

impressed with the fact that our Indian fellow-citizens have manifested far less of the tendency to brutal modes of play than whites with whom they have contended. Football seems to be going the same way. Punch has a skit on a recent game in England, which it heads "Midland Yahoos vs. North Country Savages," and in which amid some facetious exaggeration, it is evident that, under "the Rugby Rules," a number of the players were more or less seriously injured by the savage "rough and tumble" nature of the play.

Similar undesirable features characterized a game played in Halifax on Thursday week between the Wanderers and Dalhousie, in which we hear of the perpetration of an atrocious piece of foul play. One of the players being on the ground, another made a spring to clear him: as the latter passed over, the prostrate player seized one of his feet, with the inevitable result of a crashing fall.

If there are no rules in the Rugby code which discriminate against foul play of so shameful a nature it is high time they were sweepingly amended or altogether abolished in favor of a new set, which should embody stringent provisions against deliberate brutality calculated to result in life-long injury.

Football legitimately played is a manly and healthy game. It is impossible to ensure immunity from an accidental kick which may take effect on the shins of a player instead of on the ball, and that is bad enough, but when it comes to the allowance of practices which can only be characterized as deliberately malignant it is time to move for a thorough reform.

THE NEW ASSESSMENT ACT.

One of the most important measures passed by the Local Parliament in its last session, was the Act to amend and consolidate the Acts relating to Municipal Assessments. For years there had been growing discontent and confusion caused by the crude and conflicting legislation on assessment matters, but in spite of oft-repeated pledges, Governments had risen and fallen, and still the evil was not remedied. The Fielding Government is therefore to be commended for taking the matter up and passing an Act which, as a whole, seems to meet the requirements of the times. In matters of detail, there may be difference of opinion as to some of the measures introduced, and in practice it may be found that many important amendments may still be necessary to facilitate the working of the Act, but it is hardly to be expected that so important a measure should be brought to perfection at once. Section 3 of the Act provides that "for all purposes for which local and direct taxes are and shall be levied by authority of law, unless otherwise specially provided for by law, all land and all such personal property as is hereinafter defined, whether owned or received by individuals, co-partners or corporations, shall be liable to taxation, subject to the exceptions hereinafter specified; and the occupant of any Crown land shall be liable to taxation for the land so occupied, but such land shall not be chargeable for the same." The Act then defines the terms personal estate, personal property and income; the latter is an innovation, income never having previously been taxed in this Province. This is one of the most important provisions of the Act, and one that is likely to be unpalatable to many. Section 5 provides that "income tax shall mean the annual profit or gain arising to, and directly or indirectly received by any inhabitant, from any place, office, profession, trade, or calling, employment, labor or occupation; and shall include the interest arising and directly or indirectly received from money at interest, securities, notes, mortgages, debentures, accounts, public stocks, debts due to the ratepayer, and all other property, but no income shall be taxed which is derived from Provincial or Municipal debentures exempted from taxation by Acts of this Province, or from property subject to taxation under the provisions of this Act." While an income tax may in many respects be obnoxious, it must be remembered that the revenues of the Municipalities have been entirely inadequate to meet the necessary expenditure, and taxation had in some way to be increased. To lay additional burdens on real and personal property was out of the question, and in justice to all parties an income tax was necessary. The list of exemptions is ominously long, and we believe that many of them are wrong in principle, and should be struck out. Ample provision is now made for the collection of taxes, which are made a lien upon the properties assessed.

The Act is now about going into operation, and we have no doubt but that it will be found an improvement in every way over the old and vexatious system formerly in vogue. Still, we find there are many provisions in the Act the wisdom of which we doubt, and which we will touch upon in future articles.

ROYAL CORRESPONDENCE BEFORE THE EXODUS.

Slowly, but surely, Egyptian exploration is affording us further insight, and at the same time carrying us farther and farther back into the depths of antiquity of the land of the Pharaohs. A discovery, some fruits of which have been added to the treasures of the British Museum, opens up to us the family life of some of the Sovereigns of the 18th dynasty, which, according to Mariette, ruled for 241 years—from 1703 to 1462, B.C. In view of the recent discovery of the Mummies of Seti and Rameses the Second, of the 19th dynasty, we think Mariette places these dates nearly 200 years too far back, it being now considered that the Exodus took place about 1296, instead of 1494, B.C. Be this as it may, some light is now thrown on the presence in Egypt of a large number of Semites which has always been a puzzle to historians. The tablets, seals and papyri, recently secured, have been dug up from the grave of a royal scribe of Amenophis 3rd and 4th of the 18th dynasty. Most of the tablets are letters addressed to Amenophis III, and some are from Tushratta, King of Mesopotamia.

Amenophis III was a mighty hunter, and once on a shooting trip into

Mesopotamia after big game, he, like a king in a fairy-tale, met and loved Ti, the daughter of Tushratta. They were married in due time, and Ti went down into Egypt with 317 of her principal ladies. This brought a host of their Semitic countrymen along, who found in Egypt a good field for their business capacities, and gradually, like the modern Jews in Russia, got possession of the lands and goods of their hosts. The influence of the Semitic queen is attested by the very fact that this library of cuneiform tablets was preserved. And under the feeble sovereigns who followed her countrymen doubtless held their own. But at last came the nineteenth dynasty, and the Pharaoh "who knew not Joseph." Then they were set to brick-making and pyramid-building, till the outbreak which led to the Red Sea triumph.

There are further letters from Tushratta, indicating close and friendly relations between the Mesopotamian monarch and him of Egypt, and some of them treat of a marriage between the nephew of the former and the daughter of Amenophis, in which much gold is proffered by Tushratta, and the match was doubtless arranged.

A further letter is from another apparently Semitic potentate, asking for the return of the goods of a deceased subject who had died in Egypt.

It is as well, however, to remember that the 18th dynasty came immediately after the long supremacy (511 years) of the mysterious so-called Shepherd Kings, and the recently unearthed documents throw, so far as we know at present, no further light on that period, the probabilities of which are, that a combination of Arabian and Syriac nomadic hordes, of which the chief and leading tribe was that of the then powerful Hittites, took advantage of the division of Egypt into two hostile monarchies, both of which they subdued, treated the Egyptians with all the cruelty characteristic of Semite peoples, and committed much destruction and defacement of temples and other monuments. In course of time, like the Tartars in China, they succumbed to the superior civilization of the people they had vanquished, and adopted Egyptian customs and manners. It was under the last Hyksos King that Joseph is supposed to have risen to power and favor.

EGYPT AND THE NILE.

The failure of the overflow of the Nile this year has revived a curious tradition which, unfortunately, may not be without a foundation in possibility—that, namely, of its being in the power of more than one savage potentate on the course of the river to cut off, waste or deflect its stream. A singular and clever book, "By and By," by Edward Maitland, written some fifteen years ago, utilizes this tradition. It is a story of 100 years in the future, and a sovereign of Abyssinia, actuated by hereditary hatred of Egypt, uses his power to this evil end, but is stopped by the aerial navy of the combined civilized powers of Europe, who are represented as being federated for purposes of peace and the enforcement of international equity.

It is to be hoped that no African king or chief has really got this idea into his head, but there is enough possibility in what has been said on the subject to create serious uneasiness. The proceedings of the Mahdi are marked by an utterly reckless fanaticism, and no small share of astuteness and determination, and there is no reason to flatter ourselves that the project may not have occurred to him, or may not occur to him at any moment. It is believed that the Nile might be tampered with at several points in its course, and one is indicated by Colonel Colborne, which lies as far back as its great source—Lake Victoria Nyanza. This lake Colonel Colborne is said to have described at Cairo, previous to his departure for Zanzibar, as "lying on a plateau like an inverted basin." "It could be made to trickle over at any point," he is reported to have said, "the King of Uganda might take it into his head any morning to turn off the Nile by ordering a thousand natives to drop stones across the Ripon Falls until they were blocked. As the channel is narrow, this could be easily done by such a force in nine months, and the population of Egypt would be starved." Col. Colborne did not think it likely that King Mtesa would entertain this project for the sake of damaging Egypt, but considered it not improbable that he might desire to irrigate in this manner some of his own country.

It is to be hoped there may exist obstacles to such a work which cannot be estimated except on the spot, but the worst feature of such a contingency is the fact that even the possession of Kartoum, at the junction of the White and Blue Nile, would not avail to obviate it. The whole course of the river from that junction to the great lake, a length of more than 1,000 miles as the crow flies, would have to be controlled, and we have not as yet succeeded in controlling the Mahdi.

It is not, however, necessary to attribute the shortage of the Nile this year to human selfishness, ignorance, or malignity. According to Sir Samuel Baker, one of the very highest authorities on Central Africa, there are several natural agencies which may perhaps more reasonably account for it. Thus the rush of water down the Atbara may be less than usual from a deficiency of equatorial rains, a cause which would also deplete the waters of the White Nile. That stream may also have been dammed back by growths of weeds and rushes. In 1863 it was so obstructed, and two years later Sir Samuel Baker found a dam of vegetable growth three quarters of a mile wide, and on a level with the surrounding country, which was cut away by Egyptian Engineers in 1874.

In 1878 many bars were created by floods across equatorial rivers, and full connection between the upper and lower regions of the Nile, was not restored till 1880. It is quite possible that the floods of 1887 established bars that block the descent of the water this year, just as those of 1878 created dams that made low water in 1879. In this case the water that should have come down the Nile probably lies in great lakes over the Bahr el-Gazal swamps. It is suggested that this may account for the long absence of news from Stanley. It is just possible, but we scarcely see sufficient ground for the opinion,