

## Notes of the Week.

The destruction by fire of the Halifax Poor House, which contained between three and four hundred paupers, and the loss of thirty-two of the inmates—almost the whole of the sick and feeble of the institution—which happened on the morning of Tuesday week, has drawn out the gravest censure as well as the heartiest sympathy of the press and people of Canada and the United States. Such an appalling tragedy under any circumstances would have been sufficient to have saddened all hearts, but being the result of the gravest carelessness, the most stupid blundering, and the most culpable inefficiency, it has aroused the just indignation of the people. The fire began at about 12 o'clock at night, and owing to the great height of the building (nine stories) and the difficulty in procuring water, nothing was left of the main building but the walls. The structure was built in 1869, and cost over \$83,000, and was insured for about \$50,000. The hospital, instead of being on the ground floor, was placed on the highest story, and the rapidity with which the flames advanced would have prevented the saving even of a single life had it not been for the heroic exertions of a Priest of our Church—the Rev. F. R. Murray, of St. Luke's Cathedral—who led a forlorn hope of three or four and succeeded in saving several lives, but who may himself have to pay for his Christian heroism with his life, as, unhappily, he inhaled heated smoke, which has led to a very serious lung trouble, and he lies as we write in a very critical state. The secular press mention two other of our clergy who distinguished themselves on the occasion—indeed, were the only ministers of any religious body present—viz.: the Venerable Archdeacon Gilpin and the Rev. John Padfield. How the fire originated is not yet known, but the management and affairs of the institution and the origin of the fire are being made the subjects of an examination by a Coroner's jury composed of very intelligent and thoroughly independent men, who will sift the whole matter to the bottom and place the blame where it belongs. Whatever may be the verdict, public opinion does not hesitate to attach blame to and severely censure the Commissioners, who seem to have had no fixed and proper rules for the management of the institution, and the Superintendent, who has shown himself strangely unfit for the position. We ask our readers to join their brethren in Halifax in their prayers that God would spare to them their beloved and self-sacrificing brother, whose loss would be most deplorable, not only under the circumstances, but owing to the great value of his services to his parish, and the hearty manner in which he has been devoting himself to Church work in the city generally.

Our readers will expect to hear more about the False Prophet, who has recently defeated, with great loss, some Egyptian troops sent against him, and who is now marching in the direction of Cairo with a large army. He is the son and successor of a certain Muhamed el Senoussi, who some fifty years ago, after being driven out of Alexandria where he had established a convent sanctuary, founded a remarkable stronghold in the Libyan Desert, altogether inaccessible to an invading force, from whence he exercised great influence over the Arabs, and opposed all European interference in Egyptian affairs. His son, the prophet, who now claims to be the Messiah or El Mahdi of Mahomedanism, has aroused the greatest enthusiasm, owing to the fact that he has declared himself to be the mighty one which Mussulman prophets generally agree should appear in the year 1300 of the Hegira, which began the 12th November of our present year 1882. Under him the *zaouia* at Djagub has become a great fortress. The tribes in his neighborhood seem to have sworn military and civil allegiance to him, and have defied the Governor-General, who represents the Sultan at Tripoli, and refused to send tribute to Constantinople. Undoubtedly the chief of the Senoussi exercises an enormous and subtle influence throughout all North Africa, mainly by means of his secret emissaries, and it is likely at all events not to be diminished by his proclamation of himself as the predicted Mussulman Messiah who will begin to rally Islam about the

timed named above. It seems like a special Providence that has placed an English army in Egypt at the present time which will be able to ignore all fanatical influences which the Prophet would have exercised over the Egyptian troops. But it looks now as if the pacification of the country might be long deferred.

The debate on the "Closure" question still continues in the English House of Commons without any new developments. On Friday Sir Stafford Northcote's motion, made on the speaker's putting the first resolution, the closure rule, on Monday night, that it be rejected, was defeated by 304 to 260. We are told the Parnellites voted for and other Irish members against the motion. Mr. Gladstone, discussing the question, said the public did not trouble themselves about the details of the measure, but only desired less talk and more work. The public were unable to reconcile the redundancy of our talk with the paucity of results. He believed a complete and effective system of rules essential for meeting the wants of Ireland. There was no subject in which he felt a more profound interest than local government for Ireland, but it was a mockery for the Irish members to come to the House and tell the Government to establish local government in Ireland when they did all in their power to narrow the time for discussion by which alone such legislation could be enacted and given to Ireland. Mr. Gladstone seems determined not to give way either to the Irish malcontents, or to the Opposition which is evidently a unit against him. He no doubt dreads a repetition of the scenes of the two previous sittings of the House which made the leadership altogether too trying for a man of his advanced years. The feeling is so general that the business of the country must not be retarded as it has been in recent Sessions of Parliament, that, obnoxious as the "Closure" bill is to the people generally and to members of the House, it will pass with no material alteration.

The United States elections which were held in thirty-three different States of the Union on the 7th resulted as we predicted in a great Democratic victory. Democratic papers claim that the next Congress will have in it two hundred and six Democrats and but one hundred and nineteen Republicans. We spoke of the fertility of the Republicans in party cries and suggested that some question not now to the front might be used to rally to their standard a majority of the electors, but it looks now as if beyond doubt a Democratic President and a Democratic Cabinet would be inaugurated in March, 1883. The English papers seem to regret the result and express themselves fearful that Democratic rule may not be as friendly to England as the Republican party has been, but we think these fears are not justified. It is true the Irish are largely Democratic and the sympathies of the socialistic element are also largely with them, but it must be remembered that the Southern States which will exercise a controlling influence in any Democratic Government that may be formed, are warm friends of England, and will check any demonstrations against her. No doubt dissensions among themselves have been the principal causes which have led to the defeat of the Republican Party at the elections just held. And the English *Standard* speaking of this says, "If the Republicans in the United States lay seriously to heart the plain lesson of Tuesday's elections they will not in the long run have much reason to deplore the magnitude of the discomfiture in which the misconduct of their leaders has involved them. The result will certainly give an impetus to civil service reform. In that lies the hope of the future for honest men of all shades of political opinion, and the remedy for the evils which now deprave politics." And this being the case we may rather rejoice that defeat has come to the Republican Party in time to save it from utter demoralization and disruption. The *Daily News* says that President Arthur's administration will be seriously hampered by the Democratic success. It is more than probable that a wish to thus tie his hands led many of his supporters in 1880 to oppose him now. The rebuke thus given to the President and his friends was thoroughly well deserved.

Woman's Rights which we have heard so much

about of late years seem to have made a great advance in the Old Country within the past few months. In England women are now eligible not only as voters but to be elected as members of the School Boards, while in Scotland they have gone beyond that, and on Saturday week for the first time they exercised the Municipal Franchise. But they do not appear to be satisfied even with this and are now clamouring for all the rights and privileges accorded to men, and to be allowed to exercise the Parliamentary Franchise as well. As the women make up from one-tenth to one-fifth of the municipal electorate in Scotch cities and towns like Greenock, Paisley, Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, they are an important interest, and will soon learn all the crooked ways of political life, not we fear to their advantage, or to the benefit of the country.

Speaking of Woman's Rights we cannot refrain from saying a word or two in their favor in a certain direction. While we strongly oppose an indiscriminate use of the ballot we contend that the head of every household, otherwise qualified, should have a vote, and if the husband is dead, the widow should exercise the franchise, and possess all other legal rights and privileges as the head of the family. When a son reaches maturity we would substitute him for his mother, while he remained in his mother's household, by her special request, but not otherwise. We should also go in strongly for a change in the law to give a woman the control of her own effects, so that marriage shall not take all that is hers away from her.

It seems as if Jay Gould of New York, who is declared to be not only the wealthiest man in the United States but in the whole world, has succeeded in getting control of several of the most important railways, telegraph lines and steamboats, and also seeks to use the press news for his own benefit, having bought a controlling influence in the majority of the newspapers which form the Associated Press, and by whom the news of the world is collected and distributed. Such marvelous wealth and such daring enterprise have fairly startled the mercantile and financial world, and the position which this one man occupies is now the subject of sharp and general criticism. Among the newspapers which refuse to be bought up is the *New York Herald*, and it now appears that its owner, James Gordon Bennett, no less remarkable for enterprise than Gould, who has been residing for some years in Paris, intends to oppose the schemes of the latter, and for that purpose has returned to America. The *Herald* on Friday morning had a leader of two columns on cable matters, in which it said that "a new cable is going to be laid and that messages will be going through it next summer." The *Herald* also had an editorial on "Collection of News," in which it states that at the meeting of the New York Associated Press it offered a resolution that the Western Press, the New England Press, the New York State Press, and Philadelphia and Baltimore Press Associations be admitted to membership in the Associated Press, but the resolution was voted down. It can thus be seen that Bennett will have some difficulty in the work which he has in hands, and the contest will be eagerly watched both in America and England.

### TEMPORA MUTANTUR, &c.

The Church constantly finds the sects imitating her in the very things which formerly they despised and made light of. This is not only seen in great things, but in small. As a proof of another change, our Toronto correspondent clips the following from a city paper:—

"CARLETON STREET PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH.—HARVEST FESTIVAL.—This evening a harvest festival will be held in the above church, which will be decorated with flowers, fruit, grain, and evergreens. A programme will be rendered, consisting of anthems, solos, readings and addresses. Chair to be taken at 7.30 by R. Walker, Esq. Free admission. A collection at close. On Sabbath the Rev. J. Cooper Antliff, B.D., will preach a Harvest Thanksgiving Sermon at 11 a.m."