

We have now a new Mayor, and there has been a slight infusion of new blood into the City Council. This latter may not make much difference, but at all events we are at the beginning of a new Civic year, and we again appeal to the Council to stop the trotting of empty trucks and coal carts within certain limits. We have several times drawn attention to this nuisance, which the narrowness of the streets of Halifax renders so intolerable by confining the noise, which is often such as to frequently render speaking through the telephone totally inaudible. If the Daily Press would bring its influence to bear there might be some hope of amendment in this matter.

It is reported that "a number of youths who make a practice of insulting females near the north-end of Brunswick street, were chased by the police last evening, and one of them was captured. He was released with a caution." We are not in possession of the evidence, and therefore not in a position to pronounce upon the case, but we have an instinctive dislike to the easy-going "caution" in such cases. We look upon insult to women in the streets as the most abominable of offences short of outrage. If the young ruffians who do this sort of thing happened to encounter some of the young gentlemanly athletes of this city, or even perhaps older men who know what their hands are given them for, they would be hammered within an inch of their lives. It is a matter in which it behooves our police to be active and vigilant, and police magistrates not to err on the side of leniency. This is a subject on which THE CRITIC keeps a sharp eye, and will assuredly not spare any shortening of the sternest justice.

An interesting instance of the power of music is related by an apparently reliable London correspondent of a Canadian city journal. The late Duchess of Cambridge, as the world has been informed, was in her 92nd year and her vitality was at times very low. H. R. H. had all her life been passionately fond of music, and at all such periods of prostration the celebrated Signor Tosti would be sent for to play for her. As he played her eyes would unclose, the color return to her cheeks, a happy smile would come over her face, and after a while the venerable Duchess would become brilliant—and her conversation was always, it is said, deeply interesting, and full of anecdote and epigram. "Indeed it is whispered," says the correspondent, "that much of her charming gossip about all the interesting people she has met in her long life has been written down during those happy hours, when Heavenly music made her young again." It is to be hoped, it is further observed, that the Duchess has left Signor Tosti a legacy.

The reports of the proceedings of the Senate in rejecting the Short Line Railway bill furnish comical reading. The doughty Senators, secure in their seats, with no constituents to face, grew very valiant. The hour had come for them to assert themselves and prove to the country what an independent and valuable body of legislators they were, and they rose nobly to the occasion. Senator Miller denounced the bill in no measured terms, and as he was a Nova Scotian, and the bill was intended to benefit his Province, his patriotism or self-abnegation was particularly conspicuous, and every inhabitant of Nova Scotia should rejoice in the possession of such a prodigy. No doubt he will be warmly welcomed on his return home. The worthy Senators have heretofore passed all measures sent up from the lower house as if in duty bound. All the appropriations for the Canada Pacific; all the grants for Public Works, the Franchise Act, and other Acts innumerable, had slipped through their hands as if greased, but when it came to ask a simple measure of justice for Halifax they suddenly awoke from their prolonged nap, shook themselves, and decided that it was time to draw the line. In response to Senator Miller's eloquent appeal they voted the measure down 22 to 11; and if ever men proved by their own mouths that the worst that had been said about them was true, they certainly did it. Senator Almon was conveniently paired, and his voice does not appear to have been raised in the momentous discussion. His want of action was in striking contrast to Senator Power, who, although a liberal to his credit be it said, spoke and voted for the bill. Truly, the Senate has covered itself with glory, and Senator Miller has proved himself the "nobles. Roman of them all."

"The prevalence of fish forms," says the *St. John Educational Review*, in the answer kindly accorded to our zodiacal enquiries, "in the ornamentation of Christian tombs in the catacombs of Rome are not likely to have any astronomical signification. The Christians of that time were not likely to have had good opportunities, or even the leisure to cultivate such tastes." We venture to think the *Review* does not quite take into consideration all the conditions of early Christianity. The theories of the theosophists and mystics of to-day are pushed too far, and they are led away by their exaggerated estimate of analogy, especially in ascribing too much to the solar myth. Nevertheless, they have thrown much true light on the subject. The mass of the world was then Pagan, and that world was thoroughly imbued with solar and consequently zodiacal ideas, and it is well known that the Christian church adapted its festivals to this domination, among many other means it used to justify its faith in the eyes of its Pagan fellow-citizens. It is also a fact which we take to be proved, that the more ancient religions were absolutely dominated by the sign in which the sun stood at the vernal equinox. The very idea of the "Lamb of God" was due to this rule, the constellation Aries having been sometimes called the Lamb instead of the "Ram," of which more hereafter. Many high authorities consider that the transfer of the equinox from Aries to Pisces, which was regarded as symbolical of the triumph of the principle of life over the powers of evil, and therefore applicable to Christ, was connected with this recession so definitely that the Messiah was sometimes actually styled the Fish, as well as the "Lamb" of God. It therefore became a holy symbol appropriate to Christian tombs, as the cross is considered now.

The late shocking disaster on the G. T. R., near Hamilton, will emphasize the distrust and dread that are beginning to be felt by many of heating railway cars by stoves. No sooner were the cars telescoped than they were enveloped in flames. The car-stove has played a terrible part in many of the great railway disasters. In some instances a large portion of the loss of life has been entirely due to the flames originating from them, and the facility with which cars can be set on fire, and the extraordinary rapidity with which they burn when once ignited, have always struck us as not less singular than appalling. Yet, in spite of experiences so repeated and so terrible, neither in Canada nor in the States has anything been done to prevent the recurrence of these horrors. The lamps are indeed a source of danger by night, but the stove is, in cold weather, a perpetual menace. Steam heating would no doubt be troublesome, but surely something ought to be done; some inventor might set his brains to work. It has been recently suggested that the needed reform might be promoted if some public-spirited M. P. would take it up with determination and make it his own, and as such a member might certainly rely on the support of the public, the suggestion seems to be a practical one.

Poor Halifax! It seems that the fates are indeed against it. At the moment when the hearts of all enterprising citizens were gladdened by the passage of the Harvey-Salisbury grant through the lower house, a tardy measure of justice to this port, the wises carried the unwelcome news that the measure had been buried in the Senate. The causes which led to this result are likely never to be fully known, but the fact remains that Halifax has again been betrayed, and we fear this time fatally. The effects of the rejection of the measure will soon be made apparent, and the most that can now be expected for Halifax is that it may become the point of arrival and departure of the Atlantic passenger and mail business. The great steamships will then take their way to St. John to be loaded with freight, and Halifax will remain simply a port of call. St. John will reap the benefits of the immense outlay on the Short Line, while this city will commercially remain at a stand still. At least any advance that may be made will be due to the establishment of manufactures and the development of the great mineral wealth of the Province, but the millions already expended on Public Works and Railways, towards which this City and Province have had to contribute so largely, is practically money wasted so far as we are concerned. What nonsense is the promise of the Government that surveys of the line will be made this summer, and that at the next Session of Parliament the matter of a grant to the Harvey-Fredericton branch will again be pressed. Oh, yes, we have the support of the Government, and such a valuable support? The confession that the surveys have not yet been made is only a proof of how contemptibly we have been deceived. We were told over and over again that the line would be completed to Moncton this year. Messrs. Daly and Stairs supported the present Short Line system, and pledged their words that the dangers and difficulties pointed out by Messrs. Mackintosh, Engineer Keating, THE CRITIC, and others, when advocating what is now proved to be the correct route (the one *via* Quebec) would be successfully overcome. They must now admit that they were culpably careless in looking after the interests of this constituency, and acknowledge the wisdom of the electors in refusing them further support. We should like to hear what they have to say in their defence? Under the most favorable circumstances it would now take at least two years to secure the grant and complete the Harvey-Fredericton branch, and in two years St. John will have so fairly secured the through freight traffic, and have so perfected her facilities for shipping, that the road when completed will prove of little benefit to us. Halifax has been most effectually deceived and betrayed, and so handicapped that her sister city of St. John, with none of the great natural advantages of this port, has most unfairly distanced her in the race for commercial supremacy.

Unfortunate as the outlook for Halifax now undoubtedly is, through the failure of the Senate to pass the appropriation for the Harvey-Fredericton branch, there is still one gleam of hope, and, paradoxical as it may appear, that hope is largely dependent on the supposition that Sir John Macdonald deliberately connived at the defeat of the measure in the Senate. It now appears that both the C. P. R. and G. T. R., thanks to the action of the United States Railway Commissioners, who have decided that the G. T. R. must come under the Inter State Commerce Act, find it to their interests to secure a shipping port in the Maritime Provinces. At the last moment, when Sir John had committed himself under his agreement with the Canada Pacific, the G. T. R. came in and demanded equal running powers with the C. P. R. over the new branch. Under the measure as it stood it would have been impossible to grant the request of the Grand Trunk, and yet it was a most reasonable one, and to the advantage of the Maritime Provinces, as it would give them the competition of the two great railway lines of the Dominion, and prevent a monopoly. The only way out of the difficulty was to kill the Short Line bill (and with it the one sided agreement with the Canadian Pacific) in the Senate. A move of this kind would have been politically sound, and was about the only escape from an untenable position. If this was the case, and the Grand Trunk will at once extend its branch line so as to connect with the Intercolonial at Moncton, thus completing a short line entirely on Canadian soil, there will still be hope for Halifax. If the Grand Trunk would even now work hand in hand with the Intercolonial a large traffic would be assured this way. While the Short Line was being built, the Government, as a fair recompense to Halifax for the danger its trade is menaced with by the unjustifiable delay in completing the Short Line, should establish such a low schedule of freights over the Intercolonial as to assure us a fair share of through traffic, and place us in a position to compete with St. John on equal terms. If this is done, we may still hope for the best, and Halifax may yet become a great commercial metropolis.

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