

dictory that pessimistic readers were prone to anticipate the worst, while those inclined to more hopeful views were compelled to confess their inability to find or form any reliable estimate. A recent number of the *Winnipeg Commercial* gives us the key to the vacillating character of these reports. The explanation is indeed easy, and most persons will have already guessed. "If," says *The Commercial*, "a visitor felt inclined to base his estimate of the North-Western grain crop of 1889 upon the result of the harvest in any one section of the country, he could by selection of the section supply himself with a report of the most glowing description, or he could procure one very discouraging indeed. It would all depend upon where he located his observations. The fact that the areas of good and bad crops have, to an unusual degree, 'run in streaks' makes it still impossible to furnish any close estimate of the average or aggregate yield. The fact is, however, apparent that 'while wheat will be a short yield for the North-West, it would be a liberal one for any other portion of this continent, while the quality all over is turning out much superior to the grain produced here in any former year.' This is, on the whole, very encouraging news. Even a moderately good crop of such excellent quality as that which all agree in ascribing to the product now being got ready for market will go far to establish on a firm basis the high reputation of the great Canadian prairies, and assure their steady and rapid growth in population and wealth. Year by year, as the capacities of the soil, and the climatic conditions and variations come to be better understood, the reward of the settler's toil will be larger and surer. The future of the Canadian North-West, as one of the greatest and most prolific food-producing countries of the world, may therefore be safely regarded as assured."

BOTH the spirit and the action of the Anglican Synod in its recent session at Montreal tend to show that the members of that communion are in downright earnest in seeking to bring about a grand reunion of the leading evangelical churches in Canada. This is, of course, in direct line with the recommendations adopted at the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, in July, 1888, which contemplate nothing less than such a reunion of the Churches throughout the English-speaking world. There are undoubtedly very serious obstacles to be met and removed before the proposed union can be effected, even in Canada, and even with the Presbyterian and Methodist bodies, but those who are most sceptical as to the possibility of attaining the result aimed at cannot fail to admire the feelings and motives that are prompting the effort, and to perceive that in the very existence and expression of those feelings and motives a great step is taken in the direction of that unity of heart and purpose which lies deeper and is more real and fruitful than any mere organic union, however desirable the latter may be. The progress of this remarkable movement at home and abroad will be followed with great interest by all who recognize in it, as the thoughtful can scarcely fail to do, one of the most promising signs of the times in the religious world. Late English exchanges intimate that the overture of the Lambeth Conference will shortly come before the autumnal sessions of the representatives of the Congregational and Baptist bodies of England. Their deliverances thereupon will be awaited with some interest, though possibly with less expectation of hopeful results than in the case of the Churches whose ecclesiastical systems are less widely divergent from those of the Anglican Church. Nevertheless it is evident from the tone of their newspaper organs that these denominations will not fail at least to heartily reciprocate the spirit in which the eirenicon is proffered.

AN event of no small interest to Canadians has been the recent sitting of the United States Committee on Relations with Canada, at Boston. The views of a number of men prominent in business circles in New England on the question of Reciprocity have been openly expressed, and it must be gratifying to Canadians of all shades of politics to find so marked a consensus in favour of a measure of reciprocity. Some indeed are prepared to go much farther than others, but the great majority would seemingly favour a renewal of the former reciprocity treaty with trifling modifications. This is unexpected. During the years that have passed since the abrogation of that treaty at the instance of the American Government, its merits have been pretty well canvassed on both sides of the line, and it had come to be generally believed that no renewal of reciprocal trade relations would be possible, which did not include a pretty wide range of manufactured

products. It would probably be unwise to accept New England opinions, in such a matter, as fairly representative of United States opinion. The geographical relations of the New England States and the Maritime Provinces are of such a kind, and the large interchange of products under the old treaty was productive of so much mutual profit, that it is no wonder both parties look back to its discontinuance with regret and would warmly welcome its renewal. But though different views may prevail in other parts of the Union, the situation is on the whole encouraging. It has been made tolerably clear by the investigations of this Committee and otherwise, that the chief obstacles in the way of a renewal of the old friendly trade relations between our neighbours and ourselves are obstacles reared by the politicians, not by the people, and indications are not wanting that the politicians on both sides of the line are beginning to see the error of their ways, or possibly to feel the pressure of public opinion, and are looking around for lines of retreat and places of compromise.

THE great London strike which ended the other day in the almost complete triumph of the strikers is likely to take its place as an event of no small historical interest. It marks a distinct phase, and probably a distinct stage of the struggle between capital in the hands of monopoly and labour. One of the most remarkable features of the struggle was the excellent conduct of the men. That from a hundred thousand to a hundred and fifty thousand of the lower grades of labourers should have remained for a month in idleness, many of them no doubt feeling in themselves or their families the pinch of actual hunger, and yet during all that time have refrained almost absolutely from pillage, violence or other unlawful act, is indeed wonderful. Not many years since it would have been deemed well-nigh incredible. So far as this result was due to the ascendancy of the master minds which directed the movement, it indicates a growing subjection of material to moral force to which heartless or obstinate employers would do well to give heed. With this force, this triumph of organization and self-imposed law sufficiently developed, the labouring masses would be able to overcome almost any obstacle and to dictate pretty nearly their own terms. Their weakness hitherto has been their lack of self-restraint and other qualities necessary to enable them to develop the strength that lies in thorough organization and harmonious action. To the general public, who are in some respect the greatest losers by such prodigious waste of time and capital, the practical question is, how shall the recurrence of such contests be prevented. It is not easy to see what obligation of either physical or moral necessity makes it the duty of the whole community to submit meekly to such derangements of business with all the loss and misery which follow in their train, and it is not surprising that it is already proposed, in the particular case in question, that either the national or the municipal authorities should step in to put an end to the mischievous monopoly, and place the whole business on a plain, straightforward business basis. The same principle is manifestly involved in a good many other operations, those carried on, for instance, in some of the American mining districts, in which such misery and degradation are now the daily lot of the unhappy miners.

WE suppose that the question whether the naval manœuvres which have been in progress off the British coast are being attended with results commensurate with the enormous cost involved is one upon which it is presumptuous for civilians to offer opinions. One thing is, however, pretty certain. These movements have singularly failed to impress British journalists and other citizens. It was to have been expected that when the greatest fleet of the greatest nation in the world condescended to play a game of mimic warfare before the eyes of all the people, it would have managed to conduct the affair with such resemblance to the reality that the onlookers would have blanched and quaked with dread. On the contrary, the prevalent disposition seems to be in this case to criticize and even deride. One English journal, for instance, referring to the capture of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Leith, says the way in which it was done can only be looked upon as a burlesque of naval warfare. "If," says the writer, "the capture of a city is completed by a monetary call on the part of a naval officer on the chief civil authority, the work may be accomplished very expeditiously. What could be the effect of such operations as these upon the issues of a great war? We surely did not need to be taught that hostile ships may attack, with a fair prospect of success, undefended towns, especially when the fleets of the

country remain untouched." And Sir Andrew Clark, in a letter to the *Times*, says: "Correspondents write airily of 'laying Brighton in ashes,' forgetting that it would require more than all the ammunition carried by our great fleet now afloat to destroy one-tenth of that town, and that the cost would not greatly differ from that of the damage inflicted. If the mayor and corporation of any British town were found willing to pay blackmail they would richly deserve to be hanged; and I only trust some venerable law could be raked up from our wondrous statute book which would enable the execution to be carried out. A company of volunteers would suffice to prevent the landing of any party that a cruiser could put ashore, and the only answer which I can conceive that any Englishman would return to such a requisition would be 'Come and take it!'" It does certainly appear like a new thing in naval warfare to imply that the chief business of those terrible ironclads is to be to exact enormous ransoms from commercial cities on pain of bombardment. But it is much easier to point out the weakness of this mimicry of war, than to show a better way of gaining exercise and practice. Navies cannot fight real battles with each other or with fortifications merely for the sake of testing their powers, or for the fun of the thing.

EUROPEAN military preparations and war prospects form a threadbare theme for comment. Yet how is it possible to fix our attention upon anything else when we look towards Europe, and see to what an extent in each of its great nations militarism is in the ascendant and casts everything else into the shade. In France, it is true, the Exhibition has for some time filled the view, almost to the exclusion of everything else, even of the elections, which are now so near and big with the fate of the nation. Happily, however, the safety of the Republic is now pretty well assured. But even with France, the respite from the war fever will, there is reason to fear, be but brief. Too closely connected, we are forced to conclude, with the fore-shadowed re-establishment of the Republic, is the fierce martial fire which has broken out afresh in the bosom of the German Monarch. The time and energies of Emperor William seem of late to be given so exclusively to military preparations, that no room is left for civilian affairs and interests. If it be true, as is asserted with great probability, that the Czar of Russia, in his turn, is but waiting to see the French Republic once more securely planted as the result of the plebiscite, in order to make overtures for an alliance, the new-born military zeal of the German Emperor is the more easily explained, though the explanation is suggestive of results too horrible to contemplate. Alas for our vaunted civilization! It is doubtful if there was ever a time in the history of Europe when, in the midst of years of peace, preparation for war was so exclusively the one great business of the nations as it is at the present moment. The carnage of the battle field is absent, but it may be questioned whether the effect of so perpetually thinking about and preparing for war upon the life and spirit of the nations is not as inimical to true progress, and as universally demoralizing, as would be a state of actual war.

ONE result, not unforeseen, of the Maybrick incident has been the commencement of what may prove to be a crusade, though it is as yet unorganized, for the abolition of capital punishment in England. Many of the papers have editorials and articles from correspondents either openly hostile to the infliction of the death penalty, or tending cautiously in that direction. Strange to say, the religious papers, so far as we have observed, are foremost in advocating the proposed change. We say "strange," for as a rule this class of papers has hitherto, we think, regarded the Scripture precept, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," as not merely prophetic, but mandatory. It cannot be denied that some of the arguments suggested by the Maybrick trial have considerable weight. In the great majority of cases of premeditated murder, which, as being the most heinous are deserving of the heaviest penalty, the evidence is necessarily of the kind called circumstantial. But circumstantial evidence seldom, if ever, is so absolutely conclusive as to leave no conceivable possibility of the innocence of the accused. Hence to hang a person on circumstantial evidence is always to run more or less risk of taking the life of the innocent. If, on the other hand, the Courts avoid all risk, and inflict the death penalty only in cases in which there is absolutely no doubt of guilt, the percentage of capital punishments will be so small in proportion to the whole number of murders, that their deterrent effect must be, to a large extent, destroyed. Hence, on the admitted