

# 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.

One Thibault, of Montreal, in a lecture recently delivered in that city, prophesied that Boston would in fifty years be a French-Canadian city and the centre of a French-Canadian nation. There is no saying, of course, what "revenge the whirligig of time" may bring about, but considering how much recent investigations have upset the sanguine and premature estimates of ardent French-Canadian nationalists as to the supposed abnormal increase of their race, such predictions as the above seem decidedly airy.

The King of Italy recently announced that the discriminating duties against France would, with the consent of parliament, be shortly abolished. This is only one of the points recently made by King Humbert which go to show that, notwithstanding the heavy burdens which have been entailed on the kingdom by the necessity of keeping up her large naval and military establishments, the influence of continued peace, a free constitutional system of government, and improved educational institutions have been powerful enough to more than counter-balance her large expenditure. The unification of Italy, like that of Germany, was an event undoubtedly beneficial to Europe, both constituting important checks on the ambition and restlessness of France, and every observer of European politics will rejoice in the advancing prosperity of a kingdom which now fairly takes rank as one of the great powers.

A curious little story came to us which we should hardly credit were it not well authenticated. A young Canadian—having from it does not matter which end of the Dominion—graduated creditably out of the Kingston College and obtained his commission in the Royal Artillery. Returning to Canada to take up an appointment which had fallen to him, he invited a popular bank official, an old friend, to dine with him. No other guests appeared, but the gallant young soldier unfortunately thought it necessary to apologize to his friend, with some awkward circumlocution, for having had no one to meet him, by informing him that his brother officers did not much care to be introduced to Commercial Johnnie. The bank gentleman, being a very good fellow, was more amused than angry, and told the story to his club friends and others as a good joke, though of course he lost no time in wishing his exclusive young acquaintance good evening. We fear after all the Dominion and even its Military College may now and then turn out a cad! Meantime the Banker goes among his friends by the name of "Commercial Johnnie."

Harvey, the man who killed his wife and two daughters, was hanged last Friday, the Government having refused to commute his sentence on the ground of insanity. Had this murder occurred in the United States the murderer would, very probably, have been acquitted on that score, but in Canada clearer evidence than has been adduced in this case is required to substantiate irresponsibility before a murderer can escape the legal penalty of his crime. It is, however, to be regretted that the execution was an exceptional piece of bungling. The weight was light and the drop insufficient, so that the wretched man actually perished by slow strangulation.

Lady Dufferin, all whose works are redolent of humor and interest, has been publishing a book on her life in India. Some of the specimens she gives of the English used by the natives are very amusing. One addressed the English resident at Bhurtpore as "Honored Enormity!" Another, in treating of the horse, observed that "he is a very noble animal, but when irritated he ceases to do so;" a third, taking a higher flight on the theme of "riches and poverty," wrote, "In short the rich man welters on crimson velvet while the poor man snorts on flint." Those who remember the fun of Lady Dufferin's adventures in Egypt of "the Hon. Impulsia Gushington" will look for her volume on so prolific a theme as the experiences of a vicereine in India, with great expectations of a literary treat.

A correspondent of the Quebec *Morning Chronicle* states that the survey for the Short Line from Edmunston to Moncton has been very successful, and that an excellent location has been found which will not exceed 200 miles in length and passes through the heart of New Brunswick, opening up a valuable country. It is stated that this will shorten the distance from Quebec to Halifax by 110 miles as compared with the I. C. R. It will, it is stated, make the distance from Montreal to Halifax almost exactly the same as by the "Short Line" via Sherbrooke, and as it will pass altogether on Canadian territory and over very much lower summits than the Sherbrooke line, it will be preferable to it in every respect. We do not vouch for the accuracy of these statements, but if correct they are of considerable importance to Halifax.

A number of Toronto young roughts have been disgracing themselves and their city by a display of blackguardism on the occasion of the entry into the city of Archbishop Walsh to assume his new position. The young ruffians used grossly insulting language and made use of missiles, one or two of which struck the Prelate, fortunately without seriously injuring him. That a community of quiet citizens cannot welcome the diocesan head of their church into a Canadian city without insult and maltreatment is outrageous, it is only to be hoped that some of the malefactors may be caught and punished for their ruffianism. The above was written before Archbishop O'Brien's letter on the subject appeared in the *Recorder*. The occurrence took place too late for our editorial notice last week, and we fail to see what it has to do with our supposed impartiality. We are not conscious of being given to "unmanly insinuations" against the Irish party, with which the Archbishop charges us, and we are unfortunate in differing from His Grace's implied opinion on the subject of Metis heroes.

"How," says that excellent periodical, the *St. John Educational Review*, "is English grammar taught in our schools, and is it yielding results commensurate with the time and energy expended upon it?" The *Review* proceeds to give a circumstantial instance of the efforts made by a father to assist his son, who was settling into a condition of despair over this hopelessly complicated study. The father took the questions to a distinguished scholar and teacher of philology, who could not answer the questions "in any terms which would have satisfied the teacher of the boy or the author of the text book." "They were then shown to the very highest authority on such subjects to be found in this country, a gentleman whose attainments in the science of language are celebrated by the world of scholars. His answer to these questions was a strain of unmingled invective against teacher, text-book and school system which could tolerate such wasteful folly in instruction." This is not the first time we have inveighed against the ruinous taxation of the scholar in brains and time by the pedantic empirics who have succeeded in fastening their profligate grammatical processes on the schools of the country, and it is our opinion that half the time devoted to their absurdities spent on the old Eton Latin grammar, or an English grammar pruned down to a like simplicity, would afford the ordinary student all he wants to know to enable him to write and speak his native tongue with tolerable correctness and propriety. As it is, it is well known that neither of these ends is accomplished by the present methods, a fact which will excite no surprise if we consider the specimen which we give in another note, of the portentous rubbish with which our unfortunate children are perennially dazed and bemuddled,