

Notes and Comments.

Miscellaneous.

News of the Week.

The ability to walk a plank—not in the nautical sense of the phrase—and to pronounce unhesitatingly and correctly the words "truly rural," have from time almost immemorial been regarded as infallible proofs of sobriety. But it has been reserved for a witness in an English law-court to propound a test for sobriety which far outshines in originality and reliability the old-fashioned ordeals hitherto in vogue. At the Swindon Petty Sessions the other day, James Amos was charged under the New Licensing Act with being drunk, and refusing to leave a public-house. He denied that he was drunk, and called a witness. The witness, a woman, gave this testimony. She was certain, she said, that the defendant was not drunk, because if he had been so the first thing he would have done on coming home would have been to abuse his wife. He did not do this; therefore she knew he was sober. This curious evidence did not weigh with the Bench; they found the man guilty.

Reform Associations are certainly not wanting in England. If we may credit the *Court Journal*, there is a whole multitude of reform societies in the country, each with its own pet remedy for the ills under which the nation is supposed to be suffering. Sir Charles Dilke and his friends desire to extend household suffrage to the counties, and to re-distribute seats on the present basis. Messrs. Odger, Lucraft, and the rest want equal electoral districts and manhood suffrage; and this is the policy of the National Association of Miners, with its 68,600 members, and the Agricultural Labourers' Union, with its 36,000 members. The Reform Union of Manchester goes in for household suffrage in the counties, and a re-distribution of seats on the present county and borough system, with the addition of Colclen's plan for dividing a constituency into wards, and giving to every voter only one vote. Far different are the plans proposed by Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen and Mr. Walter Morrison. The first would make the county the electoral unit, and merge borough and county into one, giving each voter as many votes as his county returns representatives. Mr. Morrison's is an adaptation of Mr. Hare's scheme of proportional representation.

Talking of reforms, one of a new and startling character is about to be the subject of agitation among the London working-men—no less than the abolition of canvassing at elections. Mr. Watkin Williams, the member for Devonshire, writes to the *Times* that a petition praying for legislation to this end is about to be presented to Parliament. He thinks such a law would be a blessing, and "anyone who could accomplish it would deserve a statue." He has himself tried to frame the clauses and definitions necessary to carry out the object, but "has not succeeded to his satisfaction."

Mr. Sutton, the superintendent of the Central Division of the London and North-Western Railway, has satisfactorily established his claim—if not to a statue such as Mr. Williams would erect in honour of the successful legislator against the practice of election canvassing—at least to the enduring gratitude of his fellow-men, and especially to those who are unfortunate enough to live in the neighbourhood of railway stations. For Mr. Sutton has devised a new arrangement of signalling by which the abominable screeching of engines is done away with, except for pilot engines. From all the departure platforms telegraph wires have been laid down communicating with the pointsmen's signal-boxes at each end of the station. When a train is ready to start the superintendent unlocks the signalling-box and signals in what direction the train is going. On receiving the signal that a train is ready to start, the pointsman shows the signal "line clear," and the driver starts his train without any preparatory whistling.

Timid pedestrians have at last found an able champion in no less a personage than an English judge. In summing up a "run-over" case recently brought before him, Mr. Justice Hannen gave it to be understood by cabmen and other drivers of vehicles that the roadway is not their exclusive property, and distinctly affirmed the right of foot-passengers to cross the streets in case of necessity without injury to life or limb. The case before him, he said, well illustrated the impression which existed in the minds of many people that the roadway was intended solely for the use of vehicles, and that those who chose to walk in the road did so at their peril; the law, on the contrary, being that foot-passengers were as much entitled to use the road for the purpose of passing along or across it as those who were driving, and that, although the former were bound to take reasonable care that they were not run over, the latter were also bound to take like care that they did not drive over any one; the degree of care varying with the circumstances of the case, greater care being necessary in proportion to the increase of danger. During the sleighing season cases of furious driving and run-overs are so very frequent, that we may be pardoned for drawing the attention of magistrates to Mr. Justice Hannen's ruling—and also for expressing a hope that careless and vicious drivers will be visited with the full rigour of the law.

"The Revolution" is a meaningless phrase so much in vogue among a certain class of discontented demagogues at home, that it is satisfactory to find that the users of the word have received a decided snub from a political thinker of such an advanced type as Mr. John Stuart Mill. In acknowledging the receipt of a copy of "The Law of Revolution," a pamphlet published by, and embodying the political programme of, the Nottingham branch of the International Society, Mr. Mill says that he finds therein much of which he approves and little from which he positively dissents, but cautiously observes that it is impossible for him to say to what extent he should concur in the practical measures which the association might propose in order to bring the principles into operation. He asks, too, what advantage there is in designating the doctrines of the association by such a title as "The Principles of the Political and Social Revolution." The phrase has no abstract meaning in English, and in French it seems to mean the political ideas of any person who happens to be using it. There is no real thing called the "Revolution," nor any principles of the "Revolution." He concludes by expressing his pleasure at seeing their hearty recognition of the claims of women to equal rights; and of municipalities in proportion to their numbers.

It is expected that the Oxford and Cambridge boat race will take place on Saturday, April 6.

It is stated that Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli have been created baronets by the Emperor of Brazil.

The first iron-clad ever built in Turkey, the "Moukademli-Khair," or "Happy Beginning," was launched from the Imperial Arsenal at Hasskein on the 25th Oct.

A novelty was announced at the Aosta Theatre on the occasion of a benefit. At the close of the performance two pigeons, each with a bank note for £200 under his wings, were to be let loose in the house, the money to belong to whoever could catch them.

A curious "personal" comes from England. A few years ago, it will be remembered, the financial world was astounded by the failure of Overend, Gurney & Co. By the death of Mrs. Taylor, the divorced wife of John Henry Gurney, the lady's fortune of \$2,500,000 becomes vested in the trustees of that firm, and will be applied to the benefit of their creditors.

The Union Pacific Railroad is preparing for snow-storms. At Omaha there is being built an immense snow-plough, the largest and most powerful in the world. The monster will weigh fifty tons, and its entire length is thirty-two feet. It will cost \$5000, and will doubtless prove efficacious in clearing out the most stubborn drifts; but if it ever jumps the track, what an undertaking it will be to get it on again!

What were the Communists who destroyed Paris? Nine were shoemakers, six were condemned thieves, four unfrocked priests, four working jewellers, four hunchback and four halt, three loafers, two liberated convicts, two assassins, two forgers, two actors, two acrobats, two keepers of disreputable houses, two one-eyed men, one stable boy, a concierge, a rabbit-skin merchant, a cooper, a staymaker, and five madmen! What a respectable governing body!

The Paris *Figaro* tells us of an Englishman, Sir Thomas F., who has passed through that city on his way to Bordeaux, where he has chartered a large vessel, "Le Moustique," for an expedition of a singular nature—no less than to pick up from the bottom of the Pacific the body of his wife, who, dying on her homeward voyage from Australia, had been thrown overboard, with a cannon ball attached to her feet. Having taken the exact bearings of the spot at the time, he now proposes to return there, and, with the help of innumerable grapnels, regain possession of Lady F.'s remains.

The following trick is said to have been played upon a couple of Geneva tradesmen the other day by a man of gentlemanly appearance. He entered a confectioner's shop and ordered 55 small pasties. He then went into a ready-made clothes establishment and chose an overall, price 75 francs, asking for a young man to accompany him to his hotel, when he would pay him. The overall was packed up and the young man followed the stranger. On passing the confectioner's shop the latter opened the door and said:—"Give him 75, not 85;" then, addressing the young man, he said:—"Give me the parcel; you have no need to come any further; the gentleman there will pay you the money." The packet was given up, the stranger disappeared, and the young man and the confectioner were left to discover that they had been duped.

A curious little paper appears in Jersey, *Le Drapeau Blanc*. It consists of only four small pages, and the paper is thin, so that the whole affair may be conveyed in a letter posted to France, in which country it is intended that the little print shall be circulated. It is a staunch advocate of Henri Cinq, as his partisans delight to call the Comte de Chambord. The editor proudly writes in this particular number:—"Notwithstanding the refusal of M. Thiers & Co. to allow my journal to circulate in France, I still find a way of bringing it every week under the notice of many who are devoted to the principles of monarchy and of national liberty." And he steadily advocates the cause of the *Roi Legitime*, whose "white banner" gives the name to this little news-letter, for it is really too small to be called a news-paper, and whose portrait adorns its first page.

Johnson, the swimmer, whose attempt to swim across the English Channel recently attracted so much attention has turned up in a new rôle. He is now exhibiting at the South London Palace, where, although he has no opportunity of exhibiting his unrivalled dexterity as a swimmer, inasmuch as he is limited to the area of a glass tank not more than three times his own length, he does nearly everything that the majority of bathers do not do under water. He eats bread and drinks milk, he smokes a cigar, he walks like an alligator, he writes legibly on a slate, he turns an infinity of somersaults, he dances the "Cure" upside down, and he stays so long in a supple attitude while the band plays "Sweet Spirit, Hear my Prayer," that one is almost tempted to believe either that the water is an illusion, or that Mr. Johnson is really a merman. There is no vulgar puffing or blowing when he rises to the surface; in short, Mr. Johnson thoroughly understands, aquatically, the *ars celare artem*.

To what extent the horse may be endowed with any power of reasoning may be a question; but the intelligence he sometimes exhibits is certainly something more than instinct. Some months ago a poor dog, having been pelted with sticks and stones by cruel boys until his flesh was bruised and his leg fractured, limped into a stable. In one of the stalls was an intelligent young horse, which seemed touched by the distress of the dog. He bent his head and inspected the broken leg; with his forefeet pushed some straw into a corner of the stall, and made a bed for the dog. An affectionate intimacy was at once established between the horse and the dog. One day, when the horse was eating the bran mash which formed part of his feed, he gently caught the dog by the neck, and with his teeth lifted him into the trough. For weeks the two friends fed together, and the invalid grew strong. At night the horse arranged a soft bed for the dog, and encircled him with one of his forelegs, showing the utmost carefulness. Such humanity might well be emulated by the human race.

A complete return, given by the Strasburg Journals, of the result of the late "option" tells us that of about 85,000 inhabitants at the time of the decision 2,032 adults gave notice of retaining their French nationality, involving in their choice families amounting to over 4,700 souls. But of these notices 550 were cancelled or withdrawn on second thoughts, reducing the total number of persons thus made foreigners in their own city finally to 3,239, of the males of whom 1,185 are over twenty years of age. The greater part of the 3,239 who are to abide by the consequences of the option are returned, including, of course, all those of tender years, or of no occupation. But there are 141 shopkeepers, 451 artisans, 151 labourers, 53 civilian and 70 military pensioners, 23 of scholastic profession, 17 physicians, 3 apothecaries, 14 employees of the late French courts and police, 10 of other public offices, 22 lawyers, 20 of special occupations not before named. One manufacturer only is in the list, and no clergyman, with the exception of two of the forbidden Jesuit order. On the whole, therefore, the German view very naturally is that the option has made no serious difference in the industrial aspect of the city, and its effects are chiefly felt in the professional class, where vacancies will be most easily supplied.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

THE DOMINION.—The formal opening of a branch of the Canada Central Railway from Renfrew to Pembroke, took place on Wednesday week.—Hon. Alex. Morris, lately Chief Justice of Manitoba, has been appointed Lieut.-Governor of that Province and of the North-West Territories. The appointment meets with universal approbation.—Samuel Hume Blake, Q. C., succeeds Mr. Mowat as Vice-Chancellor of Ontario, and Mr. Isaac F. Jones, of Goderich, is named Deputy Judge for the County of Huron.—It is stated that Miss Rye is to receive a subsidy for each child brought out and apprenticed in Ontario.

The Bay Verte canal survey, between Moncton and Shediac, was finished on the 26th ult. Ten miles of the ground are reported to be at an elevation of 125, and in comparison with the more easterly routes especially the Laplanche long lake and Tidnish route, are said to be out of the question altogether.—The Ontario *Gazette* contains a proclamation from Lt.-Governor Howland further proroguing the Ontario Legislature from 7th December to January 8.—Archbishop Taschereau of Quebec has left for Rome.—The revised census returns give Ontario 1,620,855 of a population; Quebec, 1,191,575; Nova Scotia, 387,809; New Brunswick, 235,777.—There are prospects of an amicable adjustment between the two great companies holding charters for the Pacific Railway.—The Peel County by-law, granting a bonus of £7,000 to the Credit Valley Railroad, has been passed by a large majority.—The Dominion Board of Trade will hold its annual meeting at Ottawa under the Presidency of Col. McGilvern, commencing on the 15th January. It is expected that the President and Secretary, and possibly some other members of the National Board of Trade of the U. S., will be present.

UNITED STATES.—Horace Greeley's funeral took place on the 4th inst., and was largely attended.—The report of the Secretary of State on contingent expenses shows that during the fiscal year, ending with June last, the contingent expenditures for foreign intercourse and missions amounted to nearly \$30,000. £325,000 were paid to satisfy the Hudson Bay and Puget Sound indemnity, \$232 was paid to H. C. Davis as the bearer to England of the Alabama Treaty. The Treaty case cost \$55,290, and the freight in it was \$78. The aggregate cost of cable telegrams was \$6,690.—The first through train over the new Milwaukee and St. Louis R.R., arrived in Chicago on the 2nd.—The Chicago Board of Trade have expelled Munn and Scott, who were convicted of having caused false returns to be made of the quantity of grain in store in their elevators by setting false bottoms in some of the bins.—The St. Louis *Democrat* has a special from Port Gibson, Indian territory, which says that a bill has passed the Cherokee National Council, which banishes all white men from the nation. It has created much excitement and great dissatisfaction. The question now agitated is whether the Chief will sanction or veto the bill.—It is proposed to build a Printers' monument to Horace Greeley.—A war of extermination against the California Indians is about to be inaugurated.—It is stated that Schuyler Colfax will succeed Mr. Greeley in the editorial chair of the *Tribune*; while Mayor Hall takes the control of the *Herald* during Mr. Bennett's absence in Europe.—The application of steam for propelling canal boats is being thoroughly tested on the Erie Canal. What is known as the Dawson self-propelling boat has completed a second trip through the canal, and her owner now claims the State award of \$100,000 for introducing steam into vessels used in canal traffic.

GREAT BRITAIN.—A large republican meeting was held in Hyde Park on the 1st. Messrs. Odger and Bradlaugh were the principal speakers. A resolution condemning the Public Parks regulations bill was adopted, and a petition drawn up asking for the resignation of Commissioner Ayrton.—The number of emigrants that left Liverpool during November exceeds that of the previous month by 2,000.—The Gas Works in the town of Newport, Monmouthshire, exploded last week. Several persons were instantly killed, and a large number injured, some fatally.—All the stokers employed by four or five of the largest gas companies in London struck work last week, ostensibly because two of their number were unjustly discharged. Five hundred of them have been summoned to appear before the Police Court, under the Masters and Servants Act. The summonses of several of the strikers charge them with conspiracy. The companies show no disposition to concede the demand of the strikers, and the latter have notice that they are determined not to resume work until their demands are taken back. Meanwhile the absence of gas is severely felt throughout London. At night the city is in a state of partial darkness, and several of the theatres were compelled to limit their performances. The inhabitants are filled with consternation and dread, and the irritation against the striking stokers is very great.—Mr. Ronayne, a nationalist, has been elected member of Parliament for Cork.—The Town Council of Glasgow has voted the freedom of the city to the Rt. Hon. Ben. Disraeli.—One of the most terrible storms known in England for some years past raged in many parts of the country on Sunday last. Many vessels were driven on shore and wrecked; and several towns were flooded.

FRANCE.—The crisis in France is over. M. Thiers has re-organized his Cabinet, thereby securing the support of the Right and Left Centres.—The appointments of M. Gouillard to be Minister of the Interior; M. Leon Say, Minister of Finance; M. Bourton, Minister of Public Works; and M. Calmoué, Prefect of the Department of the Seine, are announced.—The new French election law will make it obligatory to every elector to vote.

GERMANY.—Nearly all the newly-elected Peers have taken their seats in the Upper House of the Diet.—The Reform Bill finally passed the Upper House of the Diet on Monday. Vote, 116 yeas; 91 nays.

ITALY.—The waters of the River Po have again overflowed their embankments and inundated the country around Turin. At last advices the flood was spreading.—Sir Bartle Frere has arrived in Rome on his way to Aden to join the British expedition for the suppression of the slave trade on the African coast. He was received by the King, who gave him a gold medal bearing the Royal effigy, and asked him to present it to Livingstone as a pledge of his esteem.

SPAIN.—A Royal decree has fixed the emission of a new loan to the amount of 250,000,000 pesetas for the 12th inst.—A despatch from Bayonne, in the Department of the Basses Pyrenees, says 260 Carlists entered Spain from France on the 8th.—There is much excitement in Malaga over the apprehension of a Carlist demonstration in that city. Many families are leaving, and troops are being quartered in the Custom House and Cathedral.—The Cortes has rejected the motion for the immediate consideration of the resolution to impeach ex-Minister Sagasta.

SWITZERLAND.—The election for President and Vice-President of the Swiss Confederation for the year 1873 has resulted in the choice of M. Ceresole for the former office, and Dr. Schenck for the latter.

AUSTRALIA.—A conflagration in Auckland, New Zealand, destroyed buildings and other property to the value of \$100,000.