

If reports are reliable there seems to be another epidemic of outrages on women in the Province of Quebec. We shall never cease to urge the unsparring infliction of the lash in convictions for this dastardly crime.

A very remarkable man has recently passed away in the person of Lawrence Oliphant. A traveller, and recorder of his travels, of remarkable scope, he was also a brilliant novelist with a deep current of theosophical thought underlying his sarcasm. His peculiar novel "Piccadilly," may almost be considered a classic. His experiences ranged from his "Transcaucasian Campaign, under Omar Pasha," and his "Journey to Khatmaudu" (Nepaul) to association with Harris, the visionary spiritualistic American preacher, whose ecstatic eloquence is still remembered in England as well as the States.

A very singular article in the *Boston Transcript*, after going into the falling off of all branches of New England commerce, actually brings geographical as well as commercial considerations to bear on an ostensible suggestion of annexation to Canada, in preference to connection with the other States "with which they are not geographically allied," and which have robbed the New England States of their trade. It is quite possible, however, that this Jeremiad may be intended to work quite the other way, and to strengthen and intensify in New England the national desire for the absorption of Canada. We do not believe all we hear or see, on the face of it.

We wonder how it is that the very American term "City Marshal" should have come into such vogue in the Maritime Provinces for the chief police officers of the cities. There would be no particular objections to it merely because it is American, but it has a smack of that sort of grandiloquence, pleasant to the American ear, but somewhat distasteful to that of the British citizen. The term is unknown in Ontario, where the functionary indicated is, so far as we know, always known by the much more direct and appropriate designation "Chief of Police." The term Marshal associates itself chiefly with the highest rank in European armies, or otherwise with the temporary organizer and director of a procession, and is quite out of keeping with the head of a body of policemen.

It is said the Imperial Government will recommend Parliament to subsidize the International Cable Company, which undertakes to lay a cable from Halifax to Bermuda, and two from England to Halifax, one direct and one *via* Lisbon. The Bermuda cable will extend to the West Indies, and they are promised to be laid during this season. We trust this is true. With a direct cable to Halifax, surely the Canadian Press might unite to deliver itself from the disgrace of getting all its cable news garbled by transmission through mendacious American correspondents, for the peculiar tastes of the American public. The Canadian Telegraph Line is also, we are glad to see, completed to the Atlantic seaboard, which, we take it, is a step towards the deliverance of Canada from the detestable Wiman monopoly.

*India and the Colonies* has the following editorial note, which may be of interest to many Canadian families, perhaps especially those of the Maritime Provinces:—"The *St. James' Gazette* having published a report to the effect that the Admiralty experienced difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number of candidates for cadetships in the Royal Navy, Sir Charles Mills has written to that paper pointing out that any such difficulty could be easily overcome by increasing the number of cadetships to be offered to the sons of residents in the Colonies. The idea suggested by Sir Charles is an excellent one, and, as he observes, there are numerous families in the Colonies who are anxious to see one or more of their sons, high-spirited and well-educated, in the Royal Navy, to which, under the present regulations, only very few Colonists have any chance of obtaining admission."

There are so many pulls on the Militia vote that it is the plain duty of the authorities to put a stop to any expenditure that can be shown to be ill-judged or unnecessary. There is no doubt that a portion of the vote in promotion of rifle-shooting falls short of its intent, which is the improvement of the shooting of the rank and file. The very large and undue proportion of prizes taken by officers (many of them non-combatants) and staff-sergeants, is forcibly commented on by the D. A. G. of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and his report is strongly endorsed by Sir Frederic Middleton. These officers and non-commissioned officers form a small clique of good shots, into whose hands about two-thirds of the prizes find their way, and it is rightly suggested that it is scarcely the thing for officers who make shooting a sometimes not unprofitable little business, to enter into competition for small prizes with their men.

The *Toronto Globe*, referring to the dismissal of Mr. Ross, the late Collector of Customs, says, that "it was very impolitic to signify Ottawa hostility to our neighbors in such a way," and, further, "that it was unwise to give fisheries and customs officials in general so strong a hint that they can win favor at Ottawa only by dealing in the harshest spirit with visiting fishermen." Now, every one regrets the indiscretion which led to the removal of Mr. Ross, but it was an indiscretion of the gravest nature, which might have been easily avoided by simply telegraphing to the head of department, and in the present temper of the American Government and a large section of the American people, it was a necessity to emphatically repudiate an action especially likely to be seized upon and construed into a precedent. As far as the *Globe* is concerned, its creed may be summed up in very few words:—"Lie down quietly, and let the United States walk over you at their sweet will, and don't presume to remonstrate if they dig their heels into you pretty sharply in the process." The last count of the *Globe's* indictment is in the worst spirit of man and superfluous insinuation."

The case of the Isle of Man as that of an independent legislature within the autonomy of the British Isles does not seem to have occurred to speculators on Federation. It is but a small instance, it is true, but the Island is practically entirely uninterfered with by the British Parliament, and has governed itself in peace and tranquility since 1765, when the feudal sovereignty was purchased by the British Government.

Notwithstanding the strong hold M. de Lesseps has upon the purse strings of France, as well as some on the national spirit, we believe the situation of the Panama Canal Shareholders comes to this—that they may possibly struggle on for a year or two by a slow sale of bonds, just keeping the works going without much real advance. If the great war breaks out suspension of operations is certain and failure inevitable, but there is a possible alternative in a sale to the Americans, who would be likely enough to buy them out for a sum down, and perhaps a right to some rate of interest when the works succeed. It is more than probable that the United States who are already willing to spend twenty millions on a rival and inferior canal and who scarcely know what to do with their surplus, would be willing to close a bargain of no small importance to the Pacific States of the Union.

There has for the last two or three years been no end to the advocacy of mercy to the birds of every sort and description all over the globe which are yearly sacrificed, often with ruthless barbarity, to the rage of fashion. Appeals have been made to modistes, both male and female, on the part of the Press, and on the part of humane associations, and it is sad to learn—though the fact is highly honorable to those persons—that they have in many instances attempted in vain to aid humanity. One man milliner, approached by a *Pall Mall Gazette* representative, went the length of seriously injuring his business before he was forced to abandon his benevolent efforts. But the women who choose to adorn their head-gear with the bodies, heads and wings of the hapless birds, stop their ears and steel their minds until no conclusion can be reached but that, where fashion is concerned, the female heart is as hard as the nether millstone.

Canada is daily becoming better known and appreciated in the old countries. Nothing shows this more than appreciation of some social usage, a matter in which English people are supposed to be particularly conservative. The *Lady*, a high class London ladies' paper, has the following:—"There is a pleasant New Year's custom in Canada, which, it seems to us, might be advantageously adopted by Englishmen. On the first two or three days of the New Year, the lady of the house is at home to all her husband's friends, who, not having been able to call on her ordinary reception days, come with the New Year to offer the season's congratulations, and are received with simple hospitality. In this way friendships that might otherwise lapse are kept up, and causes that may have produced temporary estrangement are passed over. The effect of this custom in Canadian towns is very curious, for during the first days of the New Year hardly any ladies are to be seen out, while the streets are full of men hurrying from house to house to fulfil the important function."

For some years, in common with many other Canadian papers of every shade of political opinion, we have urged upon the Government that in the interests of our people—especially of our business men—the Dominion rates of postage should be assimilated to those of the United States. Repeated representations have, however, we regret to say, been without effect. When the announcement was made, a fortnight ago, that Hon. John Haggart had accepted the portfolio of Postmaster-General, it was received with pleasure, as he is regarded as a progressive man, who would favor all reforms that would tend to improve the efficiency of his department, and its usefulness and acceptability to the public. This feeling was apparently confirmed when the telegram further stated that the new minister had decided to recommend to Parliament the reduction in letter rates to two cents, and the increase of a single-letter rate to one ounce instead of a half-ounce. It now appears that the hopes thus raised are not to be realised, that Mr. Haggart will not recommend the change, and that we are to continue to lag behind the United States and Great Britain in our postal rates. We believe that it would pay the country through increased business, and the postal department through augmented receipts, to gracefully yield the reform demanded by the people.

Insufficiently prepaid letters, especially those for points within Canada, should be forwarded to their addresses, if any portion of the postage is paid in advance, and the difference collected from the recipients. To meet such cases, unpaid letter stamps should be provided. We know of many cases wherein more or less important letters mailed to settlements barely beyond the limits of this city have been prepaid one cent instead of three. Though this has evidently been done in ignorance or through inadvertance, even where such letters were addressed to well-known business citizens who happened to be living at their suburban residences, they are sent to the dead-letter office, whence, after the lapse of about a month, a notification is received that such letter was there, and would be sent on upon the receipt of two cents. Besides the great inconvenience, and sometimes loss, arising from this stupid method, it seems impossible to instil into the official mind that the gain to the department in transporting such letters to Ottawa and back, must be infinitesimally small when the cost of this intelligent operation is taken from the two cents collected. The dead-letter office, as now arranged and administered, is an unmitigated nuisance to the public, and must be also to the department. It should be only for the care of improperly directed letters supposed to have valuable contents.