

THE PHILOSOPHER

of words thus handed on containing a warning that any person failing to obey the directions will within nine days suffer a serious calamity. It is that absurd warning, of course, not the altruistic character of the prayer which constrains so many people to give themselves the trouble of writing and addressing and mailing nine anonymous letters. They think it best to take no chances. If they ever analyzed their thinking, what a queer idea they would find themselves possessed by in regard to things supernatural. These reflections are prompted by something which the Philosopher has just been reading in a London paper—an account of a family in Higher Bockhampton, Dorchester, England, who followed the advice of a "witch," which was that they should move to another house, if they would escape the ill luck which had been pursuing them. They moved to the house specified, and they declare that there was so immediate and striking a change in their luck that they are now firm believers in the supernatural powers of the "witch" whose advice they sought. We may laugh at the credulity of these simple people, but belief in mysterious powers was common in the world long before Saul consulted the witch of Endor before his last battle with the Philistines, and in some of its guises has not yet departed from the world.

THE FIRST PEACE CENTURY

Great progress is reported by the co-operating committees in this country, Great Britain and the United States, which are making the arrangements for the celebration next year of the close of the first United States. Lord Grey is the chairman of the committee in Great Britain and Sir Edmund Walker the chairman of the Canadian committee, while the United States committee is headed by President Wilson and ex-Presidents Taft and Roosevelt. Premier Borden has given the movement the most cordial approval of the Dominion Government, saying that "the Government strongly sympathizes with and approves of its object and purpose of promoting goodwill between the nations." The Treaty of Ghent, which ended the last hostilities between the two great families of the English-speaking world, was signed on Christmas Eve, 1814, and was ratified on February 17, 1815. The winter season being judged by the committees unsuitable for open air demonstrations, the probabilities are that most of the celebrations will take place in the early summer of next year. The broad general features of the commemoration have been marked out by the joint committees. In the first place, there will be services of thanksgiving for the peace past and the peace to come, the idea being that every church should be a centre of celebration. The committees advocate that every schoolhouse also should be a centre of celebration. A number of monuments will be erected along the boundary at national capitals and in centres of population. Altogether about one hundred places in Canada are already reported as planning to hold celebrations.

A GIFT TO CANADA TAKEN AWAY AGAIN

Confirmation has arrived of the report that Canada has lost a harbor on the Pacific coast just south of the Alaska boundary line, by the movement of the vast glacier known as the Grand Pacific. Glaciers are things about which most of us have not very much definite knowledge. The Grand Pacific glacier is of great extent. Its front is some sixty miles wide. Like all glaciers, it is moving. Its movement is slow, but continuous. For many years the Grand Pacific glacier, which is situated on the shore of Glacier Bay, has been creeping towards the boundary line. As it has done so, the ocean has slowly followed it towards Canadian territory. In 1912 the movement of that great mass of ice and earth brought it across the boundary line, with the result that it provided Canada with a harbor, which gave every promise of becoming more and more commodious as the movement of the glacier continued. The importance to this country of having a harbor on the Pacific coast north of Prince Rupert and Port Simpson had long been recognized by the authorities at Ottawa and negotiations had been under consideration towards securing one. The trouble has been, as may be readily seen by glancing at a map, the long coastal strip of United States territory extending southward from Alaska. The proposal was advocated, notably by Mr. James Cornwall, whose name is so conspicuously identified with the Peace River region, that Canada should exchange some territory with the United States, in order to get the desired harbor, as a port for the extensive Canadian territory inland. But the movement of the Grand Pacific glacier brought this country the desired harbor as a free gift. Last year, however, the movement of the glacier took another direction, and now that harbor is there no longer. The glacier has taken away the harbor it gave. It has changed its motion and pushed the harbor out of existence.

"THE FINEST SPEECH"

In the front rank of living orators Lord Curzon the ex-Viceroy of India, admittedly holds a conspicuous place. Recently he delivered a lecture at Cambridge on Modern Oratory. An aristocrat himself to the finger tips, he said that "oratory is essentially an aristocratic art." For illustration he cited Chatham and Burke and Sheridan, who "spoke as they lived and dressed and drank—in the grand style." There are many who will take issue with Lord Curzon in regard to that, and will point to the oratory of John Bright, Gladstone, Disraeli and others, in disproof of his assertion. Indeed, Lord Curzon himself later on in his lecture made a declaration which stands in striking contrast with his characterization of oratory as "an aristocratic art." He said:

"The finest speech in English of the last half century was delivered at Gettysburg—a speech made by a man who had been a country farmer and a district lawyer, which ranks among the glories and the treasures of mankind. I escape the task of deciding which is the masterpiece of British eloquence by awarding the prize to Abraham Lincoln."

This is a notable declaration from a man of high intellectual power and distinction, who has himself made more than one speech that deserves to be classed among the best made by public speakers now living.

TITLES IN CANADA

Mr J. H. Burnham, the Conservative member for West Peterboro, in Ontario, announces that at the present session of the Dominion Parliament he will introduce again his bill to abolish titles in Canada, which failed at the last session. It will fail again at this session, of course. Still there will be a discussion of the subject of the suitability of knight-hoods and similar titles in this country, and without doubt expression will be given to the opinion that such distinctions are not in harmony with the spirit of this Dominion. In regard to the desirability of one thing at any rate in this connection there cannot be more than one opinion, and it is to be hoped that the discussion which will probably be brought on in Parliament by the introduction of Mr. Burnham's bill may result in that one thing being forthcoming, namely, an authoritative declaration as to the manner in which the awarding of these honors to Canadians is suggested and decided upon. The question of who is responsible for the selections made and of just how far the Dominion Government is responsible for them, is a question which, sooner or later, will have to be elucidated. If the Government of the day is not responsible, it certainly should be, in order that the Canadian people should be in a position to pass judgment upon these public acts, as upon other public acts. Certainly there can be no justification, from any point of view, of uncertainty as to the origin of, and the responsibility for, titles of honor.

SUPERSTITION IN MANY FORMS

There is still much superstition in most parts of the world. It is not such a very great number of years since the red-skinned population of Western Canada believed devoutly in the power of their medicine men to drive out disease by means of uncouth, blathering incantations and prancings about grotesque and noisy ceremonies. The medicine men made an easy living and enjoyed positions of high honor as individuals believed to be in close communication with the supernatural world. Superstition is by no manner of means yet cleaned out of this country entirely; but such superstitions as still linger are not gross, and are under the surface of our lives, many of them being, in fact, rather silliness and "peculiarities" than anything more serious. But the persistence of superstition is proved by the constant cropping up of the chain letter prayer, which people, receiving it anonymously, copy but nine times, as directed, and send anonymously to nine different persons with directions to do otherwise, the form

THE NATIVE-BORN, AND CANADIANISM

One set of tables in the latest volume issued by the Dominion Government giving details of the census of Canada that was made in 1911 deals with the origins of the people. It is notable that, in spite of the heavy immigration, more than one half of the total increase in population in the ten years 1901-1911 is given as of Canadian birth. The emigration, which in some directions is more or less constant all the year round, and to Europe in the fall months is strikingly large, reduces seriously the gain that a simple study of the immigration figures would lead the observer to count on. In all the Provinces except Alberta and British Columbia people born in Canada are in the majority; and in Alberta and British Columbia when the people born outside Canada but in the British Empire are counted with the native-born Canadians, the resulting totals give decided majorities of the whole population. It is interesting to note the showing made in this respect by some of the cities of the Dominion. Toronto, contrary to what perhaps might have been expected, has a smaller percentage of native-born than Montreal, the figures for the two cities being 91.18 and 90.81 per cent, respectively. On the other hand, Winnipeg has only 44.08 per cent of its population native born. Vancouver's percentage of native-born is smaller, namely, 43.80, which is within a shade of Calgary's percentage. Noteworthy and satisfactory is the fact that some of the places with the smaller proportions of native-born are strongest in their demonstrations of Canadianism. When the birth-place is not home, home means vastly more than the birthplace, which is in such cases only a memory, or it may be not even that but a mere tradition, while home is the central fact of actual life.

A PROPOSED WOMEN'S PARTY

The recently enfranchised women of Kansas, or at least as many of them as were represented by the delegates assembled in the convention recently held in Topeka, contemplate the formation of a Women's Party in that State, distinct from the already existing political parties. There were 250 delegates at the convention, and they professed to represent the 275,000 women voters of Kansas. The object of the convention, it was announced, was "to consider ways and means of promoting the distinctive interests of women, political and social." With much enthusiasm it was decided to organize a Women's Party for political action, and to call upon all the women of the State to hold themselves aloof from the other political parties and give their support to the new party. It was pointed out that by keeping solidly together and holding the balance of power between the "men's parties," the women can dictate their own terms and force the men to do their bidding. The first plank of this new political party is: "Equal property rights between husband and wife." If this proposed political division on sex lines is going to be actually carried into operation, it will assuredly cause a heap of trouble in Kansas.

THE GREATNESS OF A NATION

The Minister of Finance, Hon. W. T. White, in a recent speech gave expression to a truth which would result in measureless good if everybody in Canada would act upon it. "The lesson of history," he said, in referring to the development of the Dominion, "is that the greatness of a nation rests not upon its material or intellectual achievements, or upon its possession of vast territory and resources, but upon the character and morality of its citizens." It was a trite and obvious thing to say, of course. You may speak of it as a familiar and homely truth, or you may characterize it as a glittering generality. But it is undeniable that it is a truth, and that the greatest good that could happen to our country would be to have it driven home into the mind of every Canadian. The mere repetition of the words means little, in itself. There is no magic formula for the regeneration of the national life, any more than there is for the regeneration of the life of the individual person. The truth must be laid to heart and made a guiding principle; if that is done, it does not matter in the least if it never finds expression in words. We may go on reckoning up the expansion of Canada's production and measuring our country's resources and all that, but nothing that can be expressed in figures is the fundamental factor essentially necessary in making Canada great. Integrity and high character in the individual Canadian must be the foundation. A nation can be no greater than its individual citizens make it, and its national character can be no more than the summing up of the characters of its citizens as individuals. High purpose and morality cannot be legislated effectively into the national life of a country until they have first been developed in the individual lives of its citizens.