

cabinet. And all gradations of self-government may be found in the more than ninety units of the British Empire.

"This fearful and wonderful fabric has no central body. There is no 'Bundesrath' or Imperial Council. No collective action of its units is possible. The relation to them of the Mother Country is illogical, ill-defined. To the foreigner accustomed to the federation of the American States or of the units of the German Empire the government looks planless and ineffective.

"All of which is preliminary to the observation that there is not at the present moment any more effective institution in the whole world of political fabrics than the British Empire. Whatever its machinery lacks appears to be supplied by its spirit. The defects of its body are made up for the unity of its soul.

"The fact cannot be gainsaid that England, who does not begin to be as logical as Germany, or as systematic as France in matters of government, has nevertheless the knack of making men step out, of their own free will, to die in her defence. She has the gift of keeping alive, across tumbling seas, round half a world, the undying bond that unites the heart to home. She has shown herself indifferent to the possession of the taxing power over her colonies—but what matters it? Those colonies tax themselves to send her warships and their sons seize their rifles in time of strife to go to her aid. She has the wisdom so to train and guide the swarthy children of alien races, and even the foes of yesteryear, that they put their living bodies between England and England's enemies. She has a fearfully muddled theory of government, but her practice of government lays hold on the deepest things in the soul of man.

"As we contemplate this wonder of an empire whose philosophy of politics is all wrong, but for which the costliest things within the gift of man are poured out without stint, we are moved to wonder whether this is a prophecy of the future. Will the States of the coming

days make more of the spirit and less of the machine? Will they reckon less of constitutions and bills, or rights and fabrics of government and more of the invisible things which touch the soul?

"We do not want to seem to degrade a high theme; but English plum pudding holds the key to the mystery.

"English plum pudding never saw the day when it was worth the eating. It is soggy; it is greasy; it is flavourless; it tastes like the roller composition compact of glue and molasses, which every country printer knows. It is unworthy of the good fruit spoiled in its making and the good spirit burned beneath it when it is brought to the Christmas board. It does not compare with the dark suet pudding of Missouri. Yet English plum pudding is eaten on Christmas not only from Land's End to John o' Groat's house, but in Manitoba, in Khartoum, on the sides of the Himalayas, under the orange groves of New Zealand, where December is June, and in the blistering humidity of the Straits Settlements. Why? We cannot tell. But eaten it is. And British hearts, from London to Melbourne and back again, answer to the strains of 'God rest you, merry gentlemen,' and English eyes grow dim with happy tears.

"The British Empire is unscientific. It is unreasonable. But it is mighty, with the greatness of the soul.

#### Getting Onto Dad.

A friend of mine has a little boy of six. Christmas the child received an avalanche of toys, and the entire day was spent with flying machines, electrical railroads, acrobatic, mechanical toys of all kinds, and so forth. Toward evening the father, taking the child in his arms, asked:—

"Well, son, was Santa Claus good to you?"

"Ah, there ain't no Santa Claus," responded the boy.

"What! There isn't any Santa Claus?"

"No, there ain't. You're Santa Claus." And his mind reverting to a recent incident, he added: "And I believe you're the stork, too."