GLEANINGS FROM LATE PAPERS.

THE BALTIC.

The *Independance Belge* publishes the following :—

"HAMBURG, May 3.—The number of English ships of war in the bay of Kiel is daily increasing. Yesterday the gunboats Snapper, Pincher, Snap, Gleaner, and Cuckoo passed by the Belt, towed by two new steam corvettes. These gunboats, mostly armed with two Lancaster guns of the largest calibre, navigate by means of eight sails, adapted to very strong masts, and advance, when the wind is favourable, with prodigious rapidity. Our last accounts from Finland are of the 23d of April. The coast along the Gulf of Bothnia is still lined with ice from two to four feet in thickness. A deputation, chosen by the four Estates of the country, had just left for St. Petersburg, to congratulate the new Emperor on his accession to the throne. The Finnish population, but particularly the classes engaged in maritime commerce, inhabiting the towns on the coast, are still greatly excited against the English, whom they stigmatize as incendiaries. The General-in-Chief, de Berg, is actively inspecting the fortifications. The staff of the new army now being organized in Finland is still at Helsingfors, where the division of grenadiers and a regiment of the guard have kept garrison since the beginning of the last campaign. Helsingfors and Sweaborg are considered in that part of the empire to be impregnable. In order to carry them by force, it would certainly require a long and fatiguing siege on the land side, where the Russian military engineers erected, after the departure of the fleets in 1854, additional fortifications, which must be captured before a regular and methodical siege could be laid to the two fortresses. A French colonel of the staff lately passed through Hamburg on his way to Stockholm, *via* Copenhagen. The object of his mission is to obtain leave from Sweden to land troops and establish a camp on some point of her territory. Should this demand not be granted, as is very probable, Bomarsund and some of the adjoining islands will be again occupied by the allies, and entrenched camps set up to protect the troops and depots of provisions against the attacks of the Russians.

May 4.—You have learnt by telegraph the departure of the entire English fleet from the bay of Kiel. On the 1st inst. the Admiral had received despatches from London ordering him to remain there eight days longer, and on the 3d another despatch enjoined him to penetrate immediately into the Baltic. The departure accordingly took place with a certain degree of precipitation. It was believed at Kiel that the fleet would first proceed to the Swedish island of Gothland. According to the last accounts, the ice still firmly adhered to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia, and of Finland, at Abo, Sweaborg, and Helsingfors. Letters from this last town of the 26th ult., state that the 28 battalions of Finnish troops, the levy of which had been ordered by the Emperor Nicholas, were then nearly organized, having received their equipment and arms in the month of March. These troops were stationed at Wasa, Abo, and in other localities along the Gulf of Bothnia. All the old retired officers had reentered the service, and a number of civil *employes* had likewise obtained commissions in those battalions. The advanced guard of the English fleet has already made its appearance before the distance into the Baltic. On the 19th ult., two large steamers arrived at Fohroe Sound, the most northern port of the island of Gothland, where during the summer of last year a number of vessels belonging to the fleet of Admiral Napier remained stationed. A Russian vessel, which had wintered there, and was preparing to continue her voyage, was obliged to desist on the appearance of the two steamers, and will, no doubt, remain blockaded in the sound until the close of the year. The English have already made several prizes."

BERLIN, Tuesday, May 8.—Our Minister at Copenhagen has given notice to the Danish Government, that from the 28th of April the entrance to the Gulf of Finland is blockaded from Hango Udde to Dagerot.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.—PUBLIC MEETING IN LONDON.

On Saturday, the 5th instant, a meeting, convened by gentlemen connected with the trade and commerce of the city, and holding different political opinions, was held at the London Tavern "for the purpose of organizing an association to promote a thorough reform in the various departments of the State ;" and a supplemental meeting, consisting of persons for whom there was not accommodation at the London Tavern, was held in the Guildhall, for the same object. Mr. Sheriff Morley presided over the assemblage in the London Tavern, which included a number of members of Parliament. Among the speakers were Mr. W. S. Lindsay, M.P., Mr. J. I. Traverse, Mr. J. P. Gassiot, Mr. J. D. Powles, Mr. S. Baker, Mr. F. Bennoch, Mr. Johnstone Neale, Mr. W. Tite, and Mr. J. Hutchinson for the Stock Exchange. Resolutions were adopted declaring that the disasters to which the country has been subjected in the conduct of the present war are attributable to the inefficient and practically irresponsible management of the various departments of the State, and urgently demand a thorough change in the administrative system ; that the true remedy for the mal-administration which has caused so lamentable a sacrifice of labour, money, and human life is to be sought in the introduction of enlarged experience and practical ability into the public service ; that the exclusion from office of those who possess in a high degree the qualities necessary for the direction of affairs in a great commercial country is a reflection upon its intelligence and a betrayal of its interests ; and that, while disclaiming any desire of excluding the aristocracy from participating in the councils of the Crown, the meeting felt it to be a duty to protest against the pretentions of any section of the community to monopolize the functions of administration. It was also resolved that an association should be formed, to be called "The Administrative Reform Association ;" and a committee was appointed to collect funds, to prepare an address to the constituencies of the United Kingdom, and generally to carry out the objects of the association. Twenty-five gentlemen in the room at once put down their names for a subscription of £100 each towards promoting the movement. Mr. Oliveira, M.P., was the chairman at the meeting in the Guildhall, where resolutions were passed like those adopted at the London Tavern, with the exception, that a right was claimed for them "to petition that in order to effect administrative reform, it was necessary to have an enlarged constituency.

The committee of management assembled for the first time on Wednesday, when the following appointments were announced :—Mr. Monckton Milnes, to be chairman of the committee ; Mr. Tite and Mr. Bennock, to be deputy-chairmen, and Mr. Ingram Traverse to be treasurer. The following gentlemen were nominated the Finance Committee, viz., Messrs. Gassiott, Travers and Hutchinson ; and Messrs. Baikes and Co. were appointed the bankers to the association. It was further settled that Mr. W. S. Lindsay, M.P., and Mr. Torrens M'Cullagh, ex-member for Dundalk, should attend the approaching meeting at Norwich, as a deputation from the parent society.

ARRIVAL OF THE ARCTIC DISCOVERY SHIP ENTERPRISE.—Her Majesty's ship Enterprise, Captain Collinson, arrived at Spithead on Sunday, after a cruise of 4½ years, from Behring's Straits, and the Cape of Good Hope. She sailed from the latter station (Table Bay) on the 18th of February, and St. Helena on the 2d of March. The only news the Enterprise has brought confirms the reports which the Admiralty had received as to the hostile relations between her captain and his officers. It is quite true that all the executive officers of the ship (Commander Phayre, Lieutenants Jago and Parks, and Mr. Shead, the master) are under arrest, and have been so for a considerable time, three years in lesser periods. Mr. Shead has been under arrest over three years, and Mr. Parks more than two years and a half. All the chief executive officers being thus debarred from doing duty, an acting mate (Mr. Pym) in the Enterprise (ship) was sent to assist in navigating the ship home by Rear-Admiral Sir James Stirling, the Commander-in-Chief of the China squadron, who refused to hold a series of courts-martial on that station. It now rests with the Lords of the Admiralty to say whether officers by court-martial at the instance of Captain Collinson, and also to try that officer at the instance and demand of those who have been so long under confinement by his orders. The Enterprise was commissioned by Captain Collinson to go in search of Sir John Franklin on the 20th of December, 1849, in concert with the Investigator, Capt. M'Clure, but has achieved nothing in the way of discovery of the lost expedition.

The military correspondent of the *Augsberg Gazette* writes from the Polish frontier, that the reinforcements received by the Russian commanders in the west of the Crimea since the battle of Inkerman bear no proportion to those which have joined the Allies. He says, "Numerically, Omar Pasha's corps alone is almost equal to the entire reinforcements of the Russians. The new Russian troops which have entered the Crimea since the battle just mentioned are the following : The 2d brigade of the 13th reserve infantry division, and the two brigades of the 14th reserve infantry division, forming together 12 battalions.

It is understood that her Majesty will give a second State Ball on Friday, the 1st of June next, and a second State Concert on Wednesday, the 20th of June.

At the late sale of the celebrated stock of short-horned cattle, the property of the late John Bolden, Esq., of Hyning, in this country, Mr. Torr bought the highest priced animals, namely, Lady Hopetown, for 220 gs., and Gertrude for 100 gs.

The number of petitions presented to Parliament in the present session against the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sundays is 213, signed by 50,248 persons ; and 81 petitions have been presented for a repeal of the Sale of Beer Act of last year, signed by 154,716 persons.

THE SHIPPING OF THE WORLD—THE MARITIME POPULATION.—The London News of the 12th of April has an elaborate article on the Shipping of the World, which shows that the floating tonnage of the civilized world, excluding only China and the East, consists of 136,000 vessels, of 15,500,00 tons. The number of seamen it sets down at 800,000, and including the Eastern and other States, the maritime population of which we have no accounts, there must be at least a million of persons engaged at sea and generally on the ocean.

A NATION OF METHODISTS.—The mission to the Friendly Islands had been so successful, that the whole population, from the king down to his lowest subjects, attend the Wesleyan ministry.—These islands sometimes go by the name of Tonga. They consist of upward of one hundred and fifty, and lie in the Pacific Ocean between latitude 23 and 25 deg. south, and longitude 172 deg west and 177 deg. east. They were discovered by the navigator Tasman, in 1643, but received their collective name of "Friendly Islands" from Capt. James Cook. These facts are derived from the National Magazine.

There appears to be considerable excitement among the Roman Catholic Clergy in Europe, on account of the Rev. Mr. Boyle, a Roman Priest, having prosecuted Cardinal Wiseman for libel, and recovered damages of £1,000.

CANADA—DECIMAL CURRENCY.

The Third Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts relates to the propriety of establishing a Decimal Currency in Canada, and the expediency of keeping the Provincial Accounts on the Decimal principle. The determination to which the Committee came may be seen by the following Resolution, which, at the conclusion of their Report, they submitted to the consideration of the Legislative Assembly. "Resolved, That after the 31st of January, 1856, there shall be but one currency of Account and payment, of which the Dollar shall be the unit and standard of value ; the public Accounts shall be kept in dollars, cents and mills ; and the coinage be equal in intrinsic value to that of the United States." There is a second Resolution with regard to Weights and measures, but it is of too limited and partial a nature to engage our attention at present, and we think it was a pity to mix up the two subjects together. The establishment of the Decimal principle in the currency and monetary transactions of the Colony is a topic sufficiently important of itself to be considered and settled *per se*. Our system of weights and measures also demands more ample and enlarged treatment than to be appended to the fag-end of the other in a very imperfect degree. Right and complete changes in the system would only increase the confusion and inconsistencies which already prevail in the incongruous medley of weights and measures from one end of the Province to the other. Settle the money first, and then turn full attention to other branches to which the application of the Decimal principle may be desirable. There is a deal of useful, curious and interesting information in the Report, especially in the notes explanatory and historical, which run along the bottom. Of the usual reasons are enumerated for the introduction of a Decimal Currency : It would lead to greater accuracy in calculations, and diminish the labour to the extent of one half and in some cases of four-fifths.

A glance at the voluminous accounts and returns at the Custom House (it is justly stated) will show at once the labor which could be saved by the change.—It would tend also greatly to the convenience of travellers and persons engaged in exchange operations, more especially now as the currency nearly comes into operation. It would facilitate the education of the people (says the Report) by introducing into schools arithmetic made easy to the humblest capacity. Some persons are said to cling to the prejudice of continuing to acknowledge the Halifax currency. This is absurd ; the Currency differs as much in reality from the British as the American does ; its retention of the same names with different values attached to them serves only to cause the greater confusion. The Committee, therefore, have right in boldly declaring, that it is expedient to recognise and encourage two distinct currencies as legal, that of Halifax and that of the United States,—and that the United States currency of dollars and cents should be adopted as the only money of account. Notwithstanding the greatness of the change and benefit, we do not think there can be much confusion occasioned on its introduction. British shillings and sixpences constitute at present almost entirely the silver currency of Canada, and these are now supplied from Mr. Ross of Kingston thinks] they may be allowed to remain current at their present values. A copious supply of the proposed Florin or Victorine would be highly serviceable. This lately introduced coin (which however is said to be called in again) is equal to the tenth part of the Pound Sterling, and therefore very nearly equal in value to a half-dollar.—The Report is to be followed by an Appendix containing copies of about sixty answers from gentlemen in different parts of the Province to whom the Committee had forwarded a Circular of queries.

Altogether the Report is an interesting document, and gives ample proof of the industry and research of the Committee, reflecting no small credit on the activity of the Chairman (W. L. Mckenzie) who though he makes the country pay dearly for a superabundance of extraneous oratory, has shown in the present instance that he can act as well as talk. Bankers, Merchants, Business-men generally, and all concerned will doubtless prepare themselves for the changes earnestly desired by the country, and which cannot fail to prove very beneficial.—*Quebec Chronicle* May 7.

UNITED STATES.

THE CROPS.—We conversed yesterday with a gentleman who, during the last three weeks, has passed over large portions of this State, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana and New York. He informs us that in an experience of many years, he never has seen the wheat crops of these States present as fine an appearance and so flattering a prospect as they do now.—The crop is large, very large indeed, and remarkably forward. It is difficult to estimate the amount of wealth which will be realized by the farmers of these and other States by the harvest of these golden crops.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

A sad calamity occurred at Ship Cove, near Trinity, last month. During the absence from home of a Mrs. Day, her house took fire in the evening, and was entirely destroyed before assistance could reach the spot. Painful to relate, all the inmates, being three girls and three boys, between the ages of eight and sixteen, perished in the flames ; their bones were gathered, and buried in one box.—*Post.*

NOVA SCOTIA

By next steamer from England, Rev. Dr. Beecham, a Wesleyan of note, is to come to this Province. He is to organize into an independent self-sustaining "Conference" the "Districts" of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P. E. Island, and Newfoundland. It is expected that under this new *regime* the Wesleyans of these Provinces will be independent of all further pecuniary aid from their brethren at home, who will then be in a position to carry on still more effectively their undertakings in China and India.

Dr. Beecham expects to be in Halifax on or before the 22d inst.—four days before which the Wesleyan ministers of this Province are to open their Conference.—*Pres. Witness.*

TEMPERANCE.

Another significant token of the way towards which public opinion is now rapidly tending, we find in the *London Mercury* of the 9th ult., which says,—'It is stated, that the Lord Chancellor, in answer to the memorial of the (Lincoln) town council, has appointed to the Commission of the Peace for the city, Messrs. Seely, Wetherell, Hill, and Ward ; and that *his lordship intended to appoint Mr. Marshall because he is a brewer.*

In a recent letter to the *Freeman's Journal*, Mr. James Haughton, of Dublin, says :—' I believe the working-classes desire such Maine-law legislation for the protection of themselves and their families, and that, so far from thinking it would deprive them of happiness, they would hail it as the greatest blessing which parliament could confer upon them. When examined before the parliamentary committee on public-houses in July last, I was asked if I thought the prohibitory law would ever be popular in Ireland. My reply was,—' Give us universal suffrage, and we'll carry it in a year.' I am not afraid to go before the working men with the question. Whenever it has been fairly put before them, they have responded with the greatest cordiality.'

DESTRUCTION OF FOOD.—In addition to the legion of evils consequent upon our drinking system, that arising from the destruction of such an immense amount of food, is at the present time deeply to be deplored. Whilst thousands of our population have been famishing for want, during the bitter cold of last winter, our distilleries have demolished enough to supply the wants for a whole year of six millions of human beings, or nearly one fourth part of our entire population. We have not at present, time or space to follow up this subject as it deserves, but would entreat our readers to proclaim it as from the house-tops throughout the land. Whilst complaints loud and deep are made by our hungry poor at the high price of the staff of life, let them be told that this to a large extent, is attributable to the enormous quantity destroyed in making drink for the wealthy and luxurious.

SELLING LIQUOR ON SUNDAY.—On Tuesday last on information of the Tavern Inspectors, Mr. Fisher was summoned before the Mayor, charged with having kept open his bar, and sold liquor on the Sabbath day. He was convicted and fined £2 2s., and costs. We are really glad to find, that our Inspectors have moral courage enough to do their duty, and determined to make their very important office