

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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## 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 his 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.

Banking in Hong Kong has its disadvantages. The Tung Lung bank in that city failed, whereupon its celestial depositors tore down the building and made a dividend of the pieces and wanted to divide the officers.

Arbor day should this year be observed more generally throughout the Province than it has ever yet been. In some rural sections, the beauty of the country roads might be greatly enhanced, if suitable trees were planted along their sides. Maples, elms, oaks, and ash trees, which are easily obtainable, are among the best varieties of shade trees.

We have never tried to get over, or under, or through a barbed wire fence, but we have our opinion about them all the same. They are barbarous, but a top rail will not civilize them. They should be flanked on either side by a moat so deep that an individual or animal would fall into it before attempting to make a passage over or through such a fence.

The five central American Republics have adopted commercial union and a common citizenship for native born central Americans. The assimilation of the civil codes, and the adoption of a common standard of weights and measures is also proposed. This looks like a prospective confederacy; but the disintegrating elements which destroyed the former union still exist; and while they do, cohesiveness is impossible.

Some New York women have discovered a new employment for their sex. It is the supplying of buttons to the buttonless. They take their stands at street corners with trays of neatly assorted buttons, and fasten them on within a half a minute. If the new employment becomes general, many a man will go to his office in a better frame of mind than he would had he to depend upon the negligent wife or housekeeper for such little offices. But whether the negligent wife or housekeeper will approve of his standing at the street corner while a young woman fastens on a button is another matter.

It was confidently believed that the colored people in the United States would die out in freedom, and that the Indians were destined to disappear within a half century. But alas for beliefs, the negroes are increasing in the land, while statistics prove that the aborigines are adopting themselves to modern customs, and multiplying the number of red men. The curious will naturally speculate as to the continental complexion of America after another century has rolled by. Will it be white, black, or red? or will it be an artistic combination of the three? The fusion of the races will unquestionably be brought about in time.

We are pleased to observe that those death-traps, the street level sewer ventilators, are beginning to be understood in other cities, and that measures are being taken to prevent the wholesale escape of sewer gas at every street corner. From a sanitary standpoint, these gratings are indefensible, and although the substitution of other methods for carrying off the surface drainage might be more expensive, it would certainly reduce the liability to death caused from the inhaling of poisonous gases.

A London druggist has been fined forty shillings for not putting up a prescription in accordance with the directions of the physician. Sixty grains of sulphate of quinine mixed with water had been ordered. The druggist put in but thirteen grains, and defended his action upon the ground that chemists had to cut down the quantity of drugs prescribed, otherwise the doctors would soon poison the public. There is no evidence to show that the price charged the patient was any less in consequence of the prudent forethought of this London chemist.

New York Society belles are most assiduous in the cultivation and preservation of their finger-nails, and like the Nubians, they are beginning to regard long well-shaped finger nails as a sign of good birth and high social standing. By the way, the Jews have a curious tradition about finger-nails, which we seldom hear referred to, that before the fall, the bodies of our first parents were perfectly transparent, and that these lucid envelopes of the soul, our nails, were the sole surviving remains. Should the craze for long nails become general, onychomancy will become a fashionable study.

Rumors of troubles in Afghanistan continue to drop thick and fast, but as yet their causes are unexplained. Abdur Rahman, the Ameer of the country, has become most unpopular with his subjects, being an out-and-out skinflint. He has little hope of perpetuating his dynasty, and hence the greater portion of his official salary, as well as the British subsidy which he receives, is annually sent off to a safe place in Turkestan. Whether the uprising of the Ghizais is stimulated by the Russians, has not yet been made quite clear, but with an unpopular Ameer and intriguing Russians, the outlook for the Afghans is far from pacific.

Mr. H. Rider Haggard has certainly made a most successful hit as an author of fiction. The reader's opinions may vary as to the relative merits of "King Solomon's Mines" and "She," but they will agree as to the unique originality of these publications. "Jess," which everybody now is reading, is a somewhat sombre story of the late war in the Transvaal, in which two sisters fall in love with Captain John Niel, an English settler. "Jess," after whom the book is named, discovering her sister's attachment, conceals her own; but at a subsequent period, when death was momentarily expected, she acknowledges her love. Readers of fiction are curious as to the authorship of three new books which have recently appeared in London; they are entitled "King Solomon's Wives," "He," and "Bess." The sale of these works has been phenomenal, but the identity of their author is still a matter of speculation in literary circles.

The New York Sun again advertises for an original American national hymn, and, in doing so, it calls attention to the fact that no such colossal fraud has been practised on any country since the earth was made as that perpetrated by a Boston publisher and compilers, when they publicly stole and inserted in their book the accepted English anthem, "God Save the Queen," and called it "America, National Hymn." It is pleasing to note that the Americans are waking up to the fact that their national hymn lacks originality. We have heard this hymn sung in the United States many times, and as the old familiar tune of "God Save the Queen" rang out, it appeared almost like a sacrilege to have other words substituted for those we are accustomed to, although the American words are in themselves pleasing. They read—

"My country, 'tis of thee  
Sweet land of liberty,  
Of thee I sing," etc.

## WHITE SLAVERY.

A friend, writing to us from the country, suggests that we publish the recommendations of the government's commissioner, embodied in his report on the treatment of the poor in Digby county. With this request we most willingly comply, as these prove conclusively that the farming out system is capable of reform, a fact which some people appear to question. The purport of the commissioner's recommendations is; first, that the indemnifying system be done away with; second, that the contracts for the poor should never include the medical aid; and third, that proper returns of expenditure should be made by the overseers to the Council. We should like to ask the members of the legislature why no action has ever been taken upon these recommendations, as well as that of the committee on Humane Institutions? True the matter is one which affects only the well being of the poor in some sections of the province, but it is one nevertheless in which all humane persons should be interested, and as our House of Assembly presumably contains 38 of these gentlemen, we cannot see why the question of the treatment of the poor should be allowed to hang fire. We have