

dance about the room snapping his fingers in time to the music.

Riley's reading was marked by the casualness that was part of his nature. He liked small books that fitted comfortably into the hand, and he brought to the mere opening of a volume and the cutting of leaves a deliberation eloquent of all respect for the contents. Always a man of surprises, in nothing was he more surprising than in the wide range of his reading. It was never safe to assume that he was unacquainted with some book which might appear to be foreign to his tastes. His literary judgments were sound, though his prejudices (always amusing and frequently unaccountable) occasionally led him astray.

It is always a matter of speculation as to just what effect a college training would have upon men of Riley's type, who, missing the inscribed portals, nevertheless find their way into the house of literature. I give my opinion for what it may be worth, that he would have been injured rather than benefited by an ampler education. It was human nature that chiefly concerned him, and it was his fortune that he knew profoundly those definite phases of life that were susceptible of interpretation in the art of which he was sufficiently the master. Of the general trend of society and social movements he was as unconscious as if he lived on another planet. I rather think that he profited by his ignorance of such things, which left him to the peaceful contemplation of the simple phenomena of life that had early attracted him. Nothing seriously disturbed his inveterate provincial habit of thought.

He did his writing at night, a fact which accounted for the spacious leisure in which his days were enveloped. He usually had a poem pretty thoroughly fixed in his mind before he sought paper, but the actual writing was often a laborious process; and it was his habit, while a poem was in preparation, to carry the manuscript in his pocket for convenience of reference. The elisions required by dialect and his own notions of punctuation—here he was a law unto himself—brought him into frequent collision with the lords of the proof desks, but no one, I think, ever successfully debated with him any point of folk-speech. I once ventured to suggest that his use of the phrase "durin' the army," as a rustic veteran's way of referring to the Civil War, was not general, but probably peculiar to the individual he had heard use it. He stoutly defended his phrase and was ready at once with witnesses in support of it as a familiar usage of Indiana veterans.

His manuscripts and letters were works of art, so careful was he of his handwriting—a small, clear script as legible as engraving, and with quaint effects of capitalization. In his younger days he had indulged in a large correspondence, chiefly with other writers. His letters were marked by the good-will and cordiality, the racy humour and the self-mockery of his familiar talk; a collection of them would be a valuable addition to epistolary literature.

Riley always seemed a little bewildered by his success, and it was far from his nature to trade upon it. He was at pains to escape from any company where he found himself the centre of attraction. He resented being "shown off" (to use his own phrase) like "a white mouse with pink eyes." He cited as proof that he was never intended for a

social career the unhappy frustration of his attempt to escort his first sweetheart to a party. Dressed with the greatest care, he knocked at the beloved's door. Her father eyed him critically and demanded, "What you want, Jimmy?"

"Come to take Bessie to the party."

"Humph! Bessie ain't goin' to no party; Bessie's got the measles!"

## MEXICO'S SICKNESS

*Is Not a Land Problem but a Problem of Races says Wilfley*

WHILE many people say and believe that the "land problem" is at the bottom of Mexico's troubles, Lebbeus R. Wilfley, in the North American Review, denies it almost altogether. He says it is serious in only one state—Morelos. There can be no general land question in Mexico, for two reasons: First, because the Indian does not want land, and second, if he did want it, it exists in great abundance for all. Only about fifteen million people, the majority of whom are Indians, live in Mexico, which is a country of over 800,000 square miles, or 500,000,000 acres. The fact that the Indians do not want land has been demonstrated many times and in various ways. It was demonstrated conclusively on a national scale by Benito Juarez, the great author of the Reform Laws of 1857-59 and the hero of the Mexican people. This was done in the following manner: Under the Spanish regime the Indians dwelt in villages (as they do now) and were given the free enjoyment and use in common of all lands adjacent to the villages. The village proper was a rectangular plot of ground twelve hundred yards square, with a church in the centre. This was called the Fundo Legal. Surrounding this was a body of ground called Egidos, where the villagers raised their crops. Beyond this were the Communal Lands, which corresponded to the town common of English and New England towns. Here the Indians grazed and watered their cattle and gathered their wood and charcoal.

When the liberal party triumphed under the leadership of Benito Juarez, the Government not only nationalized all the property of the Church dedicated to the use of public worship, education, etc., but it confiscated many valuable haciendas in various parts of the Republic owned by the Clergy. These haciendas were sold to the friends of the liberal party. At the same time, this Reform Law of 1859 provided that the public lands surrounding the villages should be divided among the Indians and that the head of each family should receive title to his quota in his own name. This was done. The theory was that the Indian should no longer be treated as a child and a ward of the nation, but as a responsible citizen. On the same theory and at the same time, the Mexican Constitution, which is modelled after the United States Constitution, was given to the Mexican people. The net result of this law of reform was that the Indian lost his lands.

It happened in this way: The neighbouring haciendado immediately began acquiring title to the small Indian farms around the villages. In those states where the rich lands were scarce, as was the case in Morelos, this process was carried on until the big land owners had acquired all the lands up to the edge of the towns, leaving the Indians with only their shacks in the villages. This was easily done. The new purchasers of the confiscated haciendas were mainly Spaniards. The Spaniard always wielded a powerful influence with the officials of both the Government and of the church.

Since this nation-wide experiment of Benito Juarez, a number of experiments have been made by governors of different states, and always with the same results. On two occasions, for example, the governors of the State of Zacatecas divided large tracts of lands among the peons. They held them for a few years only. In too many cases the land was mortgaged and sold to get money with which to dissipate.

No, the Indian does not want land. What he wants is permanent employment at a reasonable wage. He wants to live in comfort without the anxiety and labour which are incident to the successful management of landed estates. This trait of the Indian character is well illustrated by the fact that a great majority of the race prefer to dwell on the table-lands which occupy the central part of the Republic, where the climate is cool, the land poor and dear, and water scarce, rather than to live in the low lands along the coast, where the climate is hot, the soil rich and cheap, and water plentiful. The trait of the Indian character which causes him to do this is the key to the proper understanding of the land problem in Mexico.

President Diaz estimated that in ninety per cent.

of the Mexican population Indian blood predominated, and that considerably over fifty per cent. of the population was of pure Indian blood. In this fact we have the A B C of a correct understanding of the Mexican situation; and the X Y Z of it lies in the knowledge of the fact that the Mexican Indian



THE FUTURE.

"Marne, Jutland, Erzeroum, Volhynie, Trentin, Bukovine . . ."

"The game is finished?"

"No . . . there is worse to follow."

Francis Joseph (aside): "The devil! And William calls that succeeding! !!"

—Le Rire, Paris.

is similar to the North American Indian with whom we are familiar, except in two respects. The North American Indian was a nomad, and a warrior; while the Mexican Indian is attached to his village, and is a pacific individual. Otherwise they have the same characteristics: they are treacherous, revengeful, cruel, lazy, opposed to modern civilization, lacking in initiative, in the power of forecast, in self-restraint, and are devoid of interest in the general welfare of the community. With ten per cent. of the population Caucasian and ninety per cent. Indian, how is it possible for a constitution and a body of laws to be evolved and adopted by the two races which would be applicable to both? The proposition is an absurdity. The preponderance of Indian blood in the population of the country constitutes the great fundamental problem which embraces and overshadows all others in Mexico. It is the basis of all revolutions, for the reason that revolutions such as usually occur in Mexico could not take place except in a community where the masses of the people are in ignorance. It makes real democracy in Mexico impossible, and it gives rise to all of those problems which are now vexing that unfortunate country, and the solution of which is fraught with so much difficulty.

## "IMPERIAL DILEMMA"

*A Statement of the Problem of the Empire by the Round Table*

THE following article, explaining the Round Table Society and the problem that brought it into being, is taken from the Round Table Quarterly, and as a statement of the case may be taken as fair and accurate, even though many persons—including the editorial board of the Courier—firmly reject the idea of Centralization of Empire, to which a majority of Round Tablers appear to lean. The article begins: Seven years ago there was begun a private "enquiry into the nature of citizenship in the British Empire, and into the mutual relations of the several communities thereof." The first volume of the results of this enquiry has recently been published under the title of The Commonwealth of Nations. It would seem to be desirable, therefore, to give some account of the method by which this book has been prepared, for it is largely because of that method that we wish to commend it to those who are interested in the political problems of the British Empire.

The enquiry has been an attempt to apply the



THE PERMISSIONAIRE'S RETURN.

"Well, you saw your wife. Did you tell her about our battles?"

"No chance. She wouldn't let me get a word in edgewise."

—Louis Morin, in La Baionette, Paris.