

ARCTURUS:

A CANADIAN JOURNAL OF LITERATURE AND LIFE.

Vol. 1. }
No. 24. }

Saturday, June 25th, 1887.

{ \$2.00 A YEAR, IN ADVANCE.
SINGLE COPIES, 5 CENTS.

PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT.

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Editorial Notes.

THE QUEBEC STRIKE.

WHATEVER importance may be attached to labour struggles by the parties interested, it is certain that only a languid interest is taken in them by the outside public. Even those most interested in political economy and the labour question are fully convinced that all strikes, lock-outs and other conflicts between capital and labour are mere episodes in the contest by which neither side can make any permanent gain. But while a solid gain is admittedly impossible, a material and permanent loss is by no means unlikely in the case of the pending strike of the Quebec ship labourers. They may permanently destroy the trade of the port as well as their own means of living, by making Quebec unpopular with vessel-owners, who have considerable latitude in selecting their ports of entry, and can form a very effective combination, against which merchants and shippers have practically no remedy.

THE LIBERAL LEADERSHIP.

As if the retirement of Mr. Blake were not trouble enough, the Liberal party has made a serious mistake in choosing his *locum tenens*. Mr. Laurier is an excellent speaker, and may prove a good tactician; but he is not equal in weight or ability to Sir Richard Cartwright, and the policy of putting forward a Frenchman because he is a Frenchman, and not because he is the best man for the place, will merely imply a continuance of the unfortunate policy of Mr. Blake on the Riel question. Sir Richard is entitled to the position, and the fact that he still carries the Free Trade flag ought not to interfere with his advancement. If he ever comes by succession to the dignity of leader of the party, he will have to build the party platform, and one of the planks in that platform must be either protection or free trade. Till that time arrives, Sir Richard's free trade principles cannot do the party any more harm than they have done already—which is a good deal.

THE NORTH-WEST.

THE murder of one of the police, rumours of trouble among the Indians on the boundary line, and the precautions against surprise adopted by white settlers in the North-West territories have created some apprehension that the rebellion of 1885 will be repeated on a larger scale; larger, that is, as far as Indian participation in it is concerned. But it is rather a hopeful sign that public attention has been early directed to what is going on, and that measures are being taken to prevent any probable mischief. The great danger of the rebellion in 1885 was owing to the fact that the authorities were totally unprepared for the outbreak, and quite unable to estimate its probable importance; and also that a nucleus of disaffected half-breeds was liable to form a rallying point for discontented Indians. All the conditions are altered now, and the country may fairly expect that the Indian rising, if one should occur, will be as easily put down as Big Bear's attempt at insurrection was ended after the half-breeds were crushed at Batoche.

WATER GAS.

THE many accidents that have lately happened to persons using water gas seem to call for some legislation on the subject in the interests of the public. Water gas is cheaper than coal gas, being made from coke and water only, and it is more easily purified; but a peculiar danger lurks in the fact that it contains a large amount of carbon monoxide, a more deadly poison than any of the ordinary constituents of coal gas, and having no disagreeable odour to give warning of its presence when it escapes. If the water gas companies were obliged by law to make their own coke, and to mix the gas obtained in the process with the water gas, the mixed gas would have sufficient odour to give warning of its presence when in dangerous quantity. At present the unfortunate gas consumers have their choice of paying an exorbitant price for coal gas, or of using a cheaper substitute at the risk of their lives. Legislatures are very slow to interfere with vested interests, and we may have to wait for the general use of electricity as a remedy for the evil.