

NEWS NOTES.

We do not necessarily believe the opinions of our correspondents in the following articles.

The crew is confirmed that King Mwanga has been badly beaten in Bulu, and that Uganda has finally relieved of his presence, with the Germans have him at a gun. The latter part of the intelligence will give the greatest pleasure to those who know Central Africa. We are sure Kaiser William's officers will enjoy his Majesty's captivity.

On the 27th ult. Booth terminated his prolonged fast, and left the small room in which he had been confined for 17 days. His exit was watched by the Vigilance Committee which had been specially constituted to watch him, and by a numerous mob. The first party for his fast was concluded on the 29th, but instead of breaking it, as he had arranged, he elected at the last moment to continue it for another week. During his fast Booth lost 10 lbs. After finally leaving his "living tomb," he went with his friends to the Gate Strand Tavern, where he partook of soup, a raw steak, and some sparkling Asti.

Many attempts have been made to enumerate the Kaiser's accomplishments, but the undertaking is fruitless, because the number of his achievements is so vast that it is impossible to do so. He has acquired the encyclopaedic life. During his recent visit to the Emperor of Austria, William II. is said to have revealed himself in quite a new light. After the State banquet, when he had drunk champagne and a few glasses of wine, he retired to his quarters, and his Majesty is said to have produced a couple of packs of cards from his helmet, and amused the company with conjuring tricks, showing a dexterity which might have made him a dangerous rival to Dabber of Berlin.

Young Mr. Walter Savage Landor, who dwells for a time among the hairy Ainus of Japan, had been seeking in the interests of an enterprising contemporary to penetrate the "kept" secrets of ages by going to Lhasa. But the Tibetans were too many for him. After nearly all his local servants had deserted him, the subjects of the Great Lama took him and two attendants prisoners, loaded him with chains, tortured and did him wrong until he died. Instead of doing that they put them out of Tibet, and now Mr. Landor is safe back in India, but not with a whole skin, seeing that he has been tortured and wounded by Mr. Landor. He is a promising artist, an interesting and painstaking writer, and a bold traveller. If he did not proceed very wisely in trying to win through the Tibetan wilds to the carefully-guarded capital, he is none the less to be commended with that account.

Few people on this side the Atlantic realize the magnitude of the traffic on the great American lakes. Comparing the average number of vessels passing through the St. Lawrence Canal with that of the Erie Canal, the traffic on the former is nearly contemporary to that of the latter. The number of vessels passing through the Egyptian waterway is 3,434, whilst those using the connecting channel of the lakes number 17,956, while, if we take into account the American canal, 16,806,781 tons against the Erie's 8,448,246. Two years ago the total tonnage on the lakes of 5,000 tons displacement. Now there are at least 20,000 tons, all high-powered steamers. Steel cargo steamers are now being constructed 415 feet in length, with 43 feet draught. This means that the average ocean steamer, European notions of a lake do not comprehend the vision of these huge hulls, with all the surroundings of a great sport.

Second-class traffic on railways, which has been under a cloud of late, and has abandoned years ago by the Midland Company, appears to be looking up, judging from railway statistics of 1896. First-class passengers showed an increase of 3 per cent., third-class 41 per cent., but second-class fell off by 14 per cent. This has been fully obtained, but the reduction of second-class to a slight excess over third-class. Taking the London and North-Western as an example, and the Board of Trade returns for 1896 as a datum, a person would have to travel for 40 years 10 hours a day, and for 10 years more at a speed of 20 miles a day, before his relative could claim compensation for his death. Such a condition is not given ordinary men, even if the average human life permitted it to exercise.

There has for some time past been much controversy on the question whether lunacy is or is not considerably on the increase in this country. That the number of nominal lunatics is increasing is too well substantiated. But then it is said the increase is more apparent than real, as many are now, on account of the more humane treatment, certified, and placed in asylums, which were formerly shut up in homes or in small establishments. But there is no doubt that suicides have been for some time past, and are, considerably on the increase. This is a notorious fact; and suicides in 99 out of 100 are declared by coroners' juries of unaccounted murder. Whether these suicides are in spirit and fact true, we will not venture to say. If true one kind of lunacy is conspicuously on the increase in our midst. And it is not unreasonable to infer that the stress of modern competitive life and the increasing pressure of the boys following are productive of lunacy, as they certainly assist to multiply suicides.

The expedition which is going out to Nigerland in the *Loanda* is of the utmost importance. The vessel will take two sectional gun-boats, the *Heron* and the *Wasp*, which only draw 10 inches of water, and will be able to go up the Niger, at any rate, as far as Bousa. It is said that the 1st West India Regiment will be sent from Jamaica to take part in the expedition, and if so, the movement of troops will be extensive. The expedition is being organized with the negotiations which will shortly be resumed in Paris on the matters in debate between England and France on the West Coast of Africa, and it points to the fact that we intend to occupy a large sphere of influence in our sphere of influence. The French have for some time past been carrying on a policy of bluff, and sooty attempting to cut our colonies off from all access to their hinterland. They have intruded their admittedly belongs to us, and intend to point to accomplished facts, and to carry out their great idea of an African Empire, stretching from Algiers to the West Coast, and from the West Coast to Abyssinia. It is satisfactory to learn that we are going to give in the future more, and that while we have no intention of encroaching upon their own sphere, we mean to maintain our own.

We have heard a great deal of the Abyssinians of late. An expedition reached Rome recently that an expedition, this time a British one, has been massacred by Amhara raiders, subjects of King Menelik. The news comes from an Abyssinian source, as it did in the case of the daughter of Captain Kottewé and his companions. A Rome correspondent states that the published versions are inexact, the Abyssinian report being that an attack on an English expedition coming from Lake Rudolf was to be expected. This may, however, be a mere pretext for some other thing worse to come. The *Times* says that an expedition in question consists of two Europeans and 90 native followers who went into the interior a search of sport. The Rome correspondent, however, found in the quarter where he made inquiry the belief prevailed that it was the British expedition under Major MacDonald, of the Royal Engineers, which had been or was to be attacked. This, should it prove true, is grave news indeed. Major MacDonald, who it will be remembered carried out the Uganda survey, left London last June for the Juba River with a staff of officers, his second in command being Captain Austin, R.E. It was understood that he was to have an Indian escort. We can hardly believe that Major MacDonald, who was to trace the course of the Juba river, can have reached far inland as Lake Rudolf.

Aluminium is supplanting copper in trolley line wires for electric traction. Its advantages are lightness, strength, and resistance to corrosion. It has only 30 per cent. of the conductivity of copper, but it is three and a half times as light. There is no reason why it should be employed for overhead wires, although it is stronger and lighter than copper, but in cables the greater bulk necessary would militate against its superseding copper.

The Indian Government has at last succeeded in effecting the arrest of one of the murderers of Mr. Dandekar and Chapka's accomplice named Dandekar (Chapakar), has confessed the crime. It was supposed at the time that the crime was entirely connected with the dissatisfaction felt at the plague measures, but from the confession of Dandekar and Chapka's accomplices this appears not to be the case. Dandekar was refused admittance to the army, and seems to have become embittered against the authorities long before the plague.

Lord Armstrong has stated in a letter, read at the annual meeting of the company which bears his name, that the output of the famous works at Elswick during the year was unprecedented. The number and aggregate tonnage of the warships now in hand is greater than ever before in any single year. With respect to the engineering dispute, Lord Armstrong rejoices that the company's establishment in Italy is rendering useful aid, and it is capable of development to almost any extent.

Since the "new woman" has come into existence the modern home has been rather relegated to the background of domestic life. She retains her hold on the present generation chiefly through the novelist and the dramatist, who are unwilling to discard so useful an item from their stock-in-trade. It is interesting to note that the modern woman, which is always stronger than law, has long since dealt satisfactorily with a question which to this day occasions grave difficulty in various countries of Europe. On no account is an Ethiopian mother permitted to see her daughter married, while in this country the marriage of the latter. Even then it is considered bad taste to make frequent or prolonged visits, for fear of appearing to meddle unduly in the affairs of the new household.

Honours in the Berlin Chess Tournament have gone to young and our Mr. Blackburne, after battering English hopes for several days, finishes only third. But his performance is a very creditable one, none the less, for in the mental stress of a long tournament youth has a knack of being and doing. Mr. Blackburne was a famous chess player, who some of his competitors were too young to know the difference between a pawn and a rook, except by the size. His victory in the Berlin tournament would have been a highly popular one, for there has been a revival of chess during the last few years, though there have been very few new "English" masters. Laaker, the champion of the world, plays as an Englishman, but Blackburne is English born, and has for a quarter of a century been looked upon as the first of "English" masters.

British scientists should feel a glow of pride at the news that Darwin's theory of the formation of coral islands has been confirmed by the experiments of the expedition dispatched by the Sydney Geographical Society to the Ellice Islands. The discovery has been made by the expedition, which has reached the bottom of the formation. Now, Darwin, who studied the subject during the voyage of the *Beagle*, set himself to account for the strange fact that, whereas the reef building coral does not flourish at greater depths than about 100 ft. below the surface of the sea, it is found at that level. The old theory was that the coral formations began to grow on the tops of submarine mountains of volcanic formation. Darwin, however, could not believe in this "hill-top" theory, which necessitates the assumption that there is a mountain, the top of which is exposed to every coral formation. He, therefore, propounded the theory of the subsidence of the ocean bed, according to which the reef-builders began their work in the shallow water of the coasts of islands, their foundations being gradually lowered as the islands themselves were worked up. The fact that it has now been found impossible to reach the bottom of the coral-builders' works certainly goes to confirm his view of the origin of these wonderful works of nature.

The home police will doubtless endorse the eulogizing of Captain Scoble, of the Cape Town Highlanders, on his own admission that he ordered the despatch of the corpse of the Bechuana Chief, Luka Janjio. Such grossly barbaric treatment of the dead body of an enemy is wholly out of accord with the modern spirit of civilization, and it is not to refer to any higher standard. It indicates a blindest of feeling that ought to have no place in a military body, especially in the breast of an officer. So also may all other officers and men be dismissed from their corps when they regard themselves and their comrades as well with such deeds. At the same time, it is gratifying to see that the charges of barbarous cruelty in the Langenberg expedition are now under examination before the resident magistrate at Griquatown. Captain Pringle, of the Cape Town Highlanders, is a man—all of the men bearing Boer names are before the Court. Mr. Crouch, who brought the charges, has appeared and been examined on oath. The report of the evidence, however, is incomplete, and the case must be reserved until we hope that the investigation will be thoroughgoing and conclusive one way or the other.

An innovation of considerable importance will mark the beginning of the legal year on the 25th October. Previous to the commencement of business in the Royal Courts, a service will be held in the State, according to which the Judges will hold of assizes in their chambers. It is expected that a large number of the Bar, as well as officers of the Court, and other persons connected with the law, will be present at the Abbey in their judicial robes, and will be received into the authorities of the Established Church, and will follow the precedents provided by other Christians. Recently, Roman Catholic barristers inaugurated the term by a service in the Sardinia Chapel, Lincoln's Inn, and Nonconformist members of the profession also held a preliminary of their own meeting. Through the ceremony of opening the Commission for Assizes in the counties invariably includes an attendance at church, with sermon and prayer, and this is the first time the ordinary sittings of the Law Courts in London have been preceded by a State religious service.

Wine-growing experiments in Wales are still actively carried on by the Marquis of Bute, and this year there is again a good crop of the various fruits both at Castell Coch and at Swansea. The vines are doing very well, and the grapes are still suffering from the effects of mildew, but those at Swanbridge are free from the affliction, are colouring well, and will be ready to gather in a few days. The vines at Castell Coch were planted in 1875, and the first attempt to manufacture wine from the grapes grown was made in 1877; but it was not until 1881 that a really good crop was obtained, when the whole of the vintage, with the exception of a few dozen keps for use at the Castle, was sold at 50s. per ton, a large proportion of it being subsequently sold by public auction at 112s. per dozen. The wine is described by connoisseurs as resembling a first-class still champagne. In 1887 10 hogsheads of wine were obtained, and by that time the Marquis was so satisfied with the results of his experiment that he authorized Mr. Pettigrew, F.R.H.S., his horticultural adviser, to plant a new vineyard at Swanbridge, a somewhat more favourable site, about seven miles from Cardiff. In 1893 both vines were planted, and an enormous quantity of grapes, from which were pressed 40 hogsheads of wine. The whole of it was sold by the Marquis under a licence held in his own name for an aggregate sum of £3,000, and that one season's results comprising all the expenditure incurred upon the experiments up to that date.

BANQUET TO SIR WILFRID LAURIE.

The banquet given by the Toronto Board of Trade to Sir Wilfrid Laurie in honor of his return to the Dominion is a fitting recognition of one of the most brilliant and successful ever known in the city. The guests were a thoroughly representative gathering, including prominent members of every branch of Commerce and every profession. The banquet accorded the Premier when he rose to speak was a hearty and unanimous one, and showed the warm esteem in which he is personally held by his political opponents as well as by the members of his own party. Sir Wilfrid said: "I have been accused of some treason to Canada, and by others of committing an awful blunder, because, while insisting upon the denunciation of the German and Belgian Treaties, I did not, as you have seen in the markets of the Mother Country, to these self-constituted diplomats I have only this to say, that if I had asked for more than I did—I had asked for more than the denunciation of the German and Belgian Treaties—the probability that those Treaties would still be in operation to-day. There is no denying that Great Britain is a Free Trade country. I do not want to enter into a discussion of the principles of Protection and Free Trade. Let us simply put the question before the British people in a manner that involved a departure from Free Trade principles, do you believe that it would have been possible to obtain a settlement in favor of the denunciation of the German and Belgian Treaties? It is quite easy for us to give a preference to Great Britain, because our tariff legislation is composed of Customs duties, and it is always easy to lower the duties in favor of this or that nation, but you must remember that the denunciation of the German and Belgian Treaties is not a matter of preference, but a matter of principle. I do not want to enter into a discussion of the principles of Protection and Free Trade. Let us simply put the question before the British people in a manner that involved a departure from Free Trade principles, do you believe that it would have been possible to obtain a settlement in favor of the denunciation of the German and Belgian Treaties? 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