

Notes and Comments

(By the Rev. R. G. MACBETH, M. A.)

An incident which has attracted much attention and favorable comment in the East was the coming of Sir Wilfred Laurier to Toronto to give an address on a purely historical subject. This address which was couched in classic language, gave evidence of wide reading on a phase of early Western history which few have studied. The reports in the press were not extended enough to justify the distant reader in forming a true estimate of Sir Wilfred's viewpoint, but the fact that he took up the subject purely as history is in itself praiseworthy. If more of our men in political life would come off the partizan platform and deal occasionally with historical and kindred subjects, they would do much to soften the asperities of politics, and they would at the same time add to their own stature as national figures.

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Another point of interest emerges in connection with Sir Wilfred's address. It proceeds on a plane where slang expressions could find no lodging place for the speaker learned to use the English tongue by the reading of the great masters of Englishmen whose writings were in truth "wells of English undefiled." Public men could do much to keep slang down by refusing to use street expressions however vivid and expressive they appear to be for the moment. The type of oratory changes in different periods of history, but no permanent influence is exerted on the trend of events by men who deliberately lower the status of the tongue in which they express themselves. Men will find it easier to use good language if they deal with good themes.

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Conscription has not succeeded in gaining popular approval in Australia despite the influence of Premier Hughes, who is a strong Imperialist and an intense advocate of strenuous measures to defeat Germany. It is doubtful if, under present conditions conscription would carry in any of the free self-governing colonies of the Empire. And yet one feels that something ought to be done to secure the enlistment of young men whose business and family reasons are not such as to excuse them from active service. Medical inspections turn many back at the threshold and there are some who are needed to keep the home fires burning, and the home business running. But the young man who has no such reason to plead, and who haunts the picture show and the pool room, should be made to feel the utter indefensibility of his attitude. If war ever had any glory it has departed now that battles are mere displays of murderous machinery, but the human hope of the world demands the suppression once for all of such egotistic madmen as the Kaiser, and everybody should help to that end.

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The necessity of one day's rest in seven, according to the Commandment, has been strikingly proven again in the munition factory work in the Old Land. The fourth word of the Decalogue was written not only on a table of stone, but upon the very constitution of man. And whoever under any mere pretext of gain or pleasure-seeking compels unnecessary labor is an enemy of humanity. If a day of rest was necessary when herdsmen were travelling two miles an hour in the wilderness, it is supremely necessary in these days of irrespressible speed. Even

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