

TO AN APRIL BLUE-BIRD.

The blue sky gazing through the clear air
down
May see itself in thee and rapture show ;
The glad old earth, thy gracious breast
below,
May also see in thee her honest brown ;
Yet not the blue robe nor the russet gown
Can sweeter charms on thy dear self be-
stow
Than the soft note—thy full heart's over-
flow—
That clears away the young Year's pinched
frown.
Bright as thou art to eye, still brighter seems
Thy beauty, when, half-hid in April's
tears,
The wistful mortal, smiling skyward, hears
(Like elfin carols heard in maiden's dreams)
Thy airy warble dropping in his ears
And thinks of Love's voice close to rippling
streams.

ROBERT ELLIOTT.

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THE CRITIC.

"If there be a discipline," says Matthew Arnold, "in which the Americans are wanting, it is the discipline of awe and respect." That is a curious choice to make of the many sorts of discipline of which to many this continent seems to stand in need. But it is very characteristic of the writer; and it is characteristic too that upon this one chief thing lacking he puts no little stress—indeed the assertion follows a quotation from Goethe to the effect that "the thrill of awe is the best thing humanity has"—

Das Schaudern ist der Menschheit bestes theil.

The essay in which this assertion occurs is entitled "Civilization in the United States," an essay well enough known to the majority of readers, and one which has been often enough reprinted and quoted from. To any dweller in North America north of the boundary line, the reading of this essay upon the civilization of his neighbours to the south must evoke mixed emotions. We are so close to that great nation, we are in some respects so much influenced by it, its ways are in so many things our ways, that when an English critic writes about their civilization we very naturally are a little anxious to see whether or not his criticisms are applicable to ourselves also. Of a large number of the deficiencies which Matthew Arnold points to we can be exonerated. But can Canada be wholly exonerated from the charge of a want of "the discipline of awe and respect"? That is not a question altogether easy to answer. To expect a whole nation to possess such a discipline seems in this age of the world to be utterly out of the question, for this is the age of the proletariat, and the proletariat knows no more of awe or respect than it does of painting or music. But in certain ages of the world, surely, we can say that there did exist such a feeling; not perhaps amongst the greater number—though in Greece at a certain period of its history even this might be true—but amongst a sufficient number of those who were great and influential in the nation to make it generally true. In Italy at the time of the Renaissance surely it was true; and in France in the closing years of the monarchy; and in England under certain of the Stuarts. When, then, Matthew Arnold accuses the Americans of wanting the discipline of awe and respect, "the best

thing that humanity has," as Goethe calls it, he is only accusing them of wanting what in reality every modern nation wants—every modern nation, that is, in which those classes which used once to be referred to as "lower" have now come to wield so powerful a political influence. If, then, we in Canada feel that this great critic's stricture applies to us also, we can at least console ourselves with the thought that neither we nor our neighbours to the south are at all alone in this deficiency.

But what probably Arnold really meant when he used the generic term "Americans," was, that he did not detect in America the prevalence or even the existence of any such discipline even among those chosen few to whom one might legitimately look for the wielding of some influence which would tend to create such discipline. That probably is what he meant; for no doubt in other lands—and of other lands there were at least three which he knew well: England, namely and France, and Germany—he had come in contact with many of those who could and who did wield such influence.

Looking at it from this point of view then, we may narrow the question to asking whether Canada too is without those who wield any such influence for good, who keep their eyes fixed on things above, and do not regard material comfort and prosperity as the pearl of great price and the only thing worth striving for. But this, too, is a difficult question. If there are such in any appreciable numbers, it does not seem that the influence they wield is very appreciable. The general tone of our press surely—ininitely higher than it is, than that of our neighbours which, after all, is not saying very much—would be better if our chosen few took more pains to spread the light they themselves have received. The general tone of our life and manners too, would surely be bettered if these exerted themselves to widen the circle of their influence.

To widen the circle of their influence—that perhaps brings us to the true want of our own country. That we have men and women of light is undoubtedly true; that they are men and women of light and leading is not true; they are content to shed that light the one upon the other. They refrain from leading. That we have such men and women many a drawing-room attests; so do crowded theatres and concert halls attest when the best plays and best music are to be seen and heard; so does many a Canadian book and periodical attest; and so does the conversation and manner of life of many a Canadian attest. But what Canada surely needs is that such men and such women should do something towards spreading beyond their own circle something of the refinement and culture which they themselves have attained.

Does any ask how this may be done? If there were a willingness to do it would there be any necessity of asking?

CORRESPONDENCE.

DR. HOLMES' LATEST POEM.

To the Editor of The Week :

Sir,—I was fortunate in securing from Oliver Wendell Holmes the original manuscript copy of his beautiful poem read to the Superintendents of Schools recently in Boston, at the Publishers' and Authors' reception. In your copy as printed in The Week several errors have provoked

should be debarred from the liberty of his free will, from going where, and doing whatever he pleases. But the American argument is not true. The writer of this article had as much power as Mr. Carnegie to put an end to the riots. That he could have increased the pay of the men, and thus averted the dire catastrophe, is absurd. Why, Mr. Carnegie was then and is now merely a director in the company which bears his name. Is it possible that among educated men, there is one in every hundred who is ignorant of the fact that a director has only one vote, and that even the chairman of a company has only a deliberative, and a casting vote.

Could it be expected, then, that his mere vote, on such a momentous subject as the increase or deduction of wages would be of more value than the votes of his combined conferees?

Again what man with the smallest idea of what justice meant, would refuse him the right of spending his money as he chose, of enjoying a well earned rest on the banks of the Scottish loch?

What good could he have effected, even had he been present? Could he have stemmed the torrent of fury, that had been raised against him by a band of blind fanatical agitators? Would the blood which flowed so plentifully in his absence, have been at all diminished by his presence? The assumption is the reverse. Is it fair for Americans to urge and demand the presence of an individual director of a gigantic company? Why should he trust of an infuriated mob? What legal claim had they, had Americans as a body, on him to be present? We answer none. What moral claim? Again we answer none. Whatever way we look at the matter, with stern facts staring us in the face, there comes back upon our minds, the word—none.

Are American subjects ignorant of the fact, that to expose a red cloth to a bull, is at all times dangerous, but to expose the same to a bull maddened with fury, is sheer folly? Is this a lesson the wisacre Americans have yet to learn?

The Premier of Great Britain knows that this will occur even in the case of cows (vide London Times).

Was it not then the wisest plan Mr. Carnegie could pursue, to keep himself to himself. That every telegram from the scene of action was anxiously waited for at Rannoch Lodge is attested by the writer.

Mr. Carnegie expressed the deepest sorrow, that the strikes had happened.—

In the two points we have discussed concerning Mr. Carnegie, we have endeavoured to do so with fairness, taking into consideration facts only.

That in his relation to democracy he is far from perfect, we believe we have established. His position in regard to the Carnegie works, we believe we have exonerated. Let us leave him in peace in his bonnie Scottish home.

A. E. VERT.

The Canada Life Assurance Company's 46th annual report is a most creditable shewing of work and progress. The extraordinary volume of business done during the past year represented in new assurances \$6,792,670—raising the total sum of assurances to \$59,382,937.90. The income of the year being \$2,344,077.40, and the assets having been increased during the same period by \$1,003,044.95, thus raising the total assets to the large amount of \$1,077,129.82. Nothing but extraordinary business capacity, great enterprise, the thorough confidence of the Canadian public and a complete and comprehensive adaptation of modern methods of insurance to the varying conditions of social life could establish such confidence and merit such success. Small wonder that this company is carrying the war into Africa, and has begun a profitable business across the border in the States of Michigan and Minnesota.