

TOPICS OF THE DAY

PARLIAMENT MUST LEAD: PROGRESS: MEXICO: APPROPRIATING
OUR LAURELS: APOSTLESHIP.

CANADA'S public burdens, due chiefly to war expenditure and to subsequent railway commitments, are enormous. They are almost too great for her present strength. Our main hope of early relief lies in immigration and settlement. Only by increase of products, particularly natural products for our railways to carry, can those railways be made to pay operating and interest charges, and the taxpayers be freed from the necessity of making good their annual deficits. Only by enlarging our population, adding to the numbers of our workers and developing our natural resources can such products, in adequate quantities, be made available. It is vain to expect any unearned reduction of taxation. We must grin and bear present conditions, or take the necessary steps to improve them. But there is no need to despair, or give way to discouragement. The Dominion has vast untouched or but partially exploited sources of wealth, which might speedily be made productive, if we only had the people and the energy. We have opportunities of profitable industry for more than twice our present numbers. If our population could be doubled, our debt would, as an immediate consequence, be halved. The great aim of our policy, federal and provincial, should therefore be the inducement of immigration, and the promotion of contented settlement. How best and most expeditiously to accomplish this, should be the predominant thought of every patriotic and ambitious Canadian.

Apart from this, but as a highly desirable if not absolutely necessary means to the desired end, strict or even severe economy in public administration is required. Not a dollar of public money should now be expended except for indispensable services, or on prospectively profitable enterprises.

What is the reasonable answer to enquiry as to where such economy should begin? Should it be at the top, or at the bottom? Can there be doubt? Before Parliament can, with any appearance of consistency or decency, undertake to reform the country, it must reform itself. It is obviously in great and pressing need of reformation. There is no need for any violent outcry against our Parliament, or for denunciation of its members. Their degeneration,

like *The Rake's Progress*, has been steady, but not unnatural. It has been quite in accordance with the spirit of the times. Politicians are very human, or they would not be politicians. They are emphatically men of like passions with ourselves. They have the same desires as we, and are moved by like influences. When all other incomes were soaring, why should not theirs, they asked themselves, do likewise. So theirs took to mounting, and were hard to stop until they had reached undue heights. Members of Parliament are not compelled to strike when they want more "pay". They pay themselves out of the public treasury. When they last increased their sessional allowances, from \$2500 to \$4000, that treasury was overflowing—with borrowed money—and we were all "getting rich quick" on similar money. Times have changed since then. If we have not changed with them, so much the worse for us and the country.

To demonstrate their honesty, Members of Parliament no sooner raised their "pay" than they set about giving value for what they had taken. They were as fair in their dealings as trading rats, which always leave something, however worthless, in exchange for what they carry off. Silver and gold, in excess of their own desires, Members had none, even after the increase of their allowances; what they had they gave freely—even voluminously. What they had was *Talk*. They had made no demand for "shorter hours" when arranging "longer pay." So they poured out eloquence, regardless of time and consequences. The length of sessions grew longer and longer. The consequences were that not only did the over three hundred Commoners and Senators draw each his \$4000 for the session, but every day the session was lengthened added, in other ways, most materially to its cost. In thus giving the country "value for its money" expended on indemnities to Members, the Members forced the country to spend a great deal more money, indirectly, in addition to the sums voted during prolonged sessions, often because Members talked themselves into such expenditures for want of something better to do.

Obviously, the first duty of Parliament is to begin by extracting the beam from its own eye. As obviously, the first step to that end should be the reform of procedure. Parliaments have not yet taken official cognizance of the fact that the Middle Ages and the infancy of Parliaments are past. Parliaments, as their name implies, were instituted mainly for purposes of discussion and voting. While they were "parleying", the kings and their Ministers were acting. Parliaments are now expected to do business directly, since kings have ceased to act in that way. Speechifying and busi-

ness do not fit well together. The Canadian Parliament has not realized this. It thinks it is still first cousin to the Long Parliament, and that it must proclaim the fact by its long-windedness. So, each and every year a committee of its Members, known as "the Government", begins by submitting to it a document endorsed "Speech from the Throne," which, each and every year, the Members set on and rend with their tongues or beslobber with their lips during from ten days to a fortnight or three weeks, until they are as much out of words and breath as they were without ideas of importance to begin with. Then they "divide", and the "Address" is adopted on the usual party lines. Not a vote has been changed, or is ever likely to be changed, by the "Debate" which the country has to pay for, but fortunately is not required to "follow", and never does. After that, the House is "ready for business", but business is seldom if ever ready for it. The vocal apparatus of honourable gentlemen has been limbered up, and they are ready and willing to use it to the utmost. So the speech-making, mostly without rational purpose, begins again and continues without ceasing. Of late years it has continued for nearly, if not quite, six months. In the end business is usually finished with a rush and a reckless speed which opens the doors wide to faulty and undesirable legislation.

It is perfectly evident that there is not sufficient legitimate business before the Canadian Parliament at any ordinary time to detain it in session for six months or, usually, for more than six weeks, as in former days, if that business is properly prepared, properly submitted and properly dealt with. It is equally evident that the sessions are prolonged mainly in order that Members may have the appearance of "earning their pay". This is an extravagantly expensive demonstration. It interferes with the regular business of the Departments by distracting or calling away heads and clerks from their duties. It necessitates the employment of an army of special clerks and attendants. It requires an enormous amount of costly printing. It permits all sorts of mischief-making and mischief-planning.

If sessions were reduced to their proper length, their cost could be reduced proportionately, and the allowances to Commoners and Senators could be reduced accordingly. For a six-weeks or two-months session, \$2000 would be as ample indemnity as it is in Great Britain, and as considerably less was in Canada for many years after Confederation. And it should be granted and accepted strictly as *indemnity* for necessary expenditures, and not at all as a salary. It was indemnity, not salary, that was contemplated and intended by the Constitution. What a huge and much-needed

saving this would effect, can readily be perceived. But, more important still,—far more important—it would place Parliament in its proper position of leading the way in economy, instead of merely imposing this on the country at large and upon those in its employ. It would open up and make easy the path to immense savings in every Department of the Government and in the whole public service. It would probably permit and justify the cutting at least in two of the Civil Service List, and the corresponding reduction of its cost, without in the least impairing its efficiency. These are hard times, very hard times, for the Government of the Dominion and for the Government of each of its Provinces, and far from easy for the overwhelming majority of the people. In days of scarcity it is often requisite to resort to special expedients which might not otherwise be required, even if desirable in themselves. Canada must now cut down her expenditures in every legitimate way, if she is to lighten her burdens and provide for her future expansion and prosperity. It is for her elected representatives to lead, not merely to point, the way.

THERE has been much discussion of late as to what constitutes progress, and whether the world is or is not making progress. A writer on the subject, in a recent number of *The Nineteenth Century and After*, contents himself with defining progress by stating its derivation from the Latin, *progredior*, which means a going forward, an advance. But that does not tend greatly to increase either knowledge or wisdom. One can progress in the direction of evil as well as of good, *to* as well as *from* an unworthy goal, according to the way in which one's face is set. To discuss progress intelligently, some more exact statement of what is meant by the word is imperative.

It is scarcely necessary to argue, as the Review writer does, that progress and evolution are not the same thing. As a matter of fact, there is no apparent relationship between them. Except by faith that it is ever under Divine guidance, . . . we are not able to express any real opinion as to the aim or end of evolution. With regard to progress, the case is wholly different. By common understanding it applies, ordinarily, to humanity alone, and is more or less under human direction and control. Can it be more satisfactorily defined than as human betterment, physical, mental and moral? Spiritual progress, like evolution, must be accepted as God-governed. But the fact cannot be overlooked or denied that

our physical, mental and moral conditions depend indefinitely on our spiritual outlook.

The writer referred to holds that there has been no mental progress within the limits of recorded or indicated history. The most remote Egyptians—and their history extends further back than that of any other people known to us—are proved, by the knowledge and power of thought displayed in such monuments of theirs as the pyramids, to have been at least the mental equals if not in some respects the superiors of any modern race of men. In pure power of thought and reasoning, the Greek philosophers have never been surpassed, if ever equalled. So there would appear to be good ground for the belief that there has been no purely mental progress. The widening of men's thoughts, which has accompanied the process of the suns, affords no evidence of their deepening.

If one is passing over a flat, featureless plain, the only means of judging progress is by looking backward or forward to some visible, natural landmark. When the landscape through which one journeys is varied by hill and valley, forest and stream, the rate and degree of progress in any direction is easily perceived or estimated. There has been quite enough variety in the world's history to enable one to form definite opinions as to man's moral progress. It is possible, or even probable, that the individual of to-day is no better morally than his most remote ancestors. Morality, after all, is mainly—if not exclusively—convention. The North-American Indian, who is the nearest primitive man of our acquaintance, was and is, according to his lights, fully as moral as the people of any of the nations which "discovered," overran and despoiled him. But that does not mean that the morals or conventions of mankind, in the mass, have not greatly improved and progressed. A glance backward in any direction shows the world, in its earlier days, as the habitation of horrible cruelty. Slavery and every form of moral and physical suffering were inflicted by the strong on the weak. We need not revert to remote antiquity to see this. Not merely the Grecian and Roman Empires and their contemporary great powers demonstrate it, but the nations of mediaeval and even modern Europe. The feelings and the customs of the nations have been gradually ameliorated or softened until, at present, there is convincing evidence that the world has made considerable, at least external and mass, progress in morality.

As to physical progress, there can be no serious question. By physical progress is not meant invention of the so-called comforts and conveniences of life, but bodily improvement. It may well be doubted if most of our boasted and glorified "modern improvements" have greatly benefited humanity at large. Are they not

mainly for the service of the comparatively rich? Is not the number of the poor as great as ever? And are not their deprivations greater than ever, by contrast? What have the aeroplane, radio, wireless telegraphy, the telephone, the telegraph, the railway, the motor-car, done for the toiling and sweating and mostly not far from starving masses of mankind, the world over? Are the dwellers in the slums of London, Paris or New York happier or substantially better off than were the *plebs* of ancient Rome? It is not to be forgotten that the poor of Rome were much more generally provided with public baths and the means of cleanliness and comfort than are similar classes in modern cities, and that they were kept well supplied with "spectacles" of various kinds and other means of entertainments, besides being furnished, most of the time, with liberal allowances of free bread.

There has undoubtedly been considerable progress in the physical health, longevity and stature of men. Medical and surgical skill, founded on the physical sciences, have made enormous progress. The sick are better cared for; the injured are better treated; there is far more general sympathy and help for the suffering, and the expectation of life has been very considerably lengthened. That the stature of the European man has greatly increased is proved beyond question by the armour and weapons of the past, preserved in museums and elsewhere. He would be a comparatively tiny modern man who could encase himself in the largest coat of mail of the days "when knights were bold," or take effective hold of the little hilt of an ancient sword. Teetotal advocates proclaim that the British race has been kept back and down, physically as well as morally, by the use of alcohol. Mediaeval armour hardly seems to support their assertions.

As to progress, on the whole or in any particular aspect of it, the conclusion would seem to be that one must form one's own opinions according to one's outlook and the meaning which one attaches to the word itself. It is safe to believe that, although there has been occasional retrogression, there has been general advancement in outlook and aspirations; that humanity has become more actively and capably enquiring; that it has attained greater elevation and refinement; and that, in future, there will be still greater and more distinctly perceptible progress.

IT is odd that most Canadians, although living within three or four days' journey of Mexico, and a similar proportion of Americans who are still nearer neighbours, know less, if possible, of that

country than of Russia or China. To outsiders in general, Mexico is merely a land of lawless Spaniards, blood-thirsty half-breeds and degraded natives, for whom rebellion and murder are ordinary recreations. It does not strike us forcibly enough to make us enquire, that even men such as we assume the Mexicans to be do not habitually rebel and fight without reason or supposed reason. Of course it is well known that there is much brigandage, but that must be mainly individual, and a symptom rather than the popular disease itself. The truth seems to be that the trouble in Mexico is historic, and to be remedied only by the removal of its historic causes—the oppression of the great mass of the people by a dominant foreign class, who have not only appropriated nearly the whole of the land and wealth of the country, but have reduced the native population to virtual slavery.

All have heard or read of the horrors of the Spanish conquest, and of the ruthless oppression and cruelty by which it was accompanied and followed. But that to us has been mere "history" of three or four centuries ago. If we thought of it at all, it was to fancy the natives as barbarians, practically exterminated, and the descendants of the conquering Spaniards as in almost sole possession. Two important things we have forgotten or ignored—first, that the native inhabitants of Mexico were not at all barbarians, but a highly civilized and cultured people, at least as highly civilized and cultured as their Spanish conquerors, if not more so; and secondly, that the number of Spanish invaders at the outset and of subsequent immigrants was comparatively insignificant. The overwhelming mass of the population is now and has constantly been native Indian or half-caste, mainly full-blooded Indian. These people have been degraded by brutal oppression; but they still retain proud memories of their former greatness, and cherish bitter recollections of the treatment to which they have been and still are subjected; for the process of stripping them of the last vestiges of the land of their forefathers went on continuously until a few years ago when they made discovery of the strength still left them in numbers, and the potency of persistent rebellion. The truth seems to be that the actual Spaniards in Mexico number no more in proportion to the total population than do the Bolsheviks in Russia to the inhabitants of that country. Yet they have been holding nearly all the land and most of the wealth of Mexico.

We are accustomed to think of many and repeated revolutions in Mexico. In reality there has been but one, and that a continuing revolution. This is what the Mexicans themselves contend. They

affirm that the revolution has been going on for the last 115 years, since Hidalgo rebelled in 1810, and that he, Morelos, Lerdo, Diaz, Madero, Villa, Huerta, Carranza, Obregon and Callez, the present President, have all been or are actors in the same great national drama. That drama, they say, is but the natural after-piece to the conquest of Mexico by Cortez and his army of cut-throats and plunderers. It had a dark and bloody setting, unrelieved by much of light or hope, until Obregon obtained the Presidency and the ascendant. All that is directly known of him gives the impression that he was a true-hearted patriot and a sincere as well as a capable reformer. His graceful retirement at the end of his term of office, and the assistance given by him both in the election and in the accession to power of his official successor, Callez, confirm the high opinion of him held by all who closely watched his career. And Callez appears to be as well qualified to carry on the work which Obregon began as he is to follow him in the Presidency. The new President has the whole-hearted support and assistance of his predecessor.

The ideals of the new régime are exclusively racial and social. They cherish none of the extreme designs of former revolutionaries for the complete elimination of the Whites, and reconstruction on strictly native lines. Their design is to expropriate gradually the Spanish land monopolists, and reinstate the Indians and half-breeds in their communal holdings, in part snatched from them in comparatively recent times, and to promote the ultimate establishment of individual ownership. They pin their faith and hope of success mainly to popular education of a practical kind, in the advancement of which they appear to have achieved remarkable success already, in a very short time. The progress which they have been able to make in a few years has been most encouraging, and says much for their sincerity and energy. There have been blots, or seeming blots, on their record, but to know even part is to forgive much in their endeavours. Of course it is too early yet, and the scene of action too uncertain, to predict the outcome with any confidence. All that can be said is that there is much of hope and encouragement in the present situation.

THOMAS Campbell is known to-day almost exclusively as a poet, although he does not seem to have entertained a very exalted opinion of his own achievements in that branch of literature. At a comparatively early age he ceased writing in verse. Some of his lyrics, more especially on military and national themes, are of

high spirit, and appeal almost as strongly as ever to the young. *The Last Man*, one of the latest of his poetic productions, is also one of his best. His longer poems are little read. It was on his prose writings, on the efforts he made as a man of affairs, and on his projection of the University of London, that Campbell specially prided himself. The centenary of that institution has induced the publication of three hitherto unprinted letters of his, in one of which he lays definite claim to having been the first to suggest and plan for its establishment, implying that Lord Brougham appropriated both his idea and the credit for it.

In the first of the three letters there is interesting reference to a conversation on the pronunciation of the time. Campbell had been visiting Brougham. He writes: "During my three days sojourn with him, we quarrelled about the pronunciation of words. He said 'Lunnon'—I said 'London,' and told him he pronounced no better than John Moody in the comedy. I reproached him also with pronouncing 'haunted,' 'hawnted,' and asked him why it should not rhyme to 'enchanted.' The matter is a trifle, but I have a full conviction of being in the right." In the second letter, he lays absolute claim to the London University idea. His assertion is: "I published also in the *New Monthly Magazine* one or two letters containing the first sketch and proposal of the London University. Lord Brougham may say what he pleases about his claims to the origination of that project, but it was really mine." This letter is dated 1838, thirteen years after the founding of the university. Lord Campbell, Brougham's biographer, makes the following reference to the opposing claims of the two:

Brougham had the reputation of being the founder of London University College, *open to all religions*, although Thomas Campbell, author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, complained to me (and I believe justly) that the ostensible founder had stolen the plan from him—the poet—concluding his narrative by exclaiming, "Greatest, brightest, *meanest* of mankind!"

The third Campbell letter makes no reference to this subject. In concluding his comments on the three letters in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, their editor, Mr. Walter Seton, writes:

One thing is certain: that if there ever was a fashion for Thomas Campbell's poems, that fashion has long ago ceased, and is unlikely to be revived. In the far-sightedness of his educational vision, however, he was much ahead of his contemporaries. It is not only the University of London which was the outcome of his vision; that university was the forerunner, first of King's College, London, and later of all the so-called "modern" universities and university colleges which came into existence *in Great Britain, and indeed*

throughout the British Empire, during the nineteenth century. It would be hard to mention any single educational suggestion or proposal which has had such a far-reaching effect on the life of the nation as the proposal of Campbell, in 1825, for a university which should maintain complete impartiality among the various religious confessions, and which should be open to all, irrespective of their religious or political associations. The seed sown by Campbell in 1825 has grown rapidly, and we can see from the perspective of a century how it has developed, not merely into a tree, but into a veritable forest.

The italics in the foregoing are the present writer's. Campbell's friend and defender, Mr. Seton, having shorn him, as above, of his poetic laurels, it may seem cruel to deprive him of his reputation in another respect so strongly insisted upon by Mr. Seton; but the truth must be told, as well with regard to Campbell as to Brougham. Neither of them was the originator of the much and deservedly lauded idea embodied in London University. Campbell had been a student of Edinburgh University from 1791 to 1796, winning prizes, and special distinction in Greek literature. It was there that he saw, and had just cause to admire in practical operation, the idea which he carried with him and introduced to London a quarter of a century later. Let Nova Scotia bear witness not only against Campbell and Lord Brougham, but against the claims for London University, and in support of those of Edinburgh and Dalhousie, to the distinction claimed for the former by Mr. Seton. On May 22nd, 1820, before the University of London had been publicly suggested by Thomas Campbell or another, and five years before it was founded, Lord Dalhousie, Governor-General of British North America, laid the corner-stone at Halifax of Dalhousie College. In doing so he said:

This "College of Halifax" is founded for the instruction of youths in the higher classics and in all philosophical studies. *It is formed in imitation of the University of Edinburgh.* Its doors will be open to all who profess the Christian religion; to the youth of His Majesty's North American colonies, to strangers residing here, to gentlemen of the military as well as the learned professions, to all, in short, who may be disposed to devote a small part of their time to study. It is founded upon the principles of Religious Toleration secured to you by the laws, and upon the paternal protection which the King of England extends to all his subjects. It is under His Majesty's most gracious approbation of this institution that I meet you here to-day; and, as his representative, I lay this corner-stone of the building.

The evidence is conclusive. Five years before London University was, Dalhousie University is. And it embodied all the ideas and

ideals of Campbell and Brougham, to which Mr. Seton justly ascribes such importance and such far-reaching consequences. Lord Dalhousie did not claim originality for his foundation. He stated openly that it was "formed in imitation of the University of Edinburgh." Neither Thomas Campbell nor Lord Brougham would appear to have been as frank or as honest.

ITS largely traditional character insures ultra-conservatism in religion. The impressionable age is childhood; also the remembering age. It is in childhood that the influence of parents is most potent. Consequently it is in childhood that we are all taught, and most of us impressed for life by religion. Hence the universal tendency to follow unswervingly in the religious footprints of our fathers. And it has been a good tendency, on the whole. It serves to "link the generations each to each," and to furnish a tie of fellow-feeling between the most modern and the most primitive ages. It might serve a still more humanizing purpose if the devotees of different faiths were less arrogant in their respective assumptions that each of them is the possessor of the one and only true religion, and could come to realize that whoever devoutly worships that which is higher and better than he, is a true worshipper, because a symbolic worshipper, of the All Good. It is more than well that all should cling to the religion of their parents and of their childhood, provided it is in any degree elevating, for a religious pervert is ever a doubtful product. One separated from the fellows of his youth and the faith of his fathers, by acceptance of a different religion, is of necessity more or less adrift on the sea of life with his future, personal course usually highly uncertain.

But much as there is in favour of standing fast by the faith and religious practices in which one has been born and indoctrinated, it does not hold good with regard to what may be called acquired ecclesiastical habits or customs, that is to say, church fashions of outer activity. The most conspicuous of these fashions, at present, is what is called "missionary effort", by which has come to be meant, almost exclusively, foreign missions. Of course no Christian church, which has even a name to live, can afford not to be missionary, that is, apostolic. But there is abundant room for discrimination and choice as to the direction and aims of missions.

Now that it seems certain we are to have in the near future, if we have not already, an additional church organization in Canada, with the continuation of those already existing, might it not be more than well to reconsider the apostolic side of their various activities?

The surviving Presbyterian Church will have a special opportunity. The foreign fields now pre-empted will be held and attended to by the United Church. Why should not the Presbyterian Church accept, and that gladly, as its special mission, the home field, in a broad and revived sense? One has only to cast a casual eye around one's home, wherever it may be in Canada, to perceive the great, the pressing and rapidly increasing need that there is for all the energy which can be concentrated in that field. Irreligion in every form is stalking abroad among us, open, blatant and aggressive. The disciples of Communism and even of Socialism, in some of its "more advanced" forms, are openly preaching and teaching gross atheism and non-morality if not positive immorality. Family worship and family reverence, except among the few, have gone. Most of the poor have given up church-attendance, and ceased worship of any kind. There is a growing spirit of irreverence towards and disregard of all sacred things, perceptible among them. They are without elevating or refining and purifying influences of any kind in their lives. In short, many—very many—of them are in much worse case, both spiritually and morally, than most of those whom missionaries are being sent half way round the globe to convert from their native religions. Even admitting the direct implication that "God is not in His heaven," and that religions such as civilizations other and older than ours have grown up with are not of His giving, surely we are at liberty to make choice of whither our missionary, our apostolic efforts shall be directed.

Until comparatively recent years the Churches of England and Scotland confined their attention almost exclusively to their own lands. Has not their policy been amply justified by results? Could the revived Presbyterian Church in Canada do better than follow the example of the Church of her mother-land, from which she is sprung, in the firm resolve that until worse than what is called heathenism has been, if not eradicated, at least greatly reduced in her own country, she will not dissipate her energies in the four quarters of the globe. Nothing resembling "evangelizing" missions to the dark places of our land is indicated. What is urgently demanded is the carrying to the ignorant and down-trodden of at least some of the beauty and loftiness of life which they will no longer come to seek in formal places of worship. Only thus can be manifested to them, concretely, in their own surroundings, that spirit of love and good-will which drew irresistibly to the Master those who were later to spread the knowledge of Him so widely, and hand it down to all generations as The Light of the World, although His mission was strictly confined to His own nation.

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