

Current Comment.

Vacation.

This month and next are known as the long vacation. It is the time when the residents of cities and towns look up their country relations in order that they may commit to them the care of their children. It is the time when pleasure resorts are crowded, when boating and yachting are the popular amusements, when the bathing-suit is the most becoming apparel. In short, it is for town people, young and old, the period of leisure. It is no folly for men and women to plan carefully for the holidays. Recuperation is an absolute necessity in every walk of life. The man who grinds incessantly impairs his usefulness and shortens his days. Rest and recreation are as necessary as food and drink. As no one can work week day and Sunday without breaking under the strain, so no one can work uninterruptedly for twelve months without suffering physically and mentally.

It is gratifying to note that all through the West new fields of amusement are opening up. It is now possible for the farms to become centres of social life. This is a boon to the farmers' children as well as to their visitors. The new railroads lead to fishing grounds and to paradises for campers and canoeists. The summer hotels, no longer a losing venture, have accommodation for thousands. And this is all good if wisely used. May all our readers enjoy themselves to the full, and return to their fall labors with browned cheeks, hearty appetites, and spirits refreshed.

The Short Vacation.

There are some whose holiday is necessarily brief. To such we commend the fresh air. The benefit may not be apparent at the time, but life during the rest of the year will be all the richer because fresh air has been inhaled for a fortnight. It is a mistake to live in the dust if it can be avoided. Let every one who is able get to the water or out on the wind swept prairie.

No Vacation for Us.

Unfortunately there are many for whom there is no vacation. Sick little children living in crowded tenements or in filthy hovels—hundreds of these must go without the welcome change. Boys and girls weak in body, threatened with the white plague, must continue to decline as they breathe the atmosphere of the smoky city. It is time, surely, that humanitarians added to public playgrounds a public refuge for sick children—a summer farm to which the most needy could go during the dry and dusty season. The work done in some districts of England and America indicate that it would be possible to establish a farm in the neighborhood of our largest cities that could be operated with funds supplied altogether by the children of the well-to-do parents. All that is required is a leader in such a movement.

The Vacation in the Country.

July and August are not the easiest months for the farmer and his wife, but as a rule the children are not hard pressed. There is one useful employment in which many of them might engage. They might gather and press native flowers and mount them for distribution at Christmas. Those who wish to make money in this way might easily do so as there are hundreds of customers in the cities and in the older lands who would pay handsomely for collections.

The Summer Fairs.

One feature of the vacation is the summer exhibitions. Unfortunately they have degenerated somewhat as an exhibition of farm products, and have become more or less turf-meets, with enough of the variety show added to satisfy the tastes of the most fastidious. It is satisfactory to note that the legitimate features are being emphasized this year, and as if in preparation for the Centennial of 1912, everybody is determined to make the fairs of 1909 the most successful in the history of the West. There is no reason why anything of low caste should be made prominent at an exhibition in Western Canada. With its high class horses, cattle, implements, and manufactures of all kinds it is unbecoming that the amusements should be of low grade. Here again there is cause for satisfaction in the statements of the managers, who promise to give that which is both entertaining and instructive.

The War Scare.

The more one considers the matter the more he is convinced that the recent war scare was the best thing for the Empire that could have occurred. It has aroused all classes from their dream of false security, and it has evoked a feeling of national pride which has prompted every one of the units of empire to offer its wealth and its men for the defence of the flag. It is no small thing that the Empire should feel its unity at a time like this and it is just as great a thing for the rest of the world to know that we are a united people.

Whatever may be the result of the deliberations of our own Government with the Home Office, every Canadian will insist on one thing—that we do our full share at a time like this. It may be that Dreadnoughts in ten years will be obsolete. The discoveries of science make all things possible. But we know nothing just now which is such a sure defence as vessels of this kind. Therefore let us equip and man a worthy warship to co-operate with that great navy of which we are so proud and to which we owe so much. At the same time this initial step must not prevent us for planning for a permanent and adequate national defence.

Men Needed.

After all when it comes to war and to the planning which averts war, it is men that are needed—men of scientific acumen, of bravery and integrity, of resource and invention, and above all, men who are filled with patriotic pride and Spartan determination. And so it comes to a question of education—education in home and church and school. It does seem that in some respects the strong commercial spirit of our time unmans us. We can learn something from Japan if we will. We can learn something from other nations. We must repress, a little, our strong selfish love for material things and combine to work out our destiny as a nation. It is not what we have but what we are, that will ultimately determine our standing. Nothing more calamitous could befall us than that we should be satisfied to exist merely as a nation of wheat-growers and railroad-builders.

Education Required.

This brings to the front once more the need of good schools. We are not spending upon the schools what we should in money or thought. We are satisfied with teachers who are novices, and imagine that elementary schools can do good work without a system of secondary and higher education. This is altogether wrong.

But the most serious feature in connection with the education of our children is that so many of them do not attend even the primary school. A few years ago Canada was pointed to with pride as a country in which all attended school. It is now becoming—or at least part of it is becoming—a byword for ignorance. This is in no part owing to the carelessness of those interested with the drafting of legislation. A few years ago we had a government make a parade of its loyalty when it insisted on the hoisting of flags on every school house. We are not objecting to this action, but we must condemn their present attitude which is as disloyal as anything could possibly be. It is unfair to the nation that part of its population should grow up without intellectual and moral training. No matter how loud a man's pretention to loyalty may be, there is only one way of judging it, and that is by his actions. We judge governments in the same way.

Election Protests.

One of the worst things that can befall a people is that they begin to despise their own laws and their own law-makers. We are in danger of that in Canada today. Indeed many use the words politician and crook as synonymous terms, and they laugh at certain laws on the statute book, insisting that they are there simply for show. They point particularly to the law governing elections.

The recent action of the two political parties—it is a pity we cannot truthfully say, the great political parties—in withdrawing all election protests, is another reason why people should continue to believe that certain laws are not intended to be enforced seriously. Just as certain as that the sun shone, so certain was it that during the last election in Western Canada there was in many constituencies the most brazen violation of the election act. Many of the charges that were made could have been proven. They were sufficient to arrest and perhaps disqualify not only

the representatives from the cities, but from several rural constituencies. Yet when it came to the day of trial, the two machines, through their agents at the capital, agreed upon a withdrawal of all charges. Everybody understood the significance of that. Neither party dared to have its methods exposed, for the methods were such as no one would care to own. Nor were these methods controlled by private parties but by the leaders in Dominion and provincial political life. The corruption belonged to the machine. Without it the machine could not have operated.

It is a mistake, however, to think that the sin belongs to the few party leaders alone. Every member of a political party is responsible for the acts of the party. It is possible that our country's affairs cannot be carried on just yet without some form of party government, for legislation can be effected only through concerted action. Most men must affiliate themselves with some political body. This does not mean that they are freed from responsibility. When we say that Mr. So and So is a pretty smooth politician, we must remember that we are condemning ourselves, for he occupies his position of influence through our permission. There is no political sin great or small, no legislation good or bad, for which you and I will not have to give an account some day at the bar of God. As we begin to believe this, our political life will begin to improve, for we shall endeavor to have our law and our life the expression of our better selves.

In less than five years we are going to see a change in affairs. Men are growing dissatisfied with a state of affairs under which the few grow wealthy at the expense of the many, and under which corruption and disregard for law flourish continually. Notwithstanding the persistent silence of the political press, there is at work a growing sentiment in favor of righteousness and honesty. Real party government—democratic government—will take place of the machine politics which we now endure.

A Modern Hero.

Most men love heroes. That is why men love a man like Dr. John Pringle. No task could be more unpleasant than that he assigned himself, of exposing iniquity as he saw it. We do not take the silence of the members of the Presbyterian body to mean that they are not as anxious as Dr. Pringle to see virtue triumphant. Rather do we see in it a proper reticence. They knew that Dr. Pringle alone was conversant with the facts, and no other member could have added anything of value. Still they should have insisted that a brother minister should have had fair play. If there was any member of the Assembly who believed that the best thing was to act in a politic manner, rather than in an open and frank way, he should be thoroughly ashamed. Presbyterianism stands for courage. It is associated with the name of Knox. Unfortunately there is reason to fear that at least one prominent member of the Assembly believes in cunning rather than in courageous boldness. And that man was not Dr. Pringle.

We are not in this endorsing or refusing to endorse Dr. Pringle's charges. We are only admiring the boldness of a man who, in the strength of his convictions, had the courage to state the truth as he saw it, no matter what the consequences might be to himself or his friends.

The New Theology.

A fire mist and a planet, a crystal and a cell;
A jelly fish and saurian, and caves where the cave men dwell,
Then a sense of law and beauty, and a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it evolution, and others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon, the infinite tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields, and the wild geese sailing high;
And all upon upland and lowland the charm of the golden rod,—
Some of us call it autumn, and others call it God.

Like tides on a crescent sea-beach, when the moon is new and thin,
Into our hearts high yearnings come welling and surging in,
Come from the mystic ocean, whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it longing, and others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty, a mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock, and Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless, the straight, hard pathway trod,—
Some call it consecration, and others call it God.

—William Herbert Carruth.