

Review.

The Hindus in British Columbia.

While the Hindus in the Canadian West were few and scattered and under no form of organization, operators were pleased to employ cheap labor, nor did we hear much of the workingman's resentment against the weakening competition. The operator could use, drive, discharge them at his convenience, perhaps even deport them if it were more convenient, the workingman regarded them as know-nothings who through incapacity had reduced themselves to a starvation wage and incidentally damaged the wage markets for their betters. An unspeakable lower being he believed the Hindu was, but not a menace. Now all this is suddenly changed; the Hindu has been organized and has invoked the flag, and lo! there is one sentiment common to all Western people who look upon Canada as their home. "Cheap Labor" was never our real objection to the Hindu though we allowed it to stand as a summary of our objections to Hindus, Japs and Chinamen, just as Bill Nye could find no better phrase for the expression of his distrust of Ah Sin who had out-cheated him at euchre; "We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor."

We see now how easily that difficulty could have been removed. Ah Sin could have been taken into the Unions where he would soon have learned to level his wages up to an equation with the whites. No, when Nye "went for the Heathen Chineese" he reached a better expression of his real mind than the cheap labor formula. It is the East as East, which we, Bill Nye and Jack Canuc do not want.

Nor is this sentiment a mere vulgar prejudice. It is distinctly felt in legislative halls and in Editorial sanctums though exigency may tempt men to phrase it out of existence with such phrases as "The brotherhood of men" and, inconsistently enough, "The control of the dominant races." A "dominant race" can "assimilate" with security only when they do not chance to be ethically dominant.

In this sense assimilation is going on between the "dominant" American and the "inferior" Italian to the great advantage of the American who gets more from the levelling than he loses. Here the prejudice was only sectional and unreasonable, for there was nothing in history to suggest that we should loose by mingling with the Latin race. But when we go back of History to the one fact certain amid the thousand guesses of Ethnology, we realize that there are family groupings of the human race marked off by characteristics older than anything else we know of man, and of such antipathy that the attempt to fuse them invariably results in the loss of the virtues of each of the combining elements and the perpetuation of their vices. The face of things may change before the end; but for the age in which we live and for the ages for which we have historical record, "East is East and West is West."

Meanwhile, the situation is embarrassing the votaries of Imperialism mightily, for the Hindu is a citizen of the Empire. The crisis is not yet upon us solely because the Empire does not exist, as an Empire, but only the scattered elements out of which the Imperialists hope to see it formed. This importunate Hindu question cropping up in British Columbia and in South Africa is the first real test of the meaning of their language, and gives us to see that Imperialism, as now mooted, means the extinction of the ideals of all the "inferior races" and the harnessing of all the colonial forces to the ambitions and interests of "dominant races." Now, I trust we shall be able to keep the Hindu where he belongs, and to keep this type of Imperialist there too.

Mexico.

The Mexican question as distinguished from the Mexican war, arises out of rival oil interests. Great Britain is increasingly using crude oil for fuel on battle-ships, and looks forward to the time when oil only shall

be used. The supply from Russia is threatened with exhaustion, Mexico has extensive oil areas and Great Britain through *quasi* private efforts secured large oil concessions from Huerta. Standard oil with its world wide monopoly naturally does not wish the Mexican wells to flow too freely. Huerta's concessions could be invalidated only by the outlawry of Huerta, therefore Standard Oil desired his outlawry. Even crude petroleum has a way of impregnating everything about it with its own quality, and Standard Oil being refined oil, is much more insinuating. Then comes an academic president who has burned much mid-night oil and who is consequently, however unconsciously, impregnated with the odor of the friendship of the corporation which has so liberally endowed the higher education. Standard Oil interests found Carranza with his "Constitutionalists" amenable to reason, and President Wilson refused recognition to Huerta, not because he ran through a big oil deal with Lord Murry, oh no; because he did not represent the free electoral voice of the republic and because he was strongly suspected of the murder of Madero. Whether ever any president represented, whether President Wilson represents the free choice of the democracy over which he rules we do not know. Neither do we know to what extent, if at all, Huerta is chargeable with the death of Madero, for our knowledge of what then happened is gathered almost entirely from press reports written by the light of Standard Oil. There has got abroad however a pamphlet entitled "A Square Deal for Mexico" and signed by 26 Americans, residents of Mexico City, by which it appears that Huerta stood loyally to the "Constitutionalist" Madero—elected, by the way, with 23,000 votes out of a population of about 14,000,000—till the Senate, to check the homicidal insanity of the latter, ordered Huerta as a commander of the general forces in Mexico City to take charge of the government. The same authors point out that the peons who constitute the overwhelming mass of the people of Mexico are less fitted for the duties of citizenship than the Negroes of the Southern States, and express their surprise that Wilson, who acquiesces in the withdrawal of the franchise

from the latter, should base his refusal to recognize Huerta upon the undemocratic manner of his election. It is to say the least not improbable in the words of the pamphlet, that civilization and savagery are at death grips in Mexico, with President Wilson on the side of savagery.

Our difficulty in understanding the Mexican problem is an elementary one: we do not apprehend the character of the people. France and Spain both undertook the assimilation of the American Indian. France's experiment ended with the passing of her control in Canada. Spain's lasted longer and gave us the Mexican such as he was before American exploitation had touched him, an unambitious Indian full of good nature, docile, cheerful, hospitable, impressionable. We have seen nothing like him for our English speaking forbears solved the problem by teaching the Savages the meaning of the "dominant race."

Suffragettism

Suffragettism is damping down. England certainly made a good hand of that business. What the suffragettes desired was to torment mankind when they had no other power of impressing them. A country less read in Shakespeare and less acquainted with his types of screamers might have taken the matter more seriously; England called it an amazingly good joke. There is some comfort in the reflection that these viragos are a childless set and that the type may ultimately disappear.

Strikes

In the earliest volumes of RED AND WHITE we had our say on strikes, mine disasters, and the high cost of living; but these symptoms—for they are symptoms of the times' cirrhosis have not abated in consequence. The Economists have raised these spirits but they cannot lay them. We may as well face our destiny with what courage we can. There are yet backward places where the industrial octopus has not grown beyond human control and where corporation laws do not

not grind the faces of the poor. There, a man might yet live under bright skies by clear waters, and breathe pure air. There, might he wrap his blanket about him and lie down to a refreshing sleep, pillowed on the bosom of mother earth and vigiled by shining stars. There, might he awaken to thank the Great Giver of these good gifts, and to gather berries from the hills, and eggs from the wild birds' nests. But no railroads lead to these remote haunts and we cannot make our way without them. Here must we stay and choke amid the conveniences of life—everyone of which has put a thousand wretches to the wall. What would you have? you say; "We cannot go back on progress." I know that pean well enough—McAndrew's Hymn—and it is quite unanswerable to our time. But if anyone is not of the time some things he can do; to wit, say his prayers, try to secure a small holding of his own where he can live of the product of his own labor, try to get government back into the hands of one man—a tyrannus—for the tyranny of man is human but the tyranny of law is diabolical; keep of public platforms, for you cannot scratch the itch of this age's opinion without infection. Sing and play the fiddle and try to recover the art of telling stories that will send the children to bed in wonder. If you do these things and some others, which you can have on application, you'll be happy and happier still in the knowledge that you have done what lies in you to put off a little longer the end, when our Doomsday Book shall be written full of laws from which the spirit of Christianity has departed.

The strike is as old as wage earning. Wherever one works for the pay of another he can choose his time and strike. Under the guild system of the Middle Ages, apprentices, taught, housed, fed and cared for by the master who worked with them in his own shop, had a happy life of it, learned all about the business and were thus prepared to set up a shop of their own. The master's friendship and the apprentices interest combined to make the strike impossible. All labor tended to become skilled. Their works in beaten metals and in rich textiles survive

till this day. Now the mass of workmen differentiated in squads to assist at this or that point the operation of machines which they do not understand, are to say the least, not encouraged to learn the business or to set up shops of their own. The master they do not see, sometimes do not even know by name. They know only that he is probably at some swell resort wasting in tasteless and sinful riot the enormous earnings of his plant ; or if he is of the miserly kind, is passing those earnings on to bloat some other monopoly which is raising the cost of living to themselves. How they are housed and fed, and what their souls are like they are well assured he does not care. Then the inefficient had the opportunity of becoming somewhat efficient, now they are pushed to the wall. Gratitude makes no demand upon the workmen, interest rather lies in the way of crippling the monster which they see coming round by another way to devour them ; therefore they strike. There is no remedy in Law for this ; there is a remedy in Morals, but the application involves so vast a change from the idols of today that I do not dare to hope for it. The last wild remedy remains yet to be tried and the Universal Socialists are ready to experiment. Does any one need to be told that if we had the ethical conditions under which alone Socialism could be anything but a beaurocracy of thieves and blackguards, we should already have the remedy of our present woes ?

Home Rule and the Zeit-Guist.

Ulster cannot read the signs of the times. The influence now operating to bring about Home Rule are too far-reaching to be offset by any local interest, real or imagined. Some time ago the Veto power of the Lords lay across the line of movement of these forces. We can scarcely think of anything more strongly entrenched in the conventions of British political life than the power of the Lords, scarcely anything so unquestioningly accepted as their widespread social control. But the Veto is gone and the Social predominance is fast going while the democratic strength, which pushed

them away, so far from being exhausted by the conflict has only been awakened to a realization of itself.

The Lords were always opposed to Home Rule, but their sword was taken from them before the decisive fight came on: and while we do not think it likely that every one who voted Lloyd George's revolutionary budget and the smashing of the Lords understood himself to be voting, by implication, for Home Rule, we are persuaded that a referendum on this issue if it revealed any departure from the late line of cleavage that departure would not be in the direction of an approach towards the position of the Lords.

We need not however, as British subjects, plume ourselves upon the spirit of justice which characterizes the politics of the Old Country at this juncture, though we may well admire the adroitness of the men who are directing her destiny. England is not bestowing a gift; she is buying off a menace. With the pressure from without increasing in a ratio which almost hurries British diplomacy, it is but the instinct of preservation which directs the present movement towards a confederation of all units that own the flag. Ireland gets Home Rule because that Confederation cannot be brought about except by the autonomous units—an assent not likely to be elicited while this ugly object lesson of an undesired and too intimate union remains.

The Lords are gone. I rather regret the fact. That they were an Anachronism is evident, indeed in a very real sense they have been an Anachronism at least intermitantly since the rise of the Commons; but it yet remains to be seen whether they had outlived their usefulness. An Anachronism is merely something opposed to the spirit of the times, something opposed to the rush of forces hurrying us to new and untried conditions. England at least has some reason to thank the Lords for they have at times pulled back the Ship of State when it was slipping into unknown seas.

Ulster too is an Anachronism, quite utterly opposed to the ideals of our day; not however because of caution regarding the untried but because of a too selfish adhesion to the tried and the advantageous. There is one very natural solution of the Ulster problem. If

they are ready to sacrifice everything to remain immediately under the Crown they can do it and satisfy an old claim of justice at the same time. Let them change places with the weavers of Manchester and the dock laborers of Liverpool and Glasgow. These will be glad to come home again and those will be enabled to appreciate the other point of view. I respectfully submit the plan to the consideration of Sir Edward Carson and Premier Asquith to whom the Management will please mail copies of Red and White.

The Decline of the Drama

Is the American Stage deteriorating? William Winter an old stage critic holds the affirmative and Brander Matthews a Columbia University Professor the negative. The election of each seems at this distance unprofessional, for the elder men should have his hand colored to what he worked in and the University professor should cling to the old and be chary of the new in Literature and Art. But then, William Winter is a man of letters and Brander Matthews has been a long time dabbling in art criticism. Mr. Winter in "The Wallet of Time," a recently published book of reminiscences, declares and maintains that the Drama is becoming a "brazen portrayal of the depraved;" Mr. Matthews, in the "New York Sun," as assertively declares that the American Drama is on a higher plane than ever before in its history, and that if we have not really got the tall trees—which he considers an open question—we certainly have a rich underwood to protect them. The former thinks the "Problem Play" has made the Drama corrupt and corrupting; the latter glories in the "fidelity" to the inner life of the times which is specially characteristic of the young American dramatic writer.

There is a very distinct satisfaction in reconciling antimonies and "it afford me very great pleasure" to point out that while Mr. Winter is certainly right Mr. Matthews may well be, and probably is, right also; for the one is speaking of moral deterioration and the other of advance in "realism" and technique. Mr.

Winter does not believe in "Art for Art's Sake," Mr. Matthews evidently does.

The struggle in this form is such a long standing scandal that intervention from whatever quarter can scarcely be deemed unwarranted.

In every form of art there is inherent the germ of moral decline, and that germ is not slow to develop wherever the control of higher ideals and aims is removed. Music and poetry easily fall of and decline into maudlin pathos, insipid sweetness and morbidity, and these are so many heralds to moral decline. Sculpture and painting which bear a less equivocal message are withheld somewhat by the conventional decency of the time and place of production. Dancing in its "Art" form is ancilliary to music or more strictly a sequel to it, marking, as it does, the point where the wild beast, which yawns and licks its chops in decadent music, begins to rouse itself and think of prey.

It is because these forms of art, and all forms of art whatever, appeal to us through the emotions and trust for their success to the power with which they can move us, that they fall away into riot the moment they are cultivated for their own sake; for then the artist does not ask himself to to what purpose, but only how deeply, we shall be moved; and he makes foray beyond the range of harmonious and ordered emotions to snatch a thrill from the falsettos of hysteria or the sotto-bassos of savagery. Next, and to vary the figures, these ultra-violet and ultra-red areas are not only raided, they are explored and exploited, until we have the contortionist in Sculpture, the post-impressionists in Painting, post-Wagnerism in Music—Tango is the dance of it,—while in the drama there is the specialized abomination called the "Problem Play." Now the mapping out of these new areas, won alongside the region of the legitimate Drama, has given work to many, an enormous amount of ingenuity has been concentrated upon the setting forth of every curious detail, and we may concede to Mr. Matthews that technique has been augmented. But then "any apprentice about the

schools of Emelius could soon pick up the trick of giving the almond oblong finger nails and composing the hair." He might even go beyond his master in these details; but to conceive and produce a harmonious total was the test. Failing this, his technical dexterity could not save his name to time. What useful purpose could such polishers and tinters serve if there were no one to block out the figure; and how can Professor Matthews claim advance for the Drama, on the ground of our abundance of technique, when plot, character and passion have all gone wrong.

Indeed I can scarcely conceive of a more cruel betrayal of the cause of the modern Drama than Professor Matthew's defense of it. Unless memory utterly fails me Mr Matthews is, or at least lately was, professor of Dramatic Literature in Columbia, and that position calls for a knowledge of the history of Literature of which I cannot suppose him ignorant, and which should have warned him that this agonizing exploitation of detail has not ever characterized the advance or the full tide of literary movements but their receding wave. And as if this were not enough to tell us how useless are all warnings when opposed by the empressement of a purpose he expressly repudiates the distinctive feature of the great Drama altogether, I mean its impersonality.

"An increasing majority says the professor" go (to the theatre) to see what Shaw or Barrie or Thomas has to say"....."The time has come when the divorce between Drama and Novel has ceased, plays are written to be acted and also are published to be read in the library"....."We now have a body of young men who have mastered technique of the stage, who can tell a story, who have something to say and know how to say it." There could scarcely be made, in so few words, a more complete acknowledgment of the fact that the Drama as a distinct art form has perished, or if you prefer it, has been absorbed into the novel. I need not here stop to remark that the publishing of dramas "to be read" does not belong to our day only.

It practically synchronizes everywhere with the

appearance of the regular Drama on the stage. Even if the Professor wishes us to understand him as saying that plays are now written with a view to their being read "in the Library" without the interpretation of the action, he still falls into an oversight in point of fact. Richard II, for instance, is rather more satisfactory "in the Library" than on the stage.

This distinction is immemorial in dramatic criticism. So also is the judgment that the "Closet Play", as it is called, to the degree in which it is a Closet Play, departs from the character of true Drama. But the whole cause of the Drama is abandoned in the acknowledgment that people now go to hear what the playwright has to say. Before the Drama lost its distinctive character by absorption into the putrescence of the modern novel people went to the theatre to hear what Hamlet or Jaques had to say, to hiss Gloucester, to see Othello. For the Drama was not then an ingenious plea for the forbidden, woven out of squinting morality and abnormal "psychology"—foreign words for our Anglo-Saxon selfishness. It was, rather, the presentation of worthy motives to pity for noble men and of terror at the catastrophe which the turning of the wheel brought upon them, not for any initial sin of their own but for some frailty which made them human. Such a Drama was essentially religious.

We cannot conceive of it as divorced from a faith, stronger than mere persuasion, that we are here to be tried and judged by a power which is older than the laws of nature, older than destiny, and strong to weild them as a fan to sepearate the wheat from the chaff in our hearts. Such was the Greek Drama while the Greeks believed in Zeus, such was the English drama before the faith of cultured Englishmen became a mere residue of opposing probabilities; but such shall not be our drama again till this generation is decentured and unselfed and is purged in tribulation to receive the teaching of a prophet.

I do not wish it to be inferred that the corrupt Drama, with its goat's feet and pointed ears, did not

freely parody the nobler form and frankly and foully laugh at all the decencies. Professor Matthews knows that well enough; he should know too that it remained to the pagan insouciance of this later age to attempt to vindicate it as a legitimate form of Art, and through it to teach pity, not for the frailty, but for the sins of men, and to confound an already sufficiently complex social code with the ethics which one of our "Psychological" artists has formulated as "the divine right of the passions."

It is with a sense of relief that we turn from this stifling atmosphere to breathe the mountain air of the Shakespearean Drama. Here the characters are no longer puppets through whom the smart sayings of the author are delivered, but recognizably noble individuals who speak the universal thought of that type of humanity of which he has designed them to be the exponents, so noble and so high indeed, that in the contemplation of them we are raised above ourselves only to feel all the more poignant pity that such sovereign natures shall be blasted by the infection of some human taint in the very element which makes them great. Baseness and intrigue there are in abundance, nor are these thwarted by an *ex machina* revelation. On the contrary they compass the ruin of the beautiful creature, whose exalted character is their reproach,—while their own condemnation is spoken audibly, not in a post-script aphorism but in the very contexture of the plot, and they are handed over naked to the scorn of time. Such a drama is at once true to life and a support to morals. But it can flourish only in an age when life is noble, and when morals are esteemed.

I do not suppose that our itinerant stock companies come to Charlottetown because their repertoires are too highly colored for New York. Nevertheless their work is generally disedifying. Once or twice I have taken the assurance of the forelopers who arrange for these productions, only to discover that our standards were not the same. I am ready to believe that they spoke in good faith; but I should have known that these blaze-habitués of the stage, almost as irresponsible to the questing of passion as to the call of virtue, would not be excessively nice about the means by which they drew full houses.