

Montreal Aldermen have evidently a somewhat large idea of their importance to the community and to the world at large. No less than thirty of them have now decided to help along "The World's Fair" by attending it at the city's expense. The plan will doubtless be discussed at many Aldermanic meetings, and perhaps were it known beforehand what the subject-matter of the discussion was to be, it would not be difficult to get together a quorum of Aldermen, even in Halifax.

One of the most important factors of the work of modernising Japan is to be found in the number of young Japanese students who flock to Europe and to America for the purpose of taking the law course in the Universities. The laws of Japan are being constantly revised by these young men, many of whom become Judges in the Island Kingdom. It has been found necessary on many occasions to draw up codes and treaties, for which a knowledge of European models was an essential requirement, and the young men are receiving every encouragement from the Emperor to pursue their studies abroad, so that afterwards their country may reap the advantage of their foreign sojourn.

The rules of the British Army seem to be pretty rigidly enforced just now. A court martial recently held at Windsor has imposed a punishment of eighteen months' imprisonment on one Private Marshall of the 1st Life Guards Regiment, who not only wrote an article for a newspaper on the recent mutiny in his squadron, but also posted it on the wall of the canteen. The offender will be dismissed from his regiment when his term of imprisonment is over; and the Corporal in charge of the canteen who permitted the article to be posted, is also to be deprived of his stewardship. The punishment, although in the case of the steward it may be harsh, has undoubtedly been well earned.

The coming winter promises to be most severe upon the poor of Great Britain. Owing in part to demoralization attendant on the cholera panic during the summer, and in part to the gradual decline in manufacturing, thousands of competent workmen are now out of employment. There is comparatively little being done at the docks, and the textile clothing and printing trades are extremely dull. Ship-building is at a stand still, and to crown the trouble the harvest is reported as the worst in fifty years. However, the financial outlook is brightening, capital is becoming more confident, and although the commercial outlook is poor, some method will have to be devised whereby the helpless and the hungry may be provided for.

The German Emperor is desirous of increasing the strength of his army, so that it will equal in numbers that of France. With this end in view a bill has been prepared which proposes to enlist 243,000 men yearly for two years of service, instead of enlisting 162,000 yearly for a three years' term. This Military Bill will meet with much opposition in the German parliament—there is not sufficient accommodation for so large a number of recruits, and the people are already too heavily taxed for the support of the army. If the bill were adopted, it would be impossible to draft so large a number from among the technically called "able-bodied men," but persons who were deaf, shortsighted, or lame, would become soldiers of the nation. The furor which the bill has already created will probably prevent its being presented in form to the parliament.

A veritable slave-ship has been sailing upon American waters, if we may credit the account which a San Francisco paper gives of the cruise of the steamer *Montserrat*, on which a reporter has been sailing in the guise of a sailor for some months. The steamer has been plying between the Gilbert Islands and various ports of Central America. The Islanders were induced to enter on a contract by which they bound themselves for a term of five years for a fair money consideration, which was to be paid at the end of the voyage. As a consequence the unwary natives were neatly trapped and sold to plantation owners or to slave-speculators for \$100.00 a head. During the past two years the *Montserrat* and the *Tahiti* have carried over 1000 slaves, 400 of whom were lost at sea on the *Tahiti*, while over half of those who were safely delivered have since died from the effects of bad treatment and disease.

We notice in a contemporary account of an experiment in peanut-growing, which has been tried in Kings County, N. S. As the experiment was partially successful, and is perhaps indicative of a new industry for our farmers, we would like to correct a popular error into which the *Kentville New Star* has also fallen. The peanut is a productive and profitable nut, but is not, as is often stated, a wholly underground nut. On the contrary, it is a branched, trailing annual, not unlike a combination of the dwarf pea and strawberry plants. When the flower falls, leaving the young pods exposed, a rigid, deflexed stalk appears, curving in such a manner as to push the pod below the soil, where the nut gradually ripens. The nuts, therefore, do not, as is often stated, "hang around the roots in clusters like potatoes." Since it has been found that our summer season is long enough to allow the nuts to ripen, some facts on peanut culture may not be inappropriate. The peanuts which find their way to our Canadian markets are grown in Virginia and other Southern States. The European demand is filled by the peanut planters of West Africa, while the export of South American peanuts is also very large. Although great quantities of the nuts are roasted and eaten, their chief use is for making an oil, of which the seeds contain nearly fifty per cent. This oil forms the basis of much soap, etc. The grain of the nut is also used in a variety of ways, chiefly in adulterations and in the manufacture of chocolate.

In another column we give the results of a series of experiments in butter-making, in which black pepsin was used. We recommend our readers, more particularly those interested in the product of the dairy, to carefully peruse the report referred to, and if in practice it should be found that by the use of black pepsin they can double their output of butter with little or no increase in the cost, we shall rejoice in their good fortune; and as one good turn deserves another, we shall hope that as they have profited by the publication of the report in *THE CRITIC*, so *THE CRITIC* will profit by their hearty recommendation of a paper that desires above all things to advance the interests of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotians. Read it, ye dairymen, ye struggling farmers, ye over-worked farmers' wives, and ye bonnie country lasses, and above all things, when ye have read the report, try the experiment for yourselves, and give your fellow-*CRITIC* readers the benefit of your experience.

Many who have been reading the different articles in which the famous Columbus voyage is celebrated have been puzzled over the descriptions of the Sargasso Sea, that weedy area of ocean so dangerous and often fatal to mariners. The sailors on board the caravels held that it was the uncertain edge of the earth, and were most unwilling to pursue their journey further. It has been held by many that the rustling weeds which cover the water were pushed up from the bottom of the ocean by some unknown agency. But a German scientist who has recently been investigating the cause, has concluded that the weeds come from the shores of Mexico, the Antilles, Florida and the Bahamas, that they are borne onward by the Gulf-stream for about fifteen days, when becoming water-logged they sink in the Sargasso region. If this theory be correct, the dangers to mariners in the Sargasso sea are ever increasing, for in the course of time the immense dropping of seaweeds will form a serious barrier to navigation.

Although Princess Marie of Edinburgh and Prince Ferdinand are now formally betrothed, it is doubtful if the marriage ceremony will ever be performed. As Prince Ferdinand is a Roman Catholic the Pope objects to granting the necessary dispensation to allow his marriage with the fair Lutheran, especially since, in the event of children being born to the young couple, they are to be brought up in accordance with the doctrines of the Orthodox Church. It is also stated that the Princess will become a member of the Orthodox Church immediately after her marriage, and it is thought more than likely that her husband will set aside his ancient faith in favor of hers. In the famous "Bill of Rights" which was drawn up more than two hundred years ago, the stipulation was made that any Princess "marrying a Papist" was compelled formally to renounce her claims to the British Crown. The prospective bride is now ninth in the order of succession. Strangely enough, this is the first time in the course of two centuries that the clause regarding the marriage with "a Papist" has ever been called in question.

The future of the Indian Empire is already shadowed by serious difficulties. Both native and British politicians are seriously considering the probable result of the present method of Government. The Anglo-Indian administration has paid great attention to the safety and welfare of the people—famines and plagues have been in a measure checked, civil wars have not been permitted, the burning of widows and the sacrifices at the Juggernaut have been forbidden, and a great number of man-eating beasts and venomous serpents have been killed. As a consequence the condition of the people is decidedly bettered, but in consequence of this paternal care the death-rate has been much lowered, and the population has rapidly increased, so much so that in the course of another equally productive generation many of the habitable portions of India will be over-populated. Hindu emigration has never been encouraged, indeed it is contrary to native ideas, but as homes will have to be found for the teeming population, East Africa, Arabia, Beloochestan, Southern Persia and other countries under British protection will have to be colonized by the surplus people. Thanks to the excellent schools and colleges established by the Government and by Missionaries the natives are being trained for all manner of work. It is no longer necessary to send skilled labor from England, as teachers, clerks, and officials of all kinds are now trained in their special work in the native schools. The policy of the Government in thus preparing the dusky race for self-government is a thoroughly sensible one, and yet it has been the cause of a most perplexing state of affairs. There is a continual drifting to India of an incompetent white class, and for the most part young men who go out to try their fortunes without any assured positions. These men as a rule fail utterly, as they cannot compete with the Hindu officials or workmen. They marry frequently among the Europeans and increase the pauper population. Again, owing to the depreciation of the silver rupee, the lesser European officials find themselves unable to send their children to England to be educated, the result being an ever-increasing number of puny, uneducated children, who will doubtless be the progenitors in time of a wholly pauper generation. It has been suggested that the whole male pauper population should be conscripted, but the suggestion is of no use, for the paupers are as a rule physically unfit for continuous work. The enervating character of the Indian climate is responsible in great part for the indolence and lack of muscular power which so frequently characterise both the native and the European population. What with the prospect of over-population, and the prospect of an immense pauper population, the men whose best thoughts are given to the subject of Anglo-Indian Government are sorely perplexed.

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