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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.

The growth of Germany as a Naval power scarcely extends back more than a decade. At the time of the war with Denmark Prussia had only seven war vessels of any size, and these by no means large, and fifteen gun boats, and little was done to increase the force till the Reichstag voted an appropriation in 1873. At present Germany has 14 fine ironclads, 21 corvettes, of which the *Nixe*, lately in Halifax Harbor, was probably one of the smaller specimens, 14 armored and 10 ordinary gun boats, 16 torpedo vessels, 8 despatch boats, and 7 steam and 3 sailing transports, while 35 vessels of various classes, chiefly monitors and torpedo vessels, are on the stocks. This is a wonderful increase of naval power in the space of about 15 years, and forms no inconsiderable contribution to the naval strength of the triple alliance.

It is difficult to understand the feeling which prompts a decided tone of rejoicing over the falling through of the Anderson contract for a fast line of steamers to Canadian ports from Great Britain. We fancy one obstacle has been the proposed calling at a French port. However, where serious doubts arise as to a scheme, it is perhaps better in the end that the first proposition, which may well contain elements of crudity, should fail. That which comes next will have had the benefits of the first doubts raised and be better enabled to estimate the points of practicability. Meanwhile it is evident that the Allan Line intend to do little or nothing to amend either the speed or the accommodation of their old boats. Some of our contemporaries in the expression of their delight at the collapse of the contract glide into a florid eloquent rebash of their antipathy to the C. P. R., but one of them follows up its notice in that vein with one of the appointment by Japan of a consul, to reside at Vancouver, who is stated to be charged with the desire of his government for a larger commerce with Canada, which can supply that country with grain, flour, lumber, cottons and other things required there. None but a section of unpatriotic Canadians pretend to resist the evidence of the vast import of the great highway to the East, but those who not long ago predicted that the C. P. R. would not earn enough to pay for its axle grease are, like Mr. Goldwin Smith, committed to their own foregone conclusions, and are apparently determined to hold on to them till the lapse of time shall have made them too absurd to be tenable by the most infatuated pessimist.

The death of James Prescott Joule, born 1818, recently announced, will make many aware how little the world often knows of its great men. Mr. Joule, whose very name was scarcely known but to the circle of men of science, was, however, by them ranked with Newton and Darwin. He was the discoverer of the law of conservation of energy and of the mechanical equivalent of heat, and his contributions to scientific periodicals and other publications were very numerous and important. He was seventy years old, lived wholly out of London and died at Sale, near Manchester, after long illhealth and life-long poverty, somewhat relieved by a pension of \$1,000 a year granted him by Lord Beaconsfield's government in recognition of his services to science.

Says a contemporary:—"According to a long article in *The Fortnightly*, from 60 to 86 per cent. of all the books given out of lending libraries in twenty-two of the principal towns of England were prose fiction, while from 1 to 2 per cent. were books on theology and philosophy, and about the like proportion of books of poetry and the drama. In Scotland the tone of public taste is a little higher, but only a little. The general conclusion reached is that there is an enormous demand for works of fiction, and that the preference is for books of a highly sensational character, and these often of an immoral character, and totally destitute of literary merit. It is to be feared that it is still worse on this side the Atlantic." The march of education has been rapid of late years, but the world is still in a pretty crude state in that respect. The individual is after all the type of the cosmos; the early love of fiction, good or rubbishy, precedes the taste for weightier reading, and we may remember that Macaulay retained his liking for very ordinary novels to the end of his life.

It is much to be hoped that recent reports of the illhealth of the Prince of Wales are exaggerated. It has been positively stated that H. R. H. is suffering from Bright's disease; whether or no it is certain that he has been ill in a way to indicate constitutional weakness. All things considered it is quite within possible contingencies that the Prince may not survive his Royal mother. Should he not succeed to the throne the disappointment and regret of the British people will be very great. Whatever the Prince's faults may have been, his genial, though far from undignified, character alone has made a most favorable impression, his tact and discretion are never at fault, and his estimate of democratic forces is so comprehensive that there can be little doubt that he would prove the most popular king that came to the throne for centuries. His son is far from enjoying the like popularity, being commonly regarded as somewhat of a milksop. This estimate, however, may be both erroneous and uncharitable, as it is quite possible that a young man of quiet tastes may be possessed of good sense and sound principles. However this may be, every one will hope to see the accession of the Prince of Wales when the crown shall, in the course of time and nature, cease to be worn by its present august bearer.

THE CRITIC has devoted in the past two or three years considerable space to urging upon public attention the necessity of having a secured bank circulation such as the people of the United States enjoy. Our efforts now promise to bear fruit. At the annual meeting of Molson's Bank, on the 14th ult., Mr. Crawford asked if the Board had taken into consideration the renewal of the charters, which expire in 1891, as they involved very important interests, and he thought it would be well if the Board considered some of the questions, such as the increased security to the public, by the adoption of the American principle of depositing Government bonds for the circulation, and in lieu of a double liability act. That the Government purposes making some important revisions in the present Banking Act, more especially in regard to the better protection of the public against temporary depreciation of our currency in case of bank failures, there can be very little doubt. We have always contended that the involuntary creditors of banks should be subjected to none of the risks to which they are liable under the existing banking law, and that Canadian bank notes should be as safe a medium of exchange under all circumstances as United States bills. In other words the public must have absolute security against any disturbance in the face value of bank currency. To show that this is not practically the case we append a partial list of Canadian banks that have failed within the past few years leaving quantities of worthless bills in circulation:—Agricultural Bank of Upper Canada. Bank of Acadia, Nova Scotia. Bank of Brantford, Brantford, Ont. Bank of Canada, Montreal, P. Q. Bank of Clifton. Bank of Liverpool, Nova Scotia. Bank of Prince Edward Island. Bank of Western Canada. Central Bank of New Brunswick, Fredericton, N. B. Colonial Bank of Canada. Commercial Bank of New Brunswick. Farmers' Bank, Toronto, Ont. International Bank of Canada, Toronto. Mechanics' Bank of Montreal. Mechanics' Bank of St. John's. Westmoreland Bank of New Brunswick. Zimmerman's Bank.