

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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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 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 judgment.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The manufacture of artificial diamonds has developed to such an extent as to seriously interfere with the sale of genuine stones. The imitations are almost perfect, so far as looks are concerned, but the hardness of the true diamond is lacking, hence an expert can readily detect the difference upon examination.

One solution of the Irish question has been proposed which has met with more or less favor throughout the British Isles. It is suggested that Great Britain and Ireland be divided into electoral districts, and that in addition to the twenty-five or thirty members already sent to parliament from each of these districts, twice the number of local representatives be elected to meet as a legislative body in London. Upon these local committees or boards would fall an amount of preparatory and routine work, which the Commons is now obliged to carry through, and legislation in parliament would thereby be facilitated. The scheme would certainly be an improvement upon the present plan of submitting everything to the British Parliament, whether it be of local or general interest, and it would have the advantage of keeping the representatives from different sections of the country in touch with each other. It, however, savours of centralization, and can therefore never be a popular move. The same plan applied in Canada, would make it necessary for each Provincial Legislature to meet at Ottawa, instead of in the Provincial capital.

Full citizenship was not accorded to the Jews until they arrived at the age of thirty years; and in many of the European countries the age of thirty has been adopted as the minimum at which a man can be elected or appointed to a seat in the Upper Chamber or Senate. In Britain, on the other hand, where seats in the House of Lords are hereditary, many young Peers have the right to take their places when they attain their majority. The disrepute into which the Upper House in the British Parliament has fallen calls for immediate and radical reforms, if that chamber is to retain the confidence of the people, and it is suggested that a first step in this direction may be effected by raising the age at which the Peers are entitled to take their seats, and further, by obliging each hereditary Peer to pass a strict examination, equivalent to that required for a degree at one of the Universities, before they are allowed to sit in judgment upon the Acts passed in the Commons. The reform is one that should be supported by the practical common-sense people of Great Britain, as it would prevent Lord Noodle and his beardless conferees from holding positions in the State to which their poverty in brains renders them unsuitable.

The tide of emigration from British and continental ports is twenty per cent. greater during the present year than it was during 1886, and the young Dominion is receiving a fair share of those who are seeking new homes for themselves. The Canadian immigration reports show that up to the present time forty thousand *bona fide* settlers have entered the country since the commencement of the year, and as this is an increase of fifty per cent. over those who came to Canada last year, it proves that the great Indian and Colonial Exhibition has had a decided influence in directing public attention to the great resources of our fair land.

How few of us there are who are quite content with the present. We look, we long, we hope, for that which we desire, and we patiently plod on through life, ever with an unreachd goal before us. Many a desire may have been realized, and many disappointed, but our normal condition from the cradle to the grave is that of waiting. But he who would pluck the blooms of life must learn with all his endeavors to extract the honey from the flowers that bloom to-day. Zeal, hope, energy, and ambition, are all right enough, provided they do not plunge our lives into the vortex of an unknown future, and thereby lessen our capability of enjoying the blessings that are ours to-day.

We have frequently heard of debts being compromised, by the debtor transferring to the creditor his life insurance policy, and we have likewise known of one or two instances in which the transferred policy was looked upon by the creditor rather as a burden than as an asset. There is a man now living in Washington, whose age is ninety-seven years. When he was seventy years of age, he settled a liability to a New York firm by transferring to it his life insurance policy for two thousand dollars, upon which they have since been called upon to pay between eight and nine hundred dollars. This case is remarkable, but it simply goes to show that a life insurance policy has a precarious market value.

A writer in *Chambers' Journal*, in referring to a statement made by a well-known authority, that the art of conversation was gradually dying out, and that a falling off was visible, both in the quantity and quality of our conversation, pertinently remarks that the authority could never have attended a five o'clock tea, where the quantity, if not the quality, of the conversation is no doubt equal in volume to that in which the guests at an old-fashioned tea party were wont to indulge. It is not so much that the art of conversation is dying, as that the art of listening is becoming obsolete. To be an attentive listener insures popularity among both sexes, and of this fact the young men and young women of the period should take a note.

We note two recent cases of dismissals from office, which prove that religious intolerance still holds a strong hand in the United States as well as in Great Britain. It is a curious coincidence that the two cases in point both affected ladies who were teachers by profession and believers in the Jewish faith. In the first instance, the young lady had been employed by the principal of a Texas school for the performance of certain scholastic duties, but on discovering that she was a Jewess, the principal intimated that her resignation would be accepted, whereupon the young lady at once resigned. The second case was that of a lady teacher employed in the London board schools, who, although she gave excellent satisfaction as an instructress, was dismissed, because she regularly attended the Jewish Synagogue on the Jewish Sabbath. Certainly, the breadth of our boasted civilization must narrow itself down in the eyes of most men, when viewed in the light of these facts, which display an intolerance worthy of the dark ages.

THE MANITOBA RAILWAY AGITATION.

It is seldom at once that the motive power of a serious popular agitation is discoverable through the clamor raised by the selfish and short-sighted people, who, they did but know it, are, nine times out of ten, the gulls and catspaws of the more subtle wire-pullers. So it is only by degrees that we attain some insight into the "true inwardness" of the Manitoba Railway agitation. The enlightenment in this case comes from the annual report of Mr. Oakes, General Manager of the Northern Pacific Railway, in which we find that that Line was actuated in its invasion of Manitoba by the desire to retaliate upon and injure the Canadian Pacific for the sin of competing on the Pacific Coast for business which the Northern Pacific looked upon as its own. It is, moreover, more than probable that the action of the Northern Pacific is not uninfluenced by the national sentiment to which Mr. Bayard has given utterance, to the effect that the renunciation by the United States of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 was prompted by the expectation—so flattering to American "amour propre," and to upholders of the Monroe Doctrine—that the British North American Provinces would be driven to surrender their political independence to gain free access to the markets of the Republic; which, indeed, when renewal was sought, Canada was plainly told was to be attained only by annexation. It is certain that the Dominion is more, far more, independent of the American market than twenty years ago; and even Mr. Bayard has not been able to