

# 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.

There is no doubt that the United States have emerged from the Samoan Conference with flying colors, and that Germany has had to content herself with the prospect of much less predominance on the islands than she claimed. But the treaty guarantees an autonomous administration under the point control of Germany and the United States, Great Britain acting as arbitrator in any difference which may arise, and it is now feared in some quarters that the unreasoning prejudice against England of the senatorial tail-twisters and fire eaters may lead to the rejection of the treaty by that powerful and decidedly mischievous body.

We had the pleasure of attending, last Friday evening, the exposition of M. Ingres and Herr Bober, at the Orpheus Hall, of the system of instruction in French and German of the Berlitz School. We have not the space to go into the details of this admirable method, and it must suffice to say that it must be a very stupid person who would not, in the twenty lessons which constitute a course, carry away an extended colloquial knowledge of either language. The school is now opened in room No. 15 of the Queen Building, Hollis Street. The course of twenty lessons will be cheap at \$10 to all desirous of availing themselves of it. The lessons will be twice a week, and we wish these gentlemen every success.

In answer to a request to prominent men in the United States and Canada for an opinion on the Irish situation, the following was elicited from Cardinal Gibbons:—"As far as my opportunities enable me to judge, it is the general sentiment of our thoughtful American people that the treatment of political prisoners in Ireland has been harsh and severe, and in that view I am compelled to concur. But I hope this subject is but a passing episode to be soon forgotten, or at least condoned, in view of the blessings of Home Rule and the privileges of autonomy in domestic affairs which are within your grasp. I trust that the friendly relations between England and Ireland will increase every day, and the long, unnatural and disastrous conflict will give place to an honorable emulation in the field of commerce and industry, such as happily exists among the States of our Federal Union." If all Home Rulers were actuated by similar straightforward, and at the same time moderate, sentiments, instead of the dictates of unreasoning violence, they would add immensely to the moral force of the agitation, and to the number and respectability of their sympathisers.

No nation which, unhappily, under the influence of old-time ideas, became saddled with the curse of slavery has more promptly or more successfully abolished it than Brazil. So satisfied do the Brazilian people seem with their happy achievement that they have added to their holidays one in honor of the anniversary of its accomplishment, which is celebrated with rejoicing as hearty as on that of the nation's declaration of independence. There is scarcely anything more dramatic in the annals of legislation on great subjects than the action taken last year in completing the emancipation, and probably no legislative enactment ever took so terse a form as that passed by the Brazilian Assembly in the premises, and promptly signed by the resolute Princess, then acting as Regent for her father Dom Pedro. It reads simply thus:—"Art. 1—From the date of this law slavery in Brazil is declared extinct. Art. 2—The dispositions to the contrary are revoked." Would that other legislatures would take pattern by such exemplary conciseness.

We regret to learn (if the Antigonish *Casket* is correct) that the anti-Jesuit agitation has been started in Pictou County. It is laudably characteristic of Halifax, and, as we believe, of Nova Scotia generally, that the members of the different denominations live together side by side in amity and in the exercise of good works. "Unfortunately" says the *Casket*, "there are men in Canada, as there are in all countries, who believe in agitation for its own sake. We find among them the men who roar against the Jesuits in Ontario, the ultra-national fanatics of Quebec, and a few here and there who pose as third-party prohibitionists. They cannot content themselves with acting as ordinary citizens. If they did they would lose the notoriety and self-aggrandisement which constitute the sole aim of their activity." We are above all things Protestant, but we recognize the truth of the *Casket's* remarks, and consider that nothing can be in worse taste and judgment than any attempt to raise issues of race and religion in the hitherto tolerant atmosphere of Nova Scotia. The agitation is one fraught with mischief, and Ontario has much to answer for in having raised it and persisted in it.

In an article on the completion of the twenty-second year of the national life of Canada, the (Albert) *Maple Leaf*, after justly describing the career of Canada since Confederation as "brilliant," and alluding to the failure of the many evil prophecies of those who strenuously opposed the Union, continues as follows:—"The great success which has resulted from the union of the different British provinces on the North American Continent should serve as a lesson for the public men of the Maritime Provinces. What we who live down by the sea want is maritime union. When New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are united politically, having a capital centrally situated, and a representation reduced to one half its present proportions, we shall be in a position to take our proper place in the Union. Maritime union is only a question of time, but the earlier it is brought about the better it will be for all concerned. There is a grand opportunity here for politicians who may wish to obtain a niche in the temple of fame to acquire the desired object by agitating and bringing to a successful issue so desirable a result." About eighteen months ago we advocated Maritime union in THE CRITIC. The subject does not at present seem to have attracted public attention or discussion, but we are glad to give further prominence to the views of our contemporary in which we entirely agree.

Amongst the other hygienic fads and fanaticisms daily dinned into our ears, we are inclined to think that a great deal of nonsense is being written about cigarettes. We do not care about cigarettes ourselves, and very rarely smoke one, so we are quite unprejudiced. We should imagine, unless smoked to great excess, that they are too light smoking to be nearly so hurtful as some of the doctors are said to pronounce them. Excess will no doubt tell in cigarettes as in every other form of indulgence. But the insistency of the hygienic alarmists seems to have captured the impressible American mind as found in Michigan (do they not call themselves Michigananders?) and, with their usual precipitancy, they incontinently rush into legislation, and the House of Representatives passes in red-hot haste an act prohibiting "the manufacture, sale, keeping for sale or giving away of any cigarettes or imitations thereof." It is not easy to imagine exactly what an "imitation" of a cigarette might be. It seems to us that the original is of so mild a potency that an "imitation" must be absolutely innocuous. Our experience, however, is we confess limited, and we do not desire to question too closely the wisdom of the American Solons whose range of legislative capability ranges from the stern decrees of tail-twisting and foreign labor, to the prohibition of tall hats in California, and the festive cigarette in Michigan.