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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the views expressed in Editorial Notes and Articles, and for such only; but the editor is not to be understood as endorsing the sentiments expressed in the articles contributed to this journal. Our readers are capable of approving or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after exercising due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The comparative exemption of North-western Canada from the severity of the weather experienced in the States not only adjoining the boundary line but several hundred miles south of it, seems so phenomenal that it would be scarcely credible were it not that, year after year, the reports continue to evidence the fact. Up to the time of writing this note we have no account of any stoppage of C. P. R. trains by snow, while the Union and Central Pacific lines were fearfully blocked. Despatches from Reno a week ago state that half the cattle and sheep in Nevada would perish. In some Nevada canyons the snow was reported to be from 30 to 60 feet deep. The sufferings of passengers on the trans-continental trains were very severe.

We have often called attention to the injustice of the discount system on notes of the different chartered banks of the Dominion when presented to banks in other provinces. Some of the leading banks of this province have now an arrangement whereby their notes are cashed in Montreal at par, but the matter is too important to be left to voluntary arrangement, and we therefore note with approval that Sir John Macdonald has taken a decided stand—insisting that if the banks do not agree to legislation making it compulsory to receive the notes of other banks at par he will introduce a measure giving a national currency to the country. We should like to see a national currency, but the next best thing to it would be the abolishment of any discount on the notes of chartered banks.

A Mr. I. I. Bell has written an interesting and somewhat exhaustive article in the *Railway Age* on "Color Blindness in its relation to Railway Service." He dwells specially on the liability to confusion in the eyes of color-blind persons between red and green, the colors everywhere in most use for railway signals, and recommends compulsory tests of the eyesight of signalmen. Mr. Bell goes into the phenomena of other colors, but any one who has ever marched in the ranks of a Rifle Regiment under a high and bright sun before which he has been compelled to keep his eyes downcast, and found himself under the illusion of contemplating the movement of so many bright crimson legs, will be in a well instanced position to recognize the ready convertibility of red and green, even though the rifle-green be of the darkest. It is a serious matter and calls for prompt scientific action.

The following paragraph has been going the rounds:—"A gentleman in Indiana who was so indiscreet as to leave \$30,000 for the establishment of a home for maiden ladies has been adjudged insane by the courts and the will is to be set aside." In the absence of any explanation of the reasons for this decision, or the circumstances of the case if it be at all correctly stated, it certainly seems a singular judgment in view of the apparently benevolent nature of the bequest.

The *St. John Globe* of the 22nd inst. has a paragraph, apparently the contribution of an English correspondent, which, speaking of a recent article by the Duke of Marlborough animadverting on the neglect of their duties by the Irish landlords, mentions the Duke as an ultra tory peer, and dwells on his extreme conservatism. The writer is evidently not familiar with many of the Duke's writings, which, whatever his character may be, are of a very pronounced radicalism, as in his warnings to the Lords as to reforming their House, etc.

The sentence of a year's imprisonment passed on Mr. Parke for an alleged libel on the Earl of Euston is one calculated to set folks thinking. The sensational concoction of scandals is an abomination, but the one to which attention was drawn in this instance was not only of a peculiar loathsomeness but had evidently hard facts for a foundation. Mr. Parke may have exceeded discretion, but enough was adduced to show that if Lord Euston did not visit the house which figures in the affair for the vilest of purposes, the purpose for which he did go there was bad enough, while there is considerable ground for belief that Lord Euston was only driven to defend himself by the certainty of social ostracism if he made no fight. Whether he will be much better plight even now may still be questionable. It behooves editors, no doubt, to be very careful, but recent revelations of wickedness in high places indicate plainly enough that the public cannot afford to allow the press to be unduly muzzled. There is every probability that the sentence on Mr. Parke will be mitigated, and perhaps the best way to minimise the outcry of popular feeling will be to commute it as soon as possible.

The difficulty between Great Britain and Portugal, though it might perhaps be said to be initiated by the conduct of the latter in regard to the Delagoa Bay Railway, owes its development and acerbity to the violent assertion by Major Serpa Pinto of Portuguese authority over the Shire River Valley, and the country around Lake Nyassa. It now fully appears that the Portuguese never exercised any control in those regions by right of discovery, conquest or purchase. They now pretend to show that they had geographical knowledge of these territories, but it is said to be now proved from Portuguese sources that thirty years ago they knew nothing whatever about them. When Livingstone started up the Shire River in 1859, the Portuguese could give him no information about it. They told him that years before a Portuguese expedition had attempted the ascent, but had to turn back owing to the difficulties of the voyage. The discovery of the lake with the Shire flowing out of its southern end was news to the Portuguese themselves. Since that period the region has been entered upon and cultivated by British missionary and commercial enterprise without a thought of Portuguese sovereignty. It is only recently that it has occurred to the Portuguese that these territories, opened up and developed by British enterprise alone, would form a desirable acquisition.

It is not particularly reassuring that in the speech from the throne nothing more definite regarding the Behring Sea trouble can be formulated than that the government "hopes to be enabled during the present session to assure Parliament that differences on this question are in course of satisfactory adjustment." That the discussion of this question has grown stale goes without saying, but it is yet worth while, as further evidencing the extreme weakness of the American contention, to quote from the latest contribution to its literature—an article by Mr. W. F. Dana in the January number of the *New England Magazine*:—"We ought not, in any event, to yield up the doctrine of *mare clausum*, even if an international agreement is effected and indemnity is paid for seizures already made. The nations may not always work harmoniously together, and we do not want to compromise ourselves so that we shall be estopped from acting in the future. The doctrine of *mare clausum* is not so very absurd, considering the position of the sea, and the necessity of the nations to have recourse to it; and without holding the sea as a *mare clausum*, we may argue for a right to resort to the waters beyond the three-mile limit for the necessary protection of rights within." This is the summing up of Mr. Dana's conclusions, and all that seems necessary to say regarding it is, that if Mr. Dana considers the *mare clausum* doctrine "not so very absurd" his perceptions of the absurd are, to say the least, somewhat obtuse.