

The Chronicle

Insurance & Finance.

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Proprietor.

ESTABLISHED JANUARY, 1881
PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY

JOHN T. P. KNIGHT,
Editor.

VOL. XVIII. No. 46. MONTREAL, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1898.

SINGLE COPY - - .10
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION - \$2.00

Worthy Whittingtonian Citizens.

If the report that the city of Victoria, B.C., has a surplus of \$33,000 on the operations of the civic year lately closed is correct, the men who attend to the business of that prosperous municipality ought to be invited to Montreal at the present time to show our people "how it's done." Every member of the Victoria City Council must be a worthy citizen of the type of

*Dick Whittington, of credit and renown,
Thrice Lord Mayor of London Town.*

Horse Fire Escapes.

It is not for the obscure conductor of a Canadian weekly journal to indulge in criticism of the fire service of the greatest city in the world, but we cannot refrain from an expression of wonderment at the praise lavished by the British press upon the performance of the "new horse fire escape" recently introduced by Commander Wells, of the London Fire Brigade. The reports of a great fire in Oxford street on October 17th mention in terms of glowing praise that two of the new machines were started for the scene of the conflagration and that one of them "rescued a whole family." An English insurance paper refers to this as forming "an epoch in the bright annals of life saving inventions," and thanks Captain Wells for his "happy thought" in introducing the horse instead of the hand as a means of propelling the ladders known as fire-escapes to a fire. When one thinks of people burning to death, or, after clinging to windows until suffocated by smoke, seeking death by a mad jump to the pavement below, it seems difficult to believe that it has not occurred to predecessors of the present chief of the London Fire Brigade that the fire-escape could be brought to the rescue as quickly as the fire engines. However, we live and learn. Possibly at the proposed tournament for firemen at the Paris Exhibition in 1900, an international exchange of ideas and inventions may serve to convince Englishmen and Americans of the blessings of mutual intercourse, and of the benefit to be derived from conformity with the modern way of doing things. But we can hardly subscribe to the English belief that using horses to drag ladders to the rescue of the burning inhabitants of a house "forms an epoch in the

bright annals of life-saving." The fastest horses in Montreal have been considered for many years the best means of ensuring the speedy arrival of men, engines and ladders to the scene of a fire in this city.

However, we are not vain-glorious in expressing astonishment at the failure of London to discover earlier the quickest way of bringing ladders to a fire. Perhaps, at the proposed Paris Fire tournament, our firemen may learn something new in dress, drill and deportment from their British brethren.

Outliving all Modern mortality tables make no provision for such a possibility as the relic
Tabulated vision for such a possibility as the relic
Risks. of antiquity now being described by the European press. As a recipe for ensuring longevity, that given by this old man of Vienna, who has just been celebrating what is claimed to be his one hundred and eleventh birthday, is not new, and we hesitate to believe that many will care to try his prescription or swallow the statement of his age. He is credited with giving as the cause of his ability to laugh at grim death and bid him begone "that he never worried, and he never grieved." It is also advanced in proof of the virility of this relic of the Georgian era that "he can still enjoy a glass of beer and laugh at the nonsense of a girl." At least such is the contention of *The Spectator*.

We decline to believe in the story of this old man of Vienna as to his age or the cause thereof. It is admitted that nothing has been produced in proof of his claim, not even an insurance policy, and it is just possible that his indifference to sorrow and anxiety may, as suggested by many, extend to carelessness about the exact date of his birth.

He never worried, and he never grieved! Yet grief at the loss of friends is natural, and a tear is a sign of humanity and generosity. If callous indifference to suffering, and freedom from regret for "the days that are no more" is the price of such wonderful longevity as that claimed for this ancient Austrian, who declares he first opened his eyes in Vienna in 1787, few will be found to envy him in his mumbling over a glass of beer or his cackling cachinnation at the nonsense of a girl. At all events, actuaries are not likely to lengthen their mortality tables for the sake of one whom the reaper appears to have forgotten.