

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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EDITORIAL NOTES.

Down in Albert Co., N. B., there are some individuals, who, when they lose their temper, appear to grow very voracious. In a quarrel a few days ago, one man had his fingers bitten off by his opponent, while he in turn savagely champed the flesh on his adversary's back. Such men should be punished by having their teeth extracted. At any rate this would effectually prevent a repetition of the crime.

The precautions which are necessary to insure safe travelling upon railways are well known to be numerous and difficult, but who would have ever thought of the new danger which the travelling public in Germany have to face. It is the reduction of steel rails to powder by a small gray worm, which, by the aid of acid, softens the metal, and then eats it at the rate of forty pounds per week. Here is a chance for some one to make money. The man who may discover a steel rail verminifuge has a fortune in sight.

The dog messenger corps for the German army is being carefully trained just now by the Schwerin garrison. Swift and intelligent dogs are chosen, and are taken out by the patrols regularly to the outposts, where pencil notes are tied to their collars, and the dogs are despatched back to a given point. When any of the garrison are manoeuvring at night the dogs accompany the advanced sentinels of the bivouac, and are taught to watch for and bark violently at the faintest sign of any one approaching the camp.

For many years it was thought ephemeral for an Englishman to carry an umbrella, while English ladies appreciating its use, and having a tender solicitude for their bonnets, had no hesitation in carrying them. Hanway, a famous traveller and philanthropist, who returned to England in Seventeen Hundred and Fifty, was the first man in the British Isles who had the pluck to carry an umbrella. To day, there are few men, Englishmen or otherwise, who would hesitate for a moment about carrying or carrying off an umbrella.

The meteor which was seen last week from all parts of the Maritime Provinces was one of the most brilliant that has been noticed here for many years. It is a somewhat curious fact, that in places as wide apart as Yarmouth, Halifax and Charlottetown, those who saw it heard a loud report, and were confident that the meteor struck the earth in that vicinity. It may be that several meteors passed through our atmosphere on the night in question, and the reports of the direction in which the meteor was seen to move in different places would tend to confirm this conjecture, were it not that the time at which the meteor was visible, corresponds in all the places heard from.

The dawn of returning prosperity in Ireland is very plainly indicated by a Parliamentary return which has just been made public. According to these returns, the deposits in the Postal Savings' Banks have increased about one million dollars, while the area under cultivation is eighty thousand acres more than that of last year. At the same time, the number of persons classed as paupers has diminished by several thousands. Give Ireland a fair measure of Home Rule, and her people will be the happiest and most contented community under the sun.

The demand for reindeer skins is likely to largely increase, and the Norsemen and Laps may find the rearing of deer a more profitable business than it has hitherto proved. Reindeer skins are more buoyant than cork, and persons wearing a waistcoat or belt made from this material, there is no fear of their sinking in the water. Considering the innumerable drowning accidents which are daily recorded, it is gratifying to think that these may be avoided by substituting for a portion of our ordinary clothing a garment made of reindeer skin. With the fear of drowning removed, the pastime of boating would quadruple its devotees.

The Shah of Persia will shortly visit London, Paris, and St. Petersburg. Our readers will remember that when Nasser ed Deen last visited Europe the public were amazed at the brilliancy of his own and his courtiers' uniforms, which were resplendent with diamonds. The wily Shah came for the purpose of negotiating a loan of money, and being the possessor of such a large amount of visible wealth, there was no difficulty in floating the Persian bonds. It was not until he had returned to Teheran that it leaked out that his precious stones had been expressly manufactured for him by a company of paste diamond makers in Paris.

The Intercolonial Railway authorities have done well to extend the time limit of passenger tickets to thirty days. The travelling public for the past two years has complained bitterly of the hardships they have had to undergo, not being able to purchase a return ticket good for more than ten days. The increased time limit is a boon, but at the same time we see no reason why a time limit should be placed upon tickets at all. They are purchased for cash, and represent the right to travel to and from a given point; and the railway which refuses to give value for the money received, should at least be prepared to hand back to the holder a proportion of the purchase money.

We do not look for progressive ideas among Eastern nations, and yet we occasionally find that in many respects our vaunted civilization is not absolutely perfect. For example, land monopoly, which is one of the curses of society, is in Corea practically impossible. Land in this peninsula, much of which is unfitted for cultivation, is owned by the people as a whole. Their right to the soil being vested in their originally chosen and afterwards hereditary Sovereign. A rental is imposed upon each holder of land, whether it be used for residence, or be under cultivation. This rental is equivalent to one million dollars per annum, and is applied for governmental purposes. The people of Corea are happy and contented, and the system they have adopted works admirably.

The relations between Great Britain and Spain are at present somewhat strained. It appears that the Spanish Government, having decided to establish a coaling station on an Island in the Red Sea, sent a war ship to take possession of it, and found much to the surprise of the commanding officer, that the Island had already been occupied by British troops. A somewhat similar incident happened several years ago with respect to France. A French man-of-war called at Aden, and the Governor having discovered that the French commander had orders to occupy in the name of France a strategic position on an Island in the Straits of Babel Mandit, determined to thwart the attempt. He at once issued invitations to a grand ball, and while it was in progress, despatched a party to occupy the Island in the name of the Queen. Now, history repeats itself, and Spain, like France, realizes the meaning of the saying that delays are dangerous.

A French Missionary has written a pamphlet in an effort to prove that the famous Great Wall of China was purely imaginary, and his declarations have led to considerable discussion in London, where they were recently published. One of the most practical arguments elicited is that of a gentleman who writes to one of the metropolitan journals:—"I have only just returned to London, and learn that there has been a controversy about the Great Wall of China. Will you allow me to inform your readers that I have sat upon the wall, and that I have, moreover, a photograph of it." An American engineer, who has made the subject a special study on the spot, has calculated that the Chinese wall has a contents of 6,350,000,000 cubic feet. The material used in the construction of the Chinese wall would be sufficient to build a wall round the globe six feet high, and two feet thick. The same authority estimates the cost of the Chinese wall to be equal to the railway mileage of the United States, 123,000 miles. The stupendous work was constructed in the comparatively short period of twenty years.