

The Lenten breathing space from the exactions of social gaiety is at its close. Easter Sunday falls this year within four days of the latest date at which it can occur. This is perhaps an advantage, as, when social enjoyments resume their sway, the season will be well advanced, and the weather will probably be more genial, and more likely to be settled than if it fell earlier.

After effectually pulverizing poor old Halifax, the *Ottawa Evening Journal* "goes for" St. John without gloves after this fashion:—"The pretensions of St. John are, if anything, more ludicrous. St. John, which is in New Brunswick, has just annexed a district called Portland, the united populations of the two territories being placed at 44,000 by sanguine St. John statisticians. The next census will doubtless show about 10,000 less, as good railway communication with the civilized world has been accidentally established, and the place has nothing except newspapers to recommend it to anybody who can scrape up enough money to move away. And yet even St. John pretensions to national importance become tolerable contrasted with Hamilton's."

The question of convict labor is a difficult one, but any outcry or demonstration about it is to be deprecated. The prison authorities of New York have had some trying experience in the matter. The State had failed to make adequate provision for employment, and it was soon found that idleness not only increased the difficulty of maintaining discipline, but operated to intensify moral degradation, and to weaken such mental powers as the criminal classes possess. The medical authority of Sing Sing states that under a system of steady employment prisoners insensibly fall into habits of labor, develop strength and vitality, and acquire knowledge of trades and habits of discipline. The cessation of work reverses all these considerations, which are of the most material aid in managing convicts, and leads to physical and moral deterioration, and even tends to the development of insanity.

Dr. Goldwin Smith's letter to the *Times*, to which we briefly referred last week, turns out, on perusal, to be even more deplorable than we should have imagined. According to this past master of pessimism, the flower of our population is in a state of perpetual exodus—flying from the Canadian tariff to the higher tariff of the United States; our Government, which, after all, is the free choice of intelligent electors, he declares to exist only by bribery; our trade is in a state of atrophy; our farms are decreasing in value; and our great trans-continental railway he depicts as strangling settlement, instead of having created it. The general body of the electors the "Professor of Fiction"—as he is well dubbed by a contemporary—describes as slaves of a corrupt venality, and he further proceeds to insult them by attributing to them a "good deal" of annexation feeling. The Professor is bound to verify his prophecy if by any means he can, and that he is not particular as to the means this dishonorable letter is sufficient proof. The lengths to which he has now gone, will, however, no doubt, provoke a reply from some competent pen in the same journal in which the Professor's jeremiad has found space, or at all events in some equally efficient medium of publicity.

The City Council has decided to grant \$3,000 in aid of the Summer Carnival. The sum is not large, but as the money has to be borrowed, it is, we are bound to suppose, as much as the Council could see their way to. No doubt general subscriptions will be on a liberal scale as befits the importance of the object, to which every one ought to contribute in one way or other to the utmost of his ability. Sir John Ross, with the public spirit which distinguishes him, has promised his aid, and we hear on all hands that Admiral Watson is a genial officer, who will also be sure to do his part. Some of the promoters of the festival are, we believe, desirous of bringing into Halifax the whole Militia of Nova Scotia. The expense of this, however, would be enormous, and, considering how full of recruits, under the alternate years drill, are the ranks of the Provincial Militia, as well as for other reasons, it would be highly inexpedient. But the objections would not apply to the selection of a good company or so from each rural battalion—enough to make up an additional battalion in Halifax—and the Kings County Troop of Cavalry, which is a credit to the Province. This reinforcement, with the three excellent Halifax Battalions, would constitute a fair show of Militia, and, as every possible attraction ought to be got together, a general Band Tournament of all the bands in the Province would be in order.

A correspondent of that able journal, the *Chicago Canadian American*, has, in a communication about the North-West generally, the following, which seems worth reproducing:—"I often think that the Riel rebellion was sent for a very wise purpose. It exploded a mine of subtle work so prematurely as to spare the world around and hoist the engineer. Now we have a British Province. Granted a few years more of quiet work and Ontario would have been uncomfortably sandwiched between Quebec on the East, and the land of the Metis, on the West, to be generously swallowed when lunch time arrived. As it is, the great North-West is becoming a power in itself, and conferring upon the older Provinces the inestimable gift of good government and cheap land." But we are a little surprised to find the *Week*, in an editorial note, apropos of a gloomy picture of Canada recently drawn by Mr. Davies in an oration at Toronto, admitting "that the increase of population, both in the older Provinces and in the North-West, during the last decade, has fallen far below what seemed reasonable expectation." Leaving "the older Provinces" out of the question, we are unable to subscribe to the dictum as to the North-West. The population given in guide books of the now numerous and flourishing towns along the line of the C. P. R. seems very satisfactory to those who, fifteen years ago, marched from the Red River to the base of the Rockies, through 800 miles of an absolute solitude of wilderness.

It is a pity that the rivalries of the rising cities of the Dominion are not more friendly in tone, and moderate in the estimation of their several claims and advantages than they are. Even that excellent paper the *St. John Evening Gazette* waxed wroth over the undertaking to build the Harvey-Salisbury Line, and complains bitterly of a number of things which it conceives have been done "to please Halifax." We cannot enumerate them, but one is stated to be the carrying round of the Intercolonial by the North Shore, a device which is certainly anything but pleasing to Halifax, and it is a new light to Halifaxians to be told that the Government is "wedded" to Halifax. Without being in the least jealous of the enterprise of St. John, which, on the contrary, we regard with sincere satisfaction, or having the least desire to depreciate her advantages, it is impossible not to acknowledge the immense superiority of Halifax as a harbor, and as the port which, summer and winter, it is due to the Dominion should be the point of arrival and departure of a fast and regular line of steamers, and every mile by which her distance from Montreal can be shortened is so much gain. It is much to be deplored that it seems to have been practically impossible to compel the C. P. R. to build the line, and that, consequently, an additional burthen will be laid on the country, but we cannot but be glad that the line will be built by any means.

Professor Goldwin Smith in his now notorious letter to the *Times* vexes his spirit over the oppression of compelling, by the Tariff, the N. W. settler to purchase his farm implements, etc., from the factories of Eastern Canada, instead of buying them from the market close at hand. This market, it appears, is Minnesota. As a matter of fact, Winnipeg is a much nearer market than St. Paul or Minneapolis, and the implements, &c., are not made in either place, but brought to both from distant factories. As to the "cruelty" of the system, these articles are much cheaper in the N. W. than they were, and cheaper than they now are to the settlers of the neighboring parts of the United States. Side by side with this contention, however, Mr. Goldwin Smith affirms the inconsistent pretence that there is no inter-provincial trade. The Professor seems to find himself obliged to admit that "the day of political union with the American Republic, though sure to come, may be distant," and pretends that he at present aims only at Commercial annexation. But we all know what that would mean, and it is evident that his most dearly cherished idea is the absorption of the Dominion by the United States. We imagine, however, that Mr. Goldwin Smith is pretty well played out on the ignominious lines of his peculiar aspirations. The letter to the *Times* will probably put a finishing touch to the estimation in which he will be held in Canada.

The following statistics taken from *Bradstreets* show that the amount of bituminous coal being imported from the United States is largely on the increase, as is also the importation of anthracite. The value of the bituminous coal imported in 1887 was \$3,156,127, in 1888 \$3,485,703, an increase of \$329,576. Anthracite coal to the value of \$4,127,673 was imported in 1887, and in 1888 \$5,286,120, an increase of \$1,158,447. The increased importation of anthracite coal is undoubtedly owing to the removal of the duty on that article, but the increased importation of bituminous arises from other causes, and if a remedy is not provided, the coal trade of this Province with Quebec will be largely curtailed. The Grand Trunk by its new connections has greatly reduced the distance from Montreal to the Ohio coal fields. The consequent reduction on coal freights so far counterbalances the Canadian duty of 60 cents per ton, that Ohio coal now competes with the Nova Scotian article in Montreal. To remedy this the United States duty of 75 cents per ton should be imposed in Canada, and this should be done without delay. It would be a simple act of justice to Nova Scotia, as it will be remembered that the flour duty was imposed to reconcile Ontario to the coal duties. As the duty on anthracite coal was afterwards abolished, mainly in the interests of Ontario, Nova Scotia should be recompensed by an increased duty on bituminous coal. With the duty increased fifteen cents per ton our coal shippers might be able to pay a slightly increased rate over the Intercolonial, and the large deficit in the working of that mismanaged road be overcome.

Apropos to the rivalries of cities, the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, a paper whose articles are generally all that can be desired, seems to have been seized with the desire to institute a crusade against all the secondary cities, apparently for being ahead of Ottawa in population. At first we thought the article was jocular, but it appears, on careful perusal, to be serious, and the *Journal* really appears to grow quite angry over it. Halifax, St. John and Hamilton are the particular objects of wrath. Our own city comes in for the first burst of objurgation as follows:—"For fourth place, the rivalry grows interesting, because although Ottawa is far and away the fourth most important place in the country, some inconsequential towns known as Halifax, Hamilton and St. John, which make up its effrontery for what they lack in respectability, are pretending to have claims to attention equal to those of Ottawa. It is difficult to decide which of the three contentions is most preposterous. Halifax, a bleak settlement on the coast of Nova Scotia, is principally a supply station for British ships and soldiers. So far is it from being a desirable place that people who do not swear say 'Go to Halifax,' as a synonym to express the utmost disregard of the welfare of the person they address. The population of Halifax at the last census was about 37,000. No doubt it has greatly decreased since, and not even Halifax impudence would venture to compare the place with Ottawa, but that a village named Dartmouth lying adjacent to Halifax has a population of four or five thousand which the larger town has an idea of annexing, and thus repairing its probable losses of late years. But with or without Dartmouth we dismiss the contention of Halifax as really unworthy of serious notice." And so poor Halifax is summarily disposed of.