

Another count is added to the indictment against the English sparrow. "The outskirts of the town" says the *Montreal Witness*. "have for a week been full of the sweet song of the rosignol, or song sparrow, which fills all the air with the tenderest melody, but of which we shall likely hear little more during the summer, as since the invasion of his fighting English cousin, from whom it is hard to distinguish him, poor rosignol has either been banished or adopted into the baser tribe and lost his song." There is little doubt, we fear, that the ubiquitous and irrepressible bird is a nuisance, and it would be well if there were as little doubt of the probability of his early extermination.

It is quite possible that, after all, the Pan-American Conference may not be wholly unproductive of good. It has proposed the negotiation of a general treaty by all the nations on this Continent for the settlement of disputes that may in the future arise between any two of them. The list of questions in which it is proposed that arbitration be made compulsory includes matters of diplomatic etiquette, territories, boundaries, questions of navigation, the enforcement, construction or validity of treaties, and contentions arising from any cause whatever. An exception to the rule of compulsory arbitration is proposed in cases where one of the disputing nations believes its independence to be at stake. This exception suggests remarks which would be too lengthy for us to go into, but the value of the proposition lies in the authoritative recognition—the creation, it may indeed be said—of a great moral force operating for peace, which, if duly ratified, could not be lightly defied.

The "almighty dollar" worshipper, to whom all learning which does not directly tend to the piling up of that commodity is as the crackling of thorns under a pot, may take warning as to the value of a little historical knowledge, from the awkward predicament in which the lack of that desideratum recently landed an enterprising German photographic artist in Constantinople, who succeeded in getting an excellent negative of the Sultan as that august ruler was on his way to the mosque. The exploit, however, came near costing the photographer dear. He was discovered, his instrument smashed to pieces, and every vestige of the picture destroyed. Still worse followed, when he was arrested and sentenced to death—a penalty that was changed, on the appeal of the German Ambassador, to a month's imprisonment and banishment. The photographer's trouble all arose from his ignorance of the fact that the Koran forbids the reproduction in any way of the human face or figure.

Mr. Charlton, M. P. for the North Riding of Norfolk, is, we believe, a gentleman of American birth, and desirous of handing over Canada to the land of his nativity. He is great on statistics of the pessimistic character, which might be expected from his proclivities, and which are consequently extremely doubtful and unreliable. A correspondent of the *Empire* takes this gentleman and others of the like tendencies to task as follows.—"Although I am considered to be a Democrat and free trader, I cannot but look with pity and loathing upon such misrepresentatives of Canada as Mr. Charlton and men of that ilk. Do they not know that they are making fools of themselves before the people of the United States? \* \* \* As one who has seen something of the better civilization of Canada—too late to make that country my home—I can only give her my good wishes. May the Almighty Ruler of the Universe protect your country from both inside traitors and outside enemies."

The tone of the speech to the Reichstag of General Von Caprivi, the new German Chancellor, really seems to indicate a desire to approach to more constitutional methods of dealing with that body than the fierce dictation which so often characterized the deliverances of Prince Bismarck. It would be premature to form any judgment of the real attitude of the Imperial Ministers towards the German Parliament, but the Chancellor's address manifested more of the tone of a responsible Minister desirous of conciliating a popular assembly than the Reichstag has listened to for a long time, and has consequently created a very favorable impression and elicited expressions of satisfaction from all parties except, it is said, the Clerical. Notwithstanding the many rumors, which now, however, seem to have to a considerable extent died out, of disagreement between the Emperor and his mother, it may be after all that the Liberal constitutional views of that august lady may not have been without their effect on the mind of her son.

The Supreme Court of Wisconsin has recently rendered a singular decision. The School Board of Egerton in that State appointed the Bible to be read in the public schools under its charge. But an action was brought against it on the ground that the reading of the Bible constituted sectarian instruction in contravention of the organic law of the State. Courts below upheld the Board, but the Supreme Court, on appeal, set aside their decision on the grounds that "any pupil of ordinary intelligence who listens to the reading of the doctrinal portions of the Bible will be more or less instructed thereby in the doctrines of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, the eternal punishment of the wicked, the authority of the priesthood, the binding force and efficacy of the sacraments, and many other conflicting sectarian doctrines, \* \* \* which are not accepted by some religious sects." There may be nothing new under the sun, but this decision certainly wears an aspect of novelty, and will no doubt be read with indignation, yet it may be borne in mind that those who reject the above and other dogmas are not the only persons who also object to the reading of the Scriptures in the public schools. The Supreme Court of Wisconsin, however, will probably be thought to be somewhat too far ahead of its times.

In view of the approaching election of a new Provincial Parliament, it may not be inopportune to ask who or what is a Liberal, (for we dislike the disrespectful term "Grit," and never use it,) or who or what is a Conservative in Provincial politics? In Dominion politics we take the broad difference between the so called parties to have its basis in the discrepant opinions between those who uphold, and those who disapprove of what is called the National Policy, but there is no solid reason that Provincial elections should be influenced by Dominion issues. That with which the local member is chiefly concerned is the honest and prudent appropriation of Provincial Revenue, and whether he be in the ordinary sense of the terms Liberal or Conservative is of little consequence so long as he is an able and honest administrator. Such men when elected ought to enjoy immunity from the invidious personal attacks and acrimonious denunciation which discredit so many of our partisan sheets.

Emin Pasha is undoubtedly a leader and organizer of exceptional ability. Cumulative accounts, however, scarcely leave us room to doubt that he is endowed with an amount of eccentricity that may at any time neutralize the results of his best work; or, as in the case of poor Gordon, lead him to court death where no real call of duty demands the sacrifice. There is not much doubt that his irresolution at a critical moment involved the most serious consequences to Stanley, and if the report be true that he became possessed by the notion that Stanley was more concerned about ivory than about his rescue, it would certainly indicate a lack of the faculty of correct apprehension of character and motives. His implicit trust in his own treacherous people points also to this serious defect in a leader and ruler. It has been not seldom observable that a certain amount and kind of religious fanaticism, unless in men as stern as Cromwell, is apt to lead to error in judgment at crucial moments, as in Gordon's case. The Germans seem to imagine they have secured a prize in obtaining the services of Emin, but we are not much inclined to think the loss to England one to be much deplored.

The *St John Globe*, taking the occasion of the recent delivery of a lecture setting forth some of the Canadian Northwest advantages, gets off the following wail against that territory:—"A day or two after the *Citizen* published a leading editorial diating upon the 'magnificent possibilities' of the country described by Mr. Gietz, and upon its capacity 'to become the homes of many millions of prosperous people.' Well, why does it not so become? What is there to prevent it? We have, at enormous cost to old Canada, built railroads into that section of the country; we have spent millions of dollars there to put down a rebellion brought on by mismanagement; we have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars for surveys; we have provided liberal homestead laws; and we are spending almost eight hundred thousand dollars a year to maintain police; besides other very large sums for the purposes of civil government, and yet people slowly occupy the land, and many after living a year or two there go to the United States. What does all this mean?" Well, we should say it meant special pleading and some assertion which is altogether destitute of proof. To read this sort of thing any one would think there were not 10,000 people in the Northwest instead of hundreds of advancing settlements where, 15 years ago, the land was an almost absolute solitude. As we have more than once before observed, the real population of the Northwest will not be known until after the taking of the census of 1891, after which we suspect the population and exodus wail will die of inanition. Meantime if "many after living there a year or two go to the United States"—beloved of the *Globe*—it strikes us that we have heard of "many" also returning thence wiser if not sadder men than when they emigrated, and of the immigration from the land of cyclones, tornadoes, blizzards, floods and droughts of "many" who did not, in the first instance, make the Canadian Northwest their home.

Mr. Dewdney, the Minister of the Interior, has been reported as throwing cold water on the idea of irrigation for the North West. If so he is, we think, pursuing an erroneous line of policy. The agitation in the Territories is likely to continue and, as the country increases in wealth and population, to lead to practical results of great value. The case may be thus summed up:—Here in the east our rainfall is well distributed and copious throughout the whole year. The annual rainfall of Ontario is almost 33 inches, that of Manitoba is almost 17 inches, but that of the Territories is only 11 inches, or one-third as much as the precipitation in Ontario. In the Territories two thirds of the total quantity falls within four months, and consequently the ground on the opening of spring holds little moisture to sustain the growing crops under the bright suns and occasional scorching heats of the North-West summer. In Manitoba the intensely cold and steady character of the winter season allows of the retention of frost in the depths of the soil to furnish moisture to the plant roots until the crops have attained a good growth. In the far western portions of the Territories the frost is not nearly so intense or steady, and chinook temperatures of 60 degrees or higher in midwinter, and seventies or eighties in early spring, prevent deep freezing and dissipate the moisture before vegetation has begun. If the summer rainfall of much of the Saskatchewan country is apparently sufficient, the soil is so thirsty that it requires a much larger supply, especially on light porous soils, than the summer rains afford. The North-West agitation is justified by the excellent results obtained in Washington and Montana, where the rainfall is perhaps rather greater than in Alberta. There, with irrigation works that cost only \$10 per acre to construct, the crops have been doubled in average yield. The more fertile and more easily irrigated plains and valleys of the Saskatchewan and Bow ought to show at least an equal relative gain at smaller cost. The question is evidently one of great importance.