

Messrs. Krupp, the great cannon-founders, have turned out a gun weighing no less than 255 tons; its calibre is 13½ in., the barrel is 40 feet in length, and the greatest diameter of the gun 6½ ft. The weight of the projectile is not given, but it is certain that for such a piece of ordnance it would exceed a ton, and the range of the gun is 12 miles. So perfect is the machinery that it can be fired twice in a minute; but as the cost of every shot will be from \$1,250 to \$1,500, it strikes us more strongly as another step towards the future impossibility of war than in any other light, though it would no doubt strike still more strongly any object it might happen to hit, should it ever be really used in actual warfare.

Among other tariff increases we regret to observe the re-imposition of the duty on small fruits. Last year a duty of three cents a pound was put on packages in which the fruits are put up. The duty now placed on the fruit itself raises the impost on the whole to over six cents per pound. As the American season for berries is over, or almost over, before ours begins, there is no element of competition between the home and foreign growths to justify this tax, which will be looked upon, after some years of cheap fruit, as a considerable hardship, by the increasing numbers who have rightly come to regard fresh fruit, particularly in spring time, as, if not a necessary, at least the most wholesome and desirable of luxuries.

The Chinese Government is contemplating a revolution in the coinage of that country, which is now of copper, ranging in value from about a mill to a coin worth about 20 cents in face value, without either gold or silver coins. Bars of gold and silver bullion, however, are used in commerce, and the Mexican silver dollar circulates extensively in the seaboard cities. It is now proposed by the Chinese Government to make silver a money metal, and to issue a series that will correspond somewhat to our dollars, halves, quarters and dimes. The coinage will be uniform throughout the vast empire, with its 430,000,000 population—at least six and a half times that of the United States. This will open a new market for the silver of the world, and ought to make silver higher in price and aid in re-establishing its old-time ratio with gold.

The *Toronto Globe* is authority for the statement that a statistician estimates that when the United States have got through paying the men who fought for the Union in the "late unpleasantness," there will be found to have been expended in bounties and pensions alone the sum of \$4,900,000,000—or more than the value of all the lands, houses and slaves in the South at the beginning of the war. These figures scarcely seem exaggerated in view of the fact that the military appropriations of the Republic for 1890 will very nearly, if not quite, equal those of Germany. The smaller expenditure on army and navy is made up for by the enormous pension outlay. Such a calculation as the above, even if not strictly within bounds, is not an attractive one to any Canadians who may be possessed with a hankering for sharing the glories of the Great Republic.

Cremation seems to be fast growing in favor all over the civilized world. At Woking Cemetery the number of cremations is steadily increasing. In three years, from 1884 to 1887, the annual average was 8. In 1888 there were 26. In 1889 the number increased to 46, the total number at the end of the year having been exactly 100. This year there have been several every week. In France, at the new crematorium in Paris, there were 35 ordinary cremations in 1889, but the number of stillborn children and the bodies from the hospitals and anatomical schools is so large that incineration is continually going on both night and day. The *Journal d'Hygiène* says that the total number was nearly 3,000 in the year. At Rome the numbers were 119 in 1886, 155 in 1887, and 202 in 1888. At Milan and other Italian towns the numbers are rapidly increasing, as they are in Germany and the United States.

Schiaparelli, one of the most skilful and experienced of living astronomers, has since 1862 devoted himself largely to observations of the planet Mercury. The results are most interesting. If he is correct Mercury displays in his axial rotation a phenomenon analogous to that of the moon. He concludes that the rotation of Mercury on his axis is completed in 28 days, the period of his revolution round the sun. Consequently, as with the moon to the earth, one hemisphere is constantly illumined by the sun and subjected to an inconceivable heat, while the other side is in a state of darkness and almost equally inconceivable cold. It used to be generally accepted that the axial rotation of the nearest planet to the sun was about the same in time as that of the earth. Schiaparelli's minute observations on Mars, which are also very curious, have been confirmed by two other eminent astronomers, and it is expected that his startling assertions with regard to Mercury will receive similar confirmation.

Considering the attainments and penetration of national characteristics in which Professor Goldwin Smith must be ranked with the best historians, even in the absence of any considerable historical work of his own, there is something absolutely astonishing in his recent dictum that "the social movements" of Canada and the States are the same. Setting aside the all-important consideration of the social bearings of American Divorce laws, the divergent tendencies are innumerable. We are reminded, amongst many points from which selection is open, that "in Chicago the theatres are open on Sunday; in Toronto the tram-cars are only allowed to run on that day during the time that they are required to convey the inhabitants to and from their places of worship." As a matter of fact the difference is understated, as the street cars do not run at all on Sundays in that city. Throughout Canada we may safely say that Sunday is observed in a manner very different from that in which it is kept in many American cities.

If the *Montreal Witness* were a less reliable sheet it would be difficult to credit a statement made in its columns that "The Story of the Death of General Brock and of the ocean fight between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* have been eliminated from the school books of the Province of Ontario, lest they should make young Canadians hate their neighbors, the people of the United States." It is nothing less than a disgrace and an infamy to any public school system that the truth of history so far as it can be attained should be suppressed or garbled, independently of the remark added by the *Witness* that "we shall probably have to wait a century at least for the neighbors in question to reciprocate this noble and Christian consideration."

We regret to observe that a good deal of carelessness and indifference prevails in the N. W. as to cattle-breeding. All sorts of bulls, many of them of the most inferior types, roam the prairies, and the results will be disastrous to the export trade to Great Britain if steps be not soon taken to prevent indiscriminate mixture. The *Cochrane Ranch* ship cattle which give satisfaction, and the reason is that very few other cattle drift on to their range. Horse-breeding, though improving, is also far too indiscriminate. So much of the future prosperity of the N. W. depends on good stock that it cannot but be a matter of great regret that the Territories should handicap themselves at the outset with the disadvantage of a large scrub stock which in a new country its settlers had many facilities for avoiding.

We think it to be regretted that the Dominion Government has decided to adhere to the *de jure* system of enumeration in taking the census of 1891. This system permits the enrolment of temporary absentees, and is manifestly open to error in results. No doubt a *de facto* census, giving the persons within the bounds of the Dominion on a given date, would be likely to show a population somewhat smaller than we might justly claim. Mr. Blake suggests a separate column in the returns for those regarded as temporarily absent, and a time limit of absence beyond which the census-takers shall not go. This the Government have promised to consider. Undoubtedly no precaution that foresight can contrive should be omitted to ensure a trustworthy estimate of the population next year. An extraordinary feature of omission in the last census-taking was the absence in the statistics of nationality of a division for native born Canadians. This important shortcoming will of course be rectified in 1891.

"The indignation in Newfoundland against the Anglo-French *modus vivendi* regarding the fisheries is daily growing. At a meeting at St. John's to protest against the arrangement the stars and stripes were displayed prominently, and speakers advocated an appeal to the United States in case England would not protect the rights of her colony." This is the *St. John Globe's* way of putting it, but the Franco-Newfoundland difficulty really seems to demand thorough pluck and resolution on the part of the Imperial Government. The great mischief, foreseen by many at the time, of the American purchase of Alaska was that, however remote and hyperboreal, there lay in it the serious disadvantage to Canada of being, so to speak, outflanked, a disadvantage we shall not have fully realized until the international boundary is completely settled. An appeal to the United States—though there are many considerations which render such a course, or at all events any serious result from it—highly improbable, would place Canada between two outflanking territories. Under any circumstances the position resulting from any hesitation on the part of Great Britain to firmly maintain the rights of the people of Newfoundland would be a heavy blow to British connection. The present complicated situation is of course the result of England's old-time, easy-going and over-generous style of treaty-making, and it can only now be remedied at great cost. Remedied, however, it ought to be at any cost, even that of war with France, for there is no safety from French encroachment and aggressiveness but the absolute extinction of their rights, upon which unfortunately they set a very high value.

We alluded recently to Sir Frederick Middleton as the almost monopolist—Sir A. Caron being the only other official decorated—of reward and honor for the suppression of the Riel revolt. We fancy there was some dissatisfaction on this score felt by officers who held commands in that service, and we have a suspicion that, had all Regimental Commanders received the C. M. G., we should have heard less of the grievances of certain French Lt.-Colonels. And, indeed, it would have been no great stretch to afford to those officers, many of whom well deserved the distinction, this gratification for very arduous service. It is curious, in this connection, to recall the orders granted for the Expedition of 1870. General the Hon. Sir James Lindsay received, if we remember rightly, the G. C. M. G., Colonel Wolseley the K. C. M. G., and the following officers the C. M. G.—Lt.-Colonels Fielden, 60th Rifles; Jarvis, Ont. Rifles; Cassault, Quebec Rifles; McLeod, Brigade Major; Irvine, Senior Commissariat Officer; and Dr. Young, P. M. O.; and it was understood that but for certain objections the list would have been larger. In that expedition there was no fighting whatever. Previously Lt.-Colonels Osborne-Smith, Chamberlayne and McEachren received the C. M. G. for service against Fenjans. The absence of this kind of recognition in the Riel affair is even singular. The C. M. G. is a cheap gratification to bestow, though highly valued by Canadian Militia Officers when fairly won by good military service, and there is no doubt whatever that it would have been well earned on many hands. It is well known that the services of Col. Van Straubonzee, for instance, were of the most material consequence at Batoche, while the names of Strange, Otter, Herchmer, Henry Smith, and others, readily occur. But these officers had the disadvantage of serving where the exertions of subordinates failed to inspire more cordial recognition than the formal mention in orders.