CURRENT COMMENT

NEW WATERWAY'S CHAIRMAN.

One of the very last, if not the last public act of President Wilson's official life was to dismiss the chairman of the International Joint Commission of Waterways, Obadiah Gardner, who had held the office since 1913. No reason was given for the act, but it was rumored that their President's private secretary Tumulty was appointed but this was soon set at rest by Tumulty's refusal to accept the job. There was absolutely no reason to relieve Mr. Gardner of office, except to provide a vacancy for such as Mr. Tumulty. As Mr. Tumulty was loath to act, having perhaps discovered that it was a real job, or having found out what was to be done, and measured his reluctance by his capacity, left the promotion to some one else Eventually President Wilson appointed his namesake of the Labor Department, Secretary Wilson to this Chairmanship. It is not a compliment to Canada that the change was made, and the Tumulty story is probably true. It looks like a hostile move against the St. Lawrence Canal plan.

IF NOT ABLE, AFFABLE.

If President Harding has not ability he has affability and that may carry him further than some men's ability, as indeed it has already done. But Mr. Harding is not without ability and he is an honest and well-intentioned man. He has gathered around him a cabinet which compares to great advantage with his predecessor's aggregation which had not a really able man in it. President Wilson appeared to be afraid of men who might rival him in talent. At any rate he kept them out of his cabinet. The mysterious Mr. House was his confidant, and he alone. Mr. Harding has two men at least of presidential calibre, both, it is believed, abler men than the President himself. Mr. Hughes was a presidential candidate himself, and shows his real greatness by taking office under his successful junior. Mr. Hoover might easily have been president had the Republican manipulators so minded. He will carry to Europe a good reputation for his administration. If it were possible to describe a United States administration as pro-British it might be done with Mr. Harding's. It would be an exaggeneration to do so, but at least it will be clear that hostility to the motherland of the English tongue will not be a feature of its policy. There is more of a disposition to adopt some form of working agreement with Britain than has been the case for many years.

ONE OF THE MINOR POETS.

In the several public notices that have appeared of the death of the late Robert Awde no mention has appeared of the work that was probably dearest to his heart, the poetry that he had published in volumes, one in 1865 and the other in 1887. He occasionally contributed to the press in later years. His first volume was dated from London, England, 21 Park street west, and is now rather rare. It is thus dedicated: "to Robert Ryne Esq., my good master, this volume of verses, composed in half hours snatched from sleep, and in spare moments during 'waiting at table,' is inscribed by his obedient servant, Robert Awde." The volume contains as a frontispiece, a most interesting photograph of the last moments of the late Prince Consort "as he lay in bed at Windsor Castle on Dec. 14, 1861, the Queen and other members of the Royal family, and Cabinet ministers grouped around. A poem on this photograph is part of the contents of the volume. The preface contains some curious information about those who worshipped the nurse from lowly stations in life. "A little library," says Mr. Awde, "might readily be formed of the works of those poor men and girls who have written books whilst filling very humble stations. One of the earliest instances is that of Stephen Duck, the Wiltshire thresher, who sang the praises of Queen Anne, and received for his pains a pension and a cottage at Windsor. Affliction overtook Stephen, and in dispair the poor fellow committed suicide. Phillis Wheatley was a female slave at Boston about the middle of the last century. She wrote a volume of verses which passed through several editions, and her publications assisted in obtaining her freedom. James Ripley was hostler of the Red Lion, at Barnet, in Dr. Johnson's days. He penned a volume of essays which met with the approval of the great lexicographer, and the portrait of this servant of the stable was handsomely engraved. Anne Yearsley was a milkwoman at Bristol. This servant's poems passed through four editions, and on her subscription-list are the names of the principal personages of Gloucester, Somerset, Devon and Wiltshire. Later still, Samuel Drew, the shoemaker and metaphysician of St. Austell, wrote some of his most profound pieces upon a humble pair of bellows, during the spare moments of his daily toil. The case of Robert Bloomsfield is almost too well known to be mentioned here, but his boot-maker's card, issued for Bell-alley long before he was known as a poet, affords a parallel instance to Drew's. This volume was published by John Camden Hotten, a picturesque figure among the publishers of the last generation but one. Mr. Awde wrote some pieces for this volume in the Durham dialect, from which country he came, and these are really worthy of some attention. There are six of these, "My Nice Young Wife an' Me," "My Canny Wife," and others are evidences of Mr. Awde's sympathy for domestic scenes and sentiments. Mr. Awde's second volume is largely loyal and patriotic in character. On coming to Canada Mr. Awde followed the trade of a butcher, but became inspector of schools in 1887 in Toronto. He was one of the founders of Wesley Church, at Dundas and Ossington Avenue. His death at 83, on February 24, at Denver, ends an interesting a dutiful and an aspiring and consecrated life.

THE WATCH ON THE RHINE.

Apparently nothing more could be done, or shall we say no other course could have been taken than that decided upon by France and Britain in dealing with Germany. Yet the resort to force appreciably weakens the position of the Allies with the rest of the world, and gives the Imperialist group in Germany the chance to say "We told you so." The German people will be told that this is what the Allies were all along counting upon, waiting for and preparing for, and to the German mind no doubt it will look very like it. The shrewd American Government has kept out of the whole business and poses as a benevolent factor, though it might easily be that self-interest had dictated the abstention policy. There is a great deal to be said for the view the present effort to coerce Germany will merely be throwing good money after bad. Will it be possible to get any more out of Germany than will pay the cost of the present demonstrations? This is an exceedingly difficult problem to determine, and only the sequel will decide. It is a safe game for the Washington Government which has nothing to gain and has lost nothing, but for desolated France and Belgium the case is a desperate one. The devastation caused by Germany against all the recognized rules of war in the manufacturing districts of Belgium and Germany continue to be sources of hardship, misery for the wretched population of these places. Germany could have gained great favor with other nations had she volunteered up to her limit to make reparation for this wanton destruction. But nothing of this kind was suggested. The Allies have not asked for a cent towards the cost of war, but only for the cost of the unnecessary ravages caused by the military policy of "frightfulness." This is the point to be kept in view in the ordinary consideration of the case. Those who deprecate any coercive action whatever and favor a policy of absolute pacificism should remember that had the Allies and the United States adopted that course throughout Germany would not be exacting from the Allies, including ourselves here in Canada, a hundred times as much as the Germans are being asked to pay. Those who think that it would have been better to submit to that, than to offer any resistance, have a greater faith in the Germans as the agens of Divine Providence han most people are able to summon.

CANADIAN AUTHORS ORGANIZE.

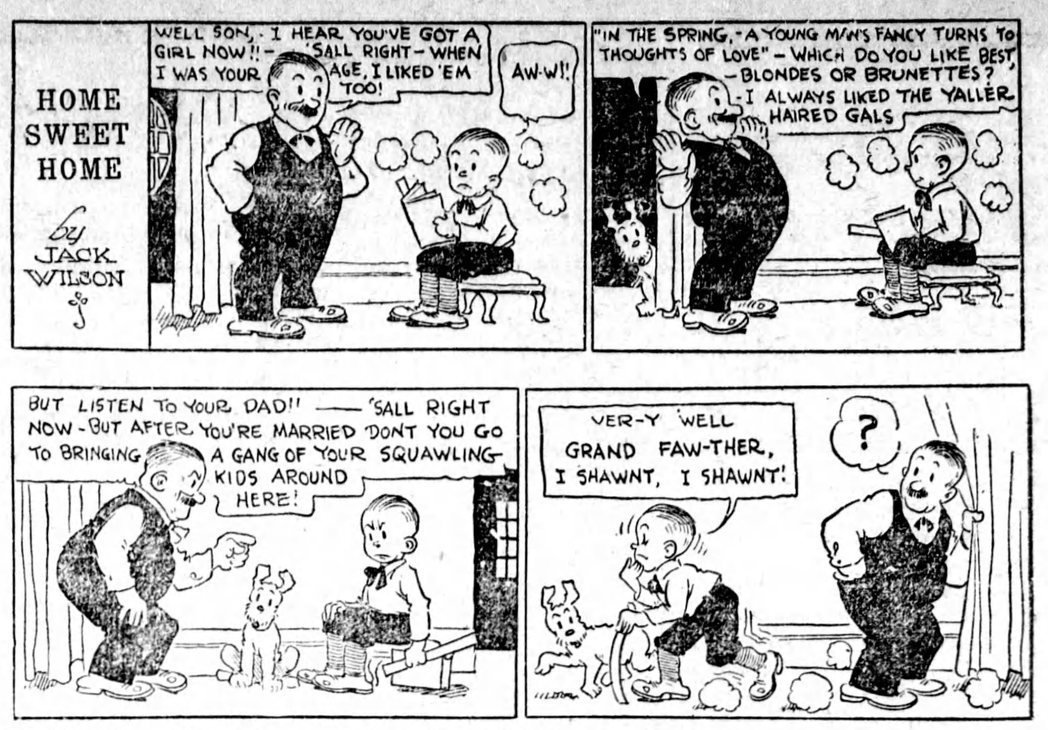
Efforts to organize the authors of Canada have been carried on for some time, and for three years the Authors and Musicians Association of which Miss Humble has been the vigilant secretary has kept the necessity for a reformed copyright act before the Government and Parliament. Canada's copyright law is the worst in the world. The United States has a better one though it is founded on the same principle of disregard for the author and full consideration for the printer, the publisher and all the other nations have a joint copyright act, registration under which protects the author in all his rights in all these countries, so that he gets copyright, and also dramatic rights, reproduction rights of any kind, moving pictures, phonograph, etc., without further trouble. The Canadian author has no chance of protecting himself by copywriting in Canada, so the labor men who obstruct reform, really prevent work being done in Canada, although the intention is to compel books to be printed in the Dominion. The author naturally goes to his biggest market for his printing and having this done in the United States, he sends over sufficient copies to cover the Canadian demand. If Canada was in the international copyright union then it would be possible to print books in Canada and have copyright in other lands, excepting always the United States. The great advantage to the author, artist or musician in a reformed law giving general copyright would be in the reservation of reproductive rights, for which he now has no protection. Besides the Authors and Musicians Association. The Society of Canadian Authors has been incorporated lately with Sir Edmund Walker as Hon. President, and Sir Robert Falconer as President. Vice-presidents from the several provinces have been chosen, and the secretary is Mrs. Frank Egerton and the treasurer, Mr. George H. Locke. Apparently unaware of this organization another movement was afoot in Montreal with similar aims, but it is expected that all these will be consolidated. Miss Humble has been in Ottawa watching the progress of the new copyright bill in Parliament.

MAKING NATIONAL HISTORY

Australia and New Zealand have been seized with the importance of collecting all the historical information and data that concern their early days and development. In London a scheme is under way for gathering together all such information and making a descriptive catalogue of the archives of the British Commonwealth. The value of old papers and documents is not known to any but experts, and in the most unpromising materials there may be grains of gold, missing links of the utmost historical importance. An example of what can be done is found in the work of Mr. Alexander Turnbull, of New Zealand, who spent his leisure and his money on such work, the result being a collection of books, pamphlets and documents relating to the whole South Pacific and running when finally made over to the Dominion of New Zealand 30,000 bound volumes, besides charts, maps, engravings, etc. Such work as this carries into our reward to the collector and is of inestimable value to a nation. In Ontario we have an example of such interest in national documents by a private citizen in the collection made by the late Mr. J. Ross Robertson, now on view in the Toronto Public Library. The Provincial Archivist is always on the alert for ancient documents, letters and so forth. Whenever a homestead or old residence is broken up there is usually a lot of old material, books, papers, documents, letters, thrown out or burned. In such cases it would be well first of all to notify the Provincial Archivist, Col. Fraser, at the Parliament Buildings, as many real treasures have been discovered in this way. Only experts can deal with such material and the mere age of a book or paper is no index to its worth.

As finally revised, the 1921 estimates for maintenance and upkeep of the Public and High schools of Toronto $5,750,950. Of this amount $5,396,600 is uncontrollable expense, including $4,679,470 for salaries, $345,370 for fuel and gas, $272,394 for text books and supplies and $99,375 for sundries. Repairs and alterations to the extent of $354,341 constitute the only controllable expense.

In 1916 there was but one Government fish-hatchery in Ontario with a capacity of 2,000,000 eggs. The Port Arthur plant now keeps Lake Nepigon replenished with trout and whitefish, while the Fort Frances supplies the Rainy River waters with fresh stock.



FARM WORK OF THE MONTH

Hatch the chicks and hatch 'em early—they do better in the cooler weather. While there is good feed in the barn, don't be too anxiuos to turn out the cows—you will need all the pasture later. See that the brood sows get some clover or alfalfa hay now to keep up their milk. Plow the corn ground in plenty of time, let it lie for a week, and then kill the small weeds by an extra harrowing just before planting.

* * *

"April showers" may "bring forth May flowers," but what do April blizzards bring? What else but white drifts of April fruit blossoms? Whether or not the trees will bear a fine lot of fruit will depend on whether we give them a chance against the curculios and the moths. With the right but inexpensive spraying outfit it is only a half day's job to put on the poison, and it will literally save the crop.

* * *

Ever chase hogs out of a 20-acre cornfield with the stalks 10 feet high and dripping with dew? Well, you can't do anything more profitable than string a new line of fence while waiting for the ground to dry out. There's a pile of comfort in a good, tight fence.

* * *

Of course you have already planned the crops for the year. But you'r plans may be completely upset by the appearance of the stand on the new seeding. Better size it up now and see what promise it is holding out. Who will get the grain this year, you or Mr. Smut? Smut has been having its innings for a good long while. Why not take the profits yourself for a change? It pays to formaldehyze—and remember that corn will take the treatment as well as the small grains.

* * *

With the work in full swing let's give the horse an even break this year. See that he has a collar that fits. At least scrape and clean the old one, and then keep it clean. We can prevent sore shoulders with a little care and win the gratitude of the suffering animals, besides getting greater service from them all the season.

EDITORIAL QUIBS ON INTERESTING SUBJECTS CLIPPED FROM THE BEST CANADIAN NEWSPAPERS

It may be true that the profiteers will now get what is coming to them, but they have already got what's coming to us.—St. Mary's Journal Argus.

Shackleton's ten-year trip to the North Pole would arouse a pleasant interest if he would take Lenine and Trotsky with him.—Calgary Herald.

Prohibition has at least reduced the number of men who think they can sing.—Windsor Border Cities Star.

Some men's idea of a good time is to have a grouch and plenty of time to tell the world about it.—Winnipeg Free Press.

A mule broke its leg in two places when it kicked an Alabama man on the head. We sometimes argue with people of that type.—Montreal Star.

No man was ever crushed by a woman's arguments; but he can be completely suffocated by her dead silence.—Galt Reporter.

United we stand, divided we stagger.—Motto of the Homebrewers' Association—Sydney Record.

Fist fights marked the closing of the North Dakota legislature. Another part of the world that isn't safe for democracy.—Winnipeg Free Press.

Doctors tried to cure a Pittsburg man of his mania for theft by removing a bone that was pressing against his brain, and chances are they will not be contented with taking only one bone away from him.—Montreal Star.

Though puzzled, the hospital nurse has summoned the Jewish rabbi, as requested, and now—the last rites administered—the rabbi, too, asked the dying Irish Catholic, "But why send for me and not the priest?" With a last flicker or energy this true son of Erin retorted, "Shure, an' would oi be sendin' for the priest an' me wit' smallpox?"—Toronto Telegram.

It is easy to exaggerate the extent to which Englishmen are sodden by drink, but not the extent to which Americans are saddened by prohibition.—Mail and Empire.

There is a man in Frankfort, Ky., whose name is M. T. Case, and his name is joked about so much that he proposes to have it changed.—Toronto Star.

The injunction to love your neighbor as yourself was spoken long before the neighbor bought a phonograph.—Kingston Whig.

Milk drivers in the city of New York are drawing sixty dollars weekly under a new wage agreement, which indicates that it is time for Henry Ford to hustle along that synthetic cow.—Regina Post.

Some of our legislators should take some lessons in efficiency so as not to make so many unnecessary motions.—Winnipeg Tribune.

Before sampling a man's brew, pour a little down the sink. If it doesn't take the enamel off, it's all right.—Toronto Star.

Don't advertise on fences. Cows don't do any buying, and autoists go too fast to read.—Walkerton Telescope.

Down in South Chili they have had 198 earthquake shocks in 6 days. Anyone in the locality can shut his eyes and imagine that he is driving his own flivver.—Ottawa Citizen.

Some people are always taking offence, but somehow the supply never becomes exhausted—Toronto Telegram.

Peace hath its atrocities no less refined than war, as witness the income tax forms.—Calgary Herald.

According to an evening paper the lady who has just become Duchess of Westminster has "one son, a boy." On the other hand, the Duke himself has two daughters, both girls.—Portage La Prairie Graphic.

The eastern school teacher who married the janitor was probably dazzled by the thoughs of comparative luxury.—Winnipeg Tribune.

Canadian tobacco growers want protection, and the Farmers' Sun is sure to say, bitterly, that they "are trying to set up a smoke screen."—Toronto Telegram.

POEMS You Should Know

THE LAST LEAF.

I saw hm once before,
As he passed by the door,
And again.
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning knife of Time
Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
Through the town.

But now he walks the streets
And he looks at all he meets
So forlorn;
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
"They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

* * * *

And if I should like to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

GOOD JOKES

WHERE HE FELL DOWN.

Employer (to youth applying for situation)—And have you a knowledge of any foreign language?

Applicant—Yes, sir; a little.

"Do you know Latin?"

"Well, sir, I began to learn it and got on fairly well, but I had to throw it up in favor of shorthand because I couldn't pronounce some of the words.

"What were the words you couldn't pronounce?"

"Words like 'MDCCCXIV,' sir."

AND IT IS.

"Say, buddy, do you remember when we were over there they used to tell us that when we got back nothing would be too good for us?"

"Sure, what about it?"

"Well, they told the truth.

ON THE OTHER FOOT.

"So the affair is off, eh? Afraid you couldn't support her in the style to which she was accustomed, I suppose."

"Not at all. It was the girl who was afraid."

IF THAT'S RIGHT HE'LL GET LEFT.

"Don't you think Braggins puts on too much side?"

"Yes, and a good deal of front; but I don't think it has any real backing."

BRIDGET SCORES.

Mistress (helping to prepare dinner)—It's an old saying, Bridget, that too many cooks spoil the broth. What do you thing?

Bridget—Sure, ma'am, there's nothing to worry about; there's only one cook here.

HAD A LAST RECOURSE.

A villager had been confiding to a country clergyman some of the shortcomings of her husband.

"Certainly,' 'agreed the clergyman, "he seems to treat you rather unkindly. But remember that you took him for better or for worse."

"Well, it ras always been for worse, so far as I can see," replied the woman, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief.

"Have you ever tried heaping coals of fire on his head?" inquired the clergyman.

"No, I haven't," she answer, grateful for the new suggestion. "So far I've only tried hot water."

A STRANGE PEOPLE

Tibet is peopled by a branch of the Mongolian race. The 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 population are a mixture of Chinese and Tibetans as the races intermarried. They believe in both polyandry and polygamy. It is the most extensive elevated country in the world, containing 750,000 square miles, with an elevation varying from 8,000 to 14,000 feet. Its climate is principally bleak and cold, although the summers in the southern part are mild and pleasant. The first white man to enter Lhasa, the capital, was Sir Francis Younghusband, who fought his way there in 1914. Dalia Lama, religious head of the Buddhist faith, which is the national religion, was so overcome by the fact that infidels had trodden the streets of the forbidden city, that he fled the country, and was for many years a wanderer in Northern China.