CURRENT COMMENT

THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

December's issue of the Round Table maintains the high standard this periodical has set, and in placing before its readers the best available advices concerning the affairs of the Empire, and of the world as touching the Empire, does an absolutely essential work without undue bias or partisanship. The Round Table does of course support the British connection, but it does so with moderation and judgment. It accepts Mr. Duncan Hall's "main conclusion that some further mechanism for co-operation is necessary to keep the peoples of the British Commonwealth a united force in international politics." It gives its reasons—"that the continued unity of the British Commonwealth of nations is necessary to the freedom of its peoples and to the progress of mankind," and that, because it is the freest and most responsible Commonwealth in the world it "arouses the hostility and jealousy of less advanced civilizations, and has the duty of helping to protect and educate in the arts of self-government those backward peoples who are not yet capable of standing alone." It is this very attitude however like that of Joseph which annoyed his brethren that leads the "backward peoples" to say, "Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" It is difficult for the other nations to believe in the disinterestedness of the British Commonwealth as the Round Table expands their policy. The only answer to this objection is the demonstration of absolute disinterestedness which would be necessary to convince these critics, and it must be confessed there is a serious difficulty here to be met. The second article is on "The Passing of Woodrow Wilson" for whom it foresees posthumous fame." Woodrow Wilson has been an austere First Citizen, but no more austere than Washington. He has been an obstinate executive, but no more obstinate than Lincoln. Like them, he has been reviled. Like them, he has been charged with treason in office. Like them, he has been a supremely lonely man." Of his successor it says: "The Senator is a man fifty-five years old, of mediocre ability, of limited vision, of no experience in large affairs, and of a reactionary turn of mind. He has apparently no grasp whatever of economic problems. He has shown no social sense except of a paternalistic kind. He has given no indication that he understands the infinite complexity of foreign affairs, or that he has any knowledge of the obscure sources of war. He is a kindly dignified gentleman, 'with a faculty of bringing men together.' All the Conservative influences in the country are put on horseback by his election, and he himself would have it so." Those who wish to understand Egypt, international finance, the Anglo-Japanese alliance and the problems of the United Kingdom, India, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand cannot ignore these perspicacious and perspicuous pages.

THE MENACE OF 1921.

In this present year of 1921 we are likely to experience the full force of the reaction after the war in social ebullition and agitation. The tremor of violence which still shakes humanity as the result of the German outbreak of 1914 has found its last responsive vibration in the opposite pole of autocracy among the anarchic, the desperate, the criminal. Lenine in Russia is the Lucifer of this inferno, and whatever idealism or alleged philanthropy he or his followers profess his actions work out to exactly the same results as the fine phrases and "kultur" of Wilhelm II. The tendency has been to ignore Lenine or to find in him the possibility of great human and social achievements. In three years he has wrought a worse desolation in Russia than Wilhelm did in France in four. What is not understood is that these forces which work through human agents are just as recognizable as magnetism or electricity. They are evil as plague, pestilence and famine are evil. They are regarded as scourges, but man himself is responsible for their existence. They are born of ignorance, selfishness and greed, and man himself must counteract and neutralize them by enlightenment, wisdom, unselfishness and kindness. The evil forces are no more welcome under Lenine than under Wilhelm, but many are deluded and persuaded into following the autocracy under the guise of the lower which they rejected under the guise of the upper class leadership. Ith ought to be a sufficient warning to the world in general that the first thing that Lenine's followers do is to kill all the educated and intelligent people in their community. This insurrection against the sanity and sense of a nation is a clear indication of the lunacy of the leadership which Bolshevism honors. It is characteristic of lunacy that every lunatic thinks all the rest of the world mad. Lenine is determined that the whole world shall be infected with the Russian lunacy. His agents are at work in every country and there are enough foolish people everywhere to give them a large following. Revolt and rebellion are advocated and in our close-packed civilization it is each to sow the mind and prepare the harvest of the whirl-wind. General Hoffman, who sent Lenine into Russia as a means of breaking down Russian resistance to Germany, now confesses that he had underated Lenine's power for evil and "neither knew nor foresaw the danger to humanity from the consequences of this journey of Bolshevism to Russia." The danger now is imminent and must be faced and overthrown this year if the world is not to be plunged into a chaos of violence and barbarism. Lenine is quite frankly pushing his policy of overthrowing every "bourgeois" government, and of using the same governments where he can to advance his aims. In Egypt, in Turkey, in Mesopotamia, in Persia, in India, as well as in the western nations, not omitting the United States and Canada, this subtle and destructive propaganda is being established and everywhere the ignorant and the inexperienced are being lured into antagonism agaist the better informed and the initiated. Lenine cannot expect to carry on for another year without some reinforcement of his authority, so that it is reasonable to expect this year such an effort on the part of Bolshevism as will summon all the forces of law and order in Christendom to withstand.

FINANCIAL CONFERENCE ADVICE.

It is perhaps less widely known than it ought to be that the International Financial Conference at Brussels three months ago was emphatically a peace conference, and used the strongest argument against war that finance knows—the world cannot afford it. "The statements presented to the conference show that, on an average, some 20 per cent. of the national expenditure is still being devoted to the maintenance of armaments and to preparations for war. The conference desires to affirm with the utmost emphasis that the world cannot afford this expenditure." Next is recommended the earliest possible abandonment of all "uneconomical and artificial measures which conceal from the people the true economic situation." Production to the limit, both on the part of capital and of labor, was insisted on and a willing acceptance especially by the wealthy, of "the charges necessary to remedy the present situation." After this came "the duty of every patriotic citizen to practice the strictest possible economy," such private action being "the indispensable basis for the fiscal measures required to restore public finances." The last recommendation was to the "States which have been created or enlarged as the results of the war," which practically includes all the Allies and those in the League of Nations, that they "should at once re-establish full and friendly co-operation and arrange for the unrestricted interchange of commodities in order that the essential unity of European economic life may not be impaired by the erection of artificial economic barriers." Among other points noted are that in future "loans that are required for urgent capital purposes must be met out of the real savings of the people;" the first step to raising fresh money must be to fund the undigested floating obligations; inflation is in fact an unscientific and ill-adjusted method of taration; the effect being to intensify the rise in prices; the conference did not recommend any attempt to stabilize the value of gold "and gravely doubts whether any such attempt could succeed;" central banks of issue should be established where none exist; credits, except for considerations of humanity, should not be accorded by governments directly, but credit is widely needed and for extended terms, between countries prepared to co-operate. It would appear that if people worked as hard in peace as they did during war we shou'd have plenty of everything, but it is necessary to work as hard for production as it was for destruction. A pamphlet containing the Report and Resolutions of the Conference has been published by the League of Nation's Union and may be had from Hodder & Stoughton. It is essential that the people everywhere, if they do not want civilization to come to ruin should study the report and learn to cut out the war stuff, face the facts, trade together with the least possible restrictions. Thirty-nine nations were represented in the conference, the Canadians being Messrs. G. C. Cassells, J. M. Gundy and Hugh Guthrie.

FIUME FREE OF THE POET.

Gabriele D'Annunzio has made enough trouble for Italy and South Eastern Europe to rank him with the idot who burned the temple of Ephesus. He appeared to be inspired by an Anthony Hope novel or a comic opera plot, and he has sacrificed enough blood and treasure to save the lives of the starving children of Austria and Hungary. His romantic idea of delivering Fiume appears to have been based on a misapprehension, and the people of Fiume were well considered in the work like blazes, pay taxes honestly, especially the wealthy, save like Hetty Green, and that the nation's arrangements made for them and except for a few were quite satisfied to fall in with the plans proposed. The May or the city after the surrender to General Caviglia, supplanted D'Annunzio in the negotiations and it is to be hoped that all parties will remain satisfied. An open door and free entry to the port wth a guarantee against disturbance should be sufficiently satisfactory terms for any city which flourishes chiefly on its trancient trade, both of imports and exports. As the gateways of the states in its hinterland it is important that no barrier should retard their access to the sea, and this point has been met.

SHORT NEWS ITEMS

William J. Vale, Deputy Superintendent of Insurance and Registrar of Friendly Societies for the Ontario Government, passed away at his home, Toronto. The late Mr. Vale was in his 71st year and was shortly to have retired upon superannuation under the Act of last session. His death was due to heart trouble, from which he had been suffering for some time.

The United States has opened negotiations with Great Britain and France for immediate payment of interest on the $9,500,000,000 loans made to those countries during the war. As yet, however, the negotiations have met with little success.

The Chatham Chamber of Commerce is complaining to the Government of a certain number of immigrants who come to the country as farm laborers and who after working a couple of weeks on the farm finally drift to the cities to take positions in factories. While believing in the policy of encouraging the immigration of farm laborers, the Chamber is opposed to further congesting the industrial centres.

D. J. McKeown, one of North Bay's oldest and best known residents was found dead in his office in the McKeown block.

B. E. Paterson, Director of Lands and Loans of the Soldier Settlement Board, has relinquished that position and will return to private life. He will reside in Victoria.

A signal honor has come to Miss Mary Logan Cowan, of the Department of Pathology, University of Toronto, in the award to her of a Beit Memorial Fellowship of the annual value of £400, tenable for three years. The award of this fellowship means that Miss Cowan will engage in medical research in the Lister Institute for Preventive Medicine in London, England. She leaves for England early in the New Year.

Miss Cowan was born in Seaforth, Ontario, and was educated in the public school and the Collegiate Institute of that town. She graduated in Arts at the University of Toronto in 1916, taking first-class honors in physiology and bio-chemistry. In 1919, she graduated in medicine and was appointed fellow in bacteriology for the session of 1919-20. This session she has held a special research fellowship in the Department of Pathology.

Provincial Gas Commissioner E. S. Estlin stated that the recent cold weather had made it necessary to issue an order on the gas companies prohibiting the use of gas for heating public buildings, including railway premises, churches, halls or rooms used for school purposes, theatres, etc. All industrial interests will be suspended if the pressure drops to a point where domestic cooking is interfered with.

Postmaster Lemon estimated that 3,000,000 letters have been mailed in Toronto over Christmas.

Managers of Toronto poolrooms report that the police raid last week has rid their rooms of an undesirable element who used to congregate in them.

William J. Reynolds, foreman in the news room of the Brockville Recorder and Times has completed 47 years in the service of that newspaper. He joined the newspaper in 1873 when it was under the direction of Colonel David Wylie, and has remained with it continuously, his record being eclipsed by that of few printers in the Province.

While announcing himself a candidate for re-election to the Streetsville Council, Henry W. Cook dropped dead at the public meeting following nominations in the Town Hall. He spoke for a few minutes only, when, without warning, he collapsed.

Justice Middleton delivered judgment whereby Rev. J. O. L. Spracklin, special license officer, must pay Oscar E. Fleming, barrister, of Windsor, $500 damages for wrongful entry, and Stanley M. Hallam and William H. Hallam, who accompanied Spracklin, have damages of $50 each given against them. Moreover, his Lordship holds that a "boat" is not a "vehicle upon the public highway," to use the phrase of the O. T. A., which ruling may have notable consequences on the Windsor frontier.

According to the statement just made public by the Canadian Pacific Railway, earnings for November showed an increase of $1,223,201, or about 43 per cent. over those for the corresponding period a year ago, $4,073,010, an excellent showing in the light of the poor showing made earlier in the year. Last month the the company's net profits followed a gain in October, when net earnings showed an increase of $2,353,040, or 44 per cent.

The select committee on salaries of members of Parliament have reported against any increase on the present allowance of £400 a year, but recommends that members be granted first-class transportation and free postage.

Brompton Pulp & Paper Company's earnings for the past year are equal to $9.57 per share of new stock and are equivalent to an increase over the business done a year ago of 70 per cent. In the statement made public the company's American subsidiaries' earnings have not been included, but it is stated that they are about equal to those of the parent company.

Miss Ellen Clemont and Andrew White, pupils of the fourth and third classes in Milton public school have each been awarded a gold medal by the Provincial Fire Marshal for their prize essays on "Fire Prevention in Home and Factory."

A confidential report regarding the reorganization of the Post Office Department has been placed in the hands of the sub-committee of the Cabinet by Griffenhagen and Associates Limited. If this report is adopted, it is unofficially learned, it will mean the dismissal of 300 employees in Ottawa and a thorough overhauling of the department. The claim is made in the report, it is stated, that the expenses of the department can be reduced $300,000 annually. The report is not likely to be made public until the coming session of parliament. Griffenhagen and Associates, Limited, have been working for some months on the Post Office Department, evolving a scheme of reorganization. Some time ago this firm undertook the reorganization of the Printing Bureau, which led to the dismissal of over 200 employees in that institution.

Doctors will have to cut down on liquor prescriptions.

The Ontario board of license commissioners has sent out two letters notifying all the medical practitioners in the province to take heed.

The first letter stated that hereafter 100 will be the upward limit of prescriptions per month to be issued, and anything more than this number will be subject to serious question.

This warning was supplemented by a second letter stating that, while 100 is the upward limit, the issue of 50 per month will be regarded as high, and that 25 per month will be deemed a fair average.

J. Bernard Dyllyn (Edwin Dunn), widely known years ago as a baritone singer on the variety stage and the first acter to popularize the song "After the Ball," was found dead from asphyxiation in his home in New York.

A call to the George Robinson Memorial Methodist church in London has been accepted by Rev. Wm. L. Hiles of Highgate, subject to the approval of the stationing committee of the conference.

WHERE THE HORSE COMES IN.

The stage coach gave way to the railway, and the sailing ship to the steamer. Thinking along the same lines, many people prophesy that the horse will give way to the motor, and become extinct. More careful investigation of the facts goes to show that this is a fallacy. For fast road travel the car is certainly more efficient than horse traction, but for farm work it would seem that the horse can at least hold his own. Next to man himself the horse is the most efficient power unit in existence. Wherever power is needed to move loads across fields or through country lanes, there inevitably come moments when the power required to move the load becomes twice or three times the normal. The wheels dip into a mud hole or get up against a rock. In such a case the motor is stalled, but the horse is not. The horse can, at a pinch and for a short period, exert a pull three to four times greater than the usual. Also a horse lasts longer than a motor. The life of the average farm tractor is not more than three to four years. A horse begins work at three years and is good for nine or ten years of useful toil. And another point in his favor is that there is no heavy bill for repairs. Still another point which is worth the farmer's consideration is the horse"s contribution to the fertility of the fields. A draft horse produces several tons of manure annually, a motor none at all.

Zora Mehmed, of Constantinople, who at the age of 145 used to tell reporters that he felt younger every day, is ill. Zora is now 146, and is suffering from indigestion. He blames it on a cheap set of false teeth he bought twenty years ago.

Public Health Talks

(By Dr. J. J. Middleton)

Provincial Board of Health.

Questions Pertaining to Medical Subjects Will Be Answered in This Paper if Letters Are Sent to Dr. J. J. Middleton, Parliament Buildings, Toronto.

Mentally defective people in large numbers are roaming at large throughout the Province, spreading disease and reproducing their own defective kind. Abundant proof of the seriousness of this situation has been obtained in Toronto and other cities by social service workers who are making extensive investigations along the lines of mental hygiene.

Heredity undoubtedly plays a big part in this condition of defective mentality, for although there are exceptions, it is nature's habit to reproduce in kind. How then can this state of affairs be rectified? A scheme based on Medical Examination to prevent mentally defective people from getting married, is being thought out, but this would only deal in part with the problem as the question of illegitimacy has to be considered. Many of the illegitimate children born have mothers who are distinctly below the par of average mental capacity, as social service workers find out in dealing with such cases. This, no doubt, applies also to many of the fathers of such children, and a tremendous task thus confronts those who are endeavoring to improve the condition of humanity both mentally and physically.

Can Be Improved.

One point, however, that should be emphasized is that whatever part heredity plays in the child's mental condition at birth, its mentality no less than its physical make-up, can be improved by scientific care and feeding during the early months and years of its life. The human brain develops very rapidly in infancy and childhood, much more rapidly than the body, and hence the urgent need for sufficient nourishment of the right kind, during this critical stage of human life. At five years of age, about the time when a child begins to go to school its brain capacity has to a certain extent already been determined. From this one can readily see how important is a scheme of child welfare that will include the supervision of infant feeding from the time the child is born, and so counteract in some degree any defects of heredity.

School children with low mentality are a great hindrance to those who are normal. Not only do their habits and actions tend to lower the morale of other children, but the class work is hindered by the co-mingling of the two grades of intellect. There should be in every school district a special class for mental defectives who could be delt with separately by a teacher specially trained in mental hygiene. These children would include those who are dull or slow-witted, those thievishly inclined, those always getting into mischief which seems to take them unawares. The classes of school children might indeed be further graded by scientific methods, and progress noted as the result of special training.

More Variety Needed.

For children of school age and older, there is not at present a sufficient number of variety of institutions to accommodate the cases varying from mental defects to imbecility. For imbeciles and definitely feeble-minded there is provision made—public opinion has recognized the necessity for it, but for the higher grade of mental defectives who in many respects are bright and seemingly intelligent, nothing has been done. And yet this class of people is almost as definite a menace to the community as is the criminal. The Toronto Psychiatric Clinic, conducted by a group of physicians, psychologists, and a certain association which takes a scientific interest in mental abnormalities, is being conducted at present in the out-patient's wing of the Toronto General Hospital. The cases come from the Public schools, the Juvenile Courts, Industrial Homes and various other institutions throughout the city, and provide excellent clinical material. But this only touches the fringe of what is to be done. The problem is Province-wide, indeed it is a national and international problem. Science can go so far, but public opinion must be awakened to come to the support of science before very great advances can be made. Besides, the problem will have to be approached from the preventive as well as the curative aspect, and many difficulties will have to be surmounted.

THE ROUND TABLE

"WHERE WE MAKE FRIENDS OF BOOKS."

"The Man With the Lamp." Published by J. M. Dent & Sons.

Among the Christmas gift books mentioned briefly in this column was "The Man With the Lamp," by Janet Laing. You will remember I said then it was worth a longer review than that given it when space was precious. It is a very unusual book, dedicated to the "True, the Beautiful, the Good among the Accused," paints the tragedy of the German who has remained a human being, who sees the deeds of his country as all other human beings see them, yet who finds himself bound by the loyalty to which he has been born and bred and by the memory of the older Germany of the poets and musicians. Granting, as many people will, perhaps, be unwilling to grant, even for the sake of argument, the possible existence of such Germans, it is clear that here is a new theme of unlimited possibilities for ambitious authors. Such was the theme of "Friendly Enemies," and such will be the theme of endless volumes yet unwritten.

"The Man With the Lamp" is an able handling of this theme by an author with a keen and kindly eye for human nature and a gift of gentle satire. We meet the German before the war as a finely sensitive lad with a genius for music, educated in England and traveling in Scotland with an English tutor, who is himself an eccentric genius bent on investigating the mysteries of the subconscious mind. We meet him again four years later cast ashore from a wrecked submarine at that very point of the Scotch coast, Rathness, where he had previously journeyed with his tutor on a holiday.

At this point, the thread of his story joins the other thread of vital interest in the book, the story of the delightful Mrs. Abercrombie whose character and experiences in wartime England are among the best of the author's present achievements. Middle-aged, charming, and infinitely capable, Mrs. Abercrombie takes an active and wise and often amusing hand in the affairs of every soul in trouble—a contract certain to include, from time to time, every person she ever meets. At the moment, she on her way to assume charge of the psychic tutor, too deeply absorbed in psychic phenomena to heed such material needs as dinner and thereby causing sore distress to his good Scotch landlady at Wood End.

Generously refusing to know more of the stranger at her gates than that he is penniless, in trouble, and trying to find his old tutor, she takes him with her to Wood End, whither the tutor has retired to pursue his studies in a peace not to be interrupted by such humdrum things as meals. Here the complications begin, and here the tragedy takes place—no banal tragedy of betrayal of friendship, but the tragedy of the German's own soul, which is tragedy to the end, unmarred by the happy ending which critics decry and readers adore.

Tragedy though it is, however, the tragic olement is counterbalanced by so much that it human and normal and even humorous, that the final impression of the book can hardly be tragedy, however deeply we may feel the cruelty of a hard fate undeserved by the person on whom it falls. There is the engaging episode of Old Ellen and Young Ellen, who is "no' so young herself," and Young Ellen's suitors, all deftly sketched and all convincingly and entertaingly Scotch. Mrs. Abercrombie herself, for all her generous kindness of heart, is no less the mark for certain delicate shafts of satire. The story moves rapidly and carries the reader with it—not, perhaps, to great heights or unknown depths, but along a pleasant highroad "where the race of men go by."

ELINOR MURRAY.

THE ORACLE SPEAKS, NEW YEAR'S PROPHECY

MEDIUM "REVEALS" THE FUTURE OF WORLD AFTER CONSULTING STARS.

Serious political and labor troubles, with President Wilson's life endangered, are part of America's fortune for 1921. Madame De Teleme "revealed" at Paris recently.

Madame De Teleme, successor to the prescient Madame De Thebes, after long study of the stars, predicted today what is in store for the world next year. The fates have mixed bitter medicines for most of the nations, she said. She found these things in sight:

England—Series economic and social difficulties.

Belgium—International worries.

Italy—A revoluntary attempt.

Spain—A most troubled industrial situation.

Portugal—A revolution.

Turkey—Dismemberment.

Russia—Increased disorder with the prospect [illegible] imperilled and Lenine's life endangered.

France—Further division of the Several parties; difficulties over labor and religious questions. In the spring will come an improvement of financial and commercial conditions and a decrease in the number of divorces. A change of Government will come during the summer and possibly a rupture of the alliances now existant, which will seriously embarass the country for a time. In the fall there will be grave financial difficulties with a menace of bankruptcy and a statesman's life in danger.

MILLIONAIRE WHO CAN'T WRITE.

Possessing a fortune which acculates at the rate of $2,000 a day, Jackson Barnett, a Red Indian, cannot even sign his name. Some years ago the U. S. Government presented him with 160 acres of land to cultivate. He lived on this allotment until oil was discovered on it, since when his bank balance has grown rapidly. In seven years this land has yielded 14,000,000 barrels of oil. He is now a millionaire, but he cannot draw a cheque because he is a ward of the Government. He can express a wish to spend money in a certain way and on certain things, but he has to get the approval of his guardian. This guardian is a business man, specially appointed to attend to Jackson's affairs, and it is he who signs the cheques—if he approves. Jackson is very religious, unmarried, and lives quietly.