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A MIDSUMMER GREETING.

In this country the twenty-fourth of June can hardly be called the middle of summer. Still, it is pleasant to remember the traditional midsummer's day that has been celebrated with so much rejoicing (and superstition) for centuries. In England, it used to be believed that on the night before mid-summer everybody's soul wandered away from his body and visited the place where soul and body would be finally separated. To prevent this doleful excursion people used to keep themselves awake all night. The young people, too, used to go through the performance of lighting bonfires and jumping over the flames. This custom began many hundred years ago, and was probably a sort of sacrifice to the sun, when that great lamp was worshipped as the Creator of the light which comes to us from it.

We have now finished a prosperous half-year together, writers and readers. In wishing all midsummer happiness to our readers, we take for granted that all our readers would return their midsummer greeting to us if they had the chance. They can do so in a very practical way. As the days shorten, and till they begin to lengthen again at Christmas time, we hope to continue to help our readers with eight pages of good reading every week, and we hope that our readers will return the compliment by getting as many new subscribers as they possibly can for "our mutual friend" the *Weekly Messenger*!

THE EGYPTIAN TROUBLE.

There was a report this week that the town of Kassala had been taken by the rebels, but this is not believed. A telegram says that the town of Ghia, near the Abyssinian frontier, has been taken, and that the rebels there got possession of six guns and seven hundred camels, besides three hundred of the garrison. Information from Abyssinia says that King John will help the garrison of Kassala to escape, and is also determined to seize the town himself. There is queer news from Dongola. It is said that the governor of that town, while professing to be faithful to his Egyptian masters, is in reality on the side of the Mahdi.

In the House of Commons it was announced that the last news from General Gordon was dated April 12. Twenty messengers were sent to him, and one succeeded in getting into Khartoum; but on his return with Gordon's answer the messenger was caught and killed by the rebels. British troops are being pushed forward for the new Egyptian expedition. The Government considers the British and Egyptian troops already on the spot quite enough to defend Upper Egypt. New fortifications are proposed at the British post of Aden, at the south end of the Red Sea.

A SPECIAL COMMISSIONER has reported that Nihilism spreads in the Russian army because the system of promotion is unjust and the pay not sufficient. The Czar is now considering a plan of reform.

PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS.

Name after name is being brought up in connection with the Democratic nomination for the United States presidency. Bayard, Thurman, Flower and Payne are all mentioned; but the general opinion is that Governor Cleveland, of New York, has the best chance of the honor. In fact the *New York World* says that, according to the general opinion, it is almost certain that Cleveland will be nominated by the national convention of the party.

If the "general opinion" turns out to be correct, it is thought likely that the contest for the President will be fought out squarely between Cleveland and Blaine. It is still possible however, that another candidate will be brought forward,—in addition to the irrepressible Butler, who carries the Greenback flag. A convention of the Prohibition party has nominated Mr. S. C. Pomeroy of Kansas, for President, and Mr. J. A. Corant, of Connecticut, for Vice-President.

The platform of this new party is in refreshing contrast to the ordinary platforms pieced together by place-hungry politicians. Here are the four chief planks: the use of the Bible in public schools; strict prohibition of the liquor trade; women to have the right to vote; and the reduction of the customs' tariff.

Mr. Blaine has been officially notified, by a deputation from the Convention, that he is nominated by the Republican party. In accepting the nomination, he declares that he agrees to every detail of the platform laid down by the Convention, and upon which he invokes the divine blessing.

FARMERS' REVIEW.

Warm weather and refreshing rains have lately been pushing forward vegetation at a rapid rate nearly all over the country from Halifax to San Francisco. In some places in the Northwest around St. Paul's, Minnesota, there has been too much wet muggy weather, and unless there is a speedy return to dryer and cooler weather, great damage will ensue from the grain lodging. Not only the grain, but the weeds as well, are growing more rankly than in ordinary seasons, and farmers will have to be pretty active in order to get this extra growth of weeds under control before the haying will absorb their undivided attention. The production of milk has been larger than usual and is likely to continue so for some time to come, and the prices of dairy products, especially butter, have been declining rather rapidly, owing to the lowness of prices on the other side of the Atlantic. The quantity of butter in cold storage is unusually large for so early in the season, and unless relieved by exportation, storage room will be exhausted long before the return of cool weather in autumn.

The latest reports from Britain indicate a slight improvement in the prices of cattle, yet prices of prime cattle are relatively higher in New York,—where they have been selling lately at over seven cents per pound, live weight,—than in Liverpool, where the price is fifteen cents per lb. dressed weight.

THE DARK SIDE OF BUSINESS.

Commodore Garrison has made an assignment: and the event has caused great agitation in New York. He is believed to owe between two and five million dollars, but to have three times that amount to pay his debts with. When that process is finished, he will retire from active business. Mr. Garrison is quite ill from the heat and excitement. The New York stock exchange was "lively" on Tuesday, and Matthew Morgan & Sons, an old firm of bankers, have failed.

John C. Eno is still in custody at Quebec, but he quite expects to escape the clutches of justice. G. T. Tully, an English bank manager arrested in New York for forgery, was discharged but has again been arrested in a civil court action. E. L. Moon, a broker at Cincinnati, has been arrested for his dealings with a defaulting teller of the National Bank of Commerce.

J. W. Burnham, of Yonkers, who failed recently, has committed suicide. The manager of a bank in Switzerland, who had been embezzling the bank's funds, has also sent himself to the next world.

"PROTECTION."—In spite of the high duties imposed by the United States to protect the manufacturers' pockets, such an enormous quantity of woollen goods are being imported from England that the prices are kept very low. "Weaver" writes to a Philadelphia paper: "Ten years ago a good four-loom weaver on gingham and chevots could make from \$15 to \$17 a week; now he has to work hard to make \$10 a week in what is considered a good shop. The manufacturers of this kind of goods have not only reduced the wages, but they have made the 'cuts' larger by several yards. Now, if a protective tariff operates so that the manufacturer is obliged to exact more labor from his employees for less pay, who is benefited by it? If this is the result of 'protection,' hadn't we better try 'free trade'?"

MONTREAL has been very gay this week. French-Canadians from all parts of the United States, as well as Canada, have been celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the first St. Jean Baptiste Association—St. John the Baptist being the patron saint of the French-Canadian movement against the Government fifty years ago. On Tuesday there was "high mass" said in the open air by the bishop, five or six thousand persons being present. Wednesday was a public holiday, and an immense procession, including many costly and splendid allegorical cars, made its way through the principal streets of the city.

PRINCE VICTOR seems now to have definitely consented to become leader of the Bonapartists in France. The Prince Imperial, who was killed in the Zulu war in Africa, left a will declaring Victor his successor as "Emperor of France;" but Victor's father, Prince Jerome, himself wanted to be Emperor if anyone got the chance and prevented his son taking any action.

LORD ROSEBURY, a Scotch Liberal member of the British House of Lords, made a proposal to reform that ancient half of the legislature. He wanted its members to be in some way representative of science, literature, art, commerce, the laboring classes, India, and the colonies. The Lords refused even to appoint a committee to consider some means of making their House more useful. However, unless their Lordships consent to reform, they will probably find themselves abolished altogether.

MR. PARNELL'S PARTY in Ireland say that at the next elections they will win every seat in the south, west and east of Ireland, and many even in the north. It is also proposed that the humbler members of the party shall tax themselves to pay regular salaries to their representatives in parliament.

A GREAT NUMBER of Indians, who had assembled in the Canadian North-West for a "thirst dance," cruelly beat a government farm inspector. A force of eighty mounted police succeeded in arresting some of the Indians, and in just avoiding a bloody encounter.

BY THE NEW TREATY between Mexico and the United States, Mexico will admit free of duty seventy-three articles,—only six of which are free at present. The United States will only admit twenty-six articles free from Mexico, and nineteen are free already.

ARCHBISHOP McCABE is taking part in the election for Lord mayor of Dublin. One of the candidates is a Freemason, and the archbishop has therefore written a letter to prevent Roman Catholics from voting for him.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT has assured Italy that no territory is going to be asked from the Sultan of Morocco.

THE FRENCH ADMIRAL at Madagascar has had another conference with the natives, but it is not known whether he persuaded them to agree to the term he wants.

MR. MOODY has closed his mission in London.

A SCOTCH WHALING SHIP, the "Chieftan," just arrived home from Greenland, has lost the crews of two of her three boats.

CHOLERA is reported to have broken out in Toulon, a town on the south coast of France. Every means is being taken to prevent this fearful disease from spreading.

PRINCE BISMARCK, it is said, is determined to annex the Kingdom of Holland to the German Empire.

FLOODS have done much damage in Poland. Warsaw, the capital, and many villages have been inundated. A new bridge across the Vistula has been swept away, and twenty of a crowd of people standing on it were drowned.

THE AUTHORITIES OF THE VATICAN have discovered a plot to blow up that building with dynamite, in order to take the Pope's life. Some of the clergy accuse the Freemasons; others treat the threats with ridicule.