

# THE CRITIC:

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## EDITORIAL NOTE.

Some ladies of high social position in New York are said to have started a society "for the advancement of propriety and frugality in dress." Among the things to be avoided are decolette dresses and sleeveless bodices.

The party war into which Mr. Parnell has plunged unhappy Ireland still continues. Briefly, it may be stated that the Nationalist party has split into two factions, one adhering to Parnell, and the other electing Mr. Justin McCarthy their leader. "The prospects for Home Rule for Ireland," says the *Express*, (Independent Conservative,) "are as dead as Queen Anne." Ireland might well ask to be saved from her friends. Mr. Parnell has dealt her a deadly blow.

Apropos of the loss of the British cruiser *Serpent*, of which we gave a brief account in a late issue of THE CRITIC, we would recall three other disasters, equally crushing, which have befallen the British navy in late years. From such calamities there are lessons to be drawn. It seems but a very few years ago that we were horrified by the news that H. M. S. *Captain*, the most powerful ironclad then afloat, had capsized in the Bay of Biscay, and carried her crew of five hundred gallant seamen to the bottom. It was the *Captain's* maiden voyage. Like the *Serpent* the *Captain* was defective in design. She was deeply distrusted by practical ship-builders, and many wise heads in the British navy had questioned her seaworthiness. In fact, like the *Serpent*, she was an experiment in naval architecture. It would seem time that the British public resented such terribly costly experiments on the part of incompetent designers, however distinguished by birth or office. England can afford to sacrifice the ships, but not the sailors. The other two disasters to which we refer are the foundering of the *Eurydice* and the disappearance of the *Atlanta*. These were old warships, in use at the time as training-ships. They were known to be unsafe, yet in them were gathered hundreds of the best of England's youths, learning to guard her homes. Surely it was culpable mismanagement that left these ships in service, and suffered them to carry a freight so priceless. Within sight of shore one day the *Eurydice* was struck by a sharp squall; she turned over in the trough of the sea, and went down with all on board. Still more appalling was the fate of the *Atlanta*. With her young crew she sailed out of port on a practice cruise, and from that day men have heard no tidings of her. We can only guess at the manner of her loss.

Now that Holland is under a Regency,—a form of government proverbially tempting to the malcontents,—it is not surprising to find the hearts of Dutchmen turning in the direction of Republicanism. The traditions of Holland are Republican. The days of her greatness were the days when she was a Republic. Not of her own will, but under pressure from her powerful neighbors, did she accept the forms of a monarchy. There is no Radicalism in the Dutch movement, which is prompted by a different spirit from that which stirs the Republican party in Portugal. It is to be imagined, however, that the Dutch Republicans will be too prudent to push their aims at the present juncture, when the accomplishment of their purpose would probably give Germany just the opportunity for which she is waiting. The Dutch Republic would, it is to be feared, very speedily find itself transformed into a portion of the German Empire.

It is highly improbable that the Indian disturbances now harassing the American Northwest will extend into the Dominion. The Crees, a warlike and intelligent tribe of our own territories, have begun the ominous rites and "ghost dances," which have been for the past few weeks stirring up their kinsfolk to the southward of the line, and instructions have been issued to officials in the Northwest to watch all our Indians closely. But the Indians are astute, and it has never been their policy to unite all the white men against them. French and English they played off the one against the other, and afterwards the English and the Americans. By tradition they are almost all friendly to the British sovereign, and with the Indians tradition is a living force. It may be urged that the craze now swaying them is a religious one, and that a frenzy of this kind is apt to rise superior to all consideration of reason. On the other hand the Indian prophet who has wrought the madness appears to be a rather prudent soul. He promises the coming of the Messiah, who will cause the ground to open and swallow up all the pale-faces, and who will at the same time restore the buffalo and renew the fruitful hunting-grounds of their forefathers. Meantime, however, he declares that it is this Messiah's will that the Indians keep at peace with the whites until all things shall be ready. So sagacious a prophet, though he is perhaps going to find it beyond his power to prevent a collision with the American forces, will doubtless look to it that his followers keep on good terms with the Canadian authorities. He is little likely to burn his ships behind him.

Every Canadian should be profoundly interested in the proposal of Monsignor Howley for the partition of Newfoundland into two Provinces, the new Province on the west coast to become a portion of the Dominion. The inhabitants of the district in question are unanimously desirous of the change, says Monsignor Howley, and in such a case the question should come at once into the region of practical politics. Whether or not such a step would be immediately advantageous to Canada is a question on which there might be conflicting opinions, but in any case Canada is bound to lend the scheme her favor and support. She would be false to her destiny, to her claims, to the aspirations of her people, if she were to hesitate in a case of this sort, because of some added responsibility or expense. The only consistent attitude for the Canadian Government towards such a proposal is one of fearless readiness to welcome those who may wish to enter our confederation. This is not a case for the weighing of reciprocal advantages, but for the prompt enunciation of a truly national and confident policy. It is the opposition of the wealthy merchants of St. John's which has hitherto kept the whole Island out of confederation, and it is apparently an aggregation of St. John's interests which throws special difficulties in the way of a settlement of the "French shore" trouble. It is the so-called French shore which is now demanding admission to the Dominion. This territory, according to the eminent authority to whom we refer, contains about 10,000 square miles,—it is nearly twice as large as Prince Edward Island and Cape Breton put together. The territory approaches within 40 miles of Canadian soil; its interests are with Canadian trade; its resources, in the form of rich agricultural lands, great mineral wealth, invaluable fisheries and fine timber, are vast, but they are only to be developed under very different auspices from those which now exert their baneful influence on the whole region. The proposed new Province would only have a population to start with of some twelve or thirteen thousand souls; but with the removal of those restrictions and hindrances which have so long warned off intending settlers, there is little room to doubt that the population would experience a great immediate increase. It is probable that the east side will oppose the scheme with bitterness, but if Canada and the west coast are both ready, and Downing Street detects in the scheme a simplification of the dispute with France, it is probable the Imperial Government will pay little heed to the wishes of the St. John's merchants. We shall wait with extreme interest the Queen's answer to the petition, which will doubtless be laid before her by the inhabitants of the west coast.