

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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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.

New and improved ferries are the order of the day. A balloon ferry to cross Niagara River over the Falls is the latest proposal.

"Imperial Federation," the organ of the Federation league, published in London, Eng., gives a list of 160 books and essays bearing on the cause supported by the League. Most of the writers are British, Canadian or Australian; among them being Edward Blake, Sir Francis Hincks, the late Alpheus Todd, Bourinot, Sir A. T. Galt, and the Marquis of Lorne.

Lieutenant-General Callija has gone to Cuba as a poor man; but if he follows the example of his predecessors who have held the office of Captain General, he will come away a millionaire. Spanish officials in Cuba have peculiar methods of grinding money from the people, and it is no wonder that the Cubans occasionally enter a mild protest or indulge in a potty revolt.

The value of time is clearly demonstrated by Dr. S. A. Allibone, in his "Dictionary of Authors," when he shows by a time table (taking days in a year 323, and working hours in a day 8) that 5 minutes lost each day is, in a year, 3 days, 2 hours, 5 minutes; 10 minutes is 6 days, 1 hour, 10 minutes; 20 minutes is 13 days, and 20 minutes; 30 minutes is 19 days, 4 hours, 30 minutes; 60 minutes is 39 days, 1 hour.

In the foggy, damp and rainy atmosphere of London, the umbrella is in daily requisition. Its use as a protector is, however, considered of small moment compared with its usefulness to those who, under its folds, are enabled to ignore their political or social enemies. The umbrella is now dubbed the "avoider," and in its new service is found useful in the vicinity of Westminster.

A late number of the *Scientific American* contains an account of a new kind of brick, said to have been recently patented by Messrs. Blininger and Hasselmann, two German chemists. The mixture consists of clay, iron filings, table salt, potash, and elder or willow wood ashes. The whole is heated to a temperature varying from 3,362 to 3,632 deg. Fahrenheit. At the end of from 4 to 5 hours the argillaceous mixture is run into moulds, then rebaked in the ovens (always protected from the air) at a temperature of 842 to 932 deg. Fahrenheit. The product may be variously colored by the addition of different chemicals. These bricks resist the action of acids, and are well adapted for sewers, etc.

Commercial men in the United States are beginning to realize that the trade of the thirty-five million people living in South America is worth looking after. This trade has hitherto been principally monopolized by Britain, but the Americans hope to secure a portion of it by arranging commercial treaties with the South American States.

Few people realize the amount that is required to conduct a newspaper business. The *London Times*, which is valued at \$125,000,000, provides work for a small army of employes, ranging from the editor in chief down to the printer's devil, aside from which, the paper manufacturer, the vendor of newspapers, bookellers, machinists, and a host of others have to be paid from its earnings.

Advocates of the eight-hour movement will do well to consider the advisability of mechanics and others going to work at an early hour. If the time saved by the workman is to be taken during the early part of the day, society will reap no great benefit from the change, but if taken from the work hours of the afternoon, workmen and their families will have time for recreation and improvement which is now denied them.

A recent copy of the *Scientific American* contains the following:— "A box stall in the corner of Stephen H. Merritt's barn, in Dutchess Co., N. Y., serves for an ice house. The ice slides in at the window easily, and is taken out by a door in the feeding alley in the summer. A foot of sawdust upon loose boards and sticks provides drainage. The ice is also surrounded by eight inches of sawdust on the sides, and a foot on top. He says he has all he needs for dairy and other uses.

The Duke of Connaught will remain two years in India in order that he may familiarize himself with the composition and effectiveness of the Indian army. His Royal Highness, when he steps into the shoes of the Duke of Cambridge and assumes the responsibilities of commander-in-chief, will bring to the office a practical experience which cannot fail to be of service to the Empire. Princes of the blood find no royal road to distinction other than that which all men have to travel.

The use of the French language in the Canadian House of Commons is slowly but surely being discontinued. Our French-speaking statesmen and politicians evidently realize that they cannot hope to catch the ear of the country if they address the House in the French tongue. It will probably be many years before the use of two languages is done away with, but it is gratifying to note that each year the members from Quebec speak more frequently in English and less frequently in French.

A writer in the *Toronto Week* has given some interesting facts with respect to the Government Insurance Bill now being framed by Prince Bismarck. This bill is to provide for the levying of a small tax upon all German subjects living within the German confederation, and promises each taxpayer in the event of accident a small weekly allowance, and at death insures to his heirs a direct grant of money. Bismarck has evidently realized that insurance can be provided at a much lower cost than is generally supposed.

A few decades since, we were taught that the English language contained 40,000 words; in later years we learned that it included 100,000 words; but we are now informed by the publishers of Murray's new and complete dictionary of the English language, that it contains 240,000 words. Talk about French and German in our public schools after this. Why it will take our boys and girls at least ten years to learn to spell and correctly use the 15,000 words in common use. When they are to master the remaining 225,000 we leave for our pedagogues to decide.

The French Bureau of Intelligence at Paris has, through the instrumentality of Capt. Jaraw, a retired Danish officer, obtained full and detailed information as to the organization of the German army, the equipment of the troops, the construction of fortifications, etc. Captain Jaraw, who has been acting as a French spy in Germany, has been a frequent contributor to the military journals in the latter country, and has in virtue of his connection with the press been afforded excellent opportunities for securing the information which the French military authorities desired to obtain. Jaraw was recently tried for high treason in Leipzig and sentenced to twelve years' penal servitude.

The German government proposes taking the census of tramps; the information thus collected will certainly have about it the spice of novelty, and the ordinary schedule of questions and answers will have to be somewhat varied. Fancy a tramp being interviewed as to his name, age, place of birth, place of residence, amount of property—real or personal—etc. It would be more to the point to ask him: "how long he had lived upon his wits, from what particular class of people he received most aid, and whether he found sleeping under a hayrick conducive to his health." These questions the tramp might answer correctly if it were possible for him to tell the truth.