

# REFLECTIONS

By THE EDITOR

## The Babylonian Tendency.

CAN it be that the sins of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar have been reproduced in a new form by the builders and users of the luxurious passenger ships of these days? Is our punishment the same as theirs, because we too have run contrary to natural and divine laws?

Nebuchadnezzar the King made an image of gold and commanded all to worship it. Belshazzar gave an impious feast to a thousand of his lords. They thought their human desires and human ambitions were of supreme importance. So we who build big ships have substituted card rooms, wine rooms and titivating parlours for life-boats because we thought our pleasures of supreme importance.

This is not a sermon, but underlying the history of the Jewish race as told in the Old Testament there is much eulogy of common-sense and humility and much condemnation of vain-glory and self-indulgence. The Jewish peoples learned their lessons slowly and painfully, and every succeeding generation of Jew or Gentile has made a similar blotted record. Even to-day the theatre exits and fire-escapes only came after several theatre holocausts which shocked us into sensibility for a few moments. So, safe ships upon the ocean will now come after one of the greatest punishments ever inflicted upon pleasure-seekers.

Who, then, is to blame? The man who designed and built the Titanic, the man who ordered the most inviting and expensive meal ever served aboard an ocean liner, or we the public who blindly follow where pleasure and excitement lead? We are to blame, we who mourn the brave men who went so nobly to an unnecessary and untimely death, we who gather up their bodies from the crests of the waves and bury them again with great lamentations.

We should not blame Captain Smith, nor President Ismay, nor the designer, nor the builder, nor the bankers who financed the leviathan. It is our own ignorance, our own selfishness, our own desire to spend the easily-gained wealth of the North American continent. It is our own selfishness, our own failure to realize that we have a greater destiny than that of pursuing our own happiness and our own delights.

"They drank wine and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of wood, and of stone."

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## Madness of Bigness.

AGAIN we have proof of the folly of our madness for bigness. The world is building big cities—and big cities are a curse. The world is building high buildings, and high buildings are a curse. The world is erecting huge combines and the combines are too often a curse. And so we may run down the list from the greatest to the smallest feature of our madness for bigness.

Every man is judged by the size of his business, the size of his bank account, and even the size of his automobile. It is not so much the question of his character, of his unselfishness, of his honesty, as it is the size of his worldly success.

As we judge men, so we judge our "creations"—railway systems, banks, circuses and steamships. This is an age of superlatives in speech, in industry and in commerce. Haven't I read somewhere of a Canadian factory which advertises "The greatest floor-cloth factory in the British Empire." Could anything be more absurd?

Why blame the White Star Line for building such big steamboats? They only did what the rest of us are doing. Even the newspapers who criticize are sacrificing their virtue and their nobility in a mad rush for circulation and notoriety.

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## Progress and Reason.

ONE may protest against the mad rush for bigness and yet have an optimistic belief in the progress of the human race. The world is making progress, but in some parts of the world the progress is modest and reasonable and in others immoderate and rash.

For example, Toronto has been making steady progress for ten years without any signs of a boom. Now the town is being over-run with real estate agents who are buying up all the farms within ten miles of the city limits and sub-dividing them for the "benefit" of the public. That these people are appealing to the middle and lower class people, whose investment knowledge is limited, is shown by the fact that the biggest advertisements of this kind appear in Friday evening's and Saturday morning's papers in order to catch Saturday afternoon investors. The same might be said of several other Canadian cities whose future progress is assured, but whose present progress is being discounted by men who cannot wait.

Again, Canadian chartered banks are all doing well. Their profits have grown steadily. Yet that is no reason why one bank should buy another bank's stock at an extraordinarily high figure; nor that two banks should combine in order to advance the price of their stocks on the security market. Further, there is no just reason why a bank should erect a hundred thousand dollar building in a small city when a twenty-five thousand dollar building would be adequate and reasonable.

The truth is that Canada's success has almost turned our heads, just as the success of big steamers threatened to turn the heads of the steamship owners and builders. This country is sure to grow rapidly during the next ten years, but that is no reason why real estate on Yonge St., Toronto, or St. Catherine St., Montreal, or Main St., Winnipeg, should double in price every six months.

Canada will avoid "bad times" only by keeping

prices normal and reasonable. If the present game keeps up, there will be some lamentations a few years hence.

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## Just a Few Facts.

NOW for a few facts of our head-turning progress. During the year ending March 31st, there arrived in Canada 354,237 immigrants. This was a gain of 14 per cent., as compared with 1910-11. If we continue to gain citizens at this accelerated pace, we shall get 400,000 during the next twelve months, 456,000 in the next and over 500,000 in the year ending March 21st, 1915.

During the twelve months ending February 29th, Canada imported goods valued at \$537,000,000, an increase of twenty per cent. over the previous twelve months. This is a new record, but one which will probably be broken again this year. We are still in the railway building era and we are big importers. We are duplicating the fancy feats which the United States performed when passing through a similar period of construction. During the same period, we exported only \$285,000,000 worth of goods, showing that we paid in cash or credit for a balance of trade against us of \$250,000,000. It will take some profit to pay that sort of bill every year.

But while we were paying this little quarter billion item, we managed to put one hundred and six million dollars in the banks. In other words, deposits in the chartered banks were \$937,000,000 on March 31st, 1912, as against \$831,000,000 on March 31st, 1911. No wonder we are getting inflated with the notion that we are the most wonderful people on earth.

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## That Ye Be Not Judged.

THE case of Major Peuchen, J. Bruce Ismay, and others saved from the Titanic, has stirred up conflicting feelings and sentiments in Canada. Some of these sentiments are not creditable to the good sense of the people. Because Major Peuchen is an officer and a yachtsman, his critics think he might have had less to say when the newspapers secured an interview with him. The public attitude towards Mr. Ismay is much more critical.

Personally, I think the public are not justified in their criticism. Major Peuchen's conduct seems to have been quite natural. He realized, as few people on the Titanic realized, that the vessel was mortally wounded. As a yachtsman he was well acquainted with the use of a small boat and when ordered to take his place in one he naturally accepted the opportunity without fear. Perhaps he did say some things which were better left unsaid, but the experience was unusual and Major Peuchen was talking to friends. Nothing that he did justifies the cruel brutality of the attacks to which he has been subjected. Even if he had done wrong, there is something inhuman in the means which evil-minded and ungenerous persons have taken to make him and his family unhappy.

As for Mr. Ismay, he was condemned before he was heard both by the Senate Committee of Investigation and a portion of the public. The later evidence has revealed the exceptional circumstances under which all those concerned were called upon to think and to act.

## The "Inland" Senators' Inquisitorial Court at Washington



A Session of the U. S. Senate Investigating Committee on the Titanic Wreck. No.1, Senator Perkins; 2, Senator Smith; 3, Senator Newlands; 4, Senator Fletcher; 5, J. Bruce Ismay. Between Senators Newlands and Fletcher are Major and Mrs. Peuchen, of Toronto.

Photograph by Paul Thompson.