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Premier Drury seems to have had his ear to the ground.

Time that the aldermanic candidates were declaring themselves.

Never argue for argument's sake, unless you belong to a debating club.

If your criticisms are not constructive, keep 'em; nobody else wants them.

Considering all the humiliation it has endured, you really blame money for getting tight.

There will be a season of great activity among undertakers just before the meek inherit the earth.

It is clear that the hates engendered by war don't influence the buyer in search of a low price.

It must irritate very nice people to reflect that so many common people are also descended from Adam.

One can prune a prune tree, or pare a pear tree, or bark a dogwood, but he can't change a family tree.

Shylock preferred a pound of flesh, rather than a bank roll. Evidently there were packers in his day, too.

Do your Christmas shopping early in good advice, but do your buying in Kingston is still better advice.

Salvation is free, of course, but it is well to remember that the food and clothes a preacher must have are not.

In the old days the Canadian standard of living permitted making flour sacks into underwear for the children.

Consciously or unconsciously every chap is being sized up by the assertions he makes and the way he spends his time.

Tino's time must be pretty well occupied keeping track of the days when he is king and the days when he is not.

There is no alternative: If you don't do your Christmas shopping early, you must do your Christmas shopping late.

A provincial judge wants boys spanked who are guilty of stealing. A somewhat more vigorous punishment than this is required.

"Conditions here are insufferable," declared Magistrate Jones, of the Toronto police court. Raney will get him if he doesn't watch out.

It is proposed to reduce the commission of fire insurance agents. But would that reduce the premium to the policy holder? Not likely.

During the war we had conscientious objectors to fighting; now we have conscientious objectors to working. The latter class are probably the harder to deal with.

Ninety-eight per cent. of the voting Greeks want Constantine back. No trouble is expected from the remainder, as there is no kick in two per cent.—Ottawa Journal.

Attorney General Raney says magistrates are servants of the government and as such subject to instructions. And all the time we thought that magistrates were servants of the people and free from political dictation.

AN UNENVIABLE RECORD.

The record of Canada in the number of executions for capital offences during the year is not an enviable one. So far twenty-nine men have been hanged in Canada during 1920, the largest number the Dominion has ever had in one year, and more than double last year's total, when fourteen men were executed.

These figures seem to indicate that capital crimes are on the increase, and that life is becoming cheaper even in Canada. The spirit of callousness engendered by the war, with its huge casualty list, seems to have hardened the hearts of many of the lower types to be found in this country, and to have so lessened the value of human life in their eyes that there is little compunction in the matter of committing murder.

Another significant feature of this record is brought out in a statement made by Hangman Arthur Ellis after the execution of George Jones in Brantford last week. "Of all the executions I have had in Canada in the past eleven years," he said, "98 per cent have been foreigners. Only seven English-speaking men have paid the penalty for murder in that time."

This statement shows that Canada's foreign element is responsible for most of the serious crime which is committed in this country, and this is a factor which must be taken into consideration in our future immigration policy. The influx of large numbers of men who have no knowledge of the English language, or of British laws and customs, cannot be anything but harmful. The record of hangings gives clear proof of this.

Another statement made by Hangman Ellis was that all executions should be carried out in the provincial penitentiaries. This suggestion will not meet with any favor in this community for to have the title of the "official hanging-place of Ontario," is by no means a desirable distinction. From the point of view of expediency it may be advisable, but public sentiment must be considered, and although municipalities in which murders have taken place may be quite willing and anxious to have the executions carried out at Portsmouth, the question of the attitude of this district must be considered, and again, the carrying out of the execution in the district in which the crime took place is more likely to have a restraining influence on others than having one central hanging station.

THE COST OF ARMAMENTS.

In looking over the army and navy budgets for the years 1920 and 1921, one is struck by the enormous appropriations provided by some of the great powers, figures that we cannot reconcile with economical administration, particularly in view of the colossal expenditures incurred during the late war and the burden of debt that the peoples of these nations have to carry in consequence of the part they took in that war.

The army budget of the United States is inconsistent with the expressed declaration of the people respecting the obligations she was supposed to assume as a member of the League of Nations. She did not even accept a mandate, and there does not appear to be any immediate danger threatening the Monroe Doctrine. The Mexico revolution has passed into history. Why this army budget of \$814,000,000, particularly at a time when there are more than one million trained men of A1 category—more than she ever had in her history—available for military service within one week's notice? No purely defensive measures appear to justify the people in assuming such a heavy obligation at the present time, and in view of the failure to recruit the authorized permanent establishment up to strength the figures are all the more inexplicable.

The budget of \$650,000,000 for the navy might be necessary in view of the experience gained in the late war. There were but few capital ships in the line and she was deficient in small craft such as destroyers, but even so, \$200,000,000 would seem to be the most called for during 1920-21 in carrying out a conservative programme such as present world conditions allow of. There is no sea power, or combination of sea powers, that causes the United States the slightest nervousness except possibly Japan. The position of the government, places it under obligation to

defend its Pacific island possessions, and there is no doubt that the inhabitants enjoy a freedom that they would not under the Japanese, who would completely over-run them and dispossess the natives.

European nations, while all seeking every possible means for relief from military burdens, are not yet able to realize their wishes. National and racial consciousness is still a prominent factor, and it appears only to have been strengthened by the fierce fires through which they have gone. Military force alone is the antidote for the disease, and it is to be hoped that the League of Nations may be able to agree upon such dispositions as will make it unnecessary for any of the powers to increase their budgets but possibly effect substantial reductions.

MUSINGS OF THE KHAN

A Precious Basket.

After Joe Spurlin left me—he had come to ask me to be his best man—I sat far into the night asking myself the question: "Is there such a thing as an accident?"

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, I begin to believe in predestination. It looks as if this had been arranged at the beginning of Time to culminate last night.

I am not going so far as to say that the Lord had anything to do with the fact that the Bunn and the Spurlin democrat wagons looked like twins. I would not dare to say that, nor that he had anything to do with the fact that the Bunn and Spurlins had been bad friends and neighbors for ten bitter years. If there is any better land on the North American continent than the Bunn and Spurlin farms I'd like to see it. And they were bad friends and didn't speak and wouldn't trade work. They didn't help each other to fill silos or thresh, and old Bunn would let a sick horse die where he lay rather than send across to Spurlin's for help to lift him. I don't know how it started—it doesn't matter—it was a line fence or something like that, or else the Bunn cows got into the Spurlin oats one night and started a neighborhood feud.

It was calamitous in every way, for it parted pretty little Melissy Bunn and her old playmate, Joe Spurlin. Old Bunn told Melissy that he would skin her alive if he ever heard of her so much as looking at a Spurlin, and so the dreary years crept along and Christmas or Easter or the Twenty-fourth of May, or the First of July, or Labor Day, or Thanksgiving never crossed the line fence between the Bunn and the Spurlin places!

Was it an accident that the Bunn and the Spurlin's had democrat wagons that were almost identical? The Bunn wagon had dull red wheels, the Spurlin vehicle had chocolate-colored wheels, but during the past November you couldn't tell what color they were for mud.

Marrriages are made in heaven, and I am convinced that the angels made up their minds to marry pretty Melissy Bunn to the man she wanted and put an end to this old line-fence dispute that has soured and darkened the lives of two fine families far too long. Joe Spurlin drove into Bullock's Corners last Saturday with a jag of sweet clover seed and tied his team in the shed of the Anglo-American Hotel. It's a foreign boarding house now and there is more liquor drunk in it than when the fine old place was a respectable licensed tavern. Ole Mister Bunn drove in with Melissy—she wanted to have a tooth filed—and tied his horses in the shed right next to Joe's team. Melissy had a basket full of stuff that she had bought, little feminine things, and she came into the hotel yard to put in her father's wagon when she spied Joe afar off. It rattled her. She was afraid Joe would speak to her and her father catch him at it, so she dropped her basket in a black democrat wagon with muddy wheels and scurried into the street. Of course, you are wise to the plot. Shall I go on? Very well, here's the rest of it.

When Joe got home his mother and sister Nettie came out to get the parcels and Miss Spurlin wanted to know where he got this basket? What basket? This here basket with a pair of silk stockings in it and

a Delineator and a pound of candy and ten yards of factory cotton and a card of buttons and a comb and—and—a whole lot of things that no one like Joe Spurlin had ever purchased or bought.

"I know the basket," says Missus Spurlin. "It belongs to the Melissy Bunn—you up'n take it to her to-night before Ole Bunn puts you in the penitentiary."

Missus Bunn was tongue-thrashing 'M'iss. "It's a pore thing," cried that distressed lady, "that you can't be trusted alone. Bless ef I kin go everywhere with you to take care of you. When yer poor drudge of a father dies I don't know what's goin' to happen to yuh and—Go to the door, James."

James went to the door and there on the verandah stood Joe Spurlin and basket.

Shall I go on? I may as well finish it when I'm at it.

"Did I put my basket in your wagon, Joe?" cried Melissy. "Oh! Joe, Joe!"

"Come in, Joseph," said the old lady, "an' set down."

The Khan. The Wigwam, Rushdale Farm, Rocketon, Ont.

Walt Mason THE POET PHILOSOPHER

DECEMBER.

December winds are blowing, and wearily I'm going down to the waiting places; the wintry clouds are flying, the old gray year is dying, it finishes its race. The old white year is falling and bitter winds are waiving its dirges as they pass; the fact they keep repeating amid the frenzied sleeting that year, like feet, are "Each year, when a beginner, is sure to be a winner, that truth is understood; and all the bells are ringing and all the choirs are singing their prophecies of good. The new year seems a treasure, with promises of pleasure and happiness we've lost; but when with age it totters, we swat it with our swatters, and say it was a frost. And now in drab December but few of us remember how good the new year seemed; its guarantees were thrilling, it promised the fulfilling of all the dreams we dreamt. December always sees us so tired that naught will please us except a brand new year, wherein to try fresh measures for profits and for pleasures, to spend and profiteer. Old year, so sad and sickly, get out, and do it quickly—you're hung around too long! Old jaws are always croaking and musty maxims speaking; we like the young and strong!" —WALT MASON.

Political Papers Passing.

Recently we called attention to the passing of the rabid political newspaper in towns and villages. This from the St. Mary's Journal-Argus hits the situation squarely in the solar plexus: Let the big city dailies continue to play politics if they wish. Possibly it will be better that they should. But why should there be out in the open a series of newspapers oversteeringly urging the people to get into each others' hair. The preacher, the teacher, the lawyer, the physician, the merchant, are in the conduct of their advocations strictly non-political. Why should the editor alone, immolate himself on a partisan altar? That political parties, societies, movements, that have messages for the public, should have vehicles by which they can reach the public, is quite true. They should use the same medium that the merchant does, the advertising columns of the newspapers, just as the merchant does, and pay cash for the space used, as the merchant does. The universal adoption of these ideas by all publishers of the country will, we feel confident, come about very quickly, and we shall have a decenter press. We cannot help thinking too, that there will be a resultant improvement in the feelings of the people. Fifty years ago the common idea was that a Grit and Tory could scarcely break bread together. It's an idea that has been dying a long time. The abandonment of politics by the newspapers would furnish its coupe de grace.

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