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## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

A PROMINENT chemist, of Elmira, N. Y., states in the *Advertiser* of that city, that he had lately been led to think that even the higher grades of cigarettes contained opium. He, therefore, collected by purchase of reputable dealers, a dozen packages of the most prominent and high-priced cigarettes to be had, which he forwarded to a Pittsburg chemist for analysis. The considerable quantity of opium in all the standard brands was astounding. The universally recognized bondage resulting from the use of opium in any form or degree, especially by smoking or absorption, renders the murderous design of the admixture and the sharp lesson to be learned terribly plain.

A FEW weeks ago a Chinaman, resident in Toronto, had fallen a prey to the terrible scourge of his nation, the opium habit. He was so completely shattered that scarcely any hope of his recovery could be entertained. It is now stated that others of his countrymen are following his bad example, and that the evil habit is extending among the Chinese laundrymen in the city. Hitherto, as a class, they have been regarded as industrious and inoffensive. Many of them attend a class for religious instruction, conducted by Christian workers. Most of the Chinese in Toronto still maintain a good reputation, and those addicted to opium are the exceptions. If opium dens find a lodgment in Canada, it will not only be a calamity for the Mongolians, but it will have an injurious effect on others. In American cities, where opium joints have been permitted, other customers besides Chinese were found patronizing them. It is hoped that effective measures will be taken to nip the evil in the bud, both for the sake of the strangers who have taken up their residence in our midst, and for preventing the outbreak of a moral pestilence.

It is simply surprising that confidence sharpers so frequently ply their oft-exposed game on unwary travellers. It is no less surprising that there should be so many unwary travellers. Scarcely a week passes without the papers telling of some stranger who had been met at a railway station or approached on a train by a plausible and smooth-spoken tramp out of uniform, to whom the unsuspecting stranger takes kindly and talks freely. At the right moment when the stranger has reached the proper degree of consistency, the sharper recollects that he has a charge to pay instantly, but unfortunately at the moment he has only a check for about twice the amount which he will at once exchange with the stranger for ready cash. The latter, with the degree of primitive innocence he retains, completes the transaction by handing over his hard earned money. The friendship, hastily formed, ends with equal abruptness, and the duped victim generally years for one more glimpse of his vanished friend. In general there is but little pity for the poor victim, because he should have known better, but there is much indignation against the scoundrels who so persistently ply the confidence game.

RUPTURE between France and China is complete. Diplomacy has done its utmost. French aggression in Tonquin has provoked resentment. The affair at Lang Son was a slap in the face of French honour. It was more than could be endured. A large indemnity was demanded. French war vessels hovered near Foo Chow. Meanwhile unsatisfactory negotiations were proceeding in the direction of war, not of peace. China was willing to submit the differences to the adjustment of a neutral arbiter. The President of the United States was named. France insisted on the indemnity, and was willing to make a reduction in the amount, but on this point China was inflexible. Then came the attack on Keelung, which did no good. It failed to benefit the French position, and added exasperation to the Chinese. Then came threats and counter threats, fruitless attempts to reach an understanding, the interchange of farewells and the breaking up of diplomatic relations, and the first stages of a war the end of which it may be difficult to anticipate. It may

be only a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. It may disappear speedily, and it may by complication reach large proportions, and lead to unlooked for results. We are deeply interested as to what may befall our promising mission in Formosa.

GROVER CLEVELAND, the Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States, has at length issued his letter of acceptance. Unlike the elaborate manifesto of his Republican rival, it does not enter into a minute discussion of political questions, but deals plainly and directly with a few general principles, to whose maintenance he pledges himself. He asserts that party government is a necessity in accordance with the principles of the constitution. He is of opinion that when a political party makes the obtaining and retention of office its chief object it ceases to do the proper work for which it was organized, and falls in carrying out the idea of popular government. Another good point in Governor Cleveland's letter of acceptance is the reference to the duty of civil servants. The employment of those engaged in the public service in electioneering, and in compelling them to make forced contributions to election expenses has been a crying evil in United States politics for many years past. A reform of this glaring abuse is demanded, and the Democratic candidate promises to effect it. Benjamin Butler is now fairly out as a candidate for the presidency. He is simply in the field as a disturbing element. He went to Chicago hoping to receive the nomination at the Democratic convention, but having failed he seems bent on doing all the harm to the party he can.

EVEN the most humane and charitably disposed can no longer doubt that the lives of several survivors of the Greely expedition were sustained by a resort to cannibalism. No one seems to judge too harshly the men who were reduced to the direst straits, exposed to terrible privations, brought face to face with death in one of its most appalling forms. It is generally considered that the men's misfortune was greater than their crime. When the proper time comes when a full investigation into the circumstances has been held and all the facts made known, an opportunity will be afforded for forming a just estimate of the tragic ending of the exploring party. Efforts to justify cannibalism in defence of the survivors seem altogether unnecessary and unwarranted. Under all circumstances it is horrible and revolting. A thorough and exhaustive investigation ought to comprehend more than the actual facts relating to the sufferings and desperation of the Greely expedition. It ought to be known if proper precautions had been taken to prevent the awful calamities by which they were overtaken, and if the expedition sent a year ago for their relief did all that could be done to rescue the missing explorers. The terrible experiences gained in hazardous experiments through years of arctic exploration should have taught the lesson that no possible contingency ought to have been unprovided for.

THE Rev. T. Nicol, B. D., of the Tolbooth Church, Edinburgh, who was lately in Smyrna, gives a graphic description of his visit to the Jewish quarter: It lies well up the broad slope on which the city is built; and although most of the houses look poor, in respect of cleanliness and comfort they compare favourably, both inside and outside, with the houses of the other quarters. The Sabbath was being religiously observed. Parents and children were gathered round the doorstep, or on the terraces of the houses, in that bond of family life which has always been so strong and wholesome among the Jewish people. The men were at leisure from toil, as all work is forbidden. The women were free from household cares, their cleaning and cooking for the Sabbath having all been got through the day before. Even the men may not smoke, as it is not lawful to light a fire on the Sabbath day! There was an air of cheerfulness over all, which was as far as possible from the heaviness and gloom said to belong to the Jewish Sabbath, and the stillness throughout the quarter reminded one of Sab-

bath in a quite Scottish village at home. In the synagogue there was an utter absence of devoutness or even reverence. The rabbi was intoning in Hebrew the prescribed Scripture portion, and when he ceased his little boy took up the lesson and read with great fluency in a shrill treble, some of the older people humming the words after him. As a religious exercise the whole performance seemed heartless and unmeaning.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Times*, who has had an interview with Mr. Stanley, gives an interesting account of the explorer's views as to the future of the Congo. He says that Mr. Stanley assured him that the ends which the African Association have in view have so far been accomplished with complete success. He encourages every means of developing the trade and resources of the country. He would give every encouragement to small traders, who, with a modest capital, had enterprise enough to quit the lower river, and establish themselves at the upper stations. A very profitable business could be done by such traders, and he would do all in his power to assist them. Mr. Stanley scouts the idea that Africa is the most hopeless and barren of the continents, and he has seen a good deal of it. The Congo region at least, he maintains, is one of the most fertile on the globe. We are usually told by those who take a pessimistic view of Africa that ivory, gum and oil are the only products of any consequence, and that the first will be exhausted in a few years. Mr. Stanley says that ivory will last for generations yet; that gum and oil alone give an ample field for trade. All along the 1,000 miles of the middle and upper Congo, the banks are crowded with oil palms, "and," said he, "divide that 1,000 by forty-two, and it will give you some idea of what you may expect the Congo to produce." Bananas, oranges and other fruits have been cultivated with complete success. Mr. Stanley considers himself perfectly justified in maintaining that the native products themselves are varied and inexhaustible, and that the country is capable of unlimited agricultural development. Mr. Stanley maintains that, apart from a little risk of fever when passing up the mouth of the river, there is no reason why white men should not enjoy as good health in Africa as in England.

THE nationalist agitation in Ireland is largely supported by the Irish in America. Were it not for the excitement kept up by a class of designing politicians, and the large amount of money they succeed in securing, the native organization would not possess the power it does. The Irish in America are the only people who keep up an incessant agitation in the affairs of the land they have left. The Germans, Scandinavians and all other races, while not ceasing to think kindly of their native land, pursue the peaceful pursuits of industry and become attached to the land of their adoption. The recent convention held in Boston at which Sexton made an inflammatory speech, is no wise different from similar meetings held from time to time. The same fire-and-fury-breathing spirit characterized much of the speaking, and the usual vigorous resolutions were duly passed. Perhaps the most noted, though by no means novel, feature of the convention was the presence of Mr. Parnell's mother. The employment and parade of the good old lady is all very well, but there is a keen eye to business in the whole affair. It is stated that she held a conference in Boston with a number of Catholic Bishops and leaders of the Irish League, concerning the means by which the coming political contest in this country can be turned to the advancement of Ireland's cause. It is understood that Mrs. Parnell represented her son. His proposition was that an offer be submitted to the Republican and Democratic parties that the one that will incorporate a plank in the platform in favour of admitting goods of Irish manufacture free of duty, specifying such goods as cannot be manufactured elsewhere than in Ireland, and the importation of which will compete with goods of American production, shall secure the organized support of the Irish-American vote. Mrs. Parnell then went to New York to take preliminary steps towards the organization of Irish interests. It is but fair to add that Mrs. Parnell has since come out with a disclaimer.