

MARINE DISASTERS.—The past winter has been a stormy one, and on the Atlantic has proved very disastrous to shipping. The great Atlantic liners have met with serious mishaps, such as having men washed overboard, upper works smashed and shafts broken, but all, with the exception of the *Naronic*, the great freighter of the White Star Line, have managed in some way to reach port. It is now generally conceded that the latter steamer has been lost, but there is still hope that some of the passengers and crew have been saved by passing vessels, and that the wreck of the *Naronic* is not to be shrouded with the painful mystery that still hangs over the ill-starred *City of Boston*.

BILL ABOLISHING PREFERENTIAL ASSIGNMENTS.—Mr. Cahon, in introducing in the House of Assembly a bill to prevent preferential assignments to creditors, has struck a popular chord, and the bill should pass without opposition. Preferential assignments to local creditors, by means of which foreign creditors have been cut off from receiving a penny of their claims, have become so common that the credit of the Province has been severely injured abroad. It was hoped that the Dominion Government would do away with the evil by passing a general bankruptcy law at the present session of Parliament, but this they have failed to do, so that Mr. Cahon's bill is most timely. In Ontario a similar act is in force, nicely drawn to prevent interference with federal rights, and it is high time that we had similar protection.

SHIPMENTS OF GOLD TO EUROPE.—The large shipments of gold from New York to Europe have been the cause of much uneasiness in financial circles, but the danger apprehended has now been safely passed, and the shipments of gold have almost ceased. The Cleveland administration did much to restore confidence by securing gold both in the Western States and Canada, and by its firm attitude in opposition to the silver legislation of former Congresses has plainly intimated that it has no sympathy with the advocates of free coinage. The repeal of the Sherman Silver Bill is one of the measures that the President has at heart, and although its repeal will be bitterly opposed by members of his own party, we believe that at its next session Congress will substitute for it a less objectionable measure, largely doing away with the fictitious value now placed on silver.

ITALIAN BANKS.—France is just now being shaken to its centre by the revelations of fraud in connection with the Panama Canal Scheme. The mania for investigation has spread to Italy, where it was rumored the banks had been illegally advancing money to politicians to be used for corrupting the electorate. The committee investigating has just made public its report, and, while it finds that there is no truth in the reported advances to politicians, it makes revelations of the unsound business methods of some of the banks that are startling. In most instances the banks have issued their bills to an amount greatly in excess of their authorized circulation, and their assets consist largely of paper on which advances have been made without any security. Such revelations in this country would cause a panic and a run on the banks, but the Italians seem to take the news quite calmly and to refrain from excited action in a manner that is astonishing in such a hot-blooded people.

ABOLISH THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.—Our small Province is just now suffering from too much Government or too many law-making bodies, and the sooner some steps are taken to reduce the expense the better. One legislative limb that has outlived its usefulness and should be lopped off is the Legislative Council. We believe that Premier Fielding has this reform in view, and that all his appointees to the upper chamber have been pledged to vote for abolition when the matter is brought up; but yet we see about all the other Provinces doing away with two houses, while we are still saddled with the expense of the unnecessary upper chamber. If the great Province of Ontario finds that with one chamber its public business is performed to its satisfaction, why should we hesitate to follow its example? New Brunswick has made the reform, and we believe that if Premier Fielding will exert himself, he may be able to induce the hon. members of the Legislative Council to perform the *hara-kiri* act with as good grace as possible and vote themselves out of existence. It will save money to the Province and should expedite the public business.

THE GERMAN ARMY BILL.—A political crisis is imminent in Germany, which portends grave disaster to the Empire, unless wise counsels prevail and Chancellor Caprivi agrees to important amendments in the Army Bill now before the Reichstag. The Act is now being considered by the Army Bill Committee, and its members refuse to report favorably on it unless it is modified in several particulars. The Chancellor, under instructions from the Emperor, insists on the bill being presented as it is, and is assured by the committee that it will be defeated by a large majority. In this case the Reichstag will be dissolved and a direct appeal made to the country. Efforts are being made to force Chancellor Caprivi to resign, when it is hoped that the bill will be withdrawn and an appeal to the country in the present state of excitement avoided. There is every reason to believe that the popular verdict will be against the bill, and wise heads are trying to avert the certainty of strained relations between the Kaiser and his subjects by a timely compromise. The Emperor, however, is firm in his determination that the bill shall pass without modification, and there is every probability that when the Reichstag meets, after the Easter recess, that the bill will be defeated and the Reichstag dissolved. Then will follow one of the most exciting contests that the Empire has yet had to face, and how it will end it is impossible to foretell.

THE PANAMA SCANDALS.—The speedy and severe punishment meted out to the convicted swindlers in the Panama Canal investigation is creditable to the administration of criminal justice in France, and should prove a warning to ambitious financiers and promoters against resorting to wholesale bribery and corruption to advance their ends. A legislator with such a low estimation of his duties as to be willing to sell his vote to the highest bidder is never to be trusted. Sooner or later he will want more money, and the briber is again and again importuned for further advances. When he can give no more the tool turns against him, and in the quarrel that follows the unsavory facts become public, and both briber and bribed are brought to justice. It is the old case of rogues falling out, and proves, without seeking a higher motive, that "honesty is the best policy."

ARE WE PREPARING FOR THE CHOLERA?—The leading medical authorities are of the opinion that we will have a visitation from the cholera scourge the coming summer, and the question naturally arises, what are we doing to avert or mitigate the dangers of the attack? At the present time emigrants by the thousand are pouring through our port on their way west, some of them direct from Hamburg, where only a few months ago the disease was at its height. Danger from this source will soon be passed, as on the opening of navigation the steamers will discharge their living freight at Quebec and Montreal; but with the advent of warm weather the danger of infection will be increased, and a rigid quarantine inspection should be enforced. Every householder should see to it that his premises are thoroughly cleansed from all garbage, and a vigorous use of the whitewash brush should be insisted on. With strict cleanliness and a pure water supply the dread disease, if it does effect a lodgement on our shores, will soon be driven back; but if the whole city is not freed from filth the disease will soon obtain a foothold and carry death and dismay to all quarters.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND TUNNEL.—There was some hope that the surveys and borings made last year to test the feasibility of connecting Prince Edward Island by tunnel with the mainland would lead to some definite determination whether the great work would be undertaken or not. The unfortunate quarrel that has arisen over this preliminary work, and the unsatisfactory state of affairs shown to exist, has, to say the least, not helped the matter along; in fact has given it a most decided set back. That the tunnel may be successfully constructed is not doubted, the only question standing in the way being the cost. When this is accurately determined it may be found to far exceed any practical benefit that could be expected from the completion of the work, and lead to the condemnation of the project. That a suspicion of "boodling" should have so soon developed is most unfortunate, and tends to confirm the belief that all great public works are more or less tainted with dishonesty. The tunnel would prove of such inestimable advantage to the Island that we should rejoice to see its construction under way, but we strongly object to the question being made a political kite, to be used only in influencing elections.

CLARKE WALLACE AND HOME RULE.—Heretofore the opponents of Home Rule in Ireland have accused the followers of Parnell and other Nationalist leaders of open hostility to the law of the land, while they have prided themselves on their love of law and order. Now, however, that the Home Rule bill is before Parliament for discussion, they are no longer contented with constitutional arguments against it, but have proclaimed that if it becomes law, they will never consent to its provisions, but will prevent the Act being enforced by open rebellion. As long as they had matters to suit themselves they were intensely loyal, but now that the law is to be changed to give equal justice to all, they prove themselves, as far as words go, more disloyal than the much-maligned Fenians. Many a Nationalist leader has been imprisoned for language less incendiary than that now used by Home Rule opponents, and it would be only politic justice to give these combative gentry a dose of their own medicine. Foolish and disloyal as are these threats when uttered by residents of Ireland, who are directly affected, how silly do they sound when voiced by a member of the Dominion Cabinet. Mr. Clark Wallace has certainly extinguished himself by his exploit in this line.

THE PRIZE FIGHTING MANIA.—With all our boasted civilization it would seem that it is but a thin veneer, and that we have but to scratch the surface to find the savage underneath. Prize fighting is certainly the most brutal of sports, and although called the manly art, has not one redeeming feature to commend it. And yet it has been revived within the past few years, and through the medium of wealthy clubs has become a sport protected by the law. It has been found that there is money in the business, and now clubs in England, the States and Australia, are vying with each other in offering the highest premium to attract noted bruisers to their arenas. The higher the stakes the greater the interest, with the certainty that tickets of admission, no matter what the price, will be snapped up, and the building packed with men all anxious to witness a degrading spectacle. The fighters, their backers, the gamblers and sports who follow them around and wage their money on them, are not the workers who build up a country and make it prosperous, but the leeches who suck its very life blood. Yet page after page of the press is filled with the sayings and doings of these men, and the youths of the country are taught to look upon them as heroes, whose examples are to be followed. The mania is on the increase, and unless special legislation is passed forbidding prize fights and imposing heavy penalties, the evil will attain to such proportions as to become a curse. It is time to call a halt.

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