

IN the course of some remarks upon the Mayoral election in Ottawa, the *Sun* of that city takes occasion to protest against the introduction of politics and sectarian issues into municipal matters, a practice which, as is very properly indicated, has proved not only "a failure in municipal matters, but a positive injury—an injury not less to the man elected by it than to the city at large." The *Sun* then goes on in the following humorous strain:—"Ottawa does not want a Tory for Mayor, nor a Grit, nor a Reformer, nor a Liberal, nor a Conservative, nor a Liberal-Conservative, nor a Conservative-Liberal, nor an Englishman, nor an Irishman, nor a Scotchman, nor a Frenchman, nor a German, nor a Scandinavian, nor an American, nor a Protestant, nor a Catholic, nor a Methodist, nor a Presbyterian, nor a Baptist, nor a Calvinist, nor a Quaker, nor a Reformed Episcopalian, nor a Lutheran, nor a New Adventist, nor a Freethinker, nor an Agnostic. There are good men in the city of Ottawa belonging to each of these denominations. What Ottawa wants is a square upwright, honourable man. A man of business, a man of character, a man of wealth and position in the community, a man with something like inflexibility in his composition, who will hold the balance between contending interests equitably. It will be a sad thing for the city if such a man cannot be found and when found elected, no matter from whence he draws his lineage or where he goes on Sunday. But failing, as we are pretty sure to fail in securing such a man, we must, or we ought, to take the next best we can find."

THE "Sandwich Man" has made his unpoetical appearance on the streets of Toronto—a striking proof of the "hard times" it is so industriously sought to conceal.

EVERYTHING seems to point to the probability that the approaching Winter Carnival in Montreal will be a great success. Preparations of the most vigorous nature for the carrying out of a full and attractive programme are in progress, the citizens seeming to vie one with another in their endeavours to assist the central committee.

LET those who bemoan the fickleness of the Ontario climate, and more particularly the recent barometrical eccentricities of Toronto, read and extract comfort from the following description of what passes current for "weather" in London:—"If Mr. Mantalini were alive and in town this week, he would have had no occasion to change the sovereign and take a bath in order to be a demd damp, moist, unpleasant body. Everybody has been moist and damp. It has been demd moist, and damp, and unpleasant weather. Life under an umbrella, life splashed with liquid mud up to the knees, life with damp boots, and spoilt hats, and wet clothes, and rheumatism in every limb, is the most absolutely unpleasant form of life I know, and that is the form of life to which we who cannot spend the seven days in an easy chair over the library fire have been condemned for many days past. The soaked and sodden existence which the generality of us have of late endured has told upon the spirits and temper of the town. I haven't seen a smiling face in the streets for a week, and there is but one reply to the stereotyped greeting, 'How are you?' and that reply is, 'Jolly miserable.'"

THERE were thirty-three failures in Canada reported to *Bradstreet's* during the past week, as compared with twenty-six in the preceding week, and with twenty-four, seventeen and twelve, respectively, in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882 and 1881. In the United States 278 failures took place in the past week as compared with 305 in the preceding week, and with 260, 242 and 161, respectively, in the corresponding weeks of 1883, 1882 and 1881. About eighty per cent. were those of small traders whose capital was less than \$5,000. The estimated total number of failures in Canada for the year is 1,400 against 1,464 in 1883 and 755 in 1882. The estimated total number of failures in the United States for the year is 11,600, against 10,299 in 1883 and 7,635 in 1882.

THERE can be no greater encouragement for Tariff Reformers than the *suppressio veri* policy adopted by the N. P. organs in this country. The barefaced manner in which these reproduce exaggerated statements of commercial distress which occasionally appear in English papers, and burke all *per contra* statements, is a clear confession of weakness—an instance of "no case, blackguard the opposite side." No sound cause suffers by the truth being told about it. It was only the other day that a prominent New York journal stated there was more distress in the United States than in England, and the *Manchester Examiner*—one of the most reliable dailies in England—of a recent date says: "Notwithstanding the protracted dulness of trade, pauperism appears to be absolutely on the decrease, probably because of the cheapness of the staple articles of food." It is not possible that the zealous journalists who so pertinaciously bolster up a bad cause are ignorant of the reverse of the medal. But it is a melancholy spectacle this—morality prostituted to party exigences.

THE "Fair Traders" in England are trying another dodge. They say that if the country will only give them a five-shilling duty on corn they will answer for it that there shall be no increase in the price of bread. Now, what is the object of a five-shilling duty on corn? Why do the farmers want it? Because, as they say, wheat is too cheap. If the five-shilling duty is put on and the price of corn is not increased, the farmers will get no advantage, except in the relief of taxation. Economically, the five-shilling duty would be nothing but a tax for revenue. If the foreign producer did pay it, the English farmer would be no better off than he is at present. He would have the same depressed markets: he would have

wheat still at its low price; he would be in all respects where he is now. The "Fair Trader" is just simply palming a fraud off by talking of such a thing.

THE marvel is that English farmers have so little discernment as to permit themselves to be swayed by the selfishness of the class immediately above them. One would think they had perspicacity enough to see that the artificially-increased prosperity would signify a corresponding increase in rent values. Instead of being the material gainers they would be merely the collectors of the added margin of profit, with the obligation of paying it over to the landlords under the title of rent. Luckily there is no prospect of its imposition. Whatever the farmers may consent to do at the bidding of the lords of the soil, the great mass of the people will not tolerate any attempt to enhance the price of their food. Five-sixths of the population will not allow the loaf to be touched in order that comparatively a handful may recover fat revenues.

MR. GLADSTONE is certainly a very fortunate man, and many a business man must envy him his life-long ability to throw off all care at the threshold of his chamber. What a blessed faculty that must be—to be able to become at once locked in the embrace of nature's sweet restorer on retiring, leaving the animosities, the wrangles of political strife, the clashing of positive minds, in short all worldly struggles in the shades of oblivion! Recently Mr. Gladstone was in conversation with a friend, when he said: "I never allow business of any kind to enter my chamber door. In all my political life I have never been kept awake five minutes by any debate in Parliament." The happy fact ought to compensate him for all the worry of the day.

IF there were any doubts as to the feeling of annoyance which exists in France with regard to the unpleasant Chinese business, it should be dispelled by the significant piece of small-mindedness which has just been exhibited in the Police department of Paris. Christmas and New Year's toys, it seems, have to undergo the scrutiny of the Prefect of Police before their sale is permitted, and any little knick-knacks recalling in the most remote degree the war now proceeding at Tonquin were rigorously prohibited. "Grotesque figures of Mandarins and Black Flags, and even an inoffensive fan on which the storming of Sontay was depicted," were ruthlessly tabooed, and Young France must console itself with figures of the Mahdi worked with springs!

BLESSINGS upon the Salvation Army come from queer and unexpected quarters. Cardinal Manning has welcomed it because it is a form of Popery with the General in place of the Pope. Dean Plumptre has given it his approval because it is in earnest; and now Canon Liddon, the leader of the High Church party in England, has been commending it because its creed is truncated and its system is bad, its votaries, so far from being ashamed of their profession, boast themselves in their Christianity, and wear badges which show them to the world for what they are. Sir Robert Peel acted on this principle, and left a room once where his creed was being abused, saying, "I am still a Christian." But is not this sort of faith a little too self-conscious? Would it not be better to stay and argue than to leave an opponent? Would Canon Liddon leave a room if religious questions were being debated (say) by Professor Tyndall?

IT will be remembered that some time ago the Mayor of Litchfield proposed to get up a Johnson Centenary, but that the scheme fell flat, even in these days of anniversaries. It then occurred to a few literary men, artists, and journalists that it was not quite right to let the day pass altogether without recognition of the "hero of literature." So they obtained the use of the famous chop-room, in the "Cock Inn," Fleet Street, for the night, and there, around the fireplace where Johnson was wont to give laws to the world, they met to sup and talk Johnsoniana. For two hours the conversation went on, everybody adding his best. Men who had edited some of Johnson's works, men who had illustrated them, publishers, and others went on seeking points to admire in the sage. One who was present says: "It was more like a conversation recorded by Boswell than anything one is likely to hear nowadays. Everybody kept to the subject; nobody made what may be called a speech; and through the whole there ran a fine humour which kept alive the spirit of the place." Mr. O'Connor Power and Mr. Passmore Edwards were in good form. Dr. Macaulay told story after story from his stores; and when all was over we came away feeling as though we knew Johnson better than ever before. I doubt whether it will be possible to renew such a successful talk. I am afraid not."

IN the long-promised dramatic narrative of Thomas à Becket, the English Poet Laureate enters into the pregnant body of English history and tells the great Archbishop's tale as he had told from imagination the tale of his mythical Arthur. Lord Tennyson has of course used poetic license; but on the whole his narrative makes no large demands on the receptive faculties of those who have read the history of the period. He opens the scene of his drama in a dialogue between Henry II. and Becket, at a moment when the Primacy of all England is vacant. The Monarch and the favourite are engaged in a game of chess, in which the description of successive movements on the board are made to tell of momentous conflicts between Church and State. But the main story of the plot has less to do with Becket as Primate or Chancellor than with Henry's intrigue with "Fair Rosamund" and Eleanor's jealousy. Very powerful use has been made of the meeting between the much-injured wife and the wronged