

has broken out with such violence that the Government has been compelled to take measures for its suppression. That the Irish should prefer the newly-discovered delights of ether to the whiskey which has from time immemorial constituted the national beverage recalls the old song :

How happy could I be with ether,  
Were t'other dear charmer away.



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VEN a journalist is not omniscient. Our esteemed contemporary, the *Mail*, in a very erudite article on the "Dutch Succession," says: "The heir to the throne by the Salic law is the Crown Princess Wilhelmina." This is a new view of that ancient constitutional restriction which most publicists will read with surprise. The general impression hitherto prevailing is that the Salic law absolutely excluded females from the throne of those countries where it prevailed. It is mighty hard to be sure of anything these days when people tell us with an air of authority that W. Tell

never existed and Columbus wasn't the discoverer of America—so the *Mail* may possibly be right. But if so quite a number of eminent authorities, whose views have hitherto been accepted as sound, are altogether astray.

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THERE is no doubt that real estate in this city is habitually assessed too low. The effort to strike a higher basis is a creditable one, but some of the methods employed to that end are flagrantly unjust. It is grossly unfair for the Court of Revision to make the amount for which an applicant will sell the test in appeal cases, considering that real estate as a rule is rated at from one-half to three-quarters of its value. A specially discreditable feature of recent proceedings is that Commissioner Maughan and Col. J. French have been permitted to use the machinery of the Court to cheapen property, the unfortunate owner being menaced with an increase of taxation if he did not sell to them at the figure he named as the value. The Court was never devised for any such purpose, and it is time the scandal was put a stop to. Raise the assessed value to the selling value by all means, but raise it fairly all round.

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OUT of regard for the good name of Toronto, we lift up our voice and implore the chairman of the City Property Committee—or whoever may be supposed to have official charge of the Horticultural Pavilion—to spend half a day in getting that concert hall fixed up. At present the stage and its surroundings are shabby to the very verge of indecency. A vast expanse of platform, covered with a threadbare and faded carpet, with the entrances masked by cheap and nasty screens—it is simply depressing for an audience to look at, and the most brilliant programme is discounted by its ugliness. It would cost but little to have the stage fixed up, and a tasteful proscenium provided. While at it, the present bleak-looking benches should be removed and opera chairs substituted. With these improvements the Pavilion would be a much more popular place for entertainments, and consequently a much better paying property for the city. Let the proper official, whoever he is, get a move on him and attend to this at once.

IT would, of course, be wrong for us to comment upon the Street Railway case while it is *sub judice*, as we might incidentally prejudice the public mind against the prisoners—beg pardon, we mean the proprietors—but, without any intention of drawing rash conclusions before the evidence is all in, we may, perhaps, be permitted to express the opinion that persons who have heretofore mingled their tears with those of the Hon. Frank Smith over the non-paying character of the enterprise, have been shamefully fooled out of a lot of lachrymal moisture.

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ALDERMAN BOUSTEAD having insisted on writing ALX before his title, has been permitted to retire from the City Council. It is understood that he can never be coaxed back to sit in any chair except the one now filled by Mr. E. F. Clarke. In thus resigning on account of the adverse vote on the Waterworks By-laws, Mr. Boustead has acted in a highly constitutional manner, though he appears to be the only alderman who took the vote greatly to heart. The other chaps say—and with some force—that to constitute a declaration of No Confidence, the vote cast against a by-law submitted to the people ought to represent a majority of all the qualified voters in the city. Although the proportionate majority in this case was large, the number of ballots cast altogether was insignificant.

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THERE is no disposition on the part of the advocates of city control of the Street Railway to "let up" on the argument of their case. The matter is not going to be waved out of discussion by the flippant and gratuitous assumption of aldermanic incompetence and corruption. It is not necessary that the lines should be managed by the City Council directly in any case; and we have yet to hear any reasonable argument against the feasibility of a Commission. If, as seems to be assumed, Hon. Frank Smith and Mr. Keily are the only mortals who can conduct the business with economy and efficiency, by all means let them be retained as managers under the new *regime*. The fact which projects and captivates the attention of the heavily-taxed citizen is that this franchise is worth millions of money, and can be turned to advantage in easing the burden of our debt. Why give it away for a paltry pittance?

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THE Prison Commission has naturally heard a good deal of evidence on the subject of drunkenness—prison and drink being twin words. Dr. Daniel Clarke testified that in his opinion drunkenness is a disease and mania, which it is both absurd and inhuman to endeavor to combat by the "thirty days in gaol" system. He urges the establishment of inebriate asylums as more in accordance with science. We do not notice that either this able authority or any other witness suggested the advisability of abolishing the manufacture of drunkards as a Government industry. It strikes us that this is what common sense would dictate. Talk about absurdity and inhumanity! What can better illustrate both than the legalization of a traffic of which this disease and mania are the direct and legitimate results?

**GOSSIP.**

ETHEL—"George must be getting poor."

MAUD—"What makes you think so?"

ETHEL—"I see he has been paying a great deal of attention to Clara Oldgold lately."