

The President of the United States has issued a proclamation which provides for the granting of copyright in the States to citizens or subjects of Great Britain, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

A new steel cuirass, covering the breast only, will shortly be introduced into the Austrian army. It is said to be impenetrable to the bullets of any rifle yet invented. It can be folded up and packed in an ordinary knapsack.

A German biologist says that the two sides of a face are never alike; in two cases out of five the eyes are out of line; one eye is stronger than the other in seven persons out of ten, and the right ear is generally higher than the left.

From a monthly report of the Clyde (Scotland) ship-building trade, it appears that the work on hand at the end of June was estimated at 197,000 tons, compared with 180,000 at the same time last year; 255,000 on 30th June, 1839; 186,000 on 30th June, 1888; 100,000 on 30th June, 1887; and 90,000 tons on 30th June, 1886.

Free traders have sustained a decided defeat in New South Wales. Complete returns of New South Wales General Election show that 51 Ministerialists, 37 members of the Opposition, 25 Labor candidates, and 3 Independents have been returned. Of the newly-elected members 75 are Protectionists, and 62 Free Traders. The large number of Labor candidates returned has called forth many comments of a very doleful character.

The New York Critic tells a story of Stanley and an American news-boy, aged fourteen, which is extremely creditable to both. Having sold over 200 sets of "In Darkest Africa," the lad thought he would like to have Mr. Stanley's autograph in his order-book as an heirloom. So he obtained an introduction to Mr. Stanley. The great man received him kindly, heard his request, then invited him to breakfast, and the pair entertained each other for three hours. The boy now thinks that Stanley is only second to George Washington.

It has been estimated, on the authority of a big Bond Street jeweller, that the jewels worn at a drawing-room represent a value equal to a million and a half sterling. Her Majesty alone would very probably wear £150,000 worth of precious stones. If the Duchess of Westminster were wearing the celebrated Nassau diamond, that jewel alone would be worth £35,000. Besides this, the Marchioness of Bath has a wonderful necklace of black pearls, estimated as worth £100,000, and the Baroness Burdett-Coutts has a unique set of sapphires.

Massachusetts has a new and novel law relating to inebriety, which partakes both of severity and leniency. As soon as possible after a man is arrested, he is brought to sobriety, and is then released upon making an uncontradicted statement in writing, that he has not been arrested for drunkenness within a year. His record is then commenced by the authorities. If it is afterwards found that he has made a false assertion, he can be arrested and tried as though he had been on bail. After he has been before a Judge twice in a year for drunkenness, he is treated as a wilful transgressor, and no fine can save him from penal servitude. The offender is sent to jail and favor cannot possibly be shown on account of his wealth or social standing. This will put poor and rich on precisely the same footing, and the penniless devil will probably have consequential associates in durance vile.

Talking of the fatal facility with which people can be got to sign petitions, the editor of the New York Journal of Commerce tells a good story and vouches for its truth. Forty years ago, he says, a gentleman made a bet that he could get a hundred prominent churchmen to sign a petition to have the Bishop of New York hanged. He had a long petition drawn up, beginning with the words—"Whereas the best interests of the Protestant Episcopal Church," etc., and going on, after a long preamble, to demand that the Bishop should be suspended by the neck. The petition was engrossed in proper style and sent round by a canvasser, who told no lies about it, simply representing it as a petition to the ecclesiastical authorities in a matter that would deeply affect the welfare of the church. Once a few well-known names had been got at the head of the list the bet was soon won, and the audacious petitioner said he could have got signatures by the thousand if he had kept on long enough.

Experiments in fostering the growth of seeds by electricity are not a novelty, since they were made so long ago as the last century by a Scotch electrician; but Monsieur Spechnoff, a Russian agriculturist, has recently drawn attention to the subject. He electrified the seeds of peas, beans and rye for two minutes by passing a current through them, and then sowed them. The result was that the plants which sprang from the seeds were much more vigorous than those from unelectrified seeds. M. Spechnoff also electrified the soil by burying plates of zinc and copper in it, so as to make what is called an "earth battery." The plates were connected above ground by an iron wire, and the electricity circulated from one plate to the other through the intervening ground. Vegetable seeds planted in this ground gave rise to an astonishing crop. A radish grew over 17 inches in length and 5½ inches thick; a carrot 10½ inches in diameter weighed 6½ lbs. Monsieur Spechnoff estimates that for root crops the harvest in the electrified earth was four times greater than that in unelectrified ground; and for ordinary plants two or three times greater.

Hippolyte, the sanguinary president of Hayti, is likely to be brought to book by the French Government for the murder of Rigaud, who it is said had conspired against the president's life. It is claimed that Rigaud was a French subject. Hippolyte's bloody acts appear, in some lights, to be those of a madman, and foreign powers intend to protect such of their citizens as may be exposed to his brutality.

The Pope has shown good common sense, in refusing to give his official sanction to the establishment of Catholic banks in the large European cities. The longer the church keeps from such pronounced meddling in business affairs, the better. Any interference in this respect would do much harm. Money-lending is not sectarian, nor is there any sentiment connected therewith. The best business management brings the most satisfactory results. An Archbishop once tried sectarian banking, but he was too pure and knew nothing of business, and as a consequence brought ruin upon thousands who had put their money in his keeping.

The British residents in the Chinese treaty-ports complain bitterly of the insufficient protection provided by their Government during the present outburst of Chinese antagonism to foreigners. The North China Herald asserts that amongst over twenty vessels composing the British naval force in the Far East, "only one small gunboat could be spared to protect the whole of the northern and river ports, which contain more than three fourths of the British population, and do more than three fourths of the British trade in China." Even that boat had gone out to sea for target practice, when the Walru riots broke out, so the British Consul telegraphed to Shanghai in vain. The Roman Catholic Missionaries had warned the Taotai of the coming agitation, but he, knowing that no English war vessel was within reach, took no notice. Then the mob attacked the mission on the plea that the priests were killing the orphans in their charge to use their eyes for medicine. A rush on the British Consulate and the Custom House followed, and for two days and nights the Customs officials, aided by the European residents, defended their quarters till a Chinese man-of-war, conveying the Governor of Nankin, accidentally put into the harbor, and at once subdued the agitation.

The notions of Tierra del Fuego, which prevailed ten years ago, have been completely upset by recent explorations. The latest travellers there are Messrs. Rouson and Willems, who have returned to France from their scientific mission in Tierra del Fuego. These explorers believe the northern part of the island can be turned to good account, and that the day is not far distant when large herds and flocks will be raised upon ranches all along the river valleys. A large district north of the Straits of Magellan, in Patagonia, which was wholly unoccupied twelve years ago, is now full of little farms devoted to raising sheep and cattle. The owners have prospered so well that the territory they occupy has become too crowded. It is impossible to extend this business further north, and the farmers will therefore be compelled to turn to Tierra del Fuego, which will receive the overflow from Patagonia. On Dawson Island, near the northwest coast of Tierra del Fuego, Jesuit Fathers are now engaged in stock-raising, and for two years or so a fine ranch has been established on the north coast of Tierra del Fuego, where there are to-day about 20,000 sheep and 6,000 cattle. The English have been the first to establish themselves there. Stockraisers are now reaping a profit of 50 per cent per annum. The explorers say the availability of the island for stockraising has been amply proven, and there is no doubt that a prosperous future is before it.

A correspondent in the Quebec Chronicle, while slightly astray in his facts, draws attention to the quick time made on the run from Halifax to Montreal via Quebec, the whole distance of 850 miles being made in twenty-six hours and forty minutes, or only about twenty minutes more time than the run by the Canada Pacific Short Line. It cost some five millions to construct the latter line through Maine, and as was pointed out in THE CRITIC at the time, the numerous curves and heavy gradients have so crippled its usefulness that the net gain for all this large outlay is only a saving of some 20 minutes in the through run. The quick time now made over the I. C. R. also bears out our former contention that the road was being wretchedly managed. Before the short line was completed it took over 36 hours to reach Montreal from Halifax; but the moment the rival line was finished the time was reduced to twenty-six hours and forty minutes. The short line may benefit St. John at the expense of Halifax, and this strengthens our claims for the extension of the Temiscouata Railway to Moncton, and the completion of a very similar short route to that advocated by THE CRITIC. There is so much truth in the concluding paragraph of the letter above referred to that we quote it at length:—"If the people of Halifax had only been wise in their generation, and had listened to the delegation sent to them from Quebec, and had endorsed the line via Quebec, this fatal error would have been avoided, and Halifax would to-day be doing the winter export business of Canada, instead of the very small share of it that she now gets. But, even now, it is not too late to remedy the evil. If Nova Scotia would, as recommended by the Quebec Board of Trade, join us in urging the construction of the Quebec bridge and of the link from Edmundston to Moncton, which would shorten the Intercolonial by one hundred miles, as public works, and as part of the Intercolonial system, the saving in time and distance, whilst restoring Quebec to the position on the main line of interprovincial trade, from which we have been so unjustly cut off, would certainly place Halifax in the position of commanding the winter trade of the Dominion, which she has always expected to get."

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