

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Vol. 24.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6th, 1895.

No. 10.

Notes of the Week.

During one week, lately, there have been, we think, three trials in different counties in the South, of parties accused of participating in the "lynching of prisoners." This is a good sign. It indicates an earnest desire to uphold the majesty of the law, and this is the safeguard not only of right but of liberty.

A statue is to be erected to Burn's "Highland Mary" on the rocks in front of Dunoon Castle, on the Firth of Clyde, where a site has been granted by the Duke of Argyll. Mary Campbell's birth-place is in the immediate vicinity, and the figure will face "the land of Burns," which lies on the opposite side of the estuary. It is intended to unveil the statue on July 21st, 1896, the centenary of Burn's death, when there will be a national demonstration at Dunoon.

It is known that for years Russia has been engaged in building a trans-Siberian railway. The first section of it, reaching from St. Petersburg to Omsk in Siberia, a distance of 2,200 miles, has been finished. It has been a work of immense difficulty, and carried through with unconquerable perseverance against great obstacles. At a certain point the boundary between Europe and Asia is crossed, and here an immense obelisk of granite has been erected on a height to the left of the railway, which bears on one side the inscription "Europe," and on the opposite, "Asia."

The marshalling of the forces on both the Liberal and Conservative sides of politics in view of the struggle not far off between the two for place, and, so far, of power, goes steadily and eagerly on. The rock ahead for both parties is the Manitoba school question. Were it not so serious a matter, and the consequences of any settlement of it likely to be so serious, the very gingerly way in which the leaders of both parties handle it would be amusing. It is one of those unfortunate questions of which any settlement whatever is sure to disappoint very many, and to lead to more or less friction in the working of the educational institutions of the Province of Manitoba.

We breathe freely again in Toronto now that the strained relations between the students and the authorities and professors of University College have been somewhat relieved in their tension. The interests of University College to the whole country are too important to be allowed to remain in the state which they had got into. Now that the difficulties and grievances which led to the late unfortunate unpleasantness are to be examined into by a commission, all parties can well afford to wait the issue of an investigation by a body of men who will be competent, unbiassed, and whose verdict, it may be hoped, will inaugurate a state of peace, contentment and opportunity for doing good work on the part of all connected with the college.

The executive committee of the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association, with headquarters at Glasgow, thoroughly investigated the workings of the Gothenburg system and have recently issued this manifesto against it: "The Gothenburg system has not been proved to be a success. On the contrary the evidence is abundant and reliable that many of the evils which attend the liquor traffic in our own country are found to result from the operation of the system in Sweden and elsewhere. The physiological fact seems to be overlooked that intoxicating liquors are in their very nature seductive and dangerous, and that, no matter under what auspices or conditions they are sold, highly injurious results will more or less inevitably follow."

Grippe, which at first was rather a subject for levity, has now established for itself such a place as to be treated with decorum and gravity. It has regained its old and familiar name of influenza. The late very severe cold, or the return of Spring, which has caused it to re-appear amongst ourselves has led to much more widespread and severe attacks of it in the old world. Among those who are confined in bed by the distemper were Lord Rosebery, Mr. Balfour, Mr. Henry Irving, Lord Dunraven, forty-five members of the House of Commons, twenty to forty per cent of the staffs of the principal banks, and one-third of the judges of the high courts. The government is obliged to confess that the post-office and telegraph services are seriously affected by the prostration of hundreds of employees by the disease.

Though in many respects a very bright and ingenious people, the French are, as we know from our own experience, very mercurial in their temperament, and greatly wanting in those solid qualities necessary for stable and successful self-government. This is strikingly illustrated in the following sentence from the *Presbyterian Banner*: "In nineteen years—such has been the fickleness of the people—the French ministry has been changed twenty-two times, and all of the five presidents, save one who met his fate by an assassin's dagger, have been obliged to yield to the pressure of public opinion, as it is played upon by Monarchist or Republican, and resign their office." In all these changes and difficulties, which have neither been few nor small, the people have kept the idea of liberty in view and have managed to uphold the Republic.

Owing to men's rapacious greed, love of pleasure, and disregard of laws, both human and divine, the friends of the Sabbath, as a day of rest and worship, have to keep in constant readiness for war on its behalf. In Louisville, Kentucky, lately, a student at the Baptist Theological Seminary, who was conducting a service at the east end of the city, was much disturbed by the interruptions of a saloon near by. He took notice of what was going on, and on Monday made a complaint in the police court of the selling on Sunday both of groceries and of liquor at that store. The Judge, of course, decided all such Sunday sales to be illegal, and fined the saloon keeper. Thereupon the Mayor of the city called public attention to the decision, and ordered the police to note down the names of all dealers keeping stores or saloons open on the Sabbath. The matter is to be further considered in the courts of that city, which is to be congratulated on having a Mayor, wise and firm, in sustaining the law.

The advocates of bi-metallism have scored a victory so far in the British House of Commons, by the passage in the House last week of the following motion introduced by Mr. Robert L. Everett, Liberal member for the Woodbridge Division of Suffolk, "That the House regards with increasing apprehension the constant fluctuation and growing divergence of the values between gold and silver, and heartily concurs in the recent expressions of opinion of the Governments of France and Germany in regard to the serious evils arising therefrom." The English Government has been roundly abused by bi-metallists in England, and still more by silver men in the United States, as the great obstructionist, for the most selfish reasons, to the adoption of bi-metallism. Sir William Harcourt showed very clearly in his speech, that in this matter as in so many others, the position of England had been misrepresented, and she had been accused falsely. As a result there will likely be again convened at no distant date another conference to discuss, and, as far as possible, advance to a settlement this difficult question.

England holds on her way and sway in Egypt and is exercising a powerful and beneficent influence over the land. The Khedive, a young man, has lately been guilty of rather indiscreet conduct in his treatment of English officials, both higher and lower, under the influence of some anti-English surroundings. Lord Cromer, England's representative in Egypt and the real ruler of it, has very sharply called the Khedive and his government to order. One of the chief difficulties in England's way is the interference of France. Vigorous measures have been taken which it is hoped will suffice to scare Abbas Pasha and his advisers into docility. If they fail, England will take the bull by the horns and declare a protectorate, and France will be told to take whatever course she pleases. The proposals submitted by the Khedive's English financial adviser, Sir Elwin Palmer, to re-classify the lands have been approved of. This will be the greatest reform ever undertaken in Egypt. Eventually it will equalize all land taxes. At present the land belonging to the wealthy families is assessed much under its value, and the land of the others is over-taxed.

The Gothenburg system of controlling the drink traffic, which has been lauded so much by many, does not appear on the best evidence obtainable to be, to say the least, a very marked success. Mr. J. C. Nash, of Boston, in an address lately given on the "Gothenburg Plan," before the Middlesex U.S. Northwest Temperance Union, said that, as the result of two years careful study, although at first inclined to favor the system, he became satisfied that it was "based upon a very dangerous principle and is a failure in practice." Official reports published in Sweden and Norway show that in both countries the consumption of brandy and beer is increasing, and, just as we would expect, the arrests for drunkenness have also increased. In all Sweden, under this system, the consumption of brandy increased from 65 quarts per inhabitant in 1889 to 68 in 1892; beer from 17.2 in 1880 to 28.2 in 1890; in Norway, brandy from 2.8 in 1887 to 3.3 in 1892; beer, from 18.7 in 1887 to 31.2 in 1891. Of Gothenburg itself a Swedish newspaper says: "It is a sorrowful fact that, not only men, but also women, and half grown boys, indulge in strong drink, and in Gothenburg one may meet more intoxicated persons than in most other civilized communities."

The complete emancipation of the church from connection with the state though somewhat slow in coming is not the less surely coming. On the 25th ult. there took place in the Imperial Parliament the first reading of the bill to disestablish the Church of England in Wales. It provides that the Church shall cease to be established in Wales and Monmouth, in January, 1897; that provision shall be made for the formation of a representative body made up from the clergy and laity, to which power shall be given to legislate on ecclesiastical matters; that the church shall be transferred to this body, and the glebes to the parish Districts and Town Councils, and that other property vested in the Church shall be placed in the hands of a commission of clergymen, who shall receive their present emoluments during their lives, the income from the remainder of the property to be used in the erection and maintenance of hospitals, dispensaries, and convalescent homes; in providing nurses for the sick poor, and in arranging for laborers' dwellings, allotments and in technical higher education. The measure was vehemently denounced by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Conservative. The bill, it is expected, will pass in the Commons, and will be as certainly rejected by the House of Lords, which will only hasten the day, not very far distant, when that House will be shorn of its power to oppose the will of the great mass of the nation as expressed by their representatives in the House of Commons.