

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 his 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.

How very few of the Americans who go to Italy to perfect themselves as singers, even rise above mediocrity. Three American stars are all that the United States can boast of, but the lesser lights find a useful, if not a remunerative, occupation in the church choirs throughout the land.

Germany has a large and well equipped army, but her navy is comparatively insignificant. Bismarck proposes to give the taxation screw another turn, so as to place the navy on a par with that of France. It will take all the persuasiveness of the Chancellor to convince the members of the Reichstag that the prosperity of Germany is such as to warrant increased taxation.

Christmas is usually a time of peace and goodwill among men, but when, as in Ontario, the memorable 25th of December is sandwiched between nomination and election days, the spirit of harmony is not likely to prevail. From a political point of view, Mr. Mowat's election of the 28th of December for the Provincial elections may be farsighted, but from a social standpoint, it is a blunder.

Even Emperors and kings have their little crosses to bear. A month ago, the young Emperor of China was engaged to be married, but acting upon the counsel of his constitutional advisers, he has postponed the wedding for two years. Kuang Sui should not grieve over his enforced bachelorhood; he is now only fifteen years of age, and the delay of two years at his age, is, after all, not such a hardship.

The Hon. Edward Blake, in one of his recent speeches, advocated the adoption of an income tax, and likewise a succession tax, that is a tax upon inherited wealth. There is much to be said in favor of Mr. Blake's suggestions, but there is always the fear that in levying an income tax, individuals may be doubly burdened; first being taxed indirectly as consumers of dutiable goods, and second, directly as having a fixed annual income.

On Sunday last, 30,000 persons gathered in Trafalgar Square, London, to listen to Hyndman and other socialist speakers. For the five thousand socialists present, we can feel no sympathy, since they propose not to reform, but to destroy existing social organizations before introducing the new order of things; but for the 25,000 unemployed working men, a common humanity makes us feel a sympathetic interest. To be able and willing to work, and not to be able to obtain employment, is a state of affairs not by any means creditable to modern civilization,

The report of the finance committee of Sam Jones' revival meetings at Toronto, shows the receipts to have been \$5,179.19; disbursements, \$4,343.95; balance, \$835.24, which has been distributed amongst the charitable institutions of the city.

It has frequently been remarked that accidental poisoning from mistaken identity in food or drink is ever on the increase. We cannot see why this should be true. Man has three senses with which to protect himself—sight, taste and smell. These, if properly exercised, should prevent nine out of ten of the fatal cases of poisoning daily reported; but there are some people whose tastes are so vitiated that they will eat rat poison with a relish, and smack their lips over sheep dip. Such persons require to be doubly cautious.

If women can effect the purification of political methods, their active interest in political affairs will be a decided advantage to the world at large. The Primrose League, which played such a conspicuous part in the late British elections, and to which it is said the Tories owe so much, will in future be met by a band of sisters holding views quite at variance with those of the Primrose dames. If Mr. Gladstone ever again takes the helm of State he may have to acknowledge that the success of his party is due to the organization of Liberal ladies now known as the Ivy League.

The unpopularity of Russian securities in the British money market makes it difficult for the Czar to borrow on advantageous terms. Russia has already incurred an indebtedness of nearly three billion dollars, the greater part of which sum has been expended in useless wars. One hundred and fifty million dollars is annually taken from the Treasury to pay the interest upon the public debt, and yet the Czar is always planning new campaigns, for which his subjects are filched. Is it any wonder that the gaunt head of nihilism is raised when the one-man power is used in such an arbitrary manner.

The comparative smallness of the increase in the French population is fully shown by the official publication of the births and deaths for 1885, by which it appears that the excess of births over deaths was but 85,000, or in other words, but 2 per 1000 of the population. A glance at German statistics shows, that for every 100 children born in France there are 184 born in Germany. If this ratio continues for many years France will find it difficult to re-conquer the Provinces of Alsace and Lorraine. Frenchmen love ease and comfort, and in old France at least they have a natural antipathy to large families, sized like nests of tubs.

Woman's position in the world to-day is unquestionably better than it ever has been in times past; but how long are the invidious distinctions which discriminate against woman's work to continue. If a man and a woman perform an equal amount of work, and the woman's is equally well done as that of the man, why is it she only receives half as much remuneration. The answer to this question is simple. The callings open to women are at present limited, while the number of the gentler sex who desire occupation is practically unlimited. It is the competition of woman against woman, not of man against woman, that makes her pay relatively small.

The inherent right of each individual to own as many dogs as he may choose to keep, without regard to the annoyance they may cause to his neighbor or to the public in general, is probably the outgrowth of centuries of association; but it is doubtful whether we would quietly submit to the nuisance of yelping curs and vicious bulldogs, were they for the first time turned loose upon our streets at the present day. The mongoose is prized in India as a serpent destroyer, and Pharaoh's rat, which destroys the eggs of the crocodile, is regarded with almost superstitious awe in Egypt, but the introduction of these animals into Jamaica, and the turning of them loose in the cane fields, has evoked a discussion in which the right of the planter to own such animals is questioned. Were the dog as unknown as Pharaoh's rat, the right to keep him would not go unchallenged.

When we consider the inventions and discoveries of the past century, we begin to wonder what our forefathers were about in the 53 centuries, which, according to orthodox accounts, preceded our own; but if we regard their achievements as comparatively small, what are we to think of our ancestors, if we accept as true the statement of the wise men of the British Association, who claim that authentic proof has been discovered in some Welch caves that man, sufficiently developed from the ape to manufacture flint implements, existed on this planet 240,000 years ago. To us it is a melancholy reflection that we should have taken so prodigious a time to attain so small a result. Even when the duration of the race is limited to the six thousand years of history, the outcome can hardly be considered as satisfactory, and there is something profoundly depressing in the sudden addition of a series of ancestors who spent 234,000 years in marking time, indeed, but in making no other mark in the world. For the sake of our genealogical reputation, we prefer to look upon the biblical chronology as correct.