

# 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.

A letter having a signature which ought to, and probably will, command attention and respect, has appeared in New York on the subject of enforced idleness in prisons. The signature is that of J. G. Whittier. "My sympathies" says the venerable poet, "are with the laboring class in all their just demands" but the suppression of labor in the prisons is too small a gain to them to be purchased by the transformation of prisons into mad-houses."

We are glad to learn that it is understood that a British Ship of War is to be sent to Behring Sea, for the purpose of guarding Canadian sealing vessels against interference. It is quite time. Delay has probably been prudent, but it is impossible that the Americans should be allowed to go on simulating a belief, and acting on it, in their preposterous claim to exclusive jurisdiction over an open sea. The mere presence of an English cruiser would probably prevent piratical seizures.

Miss Sophie M. Almon has favored her friends with a little booklet of poems for private circulation only, which we hope to see enlarged for the benefit of the public at an early date. One or two of these charming little poems have appeared in THE CRITIC, notably "Soothing," and we shall from time to time reproduce some of the others, which will be better, and more charitable to the public, than the short comment we could give them here. Suffice it at present that Miss Almon's little collection goes far beyond promise; it is fulfillment, and that of no doubtful kind.

We trust that the Wallace Anti-Combine bill will pass both Houses of Parliament, but we cannot follow the *Chronicle* in its argument that there would be no need of special legislation on the subject were it not for the protective policy adopted by the country. To refute this it is only necessary to point to Great Britain, that great free-trade country, where a mammoth salt-combine is now flourishing, and where a combination of all the coal mining companies is mooted. Labor having combined against capital, capital is now combining in self-protection, and the result of the conflict will, we trust, convince all sides that it is best to return to the old system where labor and capital went hand in hand.

A second flogging of 20 lashes has been administered at Picton, Ont., to a man named Bond, convicted of indecent assault. The ruffian had, it is said, to be assisted to his cell. This is more as it should be than one punishment of 15 lashes insufficiently administered, such as we commented upon last week. If the judges will only lay on the lash so heavily, and above all so persistently, that these fiends become fully possessed with the conviction that it is inevitable, they (the judges) will soon find themselves relieved of the disagreeable necessity of pronouncing such sentences.

The appointment by the German Emperor of General Von Verdy du Vernois to be the German Minister of War is considered to be of some importance. The General is 56 years old (the same age as Lord Wolseley) and is considered to be the first of the new generation of German soldiers to come to the front. He is said to be the foremost of living military writers and further progress is looked to under his régime in perfecting the German Army as a fighting force. The General is said to somewhat resemble General Grant in appearance. His measures will no doubt be studied with interest by the British Military authorities.

Some time ago a set of prematurely enthusiastic Scotchmen got up a considerable agitation about Home Rule for Scotland. It did not strike us at the time as being based on any very deep or broad foundations, and the rejection by a large majority of the House of Commons of the recent resolution in favor of Home Rule is confirmation of the correctness of our opinion. Mr. Gladstone's condemnation of premature measures is decisive, but we take it that whenever the desire of Scotland for the measure becomes the subject of a national expression, she will get it without much trouble. For ourselves we think it will be desirable when the time is ripe.

The eligibility of women to positions of public trust and, inferentially, the question of woman-suffrage generally, is undergoing a somewhat crucial test in England. Mr. Beresford Hope, who was defeated in the new council election by an immense majority by Lady Sandhurst, petitioned for unseating her on the ground that women cannot be public representatives, and Judges Stephen and Huddleston decided in favor of the plaintiff. Lady Sandhurst is a woman of great ability and large charity, and an intimate friend of Mrs. Gladstone. An appeal has been taken from the decision of the court, and if that decision is confirmed an amendment of the law is probable.

It has not been quite easy to understand the disbandment of the "Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company," of London. As far as we can gather they seem to have preferred devoting their large funds to their digestive organs rather than to military efficiency. The Prince of Wales was at first accused of arbitrary conduct, but general opinion seems now to have come to the conclusion that he was in the right. At all events the squabble has been patched up. Their guns have been returned to them, and, as we suppose "what is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh," the Hon. Company at once celebrated the occasion by a big dinner. Whether this was a very wise proceeding may be a matter of some doubt.

If Mr. Jones is reported correctly as to a speech in the House on Monday on the steamship subsidy, he was certainly talking nonsense. The Hon. gentleman is represented as predicting that the new steamships were not going to do more than seventeen knots, and saying that vessels of the capacity of the *Vancouver* and *Parisian* could not make the speed the Government required, and that cargo was of more consequence than mails and passengers. If the *Parisian* and *Vancouver* make slow passages it is because they have not sufficient power. We have pointed out that there is not a vessel of the Allan Line that has triple expansion engines, or that can, as we believe, steam twelve knots, to say nothing of seventeen. Mr. Jones' theories of the relative value of things may be gauged by his preference of schooners to steamers. No doubt he would have preferred stage coaches to fast trains.

The administration of the law in the Province of Quebec continued to distinguish itself up to Monday last. A chosen posse headed by a judge, who is also, we believe, a prominent militia officer, entered on a campaign which resulted, according to general newspaper accounts, in an interview with the murderer Morrison, such as might occur between the generals of two armies, one of which should be in a position rendering it expedient to treat for terms of surrender. "Rounds of handshaking" are said to have wound up the friendly discussion, but General Morrison declined to consider the question of surrendering himself in the absence of a guarantee of acquittal, which it is almost surprising that the gallant judge did not quite see his way to conceding. On Monday, however, the farce seems to have come to an end, as Morrison is reported to be at last lodged in jail after having been wounded.