

# THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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## THE CRITIC.

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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.

The longest tunnel in the world, which has taken over a century to construct, has been lately completed. It is at Schemnitz, in Hungary, and is 10.27 miles long.

The condition of the poor in Digby county is a disgrace to our fair name as Nova Scotians. Our legislators should look into this matter and legislate in accordance with the facts. On this question more anon.

Previous to the elections fourteen railway projects were dangled before the eyes of the electors of this province, how many of these were mere election kites, and how many bona fide promises, will soon be made apparent.

The committee having in charge the arrangements for the proposed school exhibition in Dartmouth, have gone to work with a will, and it is expected that the exhibition will be one of the most successful of the kind ever held in Canada. It certainly will be if the teachers throughout the province co-operate willingly.

Now that the political hatchet is buried, let us move in the matter of the Jubilee celebration. It is an easy matter to make suggestions, but a difficult thing to make practical suggestions. Our civic fathers have the question under consideration and now that they have time to put on their thinking caps, we trust they will evolve a scheme worthy the combined brain-power of the city's government.

Our hard old-fashioned winters may have had their drawbacks, but most of us might well pray to be preserved from the skipping thermometer. A drop of sixty degrees in twenty-four hours, or a jump from zero to forty above in less time, is enough to give the whole community the epizoo, catarrh, bronchitis and pneumonia. No wonder our druggists smile and admit that trade is brisk.

Corporations are said to have no souls, but this is no reason why passenger steamship companies should allow their steamers to be turned into gambling saloons. Legitimate amusements during a sea voyage may be difficult to provide, but winking at gambling does not relieve the members of corporations from their individual responsibility in the matter. The evil is now said to have assumed large proportions, and vigorous measures will be required to put a stop to it.

Halifax society considers the remarks of THE CRITIC, with respect to the preponderance of the military element, as in bad taste, but admits that the opinions expressed both editorially and in correspondence, contain many poignant truths. There are still some truths to be told about Halifax society which have not yet been touched upon, but which fortunately only apply to a limited number of those whose names are to be found upon the books at Government House and at Oaklands. A satire upon married flirts or a trenchant leader upon local snobs could be written without difficulty.

An English chemist has found a way for turning to account the practically illimitable quantity of sea weed that the ocean supplies, or at least as much of it as may be desired. He boils the weed with carbonate of soda, and treats the filtered solution with sulphuric acid, obtaining from it in this manner a substance that has more viscosity than starch, or even gum arabic, and that can be profitably employed in stiffening various textile fabrics. It is also said to be excellently adapted for the making of syrups and for certain culinary uses. From the cellular and fibrous matter left after the extraction of that material—to which he has given the name of "algina"—a very good quality of writing paper can be cheaply made.

The inventive Yankee has discovered, not how to make bricks without straw, but how to make timber from straw. At the forthcoming American Exhibition, which is to open May 2, at Earl's Court, Kensington, will be a house of straw, now being made in Philadelphia. This house is an American suburban villa, very handsome and thoroughly artistic in design, two-and-a-half stories high, and covering a space of 42 x 50 feet. It is built entirely of materials manufactured from straw, foundations, timber, flooring, sheathing, roofing—everything, in fact, including the chimneys, the material being fire-proof, as well as water-proof. The inside finish will be in imitation rosewood, mahogany, walnut, maple, ash, ebony, and other fine woods, the straw lumber taking perfectly the surface and color of any desired wood. The straw villa will be devoted to the illustration of Philadelphia's commercial, financial and industrial interests by means of large photographs of the leading exchanges, banks, insurance buildings, factories, mills, schools, &c. A number of other leading American cities will also make novel exhibits of their municipal resources.

M. Henri Germain, chairman of the Crédit Lyonnais, has published a second letter in the *Temps* on the financial situation of France. In the first, he showed that in the course of eight years, from 1874 to 1882, the expenditure rose in France from 2,500,000,000 francs to 3,700,000,000 francs. "This short period" he says, "sufficed to increase the annual budget of the country by 1,200,000,000 francs. Since 1882 the amount of the expenditure has remained stationary. The war of 1870 and the invasion had already increased the burden of the tax-payers by 600,000,000 francs, as the budget of 1869 amounted to 1,900,000,000 francs. We see here a mutilated nation which has supported for a period of 12 years the burden of 1,800,000,000 francs of new charges, and, thanks to its persevering toil and wisdom, it has not swerved from its course, in spite of the improvidence of the men by whom it has been governed. At a time of unbroken peace, the expenses of France have increased by a sum almost equal to the amount of the whole budget of two great European Powers, Prussia and Italy. While the expenses of France have been increased by 1,200,000,000 francs, the budgets of the five other great Powers have been augmented in the same lapse of time in a very different proportion. They have been increased by 350,000,000 francs in England, by 200,000,000 francs in Prussia, by 550,000,000 francs in Russia, by 350,000,000 francs in Austria-Hungary, and by 250,000,000 francs in Italy."

There is a certain Mr. John Griscom in New York who has, according to the *Medical Record* of that city, a theory of his own to account for the success of the number of persons who are now fasting for four or five weeks at a time. According to him, it is all a matter of faith, and any person who will begin to fast with a full belief that it can be done without harm will succeed. "With the prejudice against fasting wholly removed," he says, "anyone in the enjoyment of perfect health could fast two or three weeks without inconvenience; but if a man should fast simply as an experiment, without a full belief that he could do it, he would kill himself." The use of Succi's red liquid, therefore, becomes plain—it is a medicine for the mind, and gives to the faster the necessary confidence. Griscom says that he has fasted for more than three weeks at a time, and his statement that the craving for food passes off at the end of forty-eight hours is confirmed by the evidence of involuntary fasters. Hunger is a much less imperious craving than thirst, which grows stronger with every hour of abstinence from fluids. The organism of a healthy man has extensive reserves in the fat which is stored in the layers of adipose tissue beneath the skin and in other situations; when the habit of drawing upon the food for the energy necessary for maintaining the physiological processes is broken during the first forty-eight hours, the subsequent drafts on the reserve are not attended by so much discomfort as during the period of transition.