

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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## EDITORIAL NOTES.

The members of the Halifax battalion who refused to serve in the late North-West rebellion are being drummed out. Quite right; but what about the officers who funked? Cowardice as well as love should level all ranks.

The reported depression in the flax trade is confirmed. Over production is the cause, and British mill owners have been obliged to close their factories. The present is an opportune time for housekeepers to lay in a full supply of linen.

De Lesseps has made another call upon the stockholders in the Panama Canal. The work, it is supposed, will cost more than double the amount originally estimated. Before the enterprise becomes an accomplished fact, the stockholders will have reason to regret having embarked in such a costly undertaking.

The Public Debt of Denmark amounts to \$35,000,000. According to the budget recently presented to the Folkething, the estimated revenue for the coming year is placed at \$11,000,000, the expenditure at \$13,000,000. The deficit will not be a serious matter, as there is now in the treasury in the form of accumulated surpluses about \$12,000,000.

Corea has escaped from the embrace of the Russian bear. Had the schemes of Herr Von Mollendorf been successful, Corea would now form an integral portion of the Russian empire, but the Chinese protest has for the time checked the encroachments of the Czar upon the Corcan peninsula, and the sturdy Coreans have still one chance left of proving themselves capable of establishing an independent government.

"Vanity, vanity, all is vanity." So saith the preacher. "Be submissive to the powers that be, whether of Church or State. Sink your individuality, withhold your criticism, and be satisfied with the dull, dead level of mediocrity." Such was the dogmatic teaching vouchsafed to a congregation in one of our fashionable churches on Sunday last. O shades of Wilberforce and Lincoln, shades of Chatham, Washington and Howe, of Luther, Knox and Wycliff, rise and protest.

Spain is a monopolist still, notwithstanding the fact that her exclusive policy has reduced her colonial empire from half a continent to a mere handful of islands. Germany has offered to relinquish Yap in the Caroline Islands, provided Spain grant trading privileges with these islands to all nations, but the Spanish Cortes hesitates. When Fernando du Po Annadon, Cuba Porto Rico, the Philippine, Caroline, Palaos, and the Marian Islands have slipped from their grasp, the Cortes will probably think the time fitting to inaugurate a new policy.

The Queen has been pleased to congratulate the Canadian people upon the completion of their great trans-continental railway. The people of Canada have good reason to congratulate themselves. All parties were in favor of constructing the line, but its cost has been a heavy burden upon the country. Our grandsons will admire our pluck and enterprise, but their grandfathers will have to pay the piper.

For the second time during the year 1885 the Suez Canal has been blocked. A few months since the sinking of a dredge prevented the passage of steamers through the canal for upwards of a week; now by the grounding of an insignificant trader the British and Indian mails are delayed for six days. De Lesseps will have to run another furrow across the sandy isthmus if he wishes to ensure continued popularity of the route to India via the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.

The Halifax Herald, in a leading article, undertakes to completely upset and destroy the theories of Henry George with respect to taxation upon land values for revenue purposes. The writer has evidently not studied the works of George with care, otherwise he would not refer to police and fire protection as if these were provided for by the federal government. George proposed levying a tax upon land values as a substitute for customs and excise duties.

The writers upon Prohibition vs. License will take a short holiday. Many of our readers have expressed themselves as deeply interested in the controversy, and we propose in the course of a few weeks to re-open it upon new and defined lines. The question which now most concerns the public is, whether Prohibition or License is the course for a state to adopt, in order to prevent intemperance; and this is the question we wish to have discussed in THE CRITIC. Due notice of the controversy will be given.

Lord Salisbury has a foreign policy. In this the present Premier contrasts favorably with his predecessor in office. Gladstone made a muddle in the Soudan, cringed to Germany in Zanzibar, and had he remained in office would probably have drawn us into a needless war with Russia. Under Salisbury the Zanzibar difficulty has been peaceably adjusted, the Russians held in check, and the Egyptian problem partially solved. The British electors now form the jury before whom the cause of Vigor vs. Vacillation is about to be tried.

The politicians of St. John, N. B., are having a lively time of it. Last month the city and county were called upon to elect a successor in Parliament to the late lamented Sir Isaac Burpee. The retirement of Sir S. L. Tilley once more places upon the electors of the city the responsibility of choosing a gentleman to represent them in the Dominion House of Commons. If the verdict is favorable to the present Government, the Opposition journals will cry, "Corruption." If the Opposition win the seat, it will be attributed by the Conservatives to bad management, or possibly to the unpopularity of their candidate. Apparently the people have no choice in the matter, but are entirely at the mercy of those who pull the wires or supply election funds. St. John will have a chance to speak for herself, notwithstanding.

The sublime Porte is troubled in his mind—he is said to be insane, and considering the predicament in which he now finds himself, the announcement of his insanity is not surprising. Bulgaria quietly appropriates a portion of the Sultan's territory equal in extent to about two-thirds that of Nova Scotia; Serbia and Greece are preparing to carve off their slices of Thanksgiving Turkey; Austria is secretly abetting them with the hope that she may secure an outlet upon the Aegean Sea, and Russia supports the Bulgarian aggression, feeling confident that it will have the effect of smoothing her road to Constantinople. Meantime the Turkish Cabinet is divided in its counsels, anarchy prevails to an alarming extent among the people; sedition, conspiracy and treachery lurk in every corner of the empire, and the Sultan's life is threatened at every step. Under such circumstances any poor mortal might be pardoned should he become bereft of his senses.

## BURMAH TO BE ANNEXED.

The Indian Government are no sooner relieved from the threatened Russian invasion on the north-west of the country, than they are obliged to turn their attention in an opposite direction. The King of Burmah has, under French influence, been endeavouring to extort from the British traders unlawful taxes. Against such action the Indian Government has protested, but King Theebaw believes his position to be inaccessible, and having strongly fortified Mandalay, the capital of the country, bids the British defiance. Burmah has an area equal to about four times that of the Maritime Provinces, is flanked on the west and south by British Provinces, and on the east by the several independent and tributary States of Shan. Still further east lie the half-dozen Provinces wrested from Annam by the French 20 years ago. The soil of Burmah is similar to that known by us