

The West

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Flying.

It is no wonder that there should be great enthusiasm in France over the cross-Channel flight of M. Bleriot, and that the French papers should talk of nothing else. Further enthusiasm will doubtless greet the gallant attempt, which was all but successful, of M. Latham to repeat the achievement. Since the discovery of the New World no material event has happened on this earth so impressive to the imagination as the conquest of the air which is now half achieved. Indeed the conquest of the air is likely to be more vast and bewildering in its results than even the discovery of the new world, and one is inclined to wonder that men should take it as calmly as they do. But great events nowadays astonish less than the great events of the past, just because we hear so much of them. Columbus went into the unknown and there were no newspapers to relate every detail of his preparation and his start. The world was not in any way prepared for his discovery, and heard nothing more of him until he returned bringing his great and unexpected news. That news must have spread slowly and uncertainly from country to country, gathering legend and rumor about it as it spread. But now we are told day by day and at great length of every new advance and every new failure in the conquest of the air, and in a short time we are used to the subject as we are used to the advertisements of patent medicines. Our minds are prepared for even greater wonders than happen, and we discount all facts, as the stock exchange discounts whatever it certainly expects. Thus our imaginations are less stirred than they should be; already we think of improvements in flying machines as calmly as we think of improvements in motor cars, and the whole problem of the conquest of the air seems to us to be a mechanical one.

Perhaps in another hundred years the first adventures of the new element will seem as romantic as the Argonauts; and legends, fit for poetry will begin to gather around them, just as they would by now have gathered round Leonardo Da Vinci if he had achieved what was perhaps the chief of his many ambitions, and been the first argonaut of the air. In England, at any rate, it was not until the reign of Elizabeth that men's minds were possessed by the romance of the New World or their ideas powerfully changed by its discovery. It was not the thing itself that moved them so much as its results. Very likely they first heard with a kind of dull wonder that the world was twice as large as it had been supposed to be. They could not imagine a new hemisphere or all that it would mean to the inhabitants of the old one. It was only when more and more men came among them who had sailed to that new hemisphere, bringing tales of its wonders and specimens of its riches, that they began to be really interested in it. And so it may be with the conquest of the air. What has been achieved of it so far is a bare fact to us. Most people are not acquainted with aeronauts and have never seen air ships in flight. So far what has been accomplished has had no striking results. We hear that an aeronaut has crossed the channel, but his feat makes no more difference to our lives than the feat of Captain Webb. It was when the discovery of the New World began to make a difference in the lives of Englishmen that

the poets took notice of it, for only then were there enough facts connected with the discovery to stir their imaginations.

Elizabethan poetry is full of the romance of riches, for owing to the discovery of the New World the pursuit of riches suddenly became romantic, as it had never before, except in the vain dreams of alchemy.

"Riches and conquest and renown I sing," cried Chapman. He could not have joined these three together when men grew rich by minding their own business at home. Because the New World meant riches. The idea of it became real even to those who were divided from it by the whole Atlantic ocean. The idea of flying will not become real to us until it means something as concrete as riches. And at present it merely bewilders us, because we have not the least notion of what concrete results it will have for us. We are too much in the dark even to speculate about it, and it scarcely moves us either with hopes or with fears. The conquest of the air may change the fates of nations as the discovery of the new world changed them. It may give vast new opportunities to some and take away old opportunities from others. It will be a curse or a blessing according to the use which men make of it. Of that alone we can be sure, but we are sure of that about every new discovery. Meanwhile in our present uncertainty about everything else, it remains a mere topic of the newspapers, and each new achievement is nothing but an item of news, but the account of something that has happened at the other end of the world. —London Times.

Wheat and Speculators.

Under the above heading the Toronto Mail and Empire sets forth as follows:

To Canada in the midst of its wheat harvest the position of the wheat market is an object of very great interest. That position, however, is not very clear. It is obscured by the operation of speculators. For months speculators succeeded in keeping the public impressed with the view they wished to make the prevailing one as to the nearness of select stock to exhaustion. Patten and his associates kept up the cry that the quantity of old wheat remaining at the beginning of spring was so much below the lowest of former years as to forebode famine prices before the new crop wheat was ready for market. The utmost was made of every adverse factor, such as drought in Argentina, unpromising spring condition of the winter wheat crop of the United States, and more or less gloomy news as to the state of the crop in Europe.

That there was a substratum of fact under the "bull" speculators' representations is not to be denied. The actual situation so far as its features were discernable in the last three or four months favored the view that the demand was gaining very rapidly on the supply. Nor did the prospect for high prices seem to end with the crop year. As the outlook appeared to the statisticians, the period of high prices would apparently extend throughout the next twelve months. Whatever solid ground there may be under this view prices have for some time been very steadily declining, until now, when the harvesters are entering the fields of Northwestern Canada, the price of wheat in Chicago is down close to the dollar point. Does this mean that, after all, the farmers are not going to get higher prices this fall than they got last fall? If so, what is the cause? Is it the actual weight of the new crop, or is it largely the work of speculators? If speculators could boom the prices unduly at the

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time of year when stores of wheat are naturally running low, speculators could also depress the price at the time of year when supplies are greatest, and when producers are most pressed to sell. It is a fact that "bears" are now as conspicuous as "bulls" were three months ago. Fair prices, doubtless, lie somewhere between the high ones at which the predominant speculators kept them some weeks ago, and the low ones at which the same predominant speculators are now keeping them. If farmers would generally sell their wheat when the Pattens tell them to hold it, and would hold their wheat when the same advisers are counseling them to sell it, more of the money made in wheat would go into the pockets of the wheat producers and less into those of the speculators, and the consumer would fare better. The last season's wheat speculation did not do much good to the farmers, and it hurt consumers by giving an excuse to bakers for raising the price of bread.

Western farmers are under the necessity of getting their wheat to market in the comparatively short period between the harvest and the close of navigation. This puts them somewhat at the mercy of the buying side. The bear speculation, which usually becomes active at that period may be responsible for a large holding back of grain this year, for farmers are beginning to understand that the time to sell their grain is the time when the master speculators are hoisting up the price.

Press Comment.

(Qu'Appelle Progress)

A peculiar relic of early banking times is the closing of banks at 1 p.m. on Saturdays. In an agricultural community such as in this district it naturally militates against the business interests in more ways than one. It is a common practice for farmers to come to town Saturday afternoon to do their shopping, and with the banks closed business is more or less handicapped. Cheques cannot be cashed except at the stores which do not always have sufficient change on hand for the purpose and the business men are forced to carry over Sunday a large amount of cash that otherwise they would deposit in the bank. Now that the harvest is approaching, would it not be a good plan for the banks to take some other half holiday and keep open Saturdays? Such an arrangement would doubtless meet with approval of all who do business therewith.

(Bystander in Toronto Sun.)

Have our militarists, who are so bent upon making Canada a military appendage to England, carefully considered what the consequence to England would be? Would the addition to the British fleet of a Canadian Dreadnaught suffice to balance the burden of protecting Canada both on the Atlantic and on the Pacific? We may not like to dwell on any weakness in Canada herself, but the fact is that a large section of our population is French or Irish and has no Imperialist enthusiasm to fire in case the day should go hard with the empire. On the American side, Canada is perfectly safe; no thanks to the Jingoism which is always doing its utmost to keep up angry feeling between the two sections of our race on this continent. The building of Dreadnaughts is surely but a small part of the question, which embraces all the contingencies of war to be carried on in all parts of the world with the great powers.

(Toronto World)

There are two great questions up in England at the present moment. First, there is the fear of invasion and the demand for better defence by sea and land.

Second, there is the budget of the Liberal government, which proposes increased taxes on the wealthy and on big land owners especially.

Both these questions involve a lot of other things: whether the mother country cannot best find the money for defence in a custom tariff paid by the many consumers, rather than a

tax on the wealth and property of the few; whether a tariff based on reciprocal preferences between mother country and daughter states would not bind them together more firmly for a common defence; whether it is not time to reduce the power of the house of lords; whether Socialism as exemplified in old age pensions should not be checked; whether Lloyd-George or Lansdowne is the man for the hour; whether it is to be free trade or protection and a host of others.

There is right on both sides: the aristocratic party are in a measure right when they demand a united empire in trade and in defence; they are wrong when they oppose social reform, the betterment of the millions that make up the British masses.

The Liberals are wrong in not recognizing the power of a tariff to find funds for defence and better pay for workers.

A new composite party is needed for the situation; one that believes in (1) the reform of the house of lords, (2) the imposition of more taxes on wealth and privilege, (3) the efficacy of a tariff, (a reciprocal tariff if you will) to improve the condition of the working classes and to provide money for defence, (4) the increase of the army and the navy and the co-operation of all parts of the empire in a common defence, (5) the supremacy of the people and the need for great measure of social reform and of political equality.

The Liberals accept some and reject others of these planks; the Conservatives do the same; a bitter fight is the consequence; a great leader is needed, one who can crystallize into legislation the good, discard the bad, in both parties.

(Montreal Star)

Lord Kitchener seems to have been chosen to lick the military forces of over-seas British communities into shape and co-ordinate them with the regular army at home and on its stations abroad. No other soldier in the service of the empire could do the work as well; and it is hard to think of any other place in the military machine where Lord Kitchener could now be employed to such good purpose. He has "modernized" the military establishment in India, his work has left its impress on Egypt; and the next most important task before the military defenders of the Empire is to get colonial volunteers into a condition which will make them of the greatest possible use in the case of an Imperial crisis.

Undoubtedly Lord Kitchener will be fully instructed before he comes to Canada not to worry either himself or us about our unfortified American "frontier." Half-baked soldiers who visit us are usually much alarmed over our unprotected condition to the south. They want a line of forts on the European model from Puget Sound to Passamaquoddy Bay, and they do not see how we manage to "sleep o' nights" without a solitary sentinel posted along the border to give us warning of the approach of an invading host. Lord Kitchener's chief's in London, however, will understand the situation and will warn him that he must regard Canada as a North American nation and not as a European power.

His advice to our military commanders should be invaluable. He ought to be able to tell them exactly what they lack toward the making of a practical fighting force, and his advice will come from one having authority and not some ill-natured person is sure to remark as the scribe. Possibly he can convince the authorities at Ottawa that when they desire to economize they should not do so by cutting down the training camps; and he may be able to induce Sir Frederick Borden to do something toward making good his boast in London the other day that in time of trouble we could soon put a hundred thousand men into the field. If the Canadian militia could be enlarged and given better inducements to drill, it might easily form a reservoir from which contingents could be drawn which would be of the utmost service for the garrisoning of the mother country in the face of a threatened invasion.

SAFE AND SANE

Do you take this woman for better or for worse?
I do, I do, I do. But I hope you kin kinder strike an average.—Washington Herald.

When you hear an ill report about anyone, half and quarter it, and then say nothing about the rest.—Spurgeon.

MRS. ANNIE BESANT.
Chief of Theosophists.

Mrs. Annie Besant, who began recently a lecturing tour which is intended to cover some of the most important cities of Canada and the United States, has come directly from India, where is located the headquarters of the society of which she is president. The Theosophists are unique among religious organizations, in that they do not seek for converts. It is a matter of indifference to them whether the membership of the cult swells by one or one thousand a year. The lectures which their leaders give from time to time are not designed with a view to creating new adherents or the raising of funds. They merely offer the public a chance to understand what theosophy is. The society has no creed, no form of worship, and theosophy in itself is hardly as much a religion as an attempted explanation of the spiritual inwardness of all religion. It is indeed, at variance with religious generally, in that membership to the society is made purposely difficult. The required standards are extremely severe in the matter of personal life and practice, and as there is no particular paradise at the other end, there is no rush on the part of the public to become theosophists.

Mrs. Besant's career has been a remarkable one. Of Irish parentage, she was born in England, and was early left without a father. Her mother, a woman of refinement, but a recluse, brought up the girl in ignorance of the world about her, while filling her mind with treasures of the world's best literature. She was married when still a girl to Rev. Frank Besant, a brother of Walter Besant, the novelist, and the match was unhappy, primarily as a result of the young wife's previous experience, as she admitted herself in her later years.

Mrs. Besant's religious faith broke down in the course of a few years. Her agnosticism became a scandal in the parish, and her husband secured a deed of separation from her, although Mrs. Besant's friends claim that she had grounds for divorce in her husband's cruelty. The mother took with her the girl, and the father kept the boy resulting from the union; though in a few years the father recovered possession of the girl on the plea that an atheist was no fit guardian for her. Incidentally it is worth mentioning that though they had not seen their mother in years, both children joined her on attaining their majority, and are now associated with her in theosophy.

On leaving her husband Mrs. Besant continued her charitable work with which she had tried to silence the critics of her heterodoxy, and presently she found that as an advocate of the poor she possessed unusual power. She became a paid writer of the Home Ruler, and with practice developed into a powerful speaker. She came in contact with Chas. Bradlaugh, the famous free thinker, and joined forces with him in his effort to reform England. In the famous fight when Bradlaugh, elected to represent Northampton in the House of Commons, was cast out because he would affirm instead of swearing, when taking the oath, Mrs. Besant played an important part. It has been said that it was her influence alone that prevented a terrible riot when Bradlaugh was ejected from parliament after having been thrice sent back from Northampton.

On the third occasion 15,000 men from all parts of England went back with their hero, and stood outside the parliament buildings, waiting for an excuse to invade the street. The sight of Bradlaugh "standing still and white face set like marble, coat torn, motionless as though carved in stone, facing the members' door," maddened the thousands of men, and they rushed forward only to be checked by Mrs. Besant, who foresaw the day when Parliament would be glad to receive Bradlaugh without any violence in his behalf.

The next cause championed by Mrs. Besant was that of the London match girls. She organized them and led them through a successful strike. It was in the course of this struggle and in daily contemplation of the misery of the children that Mrs. Besant's creed, even as she had tired of her earlier religious faith. She had heard of theosophy and of Mme. Blavatsky, but had never given any particular thought to either. It may have been her instinctive sympathy for the under dog that led her at last to seek an interview with the chief of the society. There was no coldly questioning agnosticism in her interview with Blavatsky. Instantly she fell under the woman's power. Nor was she deterred in the least by the published report of the Society for Physical Research, which had aggressively torn the theosophist leader to ribbons and had denounced her as a charlatan of the most impudent kind. "Since that day Mrs. Besant has spent more time in India than in Europe; and her influence has been on the whole, in favor of the British raj. She has formed societies such as the "Sons of India" and the "Daughters of India," and has been instrumental in establishing schools and universities. At the age of 62 her intellect is as keen, her energy as great, as they were in the old

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days of the Bradlaugh struggle. Whether one agrees with Mrs. Besant or with the Society for Physical Research or the subject of theosophy, the conviction cannot be escaped that Mrs. Besant is one of the most remarkable women of her time.—Mail and Empire.

BACHELORS

Bachelors can be found roaming at large in all parts of the world. They inhabit apartments, clubs, open fields, bodies of water and music halls. They are also seen behind the scenes. They hover at times near front gates, and have been found in back parlors with the aid of a searchlight.

Bachelors are nomadic by nature and variable in their tastes, never going with one girl long enough to be dangerous.

Bachelors make love easily, but rarely keep it. Rich bachelors are hunted openly and shamelessly, they

are always in great danger. Those who finally escape are, as a rule, useless ever afterwards.

INSCRIPTION IN ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

Major General Charles Gordon, C.B., who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak,
His substance to the poor,
His sympathy to the suffering,
His heart to God.

Who follows in his train?

I think the first virtue is to restrain the tongue. He is nearest to the gods who knows how to be silent even though he is in the right.—Cato.

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