

way be admitted. Halifax is in a groove, its manufacturers and business men stick closely to the old ruts, and appear to make little effort to make this city take the position which nature evidently intended her to occupy. They seem to rely upon our natural advantages, and upon the good time coming, rather than seize upon the opportunities at present within reach.

In the same way our professional men appear well satisfied with the respectable positions they have severally won; and aside from the daily round of their duties, they take little interest in either improving or advancing themselves.

In social and literary circles there is a supreme air of quiet, occasionally one more ambitious than his fellows breaks the monotony of the dull flatness which reigns, but the effort is spasmodic, and ends in his retiring within his domestic circle, or seeking the companionship of the authors whose books line his shelves.

Is it our isolated position, our climate, or our surroundings, that make us such dead and alive beings; we lack vim, go, push, enterprise, individually and collectively, and hence our progress is snail-like. There is, however, one subject in which our people are keenly interested, and one class of men who fully appreciate the advantages of keeping up with the times: we refer to politics and politicians.

Everybody is more or less of a partizan, and does what he or she can to push on the interests of the favored party, and the politicians are wide awake, ready to seize upon any opportunity which will give themselves and their party an advantage over their opponents.

The very existence of this political activity proves that our isolated position, our climate, and our surroundings, do not prevent our citizens taking a live interest in the subject.

If we could infuse a little of this political life into our commerce, our business, our professions, our literary and social circles, what a city would this Halifax of ours become. Men who for party or any other purpose would then cry down Halifax, or belittle the resources of our Province, would be hooted out of the city as unworthy defamers and detractors.

Halifax has now, unfortunately, too many of this class; and it is the dead weight of these croakers which is dragging her down to a third rate position among the commercial ports of the continent. Let us shake off our lethargy, and go to work with our coats off, if we wish to make Halifax the great entrepot of the trade of the Dominion.

#### AN IRISH CRISIS AVOIDED.

According to the Irish National and anti-National journals, the month of November has passed by with but few agrarian disturbances, the landlords having, in the majority of instances, appreciated the inability of the farmers to pay in their customary November rents. Liberal reductions of from 15 to 40 per cent of the rent charge have been made on all sides, and the tenants have been prompt in their payments. This state of affairs must be satisfactory to both landlord and tenant; but there is still among the landlord class many Shylocks who demand their pound of flesh without a drachm's reduction, and who insist that the law, which has been framed in their interest, should be carried out to the very letter. At first blush, it does seem but just and fair, that a tenant farmer should discharge his obligations to the full by paying his landlord the rent agreed upon; but upon reflection, most persons will come to the conclusion that the landlord and the tenant are co-partners, the one supplying the capital in the form of land, buildings, etc., and the other the labor which is required to make the earth yield its fruits. The landlord's share of the year's produce is taken in rent, but it is evident that, if he demand during a bad season the same rental that he would receive in ordinary good years, the losses would fall exclusively upon the tenant, who, in nine cases out of ten, would be least able to bear them. In olden times, the landlord always received a certain proportion of the grain, roots, or other produce harvested; thus, in a good year, his rental would be relatively high, and in a bad year correspondingly low. Fixed rents are comparatively a modern institution, and it has been found in practice, that for agricultural holdings they are always the cause of more or less friction between landlords and tenants. But the Irish farmers are in a peculiar position with respect to rents, these being, owing to the density of the population, relatively far higher than they are in England. A farm, which in the latter country would rent for £80 per annum, would in Ireland be held at from £110 to £120, and the tenant would have to deduct the difference in these rents from his share in the profits of the year's business. Exorbitant rentals and a succession of poor crops, have reduced the majority of Irish farmers to a state approaching penury, and had their landlords insisted upon the full payment of rentals, the list of evictions during the month of November, would have been increased by thousands. As it is, a crisis has been avoided, which might have resulted in civil war.

#### A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

Modern scientific research has rendered intelligible even to the mind of childhood many phenomena which to early mankind were unfathomable mysteries. The forces of nature were regarded as supernatural beings, surrounded by a halo of myth and legend and propitiated by worship and sacrifice. It requires a vivid imagination to picture the feelings of child-like wonder, awe, and adoration, the simple, illogical theories, the vague, wild speculations which sun and moon, earth and sea and wind, produced in the mind of the savage hunter of the stone or iron age. And there is something touching as well as poetical about

"The poor Indian whose untutored mind  
Sees God in clouds and hears Him in the wind."

He is a struggling, acting, silent poet, an idolator it may be, but never an atheist. Civilized man is much less disposed to see God in the wind or in anything else. To him the tempest is simply the natural effect of a fluid acting in accordance with well-known physical laws. He calmly attributes the matchless tint of the rainbow to the dissolution of rays of sunlight in passing through a lens of water.

Nor, indeed, need we regret that so much of the wonderful and poetical thus perishes at the hands of science. As a compensation, man's mind is the more logical, his mental vision the more clear and far reaching, his fund of thinking-material the more extensive, while his enjoyment of natural phenomena is not the less keen for its being more rational. So long as the physicist confines his investigations to outward things, he has work to do. But let him beware of carrying his scales, his test-tube and his blow-pipe into the sanctuary of the human mind. Let him not think to analyze into material elements the intangible thoughts and feelings of man. It is only a few weeks since a materialistic busybody announced the discovery that courage depended upon the measure of blood-propelling power in the machine usually called the heart. In other words, when we read of a Havelock, a Nelson, a Wallace, or a William Tell, we simply infer that these men had powerful blood-propellers!

The results of this scientific discovery are too great to be at once realized. For instance, military nations will at once found establishments for the development of propelling power in the heart. On the other hand, the non-combatant population will no longer resent the imputation of cowardice; they will simply obtain a doctor's certificate to the effect that their force-pumps are weak. And now that a beginning has been made, other qualities will doubtless be attributed to other physical causes. No man need excite our admiration or incur our envy; his good qualities are the effect of merely physical agencies. Nor need anyone be held responsible for misdeeds which are the resultants of known forces. What a calm, philosophical, self-satisfied world we shall be!

#### GREAT ARMIES AND THEIR COST.

The social upheavals which are constantly recurring in European countries are due in a large measure to the tremendous weight of taxation which the people are called upon to bear, and this, too, not for the construction of great public works, but for the maintenance of colossal armies, which, on a peace footing, in the Great Powers of Russia, Austro-Hungary, Germany, France, and Great Britain, aggregate 2,300,000 men. It can readily be understood that the maintenance of such a force is a great drain upon the surplus wealth of these countries, and that the cost falls principally upon the shoulders of the industrial and agricultural classes. \$750,000,000 is the annual cost of keeping up the armies and navies of the five Powers referred to, a sum which, if turned into productive channels, would confer incalculable benefits on the toiling masses.

It seems paradoxical that on the continent of Europe, where civilization has reached its highest development, the largest proportional expenditure is required to keep the standing armies in such a state of efficiency as to prevent the aggression of these Powers upon each other, but it would seem that instead of improved civilization having reduced the necessity for such military armaments, the very reverse is the case, and each year the evil grows apace.

The following statistics, culled from the Statesman's Year Book, will give an idea of the relative fighting strength of the Powers referred to:—

"The nominal strength of the Russian Army is two million three hundred thousand men on a war footing, and nearly eight hundred thousand on a peace footing. The effective strength of the French Army under colors is about five hundred and ten thousand soldiers; but in time of war, including all reserves, it amounts to a total of three million seven hundred and fifty thousand men. In 1884, the German Army, on a peace footing, consisted of four hundred and thirty thousand privates and nearly twenty thousand officers; while on a war footing the total strength amounts to a million and a half of privates and thirty-six thousand officers, exclusive of the Land-sturm. The Austro-Hungarian Empire shows two hundred and seventy thousand men and seventeen thousand five hundred officers upon a peace footing, and can muster one million and fifty thousand privates and thirty-two thousand officers in time of war."

Finally, Great Britain's effective force on land and sea is about 248,000 men on a peace footing, while on a war footing at least 600,000 men could be called into active service.

Small wonder is it that Russia finds it difficult to meet her financial obligations, seeing that the annual cost of maintaining her army, etc., is \$235,000,000. France comes next with a yearly expenditure of \$170,000,000, closely followed by Britain with an outlay of \$160,000,000.

The German army is large, but the outlay for maintenance is comparatively small, \$115,000,000 having been found sufficient. The same remark is true of Austro-Hungary, which expends annually for military purposes \$70,000,000.

The United States, which, happily for its people, is far removed from the jealous rivalries of European Powers, contains a small army of 30,000 men, at an annual cost of about \$60,000,000, and hence the country is able to wipe out the public debt at a rate which it would be impossible to keep up, were it not for the insular position it occupies. If Great Britain occupied an equally favorable position, the national debt could be obliterated in less than half a century. How long the European States will be forced to groan under their excessive weight of armour, cannot be predicted; but it may safely be asserted that the dawn of the millennium will lighten the world's horizon before the maintenance of standing armies comes to be regarded as useless and unprofitable.