

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

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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.

Mr. Van Tassel, the successful aeronaut, will shortly take a balloon trip across this continent, starting from San Francisco. The car attached to the balloon has accommodation for 15 persons; it is 21 feet in circumference, the sides being three feet in height. The balloon has cost just \$6,000.

An illustration of how excellence in any particular article of manufacture tends to centralize those engaged in the industry, may be observed in Troy, New York. In that city, which has a population of 60,000, one tenth of the inhabitants are employed as shirt and collar makers, and 30 factories are in constant operation.

The election at Chambly has resulted in the return of a Liberal member of the House of Commons. This is very properly regarded as a Liberal triumph, and if it may be taken as an index of the feeling throughout Quebec, the popularity of the present Government is on the wane; but if the Riel issue decided the contest, the reaction will find its offset among the anti-Rielites of Ontario.

The London *Lancet* has called attention to the increased death rate consequent upon the elections just held in England. It states positively that a definite number of persons will be killed by the elections, and that this is the result of the perturbation of mind, and the exhaustion of nerve and muscle power in those participating in the political contest. If the British elections were held simultaneously upon the same day, instead of being prolonged for several weeks, the rate of mortality might be diminished.

At a time when business is unusually dull, and when the prospective taxation of Halifax, on account of the subsidy to the dry dock is likely to bear heavily upon our citizens, our city fathers propose adding an additional and unnecessary burden of \$75,000 to build a city hall. We endorse the action of the City Council in purchasing the college site, because we believe that the city should own the entire Parade block; and further, because we were told that the old college buildings could be remodeled so as to be suitable for civic purposes. Now, we are informed, that in addition to the \$15,000 paid for the property, \$75,000 more will be required for the new city hall. Surely, with the accommodation afforded by the present city building and that of the college, we might jog along for a few years without seriously inconveniencing our civic officials.

Whatever may have been our opinion concerning Louis Riel, we all agree that Gabriel Dumont was a man of universal courage and ability; and while his resort to arms was reprehensible, it was not, considering the circumstances, unpardonable. The Canadian Government has now granted Dumont a pardon; and it is probable that the bold prairie hunter will soon again be seen on the banks of the Saskatchewan.

The Sunday newspaper is regarded in New York, Philadelphia, and other great American cities, as being quite as essential as week-day journals, and yet in Great Britain and Canada none of the leading papers publish a Sunday issue. Evidently, American society is slowly but surely feeling the effect of the foreign element. Sunday is now kept as a holiday, and even the descendants of the Puritans do not seem to be averse to the European innovations.

One hundred and fifty men are now at work on the Nova Scotia Central Railway, and this time there is every indication that the work will be pushed through to a successful completion. Like our friends in Cape Breton, the people of Lunenburg County have waited long and patiently for proper railway facilities, and are pleased at the prospect of the early completion of the road. Queen's County will now have to assert itself, and claim its right to railway communication.

The federation of the British Empire cannot be considered chimerical, when we remember the strength of the administrative link which already exists. A few days ago, the Judicial committee of the Privy Council gave judgment in five cases affecting important private and public rights in India, Australia, the Cape of Good Hope, and the Dominion of Canada. When the citizens of such widely separated colonies agree to the settlement of their private affairs by the highest central court in the Empire, they virtually acknowledge that a practical bond of union already exists.

Science and religion are old enemies, but science finds in literature a new and dangerous foe. When Huxley taunted the poets with "sensual caterwauling," the poets at once accuse the professor and his ilk with gross materialism. The truth is, literature deals with Nature as it is; science delves into her secrets; literature finds in the old grist mill, with its dripping water wheel a poetical creation in which Nature supplies the motive power; science, which is more practical, points to the application of steam and the use of machinery as being, if less practical, more useful to mankind.

Medical witnesses in courts of law frequently object to "kissing the book," fearing, as they state, that disease may be contracted by so doing. It is noteworthy, that in Scotland, any witness can, by request, dispense with kissing the book, and be sworn with his hand uplifted, provided he declare that he considers the same an oath. We are not familiar with the law upon this point in Nova Scotia, but we think that the objections of the medical witnesses would be strenuous, if they were called upon to kiss one of the time-honored Bibles to be found in the courts of this Province.

The position of affairs in Burmah is causing general uneasiness in military circles. Theebaw's overthrow was brought about so easily and with so little opposition, that British supremacy in Burmah came to be regarded as a fixed fact. The truth seems to be, that Theebaw's subjects, tired of his tyrannical rule, were willing to have him deposed; but this having been accomplished they no longer regard the occupation of Burmah by British troops with favor. Two new regiments have been ordered to proceed at once to Mandalay to reinforce the army, which is at present not strong enough to overawe the Dacoits.

In a late issue of a Russian official gazette, it is announced that Russia will pursue her historical policy, regardless of European interference. "Russia," it says, "is mindful of the many Christians now held in bondage by the Mohammed usurper, and that she will press on until the crescent now to be seen on the dome of St. Sophia has been replaced by the cross." This phase of Russia's historical policy is new to most of us. Her greed for territory has long been understood, but her interest in the Christian population of the Balkans might be regarded as sincere, were her government more solicitous respecting the welfare of the Christians already resident within the Czar's domain.

Lord Salisbury and his Government are impaled on the horns of a dilemma, so far as the Irish question is concerned. If coercive measures are adopted, the Unionist-Liberals will unite with the Parnellites and Gladstonites to defeat the Tories. If a Home Rule measure is introduced, the Unionist-Liberals, the bigoted among the Gladstonites, and the Ultra-Tories, will combine in opposition. The middle course is still open to the new Ministry. To grant Ireland such a measure of Home Rule as will in no wise endanger the unity of the Empire, will, doubtless, be the aim of Lord Salisbury and his colleagues; but the Home Rule question must for a time occupy a secondary place, while affairs in Turkey, Egypt, and Burmah, are being considered.