

THE CRITIC:

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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.

We begin in to-day's issue of THE CRITIC a short story by a gentleman of marked ability, who has for some time past been resident in Halifax. The little tale is clearly and brightly written and will forcibly remind its readers of the pleasant and often pathetic little military romances of "John Strange Winter."

The Earl or, as he must now be called, the Duke of Fife, deserves credit for his consideration in declining to receive wedding presents from his tenantry. These demonstrations are often a severe tax on persons who can ill afford to make presents, and the Duke's action may possibly prove the initiative of a general change of fashion in this regard. It must have occurred to many that the wedding present tax has of late years assumed alarming proportions, and must often prove a heavy impost, while it is not unfrequently whispered that numbers of wedding guests are sometimes invited with an express view to the contributions accruing.

The French Chamber of Deputies has been prorogued. It appears to have outlived any utility it may have possessed and the respect supposed to be due to a legislative body, for its last days were marked by riotous and discreditable scenes which added to the disrepute into which it had fallen. A general election is looked forward to in the fall, and it will then be seen if there is any strength left in Boulangerism. If trouble should arise with England out of the French encroachments in Newfoundland and the hostile attitude of France with regard to Egyptian affairs, it may yet be on the cards that she may come to look upon the redoubtable General as a possible staff whereon to lean.

Accounts are very frequent in the Daily Press of the riotous conduct of the soldiers of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, and it is to be feared that corps, though in splendid drill order, is not altogether so well behaved otherwise as it might be. The trite old adage, however, that there are two sides to every question holds good here also. There has always been a section of the people of Halifax who entertain a violent animosity to the regulars, and eagerly seize or even make opportunities of collision. We were told, not many days ago, by a gentleman of unquestionable reliability that he had recently heard a rough say to his comrade loafers—"Let's get up a fight with the soldiers." And this was by no means the first time he had heard the same sort of thing.

Like our butter-making our fish-curing often falls far short of perfection, and Canadian fish is frequently unable to compete successfully in the European markets. The Minister of Marine and Fisheries has therefore taken a step likely to prove of great benefit to our great fishing industries in arranging for a special investigation into the most approved methods of curing and drying fish in vogue in Europe. We hope the investigation will be thorough and the report speedy.

Complaints have reached us of the setting of several salmon nets across the Shubenacadie River between Milford and Elmsdale, which completely prevent the salmon from getting up the stream. It is intimated that fishwardens are sometimes disposed to evade their plain duty in such cases by the fear of petty revenge on the part of offenders. This tendency is indeed far too prevalent in Nova Scotia, and it is perhaps only by the appointment of very resolute persons to the duty of enforcing the laws that the evil can be met and overcome.

We are indebted to the *St. John Gazette* for the following kindly and appreciative notice:—"The success of the Halifax CRITIC proves that a good independent weekly will prosper in the Maritime Provinces. The CRITIC has won its present position because of the intelligence which it brings to the discussion of all public matters, and also in consequence of the attention it gives to the industrial interests of the Maritime Provinces. It would be better for Nova Scotia if it had more papers possessed of the same spirit that THE CRITIC displays."

A gigantic scheme is on foot, and is to be submitted to Congress at its next session, to create a company to acquire the control of the leading railways of the continent, including the C. P. R. This control is sought in the interests of Boston. If this should come to pass it would, as is well observed by a contemporary, be a cruel awakening to Canadians from the dream that at all events, if they have spent millions on it, they were in possession of a great national highway forming an important link in the chain binding the Empire together the world over. And the worst of it is that it is not apparent that Canada would be able to put a veto on such a transaction, while the antecedents of Mr. Van Horne lend but too much probability to his giving his aid to it. The truth of the above report is doubted.

We have read with much pleasure and entirely concur in the sentiments expressed in a leading article in the *Chronicle* last Saturday. Our endeavor has ever been to point out the worse than uselessness of the continual ascription of unworthy motives to political opponents. We, for our part, decline to believe that either the Dominion Government on the one hand, or the Provincial Government of Nova Scotia on the other, are the "swindlers, ignoramuses or fools" they are too often respectively called. We believe that both are in the main actuated by higher motives. The abuse goes far beyond what is merited by their general courses of action. It is only reasonable to suppose that if their course of action were really such as is so continually ascribed to them, there would soon be a change. Moreover the tirades indulged in are out of all proportion to the importance of the interests involved. The *Chronicle's* plea for at least a truce has also this advantage, that even a temporary cessation from exaggerated invective might break the habit, and when real party warfare should demand the resumption of their weapons, the partisans might possibly renew the fight in a higher spirit of courtesy and forbearance.

The *American Bureau of Statistics* has lately published a report on the production and consumption of spirits and malt liquors, which shows an enormous increase in their use in the United States, and demonstrates the exceedingly favorable position among nations held by Canada from a temperance point of view. In the former, the average consumption per head of malt liquors in gallons actually increased from 1.36 to 12.40 between the years 1840 and 1888. The consumption per capita in different countries is given as follows, the figures denoting gallons:

Countries	Spirits.	Wines.	Malt.
United States.....	1 28	0.59	12.48
United Kingdom.....	0.98	0.38	32.88
Germany	1.09	...	24.99
France	1.24	26.74
Denmark.....	4 23
Canada.....	0 84	0.10	3.50

These figures show conclusively how unnecessary is fanatical insistence on arbitrary enactments tending to weaken personal responsibility, and to cripple the freedom of action which is the birthright of every citizen of a free country.