

PROGRESS.
 EDWARD S. CARTER, EDITOR
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TOLSTOI'S BANISHMENT.
 The young Czar NICHOLAS is credited with the intention of banishing Count Tolstoy from the Russian Empire. The Minister of the Interior is said to have been charged with the duty of collecting evidence against the famous novelist and to have already material enough to condemn him, from the Russian point of view. The special ways in which Tolstoy is supposed to menace the state and array class against class are by advocating freedom of religious sects from Government restrictions and liberty of conscience, and by denouncing the despotism and militarism of the Russian system. The Czar is said to have been influenced most strongly against Tolstoy by his article on "Persecution of Christians in Russia in 1895," which was published in the London Times nearly a year ago, and has been circulated in the form of a German pamphlet throughout Central Europe and some parts of Russia. The Holy Synod was stirred to deep wrath by Tolstoy's biting criticisms of its religious intolerance and the Chief Procurator at once presented to the Czar a strong case against the author-reformer.
 It may be in spite of all this however that these rumors are as unfounded as the many sensational reports that have long been in circulation concerning the fanatical whims and habits of Tolstoy himself. Tolstoy cannot have given the Russian government any new offence. In "My Religion" and "My Confession" he uttered his entire creed of non-resistance, foreshadowed even in "War and Peace," and actually proclaimed in "Anna Karenina." As one article of that creed preaches non-resistance to him that do evil, the autocrat of all the Russias cannot fear such a doctrine. And as another article of Tolstoy's creed denounces war he cannot oppose Russia's peaceable attitude toward Turkey.

WILL HE GOVERN RUSSIA.
 It is just as well to regard with some skepticism the report telegraphed from Berlin that NICHOLAS II. has determined henceforth to be his own chief Minister. Indeed, according to the story, he meant to go even further and to rule without any Minister at all, assuming personal control of the whole of the complicated foreign and internal affairs of his vast empire. With that end in view, it is alleged that he no longer consults with any but subordinates who are restricted to the submission of information uncolored by opinions the function of decision on every point being reserved to the sovereign himself.
 It is of course, possible and natural that a young ruler, by this time awakened to a sense of his responsibilities should desire time to choose men qualified for offices so important as the Minister of Foreign Affairs and that of the Interior. To acquire beforehand some first hand knowledge of those departments may well be regarded as the indispensable condition of a wise selection. However, the internal and external problems pressing upon the St. Petersburg government have become so intricate, that, in the absence of prolonged experience, abilities almost superhuman would be required for a single man to solve them. No such abilities are attributed to the young Czar NICHOLAS II. and it may be taken for granted that even if it be true that for a time he means to try to rule without ministers, the experiment will be short-lived.
 To what extent, and by what right, could the United States government intervene in Cuba? The answer to this question will require an examination of one of the most difficult topics in the law of nations. To those who only glance carelessly at the matter it may seem an easy thing to solve the problem; but statesmen who are moved by a due sense of the responsibility involved in the adoption of policies which may need to be asserted by force of arms will find the task less easy. The fundamental rule of international law is that no country has any right to interfere in the domestic affairs of another country; and since the Cuban revolt in its legal aspects is purely a matter of Spanish internal policies, the people of

the American republic have no right to interfere, unless their action can be justified by one of the recognized exceptions, to the general rule of non-intervention. Intervention is permissible on grounds of humanity but the right of a State to shape its own destiny would cease to exist if the law of nations should justify intervention by other States whenever they might be horrified by the cruelties practised in the course of a war or an internal struggle.
 Mr. JOHN BIGLOW in a recent published book entitled "The Mystery of Sleep" presents the popular notion that the sole object of "tired Nature's sweet restorer," is to repair the waste tissues of the body. In his view it has a far higher function in furthering the spiritual development; and in general he contends that it is upon the duration and quality of the sleep that the spiritual well being depends. This theory may not be entirely original but it will strike the popular mind with all the force of novelty and tend to interest sleeping with a moral quality which has hitherto been denied it by the proverb makers and moralists in general.

Dr. KOCH's mission to South Africa to investigate the rinderpest, or cattle plague, has not begun to attract the public attention which it seems to warrant. Although by no means fraught with human interest as were his studies of tuberculosis, his enquiry, into this widespread epidemic disease of the lower animals is likely to result in valuable discoveries for the world. As yet this curious contagious plague has been scarcely understood. A Royal Commission studied its etiology twenty years ago but bacteriology itself was then practically unknown. Dr. KOCH will bring the most advanced scientific knowledge to bear on this ravaging African and Asiatic disease.
 The reported discovery by PAUL D'ENJOY a French explorer of a hitherto unknown tribe of ape like men, called the Moi, on the Indo Chinese frontier of Annam reads like a new chapter from "GULLIVER'S Travels." The precise location by latitude and longitude, so far from dispelling in credulity, intensifies the notion that this country of the Moies lies somewhere between the grant realm of the Broddingsnags and the little kingdom of the Lilliputians. In Java, however, have been found veritable remains of a race whose ethnological features will afford some hint of an ape-like race in that region. A curious coincidence is that in Hindu mythology there is a monkey god, the great Hanuman.

Dr. NORDAU has written a new sensational work to appear as, "The Battle of the Drones." The 'drones' of this book are, it seems, the financiers of the world who live on the money makers of the human hive. Dr. NORDAU has made a slight mistake in his symbolism. The financiers of modern civilization are the bee-hive, so to speak, not the drones. They help the workers to stir up the product of their labors. With the establishment of its Bourse London's modern features began; and that great exchange centre of the world is still proud of its grasshopper crest.

A new language is to be added to those now taught in the halls of learning. It is the Malagasy, the speech of the natives of Madagascar and it has been added to the curriculum of the National School of Oriental Languages of Paris. There is a good deal more of a political than an educational aspect to this academic novelty since it emphasizes the fact that France is determined to enforce her administration upon the conquered realm of ex Queen RANAVOLO.

Grand Christmas Display.
 Christmas buyers would do well to call at McArthur's book store, 90 King street, and inspect his large stock of books, bibles, annuals and miscellaneous books, childrens books are shown in all styles, shapes and makes—bibles in all grades at 33% off regular prices—poetical works, from 25cts. to \$2.50 each, cloth books, full size, 15cts. to \$1.00 each, Christmas cards in 500 varieties, booklets and calendars, new and beautiful designs.
 There is also a big line of Japanese goods from 10ct up.
 St. John souvenir china 10 cts. up.
 Leather poets from 75 to 99cts. each, just half price.
 Dressing cases, writing desks, collar and cuff boxes, all at reduced prices.
 Photograph albums in plush, celluloid and leather from 25cts. to \$7.50 each.
 Little gem salt and pepper, 25cts each.
 Fine china cups and saucers from 10cts. up. Also tops, dolls and games to numerous mention.
 Now is the time to purchase, have the bargains reserved for you. 90 King St. show rooms upstairs.
 Mr. J.H. Plummer, publisher of Woman's World and Jenness Miller Monthly, offers \$150 in prizes to the persons making the largest number of words from the word "Industrious." See advertisement in another column.
 Belcher's Farmers' almanac for 1897 is out, and contains the same reliable and general information. Its 250 pages are literally packed with information that should be in the hand of every Nova Scotian.

VERSES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY
The River of Never to Be.
 Out on this river the starlight shines,
 And the waters have murmurs low;
 And a voice that ever sweeter far,
 Still hauntings its tuneful flow.
 The gliding surges through mists of tears;
 Look sadly to night on me;
 With a backward glance and a last good bye
 On the river of never to be.
 The beautiful star that hastened forth,
 To welcome you when you came;
 Has an anxious look in its watchful eye,
 And the language that knew your name.
 It seems to know me as here I long,
 For the one I shall no more see;
 Or clasps to my heart in a long embrace,
 By the river of never to be.
 The snow white moon moves chaste and clear,
 With its silver sandaled feet;
 Crossing the spruce wood path we loved,
 With a love that was pure and sweet.
 But that dear old path we knew so well,
 And the shade of a sheltering tree;
 And the twilight, brings me my love no more
 By the river of never to be.
 Night like the call of a soul comes down,
 O'er the waters deathly still;
 The dark wind's spirit is speaking low,
 To my son's responsive thrill.
 Here sorrow still lays her hand to mine,
 And with mine smelt in faith agree;
 We hear in the stillness 'twixt us long farewell,
 By the river of never to be.
 How lonely this broad, river's going,
 In deep silence gliding along,
 As in its swift current there leaves us,
 The air of some beautiful song.
 Thus gone on its waters for ever,
 That flow to a far distant sea;
 Good bye is the saddest word spoken
 By the river of never to be.
 Ah me! I inspire of this dreary night,
 And this dark November day,
 There comes to my soul the soul of a prayer,
 That ever will be answered at last I know,
 That prayer will be answered at last I know,
 When my soul to its home must rise;
 Where night clouds cannot arise as here,
 By the river of never to be.
 CYRUS GOLDB.
 River Philip Glen, Nov. 1896.
The Mind Cured.
 There was a boy I knew of,
 Whose clothes were made too small,
 His jacket always pinched him,
 And it did not fit at all.
 The sleeves were short and narrow,
 And he would not grow at all,
 And the buttons didn't suit him,
 And the pockets wasn't right.
 And so, this foolish fellow,
 Because his clothes were small,
 Was very cross and sulky,
 And he would not grow at all,
 For he said, "My jacket pinches,
 As everybody knows,
 You could hardly hear him speak,
 Can't be bigger than his clothes."
 There was a little fellow
 Who was sick, and pale and thin;
 He had a tiny body,
 But a mighty will within;
 His head was always aching,
 And his back was always weak,
 And he had a voice so low,
 You could hardly hear him speak.
 "What?" said this little hero,
 "I will not have it so;
 Because my body pinches,
 I will grow big and strong,
 And I will not mind my head,
 And I will not mind my back,
 And I will not mind my voice,
 For I will be big and strong."
 And so, with cheerful courage,
 He chased his pains away,
 And all the people saw him
 Growing braver every day,
 Till for his tiny body,
 They didn't care a fig,
 But everybody loved him,
 Because his soul was big.
 —Harriott Wight Sherratt.
In the City.
 Unto my eyes the city nothing yields,
 Bound on some errand in the noisy street,
 I tread the thoroughfare as in dream,
 I scarcely see faces as I pass,
 If there be pleasing sights I cannot seem
 To heed them. I am dreaming of the fields.
 Here sin stalks shameless: here men's souls are
 In thrall
 To tyrant custom. Often have I cried,
 "What room have you for home, what time for
 rest?"
 On one hand, want; on the other wealth and pride,
 Strife, turmoil, trouble. Oh, the fields are best,
 The freedom of the fields is best of all.
 Give me the simple, honest ways of men
 Who learn each day God's message from the flower,
 Whose lives are natural, whose hearts are pure,
 As meadows streams—Love, recall the hours
 In solitude and silence spent secure,
 Then come with me and find the life again!
 —Grace Ford Bronaugh.
A JUDGE'S STRANGE ACTION.
 He Furnishes a Broom in the Court House
 But Never Uses It.
 HALIFAX, Dec. 10.—The barristers at the court-house in this city have had something to gossip about for some time besides nice points of law. In the leisure between cases in court the thought of the gentlemen of the bar lately have been momentarily turned to the rather remarkable act of one of the solemn judges who is a power on the bench. The story goes that the judge took a notion that sleeping in the court house would suit his convenience or comfort to a greater extent than occupying his room at a hotel or elsewhere. This was rather strange in so dignified a man as Mr. Justice—of the supreme court of Nova Scotia. Yet it is the strange that often happens.
 There are two rooms in the court house that are not regularly occupied by any of the departments of the court, or the county administration. The judges set their eyes covetously on one of these in particular, and on the other the judge who is the prominent figure of this sketch set his eyes somewhat individually. This is made apparent, because of the way he monopolized the apartment in question. He fitted it out as a sort of primitive bed-room. A bureau and stretcher were purchased and put in condition to rest the weary limbs, and tired brain of a justice of the court. It is said that with his own hands his lordship spread out the coverlet and other appurtenances on the little bed. Every eye in the court house, when the news spread of what the judge had done to domesticate the stern place, was quietly turned in the direction of the judicially temporized chamber of rest, to see how the judge would enjoy his sleep. The barristers and court officials waited vainly for the sight however, for so far as they

could learn his lordship was never known to pass the night on the bed he had taken so much trouble to prepare for himself. Why this neglect to use the comfortable resting place the gnawing legal minds that investigated could never quite understand unless it was the difficulty of obtaining, and so desolate exterior surroundings, the nourishing morning meal that even the soul of a judge desirous, proved insurmountable. It was possible to provide for himself sleeping accommodation in the court house equal to the best, but the furnishing of breakfast, ah, that was quite another thing. This indeed, proved something that could not be arranged.
 The summer passed with the judicial bedroom unused during the night hours, so far as could be learned, and the long period of desuetude at least had its effect. The judge became disgusted so to speak, with his 'courtly' sleeping chamber in which he never slept, and one bright morning he gave orders to remove stretcher and bureau, and whatever other paraphernalia of a bedroom he had gathered together. These were forthwith taken to an auction room, or at least away from the court house, and now the apartment is as vacant as the day before his lordship thought of becoming the personal purveyor to his own sleeping comforts. Yet the judge still keeps an eagle eye on the empty room.
 This incident furnishes a rather interesting chapter in the judicial history of Nova Scotia. Another chapter may come to be written some day soon on the powers, make up, and administration of the commission that manages the affairs of the court house. The building is owned by the County of Halifax but the government of the province contributed something towards the expense of its erection. Accordingly the province is represented on the commission. So is the supreme court bench. There is much grumbling in the municipal council on account of the conduct of the judicial and governmental position of the commission—especially of the former. The council appears to think that the judicial representative acts as if he himself were a majority of the commission; as if the Warden and councillors who serve with him were but puppets to carry out his wishes. Changes have been made more than once from this quarter, and orders given which would never have been heard of had the full commission been consulted. This is rather galling when it is borne in mind by those honest representatives of the county in the municipal council that no matter what orders are given they will have the pleasure of paying for them. The council may splutter and talk of repudiation but in the long run they pay over the cash. This was exemplified some years ago, for this trouble is not a new thing, when the judicial portion of the commission ordered a handsome and expensive carpet square for one of the rooms used by the judges. Something special was on at the time. There was a kick but the money had to be paid all the same, or rather two-thirds of it had to be paid, for the objections urged were sufficiently powerful to cause a reduction of 33 per cent in the price charged the council.
 The chances are that at its session next month the municipal council will look carefully into the commission and its composition. Warden Shatford is just the kind of a man to do so when once he starts out.
A FAMILY QUARREL.
 Two Members of the Fire Department Indulge in Little Pleasantries.
 HALIFAX, Dec. 10.—No reporters were present at Monday afternoon's meeting of the board of fire commissioners, and it is just as well, perhaps, for otherwise the public might have had the details of a scene which would have gone far to lessen confidence in the arrangement of our fire department. What the commissioners saw and heard was a sanguinary wordy battle between Chief Connolly and Electrician Murphy. The chief found fault with the condition of the fire alarm, blaming the electrician for the condition of affairs, and violently attacking that official. Murphy is not the kind of a man to take a rebuke patiently if he thinks it undeserved. He thought so this time, and retorted on Connolly, giving him back all he had said with full interest. The duel was on, and it was fought to the death with such a maze of wires of all kinds as half darkened the sky, made it next to impossible to prevent crosses and that sort of thing and Chief Connolly's indignation may have been inconsiderate. It transpired at the same meeting that goods had been ordered for the board by a variety of people and the bills presented for payment amounted to a couple of thousand dollars. This was a new surprise for the commission. The upshot of the row, and the bills, was the appointment of a committee consisting of Alderman Hamill, on, Redden and Geldert, to define the duties and the powers of Chief Connolly, electrician Murphy, caretaker Spellman, and of any other officials of the board whose duties require defining.
An Order From England.
 The last steamer for London, Eng., going from this port carried a Pratte Piano for a London home. It was one of the latest productions of the Pratte Piano Company's factory, made of a choice piece of Brazilian mahogany, and containing all the recent improvements. It is a great credit to Canadian manufacture that a piano made in Canada should attain such excellence as to be preferred by a London purchaser.

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U. S. Gov't Report.

Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

THE CONGREGATION WAS SMALL
 But the Preacher was Eloquent and His Words Will Accomplish Good.
 HALIFAX, Dec. 10.—It was a unique spectacle, that was presented in the Halifax police station last Sunday afternoon, when Rev. F. H. Almon preached to a congregation of prisoners—of Saturday night 'drunks'. There were only three of those unfortunates locked up and only two of them would come out of their confinement into the open corridor to hear the preaching. So at 4 o'clock the rector of Trinity faced his congregation of two—one of them a catholic, the other a protestant; while the recalcitrant, who would not come within reach of the gospel, was an Anglican, an adherent of Rev. Mr. Almon's own communion. The sermon was earnest and loving. Perhaps it would be easy to preach over the heads of a congregation like that; surely it would be if it is possible to preach over the heads of high-toned congregations like St. Luke's or Fort Massey. But Mr. Almon spoke directly from the heart to the heart, and there was not a word of the sermon but what should have found a lodgment in the consciences of his two poor hearers.
 Rev. F. H. Almon is a brother of Senator Almon, and there is no more devoted, self-denying minister in this city of forty churches than he. Mr. Almon intends preaching as regularly as possible in the police station on Sunday afternoons.
 Chief O'Sullivan acted as usher at this service and made all the arrangements that could be made for the comfort and convenience of the congregation. Mayor McParsen had previously given permission to hold the service. More good may have been done at this little meeting than at all the services in the big, rich churches. Who knows?
"THE ELECTRICAL KISS"
 A Thrilling Story by a Young Lady—Some of the Incidents.
 Amongst the new novels of the month, issued by Hunter, Ross and Co. of Toronto is one by an entirely new author, "Dijian Fergus" it is an open secret that this is the pen name under which a young Canadian girl—Miss Ida Fergusson of Moncton—has chosen to make her first entrance into the field of literature, and while the book must of course depend on its own merits for its reception by the general public, the fact that the author is of our own nationality, and that Canadian literature is in need of all possible encouragement should be a potent factor towards its favorable consideration by Canadians.
 The author has performed the daring feat of laying the scenes of her story in the Canada of the end of the twentieth century and has managed the working out of her plot with great skill.
 The story is by no means free from the faults which seem to be inseparable from a first effort, and the keen critic would probably pronounce it unhesitatingly the work of an amateur; but Miss Fergusson has displayed a wealth of imagination, and an amount of originality in her treatment of the material at her command, which should go far towards neutralizing faults of style and construction which will almost certainly disappear with experience, which is called "First Ting or the Electrical Kiss." Briefly outlined, the story is this—Petra Bertram the heroine is an orphan born in China, of Canadian parents, and sent home, on the death of her mother which occurred when she was six years old, to be brought up by that mother's only sister, Mrs. Harrington, a well-to-do widow with two pretty daughters, who lived in Montreal. When she is seventeen her father dies in China, and from the meagre details of his decease which reach Canada, together with the fact that though he was supposed to be a very wealthy man, no news was ever received of disposition made of his property. Petra becomes convinced that he has been murdered and grows to woman's estate with a heart filled with resentment and bitterness against China, and everything Chinese.
 The tale opens with a letter to Mrs. Harrington from a Chinaman of high rank and fabulous wealth, of which latter fact he is disposed to make the most, as he mentions it with questionable taste, in his letter, placing his fortune at the sum of one thousand millions. This gentleman's chief object in coming to Canada is to deliver a message to Petra Bertram, from his father who was with Petra's later when he died. His secondary object is to secure a Canadian wife, his father having enacted a promise from him on his death-bed, that he would marry a Canadian wife. He asks Mrs. Harrington's assistance to that end, and Mrs. Harrington with two eligible daughters on her hands is more than willing to grant him all the help in her power. She invites him to make her house his home during his visit, and decides that her eldest daughter shall be his bride.
 He decides otherwise however, and from the first moment of his arrival has neither eyes nor ears for anyone but the Cinderella of the household the poor relation Petra Bertram. Loathing everything Chinese as she does it is scarcely necessary to say that Petra repulses him on every occasion, and finally refuses him with scorn.
 It is here that the very original motif of Miss Fergusson's work is shown, and the sustained manner in which she carries out her difficult scheme of action is truly admirable. The Chinese had made such a study of electricity that by the end of the twentieth century they have made wonderful discoveries in the science leaving all other nations far behind them, and after being refused by Petra, the Chinaman asks her if she ever heard of the Electrical Kiss. Naturally she has not, and after explaining that in nearly every human body there was a certain electrical vein, which, if kissed by one of opposite sex immediately causes the one kissed to feel the most devoted affection for the kisser. She asks where the vein is to be found, and is told that it is on the left side of the neck.
 "I have always been credited with a certain magnetic power, I wonder if I possess this vein?" said Petra bending back her head, and thoughtfully rubbing that portion of her neck where the electrical vein should be, according to Tisab Tiny's description. "Quick as a flash the Chinaman bends forward and kisses her on the spot.
 The result can be imagined, the girl idolizes the ugly, undersized Chinaman from that moment and is his willing slave. The further development of the plot can be left to the imagination of the reader.
 Curiously enough, the heroine who is evidently the darling child of the author's brain, and around whom the whole plot is woven, is not by any means the attractive character she is intended to be, she fails to win the sympathy of the reader from the first, until nearly the last of the story, being an acutely self-conscious person, who seems always looking out for some cause of offence. It may be her name that repels, because it is hard to take an interest in a girl named 'Petra.' But her character is carefully drawn, and the author spares no pains to make her attractive.
 The Chinaman, Jerry Arnold and Nurse Athol, are the strongest characters in the book, and the episode of the electrical stone is related with a good deal of dramatic power.
 The closing chapters are particularly strong the scenes being pictured with great vividness and the young author brings her story to a fitting climax.
 Miss Fergusson has steered successfully past the shoals and quicksands of scientific fact, and past tradition, and though the carping critic might condemn the tale on account of its improbability it must be remembered that the events described take place fully one hundred years in the future.
 Altogether 'Dijian Ting' is a very wonderful book to have been written by one unversed in the ways of literature, and just trying her wings in the rarified atmosphere which is often so hard to breathe; and if the author continues in the path she has marked out it is likely she will succeed as she deserves, and make a name for herself in the literary world. The book is now on sale by leading bookstores. Cloth \$1, paper 50 cents.
A Physician's Pigeons.
 The carrier-pigeon has been put to a new use by a doctor in Scotland who has a large and scattered practice. Says the London Globe.
 When he goes on long rounds, he carries a number of pigeons with him. If he finds some of his patients require medicine at once, he writes out prescriptions, and by means of the pigeons forwards them to his surgery. Here an assistant gets the messages, prepares the prescriptions, and despatches the medicine.
 If, after visiting a patient, the doctor thinks he will be required later in the day, he simply leaves a pigeon, which is employed to summon him if necessary. To this enterprising physician the keeping of carrier-pigeons means a saving of time, expense and labor.
Adroit Reply.
 Doctor Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1848, upheld the dignity of his position in the fashion deemed necessary.
 One day he drove up to the door of the House of Lords in a coach and four, with liveried coachman and two footmen. A Quaker, who knew him, addressed him: "Friend Howley, what would the Apostle Paul have said if he had seen these four horses and the purple liveries and all the rest?"
 The archbishop, who was seldom flustered, replied with a benignant smile. "Doubtless the apostle would have remarked that things were very much changed for the better since his time."
New Use for X-rays.
 It is said that the X-rays have been successfully applied in France to the detection of adulterations of food, where the adulterants consist of some kind of mineral matter. The food to be examined is reduced to powder and spread thinly upon glass. An X-ray photograph of the glass reveals the presence of the mineral particles by the failure of the rays to penetrate them as they penetrate the other constituents of the powdered food.