

# 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 ICE HARVEST.**—Many of our country people find that while the harvesting of ice is comparatively simple their chief trouble arises from the fact that they do not store it to advantage. The trouble is that they are not liberal enough with their saw-dust, which should not be simply sprinkled over the crystal blocks, but which should absolutely encompass them. The saw-dust, by excluding air from the ice, will most effectually preserve it through the summer months. Its virtues have long been known to lumbermen, who have observed that where any quantity of saw-dust has fallen on snow or ice in the woods, the usual spring melting has been long delayed.

**A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR HORSES.**—Some enterprising men of Calgary have devised a new and profitable employment, which if approved by the Imperial Government, may add materially to the prosperity of our North-West. The idea is to make the territory of Alberta a centre for the rearing and training of Army horses. The climate is especially favorable to the business, a fine class of horses has already been raised, and great interest is taken by the people in the breeding of the better varieties of horse-flesh. Army horses could be bred cheaply on the western ranches, and could receive their final training at the proposed School for Army Horses. The C. P. R. affords splendid facilities for distributing the horses as need for them arises, but even with this extra expense for transportation it is estimated that the cost of each horse would be reduced by \$25 if the British Government would but consent to make the experiment.

**THE CARE OF OUR CONVICTS.**—What to do with the convicts has long been an engrossing question to the officials of our Penitentiaries, who better than anyone else can understand the nature of the men and women in their charge. In the report of the Inspector of Penitentiaries for 1892 some well thought-out suggestions are made on the subject. The Inspector asks that light industries shall be more largely introduced, and that the convict may be allowed to participate in all earnings above the cost of his maintenance. He also claims that a higher class of officials, policemen, guards and keepers, shall be employed in the Penitentiaries, and if necessary better salaries given them. He advocates the use of reformatories for offenders between the ages of 16 and 30, and for doubtful cases the adoption of the indeterminate sentence system. The ticket-of-leave plan might, he thinks, work to advantage in many hopeless cases, while for convicts who are serving their third sentence for serious offences, he recommends a life sentence. We consider that his suggestions are extremely rational, and we trust that Sir John Thompson, who has already shown a lively interest in the welfare of the unfortunate class of our citizens, will give them the attention which they assuredly merit.

**A WOMAN ON THE SCHOOL BOARD.**—The ladies of Canada are to be congratulated on having so well qualified a representative of their sex appointed as a school commissioner in Toronto. Mrs. O'Connor, the new official, has the honor of being the first woman school commissioner in Canada. The position is one for which her training, tact, and energy have especially prepared her. Her new duties will make her of great service to the public in a quiet undemonstrative way, while she will be removed from the turmoil of more masculine public life. We trust that the example of Toronto in recognising ladies on the school-board will be widely followed.

**THE BIRD-CAGE HORROR.**—The dreaded hoop skirt is said to be approaching, in fact, it is said to be almost here, and the devotees of fashion who have borne the inconveniences of dress improvers, bell-skirts and over-topping dress sleeves, are now awaiting a final word before they mount the crinoline. In England the matter has been taken very seriously, and a "no crinoline league" was promptly formed by a well-known writer, the author of "Boodle's Baby." Nearly 6000 members were secured in a single week, and the spirit of the organization of the movement had begun to wax strong when the most fashionable dress-making firm of London reported that within the same week they had sent out a large number of crinolined skirts to some of the leaders of British fashion. Mrs. Stannard at once petitioned the Princess of Wales to denounce the movement, but Her Royal Highness has maintained a dignified silence on the subject—it may be that she is already wearing an invisible crinoline, and does not care to discuss so personal and intimate a matter in the public prints. We trust, however, that the appearance of the crinoline on the streets of Halifax will be delayed until the sidewalks are no longer glazed with ice. A tumble in a crinoline is an indecorous feat which is not quickly forgotten by the victim or the bystanders.

**HE THINKS THEY DO NOT TIE THE MARK.**—Major General Herbert, in making his annual report on our Canadian Militia, expresses himself as being far from satisfied with the organization, arms, equipment and efficiency of that popular body of men. He is urgent in his demands for larger appropriations for the service, in order that many details of the work, which he claims have hitherto been neglected, should receive proper attention. In particular, he desires that the commanding officer of each city corps shall have full charge of the clothing of the men. The Major-General is of course the one from whom such suggestions should come, and he is, we presume, a competent authority on such matters; but we protest against the tone of disparagement which has, perhaps unknown to the writer, crept into his report. Our Volunteers are a fine lot of men. They represent the vigorous youth of the Dominion. They are both intelligent and active, and have a patriotic desire to serve their country. We deeply regret that their Commander should have permitted himself to slur at what he styles the "Military impotence" of our country. We should like to hear of any body of volunteer soldiers in any country who, with the same amount of instruction, could make as creditable a showing as did our own forces during the North-West Rebellion.

**THE HALF WAY HOUSE.**—There seems to be no doubt that the present revolution in the Hawaiian Islands is the work of a few interested sugar planters from the United States. These men had built up a magnificent business in sugar cane with the United States, and enjoyed great prosperity until the evil day of the McKinley Bill. Since then matters have gone from bad to worse, and the planters, who easily take the lead among the strange population of 90,000 consumptive natives, half castes, Chinese and Japanese, have petitioned the United States to annex the little island kingdom. The proposition is a serious one and is not wholly satisfactory to the land hungry republic. The royal family of the islands will require a comfortable pension if they abdicate their island throne, the national debt of \$3,000,000 will have to be assumed, and considering that the nearest island is 2,100 miles from the Pacific coast it is extremely doubtful, whether, in case of war, the islands would not be outer weaknesses instead of outer bulwarks. As the navy of the United States is far from efficient, the annexation of the islands will entail a readjustment of the navy, so that protection might be afforded to the new territory. There is however a certain serious question at stake, and many maritime nations will agree to disagree with the United States if the request for annexation is seriously considered. The islands are the ocean half way house, their services are needed by the ships of all nations for the exigencies of the sea farer's life. If by some arrangement the islands can be held as neutral ground, and can be used as a coal and victualing station by all nations, there will be general satisfaction.