

# 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 Notes, 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 seeing or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after making due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their intelligent judgment.

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

If we could only manage to get rid of our grumblers, Halifax would be one of the most pleasant cities to live in on the continent. But as the grumblers are likely to remain among us, suppose they set themselves the task of first finding out what they are grumbling about, and second, what good their grumbling does.

"The First Lady in the Land" is the title of a new book which is spoken of in flattering terms by British critics. Its author, Mr. E. A. Selley, has compressed into a comparatively small volume the chief events which have occurred in the life of Queen Victoria since her birth, and, as his style is fresh and pleasing, the book will be readily bought as a Jubilee present.

We are indebted to Dr. C. Fitz-Henry Campbell, of St. John, N. B., for a copy of the poem "If I should die to-night," as originally published by its author, R. C. Vivian Myers, of Philadelphia. Those who have read the version of this poem which Mr. Ryder Haggard has inserted in "Jess," will see that much of the beauty and pathos of the original is lacking in the plagiarized poem.

Russia will not do much to encourage the union of the Danubian provinces. With the great united State, such as Roumania, E. 'garia and Servia would form, Russia would have to abandon her efforts to control the Bosphorus, and the unspeakable Turk, relieved from this ever-threatening danger, might turn his attention to something more civilizing than preparing for a death struggle with the great Northern Bear.

Chafing or fretting at the great military strength of Germany, France is now prepared to pick a quarrel with any other nation with whom she does not happen to be on particularly friendly terms. Just now Great Britain is the object of her hostility, and the manner in which perfidious Albion is being written down in the French press, if not commendable is at least creditable to the proverbial versatility of an ambitious, restless and self-aggrandizing race of people. John Bull is, according to French papers, a coward, a thief, a monopolist, and a money-grabber, and the mission of France is to put an end to his existence by dealing a death blow at British commerce, and crippling Britain through her colonies. This sounds well, but Frenchmen are cautious, and they have fortunately too good reason for fearing that their navy is inferior to that of their neighbor over the water-way.

The French Cabinet, under the leadership of Goblet, has, like its predecessors, been short-lived. The eyes of all Europe are now turned upon Paris, as with the new Premier will rest the chances of peace or war. General Boulanger's popularity with the people insures his taking a portfolio in the new administration, but the fear that he would gain control of it makes even old statesmen like Ferry and Delcraegnet hesitate to assume office.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* calls attention to the small number of marriages which were solemnized in Great Britain between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday, adding that as there was a strong superstition against persons being married in May, there would be a boom in the hymeneal market between Easter and the first of this month. Our marriage records in Nova Scotia indicate that we too are decidedly English in our objection to Lenten and May marriages.

Look out for the Jubilee Number of THE CRITIC. From a literary standpoint it will be one of the most readable specials ever issued from any newspaper office in the Maritime Provinces. The story by Miss Alice Jones, which is entitled "The Lost Cause," is in itself worth far more than the price charged for the number. Thousands of this issue will doubtless be bought as souvenirs of the Jubilee, to say nothing of the thousands of copies that will be sent to friends abroad by Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers.

The stiff taxation which prevails in most European countries is almost entirely due to the cost of keeping up their military armaments, and to the burden of their excessive war debts. Europe annually expends on its armies and navies nine hundred and five million dollars, while the aggregate interest upon the war debts amounts to one thousand and fifty million dollars. In round numbers, the industries of Europe are taxed two billion dollars per year, in order to preserve the national boundary lines as they at present exist.

The Congo, which is supposed to be the second largest river in the world, is, near its mouth, so deep that no plummet line has ever been known to touch bottom. This is the more strange, seeing that the Upper Congo, which in many places is over twenty miles in width, is so shallow that steam-launches drawing two-and-a-half feet of water frequently strike bottom. Johnston, Stanley and other explorers, anticipate that in time deep channels will be discovered, in which case the Congo will become a great artery of African life.

The death in London, Eng., has been recently announced of Lt. Col. W. Osborne Smith, C. M. G., a conspicuous militia officer of the Dominion. From Lieutenant of the 39th Foot, Col. Osborne Smith was appointed Dep.-Adj. General at Montreal about 1864, and commanded, in the latter part of 1865, the second Battalion of Cadets of the Military Schools, (twelve hundred in all), assembled in camp at Laprairie. In 1871 he was sent to command the reinforced expedition to Manitoba, on the occasion of the Fenian outbreak at Pembina, which ensued on the too extensive and rapid reduction of the Expeditionary Force of 1870. He remained in command of the Provisional Battalion at Winnipeg for three or four years, and was also appointed Dept. Adj.-General for Manitoba. He retired in 1881, and became a prominent citizen of Winnipeg, but emerged from the "retired list" in 1885, to raise and command the 91st Battalion against the half breed insurgents. Col. Osborne Smith was a very able soldier and a gentleman of superior culture. He must have been about fifty-five.

So diversified have been the opinions expressed as to Mr. Ryder Haggard's "She," some averring it to be arrant trash, that we think the following explanation, sent by Mr. Haggard to a London paper, will be of interest to our readers, and may induce some persons to change their minds as to the merits of the work. Mr. Haggard writes:—"Some time ago a lady well acquainted with Africa wrote me some notes of native legends. One of them runs as follows:—'In the Sneeuw (snow) Bergen, Cape Colony, there are immense caves which stretch on and on under the mountains and the end of which has never been found. It is believed by both Boers and natives that in the last cave there is a spring of water, which, if one finds and drinks of it, gives eternal youth. There are endless stories told of adventurous parties in search of this water of life losing their way, meeting dangers both ghostly and bodily, and failing in their object at last. A newly married couple never returned from their search, and it was believed that harm had happened to them because of the crimes the woman had committed in order to gain her husband. She had killed her first husband and his brother, whom by native law she would have had to marry, as she had no children, and she had bewitched the man (her husband) so that he followed her about like a shadow and did everything he was told by her.' Here I found the germ of 'She.' It will be seen that, without wishing to lay any particular claim to originality, I may fairly say that I have to some extent developed the idea."