

Review.

DURING the early hours of 1913 our eyes were directed towards London, where Turkish and Balkan gentlemen were engaged in a warlike debate over peace. Matters were moving splendidly slow when wires from Constantinople told the world that a new party had come into power by the short route of revolution, and negotiations for peace terminated suddenly. England then, not wishing to lose our attention, began sending out accounts of frequent glass-breaking, sundry bonfires, destruction of such sacred things as His Majesty's mail and the blowing up of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's new house. Throughout the course of this benevolent activity the Home Rule Bill, after moving through various stages of amendment and debate, passed the Commons by a generous majority. It then came before the Lords who, by making a muster roll of their "lame, and halt, and blind," gave a creditable vote against the proposed reform. They have the power to refuse assent and probably looked on this as being a last chance of serving their own peculiar interests—we all have the satisfaction of knowing they can defeat the measure only once more and then the Upper House becomes the Lower House and Lords become commoners.

The early days of the year saw France pass through the ordeal of a presidential election which resulted in the choice of M. Poincare who now directs the destinies of the French Republic. As yet there has been no noticeable departure from the policy of former governments: the general trend of affairs, however, seems to be reactionary. There is apparently a feeling that the movements of the years past have not produced the desired results. Excepting the Balkan countries, Europe has been remarkably quiet. A strange silence hangs over the more powerful

countries. It may be the calm that portends a storm or the supreme caution that marks safe action. All realize that slight misunderstandings might be the undoing of nations: prudence and care, therefore, are most necessary when all nations, although hating peace, yet dread the horrors of war.

Our neighbors to the south saw the year open quietly. There was some slight discussion over the Panama Canal tolls, considerable doubt as to the personnel and movements of the Wilson Cabinet and a laudable prying into the life and doings of New York's police force. We all found cause for edification in the fact that the investigation revealed an honest man, one of the higher officers who had been above and beyond the touch of graft. Up to the present there has been no word of his promotion. In a surrounding in which honest men are scarce our first thought would be that advancement should follow remarkable uprightness: political life, however, reminds one of David Harum's estimate of small farming—as not being calculated to bring out the best traits of human nature and keep them out—an honest man might be quite unable to rise to the position held by Lieutenant Becker.

Mexico lately developed a state of eruption of phenomenal volcanic activity. Under the bright sky of the South, revolutions are a most frequented route towards a change of government. The system, though having much to recommend it and being the means frequently employed in the days of virile antiquity, is not in favor at the present time when commercial interests make the stability of government so necessary, and so frequently lead to intervention by foreign powers. The present trouble has been marked by an outbreak of cruelty of rather alarming magnitude. Unless the political life of the Central and South American republics be put on a better basis by the adoption of constitutional guarantees for life, liberty and property, these countries will eventually lose the independence they now abuse so nobly.

In Canada, our life, like the winter, has been little

marked by storms or disasters. The Navy Bill introduced by Premier Borden is yet before the House, but not getting the attention at first expected. The Maritime Provinces are receiving, at the hands of our federal authorities, more attention than they have for years: public works of great utility and importance are being commenced in Halifax and St. John and the car ferry is to be carried through. This province saw some hundreds of its farmers assemble in the capital for a two-weeks course in agriculture: this, we believe, is a move of more lasting benefit than the continuous speech-making that for years past constituted agricultural meetings throughout the country.

Military Christianity.

We have grown so accustomed to such expressions as "applied Christianity," "muscular Christianity," etc., that few of us feel any incongruity in the idea that Christianity may be also of the military stripe. This new type of religion sprang into being in one of our Canadian towns, whose inspectors of schools threatens to reform and regenerate the youth of the place by military training. When boys and young men are taught to move "à la mode militaire," to handle a gun according to rule and shoot straight at a gallery-practice target the country will be safe, the morals of the community bud and burgeon, and crime disappear. The ordinary man doubts all this: knowing, as he does, the terrible truth of Kipling's lines that "single men in barracks don't grow into plaster saints": hence we see no relation between militarism and morality. About a century ago men thought to reform the world by education: to-day we find ourselves with a generous number of educated villains whose intellectual training makes them more dangerous criminals, and we have reason to fear that the military Christians of the years to come will trample on the laws of God and man and when brought face to face with the police will be quite able to use a rifle and defend themselves—we shall have banditti of the type now standing trial in Paris.

The town in question evidently needs some reform in school matters, for the Chairman of the Board of Education of the place was lately convicted for being interested in a firm whose business it is to publish immoral books for the benefit of the country's youth. Were militarism sufficiently established in the place, these books might be more easily distributed among the school-boy companies and we might even see the divisions of our school army attend "en masse" such immoral theatres as the benevolent men of the place might find it in their hearts to provide. It is somewhat difficult to see how the military spirit can make any body of people more respectful of the rights of other when its very spirit is the cancelling of the words: "Thou shalt not kill." Militarism is only another tentative substitute for Christianity, and like other inventions of irreligion will be soon replaced by some more modern fetish. I have no intention of condemning the physical exercise introduced by military drill, but might not some useful work be made to give the same results: work that would give our youth sufficient exercise to ensure good health and at the same time develop habits of industry. Militarism by over-emphasizing the need of exercise fails to suggest the obvious fact that work, good, honest, hard work, made men and women in the days of our fathers and grandfathers: the same means might be profitably employed today. The worst feature of the cult is that public money is being spent on a system that makes for destruction rather than construction. The end will be conscription, which Frederick the Great introduced by setting up the cadet system in the schools of Prussia, and judging by notions adopted in military circles lately the same will soon be proposed here. We have now come to a point where we might halt and see where soldier-worship and boy-scoutism lead. They suggest the worship of strength and violence, the breaking up of the home and home influence, the making of young barbarians, and from these evils we should deliver ourselves. We should be wise enough to profit by the mistakes of others, and many of the European

countries are now paying dearly for militarism and its sequel.

Weathercocks.

My friend Falstaff complains of how this world is given to lying and were he alive today he could express himself in the self same way. The worst feature of our mendacity is that we lie even in our truisms: we say, for example, "What's done can't be undone," "The child is father to the man," "As you make your bed so must you lie in it," all of which and many more of similar purport are splendid lies. We reach the very depths of falsehood when we dignify anything and everything changeable by comparing it to a weathercock. We take the poor weathervane as the noblest example of weakness and turn-coatism, forgetful the while that he is the most splendid radical of whom this world holds record. Yon rooster perched on the peak of your barn, or the arrow surmounting your flag-pole, constitutes the most uncompromising opposition on the earth: they are the only things that continually stem the gale, oppose its fury and outlive its strength. The weathercock is always "agin the government" and not even a salary-grab bill could make him move with the party in power. With him there is no thought of popularity, no wish to follow the lines of least resistance, of running before the gale: that work is left to the cast-off things of the earth.

The great pity of modern life is that we have not more weathercocks: more men and women and political groups and newspapers that would oppose, resist and fight against the popular moves of the day. Time was when we had weathercocks in politics: heroes who strove against policies and proposals that augured bad for the country: now the whole party fall in line and obey the orders of the party whip—a most appropriate name. Just at present a very gale of imperialism is sweeping over the country and very few rise to oppose its fury: not only is it unopposed, but newspapers are called into being to show the unenlightened of the land the beauty and grandeur of

the great dream of imperialism. Those newspapers might devote their space to telling a few plain truths about our political life. They might show us how much was contributed for the last election and by whom the contributions were made, to whom the money was given, the average cost of votes and the number of cubic yards of liquid argument required to convince the free and enlightened electorate that Sergeant Buzfuzz was superior to Corporal Busby—such items would be doing something to make our life worth living.

Imperialism is a catchword, an illusion, a deception of the dangerous sort. It is political free-love and as deadly in politics as free-love is in social life. As a general rule the more a man talks of the Empire the less he thinks of his homeland; for the imperial idea destroys love of country, making its victim a sort of citizen of the world with allegiance to some shadowy nowhere instead of devotion to a real, tangible somewhere. The great lesson gleaned from the past is that scattered empires are shortlived monsters, whereas kingdoms and republics are enduring realities, and the imperialist of the day should consider whither his ideals lead. Without being inquisitive one might ask who is financing this outlay of sentimentality. There is a financial backing somewhere, for in these days of commercialism men do not risk their money on mere shadows. The time is long past when people sacrificed wealth for an idea or a principle—they are, however, willing to invest where dividends are forthcoming and would not invest were there no hope of profit. There is more behind the movement than its devotees and protagonists have yet made public, and for the future welfare of ourselves and our country we should get to the bottom of the move and see whether it is based on grace, gall or graft—the last named is probably the cornerstone of the structure.

A Score and Three.

Thirteen is a number of notorious ill-luck and twenty-three may suggest destruction. One of our

papers lately gave the pictures of twenty-three men who were called the rulers of Canada. A catchphrase clergyman at once found materials for a new sermon which he gave with vigor. The good man in his earnestness forgot to raise the number to twenty-four by the inclusion of Sir Hugh Graham, proprietor of the Montreal Star, the self-constituted stage-manager and "factotum" of Canada. For the past few years Sir Hugh has been directing the affairs of the country with a devotion and persistency that forces even his friends to doubt his disinterestedness. It is rather a well-known fact that Sir Hugh has not been working for the good of his health for the past thirty years: had the greater part of his income been given to charity he would not be among the rulers of Canada today.

We have then in the year of 1913 two dozen men who rule this country, and claiming, as we do, a population of nearly seven millions, a person might ask what the rest of the people are doing. For years past we have been criticising the United States for allowing a group of combines to control the land. It is generally admitted that combines are a curse and a menace: it is evidently time that we looked about to seek some protection against what makes for wrong elsewhere. When any twenty-four men be called "Rulers of Canada," we have heard the cry "Rocks ahead" and should change our course. If our present tariffs be the fertilizers of the crop of trusts some change should be made. A charitable person might suggest that these Pharaohs supply the \$35,000,000 for the British Navy, for they are all imperialists. The ordinary tax-payer would forego the pleasure and willingly give the rulers of the land an opportunity of showing their love of country.

Such vast accumulations of wealth and power are a decided danger, giving a small body of men almost unlimited power over voters of the whole Dominion, and giving these same men the means of contributing to election funds. Besides controlling the votes of employees, these men can purchase others who unfortunately cannot be deprived of the votes they so

readily sell. People still speak of responsible government, when they mean government responsible to two dozen men. We prate of imperialism and allow the growth of irresponsible emperors at home—we are so busy looking after the welfaré of others that we cannot think of ourselves. Rip Van Winkle has become our patron saint, the twenty-four our uncrowned Cæsar, the politician speaks glibly of the intelligent and enlightened electorate and the electors breathe forth the wonderful words: "responsible government."—Earthquakes wanted!

A Vanishing Goddess.

From afar the immigrant sees over New York harbor Liberty welcoming him to the land of freedom and inside that harbor the ex-President of a neighboring republic will not be allowed to land. A liberty-loving citizen of one of our Canadian towns lately wrote a letter to our largest daily, asking that a law be passed prohibiting the use of garlic, and a model suburb of Montreal endeavored to prevent a religious community from building a house within the limits of the municipality—still we shall continue to boast about liberty. It is hard to understand why the land that welcomed Kossuth cannot admit Castro, or why a people who tolerate cigar and cigarette smoke to mingle with the fumes of soft-coal should protest against the odor of such a wholesome vegetable as garlic or why any town should protest against the building of a house by law-abiding people who are willing to pay their own bills. Were the land mine I should certainly claim the right of erecting the type of house that suited me, that suited my purse and served my purpose, and should resent the interference of the city council as much as it would be resented were they dictating the style of my clothes or the shape of my shoes. We hear so much about the tyranny of the older days that we are prone to think the tyrant a lost species: forgetful the while that we eke out an existence under ten-thousand petty tyrannies which under various palatable names restrict the liberty for which man

was born. Our towns make building laws, presumably for the beautifying of the city, but in reality to exclude the man with the three-figure salary. We have the laws prohibiting the killing of certain wild animals within certain periods: but the protected beasts can invade Smith's oat-field or Jones' cabbage patch and work his wild will—the injured men cannot protect themselves by doing away with the intruder or by claiming damages from the government that protects the intruder. Under various masks and divers sweet names our liberty is being "cribbed, cabined and confined" and the day may not be so far away when we will be involuntary vegetarians or unwilling wearers of khaki—we may, perhaps, be compelled to live in glass houses for the satisfaction of neighborly curiosity. When men begin asking law against the poor foreigner who now eats garlic, some other gentle spirits may come forward demanding that we all be compelled to eat limburger and sauerkraut. I feel sure the law could be engineered through a modern parliament: all it will require is the tribute of breath from a few loud-mouthed people and poor Liberty will be forced to vanish.

The Mills of God.

"The Mills of God grind slowly;" one of our Canadian Mills has been grinding loudly. The Mills in question is an Episcopalian dignitary who in a recent charge to his people endeavored to press on their minds the necessity of supporting the Borden Naval Policy. In my slight acquaintance with the Bible I must have missed the name of Premier Borden, nor can any mention of naval policies or contributions to imperial exchequers be recalled—the writers of the Holy Book even forgot to mention the Dreadnought which is rapidly becoming a deity among what are called the Anglo-Saxon peoples. Tacitus speaks somewhere of one of the German tribes who represented the god Isis under the form of a warship—the Dreadnought worship of the present may be an atavistic trait showing our descent from the Suevi.

It is really lamentable that the inspired writers were so thoughtless about the needs of our day. Had they looked "into the seeds of time" and written a few words that could be construed to support the policies of the political parties we should be much more willing to study scripture: the Bible, however, was not intended to be the politicians' guide for the year 1913. Instead of the necessary words "They shall make all preparation to slay mankind," we find "Thou shalt not kill," and when we might expect an exhortation to worship a steel Leviathan we find a clear-cut condemnation of graven images.

In all certainty a bishop of the present day might find in Canada quite enough to attract the attention and activity of his people without invading the political field. The mayor of Calgary recently told the world some few facts about the moral outlook of his home town and the Ministerial Association of Ontario are authorities for the terrible statement that, during the past year, 26,000 girls had disappeared from trains between New York and Montréal, Montréal and Toronto, Toronto and Detroit. The day has come when we must grapple with serious problems at home, problems that we may be able to solve by making an early beginning. Instead of spending our time on far-away benevolence let us rather face the difficulties already growing up around us as the result of our rapid expansion. Moulding each year a few hundred thousand immigrants into Canadian citizens is no small task, especially when so many of them come to us moulded wrongly. The difficulty will not be with the poor foreigner, as we call Galicians and Poles, but with the poorer foreigners from the purlieus of the large towns of England—people who have inherited poverty and its many sequela, especially the inability to adapt themselves to conditions of life and labor in a new country.

A Mean Trick.

In following out the tortuous course of political life in the past, one meets with some disgraceful things, and we seem to be improving in our meanness. Only

last November President Taft was distanced in the race for the White House and in the month of January the people of Londonderry had the audacity, the littleness, the nothingness, to elect a Nationalist member to the British House of Commons. That bit of small-souled work showed us that the people of, what the world calls, Belfast have seventeen members in favor of Home Rule and only sixteen who oppose it, and at the same time tells the world that King Carson and his friend A. Bonar Law have been telling the public things that were not so. Of course many of us knew all along that these men were not telling the truth, but it must be extremely humiliating to be called a liar in public, and in a position where defence is impossible,—one can almost feel like sympathizing with the new recruits to the Ananias club of politicians, ancient and modern. It is really a bad thing for the world that Belfast has gone Nationalist. Our papers have lacked fire and vigor ever since Londonderry made its ignoble surrender. We had almost come to feel that the people of the North of Ireland were being badly used. We already heard the measured tread of marching soldiers, and the “sniders squibbed in the jungle” of Belfast where valiant men, so we were told, were making ready to resist oppression, tyranny and injury—then came the defeat of the Unionist candidate and the “war drum throbbed no longer” to the fiery eloquence of Carson, the discredited hero of a lost cause. The election may teach us a lesson. The modern mind is frequently swayed by noise, and on that principle the opponents of Home Rule acted. They ignored the logic of the fact, and indulged in wild talk to deceive some and intimidate others—the bluff failed this time, but it may work again, and we may yet hear of Carson and his followers making their same reckless statements which another leader of the opposition may reiterate: let them remember Londonderry and its meanness in 1913.

Action and Reaction.

Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown and in danger is the hand that grasps one. When all rulers experience the changeableness of public opinion, in greater difficulty stands he who attains to power on a wave of popularity. In this latter category stood the late President of Mexico. Only a short time ago he led a revolution against Diaz, and won by making promises of reform. The reforms were badly needed but could not be carried out as soon as the office-seeking public wished—thence followed defection, revolution and murder. Madero was apparently working honestly for the betterment of his country and was moving as rapidly as the conditions of the people allowed. His failure is due neither to cruelty, nor dishonesty, but to the fact that he was “too full o’ the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way,” for that way lieth towards tyranny. Had Madero been a Cromwell or a Frederick the Great, he would yet be swaying the destinies of Mexico and, until the country produces a man of iron, revolution will be repeated at regular intervals for the simple reason that revolution is ever followed by reaction. The need of the country is a strong man; a man who by stern discipline will build up around him an army able to hold in check the revolutionary juntos the country has ever produced—the Latin mind does not naturally run towards tyranny. The country was given representative government before the people were capable of using it properly and they must yet learn the lesson. The man who faces the direction of affairs there must needs be brave and daring because the country has now a population of about 14,000,000 who must be ruled, trained and educated before they can distinguish between liberty and license, and that work must be begun in the schools where a younger generation must grow up. ‘Tis doubtful if the country will produce such a man and in his absence outside powers will step in and take over a place of unbounded wealth and unlimited opportunity. Foreign nations may already have cast longing eyes towards

the favored land, and may be fomenting the trouble we now witness. Such thing things have been done in days past and we have small reason to suppose that honesty is stronger than in the days when Russia fanned the flame of discontent in Poland whose lands she coveted. The historian of the future may find evidence of money and energy spent in backing revolution and murder in Mexico and we may be taught to believe that Madero was sacrificed to the greed of outsiders. In the heat of the trouble the truth is with difficulty secured: but Mexico must be ruled by a strong man or be absorbed by a strong power.

Psychology of the Suffragette.

A great deal of the trouble now going on in England might be avoided did the statesmen of the country give the movement even casual consideration. The destructive activity of the suffragettes is not the result of social and political aspirations, but the mere outbreak of tendencies we should have noticed and expected because they have been our glory and our boast. We have for ages back boasted of our Anglo-Saxon blood, our Anglo-Saxon ancestry and our Anglo-Saxon institutions; we should, then, be willing to accept the tendencies brought us by our lineage. Caesar and Tacitus, our earliest authorities on the Germanic races, make it quite clear that the women were as warlike as the men. The marriage ceremony in which the wife gave the husband weapons of war in return for a trained and saddled cavalry horse had in itself a military meaning: the wife was to bear and dare both in peace and war the same dangers as her husband. The women accompanied their husbands to war, remained in the rear and by their cheers urged their heroes to fight. Did the warriors attempt to fall back or retreat, they found behind them a living wall they could not break—their only hope was victory or death. These women apparently found pleasure in war, experienced agreeable sensations, else they never could be witnesses of the

combat. In the middle ages and modern times Continental travellers frequently noted the great interest in war shown by the English women, who were more fond of describing the hurly-burly of battle than even the men—within late years they have been more interested in politics than their husbands and sons. Long centuries of this excitement has produced a systemic condition that calls for sensations of the sort their remote maternal ancestors enjoyed on many a German battlefield. In recent years, owing to continued peace, this martial excitement could not be experienced: hence the women of England were forced to seek for themselves the necessary emotions and they found it in mimic warfare. The breaking of glass, for example, may recall the battering down of walls, the small crime of arson suggests the burning of cities, and noisy meetings are a near approach to the shrill shouts that forced the old German heroes to fight bravely or die nobly. The struggle for women's rights is particularly Anglo-Saxon, as evidenced by the names of the leaders: the Pankhursts, for instance, must be closely related to the Weinwursts and Miss Wylie is probably descended from the Weile family. The movement does not seem to be common to the Celts, French or Italians: it is then a hereditary trait, the outcrop of Anglo-Saxonism, and should be handled as such. The English statesmen might organize armies of fighting women and hire them to the Turks and Bulgarians or they might even convert the German war-scare into a German war, and let loose the Amazonian guard under Generaless Pankhurst, and allow the suffragettes to enjoy the pleasure of fighting. No one should make the mistake of supposing these women want to mark a ballot, they want to fire bullets and in the name of common sense allow them this small gratification.

In case that concession cannot be made, grant them equal rights: give them the same punishment as would be meted out to any over-ardent enthusiast of Home Rule who should destroy his neighbor's property,—equal rights and no exemption should be a

good rule for the present day, and let the rights include penalties as well as privileges.

Suicidal Mania.

Of recent years we have heard a great deal about the growth of suicide both in Europe and America. Some weeks ago the police discovered, in one of the large towns of Europe, a suicide club whose members, mainly servant girls, choose by lot victims whose duty it was to end their own lives. Our papers and public men seem to deplore this state of affairs and yet encourage it by giving countenance to opinions of murderous humanitarians who would kill sufferers to relieve them of pain: in addition to this we give unstinted praise to men whose actions are really suicidal. For the past few weeks our journals have been wasting encomiums on a party of Antarctic explorers who came to grief in an attempt to search the dangerous regions around the South Pole. This work is suicidal enough to please anybody and therefore should not be encouraged by ill-placed laudation. As well might we praise the sacrifice of the man who stood before an express engine to secure exact knowledge of velocity and momentum, or the genius who, to investigate the scientific side of combustion, should take a reserved seat in the inner regions of an active blast-furnace or a coke oven. One might excuse our papers for devoting space to attempts at suicide but our powers of toleration snap when parliamentarians grow eloquent over self-murder: honorable members on both sides of our Commons paid generous tongue-tribute to the bravery of the dead and the Premier stated that the widows and orphans of the explorers would become "Wards of the Empire." I also pity orphans and widows. I am, however, inclined to blame the men who took up useless and unnecessary work which was almost certain to cause death. What has been accomplished by centuries of polar exploration? It has not set a limit, nor saved a life, nor relieved one family from the pangs of poverty nor enabled us to perform more easily one of our necessary duties.

On this continent disease and accident cause annually thousands of deaths that might be averted, did our government take any interest in the people, whose welfare they are supposed to guard, and whose money they manage to squander. Every country in this world has widows and orphans, whose bread-winners lost their lives while performing work beneficial to their country and its people, and we have yet to hear of their dependent ones becoming wards of the country or the Empire: but when men lose their lives in useless exploration we are asked to praise their foolhardiness and contribute to the support of their wives and children. Such talk is the veriest bombast, maudlin worship of the fool-killer, the raising of a vice to the level of a virtue, and when we have gone that far someone should utter a protest.

A. B. McDONALD

S. D. C. March 19, '13.