

THE PUGNACIOUS INSTINCT.

Such deliverances as the address of Dr. A. C. Garnett on "The Pugnacious Instinct and War," given this week before the South Australian branch of the League of Nations Union, are welcome reminders of the change that has overtaken public opinion since Tennyson attempted in "Maud" to demonstrate the purifying effects of organised bloodshed on the morals and manners of mankind. Perhaps there never was a time when war was at such a tremendous discount as it has been since our last terrible experience of it. We have come even to doubt what was once accepted as an axiomatic truth, that thorough preparedness for strife is the surest guarantee of peace, and are travelling far and fast in the opposite direction of believing that the surest guarantee of peace is preparation for it. What is specially interesting in Dr. Garnett's address is the denial given to the Freudian doctrine that humanity is a machine which automatically accumulates psychic energy till a point is reached where it finds vent in carnage. It was Bishop Butler's fancy that insanity might suddenly overtake an entire nation, and it has really seemed as though every community has its moments of mental aberration, when it is carried off its feet by a wave of enthusiasm or of panic. It is this liability to frenzied excitement that the framers of the Covenant of the League of Nations had in mind in requiring a stated interval to elapse between the occurrence of an international quarrel and its culmination in hostilities.

If humanity were really constructed on Freudian lines, and doomed by some fate to an unceasing alternation of gathering up psychic energy and discharging it in war, we should have to despair of its future. That there is a pugnacious instinct in human nature, which is probably ineradicable, there is no denying, but that is another matter. The question is not of its existence, but of its amenability to control. The combative spirit exists, but there is no reason why its force should be expended in war, with all its horrors. The Parliamentary arena, the public platform, the press, and even, as Dr. Garnett adds, the cricket and football fields afford possible—and in some cases most useful—outlets for the old fighting instinct. But the growing aversion to war betokens something more than a dislike for blood-spilling. The sentiment of justice, which we may claim to be as much innate in the race as the element of pugnacity, is enlisted in the peace movement. It has come to be recognised that the merits of a dispute are no more necessarily vindicated by international strife than they are by private combat. All that happens is that the stronger win, and the weaker go to the wall, and this would happen whichever side was right or wrong. The private duel came to an end when its illogicality was clearly established. It was pointed out that the man who was aggrieved ran the same risk of being shot in a duel as the man who aggrieved him, and how, then, was justice satisfied? Very often the bully and the blackguard who, being such, were peculiarly liable to be challenged, were experienced duellists, and thus more than a match for the peaceful citizens they might offend. Louis Blanc took pistol lessons with a view to a duel with Ledru Rollin, who had offended him in some one of the hundred ways in which a French genius may be outraged; and it was out of that little quarrel, and having regard to the disparity of size of the two combatants that the well-known story arose of the smaller man proposing to equalise the differences of bulk by having his own shape outlined on that of his opponent, and an agreement established that no shot outside that boundary should count! The duel, once a very bloody business, still lingers on the Continent, especially in France, but the duellist is rarely injured. The encounter serves to let out passion and give a nice opportunity for ceremonial reconciliation; and for those reasons is preferred to a bout of fist-

cuffs or a slanging match in court, which is the Briton's machinery for settling a dispute. But just as it has lost its ancient savagery, so the duel is dying, even as a social convention, the jocularity to which it has given rise being too much for it.

Unfortunately, there is no satirist sufficiently clever to laugh international war out of existence, and its extermination has to be undertaken by University professors and lawyers, and other serious-minded folk; and, alas, the sway of reason is far less potent than that of ridicule. Perhaps it would be a difficult matter to make war absurd, because, however easy the victory, and however poor a fight was made by the vanquished, the consequences are of tragic import, alike to the conqueror and the conquered. And yet international war has much in common with the duel. Like the duel, it creates the swashbuckler, and like the duel, it finds itself on false notions of honor. It was in the name of honor that Germany ran amok among the nations, and it is in the name of national honor that America has made her arbitration treaties less complete than they ought to be in order to be truly effective. In ordinary life an individual's honor is not held of much account when it needs private violence for its vindication. In a society where a rational conception of honor prevails, the odium of an unjust charge falls on those who have made it. The law which mulets in damages a traducer or a violator of domestic sanctities does not merely provide the jingling guinea which "helps the hurt that honor feels." The convicted libeller is much more effectually disgraced than if his victim called him out and chanced to kill him. Some people judge a man's life by the use he makes of it, and not by the recklessness with which he may throw it away in a quarrel. And so with nations. What is wanted is a tribunal to which national honor, as well as material interests, may be trusted; and it may be hoped that the World Court will provide such a desideratum, if it does not do so already. An argument against war too often overlooked is its tendency to arrest the upward movement of the masses, politically, economically, and socially. No community can give its mind to the solution of domestic problems when its main preoccupation is the strength of its defences. However necessary these defences may be, the money and the attention they claim are inevitable hindrances to legislation for the general good. When external danger threatens, all other matters are inevitably lost sight of; political questions are dropped, and the ranks closed up under the common instinct of self-preservation. At the same time, the spirit nourished by war is unfavorable to real progress. Who can doubt that Mussolini's vaporings against the States he accuses of hindering the expansion of Italy have their root in the success of that country in the Great War? The glorification of military power, which so often results from a successful war, and the strong tendency it encourages towards absolutism, remove the popular ideals to a greater distance, and the work of democratic progress has to begin again under enormous disadvantages. There is no poorer school than the battlefield for the propagation of democratic ideas. In the case of Italy it is a strange outcome of a war fought ostensibly under the magic inspiration of liberty, to find the bonds of political serfdom fastened upon the people almost as securely as they were in the days of Mazzini.

FUTURE OF THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH.

II.—CANADA.

By A. L. Gordon MacKay.

In the first article of this series the thesis was advanced that no solution of the problem of how the British Commonwealth is to be governed could be found in politics alone. It was, further, suggested, with diffidence, that economics and finance, in addition to politics, would have to be weighed in when those responsible for settling the ultimate form of our new system came to make their decision. Finally, it was argued that the key to the problem might be found in the relations existing between the British Treasury and the Bank of England on the one hand and the financial institutions in the dominions on the other. The special application of the last point to the Dominion of Canada now calls for consideration.

By way of preliminary exposition, let us remind ourselves of the mechanism by means of which the national economy of all modern nations is maintained. At the hub of a nation's economic activities lies the financial system. Round this hub revolve the semi-financial institutions, and then come industry, government, education, the churches, and amusements. The whole draws its material sustenance from the hub in the form of capital and credit; and it does this either directly or indirectly. If the financial system is inefficient we get chaos, as we have seen it in certain countries since the war. If, on the other hand, it is efficient, even an industrial desert has a chance of blossoming and rejoicing as the rose. The danger of such a system of national economy, as is here outlined, lies in the fact that an external foe (financial, industrial, political, or religious) may wreck or control a country's happiness by striking at the financial hub. This was the way in which Lenin destroyed Tsardom; how Rome destroyed Greece; Amsterdam the Holy Roman Empire; London, Amsterdam; and this is how New York may eventually destroy London (and with London the British Commonwealth, including Australia), in my opinion, unless the lovers of peace and goodwill can develop, in sufficient time, a system of world co-operative finance.

Lest my position in this matter may be misunderstood, perhaps we may say that one and all can agree that financial statesmen are, in the main, competent in their special sphere of activity, and that they are actuated by motives of what we may call "general economic welfare;" they must, of necessity, work behind the scenes away from the public gaze; great power and responsibility are theirs, and for this reason they deserve well of the public; the best that the community can ask of them is that they shall shoulder their responsibilities in a spirit of conscience and honour. Our financial statesmen, on their part, if they fail in their duty know that they will be held strictly to account. This is only right. Financial statesmen have, occasionally, made serious mistakes in the past, and their conferees have never objected to the condign punishment which has followed such lapses. Power brings with it responsibility, and power should end with failure to discharge responsibility.

Value of Canadian Industries.

Bearing the above principles in mind we can, more profitably, turn our attention to the state of affairs in Canada.

The Canadian financial hub centres in about 14 banks, together with about 4,422 branches, though the latest figures suggest that there is even a higher concentration than the above statistics would suggest. The system functions in terms of an Act of Parliament which was revised in 1923, as far as my memory serves me. The coinage is a dollar one, and the mint was established in 1901. Round this financial hub is built up a system of national economy, the main characteristics of which are:—

Type of industry.	Approx. value in dollars (1923-4 figures).
Agriculture	7,000,000,000
Mining	200,000,000
Manufactures	2,500,000,000
Commerce—exports and imports	2,000,000,000
Shipping—(tons) entered and cleared	110,000,000
Population	9,000,000

There is a protective tariff, with preference for Empire products, subject to certain consideration. Prior to the war, the bulk of the credit and capital, which generated the financial energy to set this national system of economy in motion, was drawn from Great Britain and from the people of Canada, but since the war the position has changed with remarkable rapidity, the result of the change being that the dynamo from which the Canadian financial hub draws its inspiration is, in the main, to-day located south of Canada's political border. The following figures set out the position clearly.

Note that the figures are only approximate, and, since they have been compiled from various sources, only their general meaning can be abstracted; there is nothing definite or final about them, particularly when we take the varying price levels into consideration.

Preponderating American Capital.
Comparison of British and United States investments in Canada, 000,000 omitted.

Year.	British.	United States.
1914—500	130	81
1915—372	84	83
1918—372	81	84
1920—400	350	485
1922—396	495	484
1923—399	484	484
1924—378	484	484

Percentage of United States investment in 15 Canadian industries, 1920:—Meat-packing, 41 per cent.; steel furnaces, &c., 41; copper, 52; agricultural implements, 39; foundries, 40; electrical apparatus, 45; drugs and chemicals, 52; patent medicines, 79; automobiles, 69; paint and varnish, 50; artificial abrasives, 90; refined petroleum, 53; car construction, 60; condensed milk, 40; average for 15 industries, 50.

Now let us endeavour to clarify the meaning of these figures by quoting the deductions from the statistics which have been made by two American authorities. (a) The Department of Commerce, United States, is reported to have said, "Economically and socially, Canada may be considered as a northern extension of the United States." (b) Professor Nearing is reported to have made this statement:—"The economic title to Canada's foreign investment field has passed from British to United States bankers. History shows that economic possession, ultimately, carries with it political control."

In plain language, Canada appears to have become a financial colony of the investors in the United States; and the economic "pull" is now north and south instead of being east and west, as it was before the war.

Meaning of Economic Control.

The critic will, at once, say that the economic control which is possessed by the investors in the United States really means nothing in point of fact, since their power is centralized and mobilized in Wall street and elsewhere. But bearing mind the dictum that where one's treasure is there shall one's heart be also, we can, I think, say that, whereas the British Empire in the past has been held together by ties that are both sentimental and economic, it is a matter for regret that one of these ties has, in part,

MUSICAL MOMENTS

(By "Staccato")

The Elder Hall of the Conservatorium was crowded on Monday night when a staff concert was given, extra chairs having to be produced from the wings to accommodate many who had not booked their seats. The nominal price for these concerts places them within the reach of all, but Monday night's attendance was probably a record since the days when they were free, with a programme given in, and the Conservatorium labored under an annual deficit.

Dr. Davies' work at the organ and Miss Sylvia Whittington's efforts on the violin were the outstanding features of the evening. Miss Ivy Ayres, the newly appointed teacher of aural culture and kindred subjects at the institution, made her debut as a pianist, and played with delicacy and charm, but her numbers were somewhat uninteresting. Mr. Carey's light baritone voice hardly stood the weight of an organ accompaniment, however sympathetically played. Mrs. Smedley Palmer, so well known in her student days as Miss Ethel Ridings, who is acting in Mr. Fevan's place during his absence in Europe, was enthusiastically welcomed back to the concert platform, and used her light soprano voice with good effect.

Lowered Lights

"The Australian Musical News" has been finding fault with concert givers who lower the lights during the performance, thus inducing a semi-somnolence in an endeavor to create an atmosphere favorable to intimate absorption of the music. The sellers of programmes are in such cases accused of actually defrauding people, who have been charged for what they cannot see to read, and the whole thing is attributed to affectation and the influence of Charlie Chaplin and William Hart. Doubtless in some halls and with some performances it is unnecessary, but when strong lights gleam on a level with tired eyes or intervene between the performer and listener, the turning down of the illumination is received with a sigh of satisfaction. Modern lighting is, of course, designed to remove the irritating glare, but who of our conferees does not remember the old crystal chandelier which used to hang from the centre of the ceiling of the Adelaide Town Hall, and distract youthful attention from the performance which was to have added glittered with rainbow glints upon their faces, much to the elimination of the