

# 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 exodus of French Canadians," says a contemporary, "to the United States during the present year is estimated all the way from 60,000 to 125,000." Assuming the population of Quebec to be 1,500,000, the lower of these rates if sustained for 25 years would leave that Province well-nigh destitute of inhabitants.

A curious recent feature in matters scholastic is that of several strikes of school boys in Great Britain for shorter hours, and the abolition of the practice of getting up lessons at home. Of course it is here and there made fun of, and here and there set down to the self-assertiveness of the rising generation. Nevertheless there is probably something in it. It is perhaps desirable that the learning of lessons should be superintended as well as the hearing of them. We have often expressed the opinion that there is too much cramming, and too heavy a stress on young brains in the carrying out of the usual scholastic courses in this country, and there is evidence that it is the same in Great Britain. In Canadian public schools the absurd complication which goes by the name of English Grammar is itself enough to bewilder young heads, with the result that the greater number of pupils neither speak nor write correctly or in good style.

The longest telephone circuit on the continent of Europe has been recently opened. The line is from Vienna in Austria to Leipzig, and every word could be perfectly understood and the voice recognized without difficulty. The distance between the two cities by rail is something less than 300 miles, but the telephone wires, instead of being carried along the routes of the railways, where the noise of passing trains was found to interfere materially with the working of the long distance instruments, are strung along the highways, where the results are found to be much better, and the actual distance on these routes is nearly 350 miles. A strange fact has been noticed in connection with this route. While the speaker at Vienna is heard with clearness and accuracy at Leipzig, and at all points along the route, as at Prague and Dresden, a speaker at either of these points is heard with much more difficulty at Vienna. The electricians of the company are as yet unable to furnish a satisfactory explanation of this phenomenon. Why sounds travelling from east to west should be clear and distinct, while those travelling in the other direction are more or less blurred, remains a puzzle.

A country subscriber in sending in his subscription pays THE CRITIC the following compliment:—"I enjoy your paper—the breadth and variety of the information it brings, its concise, perspicuous and pungent editorials, and its general make-up." The gentleman from whose letter we quote has taken THE CRITIC for four years past.

A peculiar interest always attaches to the works of famous authors left unfinished at their death. A notable instance is Dickens' "Mystery of Edwin Drood," but one involving far stronger regret was Thackeray's "Dennis Duval," which promised remarkable historical points. Even as far as it went it gave the most vivid—and probably correct—account extant of the extraordinary action of Paul Jones' squadron with the Serapis and her defaulting consorts. Wilkie Collins, like Dickens and Thackeray, has left an unfinished story called "Blind Love," and seventeen out of twenty-four parts have been published in the *Illustrated London News*. There will not, however, be, as in the case cited, a field for conjectures as to how the author intended to finish, for Wilkie Collins has left behind him an elaborate synopsis of the plot of "Blind Love," and the facile pen of Walter Besant is to be the instrument of carrying it out.

"The man who fills his apple barrels with No. 1 at the top and No. 3 at the bottom, and sells them for No. 1, has just as good a right to a place in the penitentiary as the man who signs his notes with another man's name instead of his own."—*Exchange*.

"If such men were to be so treated we are afraid there would be a general depopulation of the apple-growing districts of Nova Scotia and an extension needed on the Dorchester Penitentiary."—*Moncton Times*.

"The above," says the *Kentville New Star*, "is a sample of the paragraphs which we frequently encounter in New Brunswick and other exchanges, and it is simply maddening that the honest men of Nova Scotia have to suffer from the odium brought upon the whole country by the tribe of swindling apple packers, rotten assignors and absconding debtors which seems to have cropped up in this country the past few years." It is indeed lamentable that the reputation of one of the best industries of our Province should suffer from the dishonesty of a few unscrupulous packers. We say "a few," for we cannot believe the fraud to be wide-spread. A little rottenness, however, soon pervades a mass, and even in the matter of reputation does incalculable mischief to the innocent and the honest. The suggestion of a stringent system of fruit inspection to counteract the evil would seem to be well worthy of serious consideration.

The eager identification of themselves on the part of many Canadian journals with the political parties they affect in Great Britain has always seemed to us forced and obtrusive. The politics of the old country are not our politics, the lines do not coalesce, and the impressions of the first English Statesmen on cis-atlantic affairs are often atmospherized—to coin a word—by the distance that proverbially lends a misty enchantment. Thus Mr. Gladstone draws the attention of English workingman to what he describes as "the love and enjoyment of freedom in the United States." It has been succinctly pointed out that this vaunted freedom is more noticeable in Fourth of July orations than in actual fact. "One important ingredient of freedom," it has been remarked, "as it is understood and valued by the people of the British Empire, is the freedom to make their own laws, to administer their own affairs, to regulate their own expenditure, to frame, maintain or alter their own policy, by means of Ministers responsible to them through their chosen representatives. As soon as these Ministers are no longer in accord with the will of the people as expressed by their representatives, another Cabinet which is in sympathy with popular opinion is called to power according to the constitution and practice of the United Kingdom and other self-governing members of the British Empire. The will of the people is the very basis of our system of government. It is very different with the Cabinet at Washington. Its members are not responsible Ministers, but mere dignified head clerks of departments, owing their accession to office and their maintenance to the simple pleasure of the President, upon whom they are dependent. And the President, who has more personal power than a governor, or even than the sovereign under our system, need not even be the choice of a majority of the people, as is indeed the case now with President Harrison, who secured only a minority of the popular vote of the United States. The majority of their people have no means of enforcing their views on questions of the day upon the managers of their public affairs. As to freedom of opinion, freedom of speech and freedom of action, there is certainly far less of either among our neighbors than there is in Canada. As to the condition of their working classes under the heavy hand of monopolists, there have been recent graphic accounts from the pen of a workingman of the situation of his fellows in Pennsylvania and other states." We shall resume this subject next week.