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ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1912.

PARLIAMENT AND THE EMERGENCY.

In his speeches since his return to Canada, Mr. Borden has made no reference to the German menace and has not departed from his original statement that no intimation as to the Government's policy on Naval Defence would be made public before the meeting of Parliament. In his speech at Montreal last Saturday, however, the Prime Minister threw more light upon the situation than on any previous occasion. There can be no longer any doubt that as the result of the conference with the British Government Mr. Borden considers the situation demands that the question of Canada's co-operation should be considered at the earliest possible moment. To face the emergency Parliament is now summoned to meet two months earlier than the date decided upon last June, before the conferences were held.

In his speech at Montreal Mr. Borden clearly expressed his opinion on the need for some immediate action. He said:

"I went to the United Kingdom, having in mind what I had said to the people of Canada in November, 1911, when the question of our attitude towards Imperial Defence was raised. We promised at that time that if the time came when the question became grave, and we were in power, we would endeavor to find out the situation, and if the answers to these questions by the naval experts of the Admiralty were such as to demand the co-operation of this country, I would appeal to Parliament for effective aid, and if Parliament did not give immediate and effective aid, I would appeal to the people of the country."

"We would readily and gladly have delayed the opening of Parliament until the month of January next, as indeed we had determined before my visit to England. I consider, however, that Parliament should not be kept waiting for the report of my visit, therefore we intend and expect that Parliament shall be summoned for some date in the month of November next. I am not at all sure that some of those who are endeavoring to utter certain jibes at the present time will be so ready with these jibes when we are face to face with them in the Parliament of Canada."

Mr. Borden is no alarmist. He is not given to exaggeration. No other inference can be drawn from his statement than that the information received from the Admiralty is a call to the Dominion to assist in meeting the emergency which has arisen without delay. There is a world of significance in Mr. Borden's timely warning to those who in their ignorance of the situation would place politics before patriotism and loyalty to the Mother Country. When confronted with the cold hard facts they will not out a sorry figure in Parliament. Obstruction when all the facts are disclosed can justly be met by an appeal to the people. The result of the election a year ago when the country supported Mr. Borden's platform and policy does not leave the ultimate issue in doubt.

THE ORIGIN OF LIFE.

An address by Professor E. A. Schaefer on "The Origin of Life" at the meeting of the British Association, early this month, has given rise to much interesting discussion by followers of the two schools of thought on this eternal problem. What is life? It is a question which everyone asks, and one for which no philosopher has yet found a satisfactory answer. No one knows what life is, and in the opinion of many thinkers we never shall. Professor Schaefer, who occupies the chair of Physiology at Edinburgh University, believes that the laws of life and its manifestations are to be explained by the laws of chemistry and of mechanics. The other school of thought, the vitalists, believe that life is a principle co-existent with matter and incapable of ultimate explanation or resolution. The strength of their position lies in the fact that no research has ever indicated the slightest possibility of the production of life where no life was before.

Professor Schaefer's views, as summarized by a writer in the London Daily Graphic, may be briefly stated. In reply to the vitalists, we give a letter by Miss Marie Corelli which appeared later in the same publication. The ground taken by this well known and popular author will appeal strongly to the average reader in the defence she makes that humanity must acknowledge a Greater Power, a Supreme Being, who is the sole Cause and Effect of a perfect scheme of creation.

Professor Schaefer's method of stating his case is this: He analyzes the simplest form of life-stuff that we know. Thus analyzed it yields nothing more mysterious than carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorus, sodium, calcium, potassium—all commonplace elements. Then he examines the operations of life. "The chemical attractions which some substances have for another will produce movements similar to those of life. If a metal like platinum, for instance, be torn up into particles so small that they approach the size of molecules, then these particles of colloidal platinum will not only become endowed with rapid movement, but they will effect surprising chemical changes in liquids wherein they are placed. That action resembles "life forces," and especially does it resemble that of the bodies called enzymes, which seem to help living cells to live and act and transform themselves. There are a number of other actions and reactions known to chemical and physical science which are explained on mechanical or electrical or chemical grounds, and which are almost exactly like those observed in the manifestations of life and of living things."

Professor Schaefer's position is that if we could completely examine these manifestations, if we could pry into them with mental as well as material microscopes so powerful that nothing was concealed, we should perceive that all were to be accounted for by purely physical and chemical reasons. There would be no mysterious principle of life. The principles of life would be the same as those which govern the movements of all atoms and molecules. Living matter is only a specified form of non-living matter, created by the fortuitous association in fortuitous combinations of the elements, and representing only a step onwards in the evolution of the elements themselves.

This is the mechanistic position. Miss Marie Corelli's views, from the vitalists' standpoint, are well and eloquently expressed. She presents questions to the scientist which admit of no answer, and with a woman's

intuitive perception places her finger on the weak spot—"assumption." Her letter follows.

I have read with deep interest the report of Professor Schaefer's address on "The Origin of Life," but I confess I am unable to see that he has advanced our knowledge so greatly as to prove that we should "set aside as devoid of scientific foundation the idea of immediate supernatural intervention in the first production of life—a round-about way of saying that we have no "scientific foundation" for any belief in God.

Some of his statements surely challenge question—for example, he goes on to observe after the sentence just quoted above—"we are not only justified in believing but compelled to believe that living matter must have owed its origin to a process of gradual evolution." Granted that this is so, may we not assume Evolution from what? What Cause started the process? It cannot have begun from un-intelligent "Nothing!" And as Evolution points to a guiding Force which regulates its movements with mathematical accuracy and beauty, does it not seem that there is both a Cause for Evolution and a Purpose in Evolution?

The learned professor tells us that: "The elements comprising living substances are few in number. Those which are constantly present are carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. With these, in the more diffuse living material which we know as protoplasm, phosphorus is always associated." Very well; but who brought these materials into being? From whence come hydrogen, oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and the rest? Hear again the professor—"Assuming the evolution of living matter to have occurred—there we see that we must assume—our instructor does not help us to discover how it occurred"—and in the foot suggested, namely, as a mass of colloidal slime possessing the property of assimilation, and therefore of growth, reproduction would follow as a matter of course."

Certainly, but what we want to know from the Professor is: Where did the "mass of colloidal slime" begin? Why did it begin at all? Why, from "a mass of colloidal slime" originating out of blank "Nothingness" should not only this tiny planet be produced, but millions and trillions of planets and solar systems whose marvels we can but dimly guess at? Can the distinguished Professor Schaefer tell us this? If he cannot, we stand just where we were before, humbly and fervently acknowledging a Greater Power than ourselves, a Supreme Being, who is the sole Cause and Effect of a perfect scheme of creation. And we call this Divine Intelligence a "supernatural intervention," because it is above Nature, while creating and supporting all natural phenomena. It may be, as the Professor tells us, that this majestic Universe is the result of "a mass of colloidal slime," but till we can learn where the "colloidal slime" comes from, and how it has evolved from "slime" into this cosmos, we may surely still believe in that "Supernatural Intervention" of wisdom, power and love, whom we call "Our Father which art in Heaven."—Yours faithfully,

MARIE CORELLI,
Mason Croft, Stratford-on-Avon.

FUDGE!

The Times, which is without a rival in peanut politics, is now raising objections to the number of banquets tendered to the Ministers on their home coming. It says: "The Tories of Sorel are to banquet Mr. Hazen. The chief business of the members of this precious Government appears to be to keep up the banquet record. Incidentally the people of Sorel want something."

All that has happened is that Mr. Hazen is making his first annual visit of inspection to the St. Lawrence Canal, and the Workmen's Conservative Association of Richelieu and Sorel are giving him a hearty welcome. We have no recollection that Hon. William Pugsley ever declined, on principle, to be guest of honor at a political banquet, when he had the chance.

Current Comment

A Point to Remember.

(Victoria Colonist.)
Mr. Walter Long, M. P., made one very striking observation in the course of his speech, which illuminated us in a flash one of the great and vital facts of Empire, which we in Canada should take to heart when called upon to consider what part we should play in Imperial Defence. This was, that while the Empire was wide and mighty and the people in the overseas possessions busily engaged in enterprises which seemed to them all-sufficient, they were enabled to do this unaided by those envoys of their opportunities and their resources because—and only because—of the protecting arm of Great Britain.

Minimum Wage.

(Brandon Expositor.)
The trades union congress recently held in Great Britain, representing 2,000,000 workers, resolved to demand legislation securing a minimum wage of 30 shillings, or about \$7.50 a week. The agitation for a minimum rate of pay is an old one, but does not seem to make as much headway as its seeming reasonableness would lead one to expect. Possibly the effect of such legislation upon the employment of the aged and infirm, and of female labor, affords an explanation.

Sicking 'Em on the Senate.

(Montreal Herald.)
Sir James Whitney might start something by telling the militant suffragettes, who have been passed on to him by Mr. Borden's body guard, that the Senate is really the party to blame as indeed it is, theoretically, because it is believed to be unwilling to let Mr. Borden pass a Dominion franchise law. If the leaders get out their hatchets for the Senators there would be some lively stepping.

A Drastic Remedy.

(Hamilton Herald.)
An imprisoned suffragette who refuses to take food should be assumed to be mentally unbalanced and confined in a lunatic asylum until she comes to her senses. It is not uncommon for lunatics to refuse food and they must be forcibly fed. It is better to have the forcible feeding done by asylum attendants who are accustomed to it than by prison officials.

Fine Job for the Duke.

(Toronto Saturday Night.)
The Duke is really the only candidate in sight for the post of King of Canada, when the Nationalists have succeeded in making this a French country. Once enthroned at Ottawa, His Royal Highness could send Admiral Bouchard at the head of an autonomous navy and General Lavergne in command of his Zouaves to recapture the throne of France.

The Way of a Man.

(Canadian Courier.)
A man may slam the front door when he goes out early in the evening, but the chances are that he won't when he returns later—much later.

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"CLOSED SHOP" AIM INDORSED IN ACTION BY UNION DELEGATS

Newport, Wales, Sept. 27.—The vote in favor of the continuance of the workmen's right to settle trade disputes by means of the strike, and the vote in favor of independent political action, and against syndicalism, was followed on the last day of the trade congress by the carriage of a resolution, by 302,000 to 575,000 card votes to the effect that trade unionists should refuse to work with non-unionists. This resolution was brought forward by the London carmen and read as follows:

"That in the interests of trades unionists, and in order to securing the full benefits of awards and agreements fought for and obtained by trade unionists, this congress is of opinion that the time has arrived when trade unionists should refuse to work with non-unionists. As a condition, one of the delegates of the Railway Clerks' Association, speaking to the motion, declared that the principle of forcing a man to be a trade unionist who was not one by conviction would be fatal to the trade union movement. In spite of many speeches against the resolution it was passed, largely by the vote of the Miners' Union delegates, who voted for the strike in most trades, for there is scarcely one in which non-unionists are not working side by side with members of unions. Mr. Thomas, of the Birmingham Trades Union, reported that he had elected J. W. J. Davis, Bessworkers' Society, Birmingham, to be their chairman in succession to Will Thorne. Mr. Davis, it will be remembered, was one of the two trade unionists who was elected to represent the trade unions at the Coronation of King George in Westminster Abbey. The congress, it was announced, will be held next year in Manchester."

HOTEL ARRIVALS.

John E Potts, Boston, Mass; A H Green and wife, Portsmouth, N. H.; C Hamming and wife, Fredericton; C E Hault; John Arsenault, Chatham, N. B.; Andre Gallant, Emile Arsenault, do; Ben Arsenault, do; F V Hall and wife, Boston; J L Edmonds, Montreal; Harker Nicholls, London, Eng; Miss Dorothy Harker, do; Miss Annie McKillop, Scotland; J R Randall and wife, Campbellton; R Brooks, Halifax; J J MacMasters and wife, New York; Miss E MacMasters, do; R B Turner, Digby; H Jackson, do; R O Norris, Amherst; T J Perley, Portland, Me; R F Hanly and wife, Boston; G George Woodstock; P A Davidson, Chatham; J H Wilson and wife, New York; Mr and Mrs G H Kelly, do.

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Victoria.

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