

# 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.

We have a letter from an esteemed subscriber and occasional correspondent at Quebec, whose courteous good wishes for the New Year we acknowledge with thanks and pleasure. Our correspondent, however, assumes that he is excluded from the columns of THE CRITIC, presumably by his own opinion of our "Philistinism," as there can be no other possible reason. This cant term is one of which we have never yet seen a satisfactory definition. Sometimes it seems to us that it might very well stand for common sense. Perhaps we are Philistines, for we, like many more, cannot, very likely, "see ourselves as others see us."

An astonishing charge has been brought by the German press against Sir R. D. Morier, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, that, when charge-d'affaires at Darmstadt, in 1870, Marshal Bazaine was apprised of the movements of German troops, through despatches sent by him to London. The assertion is emphatically denied by Sir R. Morier, who is supported by an equally clear contradiction obtained from the late Marshal last August, but Count Herbert Bismarck, being appealed to by Sir Robert, declines to interfere, and treats the matter with the insolence in which Germany seems anxious to vie with the United States. The German Government is thought to be jealous of Sir Robert's influence at St. Petersburg.

It is very easy for the State of New York to make a law directing that executions shall, from a certain date, be carried out by means of electricity, but the actual carrying out may be by no means so easy. Not only must certain prisons be supplied with efficient machinery, which must be kept in order, though perhaps not used for years, but a wide variation in susceptibility to the electric current may be expected in different individuals of different temperaments, and under different circumstances, and, as usual, experiments on animals fail to give reliable results. In fact the difficulties seem likely to be much greater than anticipated, and a writer in the *Scientific American* recommends suffocation by coal gas as far preferable. This has been tried on dogs with perfect success, the writer says he has himself been several times rendered insensible by inhaling gas, and testifies to the efficacy of the anesthesia produced. "Under its influence," this writer states, "a perfectly quiet lapse into unconsciousness ensues, the last memory of events being clear and unclouded." As it is, a law of a peculiar nature has been passed, and no expert provision has been made to carry it out.

We gather from the *Militia Gazette* that the reforms of the new Drill Book are far from thorough. A British military consensus seems unable to move at once clear of old groves, or to get rid of one fad without adopting another.

We have received, from a special department of the "Women's Temperance Union," a circular appeal on behalf of purity in the Public Press. Details of "murders, elopements, divorces, and acts of youthful depravity," are justly deprecated, but it strikes us that if the ladies of the Union were readers of, or subscribers to, THE CRITIC, they would be aware that this journal is quite out of the pale of any necessity of appeal, from the most fastidious, on the score of purity.

Last Saturday evening a gentleman, evidently a stranger, dropped by mistake a quarter dollar into the receiving box of a street car. The driver, though it was plainly visible, refused to return him the change. No doubt the driver was acting according to his orders, but it was a case in which a bad impression was evidently made on a stranger, who, not unnaturally, muttered something about "a one-horse place." The street-car service is, on the whole, very good, and there is little cause to grumble at the regulations the company thinks it necessary to impose, but it struck us that this was a case in which a gentleman might well have been saved a journey out to Richmond on Monday morning, if he took the trouble to go, as he expressed his intention of doing.

Owing to accidental circumstances, Mr. Archibald Lampman's Book of Poems, was not opened for several days after its arrival. We have not therefore been able to give it the attention it deserves, but from the rapid glance we have at present been able to afford it, we think Mr. Lampman quite deserves the appreciative criticism which appeared in the *Chronicle* some days ago, from the pen of a gentleman eminently capable of authoritative judgment. We trust Mr. Lampman's volume will meet the success it so well merits, for he is undoubtedly one of Canada's true poets. "The Monk" has a savor of Keats about it, and like Roberts, Carman, and others, Mr. Lampman is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of nature as she reveals herself to the observant Canadian.

Considering that Central America not only is not U. S. territory, but is separated therefrom by the Republic of Mexico, the following resolution passed by the U. S. Senate is, on the whole, a tolerably cool piece of assumption. United States politicians are so inflated with conceit and brag just now that they do not seem to know whether they are standing on their heads or their heels. "Resolved, by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the government of the United States will look with serious concern and disapproval upon any connection of any European government with the construction or control of any ship canal across the Isthmus of Darien, or across Central America, and must regard any such connection or control as injurious to the just rights and interests of the United States. Resolved, that the President be, and he is hereby requested, to communicate this expression of the views of the government of the United States to the governments of the countries of Europe."

The Local Legislature at its last session passed an important act, which was duly approved on the 10th April, 1888. It is entitled, "An Act in relation to the Public Health." It went into effect the beginning of the current year, and provides for local boards of health in every county, town and other municipality in the province. These boards are to be chosen annually, and have full powers to act on the appearance of infectious, or otherwise dangerous, diseases and epidemics. They are also required to cause the frequent and effectual cleansing of streets, yards and outhouses, the removal of nuisances, the cleansing, purifying, ventilating and disinfecting of houses, churches, buildings and places of assembly, railway stations, steamboats, railway carriages and cars, and other public conveyances, to provide for the safe and speedy interment of those dying of infectious disease, supplying medical aid, accommodation and medicine in cases of necessity, and generally to look after the proper sanitation of their respective districts. In country towns and municipalities, such boards are to consist of the mayor or warden as chairman, the town or county clerk and five other citizens. In Halifax, of the mayor as chairman, and at least twelve other citizens. They are to meet at least once a month for the transaction of business. Every possible contingency in connection with the public is provided for. The City Council met on Tuesday last to carry the act into effect, and elected themselves. The act imposes penalties for refusal or neglect to serve, and also for non-attendance at any meeting duly called, but does not provide remuneration for the boards.