

# THE CRITIC:

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## 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.

We published last week a notice of the active and valuable literary career of Mr. W. Sharp, who is now enjoying the hospitality and congenial society of the literary circle of Kings College, Windsor. We were also favoured with a short but, in most respects, charming poem by Mr. Sharp. There is no doubt that the "divine afflatus" is there, and the only question that occurs to us is whether there is not also apparent in it the very slightest tendency to the fault of obscurity, which some of our rising poets have only, after all, shared with so great a name as that of Browning.

There has been sad bungling between the City Council and the Contractor for the heating apparatus of the City Hall. Instead of this work having been ensured to be completed in time for the contractors of the general internal finishing to go to work unembarrassed by it, it has been allowed to hang fire until either the walls, cornices, etc., will have to be indefinitely delayed, or be cut through. Such a muddle is altogether discreditable to the reputation of the Council for business capacity, and of course the rate-payers of the city will suffer in pocket for the incapacity of the municipal authorities.

The Government of Manitoba has intimated its intention of doing away with the separate school system and abolishing the use of French as an official language in the province. In consequence of this decision Mr. Pendergast, the French member of the Cabinet, has resigned. The census of 1886 showed 11,180 French speaking, to 76,610 English speaking people, besides about 14,000, exclusive of Indians, of tongues other than French. This proportion is alone sufficient justification of such a measure, but the official language is a costly item, the French reports are said to be lit called for, and the separate schools but little resorted to, and to be of an inferior character. This is very probable from the generally uncultured character of the French half-breeds, and the Provincial Government is additionally justified in basing its action on economical grounds. It may be added that the country is filling up with a population which is constantly increasing the English-speaking preponderance. The people of Manitoba are somewhat given to hasty dealings with the problems which arise in their development, but in this case we are decidedly of opinion that the Government is adopting a course marked by justice, economy and common sense. We hope their action will be prompt, and that they will meet with the popular support their decision seems to us to merit.

We have an infinite dislike and repulsion to cant. Scarcely a newspaper, either here or in the old country, discusses the Soudanese war without an ostentation of pseudo-moral reflections about the slaughter of the Dervishes. War is war, and, as against a savage, ignorant and intensely fanatical foe, he would be a milk-and-water commander who should hesitate to make his adversary's losses in killed and wounded as large as possible. Heavy slaughter is the only thing that tells upon savage hordes, stimulated by the extreme of Moslem fanaticism, and every reader of history knows what that is. Physically and fatalistically brave and reckless, the followers of the Mahdi are as gratuitously aggressive and pestilent as any savage foe the arms of England have ever had to encounter, and should be met with the sternest interpretation of the exigencies of war.

The *Chronicle* in a recent issue demurs to comment on the prevalent lawlessness in the United States. We cannot coincide in this opinion. With a full appreciation of the greatness of our neighbors, we are not of those who shrink from publishing truth lest it may cause offence, and we think it right that the contrast between our own institutions, and the law-abiding spirit of those who live in peace under them, and those of the States, should, without invidiousness, be kept before the eyes of our countrymen. There is no reason that Canadians should be hoodwinked as to the actual facts of lynchings, "stickings up"—to use an old Australian expression—of railway trains, the frequent cowardly shooting of men on the most trivial provocations, the pitched battles between malefactors and sheriff's posses, White-Cap outrages and other evidences of a tendency to violence, which have no little influence in producing international complications as evinced in the proceedings of the Alaska Fur Company, culminating in the piratical seizure of the *Black Diamond*.

The German Emperor, whatever may go to the making up of a perhaps somewhat curious character, has evidently a good share of common sense, as well as the outspoken directness of a man with no sort of nonsense about him. Man of our most distinguished naval and military officers wear their hearts, so to speak, too openly displayed on their sleeves, and they write and speak more freely than prudence justifies. It is the same weakness of exuberant Saxon frankness which has stamped British diplomacy with ill-success. None other of the great European Powers fall into this error. We can imagine the Frenchman, for instance, discussing moral and military contingencies, saying "Let us wait a little, we shall presently know from themselves all they have accomplished, and, in addition, all their weak points." The German has none of this facility. The Emperor was astonished at the ocular demonstration of the greatness of England's naval strength, and expressed his admiration without stint or reserve, but he naturally regretted that a country so powerful as England should, by persistently croaking about her naval and military position, lead foreign powers to form a very false estimate of her strength. He expressed himself strongly as to the folly of saying publicly, as he had heard one or two distinguished naval officers do, that when we got the new ships the government had just got money to build, we should be unable to get men for them. These utterances should, considering the military soundness of the source from which they come, act as a salutary restraint to the rather gushing propensities of English authorities.

It would now appear that the Grand Trunk have determined to secure the shortest possible air line, all on Canadian territory, to Halifax. With this object in view they have secured an option on the Temiscouata railway, and are now having surveyed a route from the terminus of the latter road as direct to Moncton as possible. Mr. Davy, Engineer-in-Chief of the Temiscouata railway company, and Mr. Cranston, C. E., are now engaged in locating the line between Edmundston and Salisbury, the direct distance between the two places being 160 miles. But in order to secure the traffic of an important section of the country, a slight deviation from an air line will be made, increasing the distance 30 miles or 190 miles in all. This would make the distance from Montreal to Halifax in the neighborhood of 753 miles, or about 100 miles shorter than by way of the I. C. R. and the Grand Trunk. While this still leaves the Canadian Pacific Short Line a considerable advantage in distance, the proposed Grand Trunk Line will have the great advantage of being entirely on Canadian territory, no small matter in view of the recent hostile legislation of the United States aimed to cripple Canadian Railways. Now that the Grand Trunk and Canada Pacific are both seeking the shortest routes to Halifax, we need have little doubt of the great business that is to reach this port in the near future. The wisdom of the Senate's course in rejecting the bill of last session, which positively gave the Canada Pacific a monopoly of the carrying trade of the Maritime Provinces, is now made apparent, as it assures us the keen competition of a rival route, without which the benefits to be derived would have been problematical.