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Appreciation of Dr. Joseph Parker.

The Nonconformist newspapers of London, lately come to hand, contain many eloquent tributes from leading men to the late Dr. Joseph Parker. Very naturally these tributes are characterized by appreciation rather than by criticism. Many of the writers are indeed not oblivious of the fact that Dr. Parker had his limitations as to range of thought and activity, and his eccentricities and infirmities of temper and speech. But they all recognize in him a very remarkable personality, a man of great intellectual power and deep spiritual earnestness, with a genius for oratory, a man whose great talents were consecrated to the highest ends, and his superficial defects are forgotten in the contemplation of his splendid virtues. We quote here some words of Lord Rosebery's in reference to the great preacher, which appear with many other tributes in the *British Weekly*:

"I went to hear him with some doubt, and perhaps a little prejudice. For what was reported of his utterances in the daily press was, naturally enough, whatever was eccentric, daring and loud; the occasional passages which, taken out of their context, seemed crude and jarring. What I saw and heard was a great preacher, dramatic, no doubt, like Whitefield and most of his illustrious agitators of all communions; with the passion and force of a preaching friar, but also with the facile sway of one who dominates his hearers. He was, I suppose, sometimes extravagant and excessive, with the qualities of those who wish to rouse the hearers to whom they are speaking, heedless of the cold realities of print. But he moved and stirred mankind—all mankind—that came in contact with him, and was not unduly fastidious in regard to rhetoric. For he was determined, working always for good, by some means or other to produce the effect he desired, and none can doubt he produced it. It was not indeed difficult to see that he was one of those moral rulers who reign, who have a realm and subjects of their own, over whom they exercise a personal dominion—rulers like Wesley—spiritual princes as truly as the ecclesiastical electors of the Holy Roman Empire. Most striking was the number of young men among his hearers—the class most difficult for a church or preacher to attract. The congregation too, listened with the solemn, almost painful intentness of Spurgeon's congregation—more cannot be said. . . . In his private room afterwards was revealed the weary but still strenuous man; weary, for it was in his last period, but with the note of strenuousness strong within him. And so he worked to the death, animated and sustained by the atmosphere of virile reverence which encompassed him, as well as by the high purpose which inspired his career."

The "Electric Post." Count Taeggi, an Italian, the originator of a scheme for the speedy carriage of letters, which he calls the electric post has been in London recently for the purpose of explaining his system to the postal authorities there. Count Taeggi proposes to forward letters at the rate of from 200 to 250 miles an hour. Wires will be erected at an altitude corresponding pretty nearly to that of the telegraph wires at present. They will be in the form of aerial railways, two wires forming a track. On these lines will be run miniature carriages propelled by electricity. The whole apparatus will be inclosed. The wires are to be supported by posts. To avoid collisions between the cars and the poles the wires will rest on arms projecting from the uprights. There will be two main lines, one for incoming and the other for outgoing letters, and all large cities and towns will be served by them. Radiating from the large towns there will be lines to the smaller towns in direct communication with the main line. The idea is that the public will simply have to drop a stamped letter into any one of the many posts and the invention will do the rest. Within the poles there will be an apparatus to stamp the letters, i. e., impress the locality and the time of posting—and on the approach of the "electric tram" the box containing the letters will be automatically raised to the top and the correspondence emptied into the carriages. They will then be carried to the central office in the district, be automatically deposited, and by a mechanical process be conveyed to the sorters'

tables. After they have been sorted they will be again taken to the top of the building and forwarded to their destination.

An Automobile Train.

The automobile is already much more than an expensive toy for millionaires to play with. It has become practically serviceable in many ways in cities and in the rural districts of some countries where the public highways are of a character to make its use practicable. It seems probable, too, that the sphere of the automobile's utility in affording an easy and speedy means of travel will be greatly enlarged. Wherever there is a solid and smooth roadbed the automobile can be made serviceable, and this fact, when its importance becomes well understood, will probably be a strong influence to promote the construction of roads of that character. A Paris despatch gives the information that a regular system of passenger travel by automobile is about being introduced in that country. A train consisting of three automobile carriages is to leave Paris for Dijon on January 18. It will travel 106 kilometers (62 miles) an hour. The carriages will carry 40 passengers each, and their baggage as well, and will be provided with the conveniences usually found on railway trains. As to the motor power, it is said that, under the system employed, a small quantity of petroleum converts a comparatively small quantity of water into the greatest possible propelling power, the steam acting directly upon the wheels. Thus locomotives are superseded and each carriage is independent. It is said that 62 miles an hour can be maintained the whole way from Paris to Nice. Such a degree of speed may not be practically desirable and of course would be possible only on the best of roads.

Harnessing Niagara.

The Canadian Niagara Power Company has been for some time engaged in the construction of works at Niagara by which the power of the Falls will be used for the production of electric energy. The plan of the Company involved the construction of a wheel-pit with capacity for five turbine wheels of 10,000 horse-power each. This work has been about half finished, and it is now announced that the company will extend its wheel-pit to more than double the capacity first intended. With the new extension the wheel-pit will accommodate six additional turbines of 10,000 horse-power each, making a total of eleven turbines and 110,000 horse-power when finished. The wheel-pit when finished will be 540 feet long and 170 feet deep. The first section which will produce 50,000 horse-power will be in operation before the completion of the second section of 60,000 horse-power.

The Winter Fair.

The Fat Stock show held in Amherst a year ago was considered highly satisfactory, and the Fair held in that town last week appears to have been a still more pronounced success. There was a good show of fat stock and of poultry, and in connection with the show there were instructive lectures and addresses by men of theoretical knowledge and practical experience in these important departments of agricultural industry. These discussions in connection with the exhibits of stock could not fail to be of much interest to the stock-raisers present, and should have a very real value in promoting intelligent farming. The fair attracted a considerable number of prominent agriculturalists and public men from the different parts of the Maritime Provinces. There were also a number from Ontario including Prof. Robertson, Prof. H. S. Dean, of the Guelph Agricultural College, Prof. J. H. Grisdale of the Dominion Experimental Farms, E. C. Hare of

the Poultry division of the Department of Agriculture, Mr. William McNeil of London, Ont., Mr. Duncan Anderson, of Rugby, Ont., and Mr. Archibald McNellage, Editor of the *Scottish Farmer*, Glasgow. The winter fair would seem to be an institution highly worthy of being commended and promoted. It is evidently conducted on the lines of serious business and utility, and will be under much less temptation than are the Provincial exhibitions to employ doubtful methods for the attraction and amusement of a crowd in order to pay expenses and serve some local interests.

The Venezuela Difficulty.

There appears to be grounds for hope of a peaceful solution of the Venezuelan affair by arbitration. United States Minister Bowen at Caracas has been empowered by President Castro to act as the sole representative of Venezuela in the matter of effecting a settlement of the present difficulties with Great Britain, Germany and Italy. It is understood that Mr. Bowen is willing to accept the office of arbitrator if so authorized by the Government at Washington, and if the Powers interested shall concur in the proposal he will undertake to settle with them on behalf of Venezuela, being granted a free hand in the matter by President Castro, on the assurance that the American Minister will use his best efforts to guard the interests of Venezuela. It is certainly to be hoped that this may prove to be an effective means for the settlement of the trouble. Evidently there had come to be in England an increasing nervousness over the situation. This arose partly from the fact that the position of Britain in the matter was not clear to the public, whatever it might be to the Government, that the wisdom of attempting to collect debts through the exercise of military or naval force was doubted, and still more from a dislike of being mixed up with Germany in the matter, and the fear that German influence might lead Britain into trouble with the United States. Rightly or wrongly, the feeling seems to be quite prevalent in England that the Emperor William is no friend to Britain, and there is therefore apprehension in respect to some situation arising which would afford the Kaiser an opportunity of bringing Great Britain and the United States into unfriendly relations.

Marconi Announces Success.

According to despatches published in the daily papers on Monday, the efforts of Mr. Marconi to establish telegraphic communication between the Table Head Station in Cape Breton and the Poldhu Station in Cornwall, England, have been crowned with success. On Sunday the Associated Press office, New York, received the following despatch from Mr. Marconi:

"I beg to inform you for circulation that I have established wireless telegraph communication between Cape Breton, Canada, and Cornwall, England, with complete success. Inauguratory messages including one from the governor general of Canada to King Edward VII., have already been transmitted and forwarded to the King of England, and also the King of Italy. Messages to the London Times have also been transmitted in the presence of its special correspondent, Dr. Parkin, M. P. (Signed) "G. MARCONI."

Mr. Marconi is receiving the warm congratulations of his friends. It would of course be rather rash to conclude that a regular system of communication with England by wireless telegraphy will at once be established. There may be serious difficulties yet to be overcome before the invention can become practically available, but the triumph now secured would seem to justify the expectation of final success.