CURRENT COMMENT

Sir Robert Borden's Resignation

After nine years' service Sir Robert Borden has laid down the leadership of the Conservative and Unionist parties. History will determine his status as a statesman, but his contemporaries unanimously acclaim him as a great gentleman. The advent of war three years after his accession to power afforded him an unexampled opportunity and he fully availed himself of it. That he represented the great mass of his countrymen in the supreme issues of the crisis there is no dispute. Under him Canada has gained an international rank, which, but for the war, would never have been anticipated. This international position also involved a change in imperial relations and it is undoubted that in London and Paris Sir Robert has come to be regarded as one of the notable figures of the day; and this is attributable in large degree to his personal qualities as well as to his international character. It has been suggested that much of his success politically has been due to an observance of the old rule, never do to-day what can be put off till to-morrow, and some justification for this may be found in the platform of the new "National Liberal and Conservative Party," which has been created out of some of the elements over which Sir Robert presided during the war. It is as colorless in respect of contentious matters as the Republican platform of Chicago, and will receive the endorsement of all safe and sane thinkers. To judge from the provincial elections in Ontario, Manitoba and elsewhere the people are inclined to regard such platforms as safe and sorry. They want something safe and certain, or safe and speedy, or safe and sappy. They want to be getting on, and the desire evident in some quarters to be getting back to 1914 is too influential in most of the safe and sane political platforms. It will not do totally to ignore the most vital issues in the public mind like electoral reform, prohibition, control of profiteering. This is not to say that Sir Robert Borden's administration has not been progressive. For example, his nationalization of the railways has set the pace for the continent.

The Manitoba Elections

Partisan politics received another shock from the Manitoba elections, and there have been some authorities denouncing proportional representation because the labor party was enabled under it to return members to the legislature according to the strength of the vote polled. The good old dyed-in-the-wool partisan desires to see his side in a majority in parliament, no matter how votes may be polled. But that is not the democratic way. There need be no fear of anything terrible happening because a fair proportion of labor men get into parliament. Nothing sobers men like responsibility, and the more labor men are elected the less radical will be their demands as they begin to see and understand the difficulties to be met in changing earth into heaven while the inhabitants continue to be plain, everyday citizens. Objection is also taken by some to the possibility of the group system of government being introduced into parliament. But the problem is really whether the groups are to be dealt with in or out of parliament. We have the group system at present. The difference is that the groups now have to make terms with one or both of the old parties before or during an election, and this is what causes most of the corruption and the degenerate politics so loudly complained about. If the groups get their own representatives into parliament their proceedings there must be public, and the members are responsible to the voters, who acquire more influence by this method than under the two-party system. It should be noted that the objections to proportional representation are raised only by the upholders of the "machines" under the old party system. The machines cannot survive in the old way under the new system, and the only mourners are the machine workers themselves. The experience of the Ontario legislature indicates that Manitoba will have little or no difficulty in forming a government, and that it will be responsive to the wishes of the people, which, after all, is the great virtue about any government.

Fuel Still Urgent Problem

An excellent idea was given effect in placing fuel control under the railway board. Coal shortage is due as much to lack of proper transportation facilities as to anything else. Recent statements of the number of cars, running well into six figures, of loaded coal held in the neighborhood of Buffalo, indicates a lack of system in handling this staple. It is obvious that a great part of the coal requirements of Ontario must be handled during the summer, as in winter weather blockades are apt to precipitate delays. It is not too much to urge dealers to make their deliveries as early as possible, and consumers to lay in their store at the first opportunity. The railway board should have power to forward coal shipments held under demurrage by any coal dealer to any other dealer who would accept delivery. Much of the trouble is due to the use of coal wagons as storage bins. There should be no hesitation about getting all the coal possible stored away before the pressure of the cold weather begins. In this connection the idea of municipal coal yards for the supply of those citizens who are unable to purchase their fuel except in small quantities at a time, demands attention. A comparatively small quantity in each municipality would relieve a great deal of real distress and eliminate much extortionate over-charging. Cases have been known where anything from four to eight times regular prices have been charged for small lots to those unable to buy in the usual way.

Revelations Being Made

It has been a time of revelations and the end is not yet. Mr. Murdock's reflections on the Board of Commerce chairman and his allegation that members of the government were not in sympathy with the presumed objects of the Board did not "draw" the government to any great extent. Correspondence was laid on the table in parliament, and the opposition did not press for an investigation. The Port Arthur enquiry discovered somebody at last willing "to talk Turkey". A Fort William contractor, William H. Greer, swore he paid Col. H. A. C. Machin $1,000 for his influence in getting him a timber berth, and that he had subsequently talked the matter over with Premier Hearst and told him the blocks he wanted, being promised consideration. He did not suggest that Premier Hearst knew anything about the money payment. He had put up $1,000 on other occasions as well as this one. Col. Machin denied the story and said there was a "bad mistake somewhere", and that he was out of public life for good. Sir William Hearst stated that he had never at any time heard of any bribe being offered or accepted in connection with the administration of Lands, Forests and Mines. Sir William might have heard a great deal had he been willing to listen, and it has been in the public mind for a long time that a politician too innocent to know what is going on in his own party is scarcely a competent leader in a great province like Ontario. There was a very considerable smoke in the three or four years preceding the last election and subsequent to Sir James Whitney's illness. It should not have taken much shrewdness to suspect the existence of some fire. At all events the public were past the suspicion stage and rendered their verdict last October. Other verdicts are under consideration.

The Sport of Kings

Horse-racing has been described as the sport of kings, and so have several other forms of sport. If there be any more royal sport than yacht-racing it is not generally practised. Certainly such yachting as has taken place since 1851 in competition for the "America" Cup" is altogether of the sterling sovereign description. When it was won by the United States yacht "America" in 1851 it was as the result of an entirely new principle in yacht-building being pitted against the old. The skim-dish idea came in in 1846 when the first race was won by such a vessel with a centre-board. The first yacht race ever sailed wis in 1662, when Charles II. had a yacht, the "Jamie," of 25 tons, built at Lambeth, and matched it against a Dutch yacht under the Duke of York, winning the race from Greenwich to Gravesend and back, and steering himself part of the time. It was after the 1846 race that J. C. Stevens commissioned George Steers of New York to build a racing schooner to go to England. Steers built the "America" of 170 tons. She crossed the Atlantic, but declined to compete against the other yachts at Cowes for the Queen's Cup, on account of refusing to concede the time allowance due to the smaller yachts. The Yacht Squadron was made up of good sports and they decided to give the visitor a race without any time allowance. The course was round the Isle of Wight. The "America" competed against fifteen other vessels, three of the best meeting with accidents and the "America" won 18 minutes ahead of the 47-ton cutter "Aurora," but with two minutes to spare even with a time allowance. It is this cup which is now competed for under certain conditions, the chief being that the boat must be built in the country of the challenging club, and must proceed under sail on her own bottom to the scene of the contest. In 1887 the "Thistle" was the last boat built in Britain to represent a type differing from the American yachts. "Thistle" was defeated by "Volunteer," a lighter American type. Many still believe that Lord Dunraven's yacht, "Valkyrie III.," would have won the challenge race in 1895 had she been given a sporting chance. Considerable feeling existed until 1899, when Sir Thomas Lipton tried with "Shamrock I." This boat and her successors in 1901 and 1903 were beaten and it was only in the war year that Sir Thomas brought "Shamrock IV." across the ocean to lie by while the world was made safe for yacht-racing again.

There isn't a STORE in this town that is built merely to CATCH TRADE!

Every store in OUR TOWN is built and conducted to DESERVE trade.

There isn't a BUSINESS man here who doesn't DEPEND upon the people in this town and surrounding territory for all—or most—of his INCOME.

And it is the AIM and STEADFAST PURPOSE of these men to SERVE you faithfully and thereby strengthen the commercial and moral position of OUR TOWN.

This town of ours is a NATURAL shopping and business center for all this prosperous region.

The selections possible in all kinds of MERCHANDISE and all kinds of TRADING SERVICE are as great here as any place in the land—and the PRICES more often are LOWER—because they have never been INFLATED.

This TOWN and its MERCHANTS wish to know all of you BETTER. You ought to know THEM better.

This is possible when WE all do ALL of our TRADING AT HOME. Then it is mutual SERVICE.

Foolish Francesca

By Olive Wadsley

(Continued from last week.)

Some men had their wives with them, rather pale, tired-looking women, with a certain veiled happiness in their eyes; women going back to their children, women going "home" at last. Francesca was the only young girl.

She sat at the table below Wynton, beside Mr. Salter, whose method of eating soup repelled her.

She looked from time to time at the big captain's table longingly. Everyone there seemed so gay and happy. Mrs. Willson, the C. O.'s wife, the woman with the beautiful hands and the jeweled rings, seemed to make all the young, burnt-looking men laugh whenever she spoke.

She had, Francesca noticed, hair that shone, hair that looked tremendously well brushed, and she was wearing a quite plain black chiffon frock. She was pale and her nose was long; but she had beautiful teeth, and a drawling, attractive voice.

Francesca wished again that Paul's regiment had been decent to them; but it had only called once, and once again. She supposed it was because they had always been so beastly poor.

As a matter of fact, the colonel's wife had determined after Paul's death to "take Francesca up" a little; but she had been ill, and had been obliged to go to the hills, and afterward she had forgotten.

"Who is the little girl with the curls and the funny, grown-up dress?" Mrs. Willson asked Wynton.

"Queer-looking little kid," he said lightly. "Haven't an idea, Mrs. Willson. Look here, you will sing after dinner, won't you? I've been longing, waiting for the moment ever since I knew Colonel Willson was going back in command."

"Perjurer and flatterer," she laughed.

Wynton looked at her with an expression of pained distress.

"It's quite true," he said. "You know perfectly well how I love music."

"Ah, yes! So you do. It's one of your few and stable virtues, isn't it?"

He strove to maintain the hurt expression, and failed. They both laughed.

"What a dear Christopher Wynton is?" Mrs. Willson said to her husband.

"So every woman thinks," he retorted, smiling at her. "His nickname is The Invincible, I believe."

Anne Willson wrinkled her brow a little.

"It's a pity," she said; "a pity, I mean, that he has let himself become simply that; he might be so much more."

"Nailing god at his job; got his D. S. O. last year," her husband grunted.

She kissed the top of his head and went off to the music room.

Wynton was waiting for her, standing by the piano. He played her accompaniments—played them exquisitely. Outside, entranced, caught up in ecstacy, Francesca stood in the darkness, listening.

Wynton nearly fell over her when he came quickly out to go and fetch some music from his cabin. He held out his hand to steady her, apologizing pleasantly for his clumsiness.

"Oh, it was divine, the music," Francesca said breathlessly. "I loved it."

Her odd voice, her eager eyes and parted lips held his attention.

Mrs. Willson had begun to sing again; he was in no violent hurry.

He leaned up against a pillar and, taking out his case, lit a cigarette

"So you love music?" he queried.

"Love it!" she said. "Phrynette used to say I love it more than I loved brother Paul."

"Phrynette!" Wynton exclaimed. "What a pretty name! Was Miss—er—Phrynette your sister?"

"In-law. Paul married her out in Burma. She is quite lovely, all pink and white and gold. She's going to marry a rotter, though, a man called De Vlan. He is rather dark and oiled; you know the sort, I expect."

"I've seen it getting about," he said briefly. "But I thought you said your brother——"

"Paul died six months ago. He got cholera snipe shooting in the Ohilhahav marshes. He was an awful dear."

"And you are going home after a long visit, I suppose?"

Francesca laughed.

"Why, I've lived in India ever since I was eight years old, since my mother died. Paul had me fetched from school. We used to live in Paris, and I came here and we never went home, because we were hard up generally, and Phrynette never wanted to."

"Oh, I see. I suppose you will have to live with some of your people, though."

She laughed again.

"A second bad guess! I'm going back to England to work. Phrynette couldn't possibly keep me, you see, under existing circs; it would have been so uncomfortable for her, wouldn't it? And I have always longed to work, earn my own living."

Wynton stared at her amazedly.

She looked a child, her gestures, her manner were both of that sans gene order which belongs to extreme youth. She looked so very young. He felt puzzled.

"I say, I must be going," Francesca broke in regretfully. "I am sorry, but I must. Shall I see you to-morrow?"

Wynton smiled.

"Oh, we'll hope so," he said lightly. "I take quite an interest in this forthcoming adventurous career."

"Sans adieu, then," she said, holding out her thin little hand.

He took it.

"I don't even know your name."

"Francesca Trent — Frankie for short."

"Does that mean permission?"

It was she who was puzzled.

"Permission?"

"To relegate an Italian mortal to a gay and cheery little 'Frankie?'"

"Oh, I see! Of course. Every one calls me Frankie. Pourquoi pas?"

He watched her run lightly up the long deck, then turning, went in search of his music.

He looked back once to see Frankie waving gaily.

"Pourquoi pas?" he murmured again.

CHAPTER III.

The Moth and the Flame.

It is often the most paltry, insignificant trifles which precipitate an avalanche of destiny. Samson's short hair, Cleopatra's preference for figs, truly trivial details both, convulsed, each in its degree, their surrounding words!

Francesca's small and wholly unimportant sphere was whirled from its center by one of the most prosaic influences—seasickness.

She was not seasick, and every one else, every one anyway who would have mattered in her small affair, was ill; and Wynton, whose health was magnificent, and she had the decks almost entirely to themselves.

The long, smooth-rolling underground smell lasted a week, and every sunlit day and exotic purple night Francesca and Wynton laughed, and played, and walked together. Mrs. Salter, plain to a degree, and lamentably limp and given to tears, asked, "What do you do, dear, all day?" and dissolved into the self-pitiful groans of the really seasick before an answer had been given.

(To Be Continued.)

A Ouija Board Theory

A. J. Lorraine advances the view in the Popular Science Monthly that the ouija board is operated by the "subconscious mind." But this is only a name for something which is not defined nor described, and if it be suggested that each person has a subconscious mind of his own it does not cover the fact that the ouija board sometimes reveals facts not known to and never before known to any of those present. The ancients and the easterns have a theory which covers all that the subconscious mind theory covers, and a great deal more beside. They say that man possesses a phychic body, which is the term St. Paul applies to it, as well as a physical body, and also a mental body. The psychic body is always more or less in touch with what the ancients called the Demiurgos, or what Mr. Lorraine might call the "subconscious mind" of Nature. Animals and other living creatures follow instinct because their psychic body is always in touch with this subtle medium of nature. In certain people this relation is more developed than in others and as the psychic body or "subconscious mind" of nature holds a record of everything that has ever happened these people can gain access to such records and may reproduce them through ouija boards, by automatic writing, or in other ways. It is a reversion, however, to the methods of the lower animal consciousness. By his mental body man may come in touch with the real mind or "mens" of nature, which is practically omniscient, but for this a singular purity and selflessness of character are necessary. This mental body is called in Greek the soma pneumatikon. The human race is now in process of developing this vehicle of consciousness.

The South African government employs a veterinary surgeon to study the diseases of ostriches.

THE BRAIN BOX

By E. Gunn-Ramsay

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

A simple old motto, seen, often with pathetic inference, upon the walls of the humblest of dwellings, and again in residences that lack nothing of comfort or ease.

It is a motto shared universally by rich and poor, the feeling of contentment and pride in "home."

"Home." To every race and individual, this simple word conjures up a different vision. To Canadian and British boys fighting in France, the somewhat unpicturesque name of "blighty" brought to them visions of "home."

Occasionally they would get annoyed at the word, as heard upon the lips of some bumptious fellow recruit whose homeland differed from theirs. 'He seems to think his country's the only place on earth" was their inward comment, as the stranger boasted of the wonders of his home town and the clever things done by his fellow countrymen.

It reminded them a little too forcibly of the little emigrant families who would insist year after year upon doing things in the same old way with the insistance that "we always did it this way at home."

"There's No Place Like Home."

How it comes up time after time in every one of us, even the best, even the worst, the things that my mother can do, or the things that "we used to do at home" or "you should see the things they make where I came from." Ah! deep down in our hearts, every one of us have that kind of feeling that there really is no other place can just beat "home."

Funny, isn't it, and yet true. The variest scoundrel of a man will yet retain this sneaking regard for the tender associations of his boyhood days. Why? Because, after all, he feels it was "home" that made him, home that gave him the best vision of life, even though he has since fallen short of it. Yet, with all our regard for the home of the family, the home where we were brought up, how little after all of true pride we have in Canada to-day, for the home which expresses our country, the "home" of our nation's life.

When you come to think of it, it was this motto, "there's no place like home" which made Germany so strong, and which gave her the power and the tremendous force she had. How did Germany mass together her thousands of workers in all parts of the world who, by their schemes and plots, their clever plans and intrigues, were all working to encompass the downfall of the Allies? It was done through their pride in the homeland.

To them no other place could compare for a moment with Germany. The evidence of their pride was scattered broadcast throughout every country where German goods were sold. "Made in Germany."

They intended to impress upon the world at large that there was nothing half as good made anywhere else as the things that were made in their national home—Germany.

In the United States to-day, we see the Americans pointing with pride to their own productions. Pride of "home," pride of nation, pride of position is strong in America to-day.

Where does Canada come in?

Are Canadians singing still "There's no place like home"? Last week a man got up in public to say that the United States were getting some of the pick of Canada's young men and women. They were offered big money to go into the States to work for American concerns, and the speaker pointed out the moral that Canadians must learn to appreciate their own genius to a greater extent than now, if they do not mean to allow other countries to take our best.

If you must look at people's faults shut your eyes.

It's easy to convince spinsters that kissing is unhealthy.

Sea anemones will exist on water nourishment for four years.

Potatoes in Greenland do not grow larger than an ordinary marble.

About 1865 the first steam launch appeared on the Upper Thames.

In Vienna there is a cafe which has been open day and night for 150 years.

If a man tells a woman she is beautiful she will overlook most of his other lies.

A bachelor is given fair warning when a girl shows him a photograph of herself when a baby.

No matter how high the cost of living goes, a wife can make her husband feel as cheap as ever.

Eggs of different species of birds greatly differ in shape, but the yolks are invariably spherical.

In Poland the Russian language is obligatory, and it is a penal offense to speak Polish in any public resort.

Bagdad is famous for its breed of white asses. Their ears and tails are sometimes colored a bright red.

Some of the finest lace in the world is made by the women of the Philippine Islands from a strong, silky fibre obtained from pineapple leaves.

Twenty-five years ago Argentina had to import its flour. Today it sells wheat to the world, the value of the annual harvest amounting to more than $500,000,000.

At a depth of two thousand fathoms under the sea the pressure of water is two tons to the square inch, and the temperature is only just above freezing point.