

# 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.

Dr. Nansen will shortly start on his expedition to the North Pole. He is confident that the long coveted goal will be within his reach, and we sincerely hope that his voyage may be a prosperous one. Dr. Nansen will attempt the long-talked-of feat of ballooning from his vessel. His idea is that though the ship itself may be unable to penetrate the Arctic seas, yet by taking balloon observations advance parties may be safely sent over the ice.

The death of George William Artes is deeply regretted by all classes of American politicians. He has done more to purify the political arena than any single man before him. As the editor of Harper's Weekly and of Harper's Monthly he has had a steady influence for good. He was a highly cultivated, thoroughly patriotic, and wholly fearless writer, and withal he had that quiet touch of humor which without bordering on sarcasm can yet render a popular abuse or superstition entirely ridiculous. His influence will long be felt in American politics.

Although the cholera has been desolating many portions of Asia, it is interesting to note that all the Jewish communities throughout the east have been little visited by the dread disease. History, moreover, shows plainly that during each epidemic of cholera the Jews have suffered far less than any Christian or heathen people. The reason is not far to seek. Few nations have such correct health-laws as the Jews, who have observed them for generations. From an early time in Jewish history a health code has been formulated and adhered to, and there are no more valuable health treatises in existence than those written by Moses in the books of the Old Testament.

The famous "lacs of rupees" of India have always suggested the idea of fabulous wealth, and it is with no little surprise that many people will learn that even in its most palmy days the rupee was worth but 2 shillings, and that it has now decreased in value to 1s. 2½d. The fall in the value of the rupee is due to the fall in the value of silver, the standard metal of India. This great depreciation is felt most keenly by the many English officials in India, who have sent their wives and children to England. The salaries of these officials are still paid by Indian and not British standards, and their remittances to England are terribly lessened owing to the decline in value of the historic coin.

The recent death of Mr. Newton Gisborne, the Superintendent of Government Telegraphs in Canada, has cost us the life of one of our clearest and most enterprising of men. The work of laying the first ocean cable on this side of the world, connecting Prince Edward Island with New Brunswick, was his. He originated the scheme and was most active in carrying it out. His connection with the laying of the Great Atlantic Cable is well known, and there is now little doubt that the able superintendence of Mr. Gisborne and his practical experience in cable-laying had much to do with the success of the ocean cord. Of late years Mr. Gisborne has taken a lively interest in the Canadian electric service, and he has inspired all his co-workers with a keen desire to make the Canadian service second to none in the world.

The interest of the women of the United States in the "Maybrick case," in which Mrs. Maybrick is serving out a life sentence for the murder of her husband, does not show any sign of abatement. In a recent number of *The North American Review*, Gail Hamilton addresses an open letter to Queen Victoria, in which she pleads for the pardon of the unfortunate woman. We regret, however, to note among the more salient reasons for her release, the weak argument that an Englishman "who once made an attempt on vast property and on many lives under the most cruel circumstances" was pardoned by a President of the United States as a "mark of respect and good will" to an Englishman who had sued for his pardon. In this intelligent age we need no such unequal judgments—if the woman is guilty let her serve out her sentence—if she is innocent, then let every proper effort be made to secure her release as an innocent person.

The potato bug, which is still safely domiciled with us in Nova Scotia, seems to have deserted many parts of Upper Canada. In its stead has appeared the cow horn fly, which is found even a less desirable summer visitor. The fly follows the cows and oxen, tormenting them so that they are unable to eat, and in some cases it is said, causing the death of valuable cattle. Many remedies are being tried by the Ontario farmers, but they are either impracticable on account of the expense or they are of no avail. The cows on several farms have been greased with lard as a preventative, and others are sprayed each day with a kerosine emulsion. One man armed himself with a butterfly net, and in less than two minutes he had imprisoned 150 of the troublesome insects. The many farmers have come to the conclusion that they will either employ boys as fly catchers or allow their cattle to pasture only at night, when the fly is not abroad.

The forward movement in education has affected almost all uncivilized countries. In the past ten years especially many educational advances have been made. The schools of New Zealand, for instance, now rank among the best in the world—and yet, only a generation ago, New Zealand was considered a half-barbarous country. Excellent free schools and three progressive universities have been established in India. Athens, once the home of learning, is again equipped with an academy of Pentecon marble, a magnificent university and a modern school system. Many educationists consider that the young people of Sweden receive more thorough training in the Swedish schools, especially in handicrafts, than elsewhere at home or abroad. The schools of the United States are exceedingly generously dealt with by the Government, last year alone \$170,000,000 was expended upon them, and their excellence has become proverbial. Our Canadian schools are steadily improving, and each year a larger number of the more advanced pupils take advantage of the excellent special courses which all our larger colleges or universities afford.

His Lordship the Bishop of Salisbury has introduced into his diocese a form of social enjoyment combined with exercise which has become most popular with the lads of the school in connection with the cathedral. This eminent divine lays aside his clerical dignity and invites a dozen or more boys to accompany him on a walking tour of a few hours or of a couple of days in length. Together the merry party visit every attractive spot in the neighborhood, and combine the studies of zoology, botany, geology and history with one of the most healthy, enjoyable and inexpensive outings. We would suggest that some of our Nova Scotian school teachers should consider the Bishop's plan. The walking excursions would be beneficial to both teacher and taught, a healthy spirit of comradeship would soon be felt, and an intelligent interest in the products of our Province and in its past history would inevitably arise. The months of September, October and November are especially suited to pedestrians, and a more beautiful sight than our ripening orchards, our golden fields of grain and finally the gorgeous crimson hues of autumn, cannot well be found.