

CURRENT COMMENT

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

December's issue of the Round Table maintains the high standard this periodical has set, and in placing before its readers the best available advice concerning the affairs of the Empire, and of the world as touching the Empire, does an absolutely essential work without undue bias or partisanship. The Round Table does of course support the British connection, but it does so with moderation and judgment. It accepts Mr. Duncan Hall's "main conclusion that some further mechanism for co-operation is necessary to keep the peoples of the British Commonwealth a united force in international politics." It gives its reasons—"that the continued unity of the British Commonwealth of nations is necessary to the freedom of its peoples and to the progress of mankind," and that, because it is the freest and most responsible Commonwealth in the world it "arouses the hostility and jealousy of less advanced civilizations, and has the duty of helping to protect and educate in the arts of self-government those backward peoples who are not yet capable of standing alone." It is this very attitude however like that of Joseph which annoyed his brethren that leads the "backward peoples" to say, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" It is difficult for the other nations to believe in the disinterestedness of the British Commonwealth as the Round Table expands their policy. The only answer to this objection is the demonstration of absolute disinterestedness which would be necessary to convince these critics, and it must be confessed there is a serious difficulty here to be met. The second article is on "The Passing of Woodrow Wilson" for whom it foresees posthumous fame. Woodrow Wilson has been an austere First Citizen, but no more austere than Washington. He has been an obstinate executive, but no more obstinate than Lincoln. Like them, he has been reviled. Like them, he has been charged with treason in office. Like them, he has been a supremely lonely man. Of his successor it says: "The Senator is a man fifty-five years old, of mediocre ability, of limited vision, of no experience in large affairs, and of a reactionary turn of mind. He has apparently no grasp whatever of economic problems. He has shown no social sense except of a paternalistic kind. He has given no indication that he understands the infinite complexity of foreign affairs, or that he has any knowledge of the obscure sources of war. He is a kindly dignified gentleman, with a faculty of bringing men together." All the Conservative influences in the country are put on horseback by his election, and he himself would have it so. "These who wish to understand Egypt, international finance, the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the problems of the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand cannot ignore these perspicacious and perspicuous pages.

THE MENACE OF 1921.

In this present year of 1921 we are likely to experience the full force of the reaction after the war in social abolition and agitation. The tremor of violence which still shakes humanity as the result of the German outbreak of 1914 has found its last responsive vibration in the opposite pole of autocracy among the anarchic, the desperate, the criminal, Lenin in Russia is the Lucifer of this inferno, and whatever idealism or alleged philanthropy he or his followers profess his actions work out to exactly the same results as the fine phrases and "kultur" of Wilhelm II. The tendency has been to ignore Lenin or to find in him the possibility of great human and social achievements. In three years he has wrought a worse desolation in Russia than Wilhelm did in France in four. What is not understood is that these forces which work through human agents are just as recognizable as magnetism or electricity. They are evil as plague, pestilence and famine are evil. They are regarded as scourges, but man himself is responsible for their existence. They are born of ignorance, selfish-

ness and greed, and man himself must counteract and neutralize them by enlightenment, wisdom, unselfishness and kindness. The evil forces are no more welcome under Lenin than under Wilhelm, but many are deluded and persuaded into following the autocracy under the guise of the lower which they rejected under the guise of the upper class leadership. It ought to be a sufficient warning to the world in general that the first thing that Lenin's followers do is to kill all the educated and intelligent people in their community. This insurrection against the sanity and sense of a nation is a clear indication of the lunacy of the leadership which Bolshevism honors. It is characteristic of lunacy that every lunatic thinks all the rest of the world mad. Lenin is determined that the whole world shall be infected with the Russian lunacy. His agents are at work in every country and there are enough foolish people everywhere to give them a large following. Revolt and rebellion are advocated and in our close-packed civilization it is easy to sow the mind and prepare the harvest of the whirlwind. General Hoffman, who sent Lenin into Russia as a means of breaking down Russian resistance to Germany, now confesses that he had underrated Lenin's power for evil and "neither knew nor foresaw the danger to humanity from the consequences of this journey of Bolshevism to Russia." The danger now is imminent and must be faced and overthrown this year if the world is not to be plunged into a chaos of violence and barbarism. Lenin is quite frankly pushing his policy of overthrowing every "bourgeois" government, and of using the same governments where he can to advance his aims. In Egypt, in Turkey, in Mesopotamia, in Persia, in India, as well as in the western nations, not omitting the United States and Canada, this subtle and destructive propaganda is being established and everywhere the ignorant and the inexperienced are being lured into antagonism against the better informed and the initiated. Lenin cannot expect to carry on for another year without some reinforcement of his authority, so that it is reasonable to expect this year such an effort on the part of Bolshevism as will summon all the forces of law and order in Christendom to withstand.

FINANCIAL CONFERENCE ADVICE.

It is perhaps less widely known than it ought to be that the International Financial Conference at Brussels three months ago was emphatically a peace conference, and used the strongest argument against war that finance knows—the world cannot afford it. "The statements presented to the conference show that, on an average, some 20 per cent. of the national expenditure is still being devoted to the maintenance of armaments and to preparations for war. The conference desires to affirm with the utmost emphasis that the world cannot afford this expenditure." Next is recommended the earliest possible abandonment of all "uneconomical and artificial measures which conceal from the people the true economic situation." Production to the limit, both on the part of capital and of labor, was insisted on and a willing acceptance especially by the wealthy, of "the charges necessary to remedy the present situation." After this came "the duty of every patriotic citizen to practice the strictest possible economy," such private action being "the indispensable basis for the fiscal measures required to restore public finances." The last recommendation was to the "States which have been created or enlarged as the results of the war," which practically includes all the Allies and those in the League of Nations, that they "should at once re-establish full and friendly co-operation and arrange for the unrestricted interchange of commodities in order that the essential unity of European economic life may not be impaired by the erection of artificial economic barriers." Among other points noted are that in future "loans that are required for urgent capital purposes must be met out of the real savings of the people;" the first step to raising fresh money must be to fund the undigested floating obligations; inflation is in fact an unscientific and

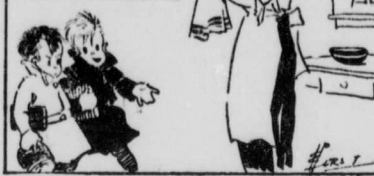
HOME SWEET HOME
by Earl Hurst



MOTHER, DIDN'T YOU SAY I COULD GO TO THE ZOO IF I PASSED ALL MY EXAMS?



I BELIEVE I DID DO EVERY LITTLE BOY OUGHT TO GO THRU THE ZOO



GEE WHITIKER! THAT'S NOTHIN' MY FOLKS ARE GOIN' T LET ME GO THRU COLLEGE WHEN I GET THRU SCHOOL!



ill-adjusted method of taxation; the effect being to intensify the rise in prices; the conference did not recommend any attempt to stabilize the value of gold "and gravely doubts whether any such attempt could succeed;" central banks of issue should be established where none exist; credits, except for considerations of humanity, should not be accorded by governments directly, but credit is widely needed and for extended terms, between countries prepared to co-operate. It would appear that if people worked as hard in peace as they did during war we should have plenty of everything, but it is necessary to work as hard for production as it was for destruction. A pamphlet containing the Report and Resolutions of the Conference has been published by the League of Nations Union and may be had from Hodder & Stoughton. It is essential that the people everywhere, if they do not want civilization to come to ruin, should study the report and learn to cut out the war stuff, face the facts, trade together with the least possible restrictions. Thirty-nine nations were represented in the conference, the Canadians being Messrs. G. C. Cassels, J. M. Gundy and Hugh Guthrie.

FIUME FREE OF THE POET.

Gabriele D'Annunzio has made enough trouble for Italy and South Eastern Europe to rank him with the idiot who burned the temple of Ephesus. He appeared to be inspired by an Anthony Hope novel or a comic opera plot, and he has sacrificed enough blood and treasure to save the lives of the starving children of Austria and Hungary. His romantic idea of delivering Fiume appears to have been based on a misapprehension, and the people of Fiume were well considered in the work like blazes, pay taxes honestly, especially the wealthy, save like Hetty Green, and that the nation's arrangements made for them and except for a few were quite satisfied to fall in with the plans proposed. The Mayor of the city after the surrender to General Caviglia, supplanted D'Annunzio in the negotiations and it is to be hoped that all parties will remain satisfied. An open door and free entry to the port with a guarantee against disturbance should be sufficiently satisfactory terms for any city which flourishes chiefly on its transient trade, both of imports and exports. As the gateways of the states in its hinterland it is important that no barrier should retard their access to the sea, and this point has been met.

TRUE WEATHER PROPHETS.

Plants and animals are the weather prophets nature has provided man with. Dandelions always fold up their leaves when rain is at hand. So do clover, trefoil, and the pimpernel. The apparent aimless braying of donkeys is a sure indicator of rain. All animals show uneasiness when rain is coming. Frogs croak with a loud, hoarse noise, owls screech, peacocks scream, and ducks and geese are unusually noisy. This is said to be due to the relaxation of their nerves by the damp air, which makes them uneasy. Cats sneeze and wash their ears when rain threatens, although the deluge may not come for four or five hours later. Dogs get restless, and are in and out of the house an hour or so before rain comes. This is said to be due to irritation set up by the damp air. It is somewhat extraordinary, but man is the only animal that cannot naturally perceive approaching rain unless he happens to have rheumatic tendencies.

Some of the larger ocean-going vessels are equipped with steam fire-fighting apparatus.

Public Health Talks

(By Dr. J. J. Middleton)

Provincial Board of Health. Questions Pertaining to Medical Subjects Will Be Answered in This Paper if Letters Are Sent to Dr. J. J. Middleton, Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

Mentally defective people in large numbers are roaming at large throughout the Province, spreading disease and reproducing their own defective kind. Abundant proof of the seriousness of this situation has been obtained in Toronto and other cities by social service workers who are making extensive investigations along the lines of mental hygiene. Hereditarily undoubtedly plays a big part in this condition of defective mentality, for although there are exceptions, it is nature's habit to reproduce in kind. How then can this state of affairs be rectified? A scheme based on Medical Examination to prevent mentally defective people from getting married, is being thought out, but this would only deal in part with the problem as the question of illegitimacy has to be considered. Many of the illegitimate children born have mothers who are mentally below the par of average mental capacity, as social service workers find out in dealing with such cases. This, no doubt, applies also to many of the fathers of such children, and a tremendous task thus confronts those who are endeavoring to improve the condition of humanity both mentally and physically.

Can Be Improved.

One point, however, that should be emphasized is that whatever part heredity plays in the child's mental condition at birth, its mentality no less than its physical make-up, can be improved by scientific care and feeding during the early months and years of its life. The human brain develops very rapidly in infancy and childhood, much more rapidly than the body, and hence the urgent need for sufficient nourishment of the right kind, during this critical stage of human life. At five years of age, about the time when a child begins to go to school its brain capacity has to a certain extent already been determined. From this one can readily see how important is a scheme of child welfare that will include the supervision of infant feeding from the time the child is born, and so counteract in some degree any defects of heredity.

School children with low mentality

are a great hindrance to those who are normal. Not only do their habits and actions tend to lower the morale of other children, but the class work is hindered by the co-mingling of the two grades of intellect. There should be in every school district a special class for mental defectives who could be dealt with separately by a teacher specially trained in mental hygiene. These children would include those who are dull or slow-witted, those who are mischievous, those who are getting into mischief which seems to take them unawares. The classes of school children might indeed be further graded by scientific methods, and progress noted as the result of special training.

More Variety Needed.

For children of school age and older, there is not at present a sufficient number of variety of institutions to accommodate the cases varying from mental defects to imbecility. For imbeciles and definitely feeble-minded there is provision made—public opinion has recognized the necessity for it, but for the higher grade of mental defectives who in many respects are bright and seemingly intelligent, nothing has been done. And yet this class of people is almost as definite a menace to the community as is the criminal. The Toronto Psychiatric Clinic, conducted by a group of physicians, psychologists, and a certain association which takes a scientific interest in mental abnormalities, is being conducted at present in the out-patient's wing of the Toronto General Hospital. The cases come from the Public Schools, the Juvenile Courts, Industrial Homes and various other institutions throughout the city, and provide excellent clinical material. But this only touches the fringe of what is to be done. The problem is Provincial-wide, indeed it is a national and international problem. Science can go so far, but public opinion must be awakened to come to the support of science before very great advances can be made. Besides, the problem will have to be approached from the preventive as well as the curative aspect, and many difficulties will have to be surmounted.

THE ORACLE SPEAKS, NEW YEAR'S PROPHECY

MEDIUM "REVEALS" THE FUTURE OF WORLD AFTER CONSULTING STARS.

Serious political and labor troubles, with President Wilson's life endangered, are part of America's fortune for 1921. Madame De Telema "revealed" at Paris recently. Madame De Telema, successor to the president Madame De Thebes, after long study of the stars, predicted today what is in store for the world next year. The fates have mixed bitter medicines for most of the nations, she said. She found these things in sight: England—Series economic and social difficulties. Belgium—International worries. Italy—A revolutionary attempt. Spain—A most troubled industrial situation. Portugal—A revolution. Turkey—Disembodiment. Russia—Increased disorder with the present regime imperilled and Lenin's life endangered. France—Further division of the Social party; difficulties over labor and religious questions. In the spring will come an improvement of financial and commercial conditions and a decrease in the number of divorces. A change of Government will come during the summer and possibly a capture of the alliance now ex-source of wealth and fame.

stant, which will seriously embarrass the country for a time. In the fall there will be grave financial difficulties with a menace of bankruptcy and a statesman's life in danger.

WHERE WERE THE TIN ISLANDS?

Where were the tin islands? asks the Children's Newspaper. Every boy and girl has been taught that the Phoenicians visited Britain before the time of Julius Caesar to get tin for use in the manufacture of bronze. They have been told that when the Scyllians, although little or no tin islands, or Cassiterides, they mean the Scyllians, although little or no tin islands were. Some historians thought they were the little islands at the north-west corner of Spain, while others have believed that they had no real existence, and that in speaking of them the authors merely meant to indicate that tin came from overseas. Now, however, an important discovery has been made that seems to clear up the mystery. Tin has been found in considerable quantities in the Hebrides, and everything suggests that these are the famous tin islands of the old writers. The mystery has largely arisen owing to the fact that the Phoenicians, who were cunning traders, and did not want anyone else to poach on their preserves, kept the source of their tin secret. This discovery of tin in the Hebrides is a very interesting fact, and it will be curious if the islands that first brought Britain into prominence should again become a source of the alliance now ex-source of wealth and fame.