

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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The political contest in Britain will probably be the most bitter that has taken place for many years. Gladstone and his supporters are evidently confident that an appeal to the country upon the Home Rule question will meet with public approval, but while the Liberal whips are confident of success, the joint opposition of the Unionists (Whigs and Conservatives) cannot fail to have a telling effect.

Newfoundlanders, taking a lesson from the experience of the past, have determined to build and fit out a bank fleet worthy of the ancient colony. They realize that competition with French and Norwegian fishermen, although keen, can have but one result, if the methods of curing their fish are improved. The same is true with respect to Nova Scotia. Hard-cured fish always find a ready market.

Matrimony is generally regarded in this age as a luxury, but engagements have been considered comparatively inexpensive. This day, however, is past. It is now said to be the custom in England for a gentleman who is engaged to present his betrothed with three rings. The engagement rings given by Earl Cairns to Miss Adele Grant included a half hoop of diamonds, a ring set with a diamond and a ruby, and another mounted with a fine single sapphire.

The Czar of Russia and his great Council of State are jubilant over the launching of the last ship of the Black Sea squadron. In 1783, a small frigate name the "Glory of Catherine," constituted the Russian navy; to day, Russia has a fleet of 389 steam vessels, of which 29 are iron-clads, with an armament of 836 guns. From the Crimean war down to 1876, Russia had no fleet upon the Black Sea, she now has 10 first and 10 second class war ships, with innumerable smaller craft.

This would be a good time for the fishermen of New England to repeat the assertions which they made a year ago about the uselessness to them of the Canadian fisheries. As they were supposed to know their own business, many of the leading newspapers accepted their statement as authoritative. Now, the Gloucester mackerel fleet find that their spring trip did not pay expenses, and while the fish are schooling on the coast of Nova Scotia, the American fisherman very reluctantly obeys the order to keep outside the limits.

The popular meetings which are being held throughout India, and especially those which have been convened in the Presidency of Bombay, prove that the inhabitants of that great dependency are not content with the nominal part now taken by them in governmental affairs. Whether Russian agents are secretly inciting the people to rebellion, or whether the agitation is the outcome of a desire for popular government, is not yet quite clear; in either event, British statesmen will need to be prepared. The Egyptian difficulty and the Irish troubles are the result of short-sighted policy. A similar mistake with regard to India would be fatal.

The triple alliance between Russia, Prussia, and Austria, is in danger of losing the last-named member. The mysterious, non-committal Russian despot can no longer reconcile his policy of fomenting discord in the Balkan States with the continuance of brotherly love for Austria, so he confines his honeyed words and gentle diplomatic caresses to the aged Emperor William. The neighborly exchange of friendly hand-shakings, in which the Emperors have hitherto participated, will this year be carried on without the Emperor of Austria, who has not been invited. Austria regards Russia's attitude towards Bulgaria as dangerous, and in Austrian military circles a war is considered as not improbable.

A Swiss correspondent of the *Republique Francaise*, in looking over the papers of the eccentric Duke of Brunswick, deposited at the library of Geneva, has found the draft of a secret mutual assistance treaty between him and the late Emperor Napoleon. It is dated Ham, 25th June, 1844, and is not only signed Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, but written by him on a white silk pocket handkerchief in marking ink. The French is full of Germanisms. The treaty is in five articles, and the contracting parties are bound by an oath and their honor to observe it. In return for the money which the German Prince was to furnish the French one to escape from Ham and restore the Empire, the latter was to aid the other to enter again into the possession of his Duchy and all his fiefs, and, if possible, to make all Germany one nation, giving it a constitution suited to its traditions, manners, and the needs of a progressive age. A Napoleonic conspiracy was carried on by the assistance of the Duke of Brunswick's purse. On the 22nd July, 1870, Napoleon III was for the last time reminded of the promises sworn to and written in the silk pocket handkerchief. He answered this reminder in a short note thus worded, which was found pinned to that curious document—"I have received your letter, and find it impossible to comply with your demands. I beg you to believe in my sentiments of sincere amity—Napoleon." Six weeks later, the Emperor was a prisoner of the Germans, and the Duke of Brunswick on his way to Geneva, to which he determined to leave his personal estate.

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The editor of THE CRITIC is responsible for the news 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 judging or disapproving of any part of an article or contents of the paper; and after taking due care as to what is to appear in our columns, we shall leave the rest to their prudent judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The population of London is growing at a prodigious rate, but this is not surprising, when we consider that 2700 babies are born in London each day.

Poultry fanciers in New England express a decided preference for the Spanish Leghorn, which matures early, and is a persistent layer. The Spaniard and the Brahma have evidently had their day, and the Leghorn is now the favorite.

The Peace Society, of which Sir Joseph Pease is the President, celebrated its 70th anniversary, by declaring a deficit of \$2,000. The Association has budded, blossomed and borne its fruit, but men are perverse and still prefer to settle their difficulties in the old-fashioned way.

The Paris *Presse* suggests as an epitaph for Mr Gladstone the words—"Here lies the man who made Ireland and unmade England." This is the epitaph which the English people don't want to see Gladstone merit. They would like to see him make Ireland, without unmaking England.

France is a Republic, but the republican idea has never yet fully possessed the public mind. M. Zola, the French novelist, says his countrymen are not at heart for a king. They love to look up to some one. "Therefore," he continues, "the proletarian volcano will not burst in France, but in the United States."

Arrangements are now being made in England to float the bonds of the Winnipeg and Hudson's Bay Railway Company. The road has been subsidized by the Dominion and Manitoba Governments, and its projectors are already considering its early construction an assured fact. This may be true, but its utility as an outlet for the North-West, yet requires to be demonstrated.

The saw-mill owners of Michigan are distressed in their minds. They are chased from the Dominion Government's extensive timber limits in the Ontonagon district, and having estimated that they could saw nearly two billion feet of lumber, were preparing to cut and ship the logs across the lake. When the Canadian export duty was suddenly raised to \$2.00 per 1000 feet, they will now have to ship their mills and do their cutting upon Canadian territory.