

THE FIRST INSURANCE CO. AT CONSTANTINOPLE.—An Insurance Co., with a capital of £400,000, has been formed at Constantinople. The present is the first instance of the establishment of an enterprise of this kind in Turkey, and it is hoped that advantageous results may result. The Company will do all kinds of insurance business, and is already assured of a large *clientèle* among the financial and industrial institutions of the country.

DISESTABLISHMENT IN WALES.—The bill now before the British Parliament for the disestablishment of the Church in Wales has called forth some very vigorous speeches on both sides of the House. Lord Randolph Churchill, who appears to be coming to the front again, criticised the Bill as an effort to disestablish by piecemeal. Mr. Gladstone, in reply, stated that the bill was framed at the request of the majority of the Welsh people, and that when a majority of the English people made a similar demand, a bill to disestablish the Church of England in England would undoubtedly be introduced. The question of disestablishment is likely to be heard of again before it is finally settled.

THE SLAVE TRADE OF TO-DAY.—On August 1st, 1834, all enslaved persons throughout the British Empire were set at liberty, and nearly thirty years later, on the 1st of January, 1862, six million slaves were freed in the United States. France, Russia and Brazil have in turn emancipated their bondmen and bondwomen, and to-day the slave trade of the world is narrowed down to a comparatively small extent of the earth's surface. Yet in Morocco and Tripoli the buying and selling of slaves is to-day practised with as much assurance and indifference as was displayed thirty years ago in the slave marts of New Orleans. This cannot long continue. Civilization is marching forward, and Morocco, Tripoli, and many other parts of the dark continent will have to give way before modern altruism.

THE AGE OF THE EARTH.—A battle royal is just now being waged by scientific men as to the age of old mother earth. Sir W. Thompson and his school prove to their own satisfaction that four hundred million years have transpired since the globe was in a plastic state. Other geologists are prepared to prove beyond all question of doubt that six hundred million years have transpired since the earth first commenced to form. These figures simply stagger the imagination and knock one out in all ordinary calculations. To what littleness does it reduce us that the efforts of the majority of mankind are bent upon getting three square meals per day, and that we have little time to contemplate the grandeur of geological epochs which cover from four hundred to six hundred million years. If measurable time can be stretched to such lengths, what imagination can grasp the infinity of eternity.

RATHER RISK IT THAN PAY SALVAGE.—The arrival of the *Sarnia* in port on Sunday evening last was a great relief to those who were anxious as to her safety. Just here the pertinent question arises. Upon what good reason can a captain of a disabled ship, with seven hundred passengers on board, refuse assistance? From shipping men the answer comes promptly, it was simply a question of saving salvage charges. In other words, that is, owing to the exorbitant charges which can legally be made under our salvage laws, the commander of an ocean steamer thinks it his duty to his employers to take upon his shoulders the responsibility of losing many lives and much valuable property, rather than submit to the extortionate charges which would be the result of accepting assistance. It is about time that shipping men the world over should investigate the salvage laws and decide whether it is just and equitable for the fortunate to levy taxes upon the unfortunate. Certainly the principle is wrong, and would not for a moment be tolerated in the affairs of the business or social world.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.—Several correspondents of the Halifax daily papers are dealing very vigorously with the curriculum of the modern high school, and are condemning in no measured language the extent and scope of the studies prescribed. The best method as to training boys and girls is a subject that well-deserves the thoughtful consideration of parents as well as educationists. In educational as in other matters we are very conservative, and while the public may recognize that something is at fault in our system of education, it will take much thought and still more courage to so amend that system as to make it applicable to the varied wants of all classes of the community. As *THE CRITIC* has frequently pointed out, the methods adopted in our modern public schools have for the most part been evolved from the methods employed in former years to train the professional classes. In other words the training in the public schools of to-day is well adapted to the requirements of those who are to become clergymen, doctors, lawyers, and professional teachers, but it has little practical bearing upon the callings of the merchant, the farmer, the mechanic, the housewife, and the hundred and one varied occupations included under these heads. Take a given school in the city of Halifax, in which two hundred boys are under instruction. Of these it is safe to say that not more than ten per cent or twenty boys will enter the learned professions. If this is true, is it fair to the remaining one hundred and eighty boys that their school hours, day in and day out, should follow the same lines? Should not a fair proportion of the time be spent in training the eye, the ear and the hand, and some effort be made to direct their studies in that special department for which they have shown aptitude or inclination. The professions are over-crowded, but there is plenty of room in this Province for intelligent farmers, mechanics, fishermen and miners. What are our public schools doing that will enable those who are to earn their livelihoods by these callings to do so more successfully?

PROSPERITY IN THE SOUTH.—The enormous development of the Southern States of the neighboring Republic far exceeds in volume and in rapidity the development of the West. For many years after the war the South appeared to be prostrated. Her people had lost their ambition, race difficulties were constantly cropping up, and the inhabitants were slow to a degree almost beyond comprehension. Ten years after the close of the war the reaction set in, Northern capital was invested in the country, manufactures were established and mines developed. In 1882 the South was characterized as being in a state of prosperity. Her agricultural and mining products aggregated yearly \$1,200,000,000. Now note the advance of a single decade. In 1892 the value of the products named above reached the enormous sum of \$2,100,000,000. This is going ahead by leaps and bounds in earnest, and shows a development which has never had a counterpart in Christendom.

COMING HOME.—A project is on foot among a number of Nova Scotians and New Brunswickers, resident in and about Boston, to form a co-operative association upon a large scale. Good farming lands and suitable manufacturing sites, where good water power can be obtained, are to be purchased, factories are to be erected, and the farm lands and factories worked on the co-operative principle by the members of the association. Every patriotic Nova Scotian will hail with pleasure the return of these fellow-countrymen to their native land. They are skilled, enterprising, wideawake bluenoses, who have profited by the training they have received in the United States, and who believe by the exercise of enterprise and their acquired skill they can succeed in establishing good homes for themselves in Acadia. The co-operative principle has worked well in many communities. It has many distinctive advantages, and if the proposed association is managed with ability and economy, there is no good reason why it should not prove a material gain to those interested, as well as being a direct advantage to the Provinces by the sea. We require population, and if one co-operative association can be successfully established and successfully carried out, it will doubtless lead to the formation of many kindred undertakings. There is plenty of room in Nova Scotia for all her sons and daughters; and if at home they go to work with the same will and determination that they display when abroad, their success will be assured.

THE REASON WHY.—The census returns of Great Britain and the United States and Canada show a steady decrease in the rural populations, and an equally steady increase in the populations of towns and cities. In Great Britain, where land rates are high and the conditions of climate very uncertain, it is not surprising to find that the acreage under cultivation has diminished; but in Canada and the United States, where the conditions are favorable, the acreage under cultivation shows each year a very decided growth. If this be true, that there is more farming being done in our own country to-day than there was ten years ago, how is it, it may be asked, that the population either remains stationary or actually decreases? There are two reasons for this state of affairs, which will suggest themselves to thinking men and women as explanations for an apparent anomaly. The use of machinery upon the farms has enabled agriculturists to accomplish much more than they could have done prior to its introduction. Hence, while the population absolutely engaged in agricultural pursuits remains about stationary, the area under cultivation, owing to the introduction of machinery, is much greater. The second reason for the depopulation of the rural districts is due to the establishment for the most part in cities or towns of large manufacturing concerns. In former years every small country district had its quota of mechanics, such as the wheelwright, the carriage blacksmith, the shoemaker, etc., but, with the house loom and Mr. Snips the tailor, these have disappeared, and the rural districts draw their supplies of cloth, clothing, boots and shoes, carriages, carts, farm implements, and a hundred and one small articles from the town factories, which a few decades since were manufactured by their own local mechanics.

NICKEL VERSUS SILVER AND COPPER.—It is proposed, according to the resolution which has just been adopted by the Dominion Parliament, to introduce a nickel coinage to replace our copper coins and silver five-cent pieces. The reason given for the change is, that by the introduction of a nickel coinage our nickel mines will be developed and an assured market be secured. This is all very well for the owners of nickel mines, but how about the proprietors of copper and silver mines. If the proposed change reduces the consumption of these two metals, have they not a right to protest that favoritism is being shown to the nickel mine-holders. During the current year the value of the five-cent pieces to be struck off for use in Canada will be about \$65,000, no inconsiderable sum. Now this proposed radical change strikes us in two ways as being, to say the least, unnecessary. First, our silver and copper coins are as frequently judged by size as by the inscriptions upon them. At present our five and ten-cent pieces are easily distinguished, but a nickel five-cent piece will be about the same size as a ten-cent silver piece, and hence the adoption of a nickel coinage will lead to many vexatious mistakes among those who are obliged to handle small change. Again, according to Mr. Peter Iurie, Canada's enviable position in having within her borders the Sudbury and other nickel mines presaged a position in the world's nationalities of a great and prosperous future. Those who are familiar with mining matters in Canada assure us that the nickel kings are already making a good thing out of nickel mining. If this be true, how is it that nickel mining requires special encouragement, and that the adoption of a nickel coinage is regarded as an important factor in the development of Canada's nickel mines? There is a screw loose somewhere.

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