

the lecture appears may, to some extent, stand in the way of its receiving that wide circulation and attention to which its merits otherwise entitle it. All must agree that upon the practical solution of the question with which it deals "depend the most momentous concerns affecting modern civilization." Mr. Ritchie shows that he has studied the question with much acumen, and it would not be easy to condense more thought and argument, and those by no means wanting in originality and force, within the compass of a fifty-page pamphlet.

TWO distinct lines of inquiry are opened up by Mr. Ritchie's and similar treatises. First, is it true that the tendency of affairs at the present time is wholly in the direction of increasing inequality in the distribution of wealth? Is it the fact that "in proportion as the rapidity of production increases, in that proportion does wealth centre in the hands of a comparatively few," and that "not only an increasing amount but an increasing proportion of the products of labour goes to enrich those of great wealth?" It is, we suppose, beyond question that under present conditions wealth is being accumulated in the hands of the few at a rate and to an extent unprecedented in the history of modern civilization. But is it equally clear that the poverty of the many is increasing in the same ratio, that while "the rich are becoming richer, the poor are becoming poorer?" Is it true that "in this way a condition of social affairs has actually been brought about which is worse than any form of human slavery that ever existed in any civilized state on the face of the earth?" We are not prepared to deny the statement, but assertions involving so dreadful an impeachment of our Christian civilization are not to be accepted without the most conclusive proof. Is that proof furnished or forthcoming? In the second place, assuming that the state of things so darkly depicted exists, to what extent would the remedy suggested prove a veritable panacea? Mr. Ritchie has, we observe, the rare courage of his convictions. He denies utterly the Malthusian doctrine of over-population, and holds that "there is every reason to believe that population might increase to almost any conceivable extent beyond what is, and yet there be enough and to spare for all, were it not for maladjustment in our social system." He has no faith whatever in the Socialistic specific, seeing clearly that "if we admit in the least degree a right to appropriate what belongs to another because he may possess great wealth, we upset a necessary foundation of all social order." While he admits that "concentration of capital gives an immense power into the hands of its possessors, which is too often exercised unjustly to extort labour for an 'inadequate recompense,' he does not fail to point out that this is not the fault of the capital, and that there is no necessary conflict between capital and labour as so many vainly imagine. In the same spirit he refers to trade-unionism, co-operation and so forth. He maintains, too, the rather startling opinions that in respect to the question of land tenure "we in Canada and the United States have become more crystallized in error than the people of Great Britain or the Continent of Europe," and that to create ten or a hundred landlords where before there was but one is not to lessen but to greatly intensify the evil. It is just as well to admit frankly the fact that the land theories of John Stuart Mill, and of Henry George and others after him, have now passed the stages of silent contempt and open ridicule and are coming to the front for serious discussion. We should be glad to see Mr. Ritchie's arguments replied to by some Canadian writer of equal ability and candour.

THE *Mail* of the 13th instant contains the report of an interview between its Ottawa correspondent and the Minister of Customs, in which the latter defends the moiety system in vogue in the Customs service, and also the principle that the person accused of defrauding the Customs may rightfully be called on to prove his innocence, from time to time. The gist of Mr. Bowell's argument is contained in the plea that it is the duty of the Department to protect, first, the revenue, and secondly, the importer who observes the letter of the law, and that this can be effectively done only by enlisting the self-interest of the Customs officers on the side of vigilance. We do not perceive that the Minister offered any defence of the singular reversal of a fundamental principle of British law, which takes place when the accused is called on to prove his innocence, on pain of being held guilty. Nor is any reference made to the fact that the accused is placed at a still greater disadvantage in such cases by being deprived

of his books and papers, which would naturally afford the readiest means of establishing his innocence, and also by being tried, not by a disinterested tribunal nor by a jury of his peers, but by his prosecutors. The *Mail* replies at length and not ineffectively to the main arguments of the Minister. We have not space to refer to the leading points of this interesting discussion, which many of our readers will have weighed for themselves. Two things must, we think, have forced themselves upon the notice of the thoughtful reader. He can scarcely have failed to notice the irrelevancy of a good deal of the Minister's reasoning, if it is correctly reported, and the extent to which he himself furnishes material for refuting that which is to the point in his argument, as when, for instance, he unwittingly shows that the vigilance of rival tradesmen is a most effective safeguard against under-valuation. Still more remarkable, in the second place, is the Minister's apparent obliviousness to the moral aspects of the system which aims at converting both the Customs officers and the merchants' employees into spies and informers, anxious not to prevent but only to detect irregularities, since their personal interests are promoted in proportion to the number and extent of the frauds committed. Surely from the moral and educational point of view, that system, which substitutes a degrading form of appeal to self-interest for a sense of duty and honour as an incentive to official faithfulness, cannot be too strongly deprecated.

WHILE a number of the head masters of the High Schools and Collegiate Institutes of Ontario have been expressing themselves in favour of the proposed substitution of a "leaving" or "final" High School examination as a substitute for the matriculation examinations of the universities, we notice that the new McMaster University has settled the question, so far as its arts department is concerned, by a very simple process. Its prospectus lately issued announces that the certificate of the Head Master of any High School or Collegiate Institute that a given student has successfully completed the work proscribed for matriculation, which is the same as in the Provincial University, will be accepted, as will also the non-professional teachers' certificates issued by the Education Department *pro tanto*, in lieu of the matriculation examination. Whether the compliment thus paid to the High School Masters is too high to be safe remains to be proved. There certainly is room for difference of opinion. Two things are, however, to be said on behalf of the innovation. Exception to it can be taken only at the expense of the High School Masters of the Province, and hence it is hardly open to the Education Department or the Government to take such exception. Possibly the Senate of McMaster shrewdly foresaw that the educational authorities could raise no objection without placing themselves between the horns of the dilemma thus suggested. In the second place, assuming that the examinations at the various stages of the university course proper are fairly rigid, any student entering with imperfect preparation would soon come to grief, and his disgrace would reflect seriously upon the institution which recommended him. Hence the reputation of the High School Masters would be at stake in the bestowal of the certificates. In case of the establishment of the "finals," under the management of the Education Department, it is reasonable to suppose that all the universities would gladly come into the arrangement.

INDICATIONS are multiplying that the forcible boarding and pretended capture of the *Black Diamond* is likely to prove serviceable rather than otherwise to the vindication of Canadian rights in Behring Sea. The attitude taken by many of the better class of newspapers in the United States is courageous and creditable, and will go far to render persistence in a Jingo policy by Mr. Blaine or the Administration impossible. No democratic government can afford to provoke a quarrel with a nation when the better sentiment of its own people declares it to be in the wrong. The curious manner in which Government officials and adherents try to shift the blame from their own shoulders to that of Congress or the previous Administration is itself significant of conscious wrongdoing. The question which Administration is to blame is, as the *Christian Union* says in an admirable article, "wholly secondary and insignificant beside the greater one—whether the act of the 'Rush' can be justified? It is the act neither of one party nor of the other, but of the United States of America." The writer goes on to show how completely and emphatically the national history antagonizes all such pretensions, and furnishes the clearest precedents against their admission by other nations, and adds,

"As to the humorous claim attributed to the Assistant Secretary of State, that we have a right to the seals in the open seas because they have been bred in our waters, the same principle would establish a claim of the Northern States to authority over the robins when they go south in the fall." From the party point of view *The Nation*, on the other hand, points out that Secretary Blaine's declaration to a Bangor newspaper reporter that "everything done on the fur-seal question since March 4th last was in literal compliance with the directions contained in the Act of Congress which was approved by President Cleveland on the last day of his term" is "characteristically misleading," inasmuch as the words of the Act of Congress referred to, "within the limit of Alaska territory or in the waters thereof," do not help anybody to decide what are the waters of Alaska territory. Thus the best American journals are effectively supporting the Canadian contention. But that does not render it any the less incumbent upon the Canadian and British Governments to take a firm stand in defence of our rights and demand redress for the injuries inflicted upon Canadian fishermen.

WE are not surprised to find that public opinion in Australia, as represented by some of its influential politicians and journals, is not in accord with the views so eloquently presented by Mr. Parkin, in favour of Imperial Federation. The circumstances of our Australian fellow-colonists, geographically and otherwise, seem to point even more clearly than those of Canadians in the direction of independent nationality as the only destiny worthy of their highest ambition. So far as we have learned, Mr. Parkin has everywhere been listened to with the respectful attention due to his talent as a speaker, and his evident sincerity. We have not heard that in any case has there been shewn any disposition to resent what might from one point of view have been regarded as almost the impertinence of members of one colony in sending an agent to enlighten the residents of another in regard to the merits of a project involving the future course and well-being of the latter. If the claim which has recently been made on behalf of Canada to the honour of having originated the Imperial Federation movement can be made good, that fact itself might give her a special right to expound and advocate the scheme throughout the Empire. In Australia as in Canada the warmth of Mr. Parkin's reception, and the enthusiasm he is able to arouse on behalf of the federation idea, no doubt vary according to local temper and circumstances, but we have greatly misread the tendencies of events in that country of wonderful possibilities if the resolution which was moved and seconded by members of the Legislature at one of Mr. Parkin's meetings in Sydney does not pretty accurately represent the prevailing opinion and spirit of the colony. That resolution, which, after thanking Mr. Parkin for his address, declared that the meeting was nevertheless "of opinion that the natural and inevitable destiny of the Australian Colonies is to unite and form among themselves one free and independent nation," was deemed inadmissible by the Chairman, but the confusion that followed indicates pretty clearly that it expressed the sentiments of at least many of those present at the meeting. The fact that the lecture itself seems to have been slimly attended is another sign pointing in the same direction.

IT seems not unlikely that the popular feeling which has been aroused in England by the conviction and sentence of Mrs. Maybrick on the charge of having murdered her husband by poisoning, may lead to some important results in the way of modifying the course of procedure in trials for capital offences. Two points in particular may not improbably be brought under public review. One is the danger of irremediable injustice being done by the infliction of the death penalty in cases in which the proof of guilt is not absolutely unquestionable. It may be said, of course, that in such a case there can be, according to the fundamental principles of British law, no conviction, since where there is any reasonable doubt of guilt the jury is always instructed to give the prisoner the benefit of it. But such instances as that under consideration show that the term "reasonable" is indefinite, and will be differently interpreted by minds differently constituted. It is hardly conceivable, seeing the effect produced upon the minds of many by the evidence in this Maybrick trial, that the minds of the jurymen could have been entirely free from doubt in pronouncing the verdict, though the verdict proves that the doubt was not of the degree or kind considered "reasonable." It is easy to see, moreover, that were juries to go to the other extreme and de-