

## The Standard



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SAINT JOHN, TUESDAY MORNING, DEC. 7, 1909.

## HORSE IMPORTATIONS.

The Telegraph was not satisfied when the Government bought pure bred horses in Kentucky and sold them to the people of New Brunswick at auction prices. Again it finds fault because the Clydesdale horses to be sold next week were bought in Scotland by private parties and are sold here by special arrangement with the provincial department of agriculture which gives substantial encouragement to purchasers who shall keep the horses in this province. The Telegraph is so indiscreet as to recall the time when its own friends made some importation of horses, cattle and sheep. This recklessness might suggest some entertaining but ghostly reminiscences of infected cattle and their unhappy fate. But these may be passed by. The Gleaner recalls a horse importation of the late Government which paid \$13,171 for horses, and no less than \$5,408 in expenses, selling the stock for \$12,750. Almost the last enterprise of this sort which the late Government undertook was a sheep purchase, wherein \$2,990 was paid for 95 sheep, which were sold for \$1,069 or a little more than half the money.

The people of New Brunswick who buy these Clydesdales will get them at auction price, as they did the Kentucky horses and the others mentioned above. One easily understands that a worshipper of the late Government, and of Mr. Farris as its agricultural leader, might be discontented if provincial money is not thrown violently away or distributed in graft, according to usual custom in most transactions in these old days. But the farmers will be satisfied to get the best bargains that are going, or that would be possible under the old conditions, and will be glad to know that this can be accomplished without provincial loss or party plunder.

## SECRETARY KNOX AND NICARAGUA.

The letter of Secretary Knox to the diplomatic representative of Nicaragua is not couched in the usual language of one sovereign state addressing another. It finds Zelaya's administration such as to make revolt a virtue, and the condition such as to call for full belligerent rights to the revolution. With this letter made public and United States fleets on the coasts, the insurgent leader in the little republic may safely conclude that his hour of triumph is at hand. The reputation of the governments in the American republics immediately north and south of the equator is such as to favor the opinion that no great wrong is done by such interference. Changes of administration may be necessary in Nicaragua as elsewhere, and the only way to effect such a change is to drive out the president by force. This is the only way that ministries respond to the pressure of public opinion. True this involves either the death of the leaders of the losing party or their escape from the country, but the penalty appears to be the same if an attempt is made to vote the government out of power. Even in the orderly state of Mexico, it was considered to be so ineffectual for Reyes to be a candidate for the vice-presidency against the Diaz candidate that he retired from the contest that his days might be long in the land.

The attitude of the United States in Nicaragua seems to involve a Central American guardianship, which suggests a possible new acquisition of territory in the narrow part of the continent.

## AN ASTRONOMER'S PREDICAMENT.

Mr. W. F. King, chief astronomer in the public service of Canada, has become involved in a trouble. The observatory where he works is on the grounds of the experimental farm, on the outskirts of Ottawa city. Mr. King has heretofore rented a modest and comfortable cottage in town, but as he has occasion to observe the heavens by night more than by day, he thought he should live near his watchtower. So the Department of Public Works set about to build him a house.

Now it has long since become impossible for the departmental architects to design anything that is not costly. The habit of planning and over-seeing public buildings has worked out its natural consequences, and the spirits of economy and even of prudence have long since concealed themselves in shame from the presence of the Public Works Department staff. Mr. King's cottage on the Government farm is now under contract. The ground cost nothing, but at the present stage Mr. Pugsley figures up the prospective cost at \$17,000. This means probably something over \$20,000, which seems to be a rather expensive rural cottage for a \$3,000 officer. A private person enjoying this salary would think twice before furnishing and moving into such a residence.

Mr. Pugsley, when questioned last year, said that Mr. King would have this cottage free of rent. This year the minister reflected. He also heard from other technical officers who hire houses for themselves. Then he went to the House and announced that Mr. King would be asked to pay rent such as he would be charged in Ottawa city. But in Ottawa City a \$20,000 house in order to pay six per cent. with taxes, insurance, and so on, could not be rented for \$1,500 a year, which is half the astronomer's salary. Mr. Pugsley mentioned \$700, but later concluded that the rent would need to be still lower. For Mr. King has now to live up to his surroundings, and his salary begins to look pitifully small. The minister stated that Mr. King approved of the plans, but that was when there was no rent visible. Conservative members who brought up the matter have

began to relent, some of them taking the ground that the astronomer is sufficiently punished by having to keep up this house. They are, perhaps, disposed to overlook his error on the ground that his duties compel him to observe stellar distances so that he has lost his domestic sense of proportion. The end will probably be that Mr. King's house will be decorated with extras, supplied with labor saving conveniences, until it costs \$25,000, and that he will pay no rent at all, while his salary will be adjusted to his environment.

Meanwhile it is a matter of note that Mr. Turfiff, a ministerial member from the West, reflects on the extravagance of the public works' architects, and their apparent incapacity to build a modest priced house for a modest purpose.

## ENCOURAGE SUCH CRITICISM.

Mr. Turfiff, strong Liberal, and a part of the former Sifton machine, has risen in the House to protest against some extravagance in the public works department. The first impulse of the Conservative member is to say that the conditions must be intolerable since a strong Liberal cannot keep silent. This reception of such independent criticism is a mistake. It tends to discourage frank speech. There is too little individual freedom in Parliament, and there will never be any more if the moment a member differs from the view of his leaders, or criticizes their action, his statement is used to discredit his own party allegiance, or the character of his leaders and associates. Such free expression of opinion might be taken at its face and no farther. The man who speaks out should not be sent back to his camp resolved to praise all that his leaders and party do, bad or good, rather than be caught making campaign capital for his opponents. A man may be a loyal supporter of his party, and may consider it the only party fit to govern the country and yet desire to correct some of its faults. Such men should be encouraged by the other party, and by their own, the former not claiming them as unwilling converts, the latter not regarding them as disloyal.

## MR. WATSON'S CONFESSION.

If William Watson, poet and censor of morals and manners, has now told the whole story of his "Woman with the Serpent's Tongue," he has done about all that was possible to avoid the respect of fair and chivalrous people. His story of himself and the Asquiths is an account of two extremely unreserved, unwise, demonstrative and undignified women, and one man whose sense of personal honor and of the ordinary obligations of social decency, is singularly defective. If this statement, said to have been signed by Mr. Watson, is genuine, he is a study for a psychologist. How any man who has been moving among his fellows, male and female, could make confession of these interviews with the Asquith women, and go on to describe and defend his treatment of them, is one of the mysteries only to be explained on the charitable theory that poets are more or less insane. Mr. Watson has, however, shown that the British public has discernment in solving the problem of the poem, and this is where the lady suffers. For while there may be just enough in the description to identify the character, the people who do not know will apply the whole ghastly portrait in the fullest sense, thus doing a grave injustice.

## SUSPICIOUS "BUCCANEERS."

The two organs of the "buccaneers" (using the language of the Sun) keep up a hot pursuit of motives. Because this journal declined to express an opinion on the question of telephone rates until the Board of Trade inquiry had been concluded, the Telegraph charged that telephone shareholders were also shareholders in The Standard Company. When it is suggested by The Standard that the taxpayers of St. John should have the first and most to say on the question of the Navy Island bridge, the Times finds the influence of a cantilever bridge concealed in the proposition. When the Sun calls attention to some obvious shortcomings of the Intercolonial Railway, the Telegraph discovers a Pearson syndicate which wants to get the road for nothing. On would suppose that there is only one judicial exponent of public opinion in St. John, and that is the Journal owned by the chief dredging contractor, the \$35,933 middleman, and the Minister of Public Works.

## NEW BRUNSWICK AT THE WINTER FAIR.

The Amherst Winter Fair is an important event. It grows larger and more representative year by year, and serves a serious educative purpose. The Standard report shows that the session which opened yesterday has the significance of a national demonstration.

The report shows also that in this friendly competition New Brunswick farmers and fruit growers take a creditable position. There has never been a question that New Brunswick could hold her own in stock, dairy products and poultry. But once more it has been demonstrated that New Brunswick can grow fruit equal to that of Ontario or Nova Scotia. The exhibit prepared by Mr. S. L. Peters includes apples from nearly every county in the province, and good fruit is grown in the counties not represented. There is no doubt that the province is coming to its own.

## NOT QUITE UNANIMOUS.

Among the cabled announcements received by the press for yesterday's issue was the statement that "the whole religious body of the country, Anglican, Non-conformist and Catholic, appear to be against the 'Lords' pretensions." As the Pagan and infidel bodies in Great Britain must be small, this would imply a rather one-sided contest. The statement seems also to indicate that those Anglican bishops who voted for the Lansdowne amendment have either changed their minds or left the church.

More recent despatches show that the struggle will continue. A number of public men who are still at least nominally connected with some religious bodies are making speeches, writing articles and performing other functions on behalf of the Conservative party, with great apparent seriousness.

Mr. Balfour is plausible when he argues that the Lords have not done the people any great wrong by simply asking the people's advice. He suggested that the next Hyde Park demonstration banner might read: "The Lords have insulted you by asking your opinion. Take care to give such a vote that your opinion will never be asked again." The ministers make answer that this desire of the Lords to know the opinion of the people only seems to exist when a Liberal Government is in power.

Delicious Mr. Aylesworth appears to be rather sensitive about his use of the Dominion police to interfere with East and West Algoma elections last year. The matter may have got on to his nerves in consequence of the result of the election. In 1904 the Government carried East Algoma by a majority of 578, while the West riding went Conservative by 95. But in 1908 the Conservatives carried both ridings, the East by 41 and the West by 209.

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"God enriches the time to come,  
With smiling plenty and fair  
prosperous days."—Shakespeare.

## A Christmas Card

from Tremaine Gard  
"Christmas is coming" this time sure  
and to select a good suitable present that will not only be good in appearance and style, but a serviceable article, and at a reasonable price, one must go to a reliable store before the rush to avoid mistakes and those examine the articles and see for themselves what may suit their purpose best, but don't send the money out of the city this year, you can save just as profitably here, and see that you're buying personally and know it is all right before presenting. I have lately been selecting, receiving, and am now opening for inspection, what I consider the very choicest up-to-date line of goods I have ever seen; in Diamond Set articles as specialties, and offering at very low prices for such fine goods to cash customers Watches, Clocks, Jewellery, Silver ware, Toilet Goods, Manicure Sets and pieces; Opera Glasses, Fountain Pens, and many other most useful articles suitable for gifts to either ladies or gentlemen and will prove satisfactory to both giver and receiver. All guaranteed.

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## THE POET AND MRS. ASQUITH

Well, "the woman with the serpent's tongue," has been identified. William Watson says so, and as William made her, that is to say, he wrote the poem, he ought to know. In a signed statement, published recently in one of the New York newspapers, Poet Watson said the lady was composite photograph of Mrs. Asquith, wife of the Premier of the British Empire, and Miss Violet Asquith, her stepdaughter, the physical attributes being those of Mrs. Asquith, and the mental those of her daughter. It is up to the public now to determine whether a tongue is physical or mental.

This is the poem. "The Woman With the Serpent's Tongue," which, copied righted by the John Lane Company, is reprinted by permission of the author, who holds the copyright:

She is not old, she is not young,  
The woman with the Serpent's Tongue,  
The haggard cheek, the hungering eye,  
The poisoned words that wildly fly,  
The famished face, the fevered hand,  
Who slights the worthiest in the land,  
Sneers at the just, condemns the brave,  
And blackens goodness in its grave.

In truthful numbers be she sung,  
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue,  
Concerning whom, Fame hints at things,  
Told but in shrugs and whisperings;  
Ambitious from her natal hour,  
Tomorrow gives her guest away,  
With little left of seemingly pride;  
With venomous fangs she cannot hide;  
Who half makes love to you today,  
Past all example in her way,  
Burnt up within by that strange soul  
She cannot slake, or yet control;  
Malignant Hipp'd, unkind, unweet;  
Past all example in her deed;  
Hectic, and always overstrung  
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

To think that such as she can mar  
Names that among the noblest are!  
That hands like hers can touch the springs  
Of life, and make the world a hell;  
That one who knows what men and things,  
That on her will their fates have hung!  
The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue.

Now when Mr. Watson arrived in the United States and the reporters of the New York papers met him down the bay he made what seemed to some a vigorous denial that the woman in the case was Mrs. Asquith. He did not say so in so many words, but he pooh-poohed the idea, and when an Englishman of education says "Pooh-pooh!" the innocent American reporter may be easily misled.

Consequently when in one morning paper appeared a signed statement with Mr. Watson's name at the tail of it declaring that the woman in the case was not only Mrs. Asquith, but her daughter as well, those simple reporters felt that they had been completely taken in. This is the story, otherwise the "statement," in the poet's own words:

"The Woman with the Serpent's Tongue" is a composite photograph of Mrs. Asquith and her stepdaughter Violet. The poem is a portrait of the physical characteristics of Mrs. Asquith and the mentality of Violet Asquith. The poet is the voice of the family and rules them all. Violet is the real official voice speaking with authority. She it is

"Who slights the worthiest in the land,  
Sneers at the just, condemns the brave,  
And blackens goodness in its grave."  
William Watson.

But this was not all. Mr. Watson

showed he had gone into the reporting business himself, for below the "statement" was what purported to be a faithful record of what happened in the poet's own words) on a day in June, that rare occasion which some other poet has apostrophized, when in response to an invitation from Miss Asquith, Mr. Watson showed up the residence of the Premier in Downing Street. Mr. Watson records a fact that shocks all the English proprieties. Mrs. Asquith was apparently not there. There was no chapter. The daughter of the house took the poet "downstairs to a sort of little library of her own, looking on the garden," and gave him—what do you suppose? "Yes, ladies and gentlemen—tea and conversation mixed—about an hour of the latter. No mention is made in the report of even an offer of Scotch—and, or even the plebeian art-and-art. Tea and conversation—that is all.

A man crossed the garden, and Miss Asquith identified him as Mr. Nash, one of her father's secretaries. "That is the man we used to write C. B.'s speeches for him," (C. B. was the familiar designation of the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who preceded Mr. Asquith as Prime Minister). The Premier was quite annoyed when he saw the poet, and then he responded to a look of surprise that flashed across the poet's features, "and you know he appeared to think that my father became Prime Minister the same sort of services would be expected of him." (A few asterisks here, simply to denote matter omitted for lack of space.) "Shortly after my father became Prime Minister he was going down to Scotland and Nash was seeing him off at the station and just as the train was about to leave the platform Mr. Nash bowed in a very respectful manner and handed over to my father a little scroll of paper neatly tied up and said in rather a subdued manner, 'Perhaps this will be of some use to you.'"

Just here Mr. Watson has let some links in the conversation escape him. But soon Miss Asquith came in with "Do you know, I have often wondered whether some of these phrases of C. B.'s that caught on so much, such as 'methods of barbarism' and that sort of nonsense, really came from C. B. or Nash." Mr. Watson here makes a comment on her remark, and then he records a statement he made. "You know," he said to her, "I rather expected that your father would make the Bishop of Hereford Archbishop of York." She said: "Yes, and I suppose the Bishop of Hereford thought so too; but don't you think that those things, Archbishoprics and so forth, are not got by trying to bring pressure to bear? They are not got by bribery, you know."

Mr. Watson, the reporter, next mentions a story about Alfred Austin, cleverly put together by Miss Asquith, but containing "one quite demonstrable lie."

Each of these three asterisks represents a paragraph in which the worthlessness of the poet laureate ship was discussed and spiced up by a viva voce vote.

After some time Mrs. Asquith appeared and conducted her daughter and the poet up to the drawing room. Mrs. Asquith, "who seemed to be in a queerish humor," talked to the visitor, with intervals of listening, until Mr. Watson pulled out his watch and found to his surprise that it was a quarter to 7. Then he took his departure.

Strolling along the inspiring ways that lead from Downing street to the Devonshire Club, the poet improvised a quatrain whose title is almost as long as the verse: "To the Memory of the Late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman." It runs:

This was one honest man, who spoke  
The truth,  
The hated truth, whether men heard  
or no.  
He stood for Honor, Justice, Courage,  
Truth.

He is gone—and they too go.

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NEWS  
Shippers Suffer.  
Winnipeg, Sask., Dec. 6.—  
and wholesalers are suffering  
as a result of the switch in  
the northern states, which  
fected freight business of  
lines. Much of the Western  
Christmas trade depends on  
United States houses and is se  
fected by the freight.

Officers Elected.  
Fredericton, Dec. 6.—D  
the A. O. H. in this city  
Mary's elected officers yest  
officers of Fredericton divi  
President, James P. Farr  
president, James A. McGil  
igg secretary, John Toner  
secretary, William Granmer  
Edward G. Barry. The  
St. Mary's division, wh  
John Doyle, vice-president,  
Barry; recording secretar  
Doone; treasurer, James P.

Can Clear Condemn  
Toronto, Dec. 6.—William  
worker among Macedonian  
city, and spiritual advisor  
Steeff, was appointed to r  
on Dec. 23, for the murder  
Simoff, a fellow Macedoni  
city, says he has located the  
Northern section foreman  
Irving, who is prepared to  
the condemned man applied  
at the Rosedale section of  
the murder, about the time  
was committed. Anos firm  
in the innocence of the  
man and will make every ef  
cure a new trial for him.

Regrets Charges.  
Brantford, Ont., Dec. 6.—  
pital board meeting held on  
Ald. Ward, who recently s

Evangelical Allian  
At a meeting of the E  
all yesterday morning  
was appointed to r  
proprietor to open a m  
Prince William street. Rev.  
how read a paper on "The C  
ing of Poreigners." A coun  
appointed to urge on the  
of the boy's industrial hom  
boys should attend church  
and that a chaplain should b  
ed. Rev. Messrs. Wentwor  
Milbury were introduced  
meeting.

Arrested For Desecr  
Nash, a native of S  
land, was arrested yester  
noon by Deputy Chief Jenki  
rective Killen in consequ  
telegram received from the  
Police of Halifax, who claim  
a warrant for Turk's arre  
charge of neglecting to pr  
his wife and children. Turk  
of age.

Received into the Min  
An interesting ceremony  
formed in Douglas Avenue  
church on Sunday evening, w  
Charles E. Armstrong was  
into the ministry. The  
clergymen were Rev. J. C.  
and Rev. E. C. Ford. Mr.  
is well known here, and  
resident of this city for some  
of late he has been supply  
church in Digby county, N.  
Lestridge College, Ky. He s  
a while in Coburg street ch  
a large number of the con  
of that church were presen  
see his ordination.