

# THE CRITIC:

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is frequently stated that women cannot invent, but it is pretty well exploded by this time. Mrs. Martinot is the name of a lady who has taken out twenty-five patents, five of which have been issued in seven countries. Among other things she has invented a gas stove, an ice cream freezer, a cream washing machine and a clothes dryer—all articles of use to women.

A notable act of official imbecility was that performed by the Cumberland county constable, who arrested Postmaster Oran Thompson of Oxford for breach of the Canada Temperance Act while he was conveying the mails from the train to the post office, and carried both (the mails and the postmaster) off to Amherst, despite the protests of the latter. The next morning Thompson procured bonds and returned to Oxford with the mails, where it is to be presumed an exasperated crowd was waiting for the delayed letters. Legal proceedings against the constable for interfering with the mails are talked of, and it really would be worth while to make an example of such misapplication of his official power.

The school question is a burning issue in Manitoba. That province of late has apparently been drifting surely on to denominationalism, and to unbiassed thinkers that would be a great calamity. In country districts the absurdity of such a system would be more than apparent. Think of a village where there are thirty or forty children of teachable age divided into four or five schools each under the management of different religious bodies! This would be poor economy for a new country, and yet if separate schools are given the Catholics every other denomination is equitably entitled to them. A stiff fight will be made against this tendency, for there are sensible men in Manitoba who have the foresight to see that such a state of affairs would be disastrous to the prospects of the province. Indeed it is thought that a death blow was struck at separate schools on the 13th inst., when Mr. J. D. Cameron, the government candidate in South Winnipeg, the most intelligent constituency in Manitoba, was elected. The government of Manitoba stands pledged to use every means in its power to wipe out separate schools, and this verdict of the people is regarded as an emphatic instruction to go ahead and do so, and the people will stand by it. Purely national schools are undoubtedly the best for making good citizens, and the government of Manitoba is sound on this subject.

Making war on women can never be considered anything but disgraceful, and when a sorrowful widow is made the object of attack every chivalrous

man naturally turns to her defence. A short time ago an article appeared in the *Regina Leader*, Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin's paper, charging Mr. Dewdney and a "person living in Ottawa and wielding great influence," with being concerned in certain questionable land speculations in the Northwest. The *Toronto Globe* took the matter up and suggested the name of Lady Macdonald as the "person" referred to. This became widely spread, and the unconscious object of it saw it first in the *New York Tribune*. Lady Macdonald wrote at once to the *Tribune* emphatically denying all knowledge of the alleged land transaction, and requesting that paper to give her denial equal publicity with the slander. This the *Tribune* did, and stated that it accepted the Baroness' statement as conclusive and regretted that it helped to circulate a baseless rumor. The *Globe* has been forced to make a full apology for its outrageous libel, and has eaten its words in a manner characteristic of the class of cowards that would attack a defenceless widow. The Baroness Macdonald is living in retirement at Lakewood, N. J., with her invalid daughter and no longer takes that interest in the affairs of the country, which it was only natural she should do in the lifetime of her husband. The *Globe* lays stress upon the fact that it did not originate the charge against her ladyship or anyone else, but this is a small way in which to crawl out of the position in which it placed itself by first putting Lady Macdonald's name in the place of the "person living in Ottawa."

It is almost impossible to believe that any body of British subjects could refuse to pass a vote of sympathy with the royal family in their deep grief over the death of the heir presumptive, yet this contemptible action has been taken by the miners' federation in session at Stoke on Trent. By so doing the miners have managed to achieve for themselves world-wide notoriety, and it is doubtful if after this marked insult to the royal family they will ever again be shown that sympathy with which the highest in the land were wont to regard them. It is often said that civility costs nothing and it buys a great deal, and in this instance it would have been but an act of common respect to those who have always evinced a great interest in the welfare of miners, and who are now in sore grief. Had the resolution never been proposed its omission would probably have passed comparatively unnoticed, but having been moved and put to the vote, its defeat has turned the scorn of every fair-minded British subject towards the perpetrators of this act of discourtesy, shame on them! The despatch announcing the action states that this federation has a membership of 200,000, and is the most powerful single union in the country. It freely gives aid to the distressed, and after sullenly and silently refusing sympathy to the Royal family it proceeded to pass a vote of sympathy and substantial aid to the starving nail makers of the midland districts, who have for some time been on strike. Perhaps it did not occur to the federation what a simple matter it would have been to have offered sympathy to the Royal family on the death of the Duke of Clarence, and what harm to themselves might result from an exhibition of boorishness like that of last Friday.

Toronto has decided to get along without Sunday street cars for the present. The defeat of the movement was far from overwhelming, for a majority of four thousand and odd out of a total vote of about twenty-two thousand does not represent a very strong feeling against such an innovation. The importance of what the Torontonians do not want is outweighed by what they do want, for be it known they have spoken for free text-books in the public schools in the same light and joyous vein that one would approve of a free lunch. We are quite in accord with the principle which maintains that every argument for free education holds good for free text-books, but in the early stages of such an experiment the expense will probably be heavy. It would be well if the system of supplying free text-books could be introduced everywhere, for only those who are familiar with poor families know what a trial it is when a child is "moved," or promoted to higher classes, and a number of new books have to be provided. School books are far too expensive, and if a different system were adopted they could not remain so. If the department of education, or public instruction, or whatever official hands the matter rests with, had to supply the books, more care would be exercised about expense and also about changing the text-books frequently. One would think there must be a fortune in school books as at present supplied in Halifax, and we presume throughout Nova Scotia; someone must reap a goodly profit from their sale. Every pupil must have a book, or progress is impossible, and parents often find it very difficult to spare the money for this purpose. We are not urging the adoption of free text-books, for the question is not before the people at present, but as a help to the hard-working people of our Province we do not see why cheaper books cannot be supplied. It would greatly reduce the terror of school expenses to many people. Toronto's experiment with free text-books may be successful, and in that case it would be well to copy her to some extent.