

shifting glow of antarctic lights, which only disappeared during the three or four hours of day time, when the sun shone dimly from low in the north. On the bleak hills near Hammerfest, Norway, where so many tourists go to see the Midnight Sun, a spectacle hardly less interesting may be observed during December, January and February, while the Night Queen for several days before and after full, steadily illuminates the sunless regions, and shining through the frost-purified atmosphere, clothes the snow-covered forests, the storm-beaten crags, and the mountains, arrayed in absolute whiteness, with a grandeur that nearly makes one forget the absence of daylight.

If the heroic attempts of modern navigators to reach the North Pole over each a triumphant conclusion, the fortunate company will be privileged to study the mysterious phenomena of six months of day and six months of night. An important portion of these relate to the moon. For the one hundred and eighty-two and a half days in one, only above the horizon during its lesser half, and, consequently, well nigh invisible all the time; and then, when the darkness begins that lasts from September to March, while the fair globe grows from first quarter to full, and then shrinks back to last quarter, over fourteen days in every month, its never-setting rays fall upon scenes, which, for aught we know, are more wonderful than any yet visited by human explorers.

While the latitude of Nova Scotia does not allow anything like this extreme exhibition of lunar radiance, our winter nights are long enough to afford about fifteen hours of darkness, which when Diana presents her full circle, in a climate just cold enough to make outdoor exercise most agreeable, surely gives every opportunity a reasonable being could ask for healthy nocturnal recreation.

During the present month another peculiarity of the moon's orbit produces a situation, which never fails to attract the attention of millions aside from those understanding its cause.

The planet is in such a direction near its fall that a combination between its own and the terrestrial motions make it appear to advance very slowly; consequently, for several days rising but little later each night.

This annual display by our attendant world is designated as the Harvest Moon; and long ago in the mother countries beyond the Atlantic, as the season of ingathering was made an occasion of general festivity and rejoicing. The gay rides and parties, lasting from early evening until September's big round moon hung low in the north-west, faint and gray before advancing morning, remain among the brightest accounts of bygone pleasure. And even in the present severely practical age, on our quiet peninsula, many of our busy people will find time for highly enjoyable excursions during these hours of lesser day across Acadia's lovely landscapes, and over the glittering waters interspersing her hills and valleys, and almost forming her entire boundary.

NORTH STAR.

[FOR THE CRITIC]

### ARCHITECTURE.

A number of wooden buildings throughout the city, and more especially in the northern portion of it, have undergone alterations during the summer. Quite a change is noticeable in the architecture of Gottingen and North Park Streets. In some cases it has been improved by the alterations, while in other cases the changes are not at all creditable to those who have had to do with them. For instance, the double-dwelling on the corner of North Park and Cogswell Streets, a story and a half house with pitch and crown roof, having a cosy appearance and of fair architectural outline, has been changed to two-storey and flat roof and an addition built to the Cogswell Street front. In remodeling this structure not the slightest regard has been had to anything like architecture. Whatever features it did possess in that respect, have been wiped out in making the alterations, and the building now is one of the most ordinary looking in form and finish that can be found in any part of the city. This is to be regretted, as the house is conspicuously situated, facing a portion of the Common where large crowds of people frequently gather. In erecting new buildings or remodeling old ones, our citizens would do well to try and improve the architecture of the town particularly as by the employment of proper skill this may be done without any additional cost.

CITIZEN.

### SHOULD THERE BE ONE SCHOOL TERM OR TWO?

To the Editor of the Critic:—

SIR,—I notice in the columns of last week's CRITIC, some pertinent remarks on the division of the school year as at present existing. This question interests at least three-fourths of the people of this Province,—parents, inspectors, and other officials,—in fact every person taking an interest in the regulating and furthering of the Education System in the Province. Let us then, throwing aside prejudices, step down and discuss the question upon its merits.

I believe that the present division of the natural school year into two terms is damaging to the true interests of education. I believe this on the principle that frequent changes in any department of public trust leads to anarchy and confusion. Why do we not elect our members to the Dominion and Local Legislatures every six months if the system is a good one? Why do not governments give the various offices in their gift (the Civil Service for instance) to men for only six months if good results from doing so? I may further say that if the school terms were longer than a year no evil results would follow. However, this view may be looked upon as impracticable just now; but having the school year one term is not impracticable—it is a living, practical issue.

Among other reasons for preferring one long term, I may mention the following: (a) It saves the superintendent, inspectors and trustees, the anxiety and trouble of making twice a year a number of unnecessary reports and statistics involving an endless amount of figuring and information; (b) Annual reports and statistics would be more complete and reliable; (c) Inspectors and others prefer one long term; (d) Pupils are benefited by it—since we know it takes a teacher nearly half the present term to regulate and conform a school to his wishes; (e) Reason, uniformity, and nature demand it; (f) It strengthens the profession—for a professional teacher does not want to be subject to a system, which, for the slightest provocation, he is liable to have a usurper every six months.

No doubt those in authority will feel somewhat timid in making a change, as is natural enough; but when they reflect that a great majority of the people of the Province is in sympathy with the move, hesitancy then betrays weakness and ineptitude.

As THE CRITIC has generously invited both parties to come forward and urge their claims in its columns, we feel sure that a fair, honest, and manly discussion, will ultimately result in requiring for the Province the great boon of one long school term.

Halifax.

J. J.

To the Editor of the Critic:—

SIR,—You invite discussion on the question of substituting one long term for the present division of the school year. I do not think there can be any real discussion. At least I do not see what arguments can be produced against the reform you so forcibly advocate. But agitation is necessary. The two term division is in possession, and let no one suppose that it can be dislodged without repeated insistence on the need of reform. There is need, as you have shown, a crying need, and I hope you will continue your advocacy.

Antigonish.

REFORM.

To the Editor of the Critic:—

SIR,—You deserve the thanks of all interested in the progress of education in Nova Scotia, for your manly and straightforward expression of opinion as to the utility—I might say, *evil*—of having two school terms in the year. It must not, however, be assumed that because the change from two terms to one has not been heretofore discussed in the press, the question is only beginning to excite attention. For years many of our hard-worked inspectors have been desirous of having the two short terms superseded by one long one. Yes, and these men who have spent years in familiarizing themselves with the needs or weaknesses of our schools, are now *unanimous* in favoring the proposed change. At some of our District Associations (of teachers) it has been discussed, and the teachers of some western County—I forget which one—as well as those of Guysboro and Antigonish Counties, long ago passed resolutions affirming their opinion that one long term instead of two short ones, would enable teachers to do more work, and would help to diminish their migration.

As you have observed, Mr. Editor, the present system ought to be condemned even if it were not responsible for anything else than the itinerancy of teachers. At present a teacher closes his school one day, and has to travel many miles to his new situation on the next—the first day of a new term. Teachers are supposed to begin work the first day of each term, but they don't pretend to do it. Schools are frequently closed for a week, or for longer, at that time.

The summer term is now so broken by holidays and by withdrawals from school, that many teachers feel, when they re-open their classes after the long vacation, as if they were beginning a new year. And why should not the year begin then for our common schools as well as for the Provincial Normal School, and all our colleges?

Teachers and pupils alike would go thro' more work and do it better if we had a school-year beginning about the last of August and ending the first of July, with a very short vacation at Christmas. We hope the Superintendent of Education will at an early day take steps to have one long school term substituted for two short ones. As you have ably shown, Mr. Editor, the country is ripe for the change.

A COUNTRY TEACHER.

Guysboro, 28th Sept., 1885.

### REDUCING WORKING HOURS.

By LOUIS F. POST.

It is a curious fact that the vulgar notion that short hours for labor must decrease wages, prevails among men who are, ex-officio at least, statesmen; and is often assented to by people who profess sufficient knowledge of political economy to teach it. At one time, and not very long ago, it swayed the masses of hired workmen and prejudiced them against short hour movements; but workmen have learned by experience that short hours for work instead of decreasing wages increases them, a truth which very many others have yet to learn.

At first blush it seems contradictory to say that workmen got higher wages for short hours than for long hours, and the thoughtless may be readily deceived by the warning that they must not expect to get ten hours' wages for eight hours' work. Even mayors of cities and governors of States cannot be greatly blamed if they fail to grasp the paradox involved in the doctrine that short hours and high wages, long hours and low wages, go together; for they are usually too much concerned about vast commercial or landed interests to give more than casual attention to labor questions from the standpoint of the laborer.