

their *Grand Prix* in the Bois de Vincennes, where the Municipal Council has made a model "Drome." President Faure stamped the meet with his presence, and the gate money amounted to 40,000 francs, all for the poor. Only in one race a distance of ten inches separated the winners; in the other not the width of a tire. It was a splendid display of skill.

Z.

Paris, July 16th.

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### Through Long Years.

Through all the nights and days,  
And the long swing and roll of years,  
Along the world's untrodden ways  
Thou art the same, O Sea.

The same thy nether deeps,  
But changeful is thy mighty flood,  
Whereon the aged North-wind sleeps,  
Where Zephyr dreams of love.

Resplendent in the sun  
And all thy face agleam with gold,  
Or when in fire thy ripples run  
Toward the Sunset-land,

Ever my gaze is bent  
From some lone crag along the shore,  
Most pleased when from her cloudy tent  
Queen Dian kisses thee.

Forgot the storms of yore,  
The swelling, roaring, gales of Time,  
While heaven shows a jewelled floor  
Upon thy proud expanse.

Thus under varying skies  
We must reflect a will supreme,  
While deep within the soul there lies  
A constancy of calm.

Victoria College

WILLIAM T. ALLISON.

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### Letters to the Editor.

SIR,—I read THE WEEK, as it comes to hand by each mail, with great interest, and am glad to see that the principal literary journal in Canada is devoting so much attention, and so much space, to the question of the Commercial Federation of the Empire. In your issue of June 19th you refer to your "request to correspondents," and in the course of the article signed "J. Van Sommer," the following paragraphs appear:—

"The two principal essays on which THE WEEK invites an opinion are very well analyzed in the issue of the 29th May, p. 634, and to which we refer our readers, and so do not repeat them here further than to say that Mr. J. G. Colmer's suggestions were:—

"1. That an import duty of 3% *ad valorem* should be placed on certain articles (specified) received from foreign countries in the ports of Great Britain, thus giving a preference to similar articles from the Colonies.

"2. A contribution by the Colonies of 2% from their revenues to an Imperial Defence Fund.

"3. The creation of a Colonial Council appointed by the Crown and the Governors-General of the Colonies for consultative purposes and to administer the Defence Fund."

These explanations of my "suggestions" do not altogether commend themselves to me. As a matter of fact, I did not suggest an *ad valorem* duty. What I suggested was certain specific duties, on a limited number of articles received from foreign countries, similar articles from the Colonies to remain free of duty. The specific duties would be equivalent to about 3 per cent. *ad valorem*, except in the case of wheat and flour, when they would be nearer 5 per cent. I also proposed reductions in the existing duties on tea, coffee and cocoa, coming from the Colonies, and upon tobacco.

The Colonies would naturally have to give, in return, I suggested, some equivalent preferential treatment to im-

ports from the United Kingdom. The fiscal systems in force in the Colonies are, however, so varied, and their foreign trade so different in extent, that no one plan can be suggested to apply to them all. Therefore, my opinion was, and is, that the better course would be for the Government of the United Kingdom to take the initiative, inform the various Colonies what rearrangement of the existing tariff it might be prepared to recommend to Parliament in favour of Colonial products, and enquire what concessions each Colony would be prepared to give to British products as a *quid pro quo*. Any concessions should apply to trade between the Colonies and the United Kingdom and to that between the Colonies themselves. A scheme of that kind would not interfere with the freedom of the Colonies to arrange their own tariffs to suit their own requirements. Of course, the proposed preferential treatment in the Colonies would have to be satisfactory to the Mother Country, just in the same way as the proposals of the United Kingdom would have to be satisfactory to the Colonies, and any agreement would naturally be subject to alteration from time to time. Such an interchange of correspondence would pave the way for another Imperial conference, when the matter could be discussed, and, I think, disposed of.

My suggestions entailed a net increase in revenue in the United Kingdom of about £700,000 per annum. If a general agreement to that effect was arrived at, a contribution of that extent from the United Kingdom, and one from the Colonies of equal extent, would make a fund available for Imperial defence in the manner suggested in my essay. The difficulty I felt, however, was in the apportionment of such a contribution among the different Colonies, and I came to the conclusion that it could be effected in the most satisfactory way by taking the revenue, after making certain deductions, as the basis for arriving at an equitable division. One of the tables attached to my paper indicates that an amount equal to 2 per cent. on the Colonial revenues after making certain deductions, and 1 per cent. on the revenue of India, would realize the sum of £700,000. What I wished to suggest was that such a sum might be raised by the Colonies and India, as the result of the preferential trade arrangements, or otherwise, as they might decide, to be devoted to a permanent fund for Imperial defence, if the Colonies and the United Kingdom so agreed.

The definition of the "Colonial Council" is somewhat meagre, from exigencies of space no doubt; but still I will only express the hope that your readers will take Mr. Van Sommer's advice, and read my essay itself before giving their views on my suggestions.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

J. G. COLMER.

29 Eldon Road, London, W., 9th July, 1896.

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### Art Notes.

AMONG the earlier Italian works in the National Gallery few are more interesting than a certain composite altar-piece, vaguely described in the official catalogue as of the "School of Taddeo Gaddi," and representing in its central panel the familiar subject of the Baptism of Christ in Jordan. The treatment, of course, is somewhat hard and dry, as one might expect from its age; and the figures have that early angularity which moves the uncouth mirth of uncultured visitors; but as a moment in the development of the theme which it enshrines it seems to me a precious relic in the evolution of the art of painting. The centre of the foreground is occupied by a small and very symbolical Jordan—a Jordan reduced, as it were, to its simplest and most beggarly elements. There is only just enough of it, in fact, to enable us to say, as the children write across their first rude attempts, "This is a river." Such purely symbolical Jordans, like symbolical temples and symbolical cities, were common in the earlier ages of art; and, what is odder still, they survived from the days of Giotto and Taddeo Gaddi, almost down to the days of Raphael and Michael Angelo. You can see another admirable example of very late date in the charming and sympathetic Piero della Fran-