

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.

There are now engaged in the Atlantic trade 130 iron steamships valued at \$100,000,000, and an innumerable number of smaller steamers of which it is difficult to estimate the value. "The highway of the ocean" is no longer metaphorical language, it is literal, yes, very literal.

Have you read "She," by H. Ryder Haggard, the author of "King Solomon's Mines"? If not, by all means procure a copy. "She" is one of the most fascinating and original books which has appeared in the present day. It is so far above the ordinary novel and so full of pleasing and unlooked-for surprises, that an extended review of it would simply spoil a rich literary treat.

Dr. Grant, Principal of Queen's College, in a recent address gave the students some wholesome advice as to the duty of honest electors. He denounced the party machine by which men were nominated as candidates for parliament, and referred in scathing terms to the bribery and corruption resorted to in order to gain party ends. If Dr. Grant were to run an election he would feel that the theme of his discourse was one that could be dealt with to the advantage of the people on at least fifty-two Sundays of each year.

Street begging in Halifax has come to be a positive nuisance. Go where you will along the main thoroughfares and you will encounter a knot of young urchins, one of whom, in whining tones, begs that you will give him a few cents. The business men complain that the nuisance is no longer confined to the streets, but that the little beggars are besieging their offices and on various pretenses requesting assistance, and too often a few cents are given to get clear of the rascals. The police should check this growing love for filthy lucre among our juvenile citizens.

St. Valentine was said to have been distinguished for his love and charity, but the origin of the present custom of selecting a valentine on the 14th of February is uncertain, it probably being an old pagan custom. Our young people who observe the time honored sending of valentines should use and not abuse the custom. Sweet missives and highly perfumed sachets are appropriate valentines, but grotesque pictures and sentiments expressed in coarse language should never be sent by any person, as such mis-called valentines wound the sensibilities of the recipients and make an otherwise pleasant custom an intolerable nuisance.

The German Army Bill upon which the government is now appealing to the country, signifies an increase of 41,135 men for the next seven years to an already huge standing army, and an annual expenditure of \$6,500,000. The German people will probably accept this new impost without complaint, but when the great chancellor, Bismarck, goes over to the majority such useless expenditures will be done away with.

The British people are somewhat too conservative. They uphold certain changes in the constitution, but when it is proposed that Lord Salisbury, the leader of the Government, who has a seat in the House of Lords, should be allowed to speak in the House of Commons, a perfect hubbub is raised and the suggestion stigmatized as ultra radical. Why ultra-radical? Surely the leader of the Government which depends for its existence upon the continued confidence of the members in the House of Commons, should be the mouthpiece of the Cabinet, and, so far as we can see, the objections urged against such a course are without weight and savor of fossilism.

Some idea of the extent to which mechanical ingenuity and efficiency have advanced may be had from the following statement: It is now possible to construct a complete sewing machine in a minute, or sixty in a hour; a reaper every fifteen minutes, or less, three hundred watches a day complete in all their appointments. More important than this even is the fact that it is possible to construct a locomotive in a day. From the plans of the draughtsman to the execution of them by the workman, every wheel, lever, valve and rod may be constructed from the metal to the engine intact. Every rivet may be driven in the boiler, every tube in the tube sheets, and from the smoke-stack to the ash pan a locomotive may be turned out in one day, completely equipped, ready to do the work of a hundred horses. Without such machinery and the skilled labor to operate them, the civilized world of to-day would be an impossibility.—*Craftsman.*

We had thought that literary log rolling was distinctively characteristic of those American writers who use their positions to advertise themselves and their friends, and who appear to work on the principle of "scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," but we are sorry to learn from the revelations recently made by Mr. Collins, that a class of British magazine writers has adopted the same reprehensible method of obtaining notoriety. These would-be literary log rollers are of the opinion that people believe what they read and that judicious puffing coming from a seemingly unbiassed source will gain for second rate contributions the stamp of merit. We regret to say that some of our young Canadian writers have had recourse to this method of bringing their names prominently before the public; but we do not believe that a cheap reputation gained by fulsome self-written notices can be of any permanent advantage to an aspirant for literary honors.

A traveller in Nova Scotia when visiting remote districts is sometimes struck with the odd names given to children, and many of our clergymen base their best anecdotes upon the names given to babies at baptism. The parents in one family living in a Cape Breton fishing village named their eldest daughter Victoria Regina, and, having come from the United States, they named their son after two distinguished presidents, throwing in the name of the Dominion's capital as an offset. The lad now delights in the name of Abraham Ulysses Ottawa. Novel as is this name it is thrown quite into the shade by that of a young Windsor boy who was christened Joseph Cornelius Theophilus Shack Ebenzer Abendego. Senator Van Wyck has been severely criticized in Washington for naming his daughter Happy New Year. But, after all, what's in a name? It is the prerogative of parents to follow their own sweet will in the choice of names for their offspring.

The following rather extraordinary paragraph appeared in the *Liverpool Mercury* as a "Science Note":—"The explosion of an ostrich egg in the hands of a scientific man is not a common occurrence, and the recent accident at Yale College has excited considerable comment. Mr. Buer, at the Peabody Museum New Haven, Conn., was boring a hole in an African egg, weighing about three pounds, when it exploded and knocked him senseless, injuring him severely, and wounding some of the bystanders. Such explosions on a small scale are a common incident on the Chinese coast. A common fashion of preserving hens' eggs for sea use is to pack them in lime, and if properly packed they will keep sweet for months, but they are not always thus packed. Sometimes a vessel leaves a Chinese port with a large supply of eggs, warranted to keep all the voyage home; but in a week or two they begin to go bad in a most extraordinary manner. The lime has such an effect on them that it generates a peculiar foul smelling gas, and the moment the shell receives a crack it explodes. At first the explosions are rare and very mild; but in a few weeks the "preserved" eggs go off with a report like a pistol, with an ever-increasing odor and frequency, and are finally relegated to the sailors, who find considerable amusement with them. The explosion at Yale, which has ended so disastrously to Mr. Buer, is doubtless due to the same cause; but the strong shell of the ostrich egg has intensified the evil result.