

THINGS CURRENT

Rev. R. G. MacBeth, M.A.

FARMERS TO THE FORE

IT WAS rather a good coincidence that, at the very time when our review in the last issue of the monthly, of a book by that well-known farmer, Mr. W. C. Good, was on the press, the farmers for whom he spoke were on the way to power in the province of Ontario. They had evidently been making up their minds individually that those who had been feeding the world for some thousands of years should have a more definite share in governing it. We say individually, because while they had organized as the United Farmers of Ontario, shortened in the papers to the U.F.O., they were too new in their history to have the compactness in party framework that characterized the old line organizations. Hence their victory was somewhat of a surprise to themselves. One man who was elected in a constituency I know well, gave so little heed to the possibility of his return that he pulled weeds on his farm up to noon, when he hitched up and went over to vote. Yet, when the reports were all in from the various polls, he was shown to be elected by over twelve hundred of a majority. The candidates for the old-line parties were snowed under and have not yet recovered from the shock.

A New Record

It is the first time in history that a farmers' party, pure and simple, has been lifted into the governmental saddle. But there is no reason to fear their failure in this case. They are not riding for a fall. They have done a lot of hard thinking in regard to life's problems and have come to some fairly definite conclusions. It is to be hoped, however, and confidently expected, that the farmers will see that government by a class for a class cannot endure even if attempted. When any class in any land has tried that dangerous experiment they have generally succeeded in dragging the nation down and have found their own grave in the ruins. The world is getting more and more in a dim way to expect wider brotherhood. There will always be vocational classes but these can be knit together in a human organization which will have no password but the interests of the whole family.

Bone Dry

The man who first applied that vivid expression to the question of prohibiting liquor had a fine sense of the fitness of things. We have seen buffalo skeletons lying white and parched on the plains where these lordly animals once roamed and have distinct recollections of the dryness of these picturesque bones. And the weather indications on the legislative barometer seems to point clearly to that state of things in regard to strong drink. Despite the efforts of an alleged "Liberty" League in Ontario, headed by a doughty capitalistic knight, the people let loose the avalanche of ballots and John Barleycorn was buried beyond the possibility of resuscitation. And although President Wilson, on a legal point, vetoed Prohibition in the States, the people, through Senate and Congress, would have none of it, even for the brief period that the President's veto would have made possible. The picture on a recent publication of a thoroughbred Kentucky Colonel making disgusted faces over a glass with a soft drink is an index to the situation. The generation that now makes the enforcement of prohibition difficult because of their life-long habits is becoming extinct, and the new generation growing up without the old Colonel's convivial recollections will keep the arch-enemy of prosperity and happiness black-listed. And the bone-dry area is extending. Dr. John H. Jowett the other day said Scotland would go dry next year. When the Scottish folk make up their minds to banish the "mountain

dew," they will do it with emphasis. And many a home in every nationality the world o'er will get a fighting chance to live as never before.

The Strike Fever

An epidemic of strikes is again abroad in the world, especially on this continent. And it is just as costly and as deadly for the body politic as any other type of epidemic. Or to change the figure, there is civil war in the world of industry and civil war is the most expensive and heart-rending of all conflicts. The attitude taken by some that they will have no conference with the other side on the subject is fundamentally inhuman, but it will be forced out of life by the power of public opinion eventually. Then we shall be at the dawn of a better day.

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FROM A WOMAN'S POINT OF VIEW

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which she has done for a generation in such a manner that only love could inspire.

To the temperament capable of tragedy the consolation of music is given. It is said that "Tragedy is the decision of the soul," but Peter Tschaikowsky was born to tragedy. It is told by Fanny Durbach, his French governess, that he opened an atlas at the map of the world, kissed Russia, and smeared the rest with the inky blot of oblivion, but because of the love that he bore her, he saved her country from the avenging wave by a protecting thumb. That unstudied act of a moment revealed the main points of Tschaikowsky's character—impulse and love. Loving, losing and suffering, his exaltation was not in attainment, but in passionate desire.

More than almost any other composer, Tschaikowsky strove to register the depths of a despair that was unfathomable. His grief was occasioned not so much by what he had lost as by what he could not attain. He deliberately turned aside from a source of inspiration that he persistently refused to recognize as such. The strange "white" marriage of 1877 being the final sin in this respect.

A truly great craftsman, his mistaken idea would permit nothing to interfere with the purity of that craftsmanship, he could and did see that the smile of the moon among the boughs was a beautiful thing, like a veiled bride, but he could not see that the smile of a woman was a more beautiful and vital thing.

It is not until a man has loved in a greater way that he produces his noblest art, and so we have in Tschaikowsky great planes of tone meeting in uncompromising angles and deliberate angles; he is elemental to the point of Paganism.

Eagerly regarding the great forest and tracing the evolution of its historical groupings, he refused to see the flutter of a bird in its nest among the branches, or the shadow of a flower that is cast. It is always the emotion of masses that he interprets; the warm spirit of the earth loved by the sun and answering by banks of perfume. By thrusting love into a secondary place this great Russian has just missed immortality.

Music has always been, and must always continue to be, the special language of emotion interpreting humanity in terms of the present. Let every woman hold to her faint heart the warming knowledge that the undying and appealing beauty of the few great masterpieces of music have as their root source just—a woman.