

The *Electrical Review* is authority for the following interesting statement: A number of experiments made in Italy have proved that an agreeable "bouquet" may be imparted to wine by subjecting it for a certain time to the passage of an electrical current; and that wines which are not easily transportable may by this process be rendered capable, without detrimental consequences, of undergoing long land and sea journeys. It has been pertinently suggested that the electric current may vitalize into increased strength the bouquet inherent in the fruit.

We learn incidentally from an excellent American Publication, *Our Dumb Animals*, that the people of Massachusetts are to be asked to enact a law that will make it a criminal offence for any man, woman or child in that State to throw a crumb of bread to a city sparrow. We do not vouch for the accuracy of this piece of information, but, if it be true, it is another and a striking example of the tendency to crude inquisitorial legislation interfering with personal action in the most petty, vexatious and unwarrantable manner, which seems to be the most serious and growing mischief of the day.

The savage potentate who rules the State of Dahomey in Africa has, it seems, come in collision with the power of France. Dahomey and Ashantee, two of the most powerful native kingdoms of East Africa, have long been celebrated for the blood thirsty absolutism of their kings. The fearful wholesale sacrifices of human life at the funerals of their monarchs and on other great public occasions have long been matter of horrid general knowledge. The king of Ashantee had his lesson some years ago at the hands of Lord Wolseley, and it will behoove the interest of humanity that the potentate of Dahomey should be as effectually brought to book by France.

There is it appears a possibility of an outbreak of war between Russia and China. The Chinese are swarming over the northern frontier into provinces which were once within the Empire, but have since been taken over by Russia, and the Russian naval station on the Pacific Ocean, Vladivostok, will be endangered if the movement is not checked. Once before the Russians sought to take over a Chinese province in the south-west, but the numbers of the Chinese proved overwhelming and Russia was forced to retire. A war in Asia would be serious for Russia, inasmuch as it would weaken her for war, or even for resistance to German and Austrian designs in Europe.

Nothing can be more satisfactory than the present relations of the Militia of Halifax with the Imperial Forces, who are untiring in affording every assistance in their power to our citizen soldiery whenever occasion serves. An instance of this good feeling occurred on Friday last. The Royal Artillery were already short-handed by the strength of one battery which had left, and another was to leave on Saturday. A very heavy gun was to be mounted for the use of the H. B. G. A., and the R. A. determined it should be done though they had to impress men not usually employed on that kind of work, and who had all to prepare for leaving on Saturday morning. This service (an arduous one) was rendered in the most cheerful and pleasant manner, and, with other instances, forms a marked contrast to the cool relations which existed under commands previous to that of Sir John Ross, and with former D. A. G's. of Militia.

Despite the combined influences of Portugedom and Buerdom the influx of British people into the Transvaal republic is so extensive that it seems far from improbable that that territory may again fall under British rule. Among other British pro-consuls who have proved themselves weak-kneed as to the extension of British rule, and who were sustained by a still weaker Colonial department of the Imperial Government, Sir Hercules Robinson, otherwise an able colonial ruler, committed himself to the fatal dictum that England had no interests beyond the Limpopo River. Such ideas are ruinous to British prestige. England ought to occupy all she can in unsettled and unclaimed countries, for her rule is on the whole in the broadest interests of humanity, and it is to be hoped that the spur of French and German competition for the waste spaces of the earth will prove an effective stimulus to the assertion of her right of colonization wherever there is scope for the extension of her power.

We are sorry that Sir Edwin Arnold, whose *Light of Asia* is replete with tenderness for all sentient beings, should have allowed himself in addressing a Japanese audience to extol far beyond any deserts possibly attributable to him, the man who is at this moment the chief prop of vivisectional cruelty in Europe—M. Pasteur. In a fine address, delivered to the Japanese Educational Society, Sir Edwin said:—"The famous Frenchman has already practically abolished the silkworm disease, splenic fever, and hydrophobia, and we seem to know, or to be upon the point of knowing, through the microscope, the bacillus or seed-form of cholera, of consumption, and of malaria." So far from abolishing hydrophobia M. Pasteur's nostrums have not only inaugurated a needless panic about it all over Europe, but have probably actually promoted the disease among dogs by the vexatious muzzlings, and other restrictions and persecutions to which the poor animals have been subjected through it. M. Pasteur's necrology of over 160 persons inoculated by him, most of whom were probably bitten by animals not rabid at all, has just been added to by two cases in which the Pastourian inoculations were followed by death, while uninoculated persons bitten by the same dog still live. We firmly believe that the inoculations are themselves dangerous to life. How many cases of hydrophobia do we hear of in Canada, where fortunately M. Pasteur's treatment and professions are but little thought about and where dogs are allowed to live in tolerable peace from terrified faddists?

If we may judge by the report of the Committee of the Pan-American Conference on Customs Union, that redoubtable Congress has achieved but very negative results. It takes the ground that the establishment of a Customs Union as generally understood would require not only a partial sacrifice of the national sovereignty of the American nations other than the U. S., but more radical changes in their respective constitutions than they are willing to accept. It expresses the opinion that the principle of unrestricted reciprocity is acceptable, and that its adoption might bring about results as favorable as those obtained by free trade among the different States of the American Union, but that a Customs Union on this basis is impracticable as a continental system at present. The report contents itself, therefore, with recommending to such governments as may desire partial reciprocity to make commercial treaties with one or more other American countries upon such a basis as may be acceptable in each case. The spirit of negation could scarcely be more palpably displayed.

In some respects Ontario may be said to be in advance of the Maritime Provinces, but in the essential of religious and even general toleration the great province is distinctly behind. In no instance has the tendency to a factiousness inimical to the best interest of the Dominion, and to an excitability on some inter-provincial points been more deplorably manifested than in the coarse and discourteous spirit in which the generous and graceful proposal of M. Mercier on behalf of the Toronto University has been received by certain Ontario newspapers and some of their correspondents. To say nothing of the exceeding bad taste of questioning the motives of M. Mercier's action, which was well calculated to assuage the rising bitterness of race and religious differences, it may be feared that if this spirit of unkindness be not speedily curbed and rebuked by the public opinion of the Province the prospect of the humiliation of a refusal of their generously professed aid may operate with the people of Quebec to the increase of the acrimony which M. Mercier's liberal action would probably have done much to mitigate.

We have alluded more than once to the expediency of the institution throughout the Dominion of Cadet Corps in the Public Schools. Montreal is achieving a great success in this line, and a very promising corps existed in the London, Ont., high school ten years ago, and is doubtless still flourishing. We believe there are similar organizations in Toronto, at all events the university furnishes a company to the Queen's Own, though of course this is scarcely a school cadet corps. New South Wales, it appears, has carried out the idea with great energy. The system is nearing completion, and promises to be exceedingly beneficial. New regulations provide for the establishment of cadet corps in connection with all the public schools throughout the Colony, and senior corps of infantry and artillery are also to be formed, so as to continue the training of lads after leaving school until they are old enough to join the militia. The cadets in all cases are to be provided with improved weapons, and there is also a proposal being considered for the formation of cavalry corps in the back country districts, where in large numbers of cases the boys ride to and from school every day.

In view of a proposed legislation on the sawdust question it may be as well that lumber mill owners should set themselves to seriously consider the various purposes of manufacture for which it has been for some time past stated that that article may be utilized. Scientific investigations in this direction should be promoted in every possible way, and it especially behooves mill owners to direct their attention to their furtherance. Every now and again some new means of utility is made known. The latest is the statement that the town of Deseronto, Ont., is to be lighted by an excellent gas manufactured from sawdust instead of coal. We learn from the *Chronicle* that the sawdust is "conducted into retorts, where by means of heat the volatile matter is driven off, and the wood converted into charcoal. The gas, after being purified is much like that procured from bituminous coal. Two tons of dry sawdust yield 20,000 cubic feet of gas. As a gas producer sawdust is said to be superior to coal, and requires a very simple and inexpensive plant. If this is the case, it may afford a desirable way of disposing of the sawdust nuisance which has caused such interminable controversy."

In an article contributed by the W. C. T. U. of Windsor to the *Windsor Tribune*, occur the following remarks:—"Two incidents lie, with the full force of a slowly mending public opinion, against the newspaper of to-day both weekly and daily. One is the exposure, indelicate to indecency, of family griefs and disgraces; the other, an utter disregard of truth in the publication of these details. Why should the newspaper bring to our breakfast and tea-tables items of gossip which, if brought and collected by a neighbor, all our neighborly instincts would break forth in scornful rebuke? And why should we tolerate a mendacious statement of such news in the daily journal when we should turn the gossiping liar out of doors? Think on these things." The writer goes on to say that the newspaper may not alone be to blame, and that it may be that conscientious thought once aroused the guns will be turned upon our own selves. Do we not enjoy some of these indelicacies ourselves? Do we not search for these tid bits as for sweet morsels ourselves? Do we not even sometimes actually feel more virtuous and respectable ourselves because our neighbor has been detected in some malfeasance, or the notably philanthropic woman of our church or society has suffered a sorrowful reminder that 'charity begins at home?' And then go deeper where lurks just that love of 'honorable mention' and courting of public praise, that makes newspapers dare to be familiar—this, too, is profitable for us, before we cast stones at them. The newspaper knows us better than we think; and we are more responsible for some of their sins than we have yet attempted to calculate." It strikes us that there is much food for thought in these sentences.