

THE CRITIC.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

The numerous subscribers and patrons of the Critic will no doubt be pleased to receive the paper in the new, popular form, in which, for the first time, it appears to-day; and, as its mechanical execution is a decided improvement upon previous numbers, our readers will peruse it with increased satisfaction. In adopting the new form the Directors have but followed the example previously set them by the proprietors of many of the ablest journals of the day, such as the "Pall Mall Gazette," the "Broad Arrow" the "New York Nation," the "Toronto Week," and others. The Critic in its present form contains sixteen well-printed pages, neatly cut and stitched, which after being read, can be readily filed for future reference. The Directors take this opportunity of expressing their thanks to the numerous subscribers and friends of the Critic, who have by their liberal patronage assured the success of the enterprise in which the proprietors are engaged. Their aim has been to supply the reading public with a first-class independent journal, fully abreast to the times in its several departments, such as will prove of service to commercial men, and at the same time be read with pleasure by those interested in our Mining, Manufacturing, and Fishing industries, and be found acceptable to those whose predilections lead them to seek for an independent discussion of the great political, literary, educational, and social questions of the day.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE SOUDAN.

The British evacuation of the Soudan has brought to a termination one of the most ignoble struggles in which Britain has ever been engaged. The insane desire to crush the Mahdi, prompted as it was by the outbreak of popular resentment upon the death of Gordon, has now given place to a profound indifference to all that pertains to the false prophet and his followers. No doubt the impending danger of a war with Russia was the immediate cause of this change in public opinion, and the Gladstone cabinet availed themselves of this change in a manner that would indicate their aversion to the campaign in the Upper Nile. For the present at least the old and new Mahdis may well be left to themselves to settle internal

difficulties; but it must not for a moment be supposed that the withdrawal of British troops from the sun-burnt Nubian deserts means the British evacuation of Egypt. The British Government, and more especially the British bond holders, cannot afford to allow the land of the Pharaohs to be given up to anarchy and rapine; and our occupation of strategical points and supervision of the Government in Lower Egypt is likely to continue for many years to come.

RAILWAYS IN INDIA.

While Canada is making rapid strides in her internal development, and binding together her scattered provinces with an iron band, British India is likewise engaged in gigantic national undertakings, which, a little more than a quarter of a century since would have been regarded as impossible if not impracticable. Canada's national highway is now almost complete from Ocean to Ocean, and in a few weeks a continuous all-rail line will stretch across the continent from the Canada Atlantic to the Canada Pacific seaboard, a distance of three thousand eight hundred miles. British India has absorbed in the building of her railways nearly one billion dollars, and now boasts of ten thousand, eight hundred and thirty-two miles of completed railway, with upwards of four thousand miles now under construction.

The Hindoos by no means share the prejudice of the Chinese against travelling by rail, and year by year the passenger and freight traffic upon the railways continues to increase. The latest returns show the number of passengers carried in 1884 to have been sixty-five millions, while upwards of seventeen million tons of freight were shipped over the various roads.

With such commercial enterprise in India and Canada, and in fact in all the British colonies, the British Empire will soon become a grand republic of nations.

GROWTH OF CANADIAN CITIES.

The growth of the principal centres of trade during the decade ending 1881, as compared with the previous ten years, is fully given in the fourth volume of the Census of Canada, and indicates a steadily increasing development.

The city of Montreal in 1861 contained a population of ninety thousand three hundred and twenty-three. The census returns of 1871 showed an increase of 18.7 per cent., the population being then one hundred and seven thousand, two hundred and twenty-five. In 1881 the population of Montreal was one hundred and forty thousand, seven hundred and fifty-one; showing an increase in the latter decade of 31.3 per cent.

The city of Toronto in 1861 contained a population of forty-four thousand, eight hundred and twenty-one; and in 1871 the population was fifty-six thousand ninety-two; being an increase of 25.1. During the past decade the percentage of growth in population was more than double that of the preceding ten years; being 54 per cent.; thus giving the Queen's city in 1881 a population of eighty-six thousand, four hundred and thirty-eight.

Halifax, which is erroneously supposed to be the only finished city in North America is, despite her detractors, annually increasing in population, and should the rate of increase during the past ten years continue for the next half century the city will in 1931 number upwards of one hundred thousand inhabitants.

Halifax in 1871 contained a population of twenty-nine thousand, five hundred and eighty-two - being an increase of 18.2 per cent. of that of 1861. During the decade ending 1881 the population had increased by 22 per cent.; it being in that year thirty-six thousand and fifty-six, exclusive of the military, the number of which at the present time is about two thousand, five hundred.

While these statistics are of general interest, proving as they do the increase of population in these commercial and manufacturing centres, the census returns indicate that the growth of our provincial towns is still more marked.

Yarmouth, Windsor, Amherst, Truro, Pictou, New Glasgow, North and South Sydney, which twenty years ago were comparatively insignificant villages, have in the past two decades grown into progressive towns, and should they continue to increase in population as they have done for ten years past, Nova Scotia will soon have within her borders a number of prosperous cities.

IMPREGNABLE GIBRALTAR.

The fortress of Gibraltar, in the maintenance of which the British people take a national pride, is the only strong-hold held by us in the Mediterranean which may be considered as impregnable. The recent improvements in its means of defence and the efforts made by the military authorities to strengthen the fortifications indicate the desire of the people of Great Britain to retain possession of this world-renowned fortress. At present every available point for defence bristles with artillery; the mountain is honey-combed with galleries and bomb-proofs, steep escarp on all approach, and batteries hewn in the solid stone, frown alike on friend and foe. Immense stores of provision, water, and munitions of war are constantly maintained and the whole is garrisoned by a thoroughly efficient