

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.

Let the bells ring out their merry, merry peals, and let the joyous spirit of the happy Christmas time have free play. Christmas comes but once a year and all should enjoy to the full the relief from care which its proper observance alone insures.

This is a season when "That great object of universal devotion, the almighty dollar," can be turned to good account. One dollar judiciously expended may brighten the Christmas in a home which otherwise might be dull, cheerless, and poverty pinched. Deposits in Humanity's Bank are safe investments, sure to yield a handsome return.

To-morrow the absent ones, the sons and daughters, the brothers and sisters, scattered far and wide in distant climes, will be remembered by those who still gather around the old fireside; their places will be vacant and their well-known faces missed, but for each and every absent one there will be a kindly wish, a warm remembrance, and a silent prayer.

Montreal has an army of travellers constantly in the field drumming up business for the enterprising firms which have their headquarters in that city. 1600 travelling agents are, to use the phraseology of the fraternity, constantly "on the road," and through them Montreal maintains her supremacy as the chief distributing centre in the Dominion.

The dangers of the deep are indeed great, but modern navigators have to face a new peril in the liability to collisions with derelicts, hundreds of which are afloat in the highway of commerce between Europe and America. It has been suggested that the sinking of these abandoned vessels would afford excellent practice for the torpedo boats of the day, while the hunting of them would give their crews an experience that can never be gained in port.

Mr. Roswell Fisher, who is a man of means, is advocating cooperative house-keeping in Montreal. He believes that with a common kitchen, a common laundry, a common staircase, and a common janitor and servants, several families might live under the same roof and enjoy for a comparatively limited expenditure all the comforts and luxuries of modern society. The idea may present itself favorably to those who have no desire to preserve family individuality or who have grown weary of the trials and vexations of house-keeping, but it appears strange that this outcome of our higher civilization should in reality be nothing more than the primitive mode of living adopted by some of the lowest tribes of savages.

The French Government is testing a new mitrailleuse which weighs only 38 pounds and discharges 600 bullets a minute.

Since the loss of her American colonies, Spain has become a second if not a third-rate power, but the present Cortes or Parliament is not willing to have her occupy the position of an effete State. \$45,000,000 is to be expended in the construction of fast cruisers and torpedo boats, and with this increase to her navy, Spain may again become one of the great powers of western Europe.

Branches of the Imperial Federation league are now being formed in all the principal cities and towns throughout Great Britain and her colonies; and these organizations are diffusing a wider knowledge of the aims of the League, and a more correct idea of the scope which their name signifies. Halifax is now to have its branch of the League, and ere long flourishing branches will be established in the more enterprising of our Provincial towns.

The British press has been doing good work during the past few months in disseminating information with respect to this country, but it is unfortunately true that the journalists, who have been devoting so much attention to the Dominion, possess but a meagre knowledge of our resources, and hence the information which they give their readers is not infrequently misleading. This is not surprising when we remember that the London "Times" and other newspapers derive their facts respecting the Dominion from American sources, which are somewhat apt to be colored.

The adoption of standard time would, it was predicted, prevent annoying delays and mistakes being made by those who are obliged to travel by railcar and steamboat; but, as a matter of fact, the introduction of standard time has added a new difficulty to those who are not thoroughly posted, as the traveller has now to familiarize himself with local standard time, eastern standard time and the actual time observed in the city or town which he is visiting. Standard time may be a convenience to the railway authorities, but to the travelling public it is an intolerable nuisance.

In the United States the question as to what is to be done with the Indians, is still one of great importance. Bishop Whipple, who is a recognized authority in matters pertaining to the welfare of the red man, believes the only solution to the question is in the abolition of tribal reserves and the distribution of property among Indian families; in other words he believes that the individual ownership of land will raise the Indian from a semi-independent to a self-dependent position. Henry George asserts that individual ownership of land is the greatest evil in modern times. Bishop Whipple should endeavor to convert the author of "Progress and Poverty."

We yet require fifteen new railways in this Province, in order that our people should have first class railway facilities. These are the missing links between Annapolis and Digby, a road from Shelburne to Annapolis and another from Liverpool to the same place, thus making old Port Royal an important railway centre. The Nova Scotia Central will have to be completed and the proposed road from Berwick to Kingsport constructed. Then there are the Musquodobuit and Steviacke valley railway; the Londonderry and Parrsboro road; the Joggins and Advocate Harbor line; the North shore air line; the Pictou branch and the Guysboro road. In addition there are the Cape Breton Central, the Port Hood line and the Baddeck and Margaree railway. If this bill of fare is not long enough, Barrington, Lockeport, Port Medway, Goldenville, and St. Peters may put in their claims. This is a railway age and he who would be a success in politics cannot afford to ignore this fact.

CHRISTMAS.

Christmas Day is the most thoroughly enjoyed, most widely celebrated, and most beloved of all anniversaries. Ever since the year 138, the whole Christian world has on this day, by joyful home gatherings, by time honored festivities, by increased efforts towards peace on earth, good will to men, kept in hallowed remembrance the first dawning of the sun of civilization and Christianity. Every Christian land, nearly every district of every Christian land, has developed some traditional form of enjoyment for this gladdening, heart warming season. In the old world especially, the proper soil for peculiar local customs and traditions, many are the curious and interesting forms of Christmas-keeping. In Italy, during the last days before Christmas, the Calabrian minstrels come down from their mountains and make a pilgrimage to Rome or Naples, saluting the numerous figures of the Virgin along their way, to cheer her for the event which Christmas commemorates. In the Protestant countries of Northern Europe, the day has come to be regarded as the children's own festival. Our beloved, mysterious Santa Claus is only an imagined substitute for the real, substantial German Knecht Rupert, who actually does the work at the request of the parents. In some small villages of Germany the presents intended for all the children are sent to a certain person, who, in long flaxen wig, high buskins, mask, and white robe, calls at the door of each peasant, inquires into