



THE PHILOSOPHER

In the group of distinguished and influential British journalists whose visit to this country last month was an event of so much importance, there were representatives of various shades of political opinion. On returning to Winnipeg after their travels through Western Canada, they were discussing the country's future and the probable effect of this policy and of that policy in moulding that future. One of their number, the representative of a London journal known the world over, who had been a listener, not an active participant in the debate, was at last called on for his opinion. He said that what had been most deeply impressed upon him in Western Canada was the self-reliance developed by the conditions of life. "The man on the prairie," said he, "who is grappling manfully with his own individual problem and succeeding by the exercise of his own intelligence and energy, is developing something that means more to the country than any policy, or any politics." There is a great truth in these words. One of the most important lessons that experience teaches is that, on the whole, success in life depends more on character than on intellect, or fortune, or anything else. This is true of the individual; and what is the nation but a collection of individuals? The nations in which strength of character is developed, and in which self-reliance, integrity, industry and self-control are most diffused and most respected are inevitably, in the long run, the most prosperous and the most advanced. This is a law that cannot be questioned, and it becomes more and more apparent as civilization progresses.

SUCCESS IS BASED ON CHARACTER.

Not, of course, that the right moulding of public policies is not of the highest importance. But the right development of individual character is the first necessity for the right moulding of public policies and the right working out of our British system of representative institutions of self-government. It is only through the high character of individual citizenship that the party system in politics can be made to yield beneficial results. Doubtless British self-government might have been developed through other and better means than the party system; but the historical fact remains that it did not. It developed through the party system. The evils of party system are many and manifest. They were never described with more cynical truth than by Dean Swift, when he termed party the madness of the many for the benefit of the few. It is for right-thinking individual citizens to prevent those evils, recognizing that in free countries party government is the inevitable, if not the best, or the only, way of conducting public affairs. A good man will adhere to his party only so long as he can do so with a firm and honest conviction that its policy is the most beneficial to the country. When he can do that no longer, he asserts his independence. It is in such men, whom Swift's cynical definition of party cannot include, that the hope of good government rests. And their number is constantly growing greater in Western Canada.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE PARTY.

That there is something in our Western politics which distinguishes them from the politics of Eastern Canada might be argued from many points of view. One difference is that politics on the prairies do not seem to be dominated by lawyers to the same extent as in the rest of the Dominion. In two out of the three Prairie Provinces the premiers are not lawyers. In every other province the premier is a lawyer; and the Dominion Premier—as also the leader of the opposition in the Dominion Parliament—are likewise lawyers. This is not cited against them here as a high crime and misdemeanor. Again to quote Swift, the lawyers of his time were declared by him to be "men bred from their youth in the art of proving by words, multiplied for the purpose, that white is black and black is white, according as they are paid." Swift had a rough tongue, and a biting pen. His savage description of the legal profession is quoted here with no intention of

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applying it to the members of that profession in Canada today, in politics or out of politics. It is a necessary and honorable profession. And, after all, what could be more in the natural course of things than that lawyers should take to politics? The politician who is not a lawyer necessarily develops the lawyer-faculty of arguing his side of the case in its strongest form. He cultivates the arts of advocacy. Like a lawyer striving to win a verdict from the jury, he uses all his powers of persuasion; he skilfully avails himself of any mistake or admission of his opponent; he appeals to every resource of ingenious and eloquent pleading. The electors are the jury; it is their business to decide on the merits of the case. Just as it is necessary in a trial by jury that the arguments on both sides should be set forth fully in their strongest form, so also is it necessary in a political contest, in order that the electors may discharge their function. Thus it is that while all lawyers are not politicians, all politicians have, on occasion, to practice the arts and methods of lawyers.

Once more the scientific world is agog over the question whether the lines discerned on Mars, when viewed through observatory telescopes, are, or are not, artificial waterways—just as astronomers on Mars, or some other planet, may be pointing their telescopes towards Alberta on this planet of ours and arguing whether they see irrigation systems. Some astronomers who are pointing their telescopes on Mars are positive that they see an elaborate system of canals, and on the strength of their assurances the conclusion is advanced that Mars is inhabited and that the Martians are an amphibious people, or at least semi-amphibious, like the Dutch. On the other hand, other astronomers throw doubt on the reality of those alleged artificial waterways. Professor A. E. Douglass, for instance, of the university of Arizona, writes: "I used to believe in them, but now, as the result of a careful study of optical illusions, I am very skeptical as to the reality of the fainter ones." As for the general question of the presence of men—or living beings—on other heavenly bodies besides the earth, the fact is, of course, that there is not a great amount of expert opinion available. Perhaps that deserving of the most attention is from the pen of Professor H. H. Turner, the Savilian Professor of Astronomy at the University of Oxford. He believes that life must exist on the planets of the solar system and probably of the universe as well, because they resemble the earth in many respects. But as they also differ from the earth in many respects, it is probable that their forms of life, animal and vegetable, differ considerably from ours. "The inhabitants might perhaps," writes Professor Turner, by way of illustration, "live in the air, or under the ground, or be like our insects. They might, indeed, be able to live without oxygen. Some low forms of life on the earth seem to get on better without air, and on the airless planet it is conceivable that such forms might have developed into higher beings such as man." If this possibility is admitted, the almost atmosphereless moon may be the home of a thriving population of Moonites. However, the whole question is one that requires for adequate treatment the imagination of a novelist and poet.

OTHER WORLDS THAN OURS.

Why has mankind from prehistoric times used alcohol? The theory heretofore generally held is that it is taken as a stimulant. But a well-known English writer on science, Dr. C. W. Saleeby, now declares that this is a mistake. Alcohol, he says, is taken, just as opium is taken—to give "peace of mind." It is taken, that is to say, not as a stimulant, but as a sedative. Both serve the same purpose, he says; and it is a fact that no race uses both. But this theory that alcohol is not taken as a stimulant lands us in the midst of paradoxes. It is to be noted that Dr. Saleeby condemns both alcohol and opium. The resort to either as a means of banishing worry and nerve strain has long since been proved fallacious; and yet that is what has given them so

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strong a hold upon humanity. They not only fail to banish the cause of worry, but they produce bodily and mental damages of which the result is worry multiplied manifold. To return, however, to Dr. Saleeby, he—as has been said before—does not regard alcohol as a true stimulant. To true stimulants, as for example, tea and coffee, he assigns great value—he rates them with sunlight as natural stimulants of the essential processes of life. Here we find fresh paradoxes; medical authorities have been declaring alcohol a valuable stimulant in the tropics, and sunlight dangerous—the latter theory, as noted in last month's Western Home Monthly, being applied by Rev. E. C. Heustis, of Red Deer, Alberta, and following him, by the New York Medical Record, to the sunshine of Western Canada. Here, indeed, is a tangle. The one thing that seems to emerge with any certainty from the conflict of opinion is that for the ordinary person drugs are unnecessary, and that their use opens the way to consequences which it is difficult to measure. It is because man is the worrying animal that he resorts to mechanical agents for relieving worry. Misery stupefies itself with drink; and so does luxurious idleness. It is no accident that in all countries the drug habit affects least the people who lead useful, active lives in healthful surroundings, free from the fear of poverty, and with both mind and body kept occupied.

An event which deserves an important place among the notable and interesting happenings of the past month was the examination of Mrs. Eddy at great length by court officers at her home in Concord. The object of the examination was to ascertain the condition of her mental faculties, with a view to the determination by the court of the question whether the condition thus ascertained showed her to be capable of managing her property interests or of understanding the management of them by those to whom she had delegated the task. That is what the purpose was; and pending the decision of the court, it may be noted what the purpose was not. It was not to find out whether Christian Science is, in the celebrated phrase of Rev. Dr. Patton, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, the leading Presbyterian divinity school on this continent, "neither Christian nor scientific." The immediate impression which the examination produced was that Mrs. Eddy is very fluent, especially for a woman of her advanced years, and that her courtesy and earnestness are very marked. Her fluency, above all, must be admitted. To believers in her doctrine that fluency is as a precious flooding of light upon the subject which she claims to hold in charge by divine revelation. To others the fluency of Mrs. Eddy is lacking in logical coherence. The words flow on with a pleasing smoothness to the air which impairs the effect on the mind for those to whom mere multiplication of agreeable words does not necessarily suggest their meaning, or impress it on the understanding.

MRS. EDDY'S EXAMINATION.

The diplomatic difference between a royal handshake, a royal kiss, and repeated royal kisses has never been worked out in handbooks and treatises, but the difference is there just the same, and the international importance of it is carefully weighed in Europe. When King Edward and the German Emperor met the other day at Wilhelmshohe they not only kissed each other's cheeks, as monarchs do when they meet in friendship, but they did it repeatedly. The leading papers in all the European capitals have been discussing at length the deep significance of this, which lies in the fact that when the King and Kaiser met a year ago they merely shook hands. The manner of their recent meeting at Wilhelmshohe means that European tensions are relaxing, and that Great Britain and Germany in particular are now on friendlier terms. The monarchs in their personal relations are necessarily more or less controlled by the state of public feeling in their respective countries. But in the case of His Majesty and the German Emperor diplomatic gossip has had it that for the past year or two there has been a certain coolness for personal reasons. Some two years ago the Kaiser saw fit to indulge in some personal criticisms of his uncle, while on a yachting cruise, and his remarks were reported to the Foreign Office in London by a British diplomat who was on the yacht and whose duty it was to report them. The report eventually came under King Edward's eye. It is satisfactory to know that the Emperor has made amends. Able man as he is, he could go to school to King Edward and learn lessons in tact, in dignity, in knowledge of men and of public affairs, and in statesmanship, that would be invaluable to him.

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