

GREAT BRITAIN IN AMERICA.

The Gilbert Islands the Latest Acquisition.

An American Views With Alarm the Encroachments of England on This Continent.

England last year declared a protectorate over the Gilbert Islands in the South Pacific Archipelago and recently has completed their annexation by taking full possession. The Gilberts are wanted as a coaling and cable station between the vast commerce now being rapidly developed from British Columbia to Australia. It now only requires the capture of the Hawaiian islands, to which the Gilberts are contiguous, to complete the last link in the vast chain of possessions and fortresses by which Great Britain has circled the globe, to the East via the Suez Canal and the Cape of Good Hope to Australia, from Australia to Vancouver via the Hawaiian Islands, and from thence across Canada and the Atlantic back to England. The Hawaiian Islands are the most important link in this

WORLD ENCIRCLING CHAIN,

not only to the commerce and dominion of Great Britain on the Pacific Ocean, but for the protection and commerce of the United States as well on the Pacific coast and ocean. If the infamous policy of Cleveland and Gresham prevails England and not America will possess Hawaii. The Gilbert Islands, sixteen in number, cover an area of 170 square miles, are near the equator and between the Hawaiian and Fiji Islands. Great Britain, in pursuance of her policy of protecting and developing her commerce on the Pacific ocean, as she does everywhere else, is about to lay a cable from Australia to Vancouver, making stations at the Gilberts and at the Hawaiians. The Gilberts have a population of 50,000 and there is considerable trade with them in copra and coconuts heretofore mainly in the hands of Americans, from which they will now be driven. The King previously offered these islands to the United States. On the same day that England declared a protectorate over the Gilberts she also proclaimed a protectorate over the Gardner, Danger and Nassau Islands in the Western Pacific ocean, to the Northeast of the Samoan Islands, intending to use the harbor of Pagapago

AS A COALING STATION.

The same month Great Britain took possession of the Johnston islands, to the northwest of Hawaii, proposing to use them as a cable station. Hawaiian missionaries under American superintendence have labored at the Gilberts since 1857. The Americans will now lose their trade and influence in the Gilberts. The natives have already received orders not to sell copra and pearl shells to any except English dealers. Heretofore the Americans have controlled this lucrative business.

When Russia sold Alaska to the United States it was not merely for the seven million dollars paid, but to serve notice by the Czar on the rest of the world that in his opinion

ALL THE TERRITORY

of North America from the Gulf of Mexico to the Arctic Ocean should rightfully be controlled by the United States. In this opinion William H. Seward concurred. Mr. Henry B. Atherton, of Nashua, N.H., in a recent address holds that the manifest destiny of this country is to control this continent. He points out the mighty chain of armament with which Great Britain has managed to surround our present territory thus:

"She has a military railway from Halifax on the Atlantic to Port Moody on the Pacific, intended to be used in military operations against this country, and on that account built in a great measure from the imperial treasury. She has free entry for her fleets to the St. Lawrence, through which flow the waters of the great lakes. From her

FORTRESS AT HALIFAX

she could let slip a swarm of armored cruisers that in forty-eight hours might ruin our coasting trade, and lay our unprotected seacoast under contribution. She has a similar sign of vantage on the Pacific at Esquimault. English dominion is exerted over the Bermudas, the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Belize, British Guiana, Trinidad, Barbadoes, St. Lucia, and the Leeward Islands. Bermuda, three days out from Charleston and New York, is equipped with fortifications which are described in the Colonial Book as the "most perfect and formidable in the world." A submarine cable connects the fortress at Bermuda with Halifax. It was laid only two years ago and cost \$1,500,000 a sum ten times greater than the exchanges between the group and Canada. In the reef-enclosed harbor at Bermuda, Great Britain has a shipbuilding plant, a dry dock that will lift her heaviest

SEAGOING BATTLE SHIPS,

a coaling station, and a vast system of earth-works, mounted with the heaviest guns. Since 1867 Great Britain has immensely strengthened the garrison at Kingston and created an entirely new one in the harbor of Castries, St. Lucia.

"Taking Halifax, Bermuda, Kingston and Castries together, a chain of offensive fortification is constituted within three days' reach of every American Atlantic seaboard city. Each is mounted with guns of the most effective modern type. Each is capable of equipping vessels for sea at an instant's notice. A cable connects them all with each other and with London.

"In the South seas British empire spreads over immense oceans and holds almost every dot of land that rises above them. On one of the Falkland Islands, just north and east of Cape Horn, there is another. There is a third, recently built and equipped and splendidly armed, at Fiji Islands; and there are the great defences at Esquimault, from which at an hour's notice Seattle and Tacoma could be laid waste."

Surprised.

A school teacher, who had been telling the story of David, ended with "And all this happened over 3,000 years ago." A little cherub, its blue eyes opening wide with wonder, said, after a moment's thought, "On dear, what a memory you have!"

WHO IS THE HEIR?

A Claimant Turns up After Thirty Years

An interesting story in real life was brought to light the other day by a suit instituted at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, by Joseph Miller of Rochester, N. Y., against Mrs. McMann of the township of Ops, Victoria County, and her daughter, Mrs. Sole, of the same place, for the recovery of a farm. The story told by Miller is substantially as follows:

Wm. Robertson was a farmer in the township of Ops, Victoria, and in 1847 he died leaving three children, a deaf mute son, William, and two daughters, Margaret and Catharine. The farm he resided on was willed to William for his life, and upon his decease was to revert to his sister Margaret. To Catharine he left another farm.

THE BIRTH OF THE HEIR.

Shortly after her father's death Margaret went to Rochester, where she married a man named Miller and subsequently gave birth to a child, a boy. Her husband died and she herself followed him to the grave in 1866, when the boy was only about 4 years old. While she was sick, and just previous to her death, her brother William went to Rochester to see her and also saw the boy. At that time she was not seriously ill and William returned to Canada, leaving her and the boy at Rochester. Some time afterwards William returned to Rochester but found that his sister was dead, and the child had disappeared.

THE FIRST CLUE.

In the meantime the child had grown to manhood and anxious to learn something about his parentage he returned to Rochester and began a search for his relatives. While engaged in this search he accidentally met a man who was acquainted with his mother's relatives in Canada. From this man he learned of their whereabouts, and came over to Canada to visit them. Although they received him into the house and allowed him to remain for a short time, they would not altogether recognize him as a relative. They very properly said that he was a total stranger to them, and they had no proof that he was their sister's child.

Miller remained at William's place for a short time, when he returned to the States. Shortly after his departure William Robertson, the deaf mute, died, and Catharine took possession of the farm and deeded it to her daughter, Mrs. Cole.

After returning to the States Miller kept himself posted as to his relatives in Canada, and on hearing of his uncle's death he came to Canada to claim the farm, which, if he is Margaret's son, as he contends, would be his by descent through his mother. On arriving at the place he found his aunt, who is now a widow named McMann, in possession of the property. At Osgoode Hall yesterday suit was entered against mother and daughter for the recovery of the same.

CALL HIM AN IMPOSTOR.

On the other hand Mrs. McMann claims that Miller is an impostor who has by some means heard the story and is trying to obtain a farm without paying for it. She admits that her brother William told her when he returned from his first visit to Rochester that he had seen their sister Margaret and a child. She says that she did not know whether the child was her sister's or not. She did not even know whether her sister was married or not, and even if she was married and had a child she does not believe that Miller is the one.

Reeve & Day, 18 King-street east, who are handling the case for the plaintiff, and will have to prove that Margaret Robertson was married, that she had a child, and that Joseph Miller, the plaintiff, is that child. They probably have a lot of trouble before they do so, for it is no easy matter to trace a man's history up from the time of his birth until he becomes 30 years of age, and by every link establish his identity clearly and beyond a doubt.

MUD AVALANCHES.

A Phenomenon that is Slowly Changing the Features of the Himalayas.

Explorers are discovering that mud avalanches are a powerful element in determining the physical features of the Himalayan regions. A number of travellers have observed the results of these great rushes of mud and rock, but very few have been so fortunate as to see them. Mr. M.W. Conway had that good fortune awhile ago, and has given a description of one of these falling avalanches to the Royal Geographical Society of London.

His party were travelling up the Gilgit Valley adjoining the Himalayas, in the extreme northern part of India. Suddenly they heard a noise as of continuous thunder. They saw a huge mud avalanche sweeping down a steep gully between two mountains opposite them. The on-rush and weight of the mud tore from the sides of the gully masses of rock and rolled them over like so many pebbles. Each of the big rocks that formed the vanguard of the avalanche weighed many tons. The mass of mud had a width of forty feet and was fifteen feet deep and moved at the rate of five miles an hour. In a few minutes the mass of stuff became shallower. The mixture was then half mud and half rocks and flowed faster. Now and then one of the larger rocks barred the way, and mud filled up behind it and finally swept it on. Looking up the gully, Mr. Conway could see that earth from its sides was constantly falling in the mud river and being swept as a part of it.

All this material poured over into the gorge through which the river runs. It did not reach the river, but spread out and piled up on one side of it. Conway says that this accumulation of debris has piled up all along the valley to a depth of 500 to 1000 feet, and that the Gilgit River flows in a sort of canon built up by this accumulation. If the valley were filled up in this way to a depth of 2,000 or 3,000 feet more it would resemble the Pamirs, and all the deeply filled valleys that are characteristic of the Central Asian plateau. Conway says that mud avalanches have done all this work of filling up the valleys, and have done it with great rapidity.

These avalanches show how rapidly, under the influence of moisture, cold and heat, the denudation, or crumbling of these stupendous rock masses of the Himalayas is going on. It is this denudation that provides the material for mud avalanches. The levelling processes of nature are in continual operation and millions of tons of rock dust and fragments of rock are taken away from the upper portion of the mountains and deposited in the valleys.

LIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

A Nervous American Recounts Some of the Little Drawbacks of Life in the Tropics—Leopards Meowing on the Back Fence, and Ostriches Cackling in the Yard.

It may be regarded as absolutely certain, says a writer in Harper's Weekly, that the South African colored individual known as King Lo Bengula, notwithstanding his experience at managing sixty wives, will sooner or later have to submit to the British forces. And it will probably occur sooner rather than later. If the colored monarch was a student of history he would know that the chief recreation of John Bull for a century has been found in taking his fowling-piece and game-bag and going out after a mess of colored potatoes. He recognizes no close season in this variety of sport, and he invariably comes back with the game on the inside of the bag and a smile on the face of J. B. The best thing Lo Bengula can do is to compromise, save as many wives as he can out of the wreck, give up his title of King, and take some such unobtrusive title as governor, deputy marshal, justice of the peace, or whatever the British see fit to allow him.

The stilling of Lo Bengula promises to open a large territory to settlers, and already we observe considerable speculation in the newspapers as to the prospects for settlers from this country. The region is said to abound in gold mines.

DIAMOND QUARRIES,

and other desirable terrestrial openings. These are good and seemly things in their way, but the prudent emigrant will be apt to inquire if there is anything to eat in the country. Diamonds in the rough cannot be looked upon as an article of diet, except, perhaps, for the domestic hen; and we fail to see any reason for entertaining the belief that a diamond-fattened hen would be any better than the ordinary gravel-fed hen.

But supposing the question of food supply were settled satisfactorily, there remain many other grave problems confronting the expectant emigrant to South Africa. Chief of these, we should say, would be the night-fighting and meowing of tigers on the back fence. Indeed, it seems probable that in the exaggerated and ridiculous animals of South Africa is to be found the real reason for giving the prospective settler pause. The tiger idea just put forward, we presume, will cause many to give up the move. Who that hath listened to the common domestic cat—and who hath not?—

ON THE BACK FENCE

of a night would care to encounter the same thing intensified fiftyfold? It would be maddening, especially if they got under the house, and bumped their heads up against the floor as they fought. This, with leopards and—but the subject is too harrowing.

We presume that the lion would scarcely condescend to roost lengthwise of a rear fence at three o'clock in the morning, with the hair on his back standing up while he yowled defiance at another lion, as we have just shown that the lion is wont to do; but the lion, nevertheless, is not a desirable neighbor. A close perusal of hunting stories, extending over a term of years, has led us to believe that the African lion spends his entire time lashing his sides with his tail. The sharp "swish" of the lion's tail as it cuts the air, together with the hollow thump as it beats his royal ribs, will also be found annoying to those not accustomed to it. Besides, while prospecting for a new diamond mine, or for a tender foot to whom an old diamond mine can be old, the danger of being knocked over by the impetuous sweep of an enraged lion's tail must be considerable.

But of course these absurd overgrown cats are not the only wild animals which infest South Africa. It is a warm country, and necessarily houses must be more or less open; but no doubt it will be comparatively easy to get accustomed to having elephants reach in at the dining-room windows and steal the mineral-water of the sideboard. Or the mineral-water can be kept down cellar, though the monkeys will be apt to get it wherever it is stored. But privacy with giraffes looking in the second-story windows will be impossible. We may be unduly apprehensive, but it seems to us that the hippopotami are going to be somewhat rough on the gardens; and the way in which a rhinoceros will be able to walk along down a line of drying clothes and carry them off

IMPALED ON HIS HORN

will be calculated to drive a housewife mad. The possession of a gravel-walk made of uncut diamonds could scarcely compensate. It might be possible to fence out many of these obnoxious beasts with barbed wire, but in this case there would be the constant danger of the ostriches picking off the barbs for breakfast. And speaking of ostriches calls up another possible terror for the nervous man. We refer to the cackle of the female ostrich as she flies off the nest. This must be deafening if she cackles in proportion to her size, something, however, which she may not do. African travellers are so much taken up with slashing the tails of their lions about in the air that they wholly neglect to tell us of the habits of the ostrich in this respect. But it is going to be noisy enough anyhow, without the ostrich cackle. South Africa may be an excellent place for residence, but it can do no harm to look into certain points before rushing off to it.

Sir John Macdonald.

The late Premier of Canada, Sir John A. Macdonald, owed much of his success as a political leader to judicious strokes of humor, which he knew so well how to apply.

When introducing the several members of his Cabinet to the Marquis of Lorne, then just arrived in Canada to take the position of Governor-General, he said, speaking of Mr. Chapleau, the new Secretary of State, who was clad in a magnificent sealskin coat, "Your Excellency, allow me to introduce you to the keeper of the Great Seal."

Meeting upon one occasion a learned Canadian judge of a very rubicund countenance he said:—"I am delighted to see you, my deeply red (red) old friend."— [Youth's Companion.

A Literal Interpretation.

"Well, young man," said old Mr. Breezys while you are at my house I hope you'll feel just like one of the family.

"Thank you. I'm sure I have every reason to."

"What do you mean?"

"Your daughter has just said she would be a sister to me.

WELL KNOWN PEOPLE.

Premier Peters, of Prince Edward Island, is a grandson of Sir Samuel Cunard, who founded the Cunard Line.

Mayor Stewart, of Hamilton, is the chief game warden for Ontario—a provincial appointment.

Professor Goldwin Smith and Mrs. Goldwin Smith are spending the winter at Ventnor, Isle of Wight.

General Middleton is writing a personal account of the Riel rebellion. In the course of his brief history he speaks with admiration of the Toronto Grenadiers.

Lord Aberdeen has been elected an honorary member of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers. If it cannot be said that he is an engineer it cannot be denied that he is civil.

On the very day that Lieutenant-Governor Boyd, of New Brunswick, died the Marquis of Lorne wrote him, congratulating him upon his appointment to the Governorship, and wishing him A Happy New Year. Mrs. Boyd has just received the letter.

Dr. Hawke, of Stratford, has in his possession an interesting relic of one of the patrons of '37. It is a pair of fire tongs made by Samuel Lount, the blacksmith, who was executed in Toronto in 1838, along with Peter Matthews.

Mr. Gladstone has presented the Rev. Frederick Cecil Alderson, Canon of Peterborough, and brother-in-law of Lord Salisbury, to the important vicarage of Luttermouth, famous in connection with the labors of the Reformer Wycliffe.

The model of L. P. Hebert has been selected out of about forty others for the Macdonald monument which is to be built in Parliament square, Ottawa. Hebert is now in Paris. The statue of Sir John will be of bronze, uniform in size with that of Sir George Cartier.

Miss Eliza White, who recently died in Ottawa, left \$100 to the "Poor Saint of India or the Poor labourers, whichever is most deserving, to be distributed as the Lord may direct." The instructions as to the distribution of the money are so indefinite that the courts have been called upon to determine who are the heirs.

A despatch from Yarmouth announces the death of W. D. Lovitt of pneumonia, after a few days' illness. The deceased was the wealthiest man in Nova Scotia and interested in all the leading enterprises in Yarmouth. He owned among other vessels the County of Yarmouth, one of the largest wooden sailing ships afloat.

Rev. Isaac Constantine, who died recently at Exeter, England, was until last autumn a clergyman in the Eastern Townships. During the epidemic of ship fever, when many of the colonial clergy succumbed while visiting immigrants, Mr. Constantine voluntarily abandoned his more lucrative occupation to do his Master's work.

Brantford has its "Grand Old Man" in the person of its veteran city treasurer, Mr. James Wilkes, who is 85 years old, with eye as bright and signature as firm as a man's of 25. He discontinued the use of tobacco sixty years ago, and he has been a moderate drinker of spirituous liquors and drank ale at dinner, but the latter he discontinued five years ago. He attributes his hearty old age with its upright figure and keen intellect partly to heredity and partly to regular habits—he goes to bed at ten o'clock and rises at six, winter and summer.

It is recorded by the Hamilton Spectator that after the resignation of Sir John Macdonald in 1873, Sir John wanted to withdraw from the leadership of the party. In caucus, Mr. H. B. Witton rose and pointed out that it would be a serious mistake to set aside the chieftain who had so frequently led the Conservatives to victory. When he sat down Mr. Alonzo Wright followed in a speech which carried conviction to the caucus. At its conclusion the tendered resignation was declined and the old leader was asked to retain his position.

The Countess of Aberdeen wears at State functions a coronet the distinguishing features of which are five emeralds, said to be the largest in the world. These precious stones were presented to her Excellency by the people of Ireland as an expression of love and gratitude to her for her interest in their welfare during the period of Lord Aberdeen's Lord-Lieutenancy.

De Grasse is a very common name in Gloucester county, New Brunswick. All who bear it belong to the family at the head of which was Count de Grasse, the French nobleman who assisted Washington in the War of Independence. When Count de Grasse died, his brother came to Gloucester county and settled. The Canadian descendants of this De Grasse, forty in number, expect to succeed to the count's estate, which, it appears, has been looking for proprietors during the past century.

Mr. Hugh Taylor, of Montreal, whose death is announced from London, England, was probably the oldest living member of the Colonial Bar, his admission as an advocate of Lower Canada, now the Province of Quebec, dating from 1829. Among other "Fathers of the Bar" who are still with us may be mentioned Clark Gamble, of Toronto; Sir N. F. Belleau, of Quebec, and G. W. Wicksteed, of Ottawa, all of whom were called in the year 1832. Another old member of the Canadian Bar is Senator R. B. Dickey, who was called to the Bar of Nova Scotia in 1834 and to that of New Brunswick in 1835.

Archbishop Walsh, of Toronto, spent his early years in the priesthood in the backwoods of the County of Simcoe. Much of his extensive reading was done by the light of the log fire and the tallow candle. As a bishop, one of his exploits was the removal within three years, of a debt of \$30,000 resting upon the diocese of London when he took charge.

Lieutenant-Governor Frazer, of New Brunswick, was, prior to 1867, an anti-Confederate. He was a colleague of Sir Albert Smith, and went out of office with him when Mr. Tilley and Mr. Mitchell were successful on the union cry. Later Mr. Frazer became a strong supporter of the Public school system of New Brunswick, and with the present Justice King, of the Supreme Court, defended the schools when they were attacked in the interests of the Separate system.

Mabel—"What an interesting talker Mr. Gusher is? He always holds one when he speaks." Mrs. Gusher—"Does he? That accounts for the hair I found on his shoulder last night.

TAKING AN OATH.

Various Forms Used in Binding Witnesses.

Ever since there have courts-martial particular stress has been placed upon the matter of administering the oath to the witnesses. In order that it may be binding and the loophole of informality may be, as far as possible, reduced it has been the custom to swear witnesses in the manner considered the most binding in their native lands. The march of civilization has, in this instance, tended toward accepting the methods for Protestants and Roman Catholics employed in this country as those best suited to impress upon a witness the solemnity and significance of the oath, though there are occasions when it became necessary to resort to other methods.

PROTESTANT WITNESSES

before a court-martial are sworn by laying their right hand, ungloved, on the Bible, closed or open, while the oath is recited. Kissing the book is frequently required in addition to the laying on of the hand. Raising the right hand and keeping it raised during the recital of the oath is also a form adopted by a number. There are many who prefer to affirm rather than to swear and those are accommodated by saying: "You do solemnly affirm," instead of "solemnly swear," the right hand being raised or placed on the Bible as before. Formerly it was required to place the right hand on the open evangelists.

IN SWEARING CATHOLICS

the Bible is closed and has marked on the outer cover a cross, generally cut out of white paper and pasted on. Sometimes a crucifix is placed upon it, which the witness, after the oath is recited, kisses when there is any suspicion in the mind of the president or the court martial or in that of any of its members. The witness, if a Roman Catholic, after kissing the cross, is frequently directed to cross himself. For convenience, the oaths to be administered by the president of the court to the judge of the court and the witnesses that are called before it to give testimony, are often written out on paper and pasted on one of the covers of the Bible, so as to be at hand to refresh the memory of him whose duty it is to administer the oaths.

THE JEWS

are customarily sworn by the five books of Moses and the Great God of Israel, that the evidence they give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Frequently, however, there is no departure in the methods used with this race from that which ordinarily obtains. The statutes in the time of George IV., King of England, contain several sections in relation to the administration of the oath in various cases, and among them are one or two referring to the Quakers as well as to the Moravians. These statutes have been embraced in our own methods of procedure, and they allow people of the sects named solemnly, sincerely and truly to declare and affirm that the evidence which they give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and so forth. Mohammedans think the oath only positively binding when they are sworn upon the koran while the Hindu prefers to swear by touching with his hand the foot of a Brahmin.

THE CHINESE.

In this country the Chinese do not insist upon the same methods that were once in force. Very likely the chinaware dealers wish they did, as they are so much more numerous than when the following was their custom: In England, at the old Bailey prison, a Chinaman was presented as a witness in an important case, and for some time the nature of an oath and all that it implied could not be impressed upon him. Neither could the authorities quite make out just what the Mongolian did consider binding. Finally, through the aid of an interpreter, it was decided to break a saucer over the head of the proposed witness. When this was done the Chinaman appealed to the supreme being whom he worshipped, praying that his own body might be broken into as many pieces as the saucer if the testimony he was about to give should not be the entire truth.

As a general thing in courts-martial held in foreign waters where native witnesses are required to give evidence, and particularly where such persons are not of the Christian faith, care is taken to ascertain and adopt the ceremony of the religions of the witnesses respectively. It is also considered a wise plan, especially in important cases, that a priest of the creed of the witnesses be present when the oath is administered in order to give it greater force and sanctity.

Journey in Central Asia.

A remarkable tour of exploration into Central Asia has recently been carried out by a young English officer in a private capacity, and without any official support or credentials. The tour was remarkable, not so much for the region traversed as for the exceptional facilities placed in the English officer's way by the Russian authorities, with the result that he acquired a better knowledge of Russia's present position in Central Asia than any traveller of recent times. Mr. H. J. Coningham, a lieutenant in the Linster Regiment, is the officer in question, and he spent the last eighteen months in a visit to Persia and Central Asia.

In the former country he explored several districts never previously visited by a European, but the real interest of his journey began when he crossed the Russian frontier into Trans-Caspia.

As he had no letters or permits from the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg, Mr. Coningham simply wrote a letter to the Russian Governor, General Karopatkin, stating that he wished to see him and study the country. The Russian commander, who is less famous for amiability than for capacity, seems to have been favourably impressed by the young officer's candour and courage, for he at once gave him the requisite leave, and ordered one of his staff to see that all necessary facilities were placed at Mr. Coningham's disposal.

As General Karopatkin freely discussed all political questions, including his famous scheme for the invasion of India, Mr. Coningham's narrative of his conversations at the Russian headquarters in Central Asia should be especially interesting, more especially as General Karopatkin is said to have unfolded to him the plan by which England and Russia could alone become friends in Asia.

It is to be hoped that Mr. Coningham will be permitted to publish his exaggerated account of all he saw and heard.