

CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. P., Ottawa.—Your M.S. to hand; too late for use this week.
LARRATT W. SMITH.—Reply to your question next week.

LOCAL OPTION.

To the Editor of *The Week*:

SIR,—When Parliament permits its enacted legislative wisdom to become subject to local approval, it practically re-delegates its power to local influence. It gives up one of its essential functions, as acting for the good of the whole circle, in favour of any one section or series of sections, and before so doing it must pre-suppose each section more capable than itself of considering, not only which is good for itself, but what is good for the whole, in adopting or rejecting its legislation. That is, in matters which of necessity affect the whole, and differing in this from ordinary municipal law. Parliament originally emerged from chaos, and it re-creates chaos by setting county against county, city against city, and each divided against itself. And it cunningly escapes censure for crude legislation and imperfect administration by throwing the onus of failure upon the people themselves. And it accomplishes this, singular as it may appear, by not going far enough on the new lines. It leaves the acceptance or rejection of its measure to the will of a local majority within certain defined parliamentary extensions. Why should there be any such arbitrary extensions? Why not grant the privilege to wards in cities, and sections in counties? This would intensify chaos. But why should not the power be granted to hundreds of populations living closely together? Why not to a dozen, why not to half a dozen, to three, to two, to one? When we arrive at number one as the extremist extension for local option, we once more breathe freely—we are all friendly again to go on as before. And if Parliament wishes to know what the voice of the people is it must ask us all in the usual way, and act accordingly. And it must also, as Mr. Leonard Tilley admits, take into account that in any radical change of policy it must be supported by a majority strong enough to carry out its policy. A fraction over one-half could scarcely put the other half into prison for non-obedience. Power of accomplishing must always accompany any practical, common-sense LEGISLATION.

FROM GLOOM TO LIGHT.

Some years after the Restoration, an aged cavalier—whose sons had died fighting for the lost cause, whose estates had been confiscated during the Protectorate, and whose claims for past services had been ignored by the worthless court of the second Charles—entered Lincoln Cathedral to pray.

EXILED from Hope, all gloomy seems my way,
O'er my dark life despair holds bitter sway
As, bending low beneath my cross of sadness,
I seek with aching heart the aisles of prayer;
For, oh! methinks the rays of joy and gladness
Can never pierce the gloom of that despair
Which, ever growing, seems to be
So truly all in all to me.

And, as I slowly pace the column'd aisle
That semi-cleaves this grey, historic pile,
The vast Cathedral, bath'd in golden glory,
Reflects fair evening's carmine-tinted sky
Athwart the chancel-window's painted story
Of One who for our surety came to die.

As the soft trilling of a wayside stream
With gentle murmur soothes the wanderer's dream
Fall the loved tones of Him, the meek and lowly,
Born on the anthem's sweetness to mine ear,
Telling how He, the Lord of Heaven, most holy,
Is, if I only trust Him, ever near.

How small my sorrows seem, compared with those
Whose awful ending bore dark Calvary's woes.
My early lands and home I lost. With sorrow
And a grudging heart I saw them pass away;
But He resigned a throne whose glorious morrow
Welcomes the heart that scorns its King to-day.

Slowly the waning streams of golden light
Merge in the shadows of descending night,
As Hope, at Faith's low call, comes softly stealing
From the fair mansions of the truly blest,
And, as I bend in supplication kneeling,
Soothes all my gloomy doubts and fears to rest.

What care I now, though outward shadows fall,
For now I know, ah me, so well, that all
Those dreadful mists of gloom and doubt which shaded
The landscape of my heart, so long o'ercast,
Beneath the sunshine of His love have faded
In the receding outline of the past.

* * * * *
As the weird gloaming weaves the shroud of day,
His parting breath in silence passed away;
And the sweet organ's grandly solemn pealing
And soften'd cadence swell'd unnoticed where
The moon's pale beams of silver fell, revealing
A suppliant in the attitude of prayer,
Whose soul had fled this vale of woe
To meet the loved of long ago.

HERWARD K. COCKIN.

THE SCRAP BOOK.

FROM A PROSCRIBED BOOK.

IN those countries where the Parliament is a truth, and the monarch is only a figurehead, patiently endured, as in England, Belgium, and Italy, the laws and decrees proclaim lies, when they are issued by manifestations of the royal will, for they are the results of the Parliament's will and take effect whether the king accepts them or not. The Cabinet ministers lie when they make use of the customary phrases: "On behalf of his Majesty we recommend," "By his Majesty's command," "We have the honour to recommend to his Majesty," "so and so," for they know, and every one knows, that the king has not recommended or commanded any thing of the kind, and that the "so and so" recommended to him is usually an established fact before they lay it before him, entirely independent of his wish or decision. Every one knows, too, that the monarch is obliged in reality to obey without question the designs and decisions of the Parliament and Cabinet. The king lies in every word in his address to Parliament, when it assembles, if he speaks in the first person, for the address is not at all the expression of his own sentiments, but a document whose composition is due entirely to others, who place it, when finished, in his hands, and he reads it as a phonograph repeats the sentences that have become spoken into the receiver. The king lies when he accepts the fiction that the prime minister is the man of his choice, in whom he has the utmost confidence, for he is not at liberty to follow the dictates of his own wishes, but must select and conform himself to the person pointed out to him as the man for the place by the majority of the people's representatives, although he may detest him in his heart, and vastly prefer some one else.

The king lies again when he signs, and allows to go forth as the expression of his will, the documents, appointments, etc., which are brought to him by the Cabinet ministers merely for his signature, and which are sometimes exactly contrary to his genuine wishes and convictions.

In those countries where the will of the people is really constitutionally enforced, the position of the monarch is ignominious, but the fiction of his supreme authority is so skilfully concealed, and the external honours and personal advantages and pleasures directly connected with the maintenance of his royal position, are so numerous and important, that we can understand how men of self-esteem and little sensitiveness can condescend to assume the role of a puppet whose tongue and limbs are set in motion by the strings pulled by the members of the Cabinet. But in those other countries, where the Parliament is a political imposition, the part of the puppet is played by the representatives of the people, and it is much more difficult to understand how men worthy of the name can find in the petty gratification of their vanity any compensation for the humiliations which, as members of the Legislature or Parliament, they are obliged to endure.

We can understand how a king in his magnificent palace, in his becoming uniform, in receipt of his splendid allowance, only hearing the most exalted expressions of respect, "gracious Majesty," "illustrious Highness," and so on, falling like snowflakes about his ears, surrounded on all sides by luxury and the most exaggerated outward forms of homage, we can understand how he can forget that the will of the people is the actual sovereign, and that his glittering pageant of royalty would vanish entirely if he were to attempt to play the role in earnest. But how can the members of Parliament in a sham limited monarchy consent to make themselves ridiculous by speeches without effect, gestures without purposes, and votes without results; this is what we cannot understand. Neither the undisguised contempt of the prime minister nor the calumnies of the press subsidized by the Government, deter them from their task. Can it be that they are sustained by a secret hope that some day the Parliament may become in reality what it now only appears to be. But such a hope or desire is impossible to any one who accepts and believes the fiction of the divine origin of the monarchy. But in fact there is no middle course. An absolute monarchy on one hand, a republic on the other. Any compromise is a fraud and a lie, and a Government which calls attention to the dilemma deserves the gratitude of all enlightened minds. But it ventures much in doing so. It lays itself open to the attack of some politicians who might say, "If logic is trumps, then the Government is the chief liar and hypocrite. If the will of the Emperor is the will of God, how dare you set up a Parliament that even in appearance seems to limit the imperial will by the will of the people. Either you are convinced that the people are entitled to a voice in the management of the country, which means that you believe in a republic, or else you have not the slightest intention of admitting the right of the people to assist in the government; you intend to do as you please in everything, and the Reichstag to be a nonentity in every way as regards the management of affairs. In this case the entire parliamentary elections, discussions, votes, etc., are a conscious lie. Either Republicans or liars. There is no middle course."

In addition to its political side, the lie of a monarchy has also its purely human side, against which reason and truth revolt as much as against the former. The fiction of the augustness and supernatural attributes of the monarch humiliates and degrades in their own eyes all those who came into personal contact with him, for they laugh at it in their hearts. The spectacle of the king's existence has always been a comedy to those who had any share in it. But each one played his part with zeal and apparent conviction of its reality; he never stepped out of his role, and while on the stage, he took every possible pains to present the spectators, from whom he was separated by the fiery barrier of the footlights, with a poetic delusion which he never allowed to fade, and only the few confidants who were admitted through the small stage entrance were allowed to see that the