

# THE CRITIC:

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

Our vaticinations as to the doubtful results of the Brazilian revolution seem by recent accounts to be in course of being borne out. There is much trouble with the army, which seems to repent the part it took in the uprising.

An exceedingly interesting contribution has recently been made to the literature of the war of 1812—15 by Lieut.-Col. C. S. Jones commanding the 38th Battalion (Dufferin Rifles) of Brantford, Ont. Col. Jones is known to us as a very able officer whose talents are by no means confined to his military efficiency, and his account, in an essay in pamphlet form, of the action at Stony Creek, six miles from Hamilton, does justice to an event memorable in that contest. The action was fought on the 6th June, 1813. On that night 700 British and Canadian soldiers, under Col. Harvey, surprised an army of 3500 marauding United States troops, camped for the night at Stony Creek, and after an hour's engagement put them to rout. The U. S. Brigadier Generals Chandler and Winder, the first and second in command, were taken prisoners, together with upwards of 100 officers and privates. The British loss was 1 officer, 22 non-commissioned officers and men killed; 12 officers, 124 n. c. o. and men wounded, and 58 n. c. o. and men missing. The essay closes with an expression of regret that no stone has yet been erected to perpetuate the memory of this sharp and decisive action so creditable to Canadian arms.

On Sunday Mr Gladstone will have completed his eightieth year. The records of modern English statesmen abound in instances of longevity with little or no diminution of the energy required for the administration of affairs. Lord Palmerston, Earl Russell, Earl Grey, who still survives at the age of 87, Sir Geo. Gray and others are notable instances that a life of continuous and arduous work in no wise tends to shorten men's days. Doubtless the living of thoroughly wholesome lives, marked by temperance, system and regularity, principle and duty, enter largely into the conditions which furnish us with such examples. Perhaps, however, of all the instances that could be cited, Mr Gladstone stands pre-eminent for surpassing vigor at his advanced age—a vigor both physical and intellectual which is indeed surprising, and which all men will desire to see prolonged for some years yet. The late Lord Derby, on whose shoulders the Premiership of Great Britain more than once rested, and who found time amidst all the requirements of his active political life to leave us, among many literary efforts, an admirable

translation of the Iliad, did not obtain quite the patriarchal age of some older statesmen, yet he was past seventy when he died.

No state of turmoil can last for ever, not even the exasperation of Irish politics. After all the surging storm that has raged in Parliament so long some signs of an abatement of the tempest seem to be visible. The incorporation of Irish reform, whatever shape it may eventually take, with practical English politics, has assumed so distinct and definite a shape that Mr. Parnell has found himself in a position to make the notable statement that "Irishmen had entered joyfully hand in hand with Englishmen, forgetting their past hostility to England, for the realization of government reform." The large number of English Liberals who follow Mr. Gladstone on the distinct line of concession to Irish desires does no doubt, in itself, to a large extent warrant Mr. Parnell's utterance, but it takes two parties either to fight or to make an alliance, and the attitude of the Home Rule members has not always been conciliatory. If Mr. Parnell, who is undoubtedly the ablest and most successful national leader Ireland has ever had, has succeeded in instilling moderation into his followers, and thus bringing them into line with, and shoulder to shoulder to, English reformers, he would, if he had succeeded in nothing else, be deserving of a high tribute of appreciation. Let us hope Mr. Parnell's utterance is the dawn of a better era.

It is now known that the pertinacious obstinacy of a single jurymen prevented all the men who were on trial for the murder of Dr. Cronin from being convicted, and saved the three who have been sentenced to life imprisonment from being hanged. The result of this singular trial is calculated to further discredit the jury system. In such a case, and in such a city as Chicago, it is evident that it is well-nigh impossible to empanel a jury that will not include one man open to sinister influences, and some alteration of the law of unanimity in juries seems to be imperatively called for. It appears that in the State of Illinois the jury has the singular power of determining the penalty, and the question almost occurs, what is the use of a judge at all under such conditions? In the Cronin case, considering the atrocity of the crime and the infamy of the association, some of whose members deliberately plotted to carry it out in all its cold-blooded and revolting details, the sentence strikes every one as a gross miscarriage of justice. So long as death is the penalty of murder, murderers ought to be hung. In this case the effect of the example would probably have been more than ordinarily beneficial, and the dissatisfaction almost universally felt is deepened by the strong doubts which are naturally prompted by the corrupt and tortuous methods so often seen to exist in the United States. Once immersed in prison and lost to the public eye, intrigues for pardon at a date more or less early will be set on foot, and no one feels any confidence that they will not be crowned with success, and four or five miscreants whose creed is assassination be again let loose on society.

1889 is fast drawing to a close. What has been accomplished in the good city of Halifax during the year? Not perhaps very much to show, but a good deal in laying broader and deeper the foundations of a more rapid advance and a solid prosperity in the near future. Several nuisances which we have endeavored to get rectified remain *in statu quo*, notably the abominable approach to and exit from the North Street Station. The streets of the city are still allowed to remain in a disgraceful state of mud after rain, and a large number of our citizens have not yet learned which is their right side of the pavements. The Allan Line still draws over the mail service, and prefers Portland to a Canadian Port. On the other hand the passing year has witnessed the successful Summer Carnival, concerning which there can be no manner of doubt that large numbers of persons, notably members of the Press of the Upper Provinces, have been imbued with different and truer views of the beauties and capabilities of our City and Province. The great work of the Dry Dock has been successfully brought to completion, a large number of new houses and business premises have been built or altered and enlarged, and the shop fronts of our principal streets present an immensely improved appearance. But the year has been chiefly distinguished by a new bold spirit of enterprise which marks the advent in commercial and soundly enterprising affairs of a new set of men, emancipated from the old slow, timid and over-cautious traditions, which in the past have done so much to retard the advancement of the Province in general and the City of Halifax in particular. Throughout the Province the progress of trade and manufacturing enterprise has been rapid and satisfactory to an unprecedented degree, and there can be little doubt that the close of the ninth decade of the century will see Nova Scotia placed on a very differing footing of importance to that which she has hitherto occupied. Let the past success stimulate every Nova Scotian to increased confidence in his native land, and to renewed efforts to place her in the position her great natural resources have marked out for her.