

undermanned, and many of the so-called sailors employed have very little more knowledge of their adopted profession than a porter on South Water street. There is also a tendency at present to pitchfork into the command of lake craft men who do not possess the proper practical requirements. A nautical school for lake captains and mates is a good thing, but no seamanship taught at a nautical school can replace a knowledge acquired by practical experience before the mast." The following instance of how a real sailor can manage a sailing vessel and a land lubber can mismanage a steamship in the same storm, is given. "Only a few weeks since during a storm on the lakes, a tow rope broke and a fine steamer and her consort parted company. The captain of the steamer ran his ship before the wind and wrecked her on the rocks of a lee shore while, as he explained, looking for his consort. The captain of the consort (which had no steam) being a sailor and having good sails, kept his boat up to the wind and finally brought her into port."

Seamen are often reckless, indeed they are proverbially so. But when their recklessness gets them into trouble in bad weather their sailorly skill can be exercised to get them out of it. The sham sailor, on the other hand, if he should indulge in recklessness in imitation of the real sailor, has not the skill and experience of the latter to help him out of the scrapes he gets into. It seems indeed, as if both ship owners and marine underwriters are getting, of late years, to despise the dangers of these great lakes of ours, from 200 to 500 miles in length, each. People who own steel steamers of 4,000 tons or who are called on to insure them, scorn to regard a trip from Duluth to Buffalo, even in December, as implying any serious danger to a splendid 300 foot, 16-mile steamship. But there are forces in nature which one is not taught how to combat by going so many weeks to a nautical school.

BRITISH COLUMBIA MINES ABROAD.

In referring last week to the fact of a reference to the Western gold fields of Canada by Mr. A. J. Wilson, in the *Investor's Review*, of London, England, we stated that for once that erratic individual had said nothing abusive of Canada, but had come perilously near praising her as having, he is compelled to admit, some gold ores really worth attention. Since then we have seen what is of much greater importance, and that is a lengthy report upon The Mines of British Columbia, by a special mining commissioner of the London Economist. It is generally admitted that any opinion expressed editorially by the Economist is worthy of consideration. We may be equally sure that the opinion of anyone chosen by that journal as a special mining commissioner is likely to be of value. And the importance to Canada of a favorable opinion upon her mines from such a source is quite apparent when the influence of that journal in English financial circles is borne in mind.

This gentleman has made, his report tells us, a tolerably comprehensive inspection of Rossland Camp, the neighborhood of Nelson and the Slocan district and an odd mine here and there elsewhere in British Columbia. And this has fully convinced him that "that country may be included amongst the great mineralized areas of the world." He explains that his remarks apply principally to the Kootenay district, "throughout large areas of which gold, silver, lead and copper, either by themselves or in association, are found in great, though not necessarily payable, quantities." And he goes on to say that this rich mineral area continues south over the boundary into the State of Washington, which also is a great mineral State.

But while admitting that "the outlook for the country (Kootenay) for the next two or three years is indeed a bright one," especially when the Crow's Nest Pass and other roads are finished, this writer does not see much in it for English capital. The reason he gives is that "most of the mines and prospects are owned and entirely controlled by Canadian and American shareholders," and therefore English capital cannot benefit here as it did in Africa or Australia. That is to say, the Englishmen not having got hold of the mines or prospects at first hand are not so likely to take hold of them at all. Our readers may believe as much of this as they please, but we are scarcely convinced by the writer's logic.

Another thing which detracts from what the Economist's commissioner calls the "theoretically pleasing outlook" is that the English-floated British Columbian companies to date are a poor selection; and further, that the Athabasca and Ymir, two promising mines recently floated, are absurdly over-capitalized, that the hydraulic worked placer mines are all disappointments, and that "in fact there are hardly any London-floated B.C. companies which have been successful." A tolerably dismal summary this. But in the very same paragraph he concludes by saying that "the prospects for the country are very promising."

What does he mean? our readers may ask. Does he mean that the English shareholders in these concerns have had worthless properties foisted on them, or merely that the prices paid for these properties were excessive and hence they are unremunerative; or can he mean that the methods of management, some of them English methods, have been faulty? Not having an answer ready to our mind we leave the writer in his quandary, for he declares that, great as the country's future as a mineral producer must be "how that future is in practice going to benefit the English financial or mining world is to the writer somewhat of a mystery." This is in effect saying:

If she be not fair for me
What care I how fair she be.

And yet we don't think it is exactly English, this attitude of avowing that while the country is rich in minerals and must have a great future we Englishmen will let it severely alone because Americans and Canadians got the first finger in the pie. What has become of the English enterprise, the English skill, the English pluck we used to hear about?

Still, there is a portion of the letter with which we can agree heartily. We shall quote it in full:

"Several other unfavorable features in connection with British Columbian mines remain to be notified. The population, as is usual with a new mining country, has an exceedingly hazy and exaggerated view of the value of any given mine or district. These hazy utterances and opinions find their way by the hundred into the local Press, where they are again magnified and written up out of all recognition. From here all this rubbish finds its way to England, where it no doubt does a lot of harm, and the actual facts about the country and the mines are totally lost sight of. Even the local papers that profess to be of a semi-official nature, and devoted entirely to mining, fill half their columns, issue after issue, with pure hearsay and irresponsible gossip. The American methods of share speculation in vogue in British Columbia do not tend to introduce financial soundness. The absurd tendency to capitalize the least prospect with a capital of 1,000,000 \$1 shares gives everyone an exaggerated idea of true mining values; so much so, that many of the more soundly-balanced engineers representing exploration and mining