

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

PER ANNUM, 1  
BLUE COPY 3 CTS.

HALIFAX, N. S., JUNE 24, 1887.

VOL. 4.  
No. 25.

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## THE CRITIC.

Published every Friday, at 161 Hollis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia,

BY

CRITIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Edited by C. F. FRASER.

Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance. Single copies 3 cents.

SAMPLE COPIES SENT FREE.

Communications should be made to A. M. FRASER, BUSINESS MANAGER.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

By the time this issue is in print the public will have been pretty well regaled with Jubilee articles. Having recently put forth a special Jubilee number we do not, therefore, feel called upon to contribute to the congestion.

At the New York dog show the other day, Miss Helen Dauvray paid \$1000 for a "perfect love of a poodle." It is significant that every attempt to hold a show of husbands in that city has ended in a miserable failure.

Referring to an article in the *Chronicle* of the 17th on the Free Trade policy of New South Wales, it is curious to remember that, for some years after her inauguration in 1851, Victoria was free trade, and New South Wales protectionist. Victoria then, it is true, rapidly took the lead, and she was powerfully assisted by her immense yield of gold. However, it is equally true that of late New South Wales has been overhauling the larger colony.

The masters of the "Celtic" and "Britannic" have both been condemned for negligence; he of the "Britannic" receiving extra censure for giving distinctive whistles to indicate his course, as was done by the "Celtic." But again we note that "censure" is all the punishment needed. If there had been loss of life it would doubtless have amounted to little more. We repeat the exclamation of one of our contributors--"Commend us to a Maritime Tribunal!"

From the papers recently laid before Parliament by Mr. Foster, it would appear that the American authorities will find it hard to prove that their capture of three British schooners on the high seas was not an act of excessive severity. The distance at which they are stated to have been captured, 60 miles from the nearest land, seems at once to cut off justification. Other acts of undue severity are detailed which, if fairly set forth, are in remarkable contrast to the mild and orderly proceedings of the Canadian Government, acting strictly within its treaty rights.

We have always regretted the antagonism of Russia and England, but the action of France seems to preclude its being healed. It would seem that taking into account all the complications of the European situation--that England must be forced into close alliance with Germany, Austria, and Italy, and it is apparently significant that the German and Austrian ambassadors were recently closeted with Lord Salisbury for a considerable time--that consultation is believed to portend the adhesion of those powers to England in opposing the aggressions of Russia toward Afghanistan, and England's joint action with Austria in restraining Russia in Bulgaria.

Trouble is rumored between the King and Queen of Servia, even to contemplation of divorce by the King, who desires to regain Russian influence, while the Queen is said to have been intriguing for his deposition.

It is much to be regretted that the Pacific Railway authorities should have adopted a high handed and exasperating tone towards Manitoba. Manitoba has, in reality, no right to interfere with the charter of the C. P. R., by which she has been built up on this distinct understanding. Neither is the urgency very apparent, Manitoba having, as it is, communication with the south. If Sir G. Stephen had adopted a conciliatory tone, the matter might very likely have been adjusted, or at all events the Winnipeggers kept quiet. As it is, the provocation has even incited pulpit oratory.

Lord Lucan, who is about to be made a Field-Marshal, was not, as stated in some of our contemporaries, "one of the Light Brigade," but was commander of the whole cavalry in the Crimea. Sir Jas. Scarlett commanded the Heavy Brigade, Lord Cardigan the Light. Lord L. and Lord C. were brothers-in-law; hated each other like poison; and, being both haughty, irritable, and essentially wrong-headed men, did immense mischief by their bickerings. The famous "charge" was probably in a great measure due to Lord Cardigan's ill-temper, which destroyed his judgment, and was itself partly due to the overbearing tone of his superior. Lord Lucan was born in 1800.

Near the sea the shifting of the sand by winds is a familiar sight, and the drifts are often known to encroach on cultivated fields, forests and villages. Striking examples are found on Lake Michigan, where the withered tops of forest are visible above a sand drift, and in Norfolk, England, where farms and houses have been covered. The same phenomenon occurs in deserts, the great sand hills being not only carried about by the wind, but even forced beyond the proper limits of the sandy waters. The extensive Registan Desert in Central Afghanistan is reported as being steadily pushed north-eastwardly, and calculations have shown that its present rate of progress will cause it to overwhelm some of the most fertile and prosperous districts of the country in a few thousand years.

The mission of Mr. O'Brien to this side of the herring-pond, and the mission of Mr. Blaine--if his programme be what he is credited with--to the other side, are alike in execrable taste. They are precisely as if a stranger should intrude himself into the private life and affairs of a family. The analogy of the nation and the family can scarcely escape any one. There are families and families, ill-bred and otherwise; nations are the same. The family newly accredited in society, the underbred youth who, without being a bad fellow, may be a very great cad, and believe the world is to be regenerated by his peculiar item of crude idea, is a particular nuisance when circumstances allow him to infest a better-bred household. May it be permitted without offence to delicate sensitiveness, to ask Uncle Sam, who thinks himself so very smart, whether he has yet learned the simple lesson of minding his own business?

"What is truth?" Whatever it may be we shall scarcely attain to it through political partisans. In the eyes of the Irish agitator reasonable landlords are the vilest of criminals. In the eyes of the ultra-conservative Englishman there are no modern wrongs in Ireland, but what the Irish people themselves are accountable for. Neither position is true, but some approach to the truth may be set forth, without incurring suspicion, by an intelligent foreigner. The Baron de Mandat-Grancey has recently published a work which he has entitled "Chez Paddy." His powers of observation are quick, sympathetic and close, his judgment impartial, and his opportunities reach from official facilities to the Irish welcome incidental to his nationality. He interviewed all sorts of journalists, and attended all sorts of meetings. He notes the hisses at every mention of the Queen (poor lady), and dissects speeches with merciless impartiality.

A complaint comes from an Englishman in California that he has endeavored to set some sort of truth before the people of San Francisco, but that he is candidly told by the editors of that city that his side of the question is "not wanted" there. As a matter of fact we all know that the boasted freedom of the press is a pleasant myth. The man who dares to think for himself is, as a general rule, boycotted by newspapers of all shades of partizanship, and they are the great majority. Not even an impartial Frenchman, probably, could obtain a hearing.

Yet M. de Mandat-Grancey has a thrilling tale to tell. He came across a shocking case of rack-renting. A man, his wife, four children, and his mother-in-law, inhabited a hovel of loose stones rooted with sods, without a chimney, window or floor. Their nakedness was barely covered, and their frames and features told of famine. They lived on the man's labor, and a "farm" less than an acre. The rent this half-starved unfortunate paid was £3 a year. The Baron was shocked at extortion so cruel. The landlord was surely an English peer! Not so--he was an Irish farmer, ostensibly as poor as his sub-tenant, but his poverty was simulated, and he was always sure of his rent, for he took it in labor and in advance. The Baron is astonished at the superior position in law of the Irish tenant to that of the continental one.