

Cotemporary Press.

DO WE WANT THIS? BY REV. W. P. ALCOCK. IN N. Y. WITNESS.

American travellers have often asserted that the wine countries of Europe are free from the curse of intemperance...

The Revue des Deux Mondes of November 15, 1876 (p. 410), states that three or four million hectolitres, or from 66 to 88 million gallons...

It is not many years since the French Legislature appointed a committee to investigate the evils of intemperance and suggest a remedy.

M. Jules Simon, the chairman, presented a startling report of the sad condition of France...

All my readers will remember an article in the Witness of September, entitled, "American Workmen from a European Point of View."

It is the duty of governments to resist the demands of the people, and not to tolerate the invasion of a place by bars and wine-shops.

Long ago the wise man said, "There is no new thing under the sun." We are continually being reminded that the civilization of ancient times was nearer a decline than we are.

DR. DALE ON PEOPLE WHO DO NOT VOTE. The Rev. Dr. Dale in his recent lectures on Preaching at Yale College, spoke as follows in relation to the duty of voting.

What words of wisdom add one touch to the crown to the boys which the post Whittier is crowned on this the seventieth anniversary of his birth?

ST. JOHNS NEWS. There are now thirty nuns employed in this establishment, and it is said they are doing as much as the nuns of the convent in the west.

THE MARRIAGE OF LOISE ANTOINETTE RED ISLAND. The Marquis of Lorne contemplates crossing the Atlantic next year.

THE CARPENTERS' STRIKE AT DUMBARTON. After lasting for a period of three months, it is a fair way of settlement.

THE MARTINIAN FAIR WAS once a large and important cattle market, like all country fairs it has become a small degree and beautifully less.

AT A RECENT CONFERENCE between the Clyde shipbuilders and ironworkers a proposition was submitted by the employers that if the men returned work at once...

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HOW THE CUBANS OBTAIN ARMS AND AMMUNITION.

Major Barnett, of the Cuban army, now in New York, tells the following to a reporter of the New York Sun...

WESTERN STATES.

A gentleman well acquainted with the produce trade in the West, writes to the Witness...

THE "DESCENT OF MAN."

A correspondent of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph writes here in a private account, from the Senate House, Cambridge, when Darwin was invited to see his L.L.D....

THE TELEPHONE ANTICIPATED.

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WEEKLY WITNESS.

ADVERTISING RATES: Ten cents per line each insertion. Births, 25c per insertion. Marriages, 50c. Deaths, 25c. Contract 1 year, \$3.50 per line. Rates, 6 months \$2.00. 3 months \$1.25.

CUTS or LARGER TYPE double the above rates. Contracts payable quarterly in advance.

Five is the minimum number of lines for which an advertisement is taken.

DAILY WITNESS, 10c per line first insertion, and 5c per line after insertion, on outside pages.

ISSUED LAST WEEK.

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Number copies of WEEKLY WITNESS DAILY: 26,400. Total: 114,538.

CAMPAIGN NOTES.

No competitor for the skates or any other prize should neglect to complete the amount he is aiming to obtain during the holidays. This week he will find it the best of all the year to gain subscribers, notwithstanding that last year more was done after the New Year than before it.

THE CAMPAIGN MAP is in hands and progresses favorably, although much difficulty is experienced in obtaining all the information necessary to its creditable completion. As a map alone it will be of great value, and should in no slight degree add to the circulation of the different WITNESS publications.

THE VERY GREAT INCREASE in the circulation of the WITNESS publications at this time is a matter worthy of comment. Last year, it may be remembered that there was some slight decrease in the circulation of the WITNESS and MESSAGERS. This year not only that decrease is being made up, but at present it seems as if a very great advance on the year before that, the best as regards circulation in the history of the WITNESS, would be made.

THE RENEWAL WEEK has come. This is the time for every subscriber of the WITNESS to enclose his dollar and ten cents in an envelope and forward it to the publishers. We would not like to part with a single subscriber this season. For a year or more the WITNESS has travelled to them on stormy days and fair days. Its many employees in Montreal and all parts of the country have worked unremittingly to make it worthy of approval. Most say they have succeeded. If this is so, and the old and new friends of the paper desire to encourage the attempt to make a paper of the nature of the WITNESS a much more powerful influence than at present, they can do so by enclosing with their own subscription that of another, in which case \$2 will pay for the two. If every one did this, the circulation of 25,000 would be doubled; this is hardly likely just at once, but every one can do something towards that end.

WE HAVE NOT received many notices of the prizes enumerated in the "supplementary list," but all so far received have been complimentary, with the exception of a reference to the magic lantern, which one who has won it says is "worth nothing," and intends to return. No one need work for magic lanterns unless he pleases. The skates are as popular as ever, as the following letter certifies:—

LINDSAY, Dec. 21. SIR,—I received your prize "Canadian Club Skates" to-day by express, charges paid, which I did not expect. Although they are not quite long enough, they will do for this winter, and I hope to get a better pair next year. When I first saw the skates, I did not know how to put them on the toe of my boot, but when I showed them to my father he soon showed me, and now I can manage them splendidly. My father and mother and brothers and sisters are all delighted with them. I remain yours very truly, W. M.

—We invite communications from farmers giving their experience on matters interesting to them as a class, also enquiries which, if we cannot answer ourselves, some of our readers may.

—Will each subscriber do us the favor of noticing on the address of his or her papers the date at which subscription expires, and renew it in good time to prevent the operation of the necessarily invariable rule of cheap papers, namely, to discontinue when subscription expires.

The Witness.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1877.

RENEWALS.

Our friends, whose subscriptions end in December or the beginning of January, will confer a favor on us by sending in their renewals at once, and not keep them over to the last week of the year. This is necessary, owing to the large number of letters which arrive at this period.

PAYING DEBTS.

There is a large class of people who do not pay their debts because they cannot. We are assured that there is no wrongdoing: "I do not pay my debts just now, it is true, and I am very sorry for it; but when a man has not got the money what can he do? Go and preach to So-and-so about paying debts; he could clear off all his if he liked, and I think it is a shame that he does not pay when he can; but I can only live on in hopes of a better time, when I will be only too glad to pay every cent I owe with interest. I can't speak fairer than that, can I?" So he quiets his conscience, and goes on as before, living beyond his means and getting deeper and deeper into debt, and yet expecting all the time, like Mr. Micawber, that something will turn up whereby he will be enabled to pay. This man imagines that he is acting honorably only because he will not stop and face the facts, and so he goes on to live out a thriftless life, and to leave a ruined estate to probably thriftless successors. In a former article we spoke chiefly of farmers, because they are the most numerous class, and upon their habits depend more than of those of any other class the

THE OPENING OF THE SESSION.

Whatever the DeBoucherville Government is noted for, and there are some directions in which it has quite a reputation, it is not remarkable for advising important speeches from the throne. These are generally about as meagre as they can be, and the public can hardly be said to be appreciably wiser for the information contained in them. As far as can be judged from the Lieut. Governor's speech, the Ministers intend to confine themselves to the work of administration almost entirely. Bills concerning agriculture, reformatories, asylums, and the License Act, we are told, will be placed before the Legislature, but the only measure which is claimed to be important is one to give greater efficiency to the public service. Their only measures for the efficiency of the public service so far have been in the increase both of officials and salaries, and the increased efficiency is not appreciated by those for whose benefit the changes may, as a fiction, be supposed to have been made, as in the case of the division of Montreal for the purpose of registry. There is one point in which, from all reports, there has already been a great increase of efficiency in the Civil Service, and that has been in regard to its value as an electioneering agent in Dominion elections. There will hardly be any direct provisions in the "important measures" to be submitted to make it more efficient in this regard. The other promised measures may contain something important, but their chances are the way, for no hint of such proposed nature has yet escaped, and perhaps the Cabinet has hardly decided the matter, so that no important changes can be in view. The reference to reformatories and asylums is painfully suggestive of extensions of the conventional system into our provincial machinery, and we are even led to ask if the agricultural measures proposed may not be the establishment of agricultural colleges taught by abbés, or perhaps ecclesiastical granges presided over by curés. We are quite reconciled to the idea of having little legislation from this Government, for we have no confidence that in any general measure it would be regulated by right principles. Some of its members may possess these in the main, but the majority both of the Government and of their supporters would be best pleased with legislation dangerous in principle and unjust and arbitrary in practice. The statement in reference to the public accounts will not set at rest the rumor of direct taxation, but it is probable that nothing will be done in that direction this year, even if it should be necessary. A general election for the Dominion Parliament has to take place before the meeting of the next session, and it might be very damaging to the Conservative party in this province if direct taxation were imposed by the Provincial Government before that time. The loan rumored to have been effected with a Montreal bank, a few days ago, may be for the purpose of tidying over the interval. The Budget Speech will, or at least ought to, give such information as will decide this point. If there be a deficit, it will be one which cannot be overcome without additional taxation of some sort. As far as can be judged from the Speech from the Throne, if there is to be any exciting legislation this session it may undertake from independent members, who may undertake to push more measures as vicious in principle as the Spruce Gum Bill of last session. The only possibility in connection with Government measures is in regard to the Budget and financial legislation and administration.

The first debate of the Quebec session seems to have been a pointless affair on both sides of the House. Mr. Israel Tarte, Bishop Langevin's member for Bonaventure, whose greenest laurels hitherto have rested on his "priest-ester" circular in the Charlevoix contest between Messrs. Langevin and Tremblay, established himself as a parliamentary phenomenon. That his party are not proud of his speech is to be found in the fact that the Nouveau Monde and the Mincree both condense it very much, and the Gazette suppress it altogether. Mr. Tarte spoke of everything but the Address with as much vehemence and relevancy as an election street orator. Mr. Thornton, the seconder, on the other hand, spoke so sensibly that one could wish him a younger man. Mr. Joly showed some of the instincts of a statesman, though not of a politician, in bringing up the significant troubles in this city last summer, seeing that those troubles were the outcome of some of our deepest subjects of solicitude which our province affords to day. His proposal that national processions should be abolished lacked the element of the practical, as Orangemen take as much umbrage at processions which do not come under that name as some of their opponents do to those which it is supposed to describe. Moreover, it is not an easy thing to suppress processions by Act of Parliament. In fact, a one-sided party or national processions are not probably the best way to perpetrate the evil. A general understanding that all processions would henceforth be discontinued would, whether it took form in a law or not, probably be attended with the happiest results. Mr. Bachand's opposition seems to be of the sweeping kind. It is almost sufficient for him that the Government has taken some course, for him to take the opposite, no matter what the question. It is plain that the real question of the session is the financial one. The rumors as to the \$500,000 loan from a Montreal bank were confirmed by the statement that such a loan had been effected for six months at seven per cent, a rate not complimentary to the Province from which it is exacted, especially in view of the ease in the money market, and the character of the security. A far more important question in connection with the finances is that as to the balance of ordinary income and expenditure. Railroad expenditures are spoken of in connection with this loan, but it is not stated that it was all applied in that way. If there is really a deficit, there cannot be much between the province and direct taxation. A debt of \$8,000,000 has already been piled up to twelve or thirteen millions before the railway enterprises on hand are completed. Such a debt would require a good deal more than half of the Dominion subsidy to meet the interest on it, and it would then be difficult, if not impossible, to find money for the ordinary expenditure without direct taxation or the shifting of some of the burdens from the province to the municipalities, which would be equivalent to it. It is not probable that in his budget speech of this year, the Provincial Treasurer will repeat his endeavor of last year to make the province feel rich by declaring that its borrowing power was \$20,000,000, because the Dominion subsidy would furnish interest for that amount at five per cent. It was most misleading to speak of the whole subsidy could be applied in payment of interest on debt, for it meant that the other expenses of the Government could be met from other sources of income. The Treasurer will indeed have the heavy end of the Quebec Government to bear. In all other matters the De Boucherville Government, with its clerical tendencies, can do pretty much what it pleases, and be quite secure in its hold of power. But with direct taxation, even the spiritual in-

THE EASTERN QUESTION AND ENGLAND.

England's relations to the Eastern Question are apparently much more critical now than they have been for many months past. Parliament has been summoned to meet earlier than usual, and the Conservative papers which can speak with some show of authority as to the present, assert that it is to give the Government the support which they need in action which they have decided upon. The least disturbing view which has been taken of the action is that of the Times, which admits that such a course would, by a previous Ministry, have meant a demand for a grant of money to support some step taken by the Queen on the advice of her Ministers, but thinks that this time the object is to leave the Ministers forming a resolution. The Times does not think that England's interests are yet threatened, but thinks they may be by the time Parliament meets, and alludes to the irritation in the British mind at Russia's ambition and Serbia's treason—rather a new justification for the Times. The Daily News, on the contrary, fears that Lord Beaconsfield has summoned Parliament rather to secure indemnity for some action taken than to consult in regard to a future policy. The Post says the Cabinet is united in its resolve, and that the beginning of the new year will see the inception of a clear and national policy. The Standard gives as the danger to Britain, not the success of the Russians, but the license given to Russia by Germany and Austria, to make use of the success as she will. Negotiations between Russia and Turkey alone, we have already pointed out, would stimulate war feeling in England, and already it seems to have aroused it to such a degree that Parliament is to meet sooner than usual in order to vote money for the army. We do not suppose that Russia wishes to fight England, for Turkey, backed by English subsidies and England's military resources, would be a very different power from the Turkey which is now fighting her. Decisive action on the part of England, now before Austria has gone too far to recede may therefore over the danger of war, but the general disposition of the British Parliament and the British people is to support its Government in any war upon which it enters, and if Lord Beaconsfield takes steps which will lead to war, unless Russia yields something, it is only too probable that the present Conservative Parliament, chosen when there was no thought of such an issue, may support him. The greatest interests of Britain are bound up in peace, but the British people, if not military, are warlike, and would hardly be content to see a problem which has always been regarded as an European one, settled by Russia and Turkey alone, especially while Russia has large and victorious armies on Turkish territory.

CANADIAN ULTRAMONTANES AND FRENCH POLITICS.

It is easy to understand what peculiar anxiety our Canadian Ultramontanes have been watching the struggle in France between President MacMahon and the Republicans. They have vaulted to the skies every arbitrary and despotic act of MacMahon in his resistance to the national will, and have saluted in him the restorer of the ancient bulwark, the saviour of the Church of France, the coming man upon whom the faithful relied to turn the strength of that great nation against Italy, in a war for the restoration of the Pope's temporal sovereignty. It is also easy to understand what consternation they receive the news that President MacMahon has finally yielded to the inevitable, and consented to the formation of a Republican ministry. They are dreadfully disappointed at the prospect of France settling down as a Republic, devoted to religious equality, popular education and all similar features of that modern civilization which is anathematized in the Syllabus. They are to be pitied, as is anyone who sees his cherished hopes suddenly dissipated. The Canadian sees nothing but disaster in the near future for France, MacMahon has ignobly surrendered to the canaille, and the foundations of society will soon be broken up. The Nouveau Monde vents its rage in abuse of Dufaure and his Cabinet. It passes all the new ministers in review and finds them either knaves or fools. But when it comes to M. Waldeck, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Protestant, and a man with an English name, the leading Ultramontane organ in Canada can not contain itself. Here is what it says about him:—"M. Waldeck, formerly an English subject, naturalized in France by the grace of Napoleon III., becomes Minister of Foreign Affairs. The day that the department of public instruction was handed over to this renegade was one of shame, but how much greater the shame to-day that the exterior policy of France is directed by this same renegade, who is not a Frenchman. Where did this intruder learn to understand the traditional Empire that Thiers reproached the second Empire with disregarding and disdaining? Where is the time when the French people sang with enthusiasm, 'Never shall an Englishman reign in France'? To-morrow not only will the Englishman reign, but he will reign for the benefit of France and Italy, before whom he will abuse himself, were it only in his quality of Republican." The hatred of the Nouveau Monde and of all other Ultramontanes to everything English and Protestant is perfectly natural. English Protestants have a deep-rooted aversion to Ultramontane doctrines, as was shown recently in Drummond and Quebec East, and will be made still more manifest in the next general elections. But in the case of Waldeck he is by education, if not by birth, a Frenchman; except that he is a Protestant, it is hard to see why he is more of an intruder than the Irish MacMahon. He is the most trusted of the two by the French people of to-day, who are the proper judges of who shall rule them, and history will, doubtless, record that he has rendered greater services to France. If the Nouveau Monde's rule were to be applied to the United States what would become of the myriads of foreign-born Roman Catholics who hold high official positions there? But then the United States is not an Ultramontane country, nor is France so henofoth, if the Republic can be maintained. Suppose the Nouveau Monde's rule were to be applied to Canada. This country forms part of a Protestant Empire, and is governed according to constitutional principles. The Ultramontane portion of our population openly profess a primary allegiance to a foreign potentate; witness the Guibord case, the Pontifical Zouave incident on the steamboat last summer, and the writings in the Ultramontane press. The teachings and practice of this section of the population are antagonistic to and subversive of constitutional government. The Hon. Mr. Laurier recognized this fact in his Quebec speech. Now, surely here, if anywhere, according to the Nouveau Monde's theory, the supreme authority would be justified in excluding Ultramontanes from all official positions. This is where our contemporary's own principles would land him if they were rigorously enforced in Canada.

ART IN SCHOOL.

The ordinary process of school education is to take the child away from what he wants to train himself in, and set him to what he does not like. Time was, in fact, when the less he liked the more it was supposed to be good for him. The same principle held good in medicine and in religion. A child's natural impulse is to be incessantly active and to exercise every muscle. The schoolmaster's chief work, and the chief work of his ferule, was to make him be still. The child is a natural naturalist and natural philosopher, always examining the facts and laws of nature. The schoolmaster bids him leave that trifling, and learn that "horse" is a noun, and "ride" a verb, and "horseback," well, what is that? People are learning better now, but are doing worse, for the simple little country school of a generation or two ago had to leave a great deal to nature after all. Children had a wonderful power of drawing out the hours that they spent in the poisonous school-room, and luxuriating with every power of their being in the free air of outside. But our better systems are correcting all that. Large schools with many teachers and much competition, have managed to keep the child's brain at it all the time, in school and out of school, and to drive Nature's teaching clean away. What we have thus lost we are beginning to see must be artificially restored. The fresh air which the free meadow and brookside once poured into the lungs, laden with the breath of violets, must now be secured by a complicated system of flues and steam-pipes, which have never secured it yet. The muscular power which the young wrestlers and boxers once developed in forbidden ways is now symmetrically built up on parallel and horizontal bars without the occasional back eye, but not without danger of some calamity. But still the great nature-love lacks an outlet for its longings. The principle of the kindergarten as it has come to us from those self-devoted missionaries of true culture, Pestalozzi and Froebel, is the training of the perceptive powers in observation, and of the active powers in action. Plays were organized into lessons, and art was taught in play. The word "art" as now used covers largely the thing lacking in our systems, whose highest production is a master of arts. Now the fact is that in the natural qualities which make an artist civilized peoples are not equal to those less cultivated. Put modern farming machines beside the canoe, and bow, and quiver, and tomahawk of the savage; beauty forms no part of the thought of the former, while it is in every line of the latter. The ornamentation of a club for breaking his enemy's head is evidently a life work with the South Sea Islander, and no mean job he makes of it. Barbarous belles can make correct and harmonious use of the most daring colors, which with us would be sure to be used vulgarly if used at all. Our modes of dress are absurd in a landscape, while those of the mountaineers, whether of Ciscausia, of the Rocky Mountains, or of Scotland, would be a principal feature of beauty even in such scenes. Our modern architecture is hideous beside the picturesque cottages of peoples we despise. It is true still, for God has made it so, that it is impossible to make anything, whether cricket bat, plow or ship, perfect in adaptation for its use without making it beautiful; but our system of education has evidently done all it could to rob us of the natural love of nature and of nature's beauty, which is born in us. The best creature which has been found for this mistake throughout the European school systems is making the teaching of drawing as universal as reading and writing. We have no doubt that as soon as this is done with us it will be found that the new art is not only as much within the reach of all as its better established rivals, but equally useful to all. Men drew before they could write. They understood pictures better than they do reading. But pictures are the least part of the object of drawing lessons. Every idea of construction is properly communicated by drawing, and every form of beauty is developed by the same faculty that is trained in drawing. Most important of all, by drawing we learn to observe and to note and utilize what we observe.

LITERARY REVIEW.

One of the most important of the illustrative holiday books this year is issued by Harper Bros., under the title of Pottery and Porcelain of all Times and Nations. It is by Mr. William C. Prime, whose own collection, formed long before the present rage for ceramics began, is one of the richest and most extensive in the United States. This work, which is profusely illustrated, gives all the information that the amateur collector will ordinarily care to have. Dr. Prime reviews the general history of the art from its early manifestations at the tower of Babel and in Egypt to the forms of the present day. It is written on the theory that the reader knows nothing even of the rudiments of the art, so that the book may be of interest and value to the inexperienced possessor of a few inherited pieces of old china or crockery, as well as to the laborious collector. The volume concludes with an elaborate table of factory and artist's marks by means of which curious possessors of bits of old china can search out their origin, and enthusiastic collectors can classify their spoils. Contemporary Art in Europe, by Mr. S. G. W. Benjamin, is a very handsome book, which justifies its name by presenting an elaborate review of the three great European schools of art, the English, French and German, with portraits and descriptive sketches of living painters, while the works by which they are best known are reproduced in small but finely executed engravings. Mr. Benjamin's notices are appreciative. He does not confine himself to painting and sculpture, but includes architecture and pottery in his remarks, and concludes with the following suggestive hint:—"The best modern art, the truest art of all ages and climes, has been that which has been most faithful to the instincts of the period and race which gave it birth. If therefore we desire to see a worthy national school of art spring up in our land let us first of all be true to ourselves. . . . It is not by being ashamed of home art that the governments and art patrons of Europe have given art the stimulus it requires to raise it from a low, struggling condition to the point where it has become a source of wealth to a people and of glory to a nation." The papers on Art Decoration Applied to Furniture, by Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, which attracted so much attention as they appeared in the columns of "Harper's Monthly," have been collected in a volume with rich binding and gorgeous illustrations, and form, perhaps, the most comprehensive treatise on the subject extant. The volume is a full compendium of the rise and progress of household furniture, with clear descriptions of the characteristics of the various styles, and practical suggestions for their general use. "Furnishing," says Mrs. Spofford, "is an affair of genius and tact—that is, of thorough taste." "Unless these qualities are brought to bear upon it, the most magnificent garniture a room can have might as well be four pine chairs and a table for all the real harmony of effect and delight of home produced by it. Nor are these all; for as the house is not furnished, whose kitchen has not received the same attention as a kitchen, that its parlor receives as a parlor, and whose mistress goes without boudoir or dressing in the one place for the sake of any ornament in the other, so is the house unfinished, where a regard for others is not shown in matters that hardly come under the domain of taste at all—in provision of the stout chair that the stout person can use without fear of breaking; of the high-backed chair from which the stiff-limbed old person can rise without effort; of the low seat for the child to be happy in; unfurnished without such and other constant evidence of an unselfish care; as well as of beauty and knowledge of what has been done in beauty." The book cannot fail to be a welcome present to any lady interested in house-furnishing. Another book issued by the same publishers, which would be a well-spring of pleasure in every family of little ones, is our Children's Songs, in which a large collection of poems for every period of youth, from "Who Killed Cock Robin" to the "Young Lochinvar," is classified into "Songs for the Nursery," "Songs for Girlhood," "Songs for Boyhood," and "Sacred Songs." Those who have wished to familiarize their children with their own favorites, but have not been able to find them in any one volume, will probably be better satisfied with this collection than with any before issued. A Book of Gold is the title of a volume containing the later ballads and poems of Mr. J. T. Trowbridge, with illustrative pictures by the best artists. The most remarkable thing about this publication is its binding, which is quite unique in its effect. It is in half leather, with its paper sides lithographed in bronze and black, in imitation of the brass-bound missals of the Middle Ages. The Flood of Years, Mr. Bryant's latest poem, is published by G. P. Putnam's Sons in attractive style, with illustrations, designed and engraved by Mr. W. J. Linton. The poem, which critics say is destined to become one of the classics of the language, opens with the following lines:—"A Mighty Hand, from an exhaustless urn Pours forth the never-ending Flood of Years Among the nations. How the rushing waves Bear all before them! On the foremost coming Tosses and foams, and fills the air with roar Of mingled noises." Wonder World Stories is a collection of fairy stories, legends and tales of enchantment from the Chinese, French, German, Hebrew, Hindoostan, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Turkish, which will delight the young folks. The Captain's Cabin is the title of a "Christmas Yarn" by Edward Jenkins, M.P., which, unlike "Ginx's Baby" and other books by the same author, has in it no definite purpose of philanthropy or social reform. It is especially interesting to Canadians, because the scene is laid on one of the steamers of the Allan Line outward bound from Liverpool, and several of the characters depicted are Canadian. Prominent among the passengers of the "Kameschatka" was Sir Benjamin Peckman, a colonial knight, once an errand boy and afterwards a ruling partner in the shipping house of Macwhally & Salt, in Quebec, whose soul was absorbed in the "prompness of trade, of winning wealth, of keeping it, and of making it grow," concerning which property Mr. Jenkins remarks:—"It could cherish some hope for a prodigal, prodigal, debauched drunken character; but the steady establishment in any human being, by a gradual process from early youth to manhood, of the trading soul and spirit, with all that follows it of selfishness, hardness, want of scruple, low subtlety of intelligence, bloodless heart, impetuous conscience, consuming hunger and thirst after wealth, and insatiable desire to possess it at all hazards—present and future—is the most dismal and hopeless perversion of God-made nature that it is possible to conceive." Lady Peckman was an overbearing lady of doubtful antecedents, who patronized the Anglican church of the colony, and was, in the estimation of the Bishop, its real "defender of the faith." She was vulgar, and not hand some, but "nothing could stand against the combination of a millionaire with a conciliatory manner, and the spouse of a millionaire with the ambition to rule." Lady Peckman was bringing her daughter home from an English school, and had selected this ship in the hope that Lord Pendleburg, a young peer who had taken passage by it, might find the attractions of the heiress invincible. Among the other passengers were an Irish Master in Chancery, travelling under an assumed name, who unexpectedly found on board his former wife, who had recently sued for and obtained a divorce from him on evidence which afterwards turned out to be false; a Toronto dry goods merchant with his Scotch bride, and a Montreal haberdasher. A telegram reaches the vessel after it has sailed, with the description of a murderer who is known to be on board, and the cunning tricks of this man, with the incidents of a storm, the plans of Lady Peckman, and the final reconciliation and elopement of the Irish Master in Chancery with his former wife, form abundant material for a lively sketch. The book is being republished by Messrs. Dawson. BOOKS RECEIVED. (For sale by Dawson Bros.—From Harper Brothers, New York.) POTTERY AND PORCELAIN of all Times and Ages, by WILLIAM C. PRIME, LL.D., 87. ART DECORATION APPLIED TO FURNITURE, by HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD. CONTEMPORARY ART IN EUROPE, by S. G. W. BENJAMIN, Author of "The East and the West," &c. THE BOOK OF GOLD AND OTHER POEMS, by J. T. TROWBRIDGE, \$2.50. OUR CHILDREN'S SONGS, Illustrated. HARPERS' HALF-HOURS, Series.—"Lord Clive," "Life and Writings of Addison," and "Wren Hastings," by Lord Macaulay, 25 cents each. THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN, A CHRISTMAS YARN, by EDWARD JENKINS, M.P. Illustrated by WALLIS MACKAY. (From G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.) THE FLOOD OF YEARS, by WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT. WONDER WORLD STORIES, from many different languages, collected and translated by Marie Perle and Margaret Deane. ACADEMY SKETCHES, comprising reproductions in fac-simile from drawings by the artists of 110 of the pictures in the Annual Exhibition for 1877, of the National Academy of Design, with descriptive notes by "Nemo." NOTES FROM QUEBEC. (From Our Special Correspondent.) QUEBEC, Dec. 20. OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. Mr. Vennor has proved only too true a prophet with his most predictions, as those who attended the opening of the Provincial Legislature on Wednesday last, in a steady downpour of rain, can testify. In spite, however, of the inclemency of the weather, a number of ladies graced by their presence the Legislative Council-room, and there was no perceptible diminution in the display of red coats and coons' feathers which the occasion usually calls forth. At the side of the throne, among others, was noticeable Mr. Police Commissioner Amyot, in the uniform of a volunteer officer in a rifle corps. On such an occasion one would have supposed that the Provincial Police would have been called out in their official capacity and gala dresses, and headed by their gallant leader in full policeman's fig; however, it would appear that our expensive provincial force are not even to be permitted to make themselves useful as ornaments. The whole of the internal arrangements of the House, thanks to the personal superintendence of the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, were even more than usually completed; and the whole proceedings were marked by order and regularity. The numerous personages entitled to special invitations were all comfortably seated without crush or confusion, and not a single hitch or mistake marred the solemnity of the proceedings. It has heretofore been considered usual, in the SPEECH FROM THE THRONE, to foreshadow the legislation of the coming session, and, in the event of any deficiency in the treasury, to allude to the causes to which it may be attributed. The present speech commends itself to public attention, if our notions of what a speech from the throne should be correct, as the most perfect sample conceivable of what such a speech should not be. Like the Ministerial press at the approach of the session, it has said—simply nothing. It seems that the brain new Civil Service Act already calls for tinkering. This will not cause much surprise, as last year's Act is, it seems, immediately about to be illustrated by the breaking of it in the case of the appointment of the English translator, Agriculture, reformatories, asylums and the license act, will also be dealt with. In the case of asylums it is to be hoped that stringent steps will be taken so as to prevent in future the possibility of the introduction of Government patients under foreign names, as is the case in the Beauport Asylum now with the notorious Louis Riel. It is needless to lay much stress on that point, as the abuses to which the present system may conduce, especially under the reign of an incompetent Attorney-General, have already been exposed in the open courts of law. The fact that the public accounts will be furnished, and supplies asked, has nothing that is very startling in it, except, perhaps, its brevity. The accounts themselves, however, if rumors can be credited, will leave nothing to be desired in the way of surprise and discomfort. Besides a large deficiency incurred by the interest due on the Railway Loan, a considerable sum will be required to refund to the insurance companies the heavy dues illegally exacted from them for the last two years by means of policy stamps. This sum will have to be provided for, and it is said further extensions of the railway policy are meditated. In one word, our Treasurer is in a fair way to recover his uneasiness at our celebrated twenty-million-dollar-borrowing-power being unexhausted. A reference has been made to the ARBITRATION BETWEEN THE PROVINCES, which, in the face of the attitude taken by the whole press of the Dominion on the award of the Fishery Commission, does not speak well for the tact and discretion of our local rulers. In the case of the fishery indemnity, even the most rabid Ultramontane papers are unanimous in agreeing that it would be the height of bad faith on the part of the American Government not to bow to the decision of the majority, though no stipulation that such decision should be final had been made. In the arbitration between the two provinces, it was distinctly agreed that the decision of two should be binding, and two, as a matter of fact, have made the award; and yet the Province of Quebec contests the award on the ground that their Commissioner resigned on finding that he had failed to induce either of the others to agree with him. Were the pretensions of this province tenable there would be an end to arbitration of any kind, as all that would be required would be for the party finding the decision likely to go against him to withdraw his representative. It were well if more good faith were shown in dealing with public matters. Any of the hon-

Family Reading.

THE LAST REDOUBT.

["With Mezzetta Ah." Vide the Times, Sept. 29.]

Kacelyev's clove still felt. The cannon's bolts and the rifle's pelt; For a last redoubt up the hill remained; By the Russ yet held, by the Turk not gained.

Mehemet Ali stroked his beard; His lips were clenched and his look was weird; Round him were ranks of his ragged folk, Their faces blackened with blood and smoke.

"Clear me the Muscovite out!" he cried, Then the name of "Allah!" echoed wide, And the fezzes were waved and the bayonets lowered.

And on to the last redoubt they poured. One fell, and a second quickly stopped; The gap that he left when he reeled and dropped; The third—a third straight filled his place; The second—and a fourth kept up the race.

Many a feat in the mud was crushed, Many a throat that cheered was hushed, Many a heart that sought the crest Found Allah's arms and a hour's breast.

Over their corpses the living sprang, And the ridge with their musket-rattle rang, Till the faces that lined the last redoubt Could see their faces and hear their shout.

In the redoubt a fair form towered, That cheered up the brave and chid the cow ard; Brandishing blade with a gallant air, His head erect and his bosom bare.

"Fly! they are on us!" his men implored; But he waved them on with his waving sword. "It cannot be held; 'tis no shame to go!" But he stood with his face set hard to the foe.

Then clang they about him, and tugged and knelt, He drew a pistol from out his belt, And fired it blank at the first that set Foot on the edge of the parapet.

Over that first one toppled; but on Clambered the rest till their bayonets shone, As hurriedly fled his men dismayed, Not a bayonet's length from the length of his blade.

"Yield!" But aloft his steel he flashed, And down on their steel it ringing clashed; Then back he reeled with a bladeless hit, His honor full, but his life-blood split.

They lifted him up from the dabbled ground His limbs were shapely, and soft, and round, No down on his lip, on his cheek no shade—"Bismillah!" they cried, "'tis an infidel maid!"

Mehemet All came and saw The reddened breast and the tender jaw; "Make her a bier of your arms," he said, "And daintily bury this dainty dead!"

"Make her a grave where she stood and fell, 'Gainst the jacks' scratch and the vulture's smell, Did the Muscovite men like their maidens fight, In their lines we had scarcely supped to-night."

So a deeper trench 'mong the branches there Was dug for the form as brave as fair; And none, her till the judgment trump and shout, Shall drive her out of the Last Redoubt.

ALFRED ALSTIN. —Cornhill Magazine.

SANTA CLAUS IN TROUBLE.

How very much I've pondered, And o'er the problem pondered, While busy with my toys— I should be sorry to be numb, What ever could or would befall Of all the girls and boys!

Without a Christmas they can't live, So Santa Claus must work and give; But oh, my labor's ponderous! My wages, to grow rich please, To give youth joy, and parents ease, Must be both good and wondrous.

Rushing food and wildest panic, Which startle banker and mechanic, Dare never make my quail; For not a girl nor any boy, Could hold esteem for Santa Claus, If once his funds should fail.

But I am growing old, my dears, And care increasing with the years That multiply so fast— When I was young and took my case, The children few or hard to please, How different was the past!

I'm busy now both day and night, I plan and work with all my might From one year to another; I've journeyed and toiled, too, A helpful and toiling crew, Who work like bees together.

I've many shops in every land, Where busy head and busy hand Fashion toys and fabrics rare; I've ships in sail on every sea, That bring me all the goods to me, Through all weather, foul and fair.

On Christmas Eve I'd no'er get through, But for the help of an extra crew, Who work with heart and hand, Some on teams with good and wood, Others on foot with baskets of food, Hurry along over the land.

They hunt up the needy and starving poor, Whom I, in my haste from door to door, By chance may overlook; Making no noise for fear of being heard, They throng in a smile and word of cheer, With here a toy and there a book.

And of each help I need much more, A fact I've hinted oft before. In sermon, prayer and book; And here anon my work is done, As I, with worried thought an' sin, Survey the grim outlook.

Of thousands with no laid-up stores, O cruel fate! as near their door, The wolf of hunger draws, Then help me, all ye powers, And endless, boundless gratitude Is yours, from Santa Claus. —Christian Union.

CERTAIN CHRISTMAS CEREMONIES.

["Harper's Bazar."] The festivities of Christmas are celebrated across the sea much more heartily than with us, with whatever heartiness we may wish to honor them. The day itself we undoubtedly observe and revere, but we have not, as a people, that power of relaxing which the descendants of our ancestors who have remained upon their native soil are wont to possess. We do not inherit the games and follies and cheerful customs which our emigrating fathers frequently were too gloomy, too weary, or too indifferently to cherish; and gift-giving and dining and church-going make the larger part of our celebration.

It is quite otherwise in England, where, in certain districts, the festivities are prolonged and numerous, and in many of them old pagan characteristics are recognizable without too much trouble, the early fathers of the Christian Church having adopted the rites of the people as a means of converting them to their religion, so that forms of the Roman Saturnalia, celebrated in honor of the entrance of the sun upon his northern journey, go now hand in hand with the hanging of the mistletoe by the Druids, and with the burning of the Yule-log of the Saxons, and other similar

heathen forms. At the season of the winter solstice the Druids cut, with a golden knife, from the oak, the tree sacred to the sun-god, the mistletoe, supposed to have magic and medicinal properties, and with great ceremony and sacrifice distributed it among the people for use as an offering to the deities of the forest and the stars. It is no longer hung up now, indeed, with an eye to those, but to the deities of the drawing-room, or rather, one might say, it is no longer plucked and hung up in the worship of the same old unsexed forces of nature, but to yet another unsexed power which many a youth and maiden recognize, and which many a man beneath the sacred plant. At the feast of Yule, held at the same time, the winter solstice, and probably so called from the old word signifying wheel, as marking a period in the earth's revolution, a wheel having long been the sign of the season since used to mark the feast of Odin and Thor, a custom that has dwindled into the burning of the Yule-log, today, although in certain districts composed of bundles of ash boughs bound together in a huge fascis, for every snap of which in burning the landlord or master is obliged to bestow upon his tenants and the poor, in other places a big old trunk fit to burn on those big old hearths, lugged in with great gloze, the hat of every passer raised as it creeps along the snow on its way to the great hall, where it is lighted by a brand of the last year's log, which has been carefully packed away for the purpose, and also carefully packed against other fire. This was a custom old in Herick's day, for he remembered it when he sang:

With the last year's brand Light the new block, and For good success in his spending, On your piece of hay That will last you all year, Come while the log is a-teending."

When the flames of the Yule-log, in the olden times, went wallowing up the chimney, the wassail bowl was filled and quaffed, if it is not now; and then the huge Christmas candle was lighted, and did not go out till after Twelfth-night. In other parts, instead of the wassail bowl, the people still take their cakes and cider, and proceed to the orchards on Christmas-eve, and having made offering of one of the cakes, pour a libation of cider upon the oldest apple-tree, the *deyenne* of the orchard, in thanks for that and all her other favors. In the same way, and with a belief that the sun shines clear at high noon on Christmas, the apple crop of the next year will be abundant. With all this, mistletoe, Yule-log, and orchard-sprinkling, the greatest but most decent merriment prevails, and every sort of game proper to the place and people is indulged in, seldom omitting the old-fashioned and the new raised, as snatched from the shallow dish over which brandy or rum has been poured and set afire. In the more ancient celebrations of Christmas, the variety of accompanying games was practically unlimited; some remnant of most of them remains, but many were too elaborate for the present time, and have been lost for days. There were the nummers, a sort of masquerades in direct descent from the old masquerades of the Saturnalia; the name meant nothing more than masks; but sometimes the nummers represented miracle plays, sometimes historical scenes, sometimes were merely a succession of superb or ridiculous masks and costumes.

To shorten winter's sadness, So where the folk with gladness Disguised all are coming, Right wondrously amusing.

Although mumming was abolished by the king's edict, after an attempted assassination under its cover, it still flourishes in the districts remote from the capital, usually expending itself on an absurd representation of a drama concerning St. George and the dragon for a consideration in silver.

It was when mumming and the attendant ceremonies of Christmas were at their height, that the Lord of Mistle, of whom we have read, had his residence at an office really located at Cambridge and Oxford and at the Inns of Court—a "master of the revels" making a little mimicry of royalty, having his treasurer, chamberlain, and guard of honor; and among the Templars the office was usually conferred only upon young men who were well-to-do, and one of them, who had surrendered his ban, the rod of office, having been knighted by the king himself. Of course advantage was taken of the license afforded by the revels under the lead of the Lord of Mistle, and it was made a subject of violent reproach by the preachers, who denounced the revels as a profane and impious Christians eternally to abominate them.

Amstom much less troublesome, if not so amusing as mumming, in those by-gone days, was the visit of the "waits," which still play after dark on Christmas-eve, and indeed on some evenings before and after that date. The waits were a band of wind instruments played upon, but gradually the word was transferred to the players. It seems, too, to have been a name given to the court minstrels, who patrolled the streets and sang the hours out, and a delightful custom that must have been of its sense of companionship and merriment, and that the waits were a band of wind instruments played upon, but gradually the word was transferred to the players. It seems, too, to have been a name given to the court minstrels, who patrolled the streets and sang the hours out, and a delightful custom that must have been of its sense of companionship and merriment, and that the waits were a band of wind instruments played upon, but gradually the word was transferred to the players. 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