



of conferences relating to the future of the British Empire there is no end, but none more pregnant than the meeting of Journalists, in London, England, which concluded early this month. The editors assembled from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and elsewhere, with those of great Britain, were not of the narrow, counting-house breed, devoid of due sense of their duty to state and humanity. They met the guiding statesmen of Britain, but the business of the congress was not to pass resolutions and frame policies, but to become informed of the needs and problems of this world-encircling empire, from the "restless West to the turbulent East."

It was to get vision. On one point they did properly define themselves, asking for more efficient and cheaper cable facilities, and secured the pledge of Premier Asquith to take up this problem. Better means of communication between the states of the Greater Britain is all-important. Cheap postage on letters and periodicals across the Atlantic has done more, in shorter time, to strengthen imperial sympathies and interests than any other one agency. The electric messages above and below the water will promote unity and trade. The members of the congress were feted by King and people with lavish graciousness. They got a close-range view of the greatest commercial centers of the world; saw something of the matchless home-life and educational institutions of learning; witnessed army manoeuvres at Aldershot, and a mighty naval pageant at Portsmouth—all of which must have vivified in their minds that John Bull is neither asleep nor living in a fool's paradise. Naturally, following the address of welcome by Lord Rosebery, and almost continuous allusions by others, questions of military and naval defence bulked largely before the conference, but a resolution favoring compulsory drill throughout the Empire was withdrawn. Mr. J. A. Macdonald, of Toronto, in a powerful speech, declaring in favor of freedom of action, each of the self-governing dominions settling such questions in its own way. "Imperial unity, with local autonomy," therefore, expressed the mind of the conference as the watchword of the Empire. Lord Roberts, in closing that particular discussion, said that in Britain they had been trying the voluntary system for fifty years, and had failed to get either the men or the military training, owing to the engrossments of labor and other pursuits. This is a most welcome utterance. There is hope of relief to humanity in it from the burdens of militarism and the atrocities of war; hope that the growing day of light and peace will yet make impossible spectacles of war as monstrous as the Russian-Japanese conflict, when two millions of peasants were set at work to butcher each other because imperial speculators were rivals for the exploitation of Korean forest wealth. The delegates from the press conference return to their homes with a fuller knowledge of the Empire, and a deepened sense of the power and peril of journalism in its relation to world-wide British citizenship.

Before the close of the congress, it was decided to form an Empire Press Association, with headquarters in London, to consider all matters relating to the interests of the press of the Empire as a whole, and to arrange other conferences. It is probable the next conference will be held in Canada, if the invitation is sent in the name of the whole press of the Dominion.

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The Provincial Government of Ontario has decided to establish a permanent system for the superannuation of public-school teachers. It is to be hoped the movement will call forth no protest. Few people have more responsible, more nerve-racking, or more poorly-paid work than the teachers, and few, perhaps, do more for the country, or meet with as little recognition for their services.

The plan, as formulated, will provide for a pension, paid partly by the Government, partly by the localities, and partly by the teachers, hence will not prove so great a drain on the Province as the Ryerson scheme, formerly adopted, but rescinded by the Hon. G. W. Ross during his term as Minister of Education.

"Teach the boys to spare the birds," is the heading of a leading editorial in an Ontario daily. The article continues:

"If the Terrapin scale and other scales are ruining our trees, if insect pests of various kinds are working immense havoc both in farm and garden, the community has only itself, or, rather, a good share of its members, to blame. It is a hopeful sign that the youthful passion for killing every bird that crosses the line of vision seems to be dying out. The boys of to-day are apparently learning better sense than fell to the lot of their fathers, but a great deal of irretrievable loss has been done in the past by the ruthless and unnecessary killing of the birds, which were the most relentless and effective enemies of all insect pests. The boys of a few years ago had their fun. It was a poor, mean, low-spirited variety of fun at the best. Fruit-growers, farmers and gardeners of the present day are paying the price. If there is one thing that is humane, wise and profitable to teach in the schools from one end of this country to the other, it is the fact that birds are among the best friends man has. They are nature's remedy for fighting the plague of destructive insects. Given a fair chance, they render a service that is beyond calculation, and the schools of this country would be teaching something worth while if they devoted a few minutes of their time to teaching boys and girls to spare the birds."

People, Books and Doings.

A violin, made by the Italian king of fiddle-makers, Antonius Stradivarius, of Cremona, was sold the other day in Old London for £925. Twice, at least, as much as £2,000 has been paid for one of these instruments, and once the sum of £1,100 was realized by a music-seller named Betts, who secured a genuine "Strad" from a stranger who entered his shop, for a guinea. There are, however, a few violins by this maker which are practically priceless. M. Ysaye values the one that he owns—but which he would not sell, even at the price he puts upon it—at £6,000. Another which could not be purchased is owned by Senor Sarasate, of Spain, to whom the violin was presented by Queen Isabella, when, as a boy of ten, he

played before her at the Court of Madrid.

A tablet in honor of the memory of John Richard Green, the historian, was recently placed over the door leading to his old college-rooms at Oxford. His most famous work, "A Short History of the English People," of which "John o' London" has said that, "Not to have read it is an intellectual disaster," was published in the autumn of 1874. It was followed by a longer history which, as its predecessor, was written during a time of bodily suffering, often intense. It was said of Green that he "worked until he dropped," but consumption at last overcame him, and on the 7th of March, 1883, he died at Mentone, whither he had gone to seek for health.

Burial in Westminster Abbey is rightly guarded jealously in these days, although in past times, as anybody who inspects the monuments can discover, the test of worthiness was not a very high one. It is remarkable that the Dukes of Northumberland are the only persons who can claim burial there as a right, and, naturally, the privilege is used. The exacting test that is now applied to claim for burial is wholly a modern growth. Even in the early part of the nineteenth century the idea of a national Valhalla had not taken firm root. As Westminster Abbey is the burial place of the statesmen and the writers, so St. Paul's gains distinction from the soldiers, sailors and painters who sleep there the long sleep. Burial in St. Paul's in these days is almost as difficult a thing as burial at Westminster. The obstacle, however, is not so much overcrowding as the fact that St. Paul's stands on a thick bed of concrete, which has to be broken through for each interment, and in days when the stability of the whole structure has been in question, interference with the foundations is naturally a matter of jealous scrutiny.

The story of Coleridge and Wordsworth and "Spy Nozy" has often had doubt cast upon it, but Mr. A. J. Eagleston, in Nineteenth Century, produces confirmation of it from Home Office records for 1797. The poets, it seems, were in the habit of wandering about the country with a portfolio, in which they entered observations, and had been heard to say that they were "almost finished." This was enough to spread a report that they were French spies, and that a plan for a French invasion of England was afoot. The Duke of Portland heard the story, and employed one Walsh to keep watch on the two. His old reports, which have been found, are very interesting. In one of them he says: "Charles Mogg says that he was at Alfoxden last Saturday was a week, that he there saw Thomas Jones who lives in the Farm House at Alfoxden, who informed Mogg that some French people had got possession of Mansion Houses, and that they were washing and mending their cloaths all Sunday, that He Jones would not continue their as he did not like it." Also, they had taken a plan of the house and asked whether near at hand was navigable to the sea!

The admirable Walsh was at once instructed to take up his quarters in the neighborhood of Alfoxden House. From the Globe Inn, Stowey, he re-

ported that the suspected persons are not French, but, according to a Mr. Woodhouse and the landlord, "they are people that will do as much harm as All the French can do." Later he wrote to his principal:

"The inhabitants of Alfoxton House are a Sett of violent Democrats. The House was taken for a Person of the name of Wordsworth, who came to It from a Village near Honiton in Devonshire, about five Weeks since. The Rent of the House is secured to the Landlord by a Mr. Thomas Poole of this Town. Mr. Poole is a Tanner and a Man of some property. He is a most violent Member of the Corresponding Society and a strenuous supporter of Its Friends. He has with him at this time a Mr. Coldridge and his wife, both of whom he has supported since Christmas last. This Coldridge came last from Bristol, and is reckoned a Man of superior Ability."

No further correspondence remains, but what Mr. Eagleston has unearthed proves that the detective was no myth, and that Wordsworth and Coleridge were actually suspected of being French spies.

Quinquennial Congress.

The last week of the Quinquennial meetings was on a different plan to the Council work. In the latter the ladies met in one large hall, and all discussions were held there. During the Congress week, the nine sections, in Art, Education, Health, Industrial Arts, Laws Concerning Women and Children, Literature, Philanthropy, Professions for Women, Moral Reform, were held simultaneously in different halls; so the most-felt want at this time was nine pairs of ears! Every section was well attended—some to overflowing—and excellent speakers, women who knew their subjects, could be heard at any hour, in every branch of work undertaken for the amelioration of standing conditions, and for the bettering of the race.

Two very bright papers were read by Miss Edwards, of the Coaley Poultry Farm, England; and Miss Wilkinson, of the Horticultural College, Swanley, Kent.

Miss Edwards is President of the Ladies' Poultry Club, and testifies to having made hens pay. She was left at an early age with little means, and took up poultry-keeping as a life-work. She bought a small cottage, with a cabbage-patch behind, and commenced on a small scale. To-day, this Model Poultry Farm is a successful business enterprise. She has added to it, and made many improvements out of her profits. Miss Edwards pointed out that there was room in every small town and village for such an undertaking, but that the best kind of fowl suitable to the locality's demands be kept, and that all birds and eggs be marketed in first-class condition. Slipshod work was sure death to success.

After the address, some discussion arose as to the best dress for such work, some ladies suggesting that skirts were an encumbrance. Miss Edwards' reply was: "I have always worn a tunic—a skirt shortened to just below the knee. I dare not do anything more advanced, because I have an old servant, devoted to me, but she says, 'The day Missus puts on bloomers, I leave.'"