

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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The short service system in the British army has had the effect of inducing a better class of men to enlist as privates, while it has had the opposite effect upon those seeking commissions as officers. It is not at all unlikely that in time promotion from the ranks will come to be looked upon with favor. At any rate, the present system tends that way, and from what is known of the individuals who have thus risen, we have no reason to fear that such a change would be injurious to the service.

The withdrawal of Queen Victoria from public life has caused much dissatisfaction among her English subjects. Ireland the Queen taboos, while her visits to Scotland only serve to strengthen Her Majesty's disinclination to take part in public affairs, the retirement at Balmoral Castle being even greater than that at Osborne. The British people are loyal and long-suffering, but such exclusiveness upon the part of the Sovereign tends to weaken the hold of royalty upon their affections.

The men in Major Low's eastern frontier column are, according to the Burmese correspondent of the *Broad Arrow*, now literally barefooted, while their clothing is almost unwearable. British troops suffered much in the Crimea, owing to the bad management of the commissariat department; but it appears almost an unpardonable offence, in these days of rapid transit, to allow our soldiers thus to suffer. Britain is never fully prepared for war until the articles of peace are about to be signed.

The Chinese Ambassador at Washington claims damages to the extent of \$147,000 for the deprecatious committed at Rock Springs, Wyoming, upon the property of Chinese laborers; and considering the niggardly manner in which John Chinaman provides for himself and family, and the miserable hut he is pleased to call his home, the amount appears somewhat large; but the Celestials may have taken a leaf from the book of our American cousins, and learned that by making an exorbitant demand, they stand some chance of getting fair compensation for their losses.

Experiments have been carried on lately on the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Co's lines with Leslie's new rotary steam snow-shovel. The head of this machine consists of a set of angular cutting blades, which revolve at a high speed, cutting and loosening the snow and passing it back to another wheel with blades which throw it some distance from the track. In drifts from 3 to 10 feet and packed too hard to be penetrated by the ordinary snow-plow, this machine cuts through at the rate of a mile an hour, and in lesser drifts much faster.

At the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War, the Legislators of Nova Scotia had already made up their minds as to the obligations of a colony to the mother state. As pointed out by Martin J. Griffin, of Ottawa, the Legislature protested "that it dreaded a separation from her (the British) government and protection as the greatest political evil that can befall us or our posterity," and asked the king to accept a tax on all commodities imported into this Province. Were these men living to-day, they would be Imperial Federationists to the core.

The destruction of American birds for purposes of fashion, has gone on to such an extent that many of the choice varieties are becoming scarce. The American Ornithologists' Union has formed a committee for the Protection of North American birds. The object of the committee is to gather information concerning the destruction of birds and the steps necessary for their preservation in the future. The diffusion of this information among the people, in order to create a sentiment in favour of the birds, the formation of bird associations, and other protective measures.

Rumor has much to account for, so far as the press is concerned. Not long since, our exchanges were publishing an item to the effect that coal-mining in China was, in the course of a few months, to be carried on according to modern methods. The Manager of the Kaiping coal mines near Peking, writes in contradiction of the statement, that the mines under his direction had been worked for the past three years according to the most improved modern methods, and that the coal was shipped by rail to Peking. He explains the Chinese aversion to railways, but states that the railroad used by his company is known as a tramway, and under that name the officials allow it to exist.

Those who have a vague idea that the warriors of former ages exceeded in physical development the men of the present, will find food for a moment's reflection in such facts as the following—The bodies exhumed from the buried city of Pompeii reveal the fact that the Italians of 1800 years ago were small and graceful, compared with those of to-day. Collections of mediæval armor show that the wearers, distinguished as they were for individual prowess, were not at all above the stature of the average man of the present day. On the accession of Queen Victoria, in 1837, the Scottish gentry gave a costume banquet, at which costumes were worn which had been actually used in the time of Mary Queen of Scots. They were not a little surprised to find that the subjects of Queen Mary were both shorter and more slender than the Scottish subjects of Queen Victoria.

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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 stockholders in the Suez Canal are making money, the receipts for tolls being at the rate of \$34,000 per day. Of the six million three hundred thousand tons of shipping that passed through the canal, during 1884, Britain owned 4,500,000, and Germany less than a quarter of a million.

Gladstone recently received five hundred dollars for an article written by him for an American journal. Five hundred dollars for fifteen hundred words, or thirty-three cents per word, is not a bad remuneration even for "the grand old man."

The *Englishman's Journal* is the name of a new monthly periodical, published in Montreal. It is practically the organ of the Sons of England, an organization most popular in the Upper Provinces, but it contains reading matter suited to the taste of all English-speaking people.

In the State of Pennsylvania, the daily attendance at school averages 2,000,000, and yet in that progressive Commonwealth where education is made compulsory, upwards of 300,000 children are receiving no educational advantages. The employment of child-labor in factories is the assignable cause.

The first move in the direction of a summer carnival for Halifax has been made. A committee to look after the preliminary work has been appointed, and if it receive the cordial support of the several athletic, aquatic, and other clubs, the success of the carnival is assured; and this means much for Halifax, both from a dollar and cent point of view and otherwise.

Says the *London Figaro*—"The uses of coal tar would seem to be endless. At a semi-scientific gathering last week in a well known chemist's rooms, the host passed around a tiny phial to his guests, containing a little of the new liquid extract "Saccharin," which a German chemist, Professor Falberg, has succeeded in producing from common coal tar. Small as the phial was, it was calculated that it contained as much sweetening power as at least 50 lbs. of sugar. Some notion of its essential sweetness may be gathered from the fact that one part of "Saccharin" added to 10,000 parts of water is enough to make that water perfectly sweet to the human palate.