

## Our Public Men.

Public men have a great deal to contend against. They are flattered and magnified by the press of their own party and abused and depreciated by the press of the other party. Men who read the papers of one side only—and their number is large—get such crooked views of public men and affairs that he who attempts to make them see straight attempts a task as impossible as it is thankless. On the other hand those who determine to read both Government and Opposition journals are apt to wax cynical and to believe the statements of neither side. In any event the public man suffers, and nothing he does or says is estimated at its real worth or significance. We believe that the majority of our public men desire nothing more than fairplay. They suffer from misrepresentation to a greater extent than any other class in the community. Especially is this the case with men in office. Their position is difficult enough without the base interpretation which is too often placed upon their words and deeds. Nothing can be more cruel, nothing can be more harmful to the people, than the incessant implication of unworthy or interested motives on the part of those to whose care is committed the governance of the country. For this reason *THE WEEK* makes it its especial aim to consider impartially acts of Ministers of State, be they Federal or Provincial, Liberal or Conservative and not to take for granted that any charge is necessarily true because it is made. It is only fair to take for granted that the different Governments are doing the best they can for the welfare of the country. We may think they are not devoting enough attention to some matters of national importance, to which we refer elsewhere, but there ought to be the least possible display of mere partisan fault finding.

## Lord Salisbury Misrepresented.

It will be remembered that the newspapers of November 28th contained a cable despatch giving a brief résumé of Lord Salisbury's speech to the important deputation from the Wesleyan Conference which waited upon the Prime Minister the previous day on the subject of national primary education. This despatch made it appear that Lord Salisbury received the deputation in a cold and haughty way, and spoke roughly to its members, after the manner of Joseph to his brethren, but from distinctly other motives. We can find no trace of all this in the full reports of the proceedings which appear in *The Times* of November 29th. On the contrary, we find, as we expected to find, every consideration displayed for the opinions and wishes of the deputation. Lord Salisbury said that he agreed almost entirely with those who had spoken as to the grievance which exists—that where there is a considerable number of Nonconformist children, they may be in such a position that they must have either a religious teaching which they do not believe or no religious teaching at all. He had always considered it “a very serious one,” and would be glad to see any means adopted to remedy “this most lamentable state of things.” As a possible and alternative remedy Lord Salisbury would encourage the establishment of voluntary denominational schools by Nonconformists, and would give them a full measure of public assistance. But the proposal of the Bishop of Bath and Wells is to be preferred. He suggests that where no other school accommodation exists except the Church school, Nonconformist ministers or teachers, duly qualified, should be granted admission, under proper regulation, to the Church school and be allowed to give religious instruction in a separate class room or other available building to the pupils entered as belonging to their own denomination. Lord Salisbury is right in saying that this question of religious instruction in schools is one of the most difficult problems which ever beset any community.

## Britain in the East.

The latest speech of Lord Roberts, as reported to the *New York Sun*, ought, to wake up the English people and all and sundry who are connected with them if they can be waked up. General Roberts is not an alarmist and he never plays to the gallery. What he says is this: “If England intends to maintain her commercial supremacy in the East she must be prepared for events even more startling and unexpected than those which have occurred during the past twelve months.” He pointed his remarks by urging the English people not only to look after their navy but to keep their army ready for action. He believes, as all far-seeing watchers of current events believe, that India is threatened. The readers of a Canadian journal may ask: “Well, what then? What have we got to do with that?” The answer is, when India is threatened Canada is threatened. When England stands solitary and at bay Canada, Australia, The Cape, New Zealand must all look out for trouble. What then is Canada's duty? In these columns we have struck no uncertain note. What we have written has been sent forth under a deep sense of responsibility and was based upon reliable information. We repeat what we have said already. The times are more than critical, and Canadians cannot prepare too soon for any emergency.

## Canadian Books.

A considerable amount of attention in the literary circles of Great Britain and the United States is being bestowed at present upon our land. The question of Canadian copyright and the visit of Mr. Hall Caine to this country have brought into prominence the fact that we have authors and publishers of our own, producing work that is worthy the name of literature and putting it before the public in attractive form—a fact of which many educated Anglo-Saxons appear to have been deeply ignorant. A very pretty number of novels and short stories have lately had the great Dominion for their scenes of action. In illustration of this we need only mention the work of such distinguished Canadian authors as Gilbert Parker, Robert Barr, Miss Dougall, and John Mackie. Their books, however, have, for the most part, been published in England. Still, our own publishing houses have been gradually winning more recognition. We have received from the publisher, William Briggs, a copy of “*Old Man Savarin, and Other Stories*,” which has been printed and bound in a style quite equal to the best London and New York publishing houses. Mr. Thomson's now widely-known collection of stories was reviewed in *THE WEEK* by Mr. Archibald Lampman immediately on its publication. The author's gifts are many. His style is excellent and his work racy of the soil. The best of the stories have Canada for their setting, and the pictures of the “*Waterloo Veteran*,” of “*Old Man Savarin*” and of “*Great Godfrey's Lament*,” leave a clear-cut impression on the mind. Such books flatter our national pride, and, like *Oliver Twist*, we ask for more. Amongst other books which deserve special mention and which have been published recently in Toronto, are “*Etchings from a Parsonage Verandah*,” “*Forest, Lake, and Prairie*” and “*Pearls and Pebbles*.” “*Kim Biler*” comes to us from British Columbia—a notable novel which we reviewed the other day. Dr. Bourinot's last book is a very marked success from every point of view. Indeed, the literary activity of the Dominion is becoming conspicuous. In theology, history, poetry, science, and in contributions to periodicals, Canadians are winning a coveted position. There are many chapters in our national history and many features in our national life which appeal to the imagination and make of the Dominion a happy hunt-