

A commission has probably by this time left France to institute a thorough scientific investigation of the works of the Panama Canal, and of the cost of continuing them. The solution of the question will be eagerly awaited by the victims of M. de Lesseps's too sanguine hopes. It is scarcely probable that any encouragement will be derived from the investigation to further prosecute the ill-fated enterprise, and it is sad to think how much genius, energy and money have been fruitlessly expended on a magnificent scheme. It is impossible not to sympathize with M. de Lesseps; the mortification to such a temperament and genius must be too intense to be realized by any-but himself; while the loss to the thousands of Frenchmen who have invested their savings in the canal shares is equally painful to contemplate.

In reference to some remarks quoted in another note from the *St. John Evening Gazette* on the supposed increase of the French population, it is believed that at the last census a considerable proportion of the people of Quebec who had emigrated to the United States were included in it, an arrangement which, if it were so, had the effect of giving Quebec an undue preponderance in Parliament. Preparations are already, it is understood, being made at Ottawa for the census of 1891, and it is to be hoped that one vital feature of census taking will be borne in mind, *i. e.*, that, as in Great Britain, it be taken in one day, and include every person who has slept in each house on the previous night. In Canada the census papers are filled out so as to give the population on a certain day, but persons temporarily absent from their homes were included in the enumeration. This arrangement calls urgently for amendment.

Mr. Ambrose Lepine, who was the "Adjutant General" of the late lamented Mr. Riel's exemplary Government at Fort Garry in 1869-70, is at Ottawa—or on his way there—to seek an indemnity to cover the sequestration of his property at the time when he was sentenced to hang for the prominent part he took in that revolution. Nothing is more grand and dignified than the patriotic talk of gentlemen of the stamp of Messrs. Riel and Lepine. This is reported to be Mr. Lepine's delivery on the subject of the N. W. rebellions. "Louis Riel was a crank on religion and politics—a monomaniac—a fool—still his work has brought good fruit; he always succeeded in gaining his point (!) He secured for the Metis of Manitoba those rights which the Hudson Bay Company so long denied them, and in the second rebellion he secured the freedom of the North-West (!) Unfortunately it appears that a rebellion is needed whenever a portion of the country wants its rights." The sentiments of Mr. Lepine are altogether delightful, but it is reassuring to learn from him that he does not think an agitation he proposes to himself for the official retention of the French language need necessarily "come to a rebellion." Perhaps Mr. Lepine is right this time.

The frequency with which an event of an altogether unusual character is followed by a similar one is one of the most curious and baffling of considerations but that the tendency exists in a marked manner in the warp and woof of the fates it is impossible to deny. No sooner has Brazil, with a doubtful prospect of solid advantage, rid herself with scant courtesy of a monarch prominent among sovereigns for liberality and good works, than Venezuela sets herself, with even stranger caprice, to the childish work of destroying the statues of Don Guzman Blanco, the most illustrious member of a Venezuelan family of the highest distinction, who was "President of the Republic for thirteen years, controlling its destinies, preserving the peace, building railways and roads, founding agricultural colonies, and who having settled the affairs of the country on a fairly sound basis, retired from office in 1883, in order that the people might carry on their own affairs." The lively Venezuelans not only destroyed the statues of this public benefactor, but have actually gone the insulting length of beheading him in effigy. The example of Brazil seems to have reminded the volatile Venezuelans that they had lived in peace and quiet for twenty years, a period which, when they began to rebel, it seems to have been altogether too long to contemplate without provoking an ebullition. The present outbreak may not improbably be connected with the Anglo-phobia prevailing just now, which Don Guzman is very likely too sensible a man to share in.

Mr. Douglas Sladen, the Australian poet, who seems to have a grasp of a good deal besides poetry, has been doing good service both to Australia and Canada in pointing out, in a communication on the relations between the two countries, that Australia, having no soft wood, imports all her deal, and that her consumption in that line is gigantic since, outside the towns and cities, nearly all the buildings are of wood. Her consumption of canned salmon is also enormous. She has no salmon, and the Australians are inordinately fond of it. She also imports a vast quantity of dried fish at present from the United States. On the other hand Canada requires an enormous quantity of wooden bridges and quays exposed to the sea-worm and to rot. Australia produces a timber, the jarrah, on which the sea-worm, the limnaria and the teredo can make no impression, and many rich, dark hardwoods admirably suited to the great furniture industries of Canada. She also imports machinery and iron and wooden utensils from the States, which Canada produces equally well. Canada yearly requires more and more the unsurpassed woods of Australia, and opossum and native bear skins for cheap fur coats in the place of the exhausted buffalo. Kangaroo hide would be valuable to her boot factories. Australia is one of the world's greatest consumers of soft wood and canned fish, and Canada only supplies her with a fraction of what she uses, whereas if there were a direct line of steamers she would probably be able to supply the whole. Herein lies material for thought which should lead to action.

California, famous for its gigantic trees and for many other things on a mammoth scale, also boasts the largest orchard in the world. It belongs to General John Bidwell, one of the early pioneers, who crossed the plains in 1841, was an associate of Sutter and Fremont, and saw many adventures in those early days. General Bidwell's orchard covers 1500 acres of land, of which 200 are planted with peaches, 100 with plums and prunes, and 70 with apricots. There are 2,350 cherry trees, and the grape vines cover 200 acres and number 57,213. All the fruit is said to be of the finest descriptions. It gives employment to 500 persons. The soil is a rich sandy loam and the trees are grown without irrigation.

Europe and America united will rejoice that accounts have now assumed a form which seems to warrant a certain expectation of the safety of the gallant Stanley and the equally gallant Emin Pasha. Precisely how the latter escaped after having been made a prisoner is not made clear, but it seems certain they are both fairly on their way to the coast. Among the names on which African travel has shed surpassing lustre that of Stanley stands almost if not quite pre-eminent, and his account of his last expedition will be looked for with eager anticipation and read, when it appears, with breathless interest. It is evident that he has solved almost, if not entirely, the whole problem of the great Nile quest, begun 3,000 or more years ago. The finding of Livingstone was indeed a unique example of enterprise, and the relief and the rescue of Emin Pasha is to the full as meritorious. It is hoped that the great adventurer may reach the coast by January.

The Cronin murder and its developments have, as was to be expected, not only enlightened the American people as to the truculent character of the murderous associations they so long elected to wink at, but have, as is also natural, seriously affected the status of the Irish National League in the United States. The Rev'd. Patrick Cronin, its first Vice-President, takes a desponding view of its position, owing to the fact that the Clan-na-Gael has more or less obtained control of it. "The Cronin conspiracy," he says, "has disclosed a far reaching and manifold power, which in a land like this is simply appalling, and this horrible affair has divided the Irish people in this country into two hostile camps; namely, those who desire to bring the murderers to justice and vindicate the followers of Parnell from any such methods, and those who are using every means in their power to shield the murderers from the American law and terrorize into silence all who do not make common cause with them. Father Cronin says these methods have caused the withdrawal of American sympathy, and practically has killed the league in this country." Of course if the National League elects to be mixed up with associations like the Clan-na-Gael it must be prepared to suffer in reputation accordingly.

Some of the best and most philanthropic efforts of monarchs are doomed to reap anything but gratitude and appreciation. Louis 16th of France lost his head as a consequence of really benevolent intentions. The Princess Regent of Brazil, acting doubtless with the sanction of her father, Dom Pedro, but displaying peculiar promptness and energy on her own account, in the abolition of slavery has, instead of earning the thanks of the nation for the removal of a foul blot, generated a revolution which has had the effect of overturning the Empire and substituting a republican form of government. There is very little doubt that, as usual, selfish interests, interfered with, were the motives of the movement, which appears the more ungracious that, though nominally an empire, the imperial form of government in Brazil more nearly approached that of a republic than perhaps any other that has existed, even the titled aristocracy being one created for services to the State, and lacking the hereditary feature. However, as the founder of the Brazilian Empire, with a spirit of a colouist, sat loose to the throne of Portugal, it is probable that neither the present Emperor nor his courageous daughter set a very high value on the occupation of a throne. The revolutionists appear to have acted with moderation (indeed it would have been disgraceful had they not) and even creditably in apportioning a considerable sum of money to the late Emperor, but if the report was true that Dom Pedro was compelled to embark at an hour's notice, the unnecessary discourtesy somewhat detracts from the otherwise not altogether unreasonable course of procedure.

At a recent fashionable wedding in Washington the Rector of St. James' Episcopal Church, who holds strictly to all the Pauline teachings, refused to allow any of the women to appear in the church with uncovered heads, so even the bride and her bridesmaids had to wear aigrettes large enough to cover the head. There is not a little absurdity in this kind of literalness. Every divine of this day ought to possess enough of the critical faculty to enable him to separate chaff from wheat. Every scriptural student knows that St. Paul's opinions on many points were deeply tinged with the current eastern ideas of the status of women, and that he added to his traditional impressions certain notions peculiar to himself, which have now long gone down the stream of time and are obsolete. The earnest truthfulness and noble candor of the apostle of the Gentiles of itself furnishes the critical student with the touchstone whereby to test the perennial soundness or unsoundness of any of his doctrines, for, in the midst of his most serious admonitions about women, he interpolates: "but I speak this by permission, not of commandment," and elsewhere he distinctly repudiates inspiration in particular cases, and intimates that he is speaking out of his own consciousness. These characteristics render the undoubted writings of St. Paul the most valuable of the New Testament, and the most reliable check, in some important points, on more artificially constructed narratives, and it is much to be regretted in the true interests of religion that so large a portion of the clergy of all denominations still cling to the superficiality of a "literal inspiration" interpretation.