

annual dinner; the duke wrote that he was unable to attend, but asked to be enrolled a member, and stated that the "happiest days of his life were the months he passed as schoolmaster at Coire," and begged that his donation would be accepted by his *confrères*. Every year, even when king of the French, he sent his donation, and his health was ever drunk at the annual dinner.

The African treaty with England will soon be ancient history. The French are content to have made England pay for snubbing her in the affair of Zanzibar, and John has paid, in a kind of *monnaie de singe*, with the Sahara. The making of a railway across that desert to Lake Tchad will be left for execution to posterity. M. Le Myre de Vilers, who has a sound colonial head, insists on the whole colonial system of France being recast. Functionaries should be taught to regard their appointment to a colony as an embarking for a new country, whose wants, resources and language, they ought to study, instead of, as now, viewing themselves as simply birds of passage. There are functionaries, natives of the colony where they exercise office, who obtain sick furlough to come to France to repair their health, compromised by a residence in their native colony.

One-half of the colonial officials, it seems, are always on the road, either going to or returning from duty, so that the budget has to estimate a proportion of 2½ employes for one post. It is not surprising, then, that travelling expenses, under this head alone, annually amount to 12,000,000 francs. Following M. de Vilers, while the governor of a colony can involve France in a local war, so encased is he in red tapeism, swaddling clothes, that he has less administrative liberty than the mayor of the humblest village in France. So long as the colonies are not defended by a fleet they rest absolutely defenceless. Their defence depends on a supply of coal; how expect a supply of coal at Obock and New Caledonia when there is none even at Brest!

France, adds M. de Vilers, possesses only three stations, Saigon, Martinique, and Dakar, affording accommodation for coaling and repairing ships—the latter of a very inferior character. None of these stations are armed to suit the times; to make them effective, including New Caledonia and Diego-Suarez, in Madagascar, 19,000,000 francs have been voted to be expended over fifteen years.

The *Petit Moniteur* is indignant that the State expends millions yearly on rewards to farmers for breeding horses, but withholds pecuniary inducements to parents to produce large families. Herodotus states that the kings of Persia sent every year presents to those of their subjects who had most children. Queen Victoria and President Carnot only notice the mothers of triplets. Monsignor Labelle, the Bishop of Quebec, is quoted as the authority, that many French Canadians have 25 to 30 children. Here is clearly a time to act as Canning once did: Call in the new world to redress the old.

Z.

A MORAL OF THE CRISIS.

SOME of us imperial federationists have been for many years convinced that—besides a fuller national life and a widening of national thought, besides a reciprocity of rights and obligations, besides the status of a peer instead of a subordinate—Canada would gain, by federating with the Empire, the very material advantage of increased security. In other words we felt that to federate would be to issue a salutary notice to the nations of the earth that the states and provinces owing allegiance to the British crown had gone into partnership to defend, at their joint expense and by their joint power, the just rights of each partner from foreign aggression. It would be a general notice that all the federated members of the Empire would ungrudgingly give to each member in its need an aid which it was pledged to reciprocate in their need. It would be a special notice to our neighbours that Canada was no longer a subordinate province, but a state of the Empire, co-ordinate with England, Ireland or Scotland; one of the directing partners, contributing and voting; not a "dependency," a "mere colony," one of the *Possessions Anglaises*, as it is classed by the postal department of France. It would be a warning to certain blatant haters of Britain that in future, if needs be, their *octopus* would fight with all its tentacles as well as with its jaws.

In an article by the present writer entitled "Paying the Insurance," which appeared over a year ago in THE WEEK and was reproduced with THE WEEK's comments in "Imperial Federation," the following paragraph occurred: "And will Imperial Federation make our American neighbours more disposed to settle the questions in dispute between us? I should certainly fancy so, for it would give them an assurance, which they do not generally feel now, that Britain will fight for Canadian rights, and not Britain alone, but Britain plus Australia, plus New Zealand, plus South Africa, etc. Politicians will probably find it impossible to make political capital by bullying Canada and worrying Britain, when their constituents clearly see war staring them in the face. For this increased security from war it would be worth paying something. A marine insurance policy does not insure the merchant against all possible loss of his merchandise, yet the prudent shipper insures his goods year after year, nor does he think shipwrecks obsolete because he has never experienced one."

Does not the lately published diplomatic correspondence amply prove that Mr. Blaine calculated upon bluffing England, and that, if he has brought his country into the unpleasant predicament of having either to fight in an unjust cause or to back down, this was owing to his false confi-

dence that Britain would never imperil her vast commerce for an unrepresented and uncontributing province? More than once he betrays his surprise and indignation at England's risking his displeasure in defence of the rights and in deference to the arguments of a "dependency," a "mere colony." He frets at "the interposition of the wishes of the British province against the conclusion of a convention between two nations." He feels that "Lord Salisbury would have dealt more frankly," and saved him from sad embarrassment, and the countries from the risk of a fratricidal war, "if he had informed Minister Phelps that no arrangement could be made unless Canada concurred in it."

There is reason to hope that in the present dispute the good heart and sound sense of the American people may constrain their politicians to submit to arbitration or to abandon their preposterous claim. But would it not be wise to avert, if possible, a recurrence of the dangerous misapprehension that Canada can be bullied with impunity? Or is the false and mean argument to prevail that, as Britain in this instance acted effectively if slowly for us, without our paying anything towards her imperial establishments, we would, therefore, be foolish to assume such unnecessary (?) burdens for merely sentimental reasons (?) in the future?

F. BLAKE CROFTON.

WOODLAND ECHOES.

As birds on wing so sweetly sing,
While nestward, restward flocking,
In deepest shade of forest glade
I hear an echo mocking.

In shady nook, the woodland brook
To its own murmur listens;
Through leafy slits a sunbeam flits,
And on its surface glistens.

Where flowerets chance bright insects glance;
As echo hears their humming,
A slumber deep doth o'er her creep,
Her drowsy senses numbing.

But threatening breeze sweeps through the trees,
I hear the distant thunder;
The forest shakes, dull echo wakes,
The rocks seem rent asunder.

Then dying wail of summer gale,
The last keen flash of lightning,
And echo sighs as I arise,
For all the world is bright'ning.
Montreal.

ERIE.

A MODERN MYSTIC—IX.

THE Mystic, like mortals less sage, it seems, must rusticate. On the morning of the 26th ult.—eventful day—Mr. Duncan McIntyre, the great railway magnate, with a number of distinguished men, called on me: Professor Sillito, of the Tamworth Agricultural College, my friend Mr. Robillard, M.P., and Madame Robillard—all astonished, glad, "feeling good," as we Canadians say, at our magnificent crops. I had accepted an invitation to dine with Mr. McIntyre, whose brother is here one of our leading farmers, and whose vast field of oats pleased the critical eyes of Professor Sillito. I sat down to work when the boy came and said some gentlemen were in the office and wanted to see me. "Bring them here"; and who should come in? There was my guide, philosopher and friend, McKnom; there that other half of my soul, Helpsam; and, bringing up the rear, Glaucus, Rectus, Hale. Greetings over, Glaucus began to survey the little library not wholly incomplete, where the poor owner, let what tempests arial or political blow outside, can always find a safe retreat and live like the worm in the apple, in the midst of perpetual sweetness, to borrow a simile from Jeremy Taylor, who, however, uses it—ungallant divine!—to express the life of the bachelor. The theme was the crops! the crops! the crops! and the visitors were told the high opinion of that practical and capable man, Mr. Duncan McIntyre, of the fruitfulness of what he calls "the Regina Plain," stretching from Qu'Appelle to forty miles west of Moosejaw, and from the boundary to the Saskatchewan. Why did they not bring the ladies? The ladies were here; were away over the prairie gathering the wild flowers.

"By Jove!" said Helpsam, "what a song Burns or Wordsworth would have sung of some of those flowers. Your prairie rose is the sweetest and most delicate thing that ever met the eye or saluted smell. The prairie is a vast odorous sea of varied beauty. Those large daisies, with deep brown hearts and pink and yellow eye lashes, are the most beautiful things I ever saw. From Chaucer and the old poets down to Burns and Wordsworth, the muse of song has done full honours to the English daisy. Shall this prairie daisy be unsung?"

"Daisy!" I said, "We think that the prairie sunflower. It is certainly more beautiful than its tall overgrown tame rival. It would seem that all the wild fruits and flowers are smaller than the cultivated. We have wild strawberries, currants, raspberries—very small, but when cultivated they grow twice the size."

"I prefer," answered Helpsam, "to regard it as a daisy. Only an Oscar Wilde could go into enthusiasm about our

sunflowers—but looking on this beautiful prairie daisy, so rich in colouring, so graceful in form, memory can have, as Wordsworth said, a 'flight,' and from the chords of association rises up a chime of fancy."

"But is not the daisy a sunflower? Does she not spread her leaves—or, as Helpsam calls them, her eye-lashes—does she not open these when the sun rises and close them as Wither says, 'when Titan goes to bed?'"

"But how is it," said Glaucus, "I do not hear your frogs?—I thought they were very vocal—I read as much."

"Water is their Melpomene. *O mutis quoque piscibus donatura cygni, si libeat, sonum!* You should have heard them during the wet June weather—I must say that they are so far like swans that their sweetest song was the last."

Glaucus: "That's a fable."

McKnom: "Plato in his *Phaedon* says the swan sings sweetly when about to die."

Glaucus: "Yes, and so does Aristotle, and Horace takes the notion from these, and Ovid says beautifully that the swan sings his own funeral dirge, and Moore is captivated with the idea. But Pliny had long ago declared it to be untrue."

"But," replied McKnom, "Ælianus says he heard the dying swan sing."

Glaucus: "McKnom, like Cicero, you would rather err with Plato than walk in paths of truth with others. You can never improve on Milton, seldom equal him, and no poet has spoken so finely of the swan, and he says nothing about singing:—

With arched neck
Between her white wings mantling, rows
Her state with oary feet.

There are two words there no other poet would have used, 'mantling' and 'oary,' and how much they add to the picture!"

Helpsam: "Is it not 'mantling proudly'?"

Glaucus: "No; but I am not surprised at your impression, for the idea of pride is conveyed as well as that of grace and style—style as of a handsome queenly woman, conscious of her beauty and how well her dress sets it off."

Hale: "I think Goethe leaves Milton behind. You remember in the second part of 'Faust,' where the hero finds himself transported by night to the margin of a siren-haunted lake in Greece. There is a moon. Do you all know German? No. Well, I will give you a translation. From out the moony shadows:—

Lo, a wonder! hither steering
Swans from creek and cove appearing,
Move majestically pure;
Soft consorting, stilly drifting,
Proud withal and head uplifting
In complacent state secure.

But exulting o'er his brothers,
One strong sailor through the others
Boldly breasting drives apace;
Puff'd his plummy bulk advances;
On the wave a wave he dances,
Hastening to the holy place.

It is not bad, but 'On the wave a wave he dances' does not equal *Welle selbst auf Wogen wellend*."

Glaucus: "I see you have a good edition of Rabelais here. I think we want a Rabelais more than a Plato in Canada, if Mr. McKnom will permit me."

McKnom: "A Rabelais! and why, pray?"

Glaucus: "Because we need two things badly in Canada—criticism—genuine criticism and satire. There may be some criticism, but there is no satire; the political writings, when dealing with persons, oscillate between abuse and adulation, just as with Horace, Hannibal was a cunning scoundrel, and Augustus a god, though to do Horace justice he does indirectly give wise counsel to the master of the world. Or if one cannot resurrect Rabelais I shall be content with Swift. 'A Tale of a Tub,' or some other vessel is badly needed."

McKnom: "Rabelais—Rabelais—I honour Rabelais. He was a student of Plato. He saw the evils of his time, and satirized them. Who had a finer satirical touch than Plato, or the late Cardinal Newman? After you left (turning to the writer) we had a whole evening discussing Newman. We little thought his death was so near. Miss Gwendolen took notes of it and of other meetings. Satire was the only form in which, in his day, Rabelais could have uttered the truth that was in him. There is not a nobler piece of writing in French literature than his prologue, and in the opening paragraph he gives a fine sketch of Socrates, which might apply to himself—a casket with the head of a Silenus on the cover, but containing within the most precious things."

"I remember," said Helpsam, "Sainte Beuve in one of his delightful papers says that if we could visit the sixteenth century and speak with its great authors, some would go indifferently from one to another; some would go straight to Molière without even stopping to say a word to Bossuet."

Hale: "Why, both Molière and Bossuet belong to the seventeenth century."

Helpsam: "You are quite right. It was a stupid blunder. I think Sainte Beuve says, on our way back to the sixteenth century—of that century and in French literature, he rates Calvin, Rabelais, Amyot and Montaigne as the four great *prosateurs*. All the world, he says, would wish to go to see Montaigne, but if they were shut up to one author, a certain group, far from contemptible either in number or quality, while regretting to have to make a choice, would go straight to pay their devotions to Rabelais, in their love for whom there is more than admiration, there is the curiosity excited by the unknown and mysterious. We know almost beforehand how