

# 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 WORLD'S FAIR.**—Intending visitors to the World's Fair will act with wisdom if they delay their trip until well after the first of May, as the probabilities now are that, although the Fair will be opened on the day agreed upon, the buildings, grounds and exhibits will be in a most unsatisfactory condition. Forty of the main buildings which are to contain exhibits are still unroofed, many buildings have not progressed further than the foundations, while the sites of some are still piled with loose lumber. In fact the complete Fair will not be in order until the latter part of June. Another matter on which tourists should be well informed is the room-renting business. Hundreds of people have already secured board and lodging for their visit, but it is probable that many of them will find that the agreement into which they have entered is not binding to the other contracting party. It is well-known that there are so-called room-renting firms in existence, who are now obtaining money in advance of their customers' arrival, who have not now, and probably will not have a single house or room to let. Travellers should make their room-renting contracts only with firms who are known to be reliable.

**JAPANESE ALDERMEN.**—Japanese municipal aldermen have some novel methods of encouraging "infant industries," although their Occidental friends may not wholly approve of the protection thus afforded by the officials. The city of Tokio recently became aware of the pressing need for cast-iron water pipes. Tenders were called for from well-known French, German, American, Belgian and British manufacturers. A Japanese firm sent in a tender for a portion of the work, but another brilliant Japanese mind conceived the idea that the foundations of a fortune might be made in fulfilling the contract. Accordingly Mr. Totaki tendered for the work, guaranteeing that if the contract were awarded him there would be no extra charges for delivery, as the pipes would be made near that portion of the city in which they were to be used. Mr. Totaki had had no experience in the iron business, he owned neither a foundry or a foot of the required pipe, but he expressed himself as being willing if the council should graciously favor him with their patronage, to transform himself into an iron founder. The services of the *Soshi*, a kind of ruffian gang, were then secured by the intrepid speculator, and forty of the city fathers through threat or other persuasion were pledged to give the contract to their fellow-citizen. Mr. Totaki is now rubbing his hands over his fat contract, and is ready and willing to fight similar commercial battles with the "foreign barbarians."

**A KINDLY THOUGHT.**—One of the *searants* of London, Henry Clarke, Q. C. C., has evidently a very soft place in his heart for the children of the great metropolis. During a recent visit to Germany he was struck with the fact that the Berlin civic authorities had provided cart-loads of sand in an open square for the amusement of delving or castle-building children. The amusement was so generally engaged in by the children, that the kindly old gentleman decided that the little ones of his own city should have sand-beds of their own. Accordingly a pit two feet deep is now being prepared in Victoria park, and if it becomes popular with the toddling generation, numbers of other pits will be made in other quarters of the city. As the beds are surrounded by seats for mothers, sisters or nurses of the urchins, the success of the new plan seems assured.

**THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RAILWAYS.**—An interesting decision has been given in the Montreal courts on the vexed question of the responsibility of railways for accidents. In the present case the railroad company has been held responsible for the value of a horse which was killed by a passing train on the track near St. Hilaire. The evidence in the case showed that the animal had been properly protected in a well-fenced pasture, from which it had strayed in some unaccountable manner, and that the section of the track on which the accident occurred was not provided with cattle-guards. A judgment of \$200 was therefore given in favor of the owner of the animal. The plea of the defendant that a railroad company cannot be held responsible for the safety of any animal straying without a proper guardian upon the highway was not allowed.

**THE DEATH PENALTY MUST GO.**—There is a serious discrepancy in the vote taken on the abolition of capital punishment in the Assembly and Senate of New York State. The feeling in the Assembly is to do away on irrevocably with the death penalty, as the vote of 78 to 28 manifested. In the Senate the vote stood 24 against and 5 in favor of the change. One of the strongest arguments advanced in favor of the abolition of the death penalty, apart from the absolute horror of judicial murder, is that by the present method hundreds of murderers are set at large each year. The jurors will not in the great majority of cases take upon themselves the responsibility of bringing in a verdict which virtually condemns a man to death. The feeling is that prompt trials for all murder charges should be held, and an immediate sentence passed. The atrocities of death in the electric chair has done much for New York State, and it is more than probable that by another year the abolition of the death penalty may be secured.

**A PLEA FOR OVER-WORKED TEACHERS.**—While THE CRITIC has long been an earnest advocate for the teaching of Temperance in the public schools, yet we cannot but think that the many calls on the teachers' time and skill should be considered. Even in the lowest grades of the public schools where a short session prevails, the teacher has already a full dozen of subjects to teach to the babies who fill the room. They are all excellent subjects, though they are not of equal importance. Reading, spelling, writing or printing, and arithmetic are undoubtedly the studies in which the Inspectors demand that most progress shall be made, but the teacher who is bent on bringing her little ones to the proper standard has also to give instruction in color-drawing, singing, mineralogy, botany, the laws of health and in temperance. Is not the demand on the teacher an unreasonable one? Should not the added burden of temperance-teaching be counterbalanced by the removal of other required subjects? Would not the children assimilate more of the instruction if they were not obliged to be crammed in order to come up to the requisite standard?

**A MISSIONARY PROJECT.**—The lack of interest which so many church members have shown in the foreign mission work of their denomination is, in the majority of cases, caused by the vague ideas associated with that branch of the church's work. A Presbyterian dominie has thought out a scheme by which he claims that the interests of the majority of each congregation might be held. His plan is to supply each missionary with a perforated and man-folded diary, in which each day some short account of the work done should be written. The leaves are to be forwarded each month to a home secretary, who will make man-folded typewritten copies for as many churches as are actively interested in the missions. A corresponding secretary from each congregation will write as a swearing letter each month with words of greeting encouragement and questions concerning details of work in which the congregation had shown a particular interest. To young people in particular the diary would be as interesting as a serial story. The needs of the missionary would receive prompt attention, and the seed for the after-consecration of laborers in the mission field would be sown in many hearts.