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## THE WEEK :

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THE meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science during the past week was an event of no small moment in the life of this growing city. The presence of so many men and women more or less distinguished in the world of science can hardly fail to have given an impulse to our intellectual life which will make itself healthfully felt for some time to come. Were one to forget the history of the past sixty years, and to shut his eyes to the ten thousand beneficent applications of scientific discovery to practical uses which are to be seen on every hand, he might, perhaps, be tempted to regard these quiet workers, delving in their special fields, some of which appear to the untrained eye infinitesimally narrow—as being far removed from the busy life of the day. But observation and experience have long since taught us better. Everyone now knows that to such quiet workers in field and laboratory the civilized world is directly or indirectly indebted for most of those modern discoveries, inventions and appliances which are doing so much to improve the condition and prospects of the race. Even those researches, if there remain any such, which have no conceivable relation to our material well-being, are still admirably adapted, by the new revelations they are constantly making of the harmony and subtlety of the laws and forces which govern the kingdom of nature, to confer practical benefits of the very highest order, by showing us the "increasing purpose" which runs through the universe, and thus enlarging our conceptions of the world, humanity and God.

HOWEVER inviting the field, it would manifestly be useless to attempt in these notes any discussion of even a select few of the great variety of topics dealt with in the various sections of the American Association. Some of the papers presented in the Economic Section are perhaps of more immediate practical interest to the whole community than those of any other section. And yet it is doubtful if this is the class of subjects in which the men and women of science are at their best. It being the true function of science to examine phenomena and deduce laws and generalizations from the actually existing facts, it goes beyond its sphere when it suffers itself to be

tempted into the regions of abstract theorizing and speculation. We hope it may not seem invidious if, passing over the wealth of material for approval and admiration furnished in the transactions of the Society, we refer to one or two indications of a tendency towards a two-fold weakness shown in some of the dissertations on economic subjects—the tendency, namely, on the one hand to make the facts accord with the theory, and the tendency on the other hand to fit the general theory to special and possibly exceptional facts. It is, we may observe, in the treatment of questions of living and practical, possibly personal or political, interest, that this temptation mainly presents itself. Happily, in the great majority of cases, the phenomena presented by nature for scientific investigation are such as may be viewed in the dry light of intellect, and through the colourless medium of genuinely scientific curiosity.

AN illustration of the first tendency referred to may, it seems to us, be found in the address of Mr. Charles S. Hill, the Vice-President, on "The Economic and Sociologic Relations of the Canadian States and the United States Prospectively Considered." We do not share in the feeling of some of our contemporaries that Mr. Hill was guilty of an act of questionable courtesy, in advocating views which he must have known would be distasteful to those whose guest he was at the moment. To argue that a speaker's mouth should be stopped by such a consideration from uttering the thing he believes to be true is a poor compliment to science. Having chosen, or had assigned to him, that subject for discussion, Mr. Hill was bound on the honour of a man of science to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so far as he was able to find it. No doubt he did so, and his Canadian hearers generally have too much of the scientific spirit to complain of the fact. What seems to us the unscientific side of the effort was that Mr. Hill appears to have set out by unconsciously assuming that the United States system of Government must be the only free, enlightened and successful system, and that there must be serious defects leading to antagonism, want of freedom, and ultimate disruption in every other, and to have wrested his facts and his reasonings accordingly. A single illustration will suffice. Mr. Hill is reported as stating that "Nowhere in the world was a more conspicuous hatred manifested between factions of one people under one government on account of race and religion than was witnessed to-day in Canada," that "Canada would disintegrate herself upon her racial and religious conditions, for in her was seen at present the anomaly of a predominating race governed under an uncongenial authority," and that "in the United States this antipathy could not exist, as the form of Government destroyed such feeling of rivalry, because the natural passions of jealousy, dislike, or ambition had nothing to feed upon." Could anything be more unscientific than the utterance of such sweeping assertions as if they were confessed or demonstrated truths? Can any unprejudiced observer doubt that the race hatred is tenfold more intense, the race difficulty tenfold greater, between negroes and whites in the Southern States to-day, than any which exists or is likely to exist between French and English in Canada? Let recent riots, lynchings, shootings and burnings in effigy in Georgia, Louisiana, Tennessee and Texas answer. What then becomes of the facts upon which Mr. Hill's patriotic, rather than scientific, theory is built?

THE opposite tendency to frame universal theories on the basis of partial and special facts and conditions was, it seems to us, somewhat strikingly shown in two or three papers dealing with the subject of Free Trade and Protection. The complaint that, while the United States is a highly protected country, the chairs of Political Economy in its great Universities, almost without exception, were filled by Free Trade professors, is evidently bearing fruit. A school of economists is springing up who are bound to bring academic theories into accord with Republican facts. The United States have prospered wonderfully under a system of high protection, therefore, protection is "an ingenious economic device which not only brings revenue to the treasury, independence to the State, and prosperity to the people; it changes the nation from the dull, mon-

otonous life of Arcadian simplicity into physical and mental activity and industry, and fills the country with all the characteristics of a free, enlightened, and enterprising nation." So gushes Mr. Lester F. Ward through pages of rhetoric, almost every other sentence of which is an unproved general assertion which only needs to be met with an equally dogmatic contradiction, and the matter is left just where it was before. We are not now denying that protection to special industries under certain conditions may be the quintessence of economic wisdom, or arguing that Free Trade is a panacea for the economic ills which afflict the race. But surely that is not science which gives us glittering generalities in place of inductive proofs. It is not science which ignores all other great sources of a nation's prosperity—a nation, too, which profits by internal Free Trade to a greater extent than any other nation in the world—and seems to set down all its achievements to the glory of protection. Such papers might almost make one doubt whether there is a science of Political Economy.

THE Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Minister of Education to inquire into the teaching of English in the Schools in the French districts of certain counties in Ontario, show the facts of the case to be very much what those who are accustomed to strike a balance between the contentions of the opposing political factions had supposed them to be. Some attempt at teaching English is made in every school. In a few it is as yet little more than the merest pretence. In a considerable number the knowledge of English possessed by the teacher himself is very defective, and the teaching, as a matter of course, inefficient. In many of the schools in which English is taught more or less passably, a large percentage of the pupils were not studying it at the date of the Commissioners' visit. This fact looks bad in statistics, but its aspect is materially changed by the explanation that in the summer season the schools are largely made up of very young pupils, and the teachers, sensibly as we think, do not as a rule put English books into their hands until they have made a little progress in learning to read in their own language. Next to the serious lack of proper qualifications on the part of the teachers, the worst feature of the case brought out by the report is, in our opinion, the use of text-books which are not merely unauthorized but seriously objectionable. Such are those which "contain teachings peculiar to the Church of Rome," and those which "are written in a spirit unfriendly to the British Empire, and the development of a patriotism embracing the whole Dominion of Canada." These last are faults which can be and should be promptly corrected.

TO weed out incompetent teachers and supply their places with educated men and women, not only thoroughly familiar with both languages, but trained in the best methods of instruction, will be a work of time and expense. The recommendations made by the Commissioners are eminently judicious and practical. Seeing that any salaries that can be offered are too small to tempt educated teachers from abroad into the districts, the necessity for establishing a special school for the training of French teachers in the English language, and in professional methods, is obvious. The condition of the schools cannot be greatly improved until an adequate supply of such teachers is forthcoming, though something may be done in the meantime by the incidental training of those at present engaged, by means of institutes and otherwise as recommended. We have on former occasions pointed out the need of a series of bi-lingual text-books, and we are glad to see that the necessity for such books is insisted on by the Commissioners. As before intimated the recommendations of the Commissioners that the use of unauthorized books be discontinued, and the provisions of the law regarding religious instruction be enforced, should be promptly and firmly acted upon. It is pleasing to learn that the French parents, almost without exception, are willing and desirous that their children should be taught English. No one can blame them for wishing them to be taught their own language also, and few English-speaking Canadians would be narrow enough, we think, to object. It is but fair to the Minister of Education to observe that the state of things in regard to these schools has been