

The latest marine infernal machine is a floating battering ram, invented for America. It consists of a cigar shaped boat, made entirely of thick steel, and operated by the captain only, who is lodged in an invulnerable turret. "Such a contrivance as this is capable of sinking the largest ironclad with the greatest ease," says the exchange from which we quote, but the easy assumption remains to be proved.

About the utterances of Mr. Erastus Wiman, and their general tendency to detach the Dominion from its British connection, and to make it tributary to the United States, there can be even less question than of those of Mr. Mercier. It is pertinently asked by the *St. John Evening Gazette*, "What sort of a figure would our wholesale merchants and manufacturers cut under Commercial Union?" The simple question is—Is Canada to be herself or to merge into the uninviting Union to the South of us. To those who believe in their own country and its grand future, Mr. Wiman cannot be otherwise regarded than as a public enemy of the Dominion.

The reading public is, it seems, being oppressed with a run of "replies" to *Robert Elsmere*. "Replies" of any sort, as books, are generally uninteresting, and we should think those to *Robert Elsmere* are likely to be exceptionally so. We can only account for the recent rage for that book—which is after all not, as we think, so powerful a work as Mrs. Lynn Lynton's *Under which Lord*—by the supposition that comparatively very few people have ever read enough of the best works of criticism and controversy on theological subjects to enable them to form any sound opinions of their own, the consequence being an idea that any tolerably clever polemical novel embodies the newest wisdom or the newest wickedness according to the tone of mind of the reader.

The death is announced, at the age of 79, of Martin Farquhar Tupper, a somewhat voluminous author and poet, known to most readers chiefly by his *Proverbial Philosophy*, a book of thoughts and arguments treated with some originality. In spite of much contemptuous criticism, which was perhaps partly due to its being written in hexameters, its publication brought him into a considerable degree of popularity, which was perhaps more justified by the purity of the sentiments embodied than by the actual merit (of which, however, it is not destitute) of the poetry. Mr. Tupper also produced two or three novels, and a number of hymns, ballads and other poems, which are comparatively little known. His life was mostly spent in retirement at his maternal estate near Guildford in Surrey, where, we believe, he died. In 1851, however, he visited the United States, where, if we remember rightly, his reception was very cordial, a visit which, it may be presumed, prompted the production, in 1875, of a play founded on incidents of the American Revolution, in which Washington and contemporary characters were introduced.

One of the latest theories started as to the origin of the Brazilian revolution is the somewhat curious one that the Emperor himself encouraged and promoted it. *Prima facie* this would seem to be a somewhat extravagant idea; but it is after all not beyond possibility. The Emperor has been in every sense a liberal and progressive monarch, and may be credited with insight into the probabilities of the future. His daughter, Dona Isabel, was undoubtedly less popular than himself, but her husband, a Prince of the House of Orleans, found still less favor in the eyes of the Brazilians, and it is perhaps possible that Dom Pedro, in view of the dissatisfaction of a powerful interested class at the sudden abolition of slavery, may have thought that, by the comparatively mild sort of revolutionary action now taken, a more violent uprising in the future, when his own prestige would be no longer available to modify it, would be happily averted. To the disaffection of the slave-holders may be added the rising general tendency towards republican forms of government, which, combined with the apparent readiness of the army to acquiesce in the new departure, may, if the theory be correct, be found in the long run to have justified the deposed Monarch's supposed course of action—"Wisdom is justified of all her children."

Referring to another note on the subject of grammatical instruction in schools we give as a specimen of the stuff with which children are uselessly worried the following farrago, originally quoted by an American paper, the *Alliant Constitution*, from a text book used in that city. We do not hesitate to use it as a specimen, as we have seen passages in our own school grammars quite as blank of all sense of utility. "A cognate equivalent, or elliptical accusative, may be used with a passive verb. The cognate or equivalent noun is often omitted and a neuter adjective used, limiting the cognate notion understood. An adjective limiting a complementary infinitive agrees with the subject. The complementary infinitive is an accusative of direct object or limitation. The infinitive passive of an intransitive verb is used as a complement of an impersonal expression. The complement of a concessive sentence is an adverbial proposition. The adverbial is often used for the adjectival relative. Dependent casual propositions are introduced by the casual conjunctions. Principal propositions in the oratio recta become infinitive propositions in the oratio obliqua." "It is almost beyond belief"—says a contemporary commenting on the question, "that this jargon is given to children to commit to memory. As to understanding it, that is a task to which the author of the book himself is probably not equal. If the effect of studying grammar is to read, write and speak English, the time wasted in filling the head with this rubbish would be much more profitably spent in studying the masterpieces of English literature and in the practice of English composition."

It is stated that Stanley, who is now expected to reach England by the end of January, will give the benefit of his experience to Mr. McKenzie, who is organizing the government of British East Africa. The *Times* expresses a hope that he may be induced to undertake the administration of the East African Government, and a belief that he might be willing to become a British subject to that end. However that may be, there can be little doubt that, should such an event come to pass, the great adventurer's energy and consummate knowledge of the country and its conditions, would eminently fit him to advance British interests in such a position. We trust it may come to pass.

Habitual drunkards in Sweden and Norway are liable to imprisonment and, during their incarceration, are submitted to a plan of treatment, which is also elsewhere known to produce a marvellous curative effect. The inebriate is made to subsist entirely on bread steeped in wine. The patient at first takes it without repugnance, but soon tires of the diet, and presently conceives towards it the strongest loathing. A few days of the treatment begets an aversion which is thought, and in many cases has been known, to be permanent. A continued diet of spirit would probably have a quicker effect, but would not be as innocuous. The idea is, of course, not a novel one, but it strikes us that a little practical legislation in some such direction would be a vast improvement on the intolerant theories which aim at the subjection of the individual responsibility and freedom of action of persons who can use without abusing them the good things which man has been endowed with the ability to produce.

The Vermont State Commissioner of Agriculture has recently issued two circulars, pointing out the very low rates at which deserted farms in that State could be obtained. In the second he says:—"Great interest has been manifested in the facts brought out by previous circulars relating to farms once fruitful and occupied by industrious people, but now left uncultivated with houses empty or gone." Much of this farming land the Commissioner states to be good, especially for dairy farming, and there are some 300,000 acres of them. Great efforts are said to be making to induce Swedish immigration, with a view to their being taken up. Yet the people who have elected to desert these tracts of land have had all the advantages accruing from the boasted "market of 60,000,000," which our pessimists so persistently din into our ears as the grand panacea for any and every ill the Canadian farmer is supposed to suffer from. As this is not mere newspaper report, but the distinct statement of a State official, it is a legitimate basis of opinion, and we must say we are unable, in the face of it, to see where the great boon to Canada of the aforesaid market of 60,000,000 lies, when it seems so evidently ineffective to enable its own countrymen to maintain themselves in their own holdings, especially when we consider that it is the advantage of the New England reciprocity which is so strongly insisted on in the interests of Maritime Province Farmers.

Notwithstanding certain denials and qualifications by Mr. Mercier of the language he is reported to have used in the United States on the subject of the sentiment in favor of annexation, which he is pleased to ascribe to a large proportion of his compatriots, there is reason to believe that he did express himself in terms grossly incorrect in point of fact, and unbecomingly to any true-hearted Canadian. M. Mercier's general attitude is in fact aggressive, and opposed to Canadian autonomy. In an address to the National Club a week or two ago, M. Mercier said:—"Let us hope that * * * we may not be called upon in any of our Provinces to have recourse to reprisals, and to remind majorities who may be unjust that there is a minority which stands in need of protection." Being asked if these words were intended as a threat to the Protestant majorities of other Provinces, M. Mercier is said to have replied, "Not as a threat, but surely as a warning." The subject in discussion was the separate school question, one on which there may be much to be said on both sides, and certainly no one wishes that a French speaking minority in any Province should be placed by law at any disadvantage as compared with their fellow-citizens of British origin. There are other points into which we cannot enter in this issue. But what we wish to point out is that, on some of them, M. Mercier's general tone is so distinctly aggressive that it is not impossible it may one day breed no inconsiderable trouble.

One feels a sort of pity for the blustering and self-glorifying tendencies which prompt the American Press, or at least a portion of it, to make such an awful fuss about the dozen or so of respectable men-of-war they have lately set afloat and are building. The *New York World*, always on the gush in that sort of thing, is especially tickled at the sending to sea of four of the new ships—the *Chicago*, *Boston*, *York Town*, and *Atlanta*, under Admiral Walker. Their destination is the Mediterranean "on a promenade excursion for the benefit of the old world," which effate hemisphere will doubtless be duly awed and impressed, especially as England has only a squadron of about 25 vessels there, eight or nine of them high class ironclads, and France probably as many. This prospect, however, hardly satisfies the *World*, which goes on to say—"Why not send the Admiral and his fleet to Rio Janeiro. The presence of these war ships from the great Republic would carry encouragement to the new-fledged Republic of the South. It would ensure order and give assurance of sympathy much needed at this juncture." Why on earth "this magnificent fleet" is wanted in Brazilian waters, and what American cruisers have to do with ensuring order where order does not appear to be in the least threatened, would puzzle a courier. We wonder if the *World* and papers that scream in the same key ever feel foolish after gushing over in this style? Probably conceit and self-complacency are too ingrained to leave room for any other sentiment or idea.