

where no English settlers are found, of the Mediterranean, cost most money; and Canada is more deeply in debt than any other dependency of the Crown. Out of the large sum of £3,350,000, the whole of the North American Colonies, though inhabited by two thirds of the entire white colonial population of the Empire, cost only £555,000, while the Ionian Islands, which England has offered to give up, cost £280,000; Malta £480,000; and Gibraltar, which George III. would have offered to give up, if his ministers would have let him, costs £420,000. The Cape of Good Hope, moreover, costs as much as the whole North American Colonies, now the subject of so much reviling on account of their charges upon the Imperial Treasury. Some other details are worth noting, for instance, Malta, which costs nearly as much money as all the British North American colonies, only took of British imports the inconsiderable value of £30,000. The West Indies, which, it is often said, have been ruined by emancipation, with a white population of only 54,000, and a very inconsiderable territory, exported £6,000,000 worth of goods, and took about the same value of imports. The smallest dependency is Heligoland, lying off the German coast of the North Sea. It has a population of 2,172 souls on a territory of one-third of a square mile, and buys yearly £13,000 of foreign produce. The Australian colonies are out of debt. Barbadoes owes the gigantic sum of £291, respecting which the *Times* doubts if it be the commencement of a new or the balance of an old debt. Considering who was its late Governor, it is perfectly astonishing that so small an amount of debentures should be extant; but we suspect that it must be the commencement of a new debt, and that it would soon have swelled, but for Governor Bincks' timely removal. Most of the West Indies are in debt to a larger amount; but even Jamaica only owes three years revenue, while Canada owes eight, which approaches tolerably near to that great British debt, which has been sometimes looked upon as almost fabulous.—*Id.*

## MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

—The *Presse Scientifique des Deux Mondes* contains a description of a series of experiments made in Egypt by Figari-Bey on the wheat found in the ancient sepulchres of that country. A long dispute occurred a few years ago, as to what truth there might be in the popular belief, according to which this ancient wheat will not only germinate after the lapse of three thousand years, but produce ears of extraordinary size and beauty. The question was left undecided; but Figari-Bey's paper, addressed to the Egyptian Institute at Alexandria, contains some facts which appear much in favor of a negative solution. One kind of wheat which Figari-Bey employed for his experiments had been found in Upper Egypt, at the bottom of a tomb at Medinet-Abou, by M. Schnepf, secretary to the Egyptian Institute. There were two varieties of it, both pertaining to those still cultivated in Egypt. The form of the grains had not changed; but their colour, both within and without, had become reddish, as if they had been exposed to smoke. The specific weight was also the same—viz., twenty-five grains to a gramme. On being ground they yield a good deal of flour, but are harder than common wheat, and not very friable; the colour of the flour is somewhat lighter than that of the outer envelope. Its taste is bitter and bituminous; and when thrown into the fire, it emits a slight but pungent smell. On being sown in moist ground, under the usual pressure of the atmosphere, and at a temperature of 25 degrees (Reaumur), the grains became soft, and swelled a little during the first four days, on the seventh day their tumefaction became more apparent, with an appearance of maceration and decomposition; and on the ninth day this decomposition was complete. No trace of germination could be discovered during all this time. Figari-Bey obtained similar negative results from grains of wheat found in other sepulchres, and also on barley proceeding from the same source; so that there is every reason to believe that the ears hitherto ostensibly obtained from mummy wheat proceed from grain accidentally contained in the mould into which the former was sown.—*U. C. Journal of Arts and Manufactures.*

—In consequence of the vote of want of confidence carried in the House of Assembly, the Cabinet has been reconstructed as follows: *Upper Canada*—Hons J. Sanfield McDonald, Premier and Attorney General West; W. McDougall, Commissioner of Crown Lands; J. A. Ferguson Blair, Provincial Secretary; William Pearce Howland, Receiver General; Oliver Mowatt, Postmaster General; Lewis Walbridge, Solicitor General West. *Lower Canada*—Hons. A. A. Dorion, Attorney General East; L. H. Holton, Minister of Finance; Isidore Thibaudeau, President of the Executive Council; Lewis T. Drummond, Commissioner of Public Works; Luc Letellier de Saint-Just, Minister of Agriculture; L. S. Huntington, Solicitor General East.

An *Extra of the Canada Gazette* of the 16th. instant contains His Excellency's proclamation dissolving Parliament and making the writs for the elections returnable on the 3rd. July, on which day the new Parliament will assemble.

—Mr. Salomon Bélanger, a hardy *voyageur* who accompanied Sir John Franklin in one of his perilous expeditions, died recently at his residence in the parish of St. Jacques de l'Acadigan, Canada East, aged 69. He had on one occasion, as may be seen by Sir John's narrative, saved the life of his illustrious companion.

—Horace Vernet, the celebrated French historical painter, died in

Paris, on the 17th January. He was born in that city in 1789, and at an early age manifested a taste for painting. Among his earlier works were the Taking of the Redoubt, the Dog of the Regiment, the Horse of the Trumpeter, the Halt of French Soldiers, the Battle of Toloso, the Soldier Laborer, the Last Cartridge, the Death of Poniatowski, which followed each other in rapid succession, and found more favour with the multitude than with the artists of the *bas relief* school. In 1819 he painted the Massacre of the Mamelukes at Cairo, now in the Luxembourg, and at about the same time the battles of Jemeppe, Valtin, Innau, and Montmirail. In 1826 he was admitted a member of the Institute, and in 1830 was appointed to succeed Guio as director of the Academy at Rome. There he resided for five years, and devoted himself to the study of the Italian school, the result of which was a series of pictures somewhat new in the subject and manner of treatment. He abandoned for a while the life of the French soldier and the battles of the Revolution. During this period he painted Judith and Holofernes, Raphael and Michael Angelo at the Vatican, Combat of Brigands against the Pope's Riflemen, Confession of the Dying Brigand, Pope Leo XII. carried into St. Peter's. But he afterwards returned to his original subjects, and in 1836 produced four battle pieces; Friedland, Wagram, Jena, and Fontenoy. When Algiers was occupied by the French troops, a whole gallery at Versailles was set apart for the purpose of commemorating their achievements in Africa. This gallery was styled the Constantine Gallery, from a town of that name in Africa which had been captured by the French, and the decoration of it was intrusted to M. Vernet. He produced a great many pictures on subjects connected with the Algerine war, among which may be mentioned the Taking of the Smala of Abd-el-Kader, said to be the largest picture on canvass in existence. Vernet at several times attempted biblical subjects, but not with much success. He has also painted a large picture representing the capture of Rome by Gen. Oudinot in 1849. His only daughter married Paul Delaroche.—*N. Y. World.*

—Beneath the branches of a giant Euphorbia, sheltered by its shade, and almost lulled to sleep by the monotonous sound of a little bubbling mountain stream, I reclined one day, after a very successful foray amongst the Guinea-fowl which were occasionally found near the Bushman's River, a locality situated about one hundred and twenty miles inland to Port Natal. A quantity of long grass, which had been washed down quite flat, grew on each side of the little rivulet, and on this several dead branches were scattered, and old trunks of trees grouped, left in their places by the last periodical flood. Over this grass I observed a large brownish coloured snake gliding towards me. His large size, and the absence of the broad arrow form of head, showed me that he was not venomous; I therefore allowed him to approach me, whilst I remained perfectly still. Although I did not alter my position in the least, he yet became aware of my presence by some means, for he suddenly stopped when within twenty paces of me, then changed his direction, and then took up a position under an old stump, from which he eyed me most suspiciously. His colours were very beautiful, and there was a bloom upon his skin somewhat similar to that which we see on a ripe plum. He was evidently puzzled at my appearance, but seemed not in the least afraid; whilst I, knowing that I could shoot him at any time if I felt inclined to do so, had no hesitation in remaining within twenty paces of a snake fully twelve feet in length. After examining me for about two minutes the snake approached me, keeping its head slightly raised and looking steadily at my eyes. Its approach was so slow, and there was no break in it, such as that made by putting one foot before the other, that I felt an almost irresistible inclination to remain still and quiet, and allow the snake to glide towards me. Had the snake been forty feet in length, or had I been no bigger than a rabbit, I believe that, unless by a considerable exertion of the will, I should not have felt disposed to move. If the snake had been compelled to advance by a series of steps, each one would then have repeated the warning, and would have intimated that it was dangerous to stay; but the gliding, insidious approach of the snake appeared to produce a wish to wait until some decided movement should be taken by the reptile. Shaking off this singular temporary sensation by a decided action of the will, I raised myself on my elbow and stretched out my hand for my gun. The snake observing the movement stopped, and elevated its head, which it waved slightly in a horizontal direction. It was now not more than ten paces from me, and although tolerably certain that it was now not a poisonous snake, yet, for fear of a mistake, I deemed it prudent to ward it off, and intimated my idea by means of a broken branch which I threw at it. The snake appeared disinclined to leave me, but yet slowly glided away, stopping occasionally to look round, as though desirous of further acquaintance. I let him go; our interview had been so close and mysterious that I could not have killed him. There was also something wild and interesting in thus alone making the acquaintance of a reptile in its native wilderness, in observing some of its peculiarities, and in feeling slightly that singular power by means of which there is no doubt many of the serpent race occasionally obtain their prey.—"*A few interviews with Snakes*," by Capt. Drayson, R. A.

EUSEBE SENECAL, Caloric Printing Presses, 4, St Vincent St., Montreal.