

ADULTERATION.—The English legislators and chemists have lately been at a great deal of pains to discover and check the crime of adulterating food and other articles of diet. Most of our readers are doubtless aware of the result of the inquiries instituted a few years ago for the purpose of ascertaining to what extent the adulteration of articles of this kind was carried, and the degree to which the mixing of fictitious with genuine materials might be considered unfavourable to the public health. In the latter respect we apprehend that the result of these enquiries was not alarming. The shams, which were palmed upon the eaters and drinkers of the tight little Island were doubtless often less nourishing, and even less wholesome, than the things which they simulated. But in general they were not noxious, certainly not of what is considered poisonous quality. The gentlemen who devoted themselves to that branch of the public service which consists in cheapening goods by rendering them nasty, or at best, weak and of feeble effect, did not push the thing so far as to kill the layers of golden eggs, to wit, their customers. They only forced them to buy more sugar if they wanted a certain quantity of saccharine, to purchase an extra bulk of the stuff which constituted the part of *terra alba*, and so on through the list of groceries, drugs and liquors. Of course, while cheating their customers, these adulterers also defrauded the revenue, so that the Government as such, apart from the duty of protecting the public, had a direct interest in preventing brandy, which ought to pay a handsome duty per gallon, from being composed for the purposes of consumption of matter which pays no duty at all. The same desire to prevent the mixing of liquors, which is so proverbially injurious, has been experienced, and from the same causes, by our own Government, and by a portion of the public represented in this case by the Hon. Mr. Alexander. For this purpose the Hon. Mr. Cartwright proposes to subject all persons engaged in the compounding of wines and liquors to the necessity of taking out a license. Moreover, all such articles and all others used for food, are to be submitted to chemical analysis whenever required by the purchaser or by any revenue officer acting in the public interest. Articles shown by this process to be mixed with materials of a character which renders them deleterious to health or improper for food, drink or medicine are to be seized and destroyed. Mr. Alexander, on his side, has procured the second reading of a bill to enable the adulterators to be convicted of the offence of mixing deleterious with presumably wholesome materials, and it is probable that the offence here, as in England, will thus be brought in a practical way within the scope of the criminal law. We presume that these laws will necessitate the appointment of public analysts. The Government will no doubt make such a nomination for its own purpose, and it seems very likely that more than one analyst will be required even for them. But, if Mr. Alexander's bill is to be made practically useful, it will, we suppose, be necessary, as in England, to have public officers named for the purpose of chemical analysis all over the territory, or, at all events, wherever the commerce is desirable and possible from the density of population to give effect to the statute.

The movement for the legal prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors, except under the most stringent regulations, gathers strength. The manner in which it is treated, both in and out of Parliament, shows this unmistakably. It no longer provokes a jeer from even the wittling who is bent upon establishing his reputation for saying something funny. Nay, it is spoken of respectfully, not only by those who regard it as premature but by those who believe it to be unsound and impracticable. It comes up for discussion at every turn and among every class, and whether men oppose it or approve they equally show its power and its progress by the favour they bestow or the hostility they manifest. How clearly this was shown in the House of Commons on Wednesday afternoon, during the discussion raised by Mr. Ross, of Middlesex, in moving the resolution of the second report of the Committee on a Prohibitory Liquor Law. With the exception of Mr. Buxton, not a single speaker said a word except in the way of approval; while Mr. Ross concluded his Prohibitory speech amid loud and prolonged cheers. The Premier avowed himself favourable to the prohibition of all traffic in intoxicating liquors except for medicinal purposes, while he wisely and carefully guarded against committing himself to any present legislation on the subject, for the good and manifest reason that public opinion has not been educated up to the point which would make such legislation effective or permanent.

PUBLIC WORKS.—The general report of the Minister of Public Works, for the fiscal year ending 30th June, is published, and is, of course, a tolerably bulky volume, containing information as to the present state of our rivers, lakes, canals, harbours, piers, lighthouses, roads, bridges, public buildings, railways, telegraphic lines, &c. The total expenditure by the department during the last fiscal year was \$4,254,106; comprising for construction \$2,284,138; repairs, 392,004; staff and maintenance, 1,421,201. The appendices are 26 in number, and among them are special reports on the plans for enlarging the Welland Canal, and two reports on the Red River route by S. J. Dawson, engineer, the whole forming a record of the transactions of the above fiscal year.

From England two important items of telegraphic news are published, one that a crusade against whiskey has been inaugurated in Manchester with an initial measure of success, several signatures to the pledge having been obtained; the other, that in recognition of the services rendered to the Conservative party in the late elections, by the liquor interest, the Disraeli Government have introduced a measure relaxing in its favor the provisions of the Licensing Act passed by the late Ministry, for this can be the only meaning applicable to the words "amending and ameliorating," when it is stated that the hour for closing the grog shops is fixed at one hour later than that in the last named Act. Both movements may be fraught with important consequences—the one in the direction of blessing on all taking part in it, and the other in destruction sooner or later of a Government that plays fast and loose with public morals for the sake of political capital.

The committee appointed by the House of Commons to enquire into the North West troubles, have not yet completed their colors; and although, nominally, sitting with closed doors, their proceedings, day by day, become public. The last witness examined was the Right Hon. Sir John A. Macdonald, and the questions put to him elicited the following statements:—

Sometime after the Fenian Raid in Manitoba, in 1871, the Canadian Government learned that Riel and Lepine were playing a double game, which included night excursions from St. Ives, their place of residence on the United States side of the Line, into British territory with armed escorts. The Government were given to understand, also, that those Manitoba exiles plotted further disturbance, after the close of business communications with Canada, for the winter, and they were striving to secure the aid of the Indians. Sir John then thought it proper to ask Bishop Tache to induce Riel to leave the country, Sir George Cartier deeming it desirable to send off Lepine also. The Bishop discredited the notion of any disloyal purposes on the part of those men, but was given to understand that it was desirable that they should quit the country for a time on account of the general state of feeling in Manitoba, and other provinces, and the forthcoming election of 1872. Sir John supported this proposal by the argument that their departure would constitute a powerful claim upon the Imperial Government for a general and unrestricted amnesty. Sir John afterwards transmitted one thousand dollars to Bishop Tache, for the secret service, to supply the wants of the party. Donald A. Smith reached Ottawa in 1872 to go through the proceeding session, when he informed the Premier that with the consent of Lieutenant Governor Archibald, he had added six hundred pounds sterling to the original sum, on that gentleman's requisition. This Sir John promised to refund, but the secret service money had run out. It is still due. It has already been made clear by documentary evidence, that Mr. Archibald, with the cognisance of Sir John and Sir George, negotiated Riel's retirement in the latter's interest, he having been rejected by East Main. Also that Governor Archibald corresponded with Riel and Lepine to secure the assistance of themselves and followers during the Fenian Raid of 1871 and told them that by loyally complying they would thereby issue a favorable consideration of their petition. When Sir George Cartier learned in 1872, that the ex-Premier promised to give the amnesty, which he himself donates, whilst admitting he personally desired an amnesty. He explains, however, that public opinion in Canada, especially in Ontario made it undesirable that a direct prayer for amnesty should come from him or his Government. On the evening of the shooting of the House in October the French Conservatives brought Messrs. Langevin and Robitaille to time with the result of declaring that they would resign if Sir John's journey did not result in an amnesty. Sir John then stated that he is reported to have craved a direct or express declaration in favor of an amnesty, although it is beyond doubt that no other result was thought of by any of the parties.

We have just received the Minister of Militia's report for 1873. On turning to the report on Mil. District No. 4, by Lt. Col. Jackson Deputy Adjutant General, we find that in the 41st Batt. the Carleton Place Company gets a very favourable report. It ought to make the officers and men feel proud and stimulate them to greater exertion to keep up a company creditable to themselves and the place. The officers deserve great credit for bringing the company to so efficient a condition, as to gain such a creditable report after the sixteen days drill, especially when we consider that considerably over thirty of the men were new recruits. The following is Lt. Col. Jackson's report:—

No. 5 Company (Carleton Place), Captain R. W. Bell, performed the duties during the summer of 1872, in a most efficient manner. I made the inspection on the 14th September; three officers and forty-three non-commissioned officers and men present. This is a very smart and soldierly company, and performed the drill as set on fire, the air was very satisfactory. Arms and other stores very clean. There being no six hundred yard range available, the three first ranges only of the target practice could be fired.

THE FAMINE IN BENGALE.—Accustomed only to unbroken plenty, it is hardly possible for our minds to form any adequate conception of a state of things like that now prevailing in Lower Bengal. The hardships of our knowledge of Indian geography helps still more to lessen the effect of the pictures of human wretchedness outlined in the cable reports. We are incapable both of estimating the extent of the troubles there, and of supplying from our own experience the unreported details. Benares, Patna, Bangalore, Rajshaye, Burdwan, what are they but heathenish names, standing for we know not what? Even when we translate them into familiar terms, and find that they represent a territory greater by a third than all New England, packed with a population equal to that of the United States and British America combined, the appalling fact that its swarming millions are pressed by want, if not face to face with starvation, loses most of its significance through our ignorance of what famine really means.

As mapped by Sir Bartle Frere, the stricken district is shaped somewhat like a clumsy boot with a thick foot and an expanded top—the toe resting on the Hooghly, the heel on the Brahmaputra three hundred miles away to the north, the leg covering the broad valley of the Ganges on the westward, a distance of five hundred miles, with a breadth from one hundred and fifty to three hundred miles.

Throughout this vast area, protracted drought last fall caused the almost total loss of the rice crop, the principal food resource of the people, who have been brought in consequence to the brink of starvation. Indeed had assistance from without been less prompt or less generous, the victims of famine would have been numbered by millions. Even with the most untiring and liberal efforts of the government of India, supplemented by the gifts of the charitable world over, deaths from starvation have already been numerous, and more must follow. And what makes the prospect still more deplorable is the fact that years of irregular and deficient rainfall rarely occur singly. As of old, they rarely come in cycles; and though the present disastrous season has been preceded by several years of short crops and scarcity, it is impossible to say whether it marks the culmination of the series or is the first of a new and worse one. The problem which the government has before it for solution is therefore twofold: 1. To supply the present wants of its hungry millions; and 2. to make such improvements in their political and agricultural condition as shall make the immediate or remote recurrence of famine an impossibility.

Mr. Sket chely an English naturalist has recently made a visit to the King of Dahomey, which, next to Ashantee, is the most powerful of the native African kingdoms. He found the King was really an intelligent man, that the Dahomans were more civilized than they have been currently reported to be, and that the stories of their brutality have been greatly exaggerated. The letters of the correspondents accompanying the Ashantee expedition have similarly shown that the Ashantees are much higher in the scale of humanity than have been led to imagine that they were. Their Capital was comparatively a well built city; their frequent executions of criminals were efforts to enforce law; and their religion did not differ essentially in theory, however much it differed in practice, from that of the Spiritualists. The truth is we have been made to believe that the negro, who in America is capable of civilization and education, is in Africa rather below the average beast in point of intelligence, and vastly more cruel and dangerous.

MORGAN'S PARLIAMENTARY COMPANION.—We learn that the Public Accounts Committee have passed an item for the supplying of the departments with "Morgan's Parliamentary Companion." The members agreeing that while printers and book agents as a rule were a nuisance about the departments, Mr. Morgan's work was such a valuable book of reference that every office should be supplied with it. We heartily endorse the opinion of the committee, for Mr. Morgan deserves encouragement and we are pleased to find that he gets it. We hope that the Provincial Legislatures will be equally prompt and reward industry and ability.

BILL STAMPE.—Mr. Cameron, of Harrow, is introducing a resolution on this subject, which seems to have considerable merit. It is well known that the public has been much annoyed by the inconspicuousness of the present law of bill stamps, and it is believed that the revenue has not been as great as it should have been as a result of the present law. Mr. Cameron proposes to abolish the nullity of a bill or promissory note, which the present law affixes to it on account of any irregularity in the stamp, and to permit a note improperly stamped to be recovered by suit at law, if previous to such recovery, stamps to the value of a quarter per cent of its amount shall be affixed to it.

A fearful explosion took place at a late hour on the 15th ult., in the Audley deep pit, Dunkinfield, near Manchester. Four men were engaged in repairing the tunnel, and were using naked lights, when a fall of earth caused an escape of gas which fired, and a dreadful explosion ensued. The wood work was blown up by the force of the explosion, and the air was very satisfactory. Arms and other stores very clean. There being no six hundred yard range available, the three first ranges only of the target practice could be fired.

THE BAY VERTÉ CANAL.—The report of the Chief Engineer of Public Works on the construction of a canal between the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy, has been published, and laid before Parliament. It states that the construction of a navigable channel between the Bay in question and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, or any line that can be selected, will be an undertaking attended with unusual difficulty, not only from the nature of the work to be done, but from the great difference in the elevation of the respective tides. The objects to be gained by the construction are to avoid the dangers of sailing round the Atlantic Coast of Nova Scotia, and the shortening of the sea-voyage to places situated in the Bay of Fundy. The difficulties of the proposed undertaking are not, however, insurmountable, and the Chief Engineer is of opinion that the An Lac and Tidnish line, via the valley of the Mississiniquish, is the best that can be selected for the purpose. The estimated cost of a practicable canal by this route is given by the Chief Engineer at \$2,217,849.

Mr. Alexander Brown, Cooper and Pork Inspector for the District of Ottawa, in which he visited the depots, and shanties of Messrs. Gilmour & Co. and others. He says there is an unprecedented amount of saw-logs and pork (the two are inseparable) up the river, and if the water rises to give the opportunity, it will be an all summer's job for the shantymen to get the logs to the mills.

A few days since an important expedition left Ottawa in charge of Mr. Horreby to explore the country between the Stikona River and Bute Inlet in British Columbia. This section embraces the Gardner and Dean Channels and the Beattie arm. The party will ascertain the capacity of these channels and whether a favourable route can be found between either of them and the north end of the Fraser River. It is reported that such a route, almost in a direct line, exists between these systems of water communication.

Plans have been prepared by Messrs. Smith & Gordon, of Toronto, for a new Wesleyan Methodist church at Port Hope to seat one thousand persons, and by using side seats at the ends of the pews, thirteen-hundred may be accommodated.

A large number of cattle in the neighbourhood of Seaford are attacked with some new kind of disease, which consists principally in a weakness of the legs. The cattle are in good condition, but when they lie down they can't rise. The local vet seems to be somewhat puzzled, but they call it by some big name, which is not easily pronounced. If the disease is as formidable as the name, it must be pretty serious.

The St. Catharines Journal says:—Today we conclude our report of the Welland Assizes. In reading the same reader will be struck with the strange anomaly of a man being sentenced to death for the murder of a person still living. The man Flynn, who attempted to murder his wife in the fall of the year, was sentenced to death for the murder of her, who was convicted of the crime of poisoning her. The evidence of the woman, who has recovered from the wounds inflicted at the time, was found guilty in a legal sense, and sentenced to death by hanging on the 4th July next. While passing the sentence, His Lordship said he would not mention the name of the woman, but he called it by some big name, which is not easily pronounced. If the disease is as formidable as the name, it must be pretty serious.

The St. Croix Courier states that John Fitzgerald, a prisoner confined in the Charlotte County Jail on a charge of stabbing a man in the neck, was executed on the 22nd inst. It was proved by the evidence of 2 brothers of deceased that the three had received \$2 on that day, in payment of work done for Mr. Sloan; that they then went to Fray's Tavern, the Black Bull, and divided the money; that deceased and one of the brothers came along to test the water gauges, and found no water. He was about to start the pumps when he discovered that the boilers had been tapped and were perfectly dry. Had he not made the discovery in time the mill would have been blown to atoms, and every person in the mill killed to a certainty. It is not wonderful that strikers, no matter where or what their profession, meet with little public sympathy when such atrocities are mediated by some of them. The cause of the working man is inculcated by the frequent discovery of such desperate efforts at revenge.

TERrible STEAM-BOAT CATASTROPHE IN CHINA.—The North China Herald, of the 26th February, records a terrible accident as having taken place at Hong Kong on the 13th to the mail steamer Wan Loong, which plied between that port & Canton. It appears, says the Herald, that the vessel was crowded with passengers, and was carrying a cargo, but accounts vary as to the exact number of passengers on board. It is generally believed, however, that there were between 200 and 300. A very large crowd of Chinese assembled on the wharf to see the vessel start. She got under way, and was moving along, when a small German yacht lying near, she gave a roll inward in the circle she was describing. On her upper decks were a large number of Chinese, and at the way they all ran to the side, a movement which caused her to heel over, and she capsized. The vessel rolled over on her side, and the passengers were thrown about as if they were so much straw. The vessel was right over and at once sank. Just before she went down, a wild cry arose from the crowd on shore, and some hundreds of spectators rushed along the wharf to see what was the matter, and the excitement became immense. Several boats were immediately on the scene. Inspector Stroud was in the boat, and he saw the vessel sink. The vessel was right over and at once sank. Just before she went down, a wild cry arose from the crowd on shore, and some hundreds of spectators rushed along the wharf to see what was the matter, and the excitement became immense. Several boats were immediately on the scene. Inspector Stroud was in the boat, and he saw the vessel sink. The vessel was right over and at once sank. Just before she went down, a wild cry arose from the crowd on shore, and some hundreds of spectators rushed along the wharf to see what was the matter, and the excitement became immense. Several boats were immediately on the scene. Inspector Stroud was in the boat, and he saw the vessel sink. 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