

# 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.

A good deal of fuss has been made recently by the London *News* and other papers over the stream of objectionable immigration allowed to pour into and out of England without let or hindrance. The official figures with regard to the influx shows that last year 38,142 immigrants entered London, and for the most part remained there, adding to the worst part of the population of the East End. They live in filth and crime, and the prospects of having a yearly addition of 40,000 such foreigners, impossible of Anglicisation, is disturbing to many minds. The *News* predicts an explosion against it, and citizens of London, by their apathy, are earning the anathemas of posterity.

Certain comic papers have been dropped from the list of the Boston Public Library for the reason that they "speak evil of dignitaries and are read by immature persons." This seems a ridiculous excuse for dispensing with the papers in question, for humor is not to be despised in these days when men are said to be forgetting how to laugh. The trouble really lies in the fact that humor, as exemplified in American comic papers, too often takes the form of vulgarity, which is neither amusing nor edifying to refined minds. If true humor, unmingled with the grosser elements spoken of, were characteristic of the papers in question, we doubt not the authorities in charge of the Boston Library would continue to give the public an opportunity to read them.

It is not likely that many people in Nova Scotia care particularly whether Mr. Blaine is in the race for the presidency or not, but the fact that he has positively refused to run is a great disappointment to the Republican party in the United States, and great are the lamentations thereover. Mr. Blaine's letter leaves Mr. Harrison in possession of the field, for no doubt he will be the choice of the party. It is stated that Mr. Blaine's refusal to allow himself to be nominated was in a large measure due to Mrs. Blaine's influence, on account of the scurrilous personalities made use of in electoral campaigning in the States, as well as to his own uncertain health. Small wonder is it that a woman should shrink from the mire of the presidential canvas, and it is to Mr. Secretary Blaine's credit if he withdrew on this account. The statement that although women have no votes they influence votes, is constantly being proved, and we often find as well that they influence statesmen too.

A meeting is to be held in the Y. M. C. A. class room at four o'clock this afternoon to push on the project of establishing a home in this city for aged men. We have before referred to the necessity for such an institution, and since the offer of a thousand dollars each towards the scheme has been made by two citizens, the time seems opportune for putting the matter on a sure footing. Let our rich men and women bethink themselves, and contribute generously towards this good object.

In a recent issue we spoke of the efforts of the Burial Reform Society to prevent undue exposure to the cold at funerals, as well as the proposed shortening of graveside services. It is rather a melancholy subject to write on, but an incident which occurred at a funeral in London this winter is not without its humorous aspect. An old gentleman, who had ideas of his own as to the value of his life, kept his hat on while service was being conducted at the grave of a friend. Another attendant at the funeral, who could not have had the most exalted ideas of respect for either the dead or the living, disapproved of this disregard of formalities, and thereupon knocked off the aforesaid hat, which on being replaced suffered again the same fate from the stickler for ceremony. The inoffensive old gentleman felt so aggrieved that he applied to a magistrate for a summons against the assaulting party, and it is to be hoped he obtained satisfaction for his discomfiture. Knocking off hats out of respect for the dead is a development of the custom of baring the head, which will probably help out the arguments of the Burial Reform Society more than anything else that happens.

The destruction by fire of the Royal Hotel in New York, and the terrible loss of life involved, has started another crusade in search of efficient fire protection in the construction of buildings and the supply of escapes. One great trouble in large buildings is that temporary inmates cannot possibly become familiar with the plan, situation of stairways, corridors, etc., and even if there is time to escape they do not know their way out. The root of the matter should first be attended to by building inspectors, who ought to be responsible to a certain extent for the building of fire-traps. Elevator shafts too often prove to be channels through which flames may spread to all parts of buildings, and some change is necessary in their construction. Then again staircases should be so placed that one could find the way directly to the ground floor and not be stranded half way down in a corridor, as is often the case. A plan of an hotel should be hung in every room in it, this would simplify matters somewhat, but the prime thing is to have efficient fire escapes which inmates can easily find and use. It is appalling to think of the sacrifice of life consequent upon the neglect of ordinary protective measures, and someone should be held responsible. When a captain loses his ship from any cause an enquiry is usually held, and the fault is found to lie either in someone's carelessness or in what cannot always be avoided, the fury of the elements. In the case of an hotel fire there is no excuse of the latter kind, and direct responsibility lies on someone. Architects should particularly take warning from the recent holocaust, and hotel proprietors should make ceaseless vigilance an integral feature of their management.

What a pity it is that when a writer, such as Mrs. Lynn Linton, undertakes to go gunning after the "wild women," as she characterized them some time ago, she does not restrict her shots to objects which the onlooker can see are worthy of her aim. In these days of emancipation there is no doubt a large admixture of objectionable features in the freedom enjoyed by the fair sex, but as time advances things will settle themselves into shape, and the really beneficial will be preserved from out the mass of somewhat mixed good now free to the feminine part of creation. In the *Illustrated News* of February 20th Mrs. Linton compares the two pictures "In Custody" and "Emancipation," and draws conclusions very much in favor of fair Mistress Dorothy under the charge of her lynx-eyed mother in 1792, while Miss Dolly on the tricycle in 1892 comes in for very harsh comments. We fully acknowledge Mistress Dorothy's sweetness, but we think it hard lines that the charming girl on the tricycle should be held up to scorn. The artist must have had a decided leaning in favor of the latter, for he has made her fully as attractive as the girl of a century ago, who sits so demurely by the side of her mother. It cannot fail to be apparent to all that the change to the present state of affairs is a good one, and that the progress of the times demands the active co-operation of women in all grades of life. If Mrs. Linton sees much that is undesirable in the modern life of women, so we may say do we all, but it is nought but a pity to use one's pen to hinder progress which makes life better worth living far more than half the human family. The girl who goes to extremes is foolish, but not, we think, frequent, and the majority of sensible maidens who thankfully avail themselves of privileges heretofore denied them, should not suffer for the sake of the unwise. It is not fair for a writer to make capital against a cause by citing extreme cases when the mass of evidence is favorable to it.