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FREE PRESS SPECIAL AGENTS.

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THE SURPLUS AS A TEACHER.

The Huron signal, commenting on the fact that during the first two months of the present fiscal year the Canadian revenue exceeds that of last year, leaving a goodly surplus in the treasury, remarks, "Well, it didn't come from the sea or the air, but simply 'from the people's pockets.'" But that is hardly the right spirit in which the subject should be regarded. The large revenue this year is to be accepted as an indication that the country is prosperous and happy, and not the poverty-stricken, down-trodden and disgruntled land that a certain portion of the press and public have represented it to be. The sugar duties were stricken off, and three millions of dollars swept out of the coffers back into the people's pockets; the duties on hard coal were removed to ease their burdens. Manufacturing has been encouraged and assisted by the most skillful adjustment of the tariff, thus removing from the list of imports many lines of goods which would otherwise return a revenue. Still the receipts from customs more than suffice to pay running charges. There is apparently a greater demand than ever for commodities that are not manufactured in the country, showing that the people have more means at their disposal, which must come from the soil, the mines, the forests, or the fisheries, or it would not exist at all. It is a very different state of things from that under the rule, in the days when Sir Richard Cartwright held control of the Treasury. Then each year brought a deficit instead of a surplus. The people have neither the means nor the confidence to indulge the taste for luxuries which is a powerful mainstay of the public chest. They did not know what a day would bring forth, what disaster was brooding over their country, so dark were the political clouds and so "hopeless and helpless" the Government. As down went the revenue, so down went the public credit. When confidence is lost, credit goes down with a rub. And this was the case under that unfortunate regime. An individual who lives beyond his means and has to borrow to keep his footing, does so at a great loss and disadvantage. Just so with a government. Sir Richard when seeking to borrow in England the wherewithal to cover his annual deficits, as well as to carry out the public pledges in regard to useful public works, had to confess that the country was losing ground under his management; and that the revenue did not keep pace with the expenditure. He could only plead that what had been borrowed formerly had been well applied to the best public purposes. This did not help him, however. The facts of the country's condition were at the time unfavorable, and with a falling revenue it was impossible to maintain the high credit of formerly. The bonds were taken up only at a discount of 12 per cent, and it was hard to get them taken up at all. Those same bonds are now at a high premium, the highest of any colonial securities, and why? Because the revenue is equal, and more than equal, to the public needs, showing that the people are growing prosperous and able to discharge their national liabilities.

THAMES FISHING - A SUGGESTION.

Mr. Geo. A. MacCallum, of the Game and Fish Commission, writes approvingly of the suggestion that net fishing in the Thames should be suspended for a time at least, and urges that representations be made to the Minister of Fisheries to that end. In any action that might be taken, of course the interests of the men who have been gaining a livelihood there should be well considered. They should not be deprived of any privilege which they may have acquired without due compensation. Yet the object to be gained in reducing the whole river with edible fish is of great importance.

Mr. MacCallum's proposal for the introduction of carp fry is worthy of consideration, but it should only be done as the result of careful inquiry. The waters of Ohio were stocked with carp by the State Fish Commissioner; but by so doing, it is said that a serious blow was struck at the propagation of some species of native fish, as well as at the existence of wild duck. The carp feeds on marine grasses and weeds, instead of being carnivorous, and many sections of the marshes are being cleared of these water plants by them. They keep the water riled where they feed, and disturb and, it is believed, drive away other and more valuable fish. To lovers of duck-shooting, the loss they threaten is serious. Indeed, the abundance of game in the marshes depends in good part on the presence of the water plants destroyed by the carp.

AN OLD CITIZEN ON CHOLERA.

The letter from Mr. Wm. McClary, in another column, concerning cholera, is worthy of general attention. Mr. McClary has lived in this city and neighborhood for about sixty years, in fact ever since the first house was built here, and he passed through every visitation of cholera. His observation of such times accords with general experience, that the worst peril to the individual arises from the indulgence of morbid fear and immoderate living. The cholera fights shy of every healthy person who is at once courageous and temperate.

CRAMMING AT SCHOOL.

A correspondent in another column calls attention to the cramming system and the multiplicity of studies imposed in our Public and High Schools. No doubt there are too many examinations, and too many subjects taught to make a child proficient in any one of them, and in this respect our school system is regarded by many, like our correspondent, as defective. The time allotted to common school education is so short that at the best only a comparatively small field can be covered adequately. But the majority of pupils have even that brief time, more or less, shortened by necessity. With them time is so short that if more than a very little be undertaken nothing is learned well. This fact is not sufficiently recognized in our grade system. The assumption is too general that each pupil will go through the whole forms or classes. Beginnings are made in too many things, and if the course is cut short these beginnings leave the pupil with little to show for his work, and, if he leaves school the pupil has confused ideas of everything and knows nothing perfectly. Cramming, in fact, is not education, as the primary meaning of the word is to lead out the faculties of the mind, and not to cram them by an indigestible mass of parrot-like learning. Of course, parents are co-educators with the teachers, and they have a perfect right to see that their children are educated in the proper course, and to remonstrate when sufficient reason is given, as this correspondent has done. But the truth is, parents pay too little attention to the education of their children and leave it too much to the teacher, and hence very few know whether their children are being educated rightly or wrongly, crammed or otherwise. Parents themselves are considerably responsible for this system of stuffing for examinations and cramming studies. Unless the teacher rush them on from book to book, and from room to room, and makes them promulge in memory work that their lessons they are not pleased and the teacher is considered no good. The teacher, too, knows his success depends upon how many pupils are going through an examination, no matter what means he takes to do this work. The whole system needs reforming.

THE QUESTION OF GOOD ROADS.

There is a strong agitation all over Canada and the United States for good roads, if we are to judge from the intense interest that seems to be taken in different newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets. The Free Press for years now has been steadily agitating this question, well knowing the great pecuniary benefit that would accrue to all classes of society by first-class country roads. The same vigorous stirring up has been going on in different parts of the American Union, but a writer in the Country Gentleman says people who think that a great reform in road making is soon to come without their effort are not well posted as to the conservatism of the farmers and their dislike of innovation and increased taxes. Besides, the farmers are the very last to be of a reform agitation on any subject, and probably not half of them have yet heard that it is seriously proposed to abolish the present system of road making, and to substitute something better and more expensive to start with—for that is certain to be the case. It will not be as expensive as now to the long run, but that is never an effective argument with the farmer. He looks to the present rather than to the future, and a tax saved now is about as high as his statesmanship comprehends. This writer considers the first thing to do to bring this agitation before the great mass of the people, and particularly before the farmers, is to change the law under which the roads are now worked. It is by no means certain what system is to be finally adopted, but the present system is about the worst that can be conceived for a civilized community, and stands as a bar to any improvement until it is overthrown. It offers a premium to laziness and inefficiency, and there is no way to stop it, visible to mortal eyes, unless to abolish it.

Until a more comprehensive law can be revised the new law should go sufficiently far to require that the road tax should be paid in cash to the collector of the towns along with other taxes, and by him paid in the order of an endorsement of roads, or of three commissioners of highway, who shall appoint a road expert, in or out of town, who shall have charge of all the town roads, but his main plan for working to be submitted to the commissioners in advance for their approval. Most farmers have given the question no thought whatever, and will not until forced to face it by a new law of this sort. What is first needed is a law that abolishes the chance to work out the road tax and to substitute a cash tax in its place. It is true that our municipal councils have the power by passing a by-law to commute statute labor and collect the same in a cash tax, but they do not do it, and the only way to do it is for the Legislature to pass an Act requiring the substitution. Then even if the money thus raised were placed in the hands of the local pathmaster, to be spent at his discretion, it would be an improvement, as not many men would tolerate loading or idleness in men hired to do a day's work. But that would be a short-sighted reform, because there are few men who know how to make good roads now, and are qualified to spend the money wisely. It is a new business to this country, and many mistakes will undoubtedly be made before the art becomes general.

Messrs. Stolt & Jurg, chemists, Bowmanville, write:—

"We would direct attention to Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery, which is giving perfect satisfaction to our numerous customers. All the preparations manufactured by this well-known house are among the most reliable in the market."

THE CARON CASE.

Despite Mr. Edgar's withdrawal from the Caron case, it is stated that the charges which he preferred will be investigated by the Royal Commission as fully and completely as if he were personally present as prosecutor. His retreat will not be allowed to hinder the course of justice. If the accused Minister shall be found guilty there will be no alternative course to pursue. He will assuredly be relegated to the proper place of a political criminal; and in justice to St. Adolphe Caron, the matter ought to be fully investigated whether Mr. Edgar is willing to follow up his accusation or not.

MATERIALS FOR PAVEMENTS.

They have in London a "Horse Accident Prevention Society." This society recently instituted investigations to learn what kinds of pavements the horses like best. The result shows that he is a remarkably progressive horse that can stomach asphalt. The society has succeeded in showing that the accidents to the horses in the city of London result almost wholly from slipping on the asphalt pavement. The remarkable feature of this investigation lies in the revelation that it is the quick-steppers and not the draught horses who kick against asphalt smoothness. Cabmen are particularly bitter against this pavement, while the truckmen like it. More than 1,045 cabmen declared in favor of other kinds of pavement. Truckmen testified that almost any weight of load could be safely moved on asphalt, while cabmen testified that almost any speed above a jog-trot is dangerous.

It appears, therefore, that the real beauty of asphalt pavement has been shifted from the sublime to the commonplace. Instead of giving to the wealthy their opportunity to display, it really meets the needs of modern life. When the London drivers of all sorts of vehicles were questioned about their preferences, the overwhelming verdict was in favor of macadam. Only 51 declared for asphalt, 197 wanted granite blocks, and 750 wanted wood, presumably Nicholson or its equivalent.

CANADIAN CATTLE FOR BRITAIN.

It is not generally known in this country that a considerable and profitable trade is done by Canada in the British markets by supplying dairy cows. But such is the case, and the special sale of Canadian dairy cows, held the other day at Stanley Auction Mart, Liverpool, was largely attended by local buyers and dealers. The animals shown there were of first-rate quality, equal in many respects to the best English home-bred. A quiet, steady trade was experienced, the range of prices being from \$50 to \$60, and from \$75 to \$85, all ad. The Meat Trades' Journal notes that cow-keepers should avail themselves of the opportunity to secure animals of the healthiest, strongest and best milking type, the run of prices for which appear to be from \$3 to \$5 per head below the current rate for native milk stock.

Considerable speculation continues to be indulged in as to the result of this season's cattle trade at Dundee. Numbers of Scotch farmers spoken to on the subject indicate that much dissatisfaction prevails on the returns the cattle have this season been making, and which they at the present time promise to make. This short return is, says the Meat Trades' Journal, most marked in the case of the deer class of cattle—those bought for short-keep purposes. A farmer in the Lothian district three months ago bought nine Canadian cattle at Dundee, paying an average price of \$17 17s 6d a head. Last week he was offered £18 a head, refusing, of course, to sell, although he admits there is little prospect of his recouping more. An Aberdeenshire farmer bought a similar number at a like figure about the same time, and finds himself in a quandary, not knowing whether to sell now at practical loss or to keep his stock longer, and sell perhaps at no increase. An Aberdeenshire farmer, one of the largest in the district, placed in exactly the same condition. Very different, however, has been this farmer's experience with the home-bred cattle. A number bought in Glenelg at last fall at an average of £11 each were sold here this season at prices ranging from £18 15s to £23 10s. Farmers who bought the more vigorous will be the growers of the tree and the more it will bear. For this reason it is better to pay good prices for careful pickers than to allow any and every one to help harvest the cherry crop. It is a good plan to kill the late crop of potato beetles. This can be done with poison, as the late beetles, unlike the summer crop, do not spend their entire time in the propagation of their useless species. They will eat cut potatoes greedily after the tops have died down. Cut potatoes sprinkled with Paris green will destroy many of the bugs that if left alive will go to laying eggs with the first appearance of potato leaves next April or May.

The time when the bull or cow were wild animals and needed horns for self-defense has long since passed. Those farmers who once begin to dehorn their cattle never go back to the barbarity again. They are more sure to be steadfast in reform for their herd than for themselves. If a man gives up taking a horn himself it is not a sure sign that he will not return to it under temptation; but a cow dehorned once, is dehorned forever.

JAPANESE MEDICAL SKILL.

WORK OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS IN THE ORIENT.

Progress of Japanese Medical Science—Early Practice—Delicate Operations—Blind Men as Surgeons—Superiority of Japanese Massage.

In aptitude, adaptation and enterprise the Japanese have shown a decided superiority over all other nationalities of the Orient. These qualities, added to great delicacy of manipulation, have made them in art conspicuous throughout the world. It is but natural to expect, therefore, that they should be found to have arrived at something, both in medicine and surgery, which the nations of the West might find to be an acquisition. The earlier Japanese medicine dates back to the "Shiada," or divine age, many centuries before Christ. The Chinese, as early as 218 B. C., found their way among the Japanese doctors with medical books dating back, it is alleged, to 2737 B. C., and the influence of Chinese medicine upon Japanese medicine has continued to be a controlling one up to the recent introduction of European medicine now in vogue. As it is difficult to disentangle that part which is of Chinese origin, I include in the vernacular medicine and surgery of Japan all that pertained to its general practice, say, forty years ago, and which still pertains to the practice of about 30,000, out of the 41,000 physicians now practicing throughout the country. One of them is still on the list of the court physicians and maintains a high reputation.

The impression throughout Europe that the colored papers, exorcisms, &c., are the basis of Chinese and Japanese medicine is erroneous. I have myself seen nearly 2,000 books by these people, covering most of the departments of medicine, but among which materials occupies at the very least a large place. In these books are the doctrines of the successive emperors, a strikingly like some of those which in ancient times existed among our own ancestors. The successive medical colleges have always had a professor of astrology, but the solid fact remains that the materia medica has included among its several hundred remedies a large number of those used by our lives, and these are not only vegetable, but animal and mineral, in the latter class mercury being prominent.

Surgery became a separate branch as long as the seventh or eighth century. Tube acupuncture needles, so comparatively new with us, have been in use here since A. D. 1688. Centuries ago one of their authors wrote: "When medicines are ineffective as well as cupping and the cautery the diem and back may be opened, the stomach and intestines be washed, &c. A narcotic mixture employed on such occasions contained opium, aconite, and camellia, &c."

In acupuncture, which, as I have said, has been practiced by the Chinese for many centuries, they exhibit very delicate manipulation. For six sets (31) one of the blind practitioners of this art will, without pain, insinuate a long needle into your stomach, intestines, arms, legs—almost any part except the eye and the brain. The conditions for which it is held in particularly high esteem are rheumatism and colic; next, perhaps, in order for neuralgia and rheumatism of the joints. From my own experience I can say it is almost absolutely painless.

It is a noticeable experience to see one of these poor blind men take from the folds of his "kimono," or robe, a case of beautifully bright long needles of gold, steel or silver, and with the nonchalance of the Oriental, and without the slightest pause in his conversation, to see him unrolling his needles two, four or six inches in various parts of your person in a way which would astonish a European professor of surgery. I mention this practice only as a pretty display of manual dexterity, not as a practice to be imitated. There is one medical procedure, however, in which the Japanese can teach us something in every particular.

I refer to their manner of practicing massage. The number of blind in Japan as in all eastern countries is enormous. Every blind boy or girl is expected to join the guild which is exclusively their own and to see an "amman." With their manual dexterity and supple limbs they give to massage a variety and a delicacy not approached even in India. To what extent they enter into their training I do not know, but no duly qualified surgeon could seem to be more intimately acquainted with the structure of the joints and the course of the nerves as a guide to manipulation.

Nearly every one of their various manipulations includes some delicate nerve which excites one's surprise and admiration. So common is massage in Japan that on arriving at a hotel next to the tea, which is always immediately brought—the "amman" is the individual who will surely appear.

I have had massage in Sweden, which I thought perfect; I have had it in Turkey, which I thought of horrid; I have had it in India, and found it is most instances too rough and indiscriminate; but with a good "amman" or masseur in Japan I have but one regret, which is that my friends at home could not share my advantage.—London Lancet.

The American Silver Question.

The news that Canadian banks will refuse to longer receive United States silver coins or certificates, except on the basis of the commercial value of the coins, is not surprising and can give our country no cause for offense. The reason why a silver "dollar," containing silver worth less than 70 cents, circulates among us without discount is simply that our Government continues to treat it as interchangeable with gold; in other words, as a token whose par value it is for the nation's interest and honor to maintain. But, with the steadily increasing volume of such depreciated coins, or what is practically the same thing, of treasury notes issued on the basis of silver bullion of depreciated market price, it is fast becoming a very serious question how much longer it will be possible to keep up the circulating paper. We cannot complain that a foreign country acts upon an alarm that financiers on this side of the line are beginning to keenly feel. Boston Advertiser.

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