

Government for employment in India should occasion require. It is officially notified that the proclamation declaring the western channel closed for foreign vessels entering Port Jackson will take effect from to-day. The channel is closed as a precautionary measure for the defence of the city and port.

In connection with the military preparations, now proceeding, the establishment of officers of the Army throughout Russia is being largely augmented.

The *Moscow Gazette*, in an article on the Anglo Russian difficulty, strongly urges that Russia should effect a peaceful settlement with England on the Afghan frontier question.

In view of the rupture between France and England in connection with the suppression of the *Bosphore Egyptien*, the French Minister and Consular officials left Cairo yesterday, ostensibly for the purpose of returning to France, but for the present they remain at Alexandria, pending the conclusion of the parleying which is now proceeding. In political circles it is believed that a compromise will be effected, and diplomatic relations resumed.

## WEDNESDAY.

The Government have received resolutions passed at Fiji asking for annexation to New Zealand. The Government have the question in hand, but nothing is decided as to what course will be adopted.

In the House of Commons on Monday Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice, Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, stated that the *Bosphore Egyptien* difficulty was on the point of being settled on a basis satisfactory to England, France, and Egypt.

The rebels and Batouche Indians, under Louis Riel, have been completely routed by the Canadian forces after seven hours' fighting.

The *Times* states that Mr. Gladstone has offered to settle the Pend-jeb difficulty by arbitration. It is reported that the Czar offers that General Komaroff and Sir Peter Lumsden should be examined by a mixed Commission.

The Government of New South Wales received a telegram yesterday afternoon from Sir Saul Samuel, Agent-general, announcing that the British Government accepted the offer of the services of the New South Wales Soudan contingent for employment in India if circumstances rendered it necessary to withdraw the British troops from Egypt. The whole of the defensive measures for the protection of Port Jackson are completed, including the submergence of torpedoes in the Western Channel.

Reuter's Agency announces, on good authority from St. Petersburg, that in that city war is considered inevitable. The Czar was to leave on Monday for Moscow, where his Majesty will issue an Imperial manifesto regarding the present crisis.

In the House of Commons on Monday night, Mr. Gladstone urged the adoption of the extraordinary vote of credit (£11,000,000) in a most powerful speech on the Anglo-Russian situation, in which he dwelt strongly on the necessity for England being prepared to carry out to the utmost extent the pledge of support which had been accorded by the Government to the Ameer of Afghanistan. Mr. Gladstone added, however, that notwithstanding the preparations which were being made, her Majesty's Government were striving by all means in their power to bring about an amicable, but at the same time an honourable, settlement of the difficulty. The vote of credit was afterwards passed by the House without a division.

In view of the possibility of war, Field Marshal his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is returning from Ireland at once. In pursuance of instructions from the War Office, preparations are being made for the withdrawal of the British forces from the Soudan.

Persistent rumours are afloat that a second engagement between the Russians and Afghans has taken place, and that the Russians were defeated with a loss of 1000 men.

## THURSDAY.

A meeting of Irishmen was held in Christchurch on Wednesday evening for the purpose of forming a defence corps.

At the Catholic Church, Ashburton, on Sunday a collection in aid of the building fund realised over £400, and promises to nearly the same extent were made.

Rewi, who has been taking great interest in the expected war, writes to the Press suggesting that the Auckland torpedo boat should be called Arai Te Ura, after the *Tunimha*, a sea god who formerly guarded these waters.

It is believed that the Egyptian Government will apologise to France for having suppressed the *Bosphore Egyptien*. The paper reappears.

News from Saskatchewan district states that the care of the wounded and the difficulties of transport are delaying Major-general Middleton's advance, and in the meantime the rebels have rapidly retired.

The Marines embarked at Suakin yesterday *en route* for England. It has been decided that the Soudan railway-line shall only be proceeded with as far as Otao Wells, about 20 miles on the road to Berber.

The Victorian Government have notified the Marine Departments of the various Colonies that in the event of war being declared the Point Lonsdale, the two Queenscliff, and the west and south channel lights will be extinguished, and two pilot schooners withdrawn.

The New South Wales contingent have accepted service anywhere they may be required. They will probably be brigaded with the Guards. The English Government are greatly pleased with this open offer.

The *Standard* publishes a telegram from its special correspondent with General Lumsden, to the effect that the Russian troops have occupied Maruchak, a position on the River Murghab, 20 miles south of Fenj-deh. No details, however, are given with regard to the occurrence.

The speech of Mr. Gladstone in the House of Commons has caused alarm throughout the Continent.

Immense supplies of coal are being shipped to the Cape of Good Hope.

Mr. H. Quinn late of the Lakes District is now engaged in conducting the Canongate Hotel, Dunedin, in a very superior manner

## Correspondence.

[We are not responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

## OUR LADY OF LOURDES.

TO THE EDITOR N.Z. TABLET.

SIR,—Once upon a time a young minister belonging to one of the Protestant Dissenting sects in England had to preach a sermon in the presence of perhaps the most eloquent and powerful preacher of the present century. The two ministers dined together, and naturally the young man was anxious to know the opinion of his celebrated *confreere*. But the other man said nothing about the sermon, until at length in dispar the young preacher said: "Pray, what did you think of my sermon, Brother H?" "It was a very short sermon, sir," replied Mr. H., with strong emphasis on the word "short." "Ah! yes!" replied the other, "I determined on no account to be tedious." "And yet," replied the elder man with a slight sigh, "you were tedious!" Now this, I am afraid, is my position with regard to the papers on the Lourdes cures. I have endeavoured, by cutting out all superfluous matter and making each case as succinct as possible, not to be tedious, and yet a candid friend informs me that I am tedious! Of course I am very grateful to my candid friend (and I may say, in a parenthesis, that of such candid friends, ready in the frankest way to tell me of my faults, I have never found any lack), but I really do not see how to alter either the plan of the work, or, in any material respect, the mode of its execution. If your readers generally share the opinion, I must ask them to look upon the couple of pages devoted to my papers as a little mortification, and to bear in mind that this is the first work of the kind that has been printed in the English language, at any rate. A critical inquiry, by a qualified physician, of any narratives of modern miraculous cures, is at least a new thing, and I venture to think that it will be of some use. The tediousness of the cases cannot be helped. The cumulative testimony of such a number of supernatural cures is of more importance than the making of a nice readable book. Now that very devout client of our Lady of Lourdes, M. Lasserre, has published a beautiful work, from a literary point of view, entitled "Episodes Miraculeux," containing an account of five cases cured at Lourdes. Two of these I had marked out as hysteria; one of them I had selected as a typical example of the class of cases which I briefly characterized in chapter

Now, I have no hesitation in saying that such cases as these published as miraculous cures do an immense amount of harm. Imagine a pious woman who reads the book (which has reached a 16th edition), and gives it to her doctor, who, in France, would generally be an infidel. She thinks it will convert him. Well, he certainly will be staggered by three of the cases, but two he will only laugh at. The one I have selected as a type of hysteria—that of Mlle. de Fontenay—is a striking example of how cautious the ecclesiastical authorities are in stamping a case as miraculous. The lady's friends, who are rich people, placed a tablet in the church at Lourdes, expressing gratitude for the cure, but there is not a word about its being supernatural or miraculous. The Bishop of Autun, three years after the cure, accepted the endowment for a Mass to be said every month in perpetuity as a Mass of thanksgiving. The intention of the Mass, and the name of the founder, are engraved on a marble tablet placed in the cathedral, but all it says is that Mlle. de Fontenay was cured, not miraculously cured or anything of the kind.

Let me again remind your readers that the only cures affirmed by the commission of the Bishop of Tarbes to be miraculous—and even that only with submission to the judgment of Rome—were subjected to the closest medical scrutiny as to all the symptoms of the case and the circumstances of the cure.

Of the thousands of cures which have been effected through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, I have selected only 230 published in the "Annales." With this letter will be sent a batch which will bring us to about half of those I have translated and annotated. I must ask for your and your readers' kind forbearance until they are all published.

In the last number of the "Annales" which I have received is an account of the devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes in Asia, which is very interesting. As I stated in a late number, the miracles worked at her shrine in Constantinople, and elsewhere in Asia, are leading to most extensive conversions among the schismatic Greeks. From recent news it appears far from improbable that a re-union of the long alienated Eastern Church may take place, and that immense community may again be united to the true fold of Jesus Christ, under the headship of His Vicar on earth.

Wonderful as are the cures of bodily infirmities through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, the miracles of grace wrought in the conversion of obdurate and impenitent sinners are far more so. Of two of these I have been myself a witness.—I am, etc.,  
Christchurch, April 23.

R. H. BAKEWELL.

MR. F. MEBNAN, King street, reports:—Wholesale prices, including bags: Oats, 1s 6d to 1s 9d; wheat, milling 3s to 3s 4d, fowls' feed 1s 6d to 2s 3d; barley, malting 3s to 4s, milling 2s 6d to 3s 6d, feeding 2s; oatmeal, 12s; fresh butter, grass, £3; chaff, £2 10s to £3; straw, £1 15s to £2; bran, £3 5s; pollard, £4; flour, £8 to £8 10s; oatmeal, 12s; fresh butter, medium to prime, 8d to 10d; eggs, 2s 3d; salt butter, 8d; cheese, 4d to 5d; bacon, 8d in rolls, hams 10d; potatoes, Derwents £2 5s to £2, 10s kidneys unsaleable £2.

Quantity in medicine is no indication of value. Ayer's Sarsaparilla is concentrated and powerful; requires a smaller dose, and is more effective, dose for dose, than any other Sarsaparilla. It is the best of all blood medicines.