

THE CRITIC:

A Maritime Provincial Journal.

DEVOTED TO

Commerce, Manufacturing, Mining and Agriculture.

1.50 PER ANNUM. }
SINGLE COPY 5 CTS. }

HALIFAX, N. S., DECEMBER 20, 1889.

{ VOL. 6
No. 51 }

CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

EDITORIAL NOTES	1, 2
MISCELLANEOUS.	
Chit-Chat and Chuckles	3
News of the Week	4
City Chimes	4, 5
Poetry—Under the Holly Bough	6
A Christmas Carol	6
Christmas Presents	6
Self-Denial	6, 7
Industrial Notes	7
Christmas in the City Shops	8
Commercial	8, 9
Market Quotations	9
Serial—A Disgrace to Her Family.....	10, 11
Mining	12, 13
Meg—A Christmas Sketch	14, 15
Our Cozy Corner	15
Chess	16
Draughts—Checkers	16

THE CRITIC,

Published every Friday, at 161 Hollis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia

BY

CRITIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Edited by C. F. FRASER.

Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance. Single copies 5 cents.

SAMPLE COPIES SENT FREE.

Remittances should be made to A. M. FRASER, BUSINESS MANAGER.

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.

Our day of issue happens this year to fall five days before Christmas, our next will of course be two days after. It would then be too late to wish our subscribers, readers and many friends a "Happy Christmas" when the season is already gathered to the great past, so we must take time by the forelock, and very heartily wish them to-day every enjoyment of the great and sacred festivity of the year.

We are extremely glad to notice that at all events one of the young reprobates who insulted and threw stones at Archbishop Walsh on his entry into Toronto, has been caught and punished. He is a youth of 18, named McIntosh, and was sentenced to pay a fine of \$50 and costs or undergo three months' imprisonment. It is fit that young rowdies of this stamp should be made to find the amusements they affect expensive.

Whatever the French people, or a section of them, may have condoned in the way of the bizarre combination of pseudo-statesmanship, soldiery, and circus-posing of the redoubtable rider of the Back Horse, the gallant general has probably given himself an effectual *coup de grace* in, if the report be correct, accepting an engagement to give 30 lectures in the United States. We fancy we shall hear little more of General Boulanger as a pretender to political distinction.

After last year's exceptionally mild winter speculation is naturally rife as to what the present may turn out. There is an idea generally prevalent that our climate has come under conditions of change. If it be so, it is of course also a matter of speculation whether such supposed change is more or less permanent. There certainly appears to be some ground, based on scientific observation, for the surmise. It has been accounted for by Lieut. Downs, U. S. N., by a deflection of the gulf stream, which tends to bring its warm waters toward the New England coast, instead of carrying them northward toward the coast of England and Norway. If such a change has taken place, and it is in any way permanent, it would have a marked effect upon the climatic condition of the Maritime Provinces of Canada, and might, perhaps, have almost as important an effect upon the climate of northwestern Europe. Appearances would seem to indicate the existence of such an influence.

It is disgusting to learn that some sort of ovation was got up at Toronto on the occasion of the release of the young rowdy who insulted Archbishop Walsh. It is to be presumed that the young reprobate had succeeded in paying the fine of \$50 which was the alternative of imprisonment.

We have strong doubts of the efficacy of the measures by which the Conservative Government hopes to ameliorate the Irish situation; they have, however, taken a form definite enough to instigate the Liberals to a sort of manifesto which indicates the influence, strength and determination of the most radical section of that party. The programme includes extension of the powers of local government, the loosening of the restrictions on the sale of land, the dis-establishment of the Church in Wales and Scotland, triennial parliaments, reform of the House of Lords, removal of the anomaly of a plurality of votes, amendment of the registration laws and a number of other measures. It seems to us more than probable that this sweeping platform will return a majority of liberals at the next general election, though it is also likely that Mr. Balfour's land measures may by that time have also produced some quieting effect in Ireland.

The death of Robert Browning, at the age of 77, calls for more than a passing obituary notice. A poet of undoubtedly the highest rank, his work is for the most part such as appeals only to deep thinkers and students of character. Abstract and analytical of character to an extreme degree it will never be generally popular, notwithstanding the delicacy and subtlety of numberless touches. To a mind so constituted the *medieval history of Italy*, so fruitful in records of fervid passion and startling crime, proved a peculiarly attractive field, and his long residence in that country rendered him a master of its wealth of resource. It is perhaps to be regretted that Mr. Browning devoted himself so exclusively to his favorite style, which is justly open to the charge of frequent obscurity, as in such short poems as "How they brought the good news to Ghent," he displayed a fine mastery of the flow and energy of the ballad, and it is to be regretted that he has left us so few verses calculated to appeal to more general tastes and sympathies.

No Yule-tide news could have been more welcome to the world at large than that of the safety of Stanley and his party, but if any in Canada are entitled to be more particularly thankful and gratified, they are the family of Lieutenant Stairs, who has earned for himself at an early age such marked distinction. William Grant Stairs, Stanley's right hand man, was born in Halifax in 1863, so that he is in the neighborhood of 26 years old. The young explorer is the son of the late John Stairs, of this city. Mr. John F. Stairs, ex M. P., is his cousin. Young Stairs received a first-class education in his native city, and in September, 1878, joined the Royal Military College at Kingston. He graduated in June, 1882, with honors, and soon afterwards went to New Zealand, where he had secured a good position as an engineer on the construction of one of the railways. He worked in the New Zealand bush for three years and at the end of that time returned to Canada, accepting a position in the Imperial service. England was at that time in want of officers and gave several commissions to past graduates of the R. M. C. Stairs was appointed to the Royal Engineers as a second lieutenant and remained for a short time at Chatham. When Stanley called for volunteers he was among the first to answer. His career while battling for life on "Afric's burning sands" is now well known. The family of Lieut. Stairs have our hearty congratulations.

Christmas, so close to the end of the year, is to the reflective a somewhat solemn as well as a festive season. A week later even the old are more inclined to look forward to the possibilities of the New Year, than backward to the irrevocable of that which is so nearly past. In the lives of some it may have been eventful and memorable; to others retrospect may not be suggestive of special events. If among the former it may have been a period of health, of advance in character, in well doing, in high aspirations or even in material prosperity, then indeed is Christmas the most fitting season for devout and careful thankfulness. Let us hope it may have been such to many. If for others the year has been marked by failure, folly or lapse of rectitude, our experience should avail us to recollect that past failure oft times points to a future success. And this may hold good as well in the moral and spiritual as in the material. If our bark has ground over the rocky reefs with but slight injury let us be thankful that we were not entirely wrecked. There are few, we trust, who on fair consideration can find absolutely nothing to be thankful for. To most a past year may be fruitful of good results if we but extract from our individual experiences only that which it will be best and most valuable to remember. Then we shall be the better prepared to enter upon the New Year with wisdom and energy, and with charity towards all men.