

The distinguished Russian novelist Tolstoi is announced as a new recruit in the crusade against strong drink. Tolstoi, who has been very ill, though now reported to be much better, has been meditating upon the evils of the liquor traffic, and has now risen from his bed of sickness filled with the determination to carry on, by writing a series of pamphlets, a popular propagandism against drunkenness. He will probably soon, however, learn how much easier it is to convince a drunkard of his folly than to turn him from it.

The fashion of embalming bodies immediately after their death is being objected to on the score that it throws insuperable obstacles in the way of an inquiry into the cause of death. As arsenic is largely used in the preserving fluid which is poured into the mouth and injected into the veins of a dead person, it is conclusive that no post mortem examination would be of any use in determining the cause of death after it had been used. The London *Lancet* alludes to this matter and says that it is probable that means will be taken to prevent this method of embalming until an unequivocal certificate as the cause of death has been given by the medical man in charge. The fashion is chiefly prevalent in the United States.

Professor William Saunders, Director of Dominion Experimental Farms, is jubilant over the success of the introduction of two-rowed barley into Canada. He has been inspecting the two-rowed barley sown in parts of Ontario. The straw is said to be of good size, the heads are very long and the berry gives every evidence of filling out plump and clean. With fairly seasonable weather from this out no doubt is left of the success of the two-rowed barley in that portion of Canada at least. A considerable quantity of seed was distributed last spring for experiment by our farmers, and we hope to hear of its success in Nova Scotia as well as in Ontario. The result of the two rowed barley experiment is the most important matter in Canadian agriculture this season.

War has been declared on the Canadian thistle. It is one of the most hardy and prolific weeds we have, and unless eternal vigilance is observed in cutting it down it will go to seed and fill the air with the mischievous little bits of down. One careless farmer can make lots of trouble for his neighbors by letting weeds flourish on his farm and become a general nuisance. The road sides are often overgrown with weeds which scatter their seeds to the winds and put to naught the efforts of those who try to keep their lands in good condition. It seems as if some penalty should be inflicted on those who will not do their part in keeping the weeds down, but there is a general disinclination to prosecute a man who offends only in a negative sense.

The art of silhouetting is supposed to be older than the Christian era. In Arcadia itself silhouettes were drawn. The shepherds of that golden age in their happy simplicity traced shadows of their beloved in the sands to worship in absence. From silhouettes came contours, then monochrome, and finally painting. To cut out from a piece of white paper the profile of a person from direct observation of the sitter required considerable artistic talent and skill. One of the first and best silhouettists in Great Britain was Augustin Amant Constance Fidèle Edonart, who was born in Dunkirk in 1788, and in 1815 found his way to London as a refugee. The name of the little black portraits is taken from M. Enenne de Silhouette, the great Financial Minister of France, who was appointed Comptroller General in 1757.

The disagreeable effects of smoke are apparent in most cities, and Halifax is no exception to the rule. The air is rendered impure, and buildings, trees and plants are injured by the black carbonaceous matter which comes from the numerous chimneys of the city. If the apparatus devised by Mr Samuel Elliott, of Newbury, is all that it claims to be, the nuisance will cease to exist. The process is said to remove from the products of combustion all the black carbonaceous matter of coal smoke, and a remarkable and important thing is the entire absence of sulphur in any form after the dense volumes of smoke generally seen issuing from chimney shafts have been forced through the "annihilator." It is to be hoped that it will be possible and convenient for this annihilator to be used very generally, but even if it were only applied to the manufactories it would do much towards keeping the air pure.

Dr. Barnardo, whose name is so well known in connection with his homes for destitute children, is visiting the "Hazel Brae" home at Peterboro', Ont., which is now under the superintendency of Miss Woodgate. Dr. Barnardo's chief object in coming to Canada is to visit the farm of 9,000 acres in Manitoba, which is in charge of officers, and upon which there are one hundred and forty young men who have been sent out from the homes in England. He has placed 4,392 children in homes in the colonies since he began the rescue work in 1866, and about 16,000 in the colonies and the United Kingdom. There are now 3,450 children in the homes in England. Not less than \$200,000 has been spent in Canada in connection with the farm. In his magazine *Night and Day* Dr. Barnardo says.—"Seventy years ago there were in the prisons of London above 2,000 boys and girls under 16 years of age. In 1855 the number of children under 12 in the prisons in England and Wales amounted to 4,792. In 1878 these had fallen to 927; in 1885 to 250: and to day there are under 100. Of course that is one hundred too many. But the diminution which these figures exhibit is exceedingly striking, and there is no doubt that part of it at least is due to the preventive efforts of Institutions like our own." This is indeed a noble work.

The first number of a new monthly paper called *Free Russia* has just been published in England. The paper is described as "the organ of the English Society of Friends of Russian Freedom." Its managers hope that a certain amount of moral pressure may be created which may help the Russian reformers in their struggle with aristocracy. It appears that there are two principal ideas shared by all classes of reformers in Russia, from the moderate Liberals to the Nihilists. The first is a representative government instead of despotism—not instead of monarchy—and the second is the nationalization of the land. "A National Assembly" and "the land for the people" can hardly in these days be regarded as revolutionary cries. Most of the rest of the number is taken up with a digest of Russian cruelties in Siberia.

Signor Schiaparelli, the Italian astronomer, who has made more wonderful discoveries about the planets than all the other astronomers of our day put together, now announces that Venus as well as Mercury turns but once on its axis in the course of a revolution around the sun, and thus enjoys perpetual day on one side of its globe and perpetual night on the other. Venus has always been supposed to rotate once in twenty-four hours, the supposition being based upon the fact that certain spots visible on its surface return to a similar position every night, but Schiaparelli shows that some of these observations have probably been misinterpreted, and that instead of indicating a rotation period of twenty-four hours, they rather confirm his conclusion that the rotation is performed in 224.7 days, which is the time the planet takes to complete a revolution around the sun, or in other words, the length of Venus' year. If this is so a very small portion of the surface of Venus would be suitable to such forms of life as flourish on the earth.

The Quebec *Chronicle* is an advocate of better pay for bank clerks. It throws the onus of blame for the New Brunswick embezzlement cases on the bank directors or managers who regulated the salaries of the clerks. There is certainly much blame to be attached to those who place young men in responsible positions and pay them merely enough to exist on, as is the case in many banking institutions, but however wrong that may be it does not make any excuse for the man who, while he has enough to live on, appropriates to himself money which belongs to other people and uses it for the indulgence of expensive habits and tastes. Two wrongs cannot make one right, and the man who steals must suffer the penalty when the theft is discovered, but this does not exonerate those who placed the temptation in his way. They will find their reward some day. Meanwhile, bank clerks should regulate their expenses in accordance with their salaries, and bank directors who do not want to have scorn thrown on them for meanness should remunerate their clerks sufficiently well to remove such pressing temptations to help themselves to the bank's funds. A salary of from five to seven hundred dollars is too little for any man who is expected to do the work required in a bank.

The search for the North Pole is not yet to be abandoned. The Norwegian Sterthing or National Assembly has just voted a grant of money for the purpose of fitting out a fresh expedition. The chief cause of the new confidence in ability to reach the Pole, in spite of the icy barrier of the Arctic Seas, is the belief in an undiscovered channel or current, making a comparatively short and direct route across the Arctic Ocean by way of the North Pole. These hopes were aroused by a curious incident. In June, 1884, three years after the *Jeannette* sank, there were found near Julianshaab in Greenland several articles which had belonged to the *Jeannette*, and had been abandoned at the time of its wreck by the crew, and which had been carried to the coast of Greenland, from the opposite side of the Polar Sea, on a piece of ice. Curiosity at once was aroused regarding the weird and mysterious journey of the piece of ice and the relics. The current could not have been any known one, either through Smith's Sound or round Novoe Zembla, Franz Josephs land or Spitzbergen, a new and short course was easily deduced. The expedition is to be under the charge of Mr. Frithjof Nansen, and will be provisioned for five years. A ship of 170 tons is being especially constructed to take these ten or a dozen Northmen on their dangerous voyage.

The Hon. Benjamin Butterworth, of Ohio, who voted for the McKinlay Tariff Bill, after making a powerful speech against its main protective features, claiming that they were excessive and would result in the overthrow of the Republican party, is having his speech extensively circulated in Canada. He poses as an advocate of reciprocal trade with the Dominion, but his speech is in reality a strong argument against the movement viewed from a Canadian standpoint, as his figures, if they are to be relied upon, prove that under the former reciprocal treaties the United States was largely the gainer, and even now with the Dominion tariff in force the United States exports to Canada yearly much more than it imports, the excess of exports over imports in 1888 being \$4,241,260. This is a very good argument across the line, but how Canadians are to be moved by it to throw down this tariff wall and allow United States manufactures and products to compete on equal terms with their own struggling industries is beyond understanding. If the McKinlay Bill is to work such disastrous results to the trade of the United States with Canada as Mr. Butterworth predicts, we should be the beneficiaries, and the McKinlay Bill instead of being detrimental to us should prove a decided advantage in building up inter provincial trade. If finally passed, which we very much doubt, it will prove a boomerang and do more to cripple and destroy the commerce of the United States than any combination of foreign powers could accomplish.