

may come in his way. He may own to some fear of the political influences that are somewhat illegitimately wielded by companies which we as a people have chartered, companies whose desire it is to make money out of our Canadian travel and freightage, and whose directors know, as men of business, that service up to the requirements of the day must be afforded on their lines. If all our people had as few mercenary motives in this connection as our distinguished leader, the difficulty would already be in a fair way of solution. As the railway companies have nothing to gain by disorganization and calamity, no portion of the press should consider itself bribed by advertisements and printing orders to betray the country in a conspiracy of silence. The conductors of those able and influential journals know that their first duty is to the people, and those journals that in firm sincerity keep themselves up to their work, and each day's requirements in relation to it, will be the ones to secure the public favour. In the writer's younger days the London *Times* distinguished itself greatly in such work, and may do so again, in the expansion of British interests. An action is now pending for \$10,000 in Montreal by a widow, for her husband run down and killed by an unguarded train. He was worth all that money to her. Our people may, as a rule, have their minds immersed in business, but their hearts are right when you can reach them. This is only in quite a subordinate sense a money question. It is a question of the life of families, and they will determine that these things shall be attended to by those who have assumed the duty of representing them, and whose valued privileges should always depend upon their efforts to promote the interests of their constituents in life and property. Their own personal interests are secondary, and to be considered in their proper order. The time seems hardly yet to have arrived for fully discussing the suggestions of "Britannicus" and other friends. Men of practical experience, such as he, are the writers we hope to hear often from in the course of this movement. X.

THE GRAND JURY QUESTION.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—The expenses of the Grand Juries to the County of Hastings for the past five years have been \$3,943.70, exclusive of the costs of summons and sheriffs' fees for mileage and service, an average of over \$800 per annum. The functions of our Grand Juries are greatly curtailed by the Speedy Trials Act, where the prisoner elects to be tried by a judge at the County Judge's Criminal Court; and by far the greater number of our criminal cases are disposed of in this manner. In England, I believe, the Grand Juries are selected from the resident magistrates. My opinion is that the best substitute for the Grand Jury would be a Grand Inquest, composed of seven qualified Justices of the Peace for the county, under seventy years of age, who would have the powers now possessed by the Grand Juries, and who should be drafted by ballot, or in as nearly the same manner as Grand Juries are now selected. There being two Courts of Superior and two of Inferior Criminal Jurisdiction in each county during the year, four juries are required. Thus let the Grand Inquest be drafted from all the qualified magistrates, under seventy years of age, by the same parties who now draft the juries—say thirty-five, which will give four panels, one for each court, and seven to spare for death or sickness, etc. I think this would be quite as efficient, and be a saving of many hundred dollars per annum to each county. What do you think of the plan? MOIRA.

Belleville, Dec. 8, 1890.

CANADIAN NATIONAL LEAGUE.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—Your correspondent, who suggests the formation of a Canadian National League "for the promotion of a distinct national feeling friendly to a connection with the British Empire, consistent with our self-respect" and hostile to annexation, has made a very happy suggestion. Public opinion, which will in time settle the question of our future relations to England, is in process of formation. The time has not come for us to settle that matter, and as a people we have not yet come to any conclusion. Were a simply drifting towards some position different from our present one. Imperial Federation, to my mind, is a splendid dream, beautiful in theory, whose advocates are to be commended for their enthusiasm and their advocacy of a federation of the English speaking race, but I feel that it is quite unworkable. I have seen no scheme that seems at all practicable. I confess I am waiting for more light on the subject of Canada's future. At present my thoughts tend rather in the direction of an Independent Dominion, with a treaty of alliance with the Mother Country, whereby we sacredly bind ourselves to her, and she binds herself to us for defence of either land, and where there shall be the freest commercial intercourse between the mother and the daughter. This would preserve the feeling of loyalty to the mother that bore us, and reverence for that historic past of England of which we are inheritors, while giving free scope to the national aspirations and instincts which are slowly rising and growing stronger among us. My position is that of many in this country. Born in Canada, of an English father, and a mother, the grand-daughter of a Loyalist, I inherit a passionate love for Canada and an unbounded faith in her future, with an

undoubted attachment and feeling of loyalty to the land from which we sprung. Now the suggested league commits us to no theory, but would cultivate a national spirit, in unison with some kind of connection with the British Empire. All Canadians, who are not annexationists, could join it, as it would not affect their opinions on Imperial Federation or Canadian Independence. I hope we shall hear more of it.

Winnipeg.

EDWYN S. W. PENTREATH.

THE RECLAMATION OF ASHBRIDGE'S BAY.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—Kindly give me space to speak on a subject of vital importance to the city of Toronto. I refer to the reclamation of Ashbridge's Bay. I believe that public opinion is a unit in demanding that this work be done—if only on sanitary grounds. It is a moot point, however, how it is to be done.

Some argue that the city ought to have whatever profit there is to be made out of this work—i.e., that the corporation should do it, an arrangement that might be paralleled by suggesting to the Ontario Government not to let any private company have any mineral lands, as the province ought to have all the benefit to be derived from mining and smelting ores for themselves. Others, again, contend that it should be done by private enterprise. I will briefly give my ideas of the two schemes:—

It is estimated that the work of dredging, piling, etc., will in either case cost \$5,000,000. Where the city could get this money is a question that is not easy to answer. But supposing the money could be obtained, and supposing it was as well administered as it would be by a private concern (which presupposes a miracle), when the work was done the bay would undoubtedly be cleansed, and that would be about all. True, we would have seven or eight hundred acres of vacant land added to the area of a city that already has too much of it, at a cost of say \$300,000 per annum interest and sinking fund. But, then, land held by private owners would be cheapened and depreciated in value by the competition; for, of course, the city could not make it productive, and would have to put it into the market like any other holder.

On the other hand, a private syndicate, willing to spend \$5,000,000 on improving land on which they obtain a lease only, would necessarily take hold of and push forward the work with an energy and activity born of a hope of gain; for the sooner the land is prepared the sooner it will be likely to yield dividends from the various industries which the particular syndicate I have in my mind proposes to establish. I give here a synopsis of their proposal:—

1. They ask for a lease of the proposed scene of operations for forty-five years subject to reasonable conditions.
2. They offer to put up \$100,000 as a guarantee to be forfeited if they fail to carry out their agreements.
3. They will reclaim the land and dredge the bay at their own cost.
4. They will cover say three hundred acres of the reclaimed land with iron and nickel smelting works, rolling mills and other subsidiary industries, such as foundries, car-wheel shops, etc., etc., costing many millions of dollars, and employing five thousand men.
5. They will pay taxes on the land as it becomes productive.
6. They will allow the city to have quiet possession of the lands without encumbrance (save the buildings, of course) at the end of the term; said lands then would perhaps be worth \$20,000,000.

I say, if they do one-third the work they promise, they will give the city a manufacturing and industrial impetus that it sadly needs at present. A great deal more could be said in favour of this proposal, but I think I can with confidence leave the public to judge of the respective merits of the two plans, merely saying that if the council has time to look after the scheme (if they do it) they ought to be able to attend to the ordinary affairs of the city more successfully than they do; and, lastly, I have no interest whatever in the syndicate other than, being a ratepayer of the city, I am interested in whatever promotes the prosperity of Toronto.

Toronto, Dec. 20, 1890.

THE GAMBLERS OF POMPEII.

IT was my good fortune to be in Pompeii not long ago when three bodies were discovered under somewhat peculiar circumstances, circumstances that are no doubt in the recollection of many. The three bodies were found within one house; one lying across the atrium end of the porch, and two lying in a small room next to the triclinium. The latter lay on the ground, one on each side of a marble table. It was evident that these men had been gambling before death, as two pair of dice were found on the table, and on the floor a third pair. These last were loaded; in that fact lay the romance of the discovery.

It was late in the afternoon when I went down with the foreman of the excavations to see the new find, as he called it. The bodies were to be left undisturbed until the next day for the purpose of rediscovery for the benefit of some distinguished person who was expected to inspect the ruins. Being a privileged person, from my frequent visits to Pompeii, the foreman allowed me to remain alone in the newly-excavated house when his duties called him

away. In the house itself there was nothing very worthy of note, or differing materially from other Pompeian residences, yet, even when the sun was slowly sinking across the Bay of Naples, I was loath to go away. I sat down again for a few minutes on one of the dusty benches in the dice-thrower's room, and for the twentieth time endeavoured to refashion the story of that last game and its sudden ending.

The shades of evening must have stolen over my senses and tempted me to sleep. I opened my eyes to see the moon full-risen over Vesuvius, while its light flooded the courtyard and outlined the marble fawn that stood behind the colonnade of the garden. I got up, and walking to the door gazed for a few minutes at the mountain and the irregular outlines of the ruins, when suddenly I was attracted by a rattling on the table behind me. I turned again towards the room, turned to see a sight that made my heart beat and my brain reel; for seated at the table there were three men, two of whom were throwing dice.

It is a commonplace reflection that in great crises of life we are apt to do and think of the most trivial things. My first conscious thought on seeing the figures at the table was one of surprise as to why the third man was present, and I instinctively turned for an answer towards the porch of the atrium. As I expected, the body that had lain across it in the afternoon was no longer there. This assurance that one of the marvels that were happening before me was in apparent consonance with reason, had the effect of tempting me to see the thing out. Indeed it was easier to sink down on the seat that ran along from the door on the fourth side of the room than to get away, for I have an idea that, if I had endeavoured to move, my legs would have refused to serve me at the time, although my brain was now steady enough. Looking at the table from where I sat, the two players were seated opposite to each other to my right and left, while at the far end of the room and table, facing me, there was a third man, who was apparently engaged in keeping a record of the play.

In the few moments that elapsed between my waking and my sitting down, there appeared to have been a change in the light. The moon still flooded the court outside, but our room was apparently illuminated by the afternoon sun shining through the canvas awning that was stretched over the aperture in the roof. This light was sufficient to enable me to make out clearly the features and expressions of the players, and the style and materials of their clothes, which were those of the first century of the Roman Empire.

I was possibly for some time too nervous, owing to the peculiarity of the circumstances, or to fear of being discovered, to take any particular notice of the fluctuations of the game. My attention was suddenly roused and fixed by observing a quiet movement beneath the table made by the man sitting to my right hand. From my position I was enabled to see what would be invisible to his opponent, and possibly also to the man whom I call the marker, as the latter was sitting close to the table, whereas I was some feet away from it. However, it flashed on me at the time, and has since been my opinion, that this man was aware of the fact that one of the players was making use of loaded dice: that in fact they were leagued together to fleece the other man.

From the instant, then, that I noticed the substitution of dice on the part of the man sitting to my right—the gambler, as I may call him—I became almost as absorbed in the vicissitudes of the game as the players themselves.

I found from my intentness in listening and watching that the Roman pronunciation, that was at first a stumbling-block, became easier to understand.

I gathered that the marker's name was Quintus, the gambler's Marcus, and Caius that of the man who was evidently to be swindled.

Even if I had not been aware of the cheating employed against him my sympathies would probably have gone with this Caius, who was a fine looking young fellow, with clear cut features, patrician bearing and wondrously fair hair for the South. His opponent had all the appearance of an accomplished roué, and the marker was of the same type.

The game was played for the most part in silence; the few words necessary being the mention of the stakes, that were offered and accepted by a sign, while Quintus, the marker, kept the record. It is not creditable to the freshness of my classical knowledge that I could not at the time accurately realize the value of the stakes being played for. These values I have, of course, since looked up for confirmation, but will only give them here approximately for the benefit of the many who may have for the moment forgotten them as I did. The first amount mentioned was Decem Sestertia (about £80); shortly afterwards the stake had risen to Centum (about £807) on a single throw, and from this the game progressed with variations of luck, if I may use the term, until Caius was some eight thousand pounds in the gambler's debt. But it would be wearisome to trace the vicissitudes of the play. I had many opportunities to admire the adroitness of the gambler's proceedings, as he alternately won and lost with consummate skill, leading his opponent on by allowing him fictitious winnings on small stakes, and so tempting him to heavier ventures where he was sure to lose.

I was, of course, ignorant of the true time, but it seemed to be towards evening, as it was growing darker every moment, when Caius suddenly jumped up from the table with the exclamation: "There, that's enough for me."

As he spoke a peal of thunder or something like it shook the house and rattled the dice on the marble table.