

# THE CRITIC:

A Maritime Provincial Journal,

DEVOTED TO

Commercial, Manufacturing, Mining and General News.

\$1.50 PER ANNUM.  
SINGLE COPY 5 CTS.

HALIFAX, N. S., MARCH 24, 1893.

{ VOL. 10  
No. 12

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## THE CRITIC,

Published every Friday at 161 Hollis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia,

BY  
CRITIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Edited by C. F. FRASER.

Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance. Single copies 5 cents.  
Remittances should be made to A. M. FRASER, BUSINESS MANAGER.

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.

**THE HAWAIIAN QUESTION.**—The annexation of Hawaii to the United States came within an ace of being an accomplished fact, but the old adage, that there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, has proved true in this instance, and to-day the matter is in a very uncertain position, with the chances rather unfavorable to annexation. President Cleveland's first step was to withdraw the treaty from the Senate, and a Commissioner has been sent to the island to investigate all the circumstances in connection with the movement, and to report the result of his labors to Secretary Gresham. We believe that there will be some startling and interesting revelations, and that the outcome of the whole matter will be the establishment of a protectorate over the island.

**CIVIC ELECTIONS.**—The Civic elections are close at hand, and it would be the part of wisdom for the citizens to take an active interest in the selection of Aldermen for the different Wards. The poll-tax vote has been very wisely abolished, and the tax-payers, the parties vitally interested in good city government, now have it in their power to elect only good men to office. It is a case where the office should seek the man, not the man the office, and a good rule to act on would be to vote against the man found vigorously canvassing on his own behalf. In nine cases out of ten it will be found that all such have their own interests at heart, and care little how much the tax-payers have to suffer, if only they can gain their point. Mayor Keefe has proved himself an able and conscientious Chief Magistrate, and his reelection for a second term is a well-merited tribute to the honesty and impartiality with which he has performed his, in many cases, delicate duties.

**A PATENTEE MUST SELL.**—There is a good deal of agitation going on just now in the United States with respect to the use and abuse of patents. In the outset it is recognized that an inventor is entitled to receive ample compensation for his labors in mechanising an idea; but it is now very generally conceded that an inventor under the protection that the patent laws afford has no right to fleece the public to the extent that some patentees or their assigns have done during late years. The Canadian patent law is much more to the advantage of the public than that of the United States. In this country a man may hold a patent of some desirable article, but he cannot monopolise the use of that article, for under the law of the land he is obliged to manufacture and sell the article patented by him at a reasonable profit. This matter of patents has been before the Canadian courts many times, but in what we have just said will be found the gist of the law according to its latest interpretation.

**WHO CAN TELL.**—The question as to what is to become of the colored race in the United States is one which has been very ably handled by the magazine writers. Boiled down, the general opinion appears to be that the white race will continue to dominate the earth until it alone exists. The weaker races, such as the Australian bushmen, the North American Indians and the Laps will first disappear. Then in the course of centuries the Mongolians and Africans will dwindle away before the onward march of the Caucasians. This, according to our idea, is a big conclusion. No allowance is made for the fusion of the races, and it is simply brought down to a question of existence or extermination. From the standpoint of a white man it may tickle his pride to know that the posterity of his race is to inherit the uttermost parts of the earth, but we fancy that the idea of the fusion of the races is the one that experience will prove is the correct theory. The North American Indian is not dying out, he is simply being absorbed by the other races of the continent.

**THE BETTER WAY.**—No gun has been fired and no excitement has been caused by the announcement that the Bering Sea Arbitrators are just now to meet in Paris to settle a great international complication. Many a bloody disastrous war has been caused by a difficulty of much less magnitude than that which has arisen over the Bering Sea dispute. And yet upon this occasion the sword has been laid aside and the two countries particularly interested have agreed to have their representatives meet and find a friendly solution to this question. To our mind the spectacle of an arbitration is much more grand and vastly more to the credit of intelligent human beings than all the pomp, parade and prestige of a victorious army returning home at the close of a campaign. At least two score of friendly arbitrations upon great international questions have been held during the present century, and who can say that the world has not gained immeasurably by having them thus quietly solved instead of having them settled by the sword. Some day, when civilization becomes broader and deeper, our humanity will rise up and revolt against war and all its mocking attractiveness, and then the Utopia foreseen by John Bright and the members of the peace congress will be appreciated by mankind.

**THE FRENCH TREATY.**—The action of the Dominion Government in refusing to entertain the Reciprocity Treaty recently negotiated by Sir Charles Tupper in Paris has caused an apparent estrangement between the High Commissioner and the Cabinet, and it is now reported that Sir Charles will resign if the treaty is not confirmed. He claims to have acted entirely within his instructions, and to have negotiated a treaty in many respects more beneficial than the Franco-United States Treaty. It does seem that he is being rather cavalierly treated, and he is not the man to submit without a protest to either an intentional or unintentional slight. It is, we believe, the first instance in which a Colony has been privileged by the Home Government to negotiate through its own representative a treaty with a foreign power; and if this first case proves a *fiasco*, it is more than likely that the privilege will not be again conceded. It is probable that the reported strained relations between the Government and the High Commissioner have been greatly exaggerated, and we trust there will be no open rupture, as the Dominion would find it almost impossible to find a suitable successor to Sir Charles, who is, without doubt, the ablest Statesman in the Conservative ranks.

**CENTRAL HERE TO STAY.**—A novel invention has recently been made, by the use of which it is proposed to do away with the central office in telephoning, the connection being made automatically. A company has been formed in the United States and another in Canada to carry on business under the common name of the Automatic Telephone Co. The invention is very ingenious, though somewhat complicated. Mr. A., desiring to telephone to Mr. B, telephone number 678, must press the button under hundreds six times, the button under tens seven times and the button under units eight times. If Mr. B is not engaged, this will give Mr. A. the connection he desires, and after conversing with him he pushes each button the requisite number of times as before, and then he is ready for telephonic connection with any other subscriber. Should Mr. B's telephone be engaged, or should he be absent from his office, Mr. A. remains in blissful ignorance as to whether the central mechanism is out of order or what is the matter. In an exchange such as that of Halifax, three wires would have to be run from the central office to the subscriber's instrument. We have investigated this automatic telephone exchange pretty thoroughly, and we are convinced that the elements of uncertainty involved, as compared with the human intelligence which now controls telephone connections, will render the automatic idea, however pretty in theory, quite impracticable in practice.