



THE PHILOSOPHER

The movement for the reclamation of the Plains of Abraham and the erection of a colossal statue representing the Angel of Peace on the impregnable rock of Quebec has been impressively begun, and with the co-operation of the Canadian Clubs of the Dominion, from ocean to ocean, is sure to be carried through to a conclusion worthy of the Canadian people.

A DUTY OF PATRIOTISM.

The Governor-General's appeal to the women of Canada to give the aid of their enthusiasm is notable for its high earnestness. Truly, as he declares, patriotism cannot be improvised or created by cold reason, but must be implanted in the heart of the child. As Lord Grey has said, "There is no more sacred spot on the whole of this continent than where Wolfe gave up his life." We Canadians would be doing something for which posterity would hold us in but light account, if we allowed the height, where the greatest and most decisive event in our history took place, to have its glory defaced by a factory—again to quote the Governor-General—"and crowned by a jail."

In this new land of Western Canada, which within the memory of many men still active was held in fee simple by the Indians and the buffalo, it is too soon for people who believe that the world is growing worse to talk about a period known as "the good old times," when things were better. Beyond a doubt, when the next century is running its course there will be people who will point back to these years we are now living in as the good old times of the West.

THE GOOD OLD TIMES.

Eastern Canada is ancient enough to have its good old times for doubters in progress to point back to. Some interesting contemporary records of Toronto in 1828 have just been published; they show that, with a population of only two thousand, York, as Toronto was then called, had sixty taverns, or one to every thirty-three persons, and that in the year mentioned there were herded in an underground cell in the jail three female lunatics, and the stench from their cell was complained of by the prisoners in the cells above. York was at that time a garrison town, and a scene of much social gaiety. There was much in the past that was desirable for fortune's favored few, and no one can deny the general picturesqueness of "the good old times," when the sordid and the cruel is ignored by the romancer or the picturesque historical writer, who is not concerned with the common people and their conditions of life. Great are the privileges of those who are to-day in comparison with any yesterday.

When any question of race preponderance—such as what is called "the yellow peril"—comes to the front, it tends to emphasize the tolerably obvious fact that unless a race, or a nation, is reinforced by continual births, it must tend to recede before the inroads made by death.

THE BIRTH RATES OF THE NATIONS.

Deaths are continuous, whether births are continuous or not. In some European countries the tendency toward decrease of births is very manifest. Less than half a century ago the populations of France and Germany were almost exactly equal, while that of Great Britain was much below both. Now France has less than forty millions of people, while Germany has more than sixty. France's population being practically stationary during recent years, while Germany's is increasing at the rate of nearly a million a year. In Great Britain the births exceed the deaths by 500,000 annually, and the population for the first time in history is greater than that of France; and this though the British birth-rate has fallen from 31 per 1,000 to 27. In Germany it has fallen in four years from 36 to 34. In the United States the decrease in the birth rate has been so marked as to justify the conclusion that the increase in the population is due almost entirely to immigration. In Canada of late years the birth rate has been practically stationary, with the exception of the Province of Quebec. On the other hand, the birth rate in Japan has increased during the last twenty-seven years from 17 to 31 per 1,000. In China the universal practice of infanticide keeps the population approximately stationary; and though statistics from China must be largely guess work, we know enough to be sure that if ever infanticide is abandoned, the yellow race will have an enormous annual rate of increase.

But surely race suicide and race salvation are more than matters of mere numbers. No race has gone very far through just being numerous. Failure to improve the race condition, the race mind, is more serious than failure to increase greatly in mere numbers. It was no golden era in the development of mankind when in ancient Egypt the multitudinous population provided such vast arrays of labor for the building of the pyramids.

Statistics show that in the world's greatest centres of population and wealth there is an astonishing increase of certain diseases, notably heart disease and cancer, which seems to counterbalance much that has been accomplished in moderating the ravages of contagious and infectious diseases.

COMPENSATIONS OF THE SIMPLE LIFE.

While the promoting causes are obscure and not well understood, there is evidence leading to a conviction that intense application and high-pressure living are the fundamental causes. In the world's great cities there are thousands of people overtaxing their own brains, training their children in intellectual hothouses, and living at a constant high strain; and the penalty of such living falls upon them with deadly effect. The simple life has its privations; it has also its compensations.

Of all the plans ever adopted for the regulation of the liquor traffic that of the Russian Government is beyond comparison the worst. In 1894 it established a monopoly in manufacturing, distributing and selling intoxicating drinks as a branch of civil administration. The St. Petersburg correspondent of the London Times gives a frightful account of the enormous increase in the consumption of vodka since that year. Figures which he gives show that it rose from 160,900,000 gallons in 1901 to 277,550,000 in 1906. As a consequence, he adds, the Russian villages, which were never prosperous or enlightened, are sinking under the curse of drunkenness.

THE CURSE OF RUSSIA.

From many of these village communities requests have been sent to the Government to close the dram shops before it is too late. But the Minister of Finance, in his latest official statement, declares that it is, on the contrary, "necessary to increase the number of places for the sale of drink, and that no restriction should be placed on the opening of new dram shops in towns and villages." The Government finds it doubly profitable to spread its vodka among the people—financially, because of the enormous revenue brought into its coffers, and politically, because a drink-sodden population makes poor material for a revolution.

In the latest report of the Dominion Department of Justice it is noted that 12 per cent. of the convicts imprisoned in Canada during the twelve months covered by the report were under twenty years of age, while more than 50 per cent. were under thirty. This calls attention to the fact that the criminal class develops early in life; and, as the report says, it "brings the origin of crime very close to the home life of the country."

AS THE TWIG IS BENT.

It has been said that three generations are required in the making of a gentleman, but as it is much easier to become a criminal, a shorter period may evolve the finished product. Heredity, of course, goes for a great deal; but early training is all important. Mere goodness in the father and mother is a poor check for the lawless instincts of the child; some more robust virtue is necessary. An insistence upon obedience is the best safeguard of any home. The baby in arms is not too young to recognize dimly that its little life is subject to a law, and that its mother is the interpreter thereof. Brought thus early under discipline, that discipline need never be harsh. It is only when a child is permitted to run wild for years before the curb is applied that correction must be severe, and often ineffectual.

In the middle ages it was a nip and tuck race between the armorer and the maker of weapons, until men at arms were about as massive and unwieldy as so many parlor coal stoves. In these days the competition between the makers of guns and of armor grows keener with every advancing year.

NAVAL ARMOR AND PROJECTILES.

When the Invincible Armada of Spain went forth in proud confidence

to the conquest of England, its ships were huge and towering, they bristled with cannon, and they were manned by fighters of no mean skill; but a smaller number of English ships of much smaller size created havoc among them. Battleship building has been carried far since then; until the Dreadnought of to-day is a thousandfold greater contrast to Nelson's flagship than even modern soldiers are to the Crusaders, clad from head to foot in armor, and carrying two-handed swords, battleaxes and maces. Still the contest between naval armor and armor-piercers goes on more keenly than ever. A main problem of modern warship construction is to keep projectiles out of the vital parts of the ship, to wit: the boilers, the engines and the magazines. Armor barks to stop projectiles, or to check their velocity so that arched protective decks will deflect them away from the ship's vitals are essential. But there will probably never be a warship on whose decks a fighting crew can work the destruction of their enemies in safety and comfort. Blood will ever be the price of admiralty.

It is no further back than 1840 that the friction match was perfected and began to come into general use. The Hudson's Bay Company still supplies flints and steels to its northern posts; explorers find the old way of making fire more reliable than matches. No match will affect flint and steel.

A COMPLAINT ABOUT MATCHES.

As for matches, they are hardly so much to be trusted as they once were, like so many conveniences of modern life, well-being, nearer and nearer perfection by a process of rapid evolution. They used to be in boxes which it was easy to tell the time of day in the dark. In those days you were in the habit of opening the box so as to empty all the matches on the floor. Not so now. The matches are often fizzes; but worse than that it is a constant danger against the grain of the wood. The greater difficulty of ignition, supposed to be a safeguard, sometimes causes a match to strike it, and the burning end to fall into cracks, or against a curtain, or into some other place where prompt action is necessary to prevent a blaze. In some ways the modern match is more dangerous than the old-fashioned article.

It is an old joke that when an estate is left to fall into the hands of lawyers, the lawyers often get the lion's share of it and the heirs the experience. In Toronto the other day came before Chief Justice Sir William W. W. a case regarding the transfer of an estate to a new owner.

HONEST LAWYERS AND OTHERS.

regard to the transfer of an estate to a new owner, a strongly object to this sort of thing," said the Chief Justice. "This matter should never have been brought up in court at all, and it is a scandal that five legal gentlemen should appear on such a matter. At the same time, it was necessary to get the consent of the Ontario Guardian to pay the money into court, which would have given as a matter of course, there are lots of things now done by lawyers which ought to be made, and ought to be made, as easy as possible to do, as the registration of a letter, if there were officials appointed to guide the layman in fulfilling the obligations of the law. There are many honorable lawyers. But there are many, too, who use every purse that passes through their hands. These gentlemen" who, for instance, in the management of an estate miss no opportunities of adding to the cost of formalities.

A Chicago physician, Dr. Siebel, has evolved a scheme—or thinks he has—whereby the sugar, fat and certain other commodities which we take into our stomachs may be transformed into reserve of electrical power. Dr. Siebel, with his intention of electric power station, is conservation, however, in comparison with the German surgeons over in Berlin who have transferred kidneys from one animal to another so deftly that the re-laid organs took up the work of those they displaced. The Berlin surgeons even think that they can, in time, replace the diseased organs of men with healthy organs removed from animals, and set the man upon his feet again, like an old piano with new strings and keyboard. The only drawback is that all the cats which were fitted out with other cats' kidneys died. Some of them lasted a week, and one of them lived thirty-one days. No doubt, the doctors will learn their job better with practice, but with that record of feline mortality before his eyes, the man who desires to swap his worn-out stomach with an ostrich, or his weak heart with an ox, will hesitate a good while before he goes upon the operating table. The time may come when we can all be built over in sections like a boy's jack knife; but for the present it is as well to take pretty good care of the vital organs we have.