

# The Commercial

WINNIPEG, JANUARY 18, 1896.

## ADULTERATED BLUESTONE.

At the annual meeting of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, held on Tuesday last, the principal discussion was upon the question of smut in grain. This is a matter which the exchange has taken a lively interest in for years, as the members are in a good position to know of the vast loss which Manitoba farmers annually meet with from this cause. It seemed to be the opinion of the members that a large quantity of poor or adulterated bluestone had been put on the market last year, and to this cause is attributed the large increase in smut prevailing in the crop of 1895. The council of the exchange was urged to take immediate action in the matter and it is likely the attention of both the Dominion and provincial governments will be called to the question, with a view to having a number of samples of bluestone analyzed, as well as to have the farmers thoroughly warned against using inferior bluestone. If climatic conditions cause any damage to the crop in any year, a great deal is heard about it, but the loss to farmers from smut in grain is much greater one year with another than the loss from all adverse climatic conditions combined. This is the more regrettable because it is preventable. It has been proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that smut can be eradicated by the proper use of pure bluestone. Some farmers perform the work in such a careless way that they might as well have not treated their seed grain at all. It will not do to sprinkle the seed over in a haphazard way. Every berry should be thoroughly wet with a solution of bluestone of proper strength. In such an important matter no risk should be taken by purchasing a cheap article of bluestone, and only the best should be taken by farmers. As the matter of the sale of adulterated bluestone will be fully ventilated between now and spring, merchants should see to it that they secure only a pure article. Country merchants by refusing to handle a cheap or adulterated article, will be doing the farmers a real service.

## AN ALARMING SITUATION.

These are exciting days for the world in general, the British Empire in particular and Canada especially. Ever since Japan started the ball rolling by declaring war on China, the situation has been more or less threatening. The China-Japan war came to a more speedy termination than might have been expected, but it has left the "Far Eastern Question," which threatens the peace of the world. Japan would undoubtedly like to hold Korea, and also that portion of China in which Port Arthur is situated. Russia has stepped in however, and so to speak has ordered her out. Russia will certainly not rest until Japan is out of Korea as well as Port Arthur, for the reason that Russia wants the territory herself. Russian territory on the Pacific does not include a winter port, and Russia wants a winter port for a naval station as well as for the Pacific terminus of

her great railway now building across Siberia. To obtain a Pacific port which is not closed by ice a part of the year, Russia will have to move her boundaries further south, and she undoubtedly has covetous eyes on the Korean peninsula, and Port Arthur as well. The latter would give her a grand harbor and a natural stronghold. Great Britain, however, is opposed to Russian encroachments in China, regarding it as a menace to her commercial supremacy there, and Lord Salisbury has publicly warned the great northern power that she will not be permitted to encroach in that direction. Thus we have the Far Eastern question, as a menace to the peace of the world.

Following the China-Japan scrap, the rebellion in Cuba was inaugurated and has been maintained with considerable success to the present day. While the Cuban trouble does not perhaps threaten to draw in any of the great powers, it is a source of great uneasiness to Spain, on account of fear of the United States. The latter country would certainly be glad to find any reasonable excuse to take a hand in the conflict, with the object of course of gobbling up Cuba.

Then we have that everlasting Eastern Question, which has again assumed a very acute form, as a result of the Armenian massacres. While the European powers are alleged to be acting in concert, it requires no discernment to see that no concert exists among the powers. If it did, the matter would have been settled long ago. While the powers apparently presented a harmonious front, there has evidently been much secret intriguing all around, hence no real progress has been made in instituting reforms in Turkey, nor is there likely to be until the Turk is driven out. The British government has no doubt been really anxious to assist the Armenians, but they have wisely refused to play a lone hand in the matter. Russia, backed by France, is not likely to fall in cordially with British proposals, while Germany has evidently adopted a dog in the manger policy in this matter. As matters now stand throughout the world, it would, perhaps, be the best course for the British government to cease to push its traditional policy of opposition to Russia, and allow the Bear to occupy Armenia, leaving Austria and Russia to do their own fighting as to the disposition of European Turkey. Austria is really the country most deeply interested in the disposition of European Turkey. Let the latter country pull her own chestnuts out of the fire. She has never done anything to further British prestige. It would perhaps even be a wise policy for the British to cultivate Russian friendship, though opposition to Russia has been so long drilled into the Britisher, sometimes showing itself to an unreasonable extent, that it would require a great revulsion of feeling to think of an alliance with the northern colossus. Prudence, however, is often the better part of valor, and Great Britain, threatened as she is at present, is certainly not in a position to force the Eastern question.

While trouble appears to be slowly brewing in the East, all the world was suddenly startled by the almost savagely warlike attitude

of President Cleveland in the Venezuelan matter, and as the president's message was speedily adopted by congress, it may be regarded as the attitude of the United States as well as the president. This "bolt from the blue," as it has been called, is so recent as to be fresh in the minds of all newspaper readers. The president's message produced an outbreak of warlike feeling throughout the United States such as caused surprise both in Canada and the mother country. Of late however, our neighbors have cooled down considerably. Newspapers sometimes speak of the danger of war from this question being over, but this is a mistake. The matter remains in exactly the same state that it was when the president's bold utterances were first published. The surprise only has had time to wear off. In Great Britain the feeling seems to be that there is little danger of war with the United States and the sentiment expressed there is much less bellicose than in the republic. The matter is regarded largely as an electioneering dodge, but this does not remove the real danger of the situation. For Canada an armed conflict over this or any other question involving Britain and the United States, would be most distressing. The greatest hope for an amicable settlement of the matter is found in the vast commercial interests existing between the British Empire and the Republic, and these interests are now making themselves felt in the cause of peace.

No first surprise of the Venezuelan trouble had scarcely passed away when another and even more startling situation is suddenly sprung upon the world, and the British people in particular, arising from the invasion of the Transvaal Republic by a body of British subjects. It is not the trouble in Africa itself, but the position taken by Germany in the matter, which has caused the greatest excitement in Great Britain. The Dutch African Republic is only a semi-independent country. By the treaty which Mr. Gladstone made with the Boers, as the people are called, they were given the management of their own internal affairs, but British suzerainty of the country was maintained. Since this arrangement was made with the Boers, a large British population has gone into the Transvaal, owing to the discovery of rich minerals, and towns have grown up as if by magic. The Boers, while taxing the newcomers heavily, have refused to give them the franchise, or any share in citizenship, fearing that they would eventually make the country simply a British colony. Hence the trouble and the raid of a number of British subjects into the Transvaal from the neighboring British territory. The home authorities did their best to prevent the raid when they learned of it, but they were too late to stop it. The action of Germany in relation to this matter has caused a wild feeling of excitement throughout Great Britain, and the most intense bitterness is shown against the Germans. In fact the Venezuelan matter has sunk into utter insignificance as viewed in Great Britain, compared with the feeling stirred up against Germany by the action of its emperor. The first action of Germany was a curt note, asking the position of the British Government in regard to the