

of widows and orphans, are less terrible than those of the preceding and some previous years. Last year, the fatalities stood—26 vessels, 1751 tons, value \$152,300; lives lost, 136.

An unpleasantly suggestive feature of the returns is the close approximation of the amount of insurance to the estimated value, and the public repute of the Gloucester owners for crazy and insufficient outfits, lends probability to the suspicion of that utter unscrupulousness which counts life as nothing against gain.

When we learn that the above amount of insurance—except the sum of \$6,140, held in Boston—was in the Gloucester Mutual Fishing Insurance Company, that circumstance does not tend to the dissipation of doubt, and we certainly derive no re-assurance from the well-known fact that very nearly all the 85 lives lost this year were those of men from the Provinces, and Europeans. This has notoriously been no less the case in former years, and we can imagine and appreciate the cynicism which would consider the lives of a batch of "Provincials" or Europeans, of small account in comparison with those of a crew of Americans.

But this is not the full extent to which the Marine Molochs of New England levy tribute of the souls of the Provinces to pass through the waters as sacrifices to their greed. No account is taken in bare statistics such as we have cited, of the numbers who, from hardship, fatigue, exposure, and, very probably, poor rations, come home irreparably damaged in health and constitution; and the lists given are only of Gloucester boats.

The Provincetown fleet has suffered even more heavily than that of Gloucester, and one vessel from that port was lost this year with a crew of 15 men, all Nova Scotians.

It is impossible to say what might be the loss of valuable Provincial life which might be revealed by fuller returns. It would probably be found to be a good deal over 100 "good men and true" of Nova Scotia alone. How long is this terrible annual sacrifice from the flower of Nova Scotia manhood to go on?

We read of old of Minotaurs, dragons, sea-monsters, Moorish tyrants, who demanded their annual tale of victims, until at last some hero arose and delivered the oppressed. But who is to deliver or awaken those who deliberately or blindly persist in self sacrifice to the New England Mammon—Moloch?

Is Nova Scotia so lacking in enterprise that she cannot herself employ her hapless fishers and mariners in seaworthy craft, and at rates which would stand between them and the destruction they court in volunteering to man the American schooners? She surely does not lack the means. Let the Press, therefore, throughout the land, continue to discuss the question, and let us see if this terrible yearly-recurring desolation of widows and orphans cannot be arrested!

THE CIVIC DISENFRANCHISEMENT OF THE RESPONSIBLE.

The new Assessment Act has now been thoroughly tested, and has proved in practice greatly superior to the old. Placing the responsibility for the taxes on the landlords, instead of the tenants, was decidedly a wise move, and in fact the principle underlying the whole Act is the correct one. There are, however, several points in the Act which we think would bear amending. Without taking up the high rates at which the Assessors, in their interpretation of the Act, are now assessing property, and which is such a sore point with the Rate Payers' Association, we will glance at some less-mooted points. We will first turn our attention to the powers given to the City Collector, in enforcing the payment of taxes, and the disabilities under which a delinquent tax payer is placed. The Collector has first—the power of distraining; second—the right to sue and issue execution, and third—all properties on which the taxes remain unpaid for three years are advertised and sold. His powers of enforcing payment are practically unlimited, and there is no loop-hole through which the tax payer can escape, but in spite of this, the delinquent has to endure another, and under the circumstances, a most unnecessary penalty—he is deprived of his power of voting at Civic elections. Some may be inclined to look on this as a providential release, but joking aside, it will be found on investigation to have a most detrimental effect. This disenfranchising of citizens, although, as we think, wrong in principle, might have been excusable under the old Act, but under the new, with a direct lien given on the property, it is most reprehensible, and should be at once abolished. Let us see how it works in practice. Non-property-owners, by paying a small poll-tax, secure the right of voting. Their interests at stake are very small, so small, in fact, that aldermanic candidates generally succeed in securing their votes by paying this tax. It matters little to them how incompetent or extravagant Civil officials may be, as dishonesty or negligence will not increase the tax upon them one iota. Hundreds, it may be thousands, of small property-owners, taxed all the way from ten up to forty dollars, find difficulties in meeting their taxes, which must be paid up in full thirty days before an election, or they are disenfranchised. Large owners, with perhaps properties in every ward in the city, whose taxes mount up to thousands, are disenfranchised, unless all their taxes are paid. They may have paid nine-tenths of the large sums due by them, and yet have no vote, while the payer of a paltry tax has. The result is, that the elections are now virtually in the hands of the firemen and the payors of poll-taxes; and while the vote of the former is generally cast for able and honest candidates, the vote of the latter is too often open to the most plausible manipulator. As a result, their vote has already placed in Civic power some men notably unfit for office. If the citizens of Halifax do not desire to be ruled by a most corrupt ring, they will insist on the alteration of a law which now disenfranchises the very men whose votes are necessary to secure good government. This is one important point, and there are others which we will touch upon on a future occasion.

MR. GOLDWIN SMITH.

We imagine that Mr. Goldwin Smith is, by this time, rated at pretty well his true value throughout the country he has been pleased to honor with his residence. The value is that of a "crank." We are not fond of slang, but that is the only word that expresses it. It seems not unlikely that in a few years, if he goes on developing as he has developed latterly, there will not be much to choose between Mr. Goldwin Smith and Mr. Gen. Francis Train.

It would be difficult to understand why a highly intelligent gentleman, who is filled with horror at the prospect of a disruption of the Empire, should be found doing his "level best" to break up the Dominion, were we not aware that, being a Professor of History, he had committed himself to the theory that it is the manifest destiny of Canada to be absorbed by the United States. The seer cannot afford to leave a stone unturned that lies in the way of the fulfilment of his predictions. Accordingly, Mr. Smith would move heaven and earth to sow dissension between the Dominion and its Provinces, if only heaven and earth would take some stock in his hallucinations. It is possible that his utter recklessness may be due to the little respect which has come to be entertained for his opinions.

Be that as it may, recklessness is beginning to be its own Nemesis. The excessive bitterness and violence of Mr. Smith's attack on the Dominion Government in the *Contemporary Review* cannot fail to produce the conviction that no government that ever existed could be quite as bad as the picture he draws of it in its dealings with Manitoba, and although his powerful pen may seem to his English readers to be a formidable weapon, the Canadian estimate of him is aptly conveyed in the words of a correspondent (evidently Canadian) of an English paper. "It is important that it should be realized that Mr. Smith is not a Canadian Patriot coming forward to save his country from ruin, but an alien academician with one fixed idea, upon the realization of which he considers that his reputation as a man of judgment and foresight depends. That idea is, to put it in one word—Annexation.

"In ten years time," said Mr. Smith in 1878, "Canada, from economic causes, will form part of the United States," and the rabid disruptionism of to-day is that he may be able to write hereafter, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, S. aith."

THE LASH AND THE CELL.

We are heartily glad to think we discern signs of a reflux of the wave of mawkish humanitarianism which, for some years, thrilled the delicate nerves, and excited the sickly sensibilities, of feeble and ill-balanced minds on the subject of the "Cat."

It has lately seemed to be in process of becoming recognized that for some offences it is the only fitting and effective punishment—of course in addition to imprisonment. It is almost unnecessary to specify the particular crime to which it has been—happily, of late, with less maudlin reluctance than formerly—justly and properly meted out. We are in no wise ashamed of proclaiming that we should rejoice in its extension to every case of gross cruelty, brutality, and bestiality, towards man or animal. In cases of the outrage of females, we are free to confess that we have a good deal of sympathy with the summary proceedings of Judge Lynch, occasionally revealed to us in such cases by American newspapers. We are not, however, anxious to advocate the more heroic method, when a fair use of the humble "Cat" will, in all probability, suffice to stamp out crime of these descriptions. The cause of the remarkable efficacy of the nine-tailed implement is sufficiently known. The pitiless ruffian is, we do not say always, but nearly always, a miserable coward where the integrity of his own hide is concerned. Some accounts of recent floggings, if reliable, astonish us at the extraordinarily facile collapse of an apparently sturdy brute, physically and mentally, in nerve and muscle, after a number of lashes which almost moves the contempt of such as may have seen four dozen laid on by stalwart boatswains' mates, sometimes alternately right and left-handed, endured without a sound, and with scarcely a flinch. If, therefore, the "Cat" is a terror to the foul and cruel ruffian, such as no other punishment is, in the name of all outraged human, let him clearly understand that there will be no escape from it for him, whenever he brings himself within the grasp of the law.

But there is another special class of misdemeanor which seems to us to call for a strong expression of public opinion. We suppose there cannot have been a year within the period covered by Railway Statistics, which has been so marked by terrible accidents as the one now drawing towards its close. Horror after horror meets our eyes in the morning papers 'till the announcement of a fresh hecatomb of victims falls upon almost paralyzed sensibilities. But when we are able to grasp the details, we are outraged to find that in almost every case the crushing, maiming, and burning of dozens at a time of fathers, mothers, husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, is due to a callous disregard of precaution, for which there seems to be no adequate retribution if the delinquents escape the immediate consequences of their criminal foolishness, apathy, or negligence. We remember hearing, indeed we might say we knew, of a case some seven years ago, in which the driver of an afternoon or evening train, excited with liquor, swore he would reach Bedford or another place (not Halifax, which he was leaving) within a certain number of minutes. He did, but, we believe, many of his passengers had strong doubts whether they would ever reach Bedford or any other station alive.

It seems to us that the frequency of railway accidents due to rashness, carelessness, or wilful disregard of regulations, would justify special and severe legislation inflicting heavy terms of imprisonment on a convicted delinquent, whomsoever he might be.