

# 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.

Mr. White, of Indiana, has introduced in the House of Representatives a Bill to Regulate Wages by Act of Congress. The proposal is to establish a minimum throughout the Republic of \$1.50 per day of ten hours for men, \$1.00 for women, and 75 cents for minors. The bill is probably an attempt to mitigate the increasing irritation of the masses who toil, but, eccentric and adventurous as Congress is, it will hardly pass so crude a measure, and one so opposed to all sound principles of political economy.

The *Springhill Independent* has done what we think a very sensible thing. It has boldly begun to publish "Mr. Midshipman Easy" as a serial. Apart from the fact that Capt. Marryatt is full of fun, and is so little read of late years that his books may be quite fresh to numbers of the rising generation; there are, we think, many great standard novels of old date which would to-day prove quite as interesting as, and infinitely more instructive than, three-fourths of the shallow pseudo-society rubbish of the hour.

The British Ironclads (out of a total of 72) regarded as obsolete, are the Achilles, Agincourt, Bellerophon, Black Prince, Hector, Minotaur, Northumberland, Repulse, Warrior, Prince Albert, Scorpion, Wivern, Viper and Vixen. Of these, the last four are quite small, and the Warrior and Black Prince are the oldest of all ironclads, dating from immediately after the Crimean war. But the rest are, tho' reckoned obsolete, still very powerful ships, and four of them, the Achilles, Agincourt, Minotaur and Northumberland average 10,500 tons.

The *Chronicle* commenting on a case of overcharge and insolence on the part of a cabman remarks that in some other cities every driver is required to keep posted up in his hack, or to produce on demand, a table of distances and a tariff of the legal fares, with the penalties for attempted extortion, &c. We scarcely know a city where this is not compulsory, and it is precisely one of those defaults of our happy-go-lucky municipal rule, that give point to the observations of visitors who are unable to find in Halifax the usual indications of an orderly government. Every hackman ought to be subject to the rules suggested by the *Chronicle*.

The London *Economist*, one of the great financial authorities of England, says:—"Persons wishing to invest money in Canada should avoid the Province of Quebec. \* \* \* Apparently, the opinion of the Quebec Legislature is that the way to promote the prosperity of the Province is to drive capital out of it; and it would be a pity if English capitalists sought to thrust themselves in where they obviously are not wanted." M. Mercier's Government in Quebec seems like Daniel's image, to stand on feet of clay.

The New York *Herald*, which seems to retain its equilibrium of common sense while Senate and House of Representatives have lost their heads in the excitement of the campaign, points out the magnitude of the subsidies granted to the American Pacific Railways. If enquiry is turned in the direction of the Pacific Road frauds, Senator Cullom may regret his resolution on Canadian Railways, there being dissatisfaction even now at the inaction which followed the disclosures of gigantic corruption made by the last Pacific investigation.

The British Government every now and then performs some very asinine pranks, evincing an utter want of tact and precaution. It is difficult to imagine why it should have felt called upon to put its clumsy finger into the Maxwell pie. The murder of Preller was a treacherous case of assassination, and presented no extenuating features whatever. The United States Cabinet is not remarkable for courtesy of tone, and Lord Salisbury must have been inconceivably stupid to have deliberately laid himself open to a snub plainly to be foreseen.

New England is not the whole United States, at least some Western papers seem to think so. Says the Chicago *Herald*:—"There is no very great reason why Western people should pay two prices for their fish for the purpose of making certain capitalists in New England rich. Most of the fishermen who man American fishing vessels are natives of the Dominion of Canada, who, after the fishing season, return to their homes until the next year. Because of the tariff on fish, the American vessel owners make big profits, and western farmers and workingmen are obliged to pay higher prices for their mackerel than if Canadian fishermen were allowed access to our market. Too much light on this subject may result in a demand for free fish."

Mr. Matthew Arnold incurred the wrath of America just before his death by expressing his opinion that American society was uninteresting. We really cannot help at heart agreeing with him. What does one see in all the papers but the baldest and most impertinent details of the private life of this, that or the other local celebrity, and the chief interest seems to attach to some cad who happens to have become a millionaire, an American class which rarely seems to possess any humane or genial quality to recommend it. Lately we have been surfeited with the doings of that extremely uninteresting person Jay Gould, and it strikes us with astonishment that such details can possess the slightest interest for Canadians. The chief characteristic of American and Canadian journalism is, unhappily, the glorification of the commonplace.

Congressmen Nutting and Farquhar have added their names to the "blazing scroll of fame," which sparkles with those of Blair, Frye, Hoar, and Riddelberger. Mr. Nutting wants \$500,000 for a dry dock at Oswego, for the construction of vessels of war for the Lakes. This gentleman is in favor of arbitration, but considers it *too soon for the United States in her dealings with England and Canada to rely on arbitration for the settlement of differences*. Major Farquhar is the gentleman who wishes to see New York State alone charged with "taking care of Canada and her five millions of people." Fortunately, the Presidential campaign will be over a little before the dry dock is completed, and probably before that drum, at the tap of which New York's 225,000 soldiers are ready to march, rolls out "all the blue breeches are over the border."

It is quite probable that there exists in the United States enough of sound sense and principle to counteract the rant of the tail-twisters, but it is folly to be blind to the fact that war would be a highly attractive plank in the Republican platform. One gentleman desires the conquest of Canada for the State of New York alone, whose forces he considers amply sufficient for that small job, and behind all is the sinister influence of Mr. Blaine, in whose hands General Harrison is but a marionette, and who is utterly unscrupulous. The Fisheries Treaty being doomed, American fishermen may quite possibly be emboldened by Republican truculence to violate the law, and any unfortunate accident may aggravate the insolence of aggressiveness on the one side, and embitter feeling on the other, to an extent fraught with danger.