

It is hard to estimate the loss which will result to British industries as a result of the great coal strike, or colliers' "holiday." The inability to obtain a plentiful supply of fuel is paralyzing in its effects, and it seems strange that a presumably highly intelligent body of men, such as the Miners' Federation, should think that any advantage to labor could accrue from their action. The public, of course, has to pay heavily for the holiday, and the owners of the mines will reap a large advantage. The latter have been receiving greatly increased prices for coal, and at the same time are paying no wages; the striking miners are on strike wages from the Federation, and that is about all they will get for their holiday. The miners are now making their exit at the little end of the horn, for the loss of a fortnight's wages is equal in itself to quite a large reduction in wages for the year, and the only gain to be seen is that they have had a holiday.

One of the contributors to the Mermaid Inn department of the *Toronto Globe* (Mr. Campbell, we fancy, by the initial "C") asks what Canadian universities are doing on behalf of the national life—national literature, and makes the grave statement that they have never in the slightest way shown that they recognize such a growth in the land. This is undertaking to say a good deal, and we doubt if the writer can sustain his contention. Off-hand, without any looking up of names and birth-places, we can dispute it. Dr. Grant, who holds the honored position of Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, is as thorough-going a Canadian as can be found from ocean to ocean; C. G. D. Roberts, Professor of English Literature, Economics and History at Kings, N. S., holds a place in the front rank of literature, and who will impeach his loyalty to Canada. Rev. Dr. Forrest, Principal of Dalhousie, is a Nova Scotian, and we could give many other examples of men who have not allowed the colleges to build them, but have been so national in spirit that they have helped to build the universities. It is true a great many outsiders occupy chairs in our colleges, but in the past it was necessary to draw to this new country all the learning and culture possible; now, conditions are being gradually changed, and those who have grown up with the country are getting their turn. It is also true that there are individual cases where it seems very hard that the country does not offer a congenial career, and talents that would adorn our national literature are given to strangers. Those who have offices in their gift should always look about them for suitable men in our own country before turning to the old country, which is always our resource when we need it. We agree with the Mermaid Inn writer that the state of affairs he depicts is deplorable, but we are far from admitting that it is as bad as he states.

The amount of money spent yearly on wine and similar spirituous beverages in the United Kingdom is calculated to give us pause when we consider the awful sum of misery produced by the drinking habits of the people. The total amount spent on intoxicating drinks during 1891 is given as \$706,250,000, which huge sum means an expenditure of about eighteen dollars per head, counting men, women and children. This is an increase of about \$5,345,000 over the previous year. There is a decrease in the consumption of foreign beverages, but the home-brew more than supplied the deficiency. This points conclusively to the melancholy fact that drinking has increased among the working classes, for the decrease is only in the more expensive drinks. The growth has not been, however, so great in proportion as in previous years, so perhaps the tide may be turning. England takes the lead among the three kingdoms for thirst, or rather the satisfaction of it, which is taken in beer principally, but Scotland retains a proud pre-eminence in the consumption of whiskey. The amount of beer consumed in England seems to be out of all proportion, and means a terrible waste of money. Twenty-seven and a half millions of barrels, at a cost of about \$392,838,365 makes the per capita expenditure enormous. There is no getting over the fact that despite the spread of individual temperance principles the scourge of strong drink is at work harder than ever, and the nation bears its marks. If the money spent thus were put to useful purposes Britain would benefit more than words can say. Every individual may find in the figures of this drink bill a warning against indulgence in alcoholic beverages, which are unspeakably harmful when taken in quantity. The dividing line between those who can and those who cannot control their appetites is hard to place, and the imminent danger of overstepping the mark is well exemplified by the figures given above.

Mr. Archibald Lampman recently raised a voice of lamentation in the *Toronto Globe* over the poor intellectual conditions of our people and the institutions of our public life. We always stand up for Canada, but we are bound to admit that in the pursuance of the ideal and beautiful, the higher arts and the refinements and graces of life, Canadians are very backward. Mr. Lampman speaks of visiting what is called the National Art Gallery at Ottawa, and gives it as his opinion that there are less than a dozen pictures worthy of note in the collection. He goes on to say that "If our public men had interest in the beauty, the honor, the real well-being of this country, they could as well as not provide that a hundred thousand dollars or double that amount be annually set apart by the Government for the purpose of buying good pictures. A few fine foreign paintings might be added to the collection every year, and a fair sum might be expended in the purchase of Canadian work of the highest merit. In this way our native art would receive both culture and reward. The best models would be provided for its study, and the benefit conferred upon it of encouragement and support would be incalculable in its effect. One would think that no sacrifice would be deemed too great, which might tend to relieve in any

respect the arid poverty of our social and intellectual life." There is a great deal of truth, unpleasant though it may be, in this hauling over the coals. Take our own city as an example. What have we, so far as progress is concerned, to point to with pride in art, science, literature, architecture, or anything else that indicates that the people have souls above the commonplace? We boast a beautiful park and lovely public gardens, but where will we find even the nucleus of an art collection or public library? There are a few fine, though small, paintings in the Provincial Museum, but it is impossible for them to be generally appreciated or exert an educative influence while they remain poked away up two long, dusty flights of stairs. There is also in the Legislative Council Chamber a painting by the great Benjamin West, which, owing to its situation, is more familiar to the people, but further than this we cannot think of any work of art in the place, except of course, a few good pictures in private homes. If, as has been said, a small but constantly growing library is a credit to any young man, why do not communities recognize the principle as applying to them, and keep adding year by year to their public supply of books. If our people were intellectual there would be a creditable public library in Halifax, and it would not be allowed to stand still. About the only benefit to others that can result from the aggregation of wealth in a few hands is that it enables public institutions to be endowed, works of art to be purchased and charities to be supported. Unless such things as these are done, money is out of the right track, and the public is the poorer for it. There is money enough in this country for a little to be spared for such purposes. The Provincial Museum, at least, should be put where it could fulfil its highest end. It is worth it, and when it is really made the best of people will appreciate it thoroughly. The late Dr. Honeyman labored faithfully in it and for it, and it is not fair that such a valuable institution should not be placed where its benefits could be enjoyed to a greater extent than is now possible. We might at least have one institution to be proud of.

It is pitiful to think of the condition of the millions of people enduring the horrors of famine in the Volga region of Russia. Despite the measures that have been employed to afford relief to the suffering peasants we continue to hear that there is no change for the better. Mr. C. E. Smith, United States Minister to Russia, has made a report to the State Department which shows, in some measure, what a miserable condition the afflicted region is in. The famine is general in thirteen Provinces, with a population of about 27,000,000, and there are seven Provinces in which the famine is partial. The whole vast section is agricultural, and ordinarily the most fruitful in Russia. It is officially stated that 14,000,000 of the inhabitants are without food or means of support, and the cause of the famine is found in the failure of the crops, which for three years have been inadequate. The peasants are accustomed to relying upon the annual supplies, and therefore have saved nothing. In addition to the lack of food there is very little fuel, and the horrors of starvation are shortened by freezing. Such want always has a disastrous effect morally, and the tales of crime and brutality which come from the famine-stricken land are most distressing. What food is available is of a quality that breeds disease, and in short, it would be difficult to imagine a harder case than that of part of Russia at the present time. It is obviously the duty of all Christian countries to try and aid Russia in feeding her starving millions, and the effort is being made in many quarters. Relief in such a case should be immediate to be effective. Up to the end of February there had been received in Russia about \$25,000 from the United States, and the American Minister stated authoritatively that the generous donors might rely upon their gifts being faithfully applied, and with the approval of the Russian authorities. The Czar has contributed largely to the relief fund, and the nobility are, many of them, working diligently to aid the sufferers. An English special correspondent, travelling in Russia, states that the climate of the Volga region is changing, and that the only remedy is for the inhabitants to be assisted to emigrate to Canada or the United States. He says they would make successful colonists, and are a fine race of people. Mme. Novikoff, a Russian lady of rank, has explained from her standpoint why the Russian Government has refused official help from other countries. "The Russians," she says, "not only share our Government's views upon the matter, but are thankful that it realizes so thoroughly the feelings of our country at large. In international intercourse the predominant principle is that of give and take. Anybody who cares to study history may easily get convinced that Russia has always been particularly anxious to remember every kind turn done to her. She could never startle the world with her ingratitude. On the contrary, she not only invariably returned the capital with gratitude, but willingly aided a large percentage for every loan; unaided she remains quite free from every obligation. To become a friend and ally of Russia means to strengthen one's own position and to guarantee one's future. Ingratitude implies a meanness of character incompatible with our moral standard. Those who understand thoroughly what gratitude means are naturally hesitating in accepting help. But private charity has quite a different meaning. Separate individuals, sympathizing with our misfortunes and sharing with us everything they can, are doing a Christian work for which every Russian is heartily obliged." This is scarcely a satisfactory explanation, and if Mme. Novikoff thinks the obligation is less when help is received from individuals, we fail to see where the Russian nobility of character comes in when they are willing to take the assistance for which they think no return is required, and refuse that which they fear might some day have to be repaid in kind. In spite of this, it is a Christian duty for all to assist the distressed, whether as private individuals or contributors to a general state fund.

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