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EDITORIAL NOTES.

The death of the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, ex-Premier of the Dominion of Canada, will be regretted alike by political friend and opponent. Mackenzie was a man of strong Scotch characteristics. He was at once an upright, honest and obstinate man, but throughout his long public life he proved himself a true patriot, a shrewd administrator and a kind friend. The ex-Premier leaves behind him an unsullied name and a creditable public record.

Not a few of the impolitic and remarkable speeches and acts of young Kaiser William may be condoned, now that it is known that for months an aching ear has kept him in such agony that no sleep has been obtained without the use of drugs. The many eminent surgeons who have attended him regret that, in this case, their skill avails nothing, as the chances are that the necessary operation will either prove fatal or permanently injure his brain. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

The action of Mayor McPherson in refusing to take official cognizance of the accusations made against Charles G. Creelman, Assistant City Assessor, deserves universal commendation. British justice counts a man innocent until he is proved guilty, and, as the matter is now before the court, it would seem like kicking a man when he is down to hastily dismiss or suspend Mr. Creelman from office. If innocent, such action would be regretted; if guilty, official decapitation will follow as a matter of course.

Private O'Grady, of the 2nd Welsh Regiment, has "put his foot in it." On St. Patrick's Day this valiant son of Erin appeared on parade with a shamrock jauntily stuck in his Glengarry. His colonel, who naively states that he was not aware of the significance of the emblem, ordered him to remove so irregular a decoration. O'Grady refused, and was punished for his insubordination with forty-eight hours hard labor. The case, rather similar to the classical tempest in a tea-pot, is now before the British House of Commons.

The question, so often agitated, again arises as to which of the great commercial nations of the world shall possess the Sandwich Islands. When the great Nicaragua canal is completed these barren rocks, thrust up in mid-ocean, situated as they will be in the track of all shipping, will be a regular port-of-call, and an invaluable possession in case of war. Great Britain already has her mind made up for them, and they certainly would

greatly strengthen her maritime power. Germany and France also have a claim, but the contestant who seems to have "nine points" in its favor and the geographical right is the United States.

The proposed Nicaraguan canal has frightened away the last supporter of M. de Lesseps' canal through Panama. The New York Chamber of Commerce and such public-spirited men as Mr. Warner Miller and Andrew Carnegie avow themselves willing to aid the enterprise. The movement will be popular with both Congress and Senate. The chief fear is that a magnificent vista of government boodling will arise before the corporation who take the work in hand. The canal would be a boon to commerce—a protection to our seafaring brothers, who would be spared the long and often stormy voyage around the Horn—and revolutionize the railroad traffic of the Continent.

The American House of Representatives has broken the treaty of 1880 with China. That treaty provided for the freedom of all Chinese travellers, merchants and students, to come and go as they pleased to all parts of the United States. The bill now before the Senate excludes Chinese from the West for all time. The political considerations which, unfortunately, may have influenced the House of Representatives should not weigh with the Senate, and amendments to allow Celestials of the classes mentioned free entry, even though Chinese labor be excluded, should be made. Let us look well to our Canadian honor and hospitality when a similar question arises on our side of the line.

Look at it as we may, from the standpoints of necessity or expediency, the proposed increase of coal royalties in Nova Scotia is a direct blow aimed at one of our largest and most important industries. Supposing the increase to be legitimate, it means that the coal companies have to continue operations upon a very small margin of profit or that the wages of the colliers will have to be reduced. The government that leased these mines upon certain royalties for a term of years has no right during the life of such lease to increase these royalties, unless they are desirous of killing enterprise and hindering the development of the country. What guarantees have investors that new necessities will not cause a still further increase in the royalties.

From Moscow comes the wail of woe! In all the country districts of the south and east of Russia the severest sufferings are being endured. The virulent grippe and the famine-fever are finding ready victims in the hunger-stricken people. The Government is making a desperate, though delayed, effort for the benefit of the masses. Of the thirty million distressed inhabitants one-half are living on Government aid. In order to convey grain to the interior the railways for the past ten weeks have been closed to trade, and exist only to obey the will of the Czar. As a consequence the mills and factories needing coal are closed, and the trade of the cities is severely strjared—actually, instead of alleviating the destitute, new misery has been created.

There has been so much condescending palaver over "little Chili" of late that the public seem quite to have overlooked the important and characteristic business of the combative little republic. The nitrate fields of Chili (which, by the way, were coolly appropriated from Peru) are almost unequalled in the world. The barren regions near Iquique are especially rich in their stored treasures. The export of nitrate of soda, more commonly known as Chili salt-petre, for last year was no less than a million of tons. The salt-petre is used extensively in the manufacture of gun-powder, giant powder and kindred explosives, and in some localities it is found to act as an excellent fertilizer. The money value of last year's export is estimated at thirty-five millions of dollars. Let us speak patriotizingly of "little Chili" no longer.

A bill to abolish capital punishment is now before the N. Y. Legislature. This bill, so nearly passed two years ago, was amended so as to exclude death by hanging and to substitute the electric chair. Statistics are brought forward from various European nations to prove that the abolition, or practical disuse, of capital punishment has lessened the tendency to crime. It is to be hoped sincerely that the bill will pass in its entirety, and that a similar law may before long be enforced in Canada. Although the supporters of capital punishment claim that the lynchings of frontier life are a demonstration of the belief of the people in the death penalty, it is well to remember that the communities in which lynch-law is practiced are not the intelligent communities of the more settled regions. The conviction of the unexcited people should (gravely considered) be the potent weight with legislators.