

# THE CRITIC:

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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 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 early history of millionaires is always interesting, and in the case of Mr. Robert Bonner, of New York, the story of his early days is also edifying. Bonner was an Irish emigrant in his fifteenth year when he reached New York. His assets at that time were three suits of clothes, a \$5 00 bill, and a lively desire to get on in the world. He served an apprenticeship of five years at his trade, and thought himself fortunate to secure board, washing and the sum of \$25 00 per year for his services. His savings began even at this time, for by thriftily working extra hours at the rate of 12½c per hour, he had by a tidy little sum. He attributes his success in life to his patient and steady grinding capabilities, and he offers the young men of to-day this free chapter of his youthful experience.

While philanthropists have been busying themselves over the horrible crowding of the masses in the great cities of the U. S., an electrician has devised a simple means of assisting them by at least providing more room for those whose duties entail their residence near a metropolis. A bee-line electric railroad is now being constructed between Chicago and St. Louis. The service is to be rapid, one hundred miles an hour being the hoped for speed. Cheap rates will prevail and every inducement will be made to entice city families to the rural districts. A residence of sixty or a hundred miles out of town would not be inconvenient to the busy city man, who would also have the relaxation of county life amid his business cares. The plan is a feasible and healthy one, well worthy of the attention which has been given it by the American public.

We note with great interest the kind'y Christmas spirit which has been infused into our public school children. A well directed effort has been made to interest them in the poor and needy of our city, and the call for contributions in food and clothing which was sounded by the teachers was promptly responded to, greatly to the benefit of the young people who were thus early taught the lesson of giving which is so hard to acquire in later life. Nor in this case have the parents been unduly taxed that their children might have the pleasure of giving, for the smallest offerings were acceptable, and a raw potato or a cooked and dressed turkey were equally welcomed by those in charge. The lesson in co-operative philanthropic work is a most valuable one for the young people, and one which is destined to deeply impress them with their duties as members of a community.

Although this is beyond doubt the day of mechanical devices, it is with a shock of surprise that we learn of the system now being used for the painted decorations of the vast exhibition halls at Chicago. Frank Millet, the well-known artist, was in despair at the amount of work assigned him to be done in so short a time. A small army of painters was thought necessary for the work, until Mr. Millet devised a paint atomizer, which is

doing the work in grand style. The atomizer consists of a piece of gas-pipe flattened at one end so as to form a spray. A barrel of paint takes the place of the perfume bottle, and rubber tubing is used for the connection. An air-pump worked by an electric motor sucks the paint from the barrel, and the air-jet sprays it evenly upon the wall surface. A more ingenious adaptation of a toilet-table convenience has perhaps never been made.

An interesting race of people living in the Seal Islands of Bering Sea are little known to the rest of the world. The Aleuts are however, related both to the Alaskans and to the Kamschatkans whom they resemble in some minor customs. They are, however, thoroughly uncivilized, and are by no means willing to take up with the manners of more enlightened people. Until recently infanticide has been a popular diversion, for the reason that there is no food to be had for a larger population. A crying child is seldom heard, for the heroic custom of dipping the weeping infant into ice-cold water still prevails, and the babes soon learn which to prefer, the pains of teething or the icy ducking. They are a peaceable people, never indulging in quarrelling among themselves, being content with vehement language and an argumentative dance. The houses for the winter months are mere burrows. In warm weather a low mound shaped trelis, which is soon covered with mosses and lichens, is built above the burrow. Beyond the provision of food for the family there is no incentive to labor, and many harmless amusements help to pass away the time. A game of chess with an Aleut is full of interest, for the moves are carefully considered, and the walrus ivory pieces—a duck for a pawn or a penguin for a king—are well handled. Excepting the high'y prized blubber there is little staple food, the coveted delicacies being sea-s' eyes, lichens scooped from a reindeer's stomach and blood sucked from the veins of a living animal.

One of the disgraces of our modern system of education is the absolute neglect which is bestowed upon the language of our young people. Very frequently the teacher is not familiar with the spoken language, although he may be able to pass a most creditable written examination. Nor do our children hear at their homes the pure mother tongue which they should be taught to speak. As a people we are deplorably careless of our language, and we are allowing the coming generation to speak it to their own liking. Further than this, Provincial accents are allowed to pass muster with the pure English accents, and the nasal twang which is so common amongst our children passes without notice. A short-sighted Upper Canada woman sent an abrupt message to a teacher, who was endeavoring to give her young daughter a correct method of enunciation, advising the instructor that the pupil read "spoke well enough," and insisting that the girl should be allowed "to talk any way she wanted to." This case, however, is a typical one, for many parents are half jealous of the teacher's superiority in education, and doubtless are much tried by the corrections of their daily speech unadroitly made by young grammarians. Still for the sake of the future of our country some effort must be made to familiarize our public school children with the English language. When they have once learned to prize its beauties they will insensibly be lifted to a higher grammatical plane, and the common whining and nasal tones will be considered intolerable.

A recent American writer cleverly points out some of the advantages which would accrue to the United States by the adoption of a reciprocity treaty with Canada. "Before another generation of young Republicans have grown up the population of the United States will have attained the vast figure of from one hundred and fifty to two hundred millions of people. These people are to be fed, clothed and warmed. They will be for the most part workers in cities and not farmers, for the farming land of the Republic is already taken up. The home food supply will be greatly inadequate, and the wheat and grains of the great Canadian farms will be needed to supply the natural wants of the people. The fish of the Canadian waters will find a ready market across the border, the Canadian timber will be highly prized, since the forests of the U. S. have been, and are being, so ruthlessly destroyed. The mineral supply of Canada will be needed—coal, copper, lead, nickel, gold and silver—for ere another generation reaches maturity many of the now most productive mines of California and Pennsylvania will be unworkable." There can be no question that a majority of our people in Canada would gladly hail reciprocity with the United States, but it is quite evident that our neighbors across the border would derive as many advantages from such a treaty as would our own people. The Democratic administration will no doubt make a strong move to break down the barriers which now trammel trade, and it is to be hoped that the Canadian Government will vigorously assist in the destruction of this International tariff wall. We occupy this great Continent in common, and the artificial obstructions to trade which now hinder the interchange of products must sooner or later disappear.