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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.

Egypt has for so long been considered one of the unprogressive countries of the Old World that the official statement lately made concerning its affairs is arousing both interest and wonder. Arabi's revolt, which five years ago led to the establishment of British rule in Egypt, has been an unforeseen blessing to the country. Since then even-handed justice has been administered in the law courts—perhaps for the first time in history. An efficient army has been organized. Financial matters have been so satisfactorily attended to that the Government has been able to reduce the salt tax, which bore so heavily on the *Fellahs*, and also to lessen the general taxation, yet last year's balance sheet shows a surplus of a million pounds sterling in the treasury. The Sphinx, that silent witness of past ages, can recall on such prosperity in the valley of the Nile.

The poachers, Charles Rayner and Frederick Engleton, who were condemned to death for killing two game-keepers on an estate, were hanged at Oxford on the 17th inst. This execution is condemned as a judicial murder, for the reason that the game laws are unpopular, and the men were not considered by the populace to have committed murder in the strict sense of the term. A largely signed petition that the men be reprieved was presented to Home Secretary Matthews, but it was not considered and the unfortunate men were made to suffer the utmost penalty for their misdeed. So great is the feeling against the hanging that it is said the affair will result in the loss of thirty of the rural seats to the Government in the coming general election. The prospects of the Government have been steadily declining for some time, and the unwise action of Mr. Matthews has apparently given them a plunge down-hill from which they will not easily rise.

The subject of Maritime Union, to which our readers are aware THE CRITIC has always been favorable, came up in the Legislature of New Brunswick on the 16th inst. Mr. Burchill moved and Mr. McKeown seconded a motion stating that in the opinion of the House a Legislative Union of the Provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island is desirable and would be in the public interest, which resolution passed without division. On the ground of economy alone this union is required, and we doubt not the affiliated Provinces would command greater prestige, not only at Ottawa, but everywhere. Our interests are nearly identical, and with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia at least, no serious

obstacles should be raised against the union. P. E. Island, being so much smaller, would not likely appreciate merging herself in the larger Provinces, but if the other two joined hands, the Gem of the Gulf would most likely follow. But saying the thing is desirable is much easier than preparing terms of union that will suit all parties, and this is not likely to be speedily accomplished. At any rate New Brunswick deserves credit for being the first to take a decisive step in the matter, and we only hope that the procession headed by that Province may be joined speedily by the others.

We cannot wonder at the labor depression in Germany when we consider the impoverishment of the people by the overgrown system of militarism in vogue there. There is besides the terrible burden of supporting the army, the expenses connected with a large number of royal and ducal families, which amounts to something like \$15,000,000 yearly. German princes and princings are generally supposed to be poor, and for royalty we suppose they are, but it is a poverty that few people in this country would complain of. Really royalty owes it to the people from whom it draws its subsistence not to be so numerous. It comes very hard on the truly loyal and hard-working subject, and in the end, like the proverbial worm, the latter will turn. One of the disgusting features of royalty is that marriages with good honest nobility or gentry is not recognized, and the result is that unions between cousins and cousins—German—are all the time being consummated, the hereditary taints of blood common to them are being perpetuated and increased, and grave constitutional ailments affect nearly all the members of the German royal families. Even limited monarchy is a pretty heavy burden, and the system appears to want boiling down or weeding out, so that the people can prosper. There is no reason why nine per cent. of the royal personages of to-day should not work for their livings, and if they are really so far superior to common ordinary clay, as they suppose, they would find no difficulty in getting to the top of the ladder both financially and meritoriously.

One of the notable signs of the times is the growth during the last few years of the insurance idea, which seems to be in accordance with the general fitness of things. So far as fairly well-off people are concerned there is no doubt of the benefit secured by insurance, but when it comes to providing, or attempting to provide, for the old age of working men, many difficulties arise. The subject of National Insurance, recently introduced by Mr. Chamberlain, is being widely discussed in England. Briefly and broadly stated Mr. Chamberlain's scheme is as follows:—He proposes that a man who pays £5, or say \$25, to the State at the age of 25 years, and £1, or \$5, annually for forty years thereafter, shall receive at the age of 65 years, and as the result of a bonus nearly half as large again added to his savings, a pension of five shillings, or about \$1.20, a week for the remainder of his life. Provisions for premature decease are also formulated so that the widow and children would get the benefit of the savings. This is a socialistic scheme, but Mr. Charles Booth's proposal that the State should provide a pension of five shillings a week for every person who attains the age of 65 years without distinction of rank or means, is more so, and very shocking to a treasury-minded chancellor. The case of the spend-thrift and the destitute and I would not be met by Mr. Chamberlain's plan, and the drunkard would continue to leave his savings in the grog shop. We cannot but feel that the State has a duty to perform to the aged and industrious poor, and that that duty should be discharged in a better way than opening the doors of the workhouse to those who are incapable of further self-support. The principle is well advocated by Mr. Ruskin in these words: "A laborer serves his country with his spade just as a man in the middle ranks of life serves it with sword, pen or lancet. If the service be less, and, therefore, the wages during health less, then the reward when health is broken may be less, but not less honorable; and it ought to be quite as natural and straightforward a matter for a laborer to take his pension from his parish, because he has deserved well of his parish, as for a man in high rank to take his pension from his country, because he has deserved well of his country." Whether Mr. Chamberlain's proposals offer a complete solution to the problem or not, they should be treated with respect, in the hope that ultimately some fit conclusion may be reached. The fact that earnest and careful attention is being given to the condition of the poor in England, where the rich are so very rich and the poor so very poor, is gratifying. The fear that absolutely free pensions may be the outcome of efforts in this direction need not be very great, for the people would not submit to it. With any scheme of this kind a large measure of State control would have to be exercised over the beneficiaries, and it would be found no easy task to regulate the masses. If State-aided pensions are not to be successful, the rich should take a turn at the problem of poverty, and try and assist the laboring class to work out its own salvation.