

# 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.

Speaking elsewhere of trade upon the great lakes, it is noteworthy that the mean level of these lakes is 20-10 feet lower than it was in 1886, and this is attributed to successive years of drouth. Owing to this lowering of the water level the depth of water in the canals has likewise decreased, and this is a serious drawback to traffic.

Governor Hill, of New York, is accused by his opponents of out and out seat-stealing, and the Republicans who had plumed themselves on a majority of three in the Senate now fear that the majority will be manipulated by Governor Hill, so as to give the Democratic party the control of the Senate. The Governor has ordered a recount of the ballots in eight different counties. In one of these eighty ballots in favor of the Republican candidate were thrown out, owing to a quod having been set by the printer instead of the letter M. This decision gives the Democratic candidate a plurality of twenty. In the other counties equally reprehensible methods are being resorted to. If such highbanded acts upon the part of the executive can be tolerated in the empire state of the American Republic the boasted liberty of our brothers across the border is somewhat mythical.

The year that has just rolled into the past has been one of the most eventful in the history of Canada. Politically speaking, we wish it could pass into forgetfulness, but still it would be a pity to lose the lessons which may be learned by the intelligent subject from the painful events of the past. The year has been marked by the passing away of many notable personalities. Sir John Macdonald closed his earthly career just before the outbreak which so scandalized the country took place in Parliament, and although in our own country not a very large number of notable people have gone over to the great majority, yet England and the United States have been losers to a considerable extent, as also many other countries have been. Our hope is that 1892 may usher in a new era of political morality in our well beloved Dominion, and that we may never again have to hang our heads in shame over the dishonest proceedings of those in positions of trust for the country.

The troubles in China are assuming serious proportions, and the very existence of the empire is threatened. This is not because China likes military organization or modern armament, but because she has not adopted modern methods for transporting her troops. A small corps of 4,000 rebels

in Manchuria has created havoc among the inhabitants, massacred hundreds of Roman Catholic converts, and threatens to move forward on Peking. Had the Chinese Government been less conservative the country might now be traversed by well-equipped railway and telegraph lines; in which case the present revolt would have been crushed before any great damage had been accomplished. As it is, it will take weeks before the Government troops reach the scene of the rebellion, and in the meantime the rebels gather strength with each fresh success. The present Chinese dynasty stakes its existence on extreme conservatism, but it is not at all improbable that this very conservatism may hasten its fall.

The great development of trade upon the North American lakes, which finds its outlet to the ocean by the way of the St. Lawrence River, has created a demand among shipping circles for the deepening of the canals so as to allow vessels drawing upwards of 20 feet of water to pass from Port Arthur, Chicago or other points to Montreal and Quebec. This deepening of the artificial water-ways would involve an expenditure of twenty millions of dollars of public money, and hence the proposal of Mr. H. C. Ketchum to obviate the necessity of this expenditure by the use of steel rafts or floating pontoons is deserving of more than a passing interest. Mr. Ketchum claims that, by the expenditure of \$500,000, pontoon floats capable of carrying a ship drawing 25 feet of water through the canals are not only possible but that similar expedients have been resorted to elsewhere. If Mr. Ketchum's scheme is feasible, and we see no reason why it should not be so, one of the most serious objections to lake navigation can be solved without loss of time and on an economical basis. We shall look anxiously for the outcome of this proposition.

The dictatorial young Emperor of Germany, who dismissed his prime minister Bismarck without so much as expressing gratitude for that Statesman's services to the Empire, has evidently overstepped the bounds of the constitution and is now to be brought face to face with the peoples' representatives. According to the German constitution all decrees of the Emperor have to be countersigned by one of his ministers to have the weight of law, but in dismissing Prince Bismarck, Emperor William neglected to have his decree counter-signed and the old chancellor, who accepted the inevitable at the time, now comes forward at the head of a strong party in the Reichstag and charges the Emperor with having wilfully violated the constitution. Emperor William has sinned in this respect upon more than one occasion, and his late arbitrary decree with respect to fallen women in Berlin is likewise unconstitutional and being such has raised a storm about his ears from unexpected quarters. The German people are proud of Germany, and they feel keenly that in diplomatic circles she has of late occupied a secondary position. They attribute this to the ill-judged actions of the young monarch and to the incapacity of Chancellor Von Caprivi, and now that the square issue of constitution versus Imperial decrees has been raised they are rallying to the support of the veteran diplomatist, and as matters now stand it is difficult to see how trouble is to be averted.

Very few people possess the unruffled calmness ascribed to Artemus Ward, who, when attacked by a robust specimen of the genus bore while travelling in a tram, knew absolutely nothing about any of the great people mentioned by his loquacious fellow-traveller, and when the latter in contempt asked him if he knew who Adam was, inquired—"What was his name?" Apropos of the bore, the London *Spectator* tells of a case that recently came before a London Magistrate, and if it is true, as has been said, that society consists of two classes—the bores and bored—it will naturally interest a good many people to hear of it. There were two passengers in a tramway, one of whom was not only a bore of the heaviest and most formidable calibre, but also, as he afterwards proved himself, one of a very dangerous and malignant character. He tried to open a conversation with his fellow-traveller, and broached several subj.c.s, but the fellow-traveller was in no mood for exchanging ideas on any subject, and after vainly endeavoring to freeze out the bore by silence and reserve, told him to "shut his mouth and not make a fool of himself." Now, this was not a polite expression, but the man was provoked, and was to a certain extent excusable. Upon this the bore showed himself in his true colors, and undertook to punch the head of the man who so decidedly opposed his advances, and the upshot was that the affair ended in court. Not a few people in this democratic age suffer in silence the assaults of the bore, and cannot by any means get even with him. The bore is a type of many things—such as society papers—that meddle with the privacy of individuals, and from which there is no escape. Reserve and retiring modesty seem to be thrown away, and the loss of old-time taciturnity, while attended with some benefits from a social and sympathetic standpoint, is not altogether to the advantage of the race.