

PASSIVE RESISTANCE LEAGUES IN BRITAIN.

We have been asked what all this fuss over the Education Act in England is about? To us in Canada under circumstances so different from England it is not easy to put in a few words the objections of Non-Conformists. But briefly it may be said the new Act places the control of the public schools, their management, the appointment of teachers, and the general run of secular and religious teaching authorized or encouraged, into the hands of one denomination, namely the Episcopalian, while making the taxpayers as a whole stand the shot in the way of payment. What would be analogous would be handing over the public schools of Ontario to the Episcopalian Church of this Province, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists and Congregationalists obliged to be content with providing a large proportion of the money; taxation without representation.

What do the Non-Conformists—i. e., the non-Episcopalians—propose to do about it? A very large number of them, clergymen, laymen, and earnest women, propose to meet what they consider an invasion of conscience by Passive Resistance. They will refuse to pay the school taxes levied under the new Act. The processes of the law will no doubt be then set in motion, and the goods and chattels of those refusing to pay seized and sold. This will be submitted to rather than the violation of conscientious conviction involved in paying the obnoxious rates. As showing the extent to which this movement has grown, it may be mentioned the British Weekly each week publishes about a column of news items relating to the formation of Passive Resistance leagues in various parts of England. Dr. Robertson Nichall, editor of the important Journal named, is one of those who has signed the new league and covenant.

An incidental effect of this agitation against the Education Act will be the revival in formidable shape of a movement to disestablish the Episcopalian church in England; as it is felt the Establishment is the hedge from behind which the rights and consciences of Non-Conformists are being shot at.

The results should be salutary in another way. To find a large number of ministers and members of Christian churches willing to have their goods despoiled rather than violate their consciences, will be a wholesome spectacle, a moral tonic.

It is impossible to predict whereunto the Education Act and the corollary of Passive Resistance Clubs may lead. Already the result in British politics has been considerable, constituency after constituency in which Non-Conformists are numerous having treated the administration responsible for the Education Act to unwonted adverse majorities.

The movement has been confined to England thus far, but we observe it is likely to make organized sympathetic co-operation from the people of Scotland, who have historic recollections of their own of ecclesiastical oppressions, and whose intellectual strength and religious fervor make them powerful allies in any fight against injustice.

Edward Bellamy's dream of a Sunday sermon carried by telephone into the homes of

subscribers, was realized not long ago in Madison, Missouri. A Presbyterian preacher, who found the roads to his evening appointment impassable, remembered that almost all of the families who attended the church had telephones in their homes, and could be reached from the central office in Madison. He saw the manager of the telephone system, who at once extended an invitation to the 326 families on his lines to join in a long-distance church service. An organ was moved into the telephone office, and a choir sang anthems and hymns, so that the entire service was conducted precisely as though in a church, while fervent "amens" were heard from half a county away. Two counties and forty-eight school districts furnished the widely scattered congregation, and the innovation proved so popular that the manager of the telephone line has been urged to make it a regular feature of his business. All of this may be very interesting as a novelty, and very practical when it is the alternative to no service at all, remarks the Lutheran Observer, but as a regular thing it would be demoralizing to all spiritual life and activity. We need the assembling of ourselves together, the benefit of worshipping with God's people, the influence which comes from such public association, as much as we need the counsel and wisdom of the sermon. People are too ready now to make excuse for absence from the house of God, and such a scheme, were it to be put into general practice, would be such a salve to conscience as would be most baneful in its results.

Literary Notes.

The April Cosmopolitan gives the leading place to an article which should be of great interest to all Canadians on The Americanization of the Canadian Northwest. Other articles are The Prophet Poet of Norway, Famous Cures and Humbugs of Europe, The Young Napoleon, and How To Administer a Household. There are also four complete stories and an instalment of the serial, Barlasch of the Guard. Irvington, New York.

The Special Summer Number of The Studio, 1903, entitled "Masters of English Landscape-Painting," will deal with the art of John Sell Cotman, David Cox, and Peter Dewint. The volume will contain more than one hundred and eighty illustrations, including a large number of coloured supplements. The April number will complete the tenth year of the Magazine's existence.

The International Journal of Ethics for April is again to hand and contains many interesting discussions such as "Christianity and the Natural Virtues" "The Domain of Utilitarian Ethics" "The Political Babel" etc. In a striking article Mrs. Francis Darwin of Cambridge, England, deals with the question of "The Religious Training of Children there is much to stimulate thought in this contribution even to those who occupy a very different standpoint. It shows the importance and difficulty of quickening the minds of children by the power of great religious ideas at a time when they are utterly unable to deal with theological doctrines. 1305 Arch Street, Philadelphia, 65 cents.

John MacKenzie, South African Missionary and Statesman, By W. Douglas MacKenzie, M. A., Professor of Systematic Theology in Chicago Theological Seminary, cloth 8vo., 654 pages. Postpaid \$2.10, New York. A. C. Armstrong & Son. Recent events have gained for South Africa a large share of public attention. In Canada it will not be forgotten readily, that, two hundred and sixty of our young men slumber on the veldt, victims of the recent war. Now that the war is over, much enquiry is directed to the ascertainment of the causes that led up to so tragic an issue. Amid so much that is misty and conflicting, it is highly satisfactory to find so illuminating and trustworthy a volume as the present. It is the life story of a great South African Missionary written by his gifted and scholarly son, in a way befitting the theme. It has the advantage of an inside view and first-hand information, without the disadvantage of the want of perspective and partiality sometimes associated with a son's biography of his father. The opening chapters give an interesting account of the early life of MacKenzie and the chain of providential events that led him to the South African mission field. The interest deepens as we follow the course of his operations at Shoshong and later the new centre, Kuruman, whether carrying on itinerating evangelistic work among savage tribes or training them at the "Moffatt Institution," he proved himself a man of deep consecration and unusual ability. Hence he won the confidence of the black races and had deep sympathy with them. Because of this sympathy, he sought to lessen their terrible sufferings at the hands of the Boers, by seeking British protection for them. His full and exact information and sound judgment on the affairs of the country proved to be of such value to the British that they ultimately appointed him Deputy Commissioner, a post which his interest in the black man led him to accept with the consent of the London Missionary Society under whose auspices he set out. In this new position he displayed in a high degree the powers of a statesman. It was by his advice that Bechuanaland was saved from occupation by the Boers, and he gave the home government advice, which, if followed, would have prevented the great war. His letters of that time show that he clearly foresaw the course of events that have issued in it. When the home government took the opposite course, he went to England and by a series of public meetings prevented the government from making complete surrender of the Transvaal. Then he returned to South Africa and labored at Hankey under the Congregational Church till his death. The volume deserves wide reading as a fine contribution to missionary literature, a key to the solution of the South African riddle and a biography of rare excellence.

There is probably no more superstitious and ignorant country than the Tyrol, though its beauties are the wonder of the traveler. On Easter eve bands of musicians in quaint garments still traverse the country, guitar in hand, singing Easter hymns, somewhat in the fashion of our carol singers at Christmas. Even more curious, however, is the custom, still surviving in the remoter districts, of the "Easter riding." With cross-bearers and priests leading in full canonicals on horseback, and the people devoutly following on foot, a procession starts from a village, and passes round the fields, imploring the blessing of heaven upon the harvests.