

A recent decision in an English assize court will be comforting to some of our hot-tempered friends. The prisoner had struck the plaintiff a blow in the face because the plaintiff had called him a liar. The jury was charged to the effect that retaliation under the circumstances was justifiable, although, as the judge added naively: "I may be giving you new law based on common sense." The jury were of one mind in discharging the prisoner.

A railroad journey on the Panama line seems to be not an unmitigated delight. The conductor, with a pistol in his belt, demands a fare of \$24.00 for the trip of 44 miles. The scenery along the road consists of alligator swamps, forests, from which screaming vultures arise, and occasional settlements of Chinese and negro huts. There are no stations along the line, but the adventurous traveller may be literally "dropped off" if he so desires. A proverb has grown up about the ill-fated isthmus that is distressfully suggestive—"Open your eyes but pinch your nostrils." An investigation as to the nature of the country shows that fevers, agues and malarial diseases abound, the death rate in the hospital being 76 per cent, and it is well known that the sleepers laid down in building the railway meant the death of a corresponding number of workmen. After all, the ocean trip around South America would seem to be far preferable.

It appears that Canada has not been the only retreat of swindling and absconding citizens of the United States. Those who reach us are chiefly of the bank clerk or professional sharper varieties, and sooner or later they find their level. Mexico has of late years been the refuge of criminals escaping justice—murderers, lynchings, and the like have crossed the border line and remained in the little Republic, to the great discomfort of the more correct living citizens. A formal complaint has now been made by President Diaz to the American Government, asking that the disgraceful immigration shall be checked by the proper authorities. The Secretary of War for the United States has ordered more troops along the Rio Grande, in order to protect the most travelled portions of the border, but it is practically impossible to keep out the objectionable class in this way. It is hoped that a diplomatic settlement of the question will be arrived at.

Dr. Douglas, the veteran Methodist leader, is making an appeal to the Canadian people to obtain better laws for the protection of the young girls of our Dominion. At the present time every girl is protected until she reaches the age of sixteen, and if she be a heiress there is further legislation to prevent any interference with her person or property until she has attained her twenty-first year, while for girls over sixteen not prospectively possessed of property, there is no Government guardianship. Dr. Douglas claims justly that this is a "shameless discrimination" between the rich and poor of the land, and that the poor girl being, as a rule, less protected by her natural guardian should be doubly protected by the Government. He asks, however, only that the legislation which protects the heiress shall be so worded as to include the poorer class of girls. Although many of us disapprove of Dr. Douglas' hot-headed protests against the policy of Sir John Thompson or against Roman Catholics generally, yet we cannot but thoroughly sympathize with him in his effort to secure a needed protection for a most worthy class of young people.

Apropos of the Missing Word Competition prosecution, which has been interesting the British public, an old doctrine of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes is quoted. He says that "the turning point in a boy's career is often the moment when he finds himself face to face with the possibility of getting a dollar in any other way than by squarely earning it." The doctrine is a sound one, and is well worthy of consideration by our citizens, who, if they peruse the advertisements in the backs of magazines, and indulge in the guessing competitions which have been the plague of Xmas shoppers, will realize the temptations which are omnipresent for the less experienced members of the community—not to make money, but to hope that they may make money by risking a trifle. The Missing Word Competitions will soon arrive in Canada, since they have been driven out of England, and we feel it to be our duty to warn our young friends to have nothing to do with them. The suggestive request to enclose stamps for packing, "as fees," should be the warning signal to our young people, unless they are inclined to scatter their pennies to the winds.

The short-sighted and barbarous policy of the Russian Government with regard to the persecution of the Jews is being pushed to an extreme limit. More severe edicts against that unhappy people have seldom been enacted even in the darkest pages of history. Every effort is made to compel them to give up their cherished faith, and the 20,000 who have recanted have been, by order of the Government, removed to a little village five miles from Moscow. They are most vigorously governed in civil as well as ecclesiastical matters by the priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, and are severely punished for any delinquencies. Over 100,000 Jews, who have been driven from Moscow, are established at Lodz in Poland, where they have built up a prosperous manufacturing town, while trade in Moscow has been demoralized by the sudden loss of the most industrious and skillful citizens. No Jews, except those born in Russia, are allowed to remain in the towns, but are driven to barren portions of the vast empire, although the town officials are privileged to accept bribes from those who are most unwilling to move. There are many kinds of work which Jewish laborers are not allowed to do, and stringent laws prevent the assembly of the persecuted people in any but authorized synagogues. It is indeed deplorable that such a state of affairs should exist in this nineteenth century.

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Hundreds of young men flock to California each year, tempted by the glowing pictures which are painted of the prosperous state, but with few exceptions they find that there is no opening for them unless they are well supplied with capital and can engage in manufacturing. A number of energetic young fellows who recently travelled thither, have now journeyed southward to Guatemala, where they mean to establish a colony for the purpose of coffee cultivation. They hope to attract to their settlement many young men who are seeking for openings in life. It is indeed curious that in a Republic of such vast size and resources home openings should not be found; and should the new colony prosper, it may lead to many similar colonies being established, and to the desertion of their country by many of the young and most promising citizens. We trust that the young men of Canada will find fitting openings without straying beyond the bounds of the Dominion.

Fresh complications are continually arising in the affairs of the unfortunate Panama Company. The public have been convinced that the Baron de Reinach did not meet his death by means of poison, although the suspicions of foul play have by no means been lulled. Two officers of the Panama Company died very suddenly during the last week, reminding one not a little of the theatrical custom of ridding the stage of all unnecessary or inconvenient characters before the curtain falls. It is thought that an enquiry into the cause of the two later deaths will shortly be made. Amiel, a celebrated detective, declared before his death that he was offered a large sum of money to murder Dr. Cornelius Herz, and correspondence has been found which justifies belief in the story. The *Fiji* states that a letter-book of the Canal Company has been found which will compromise the characters of many leading men. The letters in question relate to the sale of votes in the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, and in almost every case Dr. Herz is found to be the "go-between," and not a blackmailer, as the directors of the company would fain have the public believe. It is, however, extremely doubtful if the real inwardness of the financial methods of the company is ever known to the public.

General Booth's many detractors are now silenced by the report of the committee appointed to investigate the financial management of his scheme for reclaiming the degraded and poor of darkest England. The General has by no means been appropriating the money given for charitable work to his private purse, but has kept an accurate account of every penny expended. The expert accountants appointed to examine the books state that the accounts are absolutely correct, and that the money received has been expended in the most economical way. General Booth, being hampered by lack of means, has not yet carried out all the projected branches of his great work, but the food depots and shelters have been established, his match factories are at work, the labor registration and intelligence offices are much used by the cut-of-works, improved lodging houses have been built, and the slum sisters have devoted themselves to improving the condition of the worst parts of London. A brigade has been formed to assist discharged prisoners by providing employment and temporary shelter; a travelling hospital has been organized, and the household salvage company is in successful operation. The farm colony at Hadleigh, with its 1600 acres, gives employment to some three hundred laborers, but the over-sea colony which was to relieve the farm colony has not yet been formed. It is hoped that during the coming year the salvation ship may be floated, the inebriates home erected, the training school for domestic servants opened, industrial schools and refuges provided for the street children, and a poor man's bank opened. When we consider the good which the doughty General has already accomplished, the doubts and cavils which he has outlived, we cannot but have faith in the man and his work, and we trust that the year of 1893 will be one in which his philanthropic work will be greatly aided.

If it be true that "there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune," then there is a strong probability that the Republic of France may be overthrown if a popular claimant will but make his appearance at the present crisis. The young Prince of the old régime, who laid down his life fighting for England in the Zulu war, might have regained his hereditary titles and restored to his mother, the beautiful ex-Empress Eugenie, the honors of State which she so gloried in, had he been alive at the present state of affairs. The living representative of the once powerful Bonaparte family is Prince Victor, eldest son of Jerome Bonaparte. Although still a young man, and for the most part a stranger to the people of his nation, yet he maintains a certain popularity. Only last September he issued a most interesting manifesto to the Bonapartist faction, in which he charged his followers to take the side of the humble, the unfortunate and the afflicted, to aid in all schemes for social amelioration, and to respect the spirit of the Great Napoleon, whose institutions are still extant in France, although his form of government has vanished. A picturesque achievement or a witty bon-mot may at any time sweep the exiled Prince into popular favor. Meanwhile, the Monarchist party is strong in numbers. The Comte de Paris has united the powerful factions of the Orleanists and Legitimists, and has transferred his claims to the handsome and popular Duc d'Orleans. The ancient Royal House has always had a large following, and the Comte de Paris and his wife are greatly beloved. During their recent visit to the Republic hundreds flocked to the cities favored by the semi-Royal presence to kiss the hand of the gracious Comtesse. The party, politically speaking, is well organized and thoroughly united. So, after all, La Belle France is not so badly off, since she has two legal heirs to a throne which does not at present exist.

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