

THROUGH A MONOCLE

"Nationalism" and the Navy

THE first signal political fact focused by the "Monocle" on its resumption after some months' seclusion in my vest pocket, was the defeat of the Laurier candidate in Drummond and Arthabaska and its effects upon the rest of the Canadian people. In the main, these effects have been far less pyrotechnic than I feared. The pro-navy Canadians, largely "of English origin," to quote a phrase which Sir Wilfrid Laurier himself invented for the Jesuit Estates affair, have been commendably moderate in their comments; and there seems no disposition to preach a race jihad in any quarter. Possibly they are a trifle awed in the face of a dangerous manifestation. Possibly their zeal for the new naval policy is not as fierce as might have been expected of them. And it is even possible that they are governed by a feeling of justice which compels them to see that it would have been wholly unfair to expect any other result under the circumstances from "our fellow-Canadians of French origin"

IN this whole navy business, it seems to me that our pro-navy leaders have been expecting to produce an effect without a cause.

They have hoped to induce the thrifty Canadian people, who are immersed to the eyes in the great enterprise of laying the foundations of a new half-continental empire, to vote a lot of good money for the building of a navy for which there appears to be no earthly use. With the exception of loose generalities to the effect that navies seem to be all the style now, and that every self-respecting nation wears one when it goes out Sunday afternoons, what reason has been given the Canadian people why it should plunge into the tremendous task of equipping itself with a retinue of fighting ships? Are we in danger of invasion from the sea? Is there a foe lurking behind the blue waves of the Atlantic or the Pacific ready to attack our coasts, which, however, can be repelled with great slaughter by a few cruisers of the Bristol class?

WE all know better than that. Britain has a navy because it needs one; Germany is building one because it thinks it may want to use it; even poor old Turkey is buying up a few cast-off cruisers because it sees a very definite reason for having them in the restive condition of Crete. But so long as the British navy is supreme and the American navy reads the Monroe Doctrine on the quarter-deck every Fourth of July, why does Canada need a collection of ships which could never fight a battle, but which will cost more than a full equipment of technical schools? The British Empire must be supreme at sea or go to pieces; but the Dominion of Canada will never fall before an armed invasion, unless it crosses the frontier on foot. In the face of the plain and irresistible logic of facts, what has been done to convince the Canadian people as a whole that they should build a navy? What, in particular, has been done to persuade the contented farmers of Quebec that they ought to dip down in their pockets to buy "Bristols" or enlist their sons in the "marine of Canada"? They are a peace-loving, diligent people. The clang of war was never meant to disturb the quiet of their little farms. Somehow the war-lords will look after their own affairs. There is no need for war-preparedness till some invader crosses the frontier. There was plenty of fighting once upon a time. The walls of Quebec are a reminder of war. But this is the era of peace, plenty and prosperity. Why disturb it by international or imperial imbroglios?

JUDGING by the arguments that were put up in Drummond and Arthabaska by the pro-navy advocates, the attitude of that section of the community, be they Liberal or Conservative, English or French, is abjectly apologetic. They do not go to the people with a stirring cry of warning on their lips—with an insistent finger pointing to a real and approaching danger—and present their navy plans as a practical call to arms. They do not arouse our voters as even the Liberal Asquith and Gray stampede the Radical voters of Britain. They rather deprecate "war scares," and the larger part of our English press itself makes a joke of the cloud which every European without distinction thinks he sees hanging in the heavens. In a word, there is no good reason given our people why they should even mount

a shotgun in a canoe; and, in the absence of such reasons, our French-Canadian fellow-citizens are perfectly right to keep out of "the vortex of militarism," and refuse to lend themselves to what they erroneously believe to be the selfish ambitions of an Imperialistic clique with a greed for power and a passion for oppression.

* * *

NOW you probably have gathered that I strongly believe that there is abundance of reason why every section of the British Empire should prepare with all haste to defend itself against any possible foe. No man could travel for a year in a European atmosphere without perceiving that the nations there are sternly and anxiously girding themselves up for a titanic struggle which visibly impends over them and toward which our "whole creation" seems to "move." But there is little or no apprehension in Canada. The "scare" out of which our naval policy was born, has become one of the foolish sensation of "yester-year." They may be troubled on the Quai d'Orsay, they may be straining every nerve in the British Foreign Office, they may be laying down Dreadnoughts at Trieste, and there may be a military compact between Turkey and Roumania. But Canada believes herself above the storms. If Europe is silly enough to be vexed over many things, we with our impregnable school system and our evangelical Christianity have chosen the better part. We may have consented in some half-hearted fashion to go through the motions of starting a navy; but we are not to be prod-

ded into taking our little experiment seriously. Still, that being so, we must not be surprised if the busy farmers of the West and the peaceful "habitants" of Quebec, are even calmer than we are, and will not pay for a toy with which they do not care to play. Few men will consent to carry a revolver unless they believe there is danger.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

Music and Manners

MUSICAL manners in Canada need amending. Perhaps this is not true of Canada alone. Those who know say that even in London manners in music are in sad need of reform. I don't mean the manners of musicians; which may be bad enough or good enough or what you will; but the manners of those who listen to music. "Music and Morals" is the title of a good book by an English clergyman who saw in music a profound aid to the morals of other people—whatever became of the morals of the musician. "Music and Manners" should form the title of another book.

No man suffers so much from the lack of manners in other people as the musician—who may have to play at private recitals or drawing room functions. The performer in the music hall has the advantage. There, no matter how bad his music, he gets some kind of attention from the audience. But in a drawing room the pianist, or the violinist, or the singer is completely at the mercy of the "crush"; and a crush is a bad setting for a performance of music.

Of course the performer has his fee. Mrs. or Lady So-and-So having arranged her "crush," and the payment of the musician's fee assumes no further responsibility. At a stage in the proceedings when on ordinary principles most of the guests should have said all they need to say, the musician is called on to perform. Nobody announces him. There is no master of ceremonies. He may be a big artist with his hundred or hundreds of dollars for a performance—and getting it; but when he sings or plays to a drawing room crush he is relegated to the rank of the restaurant piano or the theatre orchestra. The moment he starts to sing or to play, conversation, previously lagging, begins to crescendo. The louder he performs the louder the clack. Those under his elbow are no better than those at the end of the room. From piano to hallway there is nothing but the clatter of tongues; and he may interpret his music till he is black in the face, but it makes no difference to the feast of talk.

"I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play," wrote Browning. But he has few if any disciples in the average drawing room affair, where an artist is engaged to play or sing and to take a fee which he gets, and sometimes feels like saying: "Less fee and more manners if you please."

Ontario's proudest boast is her stock of K. C.'s. These letters do not mean Konservative Counsel, but King's Counsel, or a barrister entitled to wear "silk." Of these Ontario has 300, in a population of only two million, whereas England has only 276 in thirty-five million.



THE NEW KING OF SIAM, EDUCATED IN ENGLAND

Maha Vajiravudh was one of the most unusual figures at Oxford University, where he went after completing his course at Sandhurst. He reads English, French and German, and has written a volume in French on Siamese folk-lore. He has also studied military affairs.