

inspector, who will look the matter up. It is not an engaging inquisitiveness; some of the children are very precocious, witty and wicked, and abuse is to be anticipated—when their “farmers” strike in. Some children give their address: the top of the Eiffel Tower; the Catacombs, the Elysee Palace, and the old Exhibition Buildings.

Whether it pleases the Russians or not, the French farmers insist on their deputies raising the duty from 50 to 80 francs per ton on imported grain, etc.; wine will also be taxed more—that, Spain of course will resent. The small cultivator in France is to be pitied; he can make nothing out of his bit of ground; he sends his children to the cities to seek work—no matter at what; they find also some occupation for their parents, who abandon the land—so escape the tax as being uncultivated—and soon find town life the speediest road to the grave. Old people who cannot secure a crust to earn, and who will not beg, after exhausting all means to exist, devote their last sous to buy a pan of charcoal, and so sleep well after life's fitful fever. And food is to be made dearer, when work is shrinking, commerce contracting and the business world's at their wits' end. The number of shops quietly putting up the shutters for good is suspiciously increasing.

The anarchists remain collectively still. Is it the calm before the storm? The new law, however, makes it very difficult to indulge in any kind of political high jinks, whether by vociferation or fulminating prose. Disciples of Vaillant's notions, or curious excursionists, continue to visit the grave of the guillotined: place some floral tribute and a few stanzas thereon, and retire satisfied. There were hands to deposit flowers even on Nero's tomb. However, the Government intends to put a stop to these “floral games.” The nut-meg grater plan of dealing with the anarchists is not the worst. The Rev. M. Loyson has had his say on the socialists, who form the training school for the anarchists; he accuses them of adopting civil baptism, and may it be said, the “cult” of atheism. Both are unhappy phases of our civilization, but not at all new, and are destined to live as long as Christianity itself—“Old Catholicism” included. The great attractions about civil baptisms are the lollypops distributed during the ceremony; the babies come in nurseries full; some mothers manage to have their doxy several times saccharinely received into—no church; small boys are also demanding to be re-christened.

The civil marriages are far more interesting; they can be as plain or as gorgeous as—a funeral; they can be full choral and instrumental, or partly so; they can be horticultural and floricultural, with carpets, etc., all is a question of price. What is new is the fashion to address suitable compliments to the young folks—or otherwise, and to the bridal party, by professional elocutionists, who can be hired for the occasion, just as a marquis or a count can be engaged for a dinner party to keep the table in a roar. Civil marriages naturally engender civil baptisms, with or without the sugaries.

Deputy Wilson, son-in-law of the late President Grevy, and grand dispenser of decorations, etc., took an action against one of his recalcitrant constituents for attempting to black-mail, and so injure his “reputation”; as counsel said, he buys to-day what he sold yesterday. He was laughed out of court; the jury acquitted the defendant, and ranked the action as an unseemly political joke! “Thou hast wished it, George Dandin.”

The pitcher going to the well is smashed at last. The terrible Bonapartist financier, Baron de Soubeyran, has arrived in jail. Mires, Jecker, de Morny, were only babes compared with his dabbling with millions; he would not hesitate to play pitch-and-toss with the total national debt of France. Millions, rather than millions, were his counters. He was director of nearly every important company in France. Of late he was known to be gambling—on 'Change, rather wildly. The late Baron Rothschild said, what interested him financially was, not the hearing of people making money, but of their losing it. Now the losses of M. de Soubeyran may not be more than 17 millions frs.—a mere flea-bite in his eyes. He was a man of extraordinary ability—a Jew of course. He founded enterprise upon enterprise, merely to sell out when the shares rose. But he could not administer, he had no patience—it was organization, in that quality, lay the superiority of the Pereires. He speculated in the financial resuscitation of Egypt—and sees it is realized now. At one time he led the whole financial world of Paris by the nose. Happily, his liabilities will wholly fall on wealthy bankers—small financiers he would hardly look at.

The circus has its dynasty in the Franconis, as the guillotine had its race in the Sansons. The menageries have their dynasty in the Pezon family. All these family trees intermarry—they are Israelitish gypsies. The right line heir of the Pezon dynasty has just married his cousin; the wedding was postponed to allow the young man's arms to be healed, after being torn by one of his performing eight lions, in whose den he made himself “at home” rather too freely; on the day of the ceremony he gave all the animals a day's rest, and double rations; the dishes at the banquet were named after the inmates of his show—fillet of lion, bears' paws and truffles, panther ham, snake pie, tiger beef-steak, etc. There was a new liqueur—“crocodiles' tears,” not shed directly from the animal, but distilled. The bridal chamber is covered with the skins of all animals which died in the service. Pezon keeps his carriage, and has half a million francs invested in his three shows.

The commercial treaty just signed between Russia and Germany is the best of alliances and the truest pledge of peace. So for ten years Europe has the prospect of being able to sleep on both ears, and to dream of battle fields no more. Between the two governments there is autocratic sympathy as well as sovereign kinship. As for the Franco-Russian alliance, the feeling is extending that none such exists. Indeed cultured people in France never attached much belief to that strange combination as a working factor in every-day political life. In case of war, no nation is particular about allies, so long as they can fight; any wood is good enough to make arrows with when ore has none. The Russo-German treaty is based on the best of principles, that of mutual self-interest; sentimental alliances are but day-dreams and political toys. Since the union of the two great empires, the tone of a certain section of the French press is happily less fee-faw-fumish towards England and Italy—not that it ever did, the former power especially, any harm, save to force her to take stock of her defensive resources, and to adopt measures to keep her naval strength up to date—the future included.

Although the cabmen of Paris have large purses and generally well filled, they are

rarely the victims of pickpockets. A “lady,” fashionably dressed, and boasting to be engaged in mission work, hailed a cab; after giving an address and paying with a five franc piece the fare, she received change from the cabbie, and noted the pocket into which he replaced his bulky purse; then she entered the vehicle, pulled down the blinds, save one of the windows in front, through which she reached the driver's pocket, and extracting his purse, handed it to a pal who had continued running beside the door of the vehicle. Cabbie suspected, felt for his purse, it was gone, and the pal also; he descended from his seat after calling a policeman, and handed over the *élégante* to his care.

California is famous for its big trees; the “Daughters of the American Revolution” are about planting in Frisco a tree of Liberty; as none of the latter genus exists now in France, no cutting could be obtained; but they were authorized by the French Government to take a pinch of soil from around the tomb of Lafayette in the Picpus cemetery to add to that in which the tree will be planted. The Daughters forget, that very soil, was contributed by the emancipated States of America. A pinch from Hampden's grave, or from that of Beaumarchais, who “ran” commercially, the war of Independence, would have been better.

The bomb thrown in the cafe Leminus, is not considered to be the work of an anarchist, but of a madman. It is the first time the distinction has been made. To avoid mistakes, it is proposed to send him to the guillotine as swiftly as he throws the bomb. Deibler, the executioner, is in a fair way of making a fortune; business is thus not wholly bad. The bomb epidemic is forcing people to keep at home; man is ceasing to be gregarious. Z.

## VIEWS OF CANADIAN LITERATURE.

While preparing the programme for the Canadian Literature Evening, held at Victoria University, Toronto, on Feb. 9, 1894, I asked a number of Canadian authors to give me their views on the present state and outlook for the future of our literature. Mr. Chas. Mair, author of “Tecumseh,” kindly gave me permission to publish his contribution, which, I think, will be of interest to the readers of THE WEEK, and Mr. Le Moine's short essay on French literature in Canada will also be found to be very instructive as well as interesting. Mr. Mair's reply is as follows:

“By the term Literature you mean, of course, poetry: that imaginative and creative form of literary effort, which, by the common consent of mankind, stands at the head of letters. There is no dispute about its place; it holds it by right, and all men, gentle and simple, learned and unlearned, alike feel that it is the touchstone of a nation's intellectual eminence. It is bootless to enquire what it is. Such inquiries have been thrown into literary form by thousands of writers, but all definitions fail. Matthew Arnold calls it a ‘criticism of life.’ He might as well have called it life itself, for it is instinct with life, with life's mystery and the mystery of its environment. It is the art which informs all other, the art which exercises the highest function amongst the various purposes which art fulfils. For, however effective, but prosaic a side a plastic artist's work may assume, in the long run its success will depend upon its poetic quality, which is in unalterable proportion to the quality of the artist's mind.