

An article by Admiral Von Werner, of the German Navy, "On the Military Value of Heligoland," has just appeared in a Leipzig journal. In the Admiral's opinion the possession of the island by Germany renders the blockade of the Elbe and Weser an impossibility. Any fleet attempting this must, he contends, have some anchorage protected from the weather where it can renew its stock of coal. The only suitable place for this, he says, in the neighborhood of the Elbe mouth lies to the south east of Heligoland, within range of heavy ordnance. It was at this spot that the French fleet in 1870 renewed its supplies. Such being the case, Admiral Von Werner concludes that with a fortified Heligoland no foreign fleet would attempt the blockade of the river mouths, and that therefore a German squadron of ten to fifteen line of battle ships could be set free for service elsewhere, a saving to the national purse which he estimates at ten to twelve million marks.

The statement published by the *Mouvement Geographique*, as to the cost in money and lives of the conquest of the Congo, during the eleven years from 1879 that King Leopold has been carrying on his enterprise, shows that the total number of deaths among the white agents of King Leopold in these eleven years is 82. In the past six years, during which an average of 173 white agents have been constantly employed on the Congo, 56 deaths have occurred. The largest white force was last year, when 226 white employees of the Congo State were at work and eleven deaths occurred, or 4.8 per cent. The five Belgium commercial companies trading on the Congo employ 150 European agents and laborers, and in the two to three years of their existence these companies have lost only six men by death, two of them by accident. The total expenditure of King Leopold in behalf of the Congo possessions in the past eleven years have been about \$5,000,000. It is argued from these figures that, considering the ultimate value of the Congo, the cost of opening the country has thus far been remarkably small.

Under the heading "Crimes and Accidents" the *Montreal Witness* publishes the following despatch from Halifax:—"A girl named Wearton, while walking from River Herbert to her home at Joggins, Cumberland County, put a pipe she had been smoking into her pocket. The fire from the pipe ignited her clothing, which was soon in flames. The girl then ran, but the wind so fanned the fire that she was burned to death." It is not the general practice of Nova Scotian women to smoke a pipe or use the weed in any form, but this instance has been telegraphed all over the country, and no one has drawn a moral from it, or dilated upon the sin of smoking. The *Witness*, by placing it under the above heading, gives one the choice of denominating it either a crime or an accident, as one may be disposed to regard it. Smoking is certainly not a desirable accomplishment for any woman, be she high or low; and it is to be hoped that we shall hear of no more accidents from this cause. It is quite bad enough when men and boys do the mischief. Let all smokers, male and female, take warning by this girl's fate, and if they must smoke, be sure to avoid putting lighted pipes in their pockets.

The remarks of Lord Coleridge in the *New Review*, on "Thinking for Ourselves," will not commend themselves very highly to newspaper writers. He deprecates the anonymous writing which appears editorially and otherwise in newspapers and magazines, as having more influence than it ought to have, because the public do not know the authors. "Sometimes," he says, "by chance we do know an editor or a writer who is only an editor or a writer, and we shall generally find them much poorer creatures in the flesh than in the pages of their publications; and shall feel sure that those who quote their printed words as oracles of wisdom would remain entirely unimpressed by the same sentiments in the mouths of their authors delivered across a dining-table or in a drawing-room." This is pretty hard, but even so, all people have not the personal magnetism which gives weight to spoken words, and surely if they have the faculty of what Lord Coleridge calls "smart writing," they should not bury their talents. His Lordship is generous enough to say that he objects to the periodical press and periodical writers only if, and only so far as, they interfere with the duty of the independent thinking, and forming independent judgments. The press, he admits, has been a power for good. The *Manchester Courier*, in criticising this article makes some remarks which fit the case exactly:—"We claim," it says, "with Frederick Greenwood, that it is the business of a journalist, equally to express his own thoughts and to give expression to and popularize the thoughts of others; to represent not crotchety specialisation, but average culture and common-sense; to cultivate a habit of discrimination, and to be independent; and lastly, we might add, to condense and crystallise verbosity, whether of speakers, judges, preachers, or grand and garrulous old men, so as to make the best ideas available for those whose time is money." There is nothing in the conscientious discharge of these duties by a journalist to deter the reader from independent thinking. On the contrary it is more likely to promote it. One more quotation from the *Manchester Courier* cannot come amiss:—"How," asks Lord Coleridge, "can they even give us of their best under the strain and pressure and unnecessary haste which periodical writing entails." Turning to a higher authority, we take down a volume of De Quincey, and need scarcely apologise for quoting the following passage:—"But my own experience, in common with that of many other writers, has taught me that the disadvantages of hurry are not without their compensations. . . . It is certain that the fierce compression of mental activities which takes place in such a struggle, though painful and exhausting, has the effect of suddenly unlocking cells in the brain, and revealing evanescent gleams of original feeling, or startling suggestions of novel truth, that would not have obeyed a less fervent magnetism."

The locomotive telephone signal enables two trains approaching each other to communicate by closing the circuit when two miles apart. The ringing of the gong warns the engineers, who converse with each other over the telephone.

The original manuscript of the song "Scots Wha Hae" has been purchased by the Town Council of Edinburgh for the sum of £70. The manuscript had been bought by Mr. Kennedy, a Scotch banker, of New York, but before removing it to America he gave the metropolis of Scotland the opportunity to secure the great war song at the price he paid for it. The opportunity was not to be lost, and after expressing themselves deeply obliged to Mr. Kennedy the Council agreed to purchase the song.

The question of women as medical practitioners is an interesting one, and the following extract from the *St. Petersburg Novoye Vremya*, showing how the matter is regarded in Russia, may be not without interest to our readers:—"The medical college in St. Petersburg admitted female students in 1873. Fourteen years after, at the instigation of the male physicians, women were denied the privilege of pursuing medical studies. During the period—1873 to 1887—the Medical Department registered 698 female physicians, but the number has largely decreased since that time. It seems to us that Russia, with a population of nearly 70,000,000 women and children, needs a large force of female physicians. But since 1878 they have received only compliments for a work more beneficent than that of their male colleagues. In 1881 St. Petersburg was ravaged by diphtheria. The city authorities made appropriations for the treatment of the poor, among whom the disease prevailed to a large extent. The female physicians were the first to offer their services, and they remained at their posts, although the male physicians resigned because of the inadequateness of the pay. Because of the signal success of the female physicians in the treatment of diphtheria and scarlet fever, the authorities have retained them, while all the male physicians have resigned or have been discharged. Their devotion and efficiency have been somewhat rewarded. The municipal government has re-opened the medical schools for female students, and funds to the amount of 200,000 rubles have been subscribed for their maintenance. Their intelligence, devotion and efficiency should be acknowledged by placing them on an equal footing with the male physicians throughout the empire."

In referring to Dr. Bridge's paper on "Women as Medical Practitioners" our chief object was to protest against obstructions being placed in the way of feminine advancement. Our esteemed contemporary, the *St. John Globe*, thinks THE CRITIC "not as correctly critical" as usual in dealing with the subject. As, unfortunately, we have not had the opportunity of studying the paper as a whole, our information being drawn from the *St. John* press summary, we are unable to be definite as to details, but the gist of the matter remains the same. If Dr. Bridge's paper, which we have no doubt was a strong argument for his side of the question, was antagonistic to the profession of medicine as an occupation for women, and a large number of his confreres agreed with the sentiments expressed therein, then we were right in saying what we did. If the *Globe* will give this matter consideration, it will see that such action by an influential body of men places barriers difficult to overcome in the way of those women who are striving to obtain the highest medical qualifications, in order that they may take their place with men in what is certainly one of the noblest of professions. As nurses women have always excelled, and the art of healing in its higher branches would seem to be one no less suited to their abilities. We are far from wishing to deny the Medical Association the right to discuss the question of whether the physical structure of woman fits her to be successful in the medical profession, or to "brow-beat" them when they do so. On the contrary we believe that all questions are the better for fair discussion. What puzzles us about this one is that it does not appear to be fair, and the result of the discussion may be to discourage a struggling and small class in the country in their endeavors to reach the goal for which they are striving.

Edward Marston's account in *Scribner's Magazine* for August of how Henry M. Stanley wrote his book is interesting. The great work was done at Cairo, where there was more possibility of comparative seclusion than there would have been in London. After the first display of honors forced upon him by the Khedive and other dignitaries Stanley retired to the Hotel Villa Victoria, which Mr. Marston says is a charming retreat, surrounded on all sides by fine and newly built mansions. Here, although Mr. Stanley had a fine suite of rooms very handsomely furnished in oriental style, he wrote his book shut up in his bedroom, and woe betide anyone who ventured unasked into his sanctum. He rarely went out even for a stroll through the garden. "Nothing," says Mr. Marston, "worried him more than a tap at the door while he was writing. He sometimes glared even upon me, like a tiger ready to spring, although I was of necessity a frequent and privileged intruder, and always with a view to forwarding the work in hand. He was a perfect terror to his courier and black boy." The way in which Sali, the black boy, delivered a telegram would lead one to believe that Stanley was inclined to be violent. "Every time Sali approached the door, the least thing he expected was that the inkstand would be thrown at his head. He no longer ventured therein. One day he originated a new way of saving his head; he had a telegram to deliver, so he ingeniously fixed it on the end of a long bamboo, and, getting the door just ajar, he poked it into the room and bolted." Stanley was only a few times outside of the garden during Mr. Marston's stay with him, but one of the few diversions he allowed himself was sitting for his portrait to Miss E. M. Meyrick, a student and silver medallist of the Royal Academy, who was spending the winter in Cairo. He worked from morning to night with ardor and assiduity, with the result that his great book is now before the public, while it seems but a short time since we were in doubt as to whether he had perished in darkest Africa.