

To the Editor of the Critic:—

DEAR SIR,—In your last issue of the CRITIC you say, "you are free to admit that our school taxes are large." How exceedingly easy it is to admit a fact we cannot deny. But pray you, why were you not free to give to the public my moderately written criticism of the School Board's wish to increase our already largely unnecessary taxes by putting up a building that is not required, and that to, at a cost of \$20,000. Again, you did not feel free to publish a criticism of the last yearly report of the Inspector of Schools for the city. You know, sir, every word of my criticism is correct.

Many had hoped that the establishment of the CRITIC would give us an independent medium through which some of our city abuses might be corrected.

MAV.

[Our correspondent forgets that his so-called criticism, consisted largely in personal abuse of one member of the School Board. If that gentleman had to "step down and out," as he terms it, it does appear to us, to say the least, unkind and ungenerous to refer to a matter that has long since been forgotten, at least by the public. In referring to the Report of the Supervisor of Schools for the city, while we are ready to admit the evident want of more mature thought in the report referred to, we feel that no good can be subserved by publishing his almost ungenerous criticism of the Supervisor of the city schools.—ED.]

[FOR THE CRITIC.]

A WRITER'S PERSONALITY.

To trace the personal characteristics of an author in his writings is in some cases a source of interest; in others it tends to weaken the hold which he may have already gained. If his peculiarities are such as endear, or even such as are easily tolerated, he becomes an esteemed personal friend; if on the other hand these peculiarities are such as we can neither admire nor condone, the less we know about them the better.

It is customary to divide authors into objective and subjective; the former possessing, like Shakspeare and Scott, the power of going completely outside of themselves and treating their subject from a point of view quite independent of their own characters, while the latter always reveal themselves, not merely by their literary style, but by their very sentiments. Of the objective class of writers, who possess genius of the highest dramatic order, we have here nothing to say. We wish to glance at a few of the subjective writers in order to learn how far a writer's personality may be enjoyed by the general reader.

The lofty idealizing power, the refined classical taste, the profound religious fervor of Milton; the gentle manliness of Addison; the burly strength, and honest independence of Sam. Johnson; even the sympathetic tenderness of that embodiment of human weaknesses, Goldsmith, cast over the reader's mind and affections a spell more potent than any mere admiration for intellectual greatness can produce. These authors bring us within the range of their personal influence; we learn to know them personally, and to like them. On the other hand there are authors who reveal personal characteristics which repel rather than attract us. Even Thomas Carlyle, with his brilliant powers of expression and his mighty grasp of intellect, with his writings qualities of heart, which prevent our liking him personally. There is no doubt that this want of sympathy with him as a man has largely impaired the popularity of his writings, and will shorten the permanency of his fame.

In the field of journalism the effects of betraying good or bad personal qualities are no less decided than in that of authorship. Not to go abroad for examples, we have in our midst newspapers whose leading editorials always consist of an effusion of malicious sarcasm. On attempting to wade through these torrents of vituperation, rage, and mis-statement, one pictures to himself a journalist whose face is distorted with the pangs of dyspepsia and whose conversation is saturated with the "gall of bitterness." There is an evening paper in this city, it is needless to specify it more particularly, whose editorials are so uniform in their malice, narrowness and disregard of fact that, given the first sentence as a key-note, the rest might be supplied in substance by any constant reader of the paper.

Whether in journalism or in authorship, a writer may safely betray any personal qualities which would not stand in the way of our liking him as a man; but he must be careful how he regales his readers with the nauseating taste of his less amiable peculiarities.

HOWARD OF THE GATLING.

The Boston Globe of June 5, contains a letter written on May 15, by Capt. Howard, of Gatling fame, to his friends in New Haven, Conn., he thus describes the gallant exploit at Batoche's:—

"About thirty Sioux Indians made a rush with a whoop to take the nine-pounders, and as I was on the left I saw that I could not fire across them. There was only one thing I could do; that was to take the piece by hand to the front, down hill, and give it to them. This I did within twenty yards of the enemy. I set the gun and turned the crank. There was not another war-whoop after that. Then the Indians were closing in on my left to cut off the scouts and I let them have it on that side, and when I looked up not a man was to be seen but the three men with me at the Gatling gun, but I kept in position until I had driven all the Indians out of their pits. One horse was shot and one man killed and another wounded. The firing lasted about twenty minutes. We then dragged the gun up hill with two men and held the position until ordered over to the right to drive the enemy

out of some brush. This I did, and I was all over the field all day, from one place to another. The battle was as hot a one as I ever saw, as the enemy were in rifle pits and hard to get at.

"By 7 o'clock in the evening the General fell back about a quarter of a mile to the place of the camp, and I was ordered to cover the retreat. Through some mistake the General withdrew my right support, and about 100 Indians made a dash on my right. I had all I wanted to do to get to camp, as I did not have my horse, and it would have made you laugh to see me dodging the buckshot and bullets."

MR. SANDFORD FLEMING ON THE INDIANS.

In his volume "From Old to New Westminster," Mr Sandford Fleming has a chapter on the Indians which is worth reading just now. He is a writer who must certainly have seen a good deal of the Indians, and who has had to deal with them from the benevolent as well as the practical point of view, and his opinions are therefore of value.

He deals with the subject from two points of view, first from the point of patient benevolence, and next from that of the practical man. Concerning the difficulty of civilizing the Indian he says:—

"We must, on our side, be reasonable in our speculations. We must remember that the Indian has never been habituated to steady labour, and it should not be a matter of bewilderment if he is vacillating and irregular in accepting that condition. For countless generations his life has been nomadic. He has been lord of the soil, bred a warrior, and the whiteman who has been the cause of this change in his condition should bear with him and be patient, and extend him help and aid. It is not only the Indian who finds it hard to accept the life of monotonous employment day out and day in. Many of our race who at a somewhat advanced period in their career are set down to patient effort, find it no little of a trial." That is perfectly true; and it is recognized by all wise men who know that human problems seldom yield to sudden solutions, and who never talk, or write, or act, in a panic on any subject that touches the improvement of a generation of mankind in any condition of civilization.

When Mr. Fleming comes to consider what employment the Indian can be placed in he has a practical suggestion to offer. "There is much," he says, "in the Indian character by which they are fitted for peculiar employment; as guardians of rivers, as herdsmen: as boatmen; and they have extraordinary aptitude for any calling which exacts readiness of resource and quickness of perception." He refers, also, to the skill which the Indians show in boat building, the handiness they exhibit in mills, etc., and says, "as forester and guardian of the observance of some of the game laws he would be invaluable; and it is only by strict observance of our regulations with regard to the season in which fish and game can be hunted and killed that its preservation can be assured."

We are especially concerned as a people in the maintenance of a peaceful policy regarding the Indians. The policy that has been heretofore pursued has been a policy that has had so much the admiration of mankind that it would be most unwise to recklessly abandon it. Just now many counsels of abandonment are offered. We do not think they are councils of perfection, and fortunately they are councils which no one who has ever had any responsibility for Indian welfare has ever entertained with seriousness.—*Toronto Mail.*

The tide of immigration to the United States continues to ebb. The arrivals at the chief ports during the ten months ending with April aggregated but 275,468, as against 371,625 during the ten months ending with April, 1884. At this rate the total for the fiscal year which closes on June 30, will be only about 385,000, or scarcely half the aggregate for the twelve-month ending with June, 1882. The influence of business prosperity and depression is always plainly visible in the statistics of immigration. During the flush times which followed the war, the total kept rising until it had reached 459,803 in the year ending on June 30, 1873. The panic arrested this movement, and the aggregate kept sinking year by year until it had fallen to only 138,469 in the fiscal year of 1878. As business improved, the pendulum began swinging the other way, and this time it went further than ever before, the twelve months which closed with June, 1883, reaching the enormous total of 788,992. From this lofty mark it fell in the next year to 603,322, and in the following one to 518,582, with the prospect of coming this year well within 400,000. So vast, however, has been the influx during the five years since the last national census that, even if the growth of the country by immigration during the remaining half of the decade should be very slight, the increase of our population from this source between 1880 and 1890 will still be larger than for the previous ten years.—*New York Nation.*

The unsatisfactory state of affairs in connection with the City and Provincial Hospital, which has arisen from the somewhat arbitrary action of the Board of Charities, in that they refused to ratify the appointment of the candidate who had been unanimously recommended by the visiting physicians as a fit and proper person to hold the position of House Surgeon, continues to agitate the public mind, but we understand that an amicable settlement of the difficulty will be made in the course of a few days. To guard against any recurrence of such a disagreement, the government should insist upon retaining the power to supervise the acts of the Board, ratifying or amending the same as in their judgment the public interest demand. The government are responsible to the people for the management of the Hospital, and they should not delegate their power to an irresponsible Board without reserving the right to supervise the acts of that Board.