

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

EDITORIAL.	
The Land Problem.....	2
The Silver Dollar.....	2
A Representative Senate.....	2
Prison Reform.....	2
Our Parliaments.....	1
Notes.....	1
CONTRIBUTED.	
Rambling Notes on Burmah.....	6
The Canadian Militia.....	6
How to Make Home More Attractive.....	6, 7
The Maritime Provincial Grange.....	7, 8
Events and Comments.....	7, 8
Stray Shots.....	8, 9
A Tempest in the Academy of Music.....	9
Enigmas.....	3
MISCELLANEOUS.	
Tit-Bits.....	3
News of the Week.....	4
Religious.....	5
Market Quotations.....	5
Commercial.....	9
Serial.....	10, 11
The Maritime Patron.....	12
Mining.....	13, 14

Gladstone has been granted breathing space in order that he may fully consider the measures which he proposes to introduce with respect to Ireland. Social reform, land reform and home rule for Ireland, are the three great questions now before the British people. The only difference of opinion between Gladstone and Parnell is as to which of these three questions is to take priority. Gladstone proposes to lead off with land reform, but Parnell demands that home rule shall first be dealt with.

It has been proposed that during the Intercolonial Exhibition at London, some of the leading men from the various colonies meet in London and discuss Imperial Confederation. The minds of both colonists and old country people will then, if ever, be disposed to favor the project; and the Exhibition will furnish a rare opportunity for a meeting between men from the different colonies. To borrow, in part, Mr. Froude's figure, both pieces of the iron will then be hot; the hammer will weld them.

The military authorities in Austria have provided the frontier scouts with bicycles instead of horses. The former are certainly more noiseless and more easily provided with fodder than is the horse, but we imagine that the scout, mounted on a bicycle, would cut a sorry figure if obliged to depend upon his faithful two-wheeled friend to carry him over the burning sands of the Soudan or through the mountain defiles of Afghanistan.

Senator Cameron proposes to build up the American Merchant Marine, by allowing a mileage bonus of from four to five and three-tenth cents per mile to American vessels and steamers sailing or plying between a port in the United States and a foreign port. Should Senator Cameron's measure become law, American ship building would at once revive, but the surplus now to the credit of the country in the treasury would speedily vanish.

In Canada, pensions are given to officers retiring from the civil service. In Brazil, teachers in the public schools are pensioned. If we had a system of this kind, our young men would not merely make the teaching profession a stepping stone to something better. It is notorious that those best qualified to instruct in our public schools, seldom devote more than five or six years to teaching. The truth is, it does not pay, and unless better inducements are held out, we cannot hope to retain the services of talented and experienced men.

The people of Denmark are determined upon securing responsible government, while King Christian and his ministry have fully resolved not to yield to their demands; meantime, the 'Folkthing' or Commons, positively refuses to grant the supplies necessary to carry on the public services of the country, and King Christian is obliged to resort to most extraordinary means for raising money. The present strain cannot be of long duration. The King and his Ministry must yield to the fair demands of the people, or be prepared to settle the differences with the sword.

John Bull is credited with having an inordinate land hunger; whether this be true or not he proves that common sense is after all the mainspring of most of his actions. He annexed Burmah without consulting with the three Emperors, and now, in order to perpetuate the growing friendship of China and bring about an Anglo-Chinese alliance in the Asiatic continent, he has agreed to present the Celestials with the eastern portion of his new domain—which they have long coveted, but which the jealousy of the French has hitherto prevented them from acquiring.

The rapid sale of the last edition of Sir Charles Wilson's book, entitled "From Korti to Khartoum," has induced the publishers to issue a second and much larger edition. Sir Charles is an able writer; but he is more—he is a capable soldier, and his severe strictures upon the practice of marching by night in crossing the desert, cannot fail to have weight, as the writer states the early morning and the late afternoon are the only times in the day when marches should be conducted. During the hours of night the men should enjoy their natural repose, and the midday halt should include several hours before and after noon.

A bill for the incorporation of the Atlantic and Pacific Ship Railway Company was introduced by Mr. West in the United States Senate on December 15, 1885, and after being read twice, has been referred to the Committee on Commerce. The Mexican Government has granted the Company 2,700,000 acres of land, and guaranteed that one-third of the annual net revenues of the company shall, for the period of fifteen years after the completion of the railway, amount to \$1,250,000. It is proposed that the United States guarantee that the remaining two-thirds of the annual net revenues shall amount to \$2,500,000. Fifty per cent of the gross earnings are assumed to represent the net revenue. The guarantee is only to go into effect when a loaded vessel, weighing not less than 3,000 tons, has been safely transported from one ocean to another at an average speed, on land, of six miles an hour. Bonds payable in 15 years are to be given to the government for all money advanced. The toll on American vessels is to be 75 per cent of that charged on other nations except Mexico. There are some other conditions respecting the transport of mails, warships, troops, etc.

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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 this 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 judgement.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Henry Guy Carleton, of New York, has invented a delicate system of electric balances to indicate fire-damp in mines. This instrument will give the quantity of marsh gas present to $\frac{1}{4}$ of one per cent. It is fully described in a late issue of the *Scientific American*.

"Not a soldier flinched." Such was the message flashed over the wires from Washington Territory, when the United States troops were called out to prevent the American laborers of that district, from forcing the Chinese from the country. Not a soldier flinched; why should they? Were they not armed with rifle and bayonet?

The electric tramway at Blackpool, England, is now in full working order, and cars driven by electricity run daily. A statement of the cost of laying the line has been issued by the Corporation. The line is 2 miles, 1000 yards in length, and the actual sum expended was \$55,000. The cost of laying the central channel for the electrical apparatus was borne by the company which works the line.

In these days of gigantic undertakings, Canada seems able to keep well up to her neighbors. No sooner is the great Canadian Pacific Railway completed than we see a new project taking shape, to connect Montreal with St. Paul and Minneapolis by a direct line, crossing the Sault St. Marie which connects Lakes Huron and Superior. By the proposed route, the Western States will save forty-four per cent. in the distance to the Atlantic seaboard; and for about half the year there will be a saving of two hundred miles in crossing the Atlantic.

A correspondent writing to the *Broad Arrow* from Lahore, gives an interesting account of an armor-plated train now being constructed at the workshops in connection with the Sind, Punjab and Delhi Railway. The locomotive, which is encased in boiler plates, is placed in the centre of the train; before, and behind, are two armor-plated carriages fitted up for infantry sharpshooters; beyond these are the ten-pound gun-carriages, which are shell-proof, and beyond these again are the flat trucks, upon which are piled the rails and sleepers which may be required in repairing the track. These latter are in themselves a protection to the trains, as in the event of de-railment they would be the first to leave the track. The armored train may yet play an important part in Asiatic warfare.