

# 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.

The London *Daily Graphic* sees cause for alarm in the prevalence of laudanum-drinking by women in London. A dealer who gave evidence on the subject stated that one of his patrons spent ten shillings weekly in the purchase of laudanum, and that another was in the habit of drinking in his shop at one time two ounces of it, and that his customers habitually used large quantities of the baneful drug. It is well known that ether-drinking is quite common in Ireland and that the habit is growing. If things are as bad as they appear to be, measures to restrict the sale of opiates should not be delayed.

The views of the Rev. Dr. Partridge on the temperance question, in the last number of the *Mercury*, are outspoken and manly, they are based on experience and common sense, and they are expressed in a clear and forcible style, free from exaggeration and useless verbiage. By coming out squarely with his opinions on this subject, the Reverend gentleman will no doubt arouse in their wrath many intemperate advocates of prohibition, but he is deserving of great credit for his fearless championship of what he believes to be the best temperance policy. His article occupies a column of space in the *Mercury*, all of which is worth reading. We have space for but a few short extracts: "Total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, for example's sake, or for reason of health, is lawful and praiseworthy; but its only moral value lies in its voluntary acceptance, and individual liberty must not be interferred with." \* \* \* "That the true way and the only way of accomplishing the end aimed at by those who would violently compel the acceptance of prohibition, is to train the young to do without alcoholic stimulants. Where there is no demand there will be no supply." \* \* \* "That all methods of coercing the individual will, which take for their principle the doing of evil that good may come, exciting in many minds indignation and contempt, must fail and deserve to fail." \* \* \* "That all legislation which aims at being lasting should look to the end, instead of trusting in temporary expedients." Dr. Partridge also speaks of the discomfort of the homes of the poor, which drives them to take stimulants, and also points out the fact that it is the quality and not the quantity of liquor consumed which inflames men's brains and renders them imbecile or lunatic. "If," he says, "a man who labors hard with his body or brain could obtain a reasonable quantity of a stimulant that was pure and wholesome, instead of being compelled to purchase a pint of fiery rum, there would be less drunkenness, violence, crime and sin."

It is reported that the *Warspite*, flag-ship of the Pacific squadron, has been ordered to the Esquimalt dry dock on account of an alleged discovery of structural defects. This is unfortunate, if true. The *Warspite* is a comparatively new cruiser, being launched in 1884, and she is considered one of the best and most powerful of British armored vessels. She carries ten guns, registers 8,400 tons and has a horse power of 10,000.

The Chilean civil war grows more cruel. According to advices from Chili via Panama 500 Government troops and 800 revolutionists were killed in the battle of P. 20 Almonte, in which the Government forces were defeated. Five thousand men were engaged in this action, and 234 wounded men were taken to Valparaiso. The Government forces lost all their artillery. Many atrocities were committed by the revolutionary army, and many of the inhabitants of Pazo Almonte, including women, were killed. The officers and crews of the rebel vessels state that they have bound themselves not to lay down arms until they hang President Balmaceda in the principal square in Santiago. Other engagements are reported, as well as a fearful massacre by Government troops of workmen who had assembled on February 3rd to proceed to Iquique to make representations respecting the scarcity of provisions. The troops opened fire without warning upon 900 defenceless men, women and children, but the report says the killed were all men. It is reported that the Chilean ironclad *Blanco Encalada* has been sunk off Antofagasta in the Bay of Morena, by a torpedo.

The occasional spats between England and Portugal in Africa bid fair to develop into a sound drubbing for the latter unless she stops shaking her fist in the British lion's face. Portugal, probably relying on her insignificance, has been in effect saying, "Come on McDuff" for a good while, and last week despatches from South Africa stated that the Portuguese authorities had fired upon the British steamer *Agnes*, conveying the expedition of Sir John Willoughby up the Pungwe River, as under the *Molus Vicenti* between Britain and Portugal it had a right to do. Portugal explains as a reason for the seizure that Willoughby's vessels attempted to proceed up the river without paying the duties, but Britain has given Portugal to understand that no more fooling will be taken, and to enforce her meaning has despatched three gun boats to the mouth of the Pungwe River to look after the interests of British subjects. Portugal has accordingly, it is stated, given instructions to her agent; to allow the British free access to the Pungwe River in future. The trouble is that the demeanor of the Portugal officials in Africa does not correspond with the suave assurances emanating from Lisbon, but doubtless the presence of the British warships will have the effect of producing a behavior more in accord with good manners.

The report of the drowning accident in St. John Harbor on Thursday night of last week is particularly sad and distressing, because of the cowardice and brutality alleged to have been shown by all but one of the men to the three women in the boat. It appears that a large dance was being held in Carleton, which was attended by several people from the east side. On returning home, the boat in which the accident occurred was overloaded, seven young men besides the two in charge of the boat, and three girls being carried. The current was very strong, and a dispute arising about the best landing place, the majority carried their wish, and the place objected to as dangerous by Stanton, one of the men in charge of the boat, was made for. Owing to this course the boat struck across the bows of the steamer *Dominion* and began to sink. The men of the *Dominion* threw lines out which were grabbed by the men, who made not the slightest effort to save the girls—in fact the one young girl, Miss Worden, who was saved, states that one of the young men kicked her off when she held on to him. The only man who kept cool and collected during the entire danger was Joseph Stanton, without whose aid probably few would have been saved. As it was, all the men and one girl were rescued, but the other two girls were drowned, in consequence of the wild scramble for life among those who should have been their protectors. If they had not lost their heads the whole party might have been saved. As a warning against overloading boats this lesson could scarcely be stronger. If those whose business or pleasure takes them on the water would but exert themselves to study the subject, they would have more sense about it. They would know that a boat has only a certain capacity, and that overtaxing it is unsafe even in smooth water; but when added to being deeply laden, a strong current prevails, there is every chance of such a boat coming to grief. Of the behavior of the men little need be said. The heroic conduct of Frederick Young, who lost his life in St. John Harbor in the attempt to save another, stands out in bold relief against this dark background. Whatever denials the survivors may make of the charges against them, the fact remains that they were saved and the girls were not.