

THE CRITIC.

The Welfare of the People is the Highest Law.

1 50 PER ANNUM. }
SINGLE COPY 3 CTS. }

HALIFAX, N. S., DECEMBER 10, 1886.

{ VOL. 3.
{ No. 60.

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THE CRITIC,

Published every Friday, at 161 Hollis Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia,
BY

CRITIC PUBLISHING COMPANY.

Edited by C. F. FRASER.

Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance. Single copies 3 cents.

SAMPLE COPIES SENT FREE.

Remittances should be made to A. M. FRASER, BUSINESS MANAGER.

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.

It is stated on good authority that during the recent strikes in Chicago every married man voted against quitting work, but as 75 per cent of the employees were unmarried, the counsels of those who had wives and children to provide for were unheeded. Marriage is a conservative influence which tends to prevent radical and ill-considered action.

The French Chamber of Deputies is evidently convinced of the advisability of taxing bachelors, but it yet remains to be seen whether the fine for celibacy will drive the bachelors from their state of single blessedness. Fortunes, not affections, control French marriages, and the impecunious man and the dowerless girl have indeed poor prospects of conjugal bliss.

The King of the Hawaiian Islands should be a happy man. He receives \$85,000 a year for the discharge of his kingly duties, and his opportunities for spending money are in a great measure limited. If the King were Governor-General of Canada, or President of the United States, he would find the salaries attached to these positions very meagre, and would soon strike for higher pay.

The many uses found for wire netting have led to its greatly increased production of late years. In 1842 its consumption in Europe is stated to have been only 10,000 yards per annum, while at the present time it is estimated to be about 40,000,000 yards per annum. In its production some 420 machines are employed, 300 of which are in operation in Great Britain, 100 in France, and only 20 in Germany, which latter country, curiously enough, is a large producer of the wire used in the manufacture of netting in England.

The Provincial elections held during the year have been phenomenal, records have counted for naught, and side issues have absorbed the attention of the electors. The “Riel” cry has greatly weakened and may possibly yet overthrow the Conservative Government of Quebec, which by both parties was previously admitted to be one of the best governments the Province had ever been blessed with. The “no popery” cry now threatens in the same way to weaken if not to destroy the Mowatt administration, which, although a Liberal government, has for years had the support of many independent conservatives. What have we in this country to do with race or religion, provided all creeds and all people, irrespective of their origin, are equal in the eye of the law.

Is federation to be the outcome of the growing demand for home rule in the several sections of the British Isles? Ireland and Wales are now clamoring for more direct home government, and Scotland is following closely in their wake. Canada has its federal, and New Zealand and Australia their provincial governments, but these are all in a degree subordinate to the Imperial Parliament. Are Ireland, Scotland and Wales to sink to the level of colonies, or are Canada, Australia and New Zealand to rise and form with them and England one grand united “British Empire.”

We expect rather too much of our party leaders. To them we look for the principles which are to lead to party success, and upon their shoulders we throw the obliquity of defeat. Sir John Macdonald and the Honorable Edward Blake stand out in bold relief against the political horizon, and from them the Conservatives or Liberals take their cue as to the course to be adopted or the plank to be laid down in the party platform. Are these leaders infallible, and their dictums beyond dispute? To the partizan it would seem they are, but to the independent thinker the idea that one leader is always right and the other invariably wrong appears absurd.

We talk glibly of the corruption which influences political contests in the neighboring republic, but we need not go outside of the Dominion for examples of this kind. In the late Quebec elections thirty Liberals, thirty-one Conservatives and four Nationalists were elected as members of the Provincial parliament, of these the seats of nineteen Liberals, eleven Conservatives and one Nationalist are to be contested. Wholesale and unblushing bribery is alleged to have been practised by both Tories and Grits, and if this be true the complexion of the Quebec Legislature will depend upon the decisions shortly to be given in the courts.

The thirteen New York boodle aldermen, who banded together to sell the franchise of Sharpe's Broadway Railway for a half a million dollars, pocketed \$20,000 apiece out of the transaction, and thought to keep their magnificent secret as dark as the tomb, but the present condition of these men should be a warning to boodle-grabbers. Of the thirteen worthies, one is in the State prison, three are in exile, one is undergoing his trial, two are dead, one is hopelessly insane and two have turned State's evidence. The remaining three have not yet been convicted, although their complicity in the fraud is beyond question.

When the people of St. John take hold of any matter they realize the necessity of united action. Liberals and Conservatives in our sister city are vying with each other in their endeavor to make St. John the winter port of the Dominion. Imperfect terminal facilities, limited wharf accommodation, and the prevalence of fog upon the Bay of Fundy, are brushed aside as trifling obstacles, and with one voice the people say, “St. John *must* be the winter port.” Had we in Halifax a little of this patriotic adhesiveness, St. John might shout herself hoarse to no effect, but then you see we have not, and so our great natural advantages count for naught.

The Bulgarians still have a lingering hope that some turn of the wheel of fortune will again enable Prince Alexander to become their ruler. We confess, were it compatible with peace, we should like to see the patriotic people of this Balkan State have their hearts' desire granted. Prince Alexander was a successful ruler in times of peace, and during war proved himself to be a commander of no mean attainments. He sinned in that he did not make his policy subservient to that of the Russian Czar, but the sin is one which would have been committed by any independent man of character who had a proper regard for the rights of those over whom he had been called to govern.

MARINE INSURANCE.

Underwriting, or insuring against Marine risks, is of ancient origin, and is credited by some writers to the Phœnicians, but Marshall, in his able treatise on the law of Insurance, combats this idea; and while admitting that there is room for doubt, concludes that it originated with the Lombards, the name given the great Italian merchants of the 12th and 13th centuries.

Whoever is right, the large army of underwriters who thrive so well, while to the uninitiated they “toil not, neither do they spin,” may lay the “flattering unction to their souls,” that the business has all the respectability that age alone is supposed to give. As successful underwriting must have always lain in the knowledge that the vessel proposed for insurance was sea-worthy, it naturally follows that the business of the ship surveyor is also of great antiquity. A 1 at Lloyds is a familiar expression, which is recognized as the nautical equivalent for “first quality,” but here information on the subject usually ends Lloyds Register of British and Foreign Shipping, the institution granting the title in question, lately celebrated its jubilee, and the present seems an opportune time to give a short account of its origin and the work in which it is engaged. The primitive underwriter was probably a man well posted in shipping, who was capable of working his own surveys. As business increased, he probably employed experts to do his surveying and kept tabular lists of the vessels rated.