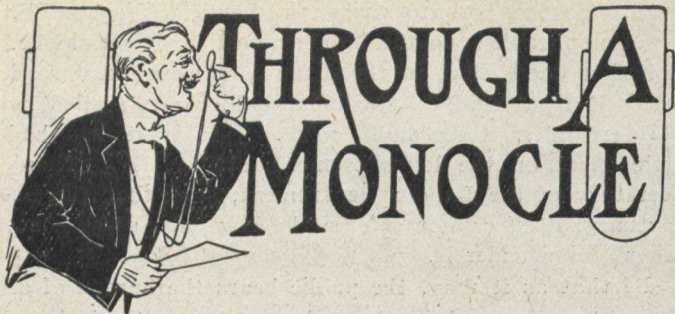




I NOTICE that one of the Vernon Harcourt family has had the "nerve" to refer to a communication by our own Prof. Leacock to the London Morning Post as "vulgar offensive twaddle." It is such things as these which make us wonder if British connection can endure. Here is Canada's own and only Prof. Leacock, abandoning a position at McGill University in order to obey the summons of another of Canada's most successful advertisers—Principal Parkin—to set out on a pilgrimage through the British Empire and awaken it once and for all with his young clarion voice! Here is the high-spirited boy missionary arrived in London, the effete capital of the slumbering Empire! Here is his first message to the British people which we have not yet had the pleasure and inspiration of reading, but which bears the tactful, the persuasive, the modest and polite title of "Decrepit John Bull and His Lusty Grown-up Son." And what reception does this stirring effort of Canada's young hero-knight receive? Is John Bull grateful? Does he recognise his "decrepit" condition and overwhelm with thanks—as might well become him—this still lustier son of his own "lusty son" who has come with a filial and fire-cracker patriotism to sound the alarm before he has slumbered too long?

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Not a bit of it. He lets a mere Vernon Harcourt insult the human "alarm clock" who has journeyed all the way from Canada—at the invitation of the Rhodes Trustee—to announce the dawning of a new day. After such ingratitude, John deserves to be left in his "decrepitude" while the "lusty grown-up son" heaps scorn upon him—and incidentally accepts his naval protection and begs for a tariff preference in his market. I am waiting impatiently to see Prof. Leacock's "humourous article." I am quite certain it will be humourous." I have never known the Professor to write anything that wasn't. He probably exploded this sort of thing into the ear of the somnolent giant. "What think you, little River Thames, of our great Ottawa that flings its foam eight hundred miles? What say you, little puffing, steam-fed industry of England, to the industry of Coming Canada?"

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Or he may have turned his attention to the politicians at Westminster, thus stirring up the bile of the Vernon Harcourts. Something after this fashion, it would go:—"Harsh is the cackle of the little turkey cocks at Westminster, fighting the while as they feather their nest of sticks and mud, low on the river bank." . . . It is true that Professor Leacock once applied the foregoing complimentary references to the "little turkey cocks at Ottawa"; but he is not a man to be overawed by the historic majesty of the House at Westminster. Or he may have said something like this:—"Nor is it well with the spirit of those in England in their thoughts of us. Jangling are they these twenty years over little Ireland that makes and unmakes ministries, and never a thought for Canada"—or of her lusty boy missionary—"jangling now over their Pantaloon Suffragettes and their Swaddled Bishops." This would please the British people very greatly. They would regret that they grew "turkey cocks" and not the modest and retiring choristers which Canada sends as missionaries of Empire to "out-worn" London.

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Still John Bull is more apt to judge us by our Sir Wilfrid Lauriers than by our Parkins and our Leacocks. We are not really the conceited asses we are sometimes made out to be. Sir Wilfrid has been striking a note of splendid sanity at the Imperial Conference and undoubtedly stands higher with the British people to-day than he ever has in the past. He has given evidence of the highest qualities of statesmanship, in that he has not played for any temporary local popularity by demanding much and leaving the responsibility for inevitable refusal upon other shoulders. He has rather acted

as if he felt to the full the responsibility for his utterances, and the weight of his position. He has kept in touch with the British Government, though it was not a Government likely to meet the Canadian proposals for a mutual preference; and he has helped to make the new-comer—Premier Botha—feel at home in his step-mother's house. In short, he has been more than a Colonial representative; he has been an Imperial statesman.

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Canada has always been fortunate in the sort of men it has sent officially to England—though it cannot control the freakish choices made by private enterprises, such as the Rhodes Trust. When Sir John Macdonald used to go to London, he was a "persona grata" with the great Disraeli and won a high place in the esteem of the British people. Sir Alexander Galt was a figure that commanded respect in the High Commission; and when Sir Charles Tupper succeeded him, he brought an energy and capacity to the task which won for Canada a distinctly better position in the British Isles. As for Lord Strathcona, he has gained a quite unique place in the body of Colonial representatives, and has, indeed, been lifted to a position of importance in the political and philanthropic life of the United Kingdom. Now Sir Wilfrid goes to London as our chief statesman, and he has always proved worthy of the responsible position. We have gained in prestige under his leadership; and never have we gained more signally than during the Conference that has just closed.

Dramatic Notes

THE "Canadian Courier" of May 11th drew attention to a pernicious melodrama advertised as a Toronto attraction and remarked that it was high time for a theatrical censor to do some blue-pencil work. The management of the theatre, at which this disgusting production was to appear, recognised the nature of the entertainment and withdrew the performance early in last week. Then the press awakened to the situation and made highly edifying comments thereon. Both posters and advance notices had indicated that the "show" in question had no place among decent amusements. The sooner discrimination is exercised regarding these performances, the better it will be for the management and public.

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The plays of Mr. George Bernard Shaw will soon be familiar to his Canadian admirers. Next week, Miss Effie Shannon and Mr. Herbert Kelcey will appear at the Princess Theatre, Toronto, in "Widowers' Houses," one of Mr. Shaw's "plays with a purpose," aimed against the tenement-owning landlords. This play will run for the first half of the week. The Toronto Press Club has been obliged to make a slight change of plan. Their first performance of "Gringoire" and Mr. Shaw's "The Importance of Being in Earnest" will be given on Friday, May 31st, at the Princess.

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"The Walls of Jericho," Mr. Sutro's four-act play, in which Mr. James K. Hackett is appearing in Toronto, is an extremely modern depiction of that crowd of Londoners, commonly and alliteratively known as the smart set. The hero, Jack Frobisher, is an Australian Croesus who marries the worldly Lady Alethea and finds himself a hopeless stranger in the fashionable circles of London. He finally arouses himself sufficiently to dismiss a gay Lothario who threatens the peace of the household and then decides to transfer his wife and son to the simpler life of Antipodean society.



Mr. James K. Hackett,
A Canadian Actor in Toronto this week.