

The Philosopher

The Annual Renewal

March is the month in which, according to the calendar, Spring begins. In this region, it is true, the actual climatic fact is not unfailingly in accord with the almanac; but even our most blustering March days, there is a something in the sun and in the sky which speaks of the coming of the great renewal of the year—something which tells us that while Spring, the season of "soft rains and blossomy boughs," is not actually at hand, it is nevertheless on the way. The sun rises higher in the sky every day, and shines more strongly—so much so, indeed, as to start the sap mounting unwisely soon, for though the sunshine may be strong on our March days, there is frost during our March nights, which freezes the too early mounting sap and so splits the trees—which The Philosopher found to be one of his main primary difficulties in growing fruit trees here in Winnipeg, and so learned the lesson of the necessity of mulching to keep the sap from starting upward until the danger from frost is past. It is the annual miracle, this renewal of Nature's life every spring—but a no more wonderful miracle, if we will but consider things rightly, than the new beginning which every separate morning brings in the eastern sky—the wonder of each new day, which (because it has become so familiar a wonder) we have ceased to regard as a wonder at all. It is our loss that this is so—our loss that we do not renew our lives not only with each spring, but with each new morning. Nature surely sets us the lesson often enough.

The Curse of Party Patronage

Every thoughtful and patriotic man and woman in this country is looking for such decisive action by the new Dominion Parliament as will effectively do away with the whole pernicious patronage system, which has not only impaired incalculably the efficiency of the country's public services in the past and cost the people untold millions of worse than wasted dollars, but—worst of all—has been the mainspring of corrupt and corrupting politics. The spoils system has been truly a curse to Canada. Now is the time to establish a radical measure of reform which will do away with that curse. Both the Dominion Parliament and all the Provincial Legislatures should take action to free the land from this insatiable plague, which has preyed upon it for generations. The strain and stress of war endeavor and war need make this reform imperative now; and the consideration of the burden of war taxation in the years to come adds to the compulsion that every Canadian who is capable of thought must realize there is for protecting the public money for spoilation. The freeing of Canada from the spoils system will be the work of true and high patriotism.

A Queer Creed

Consider the case of some people in Michigan, who are members of a sect known as "The House of David," and have conscientious objections to a number of things. A whole company of them has been formed at Camp Custer, near Battle Creek. Their creed enforces upon them respect for the constituted authority; and so they made no objection to the draft. They announced they were willing to serve their country; but when they were drafted, the problem of what to do with them presented itself. Their creed does not allow them to touch any weapons. Not only are they vegetarians, but they have as strong conscientious objections to touching meat as they have to touching weapons; and so their usefulness in the camp kitchens is restricted. They are forbidden, too, by their creed and their consciences from touching diseased living flesh; and so their usefulness in the camp hospital is also restricted. They are willing workers within the field marked out by their conscientious objections. They clean out the camp stables, and do whatever work they are ordered to do which does not bring them into conflict with their interpretation of the Scriptures. They attach extreme importance to the fifth verse of Leviticus, xxi.: "They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their beard"; and so one of the strongest of their conscientious objections is to cutting either the hair of their heads or their beards, both of which growths they cherish in flowing, luxurious length. They are fortunate that they are living in a land which is not under German rule.

Our Victuals These Days

"Every householder in Canada can and will be a Food Controller," said the new Food Controller for Canada, Henry B. Thomson, in his first announcement after assuming his duties last month. This personal view of the food problem by not only every householder, but by every person in Canada, whether a householder or not, is essential no less than vigilance on the part of the official Food Control service of the Dominion in profiteering, hoarding and ille-

gitimate trading. It is only the luck of geographical position which has left the Canadian householder with a roof over his head. If his home had been in Belgium, northern France, Serbia or any other of the regions devastated by the Huns, it would not be a case of his being exhorted to practise food conservation and economy—he would be confronted by actual food shortage, dire, with the spectre of Starvation stalking in the background—"that Starvation," as Baron Rhondra, the Food Controller in Great Britain, has said in his address to the farmers of Great Britain, urging them to their top capacity of production, "which is followed by Disease and Death." The people of the United Kingdom have been put on a meat ration of a pound of meat a week; those who are content to eat inferior grades of meat may obtain slightly more than a pound a week on their meat cards, four of which each permitting the purchase of ten cents' worth of meat, are available weekly. In Germany, the meat ration, consisting largely of pork, is about three-quarters of a pound a week. How does our consumption of flesh food in Canada compare with the ration in Great Britain? Should we not, each and every one of us, regard the British meat regulation as a challenge and a warning?

In Regard to Self-Sufficiency

There are not a few fine and valuable thoughts finely expressed in the speech delivered by W. L. Grant, an old friend of The Philosopher's, on the occasion of his installation as Headmaster of Upper Canada College, in Toronto, of which speech The Philosopher has been honored with a copy. In one passage of that speech Principal Grant (who is a son worthy of his distinguished father, the late Principal Grant, of Queen's University, Kingston, who was one of the first of the men of light and learning of his time to foresee the possibilities of Western Canada) tells of how several years ago in London he spent part of a day in showing a youth from Canada some of the sights of that great city. "I ventured to point out to him some points in which I thought we in Canada might learn from the Mother Land. 'Oh,' he said, with a touch of accusation in his voice, 'Canada is good enough for me!' If he meant what he said, he was right, abundantly right. Canada is good enough for him, for you, or me, or any other man or woman, to live or die for. The land for which so many have died needs not to have that established. But I fear that what he meant was a very different thing—that he was good enough for Canada—that he, a raw, crude, half-educated young cub, was God's last and most perfect gift to humanity, and had nothing to learn from the Old World and its civilization." In that utterance Principal Grant sounds a true note, which needs to be sounded not in this country alone. Rightly-based, resolute, unvaunting self-confidence is one of the best of human qualities; but self-sufficiency which "knows it all" and is puffed up with the conceited delusion that it has nothing to learn, is one of the most evil things under the sun.

Stage Thunder by the Junkers

During the Brest-Litovsk negotiations the journals in Germany which speak for the Junkers—the large landholders who are in the forefront of the extreme Conservative party—clamored for the immediate and unceremonious annexation of the Baltic provinces of Russia by force of German arms, and denounced any "pandering to the idea that the people in those provinces should be given any say in the determination of their future political status." They demanded that, instead of holding parleys, Germany should "carve those provinces away from Russia with the sword," as the Berliner Deutsche Tageszeitung, the organ of Count zu Reventlow, a leader of the Junkers, expressed it. The Tageszeitung even went so far as to hint that there ought to be a military rebellion, to enforce that view. In which—including the suggestion of a military rebellion against the Imperial Government at Berlin—the Tageszeitung was, of course, acting on the instigation of the Imperial Government at Berlin, and by and with its advice and permission. It was simply stage thunder by the Junkers, to serve the purpose of the Hohenzollern regime.

The German Talk of the "War Map"

When von Bethmann-Hollweg was the personal servant and mouthpiece of the Kaiser at Berlin, under the title of Imperial Chancellor, he was always prating about the "war map" as proving that German might was already victorious. German invaders are still in occupation of large areas of territory which they have overrun; but there is not quite so much heard from Berlin about the "war map" as there used to be. It is being borne in even upon the German mind that there are other "war maps" to be considered than that which shows the territory overrun by German armies out of which they have not

yet been driven back. There is the economic map of the world, which shows that German ships have been driven from all the seas, that the great structure of German world-wide commerce has been destroyed, that the supplies of raw material for Germany's manufacturing industries from the world outside Germany has been cut off, so that only war work, with "substitutes" for not a few materials, keep German factory chimneys smoking, and that the food of the German people has been cut down. Another map may be called the democratic map—it shows the free peoples of the world allied against the confederacy of Germany, Austria, Bulgaria and Turkey—a confederacy which stands against the world-movement towards free government and representative institutions. And last, but not least, is the map of Justice—the imperishable scroll whereon are recorded the crimes of men and of nations. Burnt indelibly into that dread scroll, as into the memory of humanity for all time to come is the long list of crimes of Germany and its three associates in infamy which are mere vassals of Prussianism rather than equal and independent co-partners.

The Changed View of Education

"We must educate our masters!" was the famous utterance in the House of Commons in which Robert Lowe, after the first of the widenings of the franchise that were the great fundamental facts in the political history of Great Britain during the nineteenth century, summarized the imperative need of making provision for the spread of education among "the masses." Robert Lowe's declaration was brought to The Philosopher's mind on reading the excellent report of Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. Robert Fletcher, which forms the introduction to the annual report of Manitoba's Department of Education, issued during the past month. Mr. Fletcher, in dwelling on the new point of view in education, quotes Macaulay's famous speech in favor of a grant of a mere £20,000 for public elementary education, in which "he addressed himself to the governing classes of the country, appealed to their fears, and warned them that if the tasks of the Government were to be safely accomplished, if crime and intemperance were to be reduced, they must provide for the education of the people." The new British Minister of Education, Mr. Fisher, in stating his educational plans to the House of Commons, while, of course, he does not ignore the essential, vital importance of enlightened public opinion in a democracy, takes the view that education is also an end in itself, and must in justice be extended to all classes of the community. "It enables men and women," he said, "to escape from the oppressions of a difficult and somewhat sordid life into regions of pure enjoyment; it dispels the hideous clouds of class suspicion, and softens the aspirations of faction." What a change from the time when "the governing classes" regarded the idea of the spread of education among "the masses" with alarm.