

Australian wines are fast nearing a great opportunity by the serious reduction in the wine production of France. It is believed that the quantity of wine now made in Australia amounts to over 2,000,000 gallons, of which Victoria yields more than half, while New South Wales and South Australia each produce somewhere about half a million gallons, the larger amount at present being yielded by the parent member of the group. The annual consumption by Australians of their own wines is said to be small, but in the growing likelihood of extended commercial relations, an increased production might possibly find a desirable market in Canada.

The *Scientific American* quotes *London Engineering* as follows:—"In closing these details, we may add that Great Britain has now ten war vessels of 3,000 tons and upward with a minimum speed of 19 knots per hour, the United States eight, France five, Spain three, Japan two, and Russia one. The United States accordingly now claim that, in the important matter of high-speed war ships, they rank second, and are not far behind Great Britain. The Americans are, in fact, going in for high-speed cruisers." One thing the British Naval authorities may be sure of, that when the Americans do take hold of an idea they lose no time in carrying it out in the quickest and the most complete manner possible.

The utter collapse of the *Times* case so far as the forged Parnell letters are concerned cannot but produce a strong feeling throughout the country. The most incomprehensible thing about it is that the *Times* people should have accepted, with scarcely an attempt at investigation, the statements of such a man as Pigott, especially if it be true that Mr. Balfour himself warned them that Pigott was unreliable. On the other hand it has always been almost impossible to give credence to the idea that gentlemen like Mr. Parnell and Mr. Justin McCarthy could be implicated with murderers and dynamiters. It will afford satisfaction to all right thinking people that Mr. Parnell is so far exonerated, and it will afford still more if complicity with the party of violence can be yet more clearly refuted.

The *Toronto Globe* of 18th ult., has the following note:—"So far as the *New York Herald* has been able to ascertain, Germans resident in America would take the part of their adopted country, and not of the country of their birth, if a war broke out between the two. The American Republic has always been distinguished for its power of assimilation. Canada has hitherto not been so successful in making Canadians of her adopted children—too many of them are English, Irish, Scotch, French or German first and Canadian afterwards." In the first place recent events have, we take it, pretty well established the fact that the vast majority of our countrymen are Canadians first, certainly all men of culture and honor. In the second place, supposing it were as the *Globe* puts it, it would have been very different had the Canadian Press been an unit in the cultivation of patriotic sentiment.

We learn from *India and the Colonies* that the Government of Western Australia has come to definite terms with the promoters of a great railway project, for the construction of a line from Eucla to connect with the West Australian system, a distance of 800 miles, which, when completed, will bring into railway communion Perth, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. The contractors have agreed to construct the railway on the understanding that for every mile completed they shall receive from the Government the gift of 20,000 acres of land. Should they keep their promises the contractors will become the owners of an estate of 16,000,000 acres, equal in size to one-fourth the territory of Victoria. This would appear to constitute an enormous monopoly, and it is said that the work will occupy ten years, which seems to be a long period for the distance over a presumably not very difficult country.

*St. John Progress* concludes an appreciative sketch of Professor Roberts as follows:—"Not to speak of his original work, it is safe to say that his marked success as a teacher is due to an unswerving and strongly individualized energy of purpose, coupled with wide sympathy and an unusually inspiring enthusiasm for literature, directing a penetrating critical faculty. He is a strenuous lover of his native land, sturdy, virile, easy of approach, a good friend, and (if one may venture a hazard opinion,) but an indifferent enemy. It is upon the loyal, uncompromising and unquestioning patriotism of such men that Canada—the true Canada, mindful of her history, loving her heroes, keeping faith with the greatness of her destiny—rests her bid for fame and honor among the nations." It is indicative of the varied ability of Professor Roberts that, at the early age of 23, he was the first Editor of the *Week*, undoubtedly in some aspects the first journal in Canada.

The question of re-adjusting the wards of this city is ever old and ever new. That is to say, it is a matter which has been frequently mooted, but in which nothing practical has been effected. The present division is palpably unfair. For instance, the two centre wards—Three and Four—with barely 300 votes each, have the same representation in the Council that Ward Five has with about four thousand possible votes. Many schemes have been proposed, but we are convinced that the most equitable would be—first to amalgamate Wards Three and Four; second to divide off the Western portion of the city, say on the line of South and North Park and Agricola Streets, or of Robie Street, and making thereof two wards, and then to make two wards of the remainder of Ward Five. At the same time it might be advisable to shorten the period of an Alderman's service, which would reduce the number of Aldermen to sixteen—quite a large enough body to rule this city. Of course men who prove themselves to be good representatives would be eligible for re-election as often as their constituents choose to retain their services.

Electricity advances. It has now been applied to the working of a fire engine in the place of steam. It has the advantage of noiselessness, economy, and starting at full speed, and makes no smoke, sparks or ashes.

The question as to how far the Dominion Rifle Association is a military body is an old and vexed one. This only is certain, it receives and expends large sums of money which find their way into comparatively few hands, while the mass of the militia remain poor shots. There is, however, looming up a far more serious question, viz:—Whether long-range shooting as practised at present, is, in view of the greater importance now ascribed to volley firing, anything more than the a b c of effective fire in action. The *Broad Arrow* quotes from the *Volunteer Service Gazette* a trenchant letter on this subject. We cannot at present quote from it, but we have long felt sure that target practice does not accomplish what it is thought to do towards efficiency of fire in battle. The British Army all does its proportion of target-practice, yet their men are shot down like rabbits by the Boers, and our target-practising militia by Dumont's Half Breeds. These are points for discussion and thought.

Sir Frederic Middleton showed even more than his usual pluck in facing the Rifle Hierarchy at the late Dominion Association Meeting. The discussion evoked was wholesome, as it is always desirable to hear both sides of a question. On the one hand it was claimed that the Association was not military, but a link between the military and the public—that the body of marksmen, whether officers or non-combatants, had worked up from the ranks, were men good at all points, and that interest in the force would die out without them. These contentions are, we consider, exaggerated. The body of marksmen is small, many make a profitable sport of it who are by no means remarkable as ensamples of other points of soldiership, and the result of the system is that their example does not stimulate the rank and file to anything like the degree claimed. Incidentally we are glad to learn that in some battalions the officers do not compete. We were also glad to see Sir Frederic unflinchingly supported by two such good men as Lt.-Colonels O'Brien, of the 35th, and Curren, H. B. G. A.

The report of the Commissioner of the N. W. Mounted Police is an exceedingly interesting document. Commissioner Herchmer is evidently an officer who slights no portion of the multifarious duties of the Force, which is in a high state of efficiency physically as well as morally. As regards the former, he makes the remarkable statement that the average height of the men of the Force is over 5 ft. 9 in. and their chest measurement over 37½ inches. "In physique," he says, "we are second to no force in existence, and we have very few men that cannot ride day in and day out their fifty miles. We are trained soldiers, both mounted and dismounted, and squads in nearly every division thoroughly understand gun drill; we do our own carpenter work, painting, alteration of clothing, black-smithing, most of our freighting and teaming, plough when required, put out prairie fires, act as customs and quarantine officers, do most of our own waggon repairing and tinsmithing, mend all and make a great deal of saddlery and harness, act as gaolers and keepers of the insane sometimes for weeks, and there is not a division that cannot go into any country and put up a complete barrack either of logs or frame."

A bill has been prepared by the Sanitary Committee of the City Council, and will shortly be introduced in the Provincial Legislature, providing for the erection of a slaughter house in the northern suburbs of the city, and for the due inspection of cattle on the hoof and of carcasses that are to be sold as meat-food. It frequently occurs that cattle are brought to town wearied with a long travel on foot, or bruised by rail transport, and it is most necessary that they should be rested before slaughtering. Others have internal ulcers or are otherwise diseased, still they are killed and their meat sold to consumers. It is, of course, impossible for the two Health Inspectors to attend to the duties of looking after the sanitary condition of the houses and shops of the city, and also to inspect all animals and carcasses that come to Halifax for the feeding of her citizens, especially when there are eight slaughter houses scattered over an area of a square mile. The plan will probably entail the expenditure of \$15,000 to \$20,000, but the fees derivable will probably pay all current expenses besides meeting the interest on the original sum, and leaving a rest that will pay off the principal in a few years. The slaughter-house will thenceforward be a source of revenue to the city.

"It is understood," says *India and the Colonies*, "that a handsome sum of money is now on its way home from Australia as a gift to Dr. Chas. Mackay," and that a like proposal—of which we were not aware—has been lukewarmly received in Canada. Yet Dr. Mackay, with the exception of knowing him by his songs, which cheered and moved many an emigrant in early Colonial days, has no particular claims on Australia, while it is, though not generally known, quite otherwise as regards Canada. Besides reporting for the *Times* on Federation when that question was first started, Dr. Mackay remonstrated strongly with Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, when Colonial Secretary, on the danger of taking little or no notice, social or otherwise, of Canadian visitors to London. Sir Edward, to his honor, at once departed from the manners of his predecessors, and invited all the members of a Canadian deputation to meet him at Knebworth, "since when," writes the author of "Cheer Boys, Cheer," "There's a Good Time Coming, &c.," "neither Canadian nor any other Colonial deputation or functionaries visiting London, have had occasion to resort to American Ambassadors, (which seems to have been at one time a common, but most regrettable practice) for aid or courtesy."

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