

It is a curious co-incidence that, for three centuries past, the year '88 has been marked by striking events, each representing a stepping stone on the ascent of humanity to freedom and liberal institutions. In 1788 culminated the gathering of the storm which burst forth in France, on the 4th May, 1789, on the meeting of the States General. Notwithstanding that the violence of the Revolution operated, by the fear it naturally engendered, to actually retard liberty and freedom of thought and expression for fully half a century, there have remained the germs which will crystalize—-which, indeed, as we take it, are now crystalizing into permanent results. It is probable that, but for the precedent of the first republic, neither the second nor the third would have existed.

Going back to 1688 we have the landing of William of Orange, the ultimate downfall of the unfortunate tyrants of the House of Stuart, and the inauguration of that government by Parliamentary majorities than which we have as yet been able to devise no better system.

Yet another hundred years back, and we picture to ourselves England with every nerve, so to speak, strung to utmost tension, to face the really greatest danger she and Protestant liberty have ever encountered. When we consider the might of Spain, backed by the wealth of the Indies; that her fierce and stalwart soldiery, unequalled in daring and endurance, were then the first in Europe, and that the whole population of England did not in Elizabeth's time exceed three millions and a half, we may partially realize the grave anxiety of the bravest when it was understood that the terrible Armada of Philip was fairly at sea.

Elsewhere we give the noble lines in which Macaulay paints the attitude of England on the 31st July, when the Armada sailing in a crescent order, seven miles from horn to horn, must have almost seemed to span the chops of the channel. Wednesday next is the 300th anniversary of the day on which the British fleet—a motley gathering, of which the biggest ship was probably under 1100 tons, not larger than a thirty-six gun frigate of 30 years ago—allowing the "Invincible Armada" to pass Plymouth, sallied out and assailed it in the rear, hanging on its skirts like blood hounds on a herd of huge game, and from that day—when Drake and Hawkins were interrupted at their game of bowls by the news of the Spaniard's approach—for many another, followed the huge galleons and galleasses, forcing them now and then to close fight, up the Channel, along the East coast, till, preventing them from entering Leith harbor, some English ships see their remains committed to the stormy Northern seas; a few even follow them round, till some founder on the West coast of Scotland and the East coast of Ireland, and of all the proud flotilla, but fifty shattered ships with starved and scurvy stricken crews reach the ports of Spain, whose power lies crushed for 300 years.

Those who desire a graphic description of the great contest should read Kingsley's "Westward Ho!" in our opinion one of the five or six greatest of English novels that deserve to stand together classed like David's Chief Captains. One passage in it is peculiarly grand and peculiarly significant. "The massacre of St. Bartholomew, the fires of Smithfield, the immolation of the Moors, the extermination of the West Indians, the fantastic horrors of the Piedmontese persecution * * * these were the spectres which, not as now, dim and distant thro' the mist of centuries, but recent, bleeding from still gaping wounds, flitted before the eyes of every Englishman, and filled his brain and heart with fire. He knew full well the fate in store for him and his. One false step, and the unspeakable doom which, not two generations after, befel the Lutherans of Magdeburgh, would have befallen every town from London to Carlisle. All knew the hazard as they prayed that day and many a day before and after throughout England and the Netherlands, and none new it better than She who was" (whatever her caprices at other times) "the guiding spirit of the devoted land, and the especial mark of the invaders' fury."

Time brings, if not always its revenges, revolutions which, while often resembling revenges, are somewhat more. Few, except the Egyptian, of the great ancient monarchies lasted above 700 years. England, from the Conquest only, already counts 820. If we take it back to the reign of Egbert, the first King of all England, we get 1066 years, curiously enough the date of the Norman Conquest.

It is difficult to say that the Norman Conquest was a misfortune. The fact is the mixture of races resulted in ultimate superiority. But civilization was, in the Saxon times, steadily on the advance, and if William had not been the supreme leader he was, and Harold less heavily handicapped by singular mischances, the Saxon race in England with such admixture of the Celt as was left, would have certainly proved itself the equal in progress and philosophy of its old time cousins of Germany. But who to-day will venture to affirm that the Imperial Race is not about to enter on a new lease of world-power, grander perhaps than all that has gone before?

CIVIC LAW IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

One defect exists in our Public Schools for which we think a remedy should be found and at once applied.

Our boys and girls attend school for a number of years and finally develop into the attributes and responsibilities of citizenship, when they are called upon to exercise the franchise in civic matters without having received any instruction whatever on the subject. There can be no doubt that this is a reason why unfit men so often occupy seats at the City Council Board, and why citizens and voters are so apathetic in regard to city elections and the actions of their representatives.

The children of both sexes (as women have votes now) should be instructed in the main principles of civic law, so that when they attain the

age that entails the performance of their share of public duty as taxpayers and as voters, they may do so intelligently.

One afternoon hour each week might, we think, be profitably utilized by each teacher in our Public Schools in delivering a lecture to the class in his or her charge explaining and illustrating these principles.

Of course the dividing of the subject and the order in which they should be presented to the little ones will vary according to the tastes of different teachers and the capacity of their pupils. Still, the leading topics to be deacanted upon would be the necessity of civic government. This would show the functions of such government, as distinguished from Dominion and Provincial Government. Then would naturally follow dissertations on police, streets, sewerage, taxes, borrowing money on the public credit, and the methods by which such moneys are repaid. Another branch would be gratuities or immunities given to private enterprises that are likely to be beneficial to the general public—such as railroads, factories, etc. The matter of credit and debit and all the varied relations of one citizen to another might also be explained to the great advantage of the future citizens and voters.

If the system of instruction that we now suggest was adopted and carried out, there can be no doubt that a generally more intelligent class of voters—that is, one better posted in their duties and their rights—would exist years hence than does to-day.

This plan would, doubtless, prove an agreeable change from routine, both teachers and scholars, and would interest as well as instruct the children while tending to better prepare them for the proper and conscientious performance of the duties that time will devolve upon them.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION

A distinct advance towards a definiteness in the theory of Imperial Federation has been made by Mr. Parnell's acceptance of the idea and of the principle that Ireland cannot afford to slip out of representation at Westminster. If this were permitted there is too much reason to fear that, falling under the sway of the most violent among her professional agitators, she would be driven, against the will of her honest, moderate and industrious citizens, into the assertion of complete independence. Under such rule independence would mean hostility. England cannot afford a hostile nation open to the most adverse foreign influences lying close alongside her, and the ultimate necessity would be reconquest. Even Germany could scarcely afford to allow the strength of Great Britain to be impaired by an Ireland open to French Intrigue.

To those accustomed to the working of Federation—we are only now speaking of Great Britain and Ireland—the most natural and the smoothest road out of present difficulties would appear to be the establishment of English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh Parliaments, with an Imperial Parliament or Council over all. A re-production, in fact, of the Dominion Federation and that of the United States.

We consider the principle of hereditary right to legislation foredoomed. It may not be to day or to morrow, or the next day, but its extinction is in the end sure and certain. But so long as it is spared, the peerages of Ireland and Scotland would find their proper sphere in the Upper Houses of those countries, and perhaps an elective upper house, if one is necessary at all, might be constituted for Wales.

It is quite possible that the beginning of a rapprochement of ideas may be due to Archbishop O'Brien, whose breadth of views does him great honor. Be this as it may, Mr. Parnell's utterance makes a factor of very considerable weight.

Mr. H. Percy Blanchard, Barrister, of Baddeck, has formulated in the shape of a draft bill an elaborate, but tentative, scheme of a Federal Constitution for the Empire at large. We cannot go into it, but, with many feasible features, it seems, on a superficial reading to be rather too elaborate. If any success is to be hoped for in a larger measure intended to unite the Colonies, great breadth and simplicity of conception must, it appears to us, be its distinguishing features.

As regards the general question, "We do not," as *Imperial Federation* says, "need the argument of Professor Goldwin Smith to support the proposition of ultimate disintegration, unless the natural tendency of peoples having a certain number of separate interests to diverge more and more, be counteracted." Lord Carnarvon dwells emphatically on the same point, and Lord Lansdowne considers an Imperial Zollverein impossible. Yet the course of events may be forging fresh links of mutual interest, such as the enormous increase of wheat production in the North West, should no serious mishap befall her harvests in the near future, and if England should return to practical protection, and discriminate against American wheat in favor of Canadian, this link might prove a very strong one.

Whether the strength, security and commanding position of a great federated Empire, and her representation in an Imperial Federal Council, which would both add to the guarantees of peace, would be deemed by Canada a sufficient *quid pro quo* for the impost necessary to augment the Imperial fleet by a Colonial contingent, remains to be seen, whenever the theory assumes a really practical form. Australia has thought so, and has got for a small amount, five ships of 265 feet in length, of 2,500 tons displacement, with the very satisfactory speed of nineteen knots, and corresponding improvement in armament, while the Victorian Minister of Defense has spoken in public of the "generosity" of the Admiralty, and stated that "there is no doubt the government is going beyond the agreement it entered into with the Colonies." Yet Australia, with a population of three and a half millions, has a public debt of \$750,000,000, while Canada with five millions, has a debt of say \$250,000,000. This is a great fact, and one worth remembering.