

Canadians who have a financial interest in phosphate mines have now a cause for jubilation. A cheap American phosphate or apatite has during the last year been competing with the Canadian article in the British market, and the phosphate mines of Florida and South Carolina have been threatening to destroy the entire Canadian trade with Great Britain. The American phosphate is now found to be most inferior and impure, and British buyers are all returning to the Canadian markets. As there is but little of this valuable mineral found outside of Canada, and as our Canadian mines are being rapidly developed, a prosperous future seems assured to the mine-owners.

Mr. Gladstone's trouble with the Irish members will soon begin. If they are not satisfied with their treatment they are strong enough to frustrate many measures in which they as Irishmen are not interested. The same is true of the Scotch and Welsh members, who, by combining, may effectually block local bills in which they can have no particular interest. It is therefore suggested that the Irish members shall be allowed to vote only on Irish questions, and when Imperial measures are being discussed. If this method were adopted for the members for Scotland, for Wales, and for England, a simple and direct method of legislation would be attained. The obvious difficulties would be in defining the actual jurisdiction of each member, and the uproar which in all probability would be aroused by this narrowing of the representative's power.

There are few Canadians who do not feel that the election of Cleveland augurs future good for Canada, where the advantages of the McKinley bill have never been felt. Legislation is proverbially slow, and although McKinley may rule for a few months, yet he will certainly have to go. Among the interesting features of the late campaign has been the similar positions of the candidates. Each had enjoyed a term of office, and while struggling for a second term each knew that at the close of the four years of office he must retire to private life. A president has never held office for more than two terms, and in the late election both men recognized the fact and dealt directly with the people of to-day, instead of shrewdly looking out for an extended term of office. Cleveland enjoys the unique distinction of being the first defeated candidate who has won back success. Long life and good luck to him!

A washerwomen's festival, a most unique fête in its way, recently took place among the colored congregation of a Maryland church. Thirty washerwomen marched to the music of a brass band to the pine grove, which was to be the scene of action. Fires were built and kettles swung, and then the contest began in earnest. The clothes were doused, rubbed and rinsed in most approved fashion, and while they were drying in the open air the workers and the spectators adjourned to the vestry of the church, where this practical illustration of the proverb that "cleanliness is next to godliness" was well impressed upon them. Later in the day the ironing competition began, and a committee was appointed to decide on the best laundress. A competition of this kind, if introduced in Halifax, might inspire our city washerwomen with a desire to reform, and to send home no more yellow, grimy garments which are not suggestive of soap and water.

One would think that the puzzling, baffling intricacies of the L. s. d. monetary system would soon become unbearable to our British cousins, and that they would begin to see the full advantage of the decimal system of our dollars and cents. The cumbersome coins with which we have been obliged to burden ourselves when in England rise before our memories—the massive pennies, the bothersome three penny, six-penny, shilling and crown pieces, and the absence of the convenient though uncleanly bank-note. Sir John Evans now proposes to make the British currency still more intricate by introducing a thirty-shilling piece, and probably the fifteen-shilling piece as well, on the ground that the new issue would in some recondite way be an economy to the mint. The coin would, in our estimation, be simply an added annoyance to an already complex system—the sovereign, the forty-shilling and the hundred shilling-coins are all in use, in addition to the numerous small pieces of the realm, and on behalf of the travelling public we protest against the proposed innovation.

For some time past it has been the policy of Russia to keep alive all the jealousy and race-feeling between the people of the Balkan Provinces of Roumania, Servia, Bulgaria and Greece. A peaceful federation of these minor powers would be a galling curb to the Czar, and would effectually blockade the Russian road to Constantinople. Trifling dissensions are fanned at once into State quarrels, which are usually referred to and settled by Russian arbiters. A curious dispute is now going on in which Roumania and Greece are taking an active part. One M. Zappa, a Greek merchant resident in Roumania died recently, leaving a large fortune, which he bequeathed to the various philanthropic institutions of Greece. The laws of Roumania, however, do not permit the transfer of property to foreign legatees, and the Government has seized the estate, holding it in trust for the heirs of the deceased. King Charles of Roumania, who is by all odds the most plucky of the Balkan rulers, ignores the claim which Tricoupiis, Premier of Greece, is pressing for the possession of the State, and declines to submit the matter to arbitration. The result of the contest will of course in the end be the decision of Russia in favor of Greece, and the Roumanian laws of inheritance will be ignored. This is but one of countless squabbles which will continue until the "little nations" unite in some fixed policy of withstanding Russia's encroachments.

The government of a kingdom during a long regency is a thankless task, so historians have told us, and so the Queen regent of Spain is finding to her cost. The people take a lively interest in their precocious little sovereign, and are in a way loyal to him, though many of them disapprove of the courtly atmosphere in which he is being brought up. Only last week at Granada great preparations were made for the reception of the boy-king, when his mother, fearful perhaps of the excitable people, refused to allow him to visit the city. An angry mob, on hearing of the refusal, tore down the handsome arches which had been erected for the reception, set fire to several Government buildings, and attacked the private houses of several supporters of the Government, with cries of "Long live the Republic." The disaffection spread also to Madrid, where open rioting was indulged in on the Parade. The Governor of Granada and the Mayor of Madrid have each received dismissal as a vicarious punishment for the misdeeds of the citizens—a summary method of settling the dispute which is not adapted to appease the people.

During the early part of this year the great strike of the colliers caused great misery among the poor of Great Britain, and the coming struggle between the employees and the employers of the cotton mills of England promises to be full as disastrous. There are 44,000,000 spindles in the factories of England. About half the number are controlled by a masters' federation, composed of mill-owners, who will form a solid resistance against the demands of the workers. Some 14,000 spindles are now standing idle. The spinners have also a well-organized union of 24,000 skilled operatives, and in addition there are 9,000 spinners still at work who contribute four shillings a week each to the funds of the strikers. A reserve fund of £120,000 is also at the service of the strikers. There has been a break already in the owners' federation, as the great manufacturing firm at Bolton declines to cut wages—they attribute their satisfactory financial position to the fact that they do not use American but the cheaper Egyptian cotton. It is to be hoped that matters may be adjusted satisfactorily before the inclement weather of winter prevails.

Denmark seems to have satisfactorily solved a problem which has been perplexing philanthropists for the past generation. A discrimination is made by the new poor law between the vicious, demented and vagrant poor, and those who, notwithstanding their exertions, are reduced to poverty. The paupers of the first classes are to be accommodated in the ordinary workhouses and asylums, but the circumstances of applicants of the second class are to be carefully inquired into. Any Danish subject who can point to an honorable record, and who, after attaining the age of sixty years, is in absolute need, is to be cared for by the State, either by his relatives in his own home or in some suitable institution such as a home for the aged. The pension in either case continues only during good behaviour on the part of the pensioner, and as in many cases the pension need only be a partial one, money which would necessarily be spent in building and supporting enormous asylums and poor houses, is actually saved to the State, while a more considerate treatment is assured to those who, through no fault of their own, were thrown in their old age upon the tender mercies of the ancient poor laws.

The increasing number of divorces granted in the law courts of the United States is forever being discussed by both the clergy and the press, but no practical solution of the difficulty has as yet been given. After all, divorces are not so numerous as we are accustomed to consider them, as they average not more than one per cent a year. It is not improbable that the number of golden weddings which are annually celebrated is greater than the number of divorces applied for. But the same evil which has caused the comparative popularity of divorce in the neighboring Republic is at work in our own Dominion. Improper marriages are the feeders of the divorce courts. Marriage is easy and cheap. The tramp who begs from door to door finds no difficulty in having the marriage ceremony read over himself and some infatuated girl. Young people, whose united abilities are not great enough to earn a single livelihood, think it great fun to elope, being either unaware or careless of the solemn vows which they are taking upon themselves. The wonder is, when we consider the number of imprudent marriages which every day take place, that the number of divorces is not much greater. A little paternal care on the part of the Government officials who issue marriage licenses might be beneficial in its results.

Although the recent Italian elections have resulted in the return of Premier Geolitti, yet the victory is by no means a decisive one. Geolitti is pledged to an economical administration of affairs, and his first duty will be to cut down to one-half their number those Government officials whose offices are mere sinecures. Further than this he probably will not dare to go—in fact it is doubtful if his countrymen will allow him to take more than the initial steps necessary for reform. Ex-Premier Crispi was at one time fairly as popular as his successor, but he lost prestige when he endeavored to bring about reform; nor was Premier di Rudini a whit more successful in his attempt at solving the problem. The financial state of Italy could hardly be worse than at present. The maintenance of the army and navy, according to the terms of the triple alliance, is a constant drain on the treasury, and the harbors, roads, railways and bridges are in urgent need of funds for repairs or for development. Unless Signor Geolitti is an exceedingly shrewd politician he will speedily be in hot water. Either he must carry out his agreement honorably to the letter, or he will by a wavering policy bring farther evils on the people who have chosen him as their premier.

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