CURRENT COMMENT

LORD READING'S TASK IN INDIA.

Lord Reading's appointment as Viceroy of India has been announced, and as has already been remarked, it indicates the consciousness in Downing Street of the need for the ablest man possible for the position. Lord Reading's religion has been commented on in connection with his office, but there is no reason why a Jew should not, and many reasons why a Jew should be more acceptable in India than a Christian. People who raise such a question are probably thinking more of themselves and their own opinions than of the people of India. If conciliation and diplomacy can accomplish anything Lord Reading may be trusted to do it. The situation is complex and difficult, and will be aggravated in the spring by the determination of the Bolshevists to march on Paris. The west has sowed the wind and is about to reap the whirlwind. The unfortunate thing is that the west does not recognize its own seed-sowing, the materialistic science, philosophy and religion which under the guise of civilization the west has imported into the east. Japan, materialistic at heart, responded at once, and is imbued with the lex talionis. India, more spiritual in temperament and character, has been less open to these influences. But our literature and our economies have had their effect, and here is what M. K. Gandhi, the leader of the present revolt moveme t in India, known as non-cooperation has to say of England and her policy in the east: "Exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of Great Britain. An ever-increasing military expenditure, and a civil service the most expensive in the world. Extravagant working of every department in utter disregard of India's poverty. Disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation lest an armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst. Traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for the purpose of sustaining a top-heavy administration. Progressively repressive legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation seeking to give expression to a nation's agony. Degrading treatment of Indians residing in your Dominions and you have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Mussulman sentiment." This indictment is taken from an open letter "to every Englishman in India." Gandhi has hitherto been a supporter of the British Raj and fought in the Boer war, during the Zulu revolt in Natal, at the beginning of the great war, and later in the recruiting campaign in the Kaira district, from the effects of which he nearly died. The Amritsar massacre changed his view and the facts in this affair do not appear ever to have been fully appreciated. Lord Reading has a great task entrusted to him.

PIONEER WOMEN DOCTORS.

Dr. Stephen Smith, the venerable dean of American surgery, has at the age of 97 been telling what first interested him in woman's suffrage and the "woman question" in general. It was away back in 1846 or so that Elizabeth Blackwell, having been refused admittance to many medical schools was proposed as a student at Geneva Medical College. Dr. Smith declares that the students at that time were the rowdiest lot of young ruffians he had ever met. A petition had been signed to have the college closed as a public nuisance. The faculty did not want to refuse Miss Blackwell's admittance directly, but decided to put it to a vote of the students, one vote against being sufficient to exclude her. Then they made speeches to the students insisting on the necessity of keeping medicine for men only, and trusted the boys to settle the business. They did, but not as expected. When the vote was called there was a storm of ayes. When the noes were asked one squeaky voice was heard in a corner, and the owner was immediately set on by the gang who persuaded him in a moment or two to vote yes. Dr. Smith says there was a distinct change in the manners of the school from that day. The little Quaker girl changed the howling mob of students into a lot of well-mannered respectful young men. Even the professors were modified. One instructor in anatomy had been accustomed to lard his lectures with spicy Rabelaisian stories, which could not be repeated before ladies. He wrote Miss Blackwell that he would give her separate instruction in one special course but she replied that she had paid her fees and was going to attend the classes and study medicine. This ended the funny stories, but it was the beginning of a brilliant course of lectures. Elizabeth Blackwell was the pioneer in the United States. Emily H. Stowe was the first Canadian woman to take a medical degree and she had to go to the United States to do it. Her daughter, Dr. Augusta Stowe Gullen, was the first Canadian woman to graduate in medicine in Canada. The first woman doctor in England was Dr. Anna Bonus Kingsford, and she had to go to Paris to take her degree which she did with a thesis now published as "The Perfect Way in Diet." A later book of hers, "The Perfect Way," is a fascinating contribution to the study of Greek and Christian mysticism. These pioneers had a hard time at first, but the changes they have accomplished are very marked. Dr. Smith wonders what a whole nation of enlightened women will do when they set their minds to it.

SCIENCE AS SHE IS SYNDICATED.

Some of the popular information being supplied by United States syndicates to the newspapers is about as unreliable and incorrect as it can possibly be. Take this statement about steam for an example- "While we are accustomed to think of water as a liquid, it is in reality a combination of gases which may be separated by the application of heat. In addition, water is constantly vaporating, whether the temperatures be hot or cold, and this 'evaporation' is nothing more than the changing of a portion of the water into the form of a gas which is, of course, invisible." There could scarcely be more errors of fact packed into two sentences. We are quite right in regarding water as a liquid while it is in a fluid state and not frozen solid as ice, or vaporized as steam. Its liquidity has nothing to do with its molecular constitution, but is a question of temparature. Water is a combination of two substances, oxygen and hydrogen, which are gases in their most familiar form but which are really metals when reduced by low temparature to the solid state. It is not true that they can be separated by the application of heat. They can be separated by electrolysis, the action of an electric current passed through water from two poles of an electric battery with copper and zinc plates, when hydrogen is set free at one pole and oxygen at the other in the proportion of two atoms of hydrogen to one of ogygen. Hydrogen has in recent years been accepted as the unit in atomic weight of all chemical substances, and by weight oxygen has been set as 16. But in combination hydrogen shows 1.008 instead of 1. This fraction has been ignored to some extent, but Mrs. Clara Humberstone, of Newtonbrook points out that it is of the greatest importance in the analysis of the various atomic groupings of the elements, and their relation under gravitational strain. "The helium weight squared," she says, "makes 16 the devouring element in oxygen. In the group of 1.008 there are 16 groups of 63 each, and this weight is that of copper. A division of this weight by 9 yields 7, the total of the groups 1, 2, 4, a gravitational grouping, building up the weights of the chemical elements." Mrs. Hemberstone shows that when 1.008 is squared and cubed, the diagonal of the square divided by 100 gives the atomic weight of nitrogen; the long diagonal of the cube so divided gives the weight of phosphorus, and all the elements have a similar geometrical relation to each other, while the "strain" or relation of their attractions is similarly controlled. This however is an inexhaustible digression. Evaporation never changes water into a gas, but into vapor, which is not a gas in any sense, nor is it "of course" that a gas is invisible. Many gases are visible. Fluorine is greenish yellow and chlorine yellowish green in color, and are of course visible. If water changed to gas by evaporation the first flash of lightning would blast the earth with a devouring flame when the hydrogen and oxygen gases recombined to form water. The delicate adjustments of the chemical elements in gases, liquids and solids, in vapor and cloud, at different temperatures and densities, and in all the various combinations, mixtures and compositions that we possess is the most marvellous testimony we have to the designing consciousness in the universe

"FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS."

It will be remembered that one of the last thing Lord Fisher did before his death was to propose that the nations should cancel their debts and mutually absolve each other of the intolerable burden under which the world totters. "All nations," said the old Admiral, "spent their best blood, and only by God's Providence (and not by their own arm) did they win! When each country demands of another repayment in cash for what was spent in this common cause, it has all the aspect of the price of blood, and as if we were setting a valuation on those millions of young souls who sacrificed their loss for Freedom, not for Cash! Can't all these international debts be wiped out? England will lose most! Let her lead! And like that great similitude (written for our example) say to all ('moved with compasion'): 'I forgive thee all thy debt!'" England owes a huge sum to the United States and this sum is owed in turn to England by the allied nations of Europe. Some optimists thought that as the United States did not enter the war till nearly three years after it started, thus not only saving the expense of warfare for that period, but also making fabulous profits out of the munitions supplied to the Allies, she could very well afford to cancel her loans to Britain. It would at once relieve the pressure on the smaller European nations among the Allies. This is not an agitation for repudiation, but the action that is taken when a firm is obviously bankrupt, when no business is being done or likely to be done, and when the best thing to do is to wipe out the bad debts and start fresh. The bankruptcy of Europe is plain to everyone, and the hope of extracting money from the moneyless is vain. There are many in the United States who would object to helping Britain, but the cancellation of the British debt would be merely the cancellation of the debt of France, Belgium and the other allied nations of the continent which had to get credit from England to make their participation in the war possible. England would have no direct benefit, but would have the indirect benefit of having her cross entries marked off. For the rest it is good business to write off one's bad debts as soon as they are recognized. The time spent in trying to collect bad debts can be more profitably spent in developing new business. It is scarcely necessary to add that the suggested cancellation is not regarded with favor in the United States.

The History of Your Name

FRASER.

VARIATIONS — Frazer, Frasier, Frazier.
RACIAL ORIGIN—Norman-French.
SOURCE—A locality.

This is another of the few Highland clan names which, though born by Celtic families, trace hick to an origin in Normandy.

All of these clan names were formed in the same way, by knights and nobles from the army of William the Conqueror, or the sons of such followers, who, either to strengthen the foreign relations of the Conqueror or because they were not satisfied with the spoils of war which fell to their lot in conquered England, sought their fortunes in the north at the court of the Scottish king.

They were, as might be expected, men with reputations as mighty fighters, and as they were independent of blood relationship with the factions around the throne, they were, of course, welcome additions always to the royal Scottish organization.

But the Frasers, like the others, quickly formed alliances by marriage and adapted themselves to the customs of the Gaels upon receiving grants of land in the Highlands, rapidly assumed leadership of existing clans and gathered around them clan organizations which they strove to make more powerful.

The Frasers are found first settled in Tweedale during the reign of Malcolm III. They got their foothold in the Highlands through marriages into families of the Orkneys and Caithness chieftains.

The original Norman form of the name was "de Frisell" or "Frasell," and simply denoted overlordship of a place of that name in Normandy, being a family name only in the sense that it was hereditary because the feudal power wah hereditary and descriptive.

John Hayes, a farm labourer near Bowmanville, a former Barnardo boy, who died following an accident, leaves an estate of $15,000.

THE SPICE BOX

HOT STUFF GLEANED FROM EVERYWHERE.

The man who drinks wood alcohol seems to be that ultimate consumer we have heard so much about lately.
—Calgary Herald.

Elephants pushed several railroad trains out of danger during a fire at Bridgeport, and each jumbo is now proud of his Grand Trunk.
—Montreal Star.

Mary Garden lost her costume for "Aphrodite." Such a little thing to be disturbed about!
—Winnipeg Tribune.

"What do records cost today, lady?" Well, sir, for fifty cents you can have 'Smiles,' for a dollar, 'Kisses,' and for a dollar and a half 'You'd Be Surprised.'"
—O. A. C. Review.

Even a trained athlete has difficulty in heading off his wife at a bargain sale.
—Ottawa Journal.

Under the O. T. A. the doctor fills the prescription and the prescription fills the man.
—Kitchener News-Record.

Dear Beatrice: "How shall I treat a young man who always kisses me on the porch?" Heartless Harry: "What d'ya mean porch?"
—Jack Canuck.

Admiral von Tirpitz calls upon Germans to hang together. Either way you like, Tirp—together or singly.
—Windsor, Border Cities Star.

Customs differ. In Arkansas a mob lynched a negro for killing a policeman. Had the colored gentleman performed this feat in Ireland, he'd probably have been tendered a banquet.
—Winnipeg Tribune.

The proposition is to increase mothers' pensions. Those who now get a pension will get more, and those now getting nothing will get twice or three times as much.
—Toronto Star.

A Toronto publication protests against the free admission of such American magazines as "The Ginger Jar," "The Pepper Can" and "Spice of Life." It seems reasonable that they should be subject to the same duty as cloves and nutmegs.
—Regina Post.

One city merchant announces, "All our trousers forty per cent off." This seems to us to be carrying style to extremes.
—St. John Standard.

When daughter dresses for the party, she always puts off until tomorrow what she should keep on today.
—Kingston Whig.

They say the House of Hapsburg will again assume the Austrian throne. Which prompts some one to remark that what is probably meant is the House of Perhapsburg.
—Ottawa Citizen.

THE ROUND TABLE

"WHERE WE MAKE FRIENDS OF BOOKS."

"The Rose Dawn," by Stewart Edward White. Published by S. B. Gundy.

In this sequel to "Gold" and "The Gray Dawn," the concluding volume of Mr. White's trilogy of California, there is all the charm, scenic coloring and clean-cut delineation of character which distinguished the earlier works. The period, in the eighties of the last century, when the State was in transition from its dim beginning into the glory of its later development—a veritable Rose Dawn is brought boundingly into life in the virile pages of this skillfully made and altogether delightful novel.

In reading we long for those days, with their freshness of enjoyment and keeness of living, and above all their sincerity, in comparison with the feverish activity and pleasures of today. Judging from the last chapter, describing the scene of his story twenty years later, Mr. White regrets also.

The book is written by one who loves to write. We have the leisurely style of the Victorians. The writer goes into byways of description and character drawing, forcing us to his mood. In the art of description he is unusually gifted. His characters are real and varied. The story concerns an old-world gentlemen, generous to a fault and with no business sense, so that his lavish hospitality runs him into debt and he must mortgage his ranch, Corona del Monte. The Corona del Monte grant has been his life work and is a part of him. How he nearly loses it and is saved by Kenneth and Daphne is the stroy.

The plot is not very strong, and though the characters all stand out, and one gets to love the dignified, chivalrous, always gentle, Colonel Peyton and the pretty-long-legged, hard-riding young girl, Daphne Brainerd, and to enjoy the society of the typical Western men who rollick through the smooth recital, their doings tend more to illustrate the life of Californians of that generation rather than to thrill one by the strength of the narrative.

But what of that? The plot is strong enough for five out of six novels of this day, and doubtless it is only in contrast with the wealth of description which makes the Golden State of a bygone period a living, pulsing reality, that the mere story becomes commonplace. It is hard to see how any one can read this latest offering from the gifted author's pen without pleasure that will remain unforgetable.

FARM WORK OF THE MONTH

Old Mr. Ground Hog popped out of his hole February 1 and took a look around. Did the sun shin in your neighborhood?

But, omens to the contrary notwithstanding, it now is approaching the time when the weather will break and the farm operations begin. Better get ready.

Undoubtedly the seed has been ordered, and the seed corn tested. If it hasn's been, no time should be wasted, as it'll be needed in no time at all.

Better give those sets of harness that have been idle much of the winter a good soaking with neat's-foot oil. The tugs and belly band and bridle and lines are undoubtedly rather dry and brittle. But the oil will put them in good condition again, and prolong their life.

Speaking of omens, March always is associated with "lions and lambs." Lions don't interest us, except on circus day, but lambs do.

The ewes will be lambing soon. See that the mothers and little ones are protected from cold and damp of early spring. Cold and damp are mortal enemies of lambs. Keep tab on the flocks and when the little ones arrive help them get a start.

So with the pigs. They, too, will be coming along pretty soon; that is, if the sows are scheduled to farrow early. Put plenty of bedding on the board section of the hog house floor. A cold house makes it difficult for the old sow to keep the pigs alive, and also brings the danger that they may be crushed to death in the mother's effort to keep them warm. Plenty of bedding helps the sow to keep the pigs warm.

Couple these activities with the routine winter farm work and chores, and there won't be much time wasted.

The Sunday School Lesson

THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

Lesson—Matt. 22: 1-14.

Golden Text.—"Go out into the highways and hedges and constrain them to come in" (Luke 14: 23).

Historical Setting.

Time—Apr. 30, A. D. 30. Place.—Temple at Jerusalem.

The Lesson Text.

1 And Jesus answered and spake again in parables unto them, saying,
2 The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son.
3 and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast: and they would not come.
4 Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to his merchandise;
6 and the rest laid hold on his servants, and treated them shamefully, and killed them.
7 But the king was wroth; and he sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.
8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they that were bidden were not worthy.
9 Go ye therefore unto the partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage feast.
10 And those servants went out into the highways, and fathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was filled with guests.
11 But when the king came in to behold the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding-garment:
12 and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless.
13 Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.
14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

Comments.

Verse 1. Two parables had preceded this. Hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees could not help seeing that His parabolic fire was directed at them. There may have been additional parables that are not here recorded.

Verse 2. To the formal, carnal-minded Jews the teachings of Jesus concerning the kingdom were revolutionary and incomprehensible. His spiritual-winged imagery was beyond them. In their legalistic view, He was impossible.

Verse 3. This part of the parable covers all the invitations given before the resurrection by Jesus and His disciples. The universal liking for a feast and the honor of being the king's guest, make this a strong figure.

Verse 4. The patience of God with a willfully perverse and ungrateful people is a never-ending marvel.

Verse 5. In the parable recorded by Luke the guests refused courteously; here contemptuous. There are all kinds of receptions of the king's invitation today as there were then.

Verse 6. Note how literally this was true by reading Acts 5: 40. That messengers bearing invitations to a royal feast should be so mistreated is almost unthinkable; yet such was the fate of Stephen, James, Paul and others.

Verse 7. Let us not sentimentalize about the impossibility of God's wrath. Justice is as much a divine attribute as love.

Verse 8. They were unworthy in that they refused to accept. Such are unworthy now.

Verse 9. It is a noteworthy fact that the gospel invitation is often unheeded by the smugly self-satisfied and accepted by the poor and unfortunate, though all equally need the Christ.

Verse 10. The bad should become good and the good become better.

Verse 11. The Oriental kings furnished a special dress for royally invited guests. There was no excuse for being without it.

Verse 12. A smitten conscience which recognizes the fairness of the smiting is tongue-tied when honestly questioned. Nothing makes frankness and fearlessness possible except a clear conscience.

Verse 13. Any place or condition of alienation from God is "outer darkness." God's enemies are not happy here or hereafter.

Verse 14. "The called are those who hear; the chosen those who obey." The responsibility for the call rests with God; the responsibility for obedience rests upon those who hear.

Illustrated Truth.

We make light of God's gracious offers when we do not take advantage of them (v. 5).

Illustration.—Elias Howe, to whom we are indebted for the beginning of the modern sewing-machine, tried for a long while to interest men of money in his invention. The plans over which he had spent so much of his life were allowed to accumulate dust because those to whom they were offered set no value upon them. An author who has risen to the place of writing "best sellers," says that he was besieged for a story by an editor who had refused, in the earlier days, to even read the author's manuscripts. "He may not have sneered at me in words," said the latter, "but he despised my work."

Topics for Research and Discussion.

1. The King's Invitation Refused (vs. 1-7). 1. Where was Jesus at the time of this teaching? 2. Why was his teaching so difficult for many of the Jews? 3. What is the meaning of this parable? 4. Is God's wrath hard to understand?