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The Week in Review

The versatile Kaiser has been giving to the world his opinions on the much vexed question of marriage. He reminds intending brides and bridegrooms that marriage means the establishment of a household and starting life together. He then goes on to emphasise the fact that life means work, and it is only through work that we secure achievement, and achievement means striving for others and for the Fatherland. He touches on the fact that it is after the happy hours of the first days and months that people are confronted with the seriousness of life, and future happiness depends on the spirit in which life's duties are met. This speech is trite and commonplace compared with the other utterances of the Emperor; but his advice is good, and that is more than we can say for some of his sentiments. The real reason why so many marriages turn out unhappily is because people so seldom look at the duties marriage imposes. Love's young dream passes, and then many find themselves confronted with trials and difficulties that call for other qualities than those demanded in the lover. Life for both man and woman means work, and marriage should be something that relieves and sweetens our daily toil. If we realised this there would be fewer cases of unhappy wedded life.

Mr George Wyndham, the ex-Chief Secretary for Ireland, in a speech at Liverpool, declared that the Unionists, when they returned to power, would introduce a tariff reform budget. He indicated that they would impose a 2/- duty on wheat, and a tax on meat, both with preference to the colonies. This, taken in conjunction with Mr Balfour's recent emphatic declaration in favour of some measure of fiscal change, shows that the Conservatives are fully pledged to alter the present free trade policy, and this will form the main plank in their next election programme. It is not too much to say that the present Liberal Government has, to a large extent, paved the way for the change which now seems imminent. The Old Age Pensions Bill has enormously increased the national expenditure, and revenue must be procured from some fresh source. Englishmen would never countenance any serious reduction in the defence vote, which now amounts up to nearly forty millions sterling. Existing death duties and other forms of taxation of the wealthier classes are already as high as they can well be placed. Mr Lloyd George talks glibly enough of sources of revenue still available apart from the Customs, but he has not yet disclosed what they are, and most people are inclined to be a little sceptical on the matter. But even apart from any question of national finance, the English workers are feeling the pinch of trade depression very acutely just at present, and they do not see why English goods should be at the mercy of foreign importations. The hop industry has suffered severely from this cause, and the free traders have just killed a bill seeking to prohibit the wholesale importation of hops from abroad. Mr Wyndham is confident of victory at the next election, and recent indications of the feeling of the country on this matter go to show that his confidence is not misplaced.

The proposal to allow colonial representation by nominees in the House of Lords has not met with any great support as far as the colonies themselves

are concerned. Mr Fisher, the Federal Prime Minister, much prefers the idea of a Council of Empire, and he considers the prospect of securing such a council would be seriously retarded by giving seats in the Upper House to a few selected colonial representatives. A further objection is to be found in the fact that a change in colonial ministries might involve changes in policy on Imperial matters, and the fact that the House of Lords has no power to deal with financial questions must seriously mar its usefulness as far as the colonies are concerned. Besides, what a menagerie such an assembly would be. There would be spiritual peers, feudal nobles, pushing colonials, sedate law lords, and a pot-pourri of Bohemian talent selected from the ranks of artists, musicians, doctors, scientists, and litterateurs. There would be hopeless to look for any real statesmanship from such a mixed body, and the problem as to the relations between the two Houses would be no nearer solution than before.

Lord Ripon, who recently resigned the office of Lord Privy Seal in Mr Asquith's Government, was always spoken of as "the greatest gentleman in the House of Lords." He had an extraordinary devotion to principle, and if he thought a cause to be a just one he would defend it at any cost to himself. He is best known through the extraordinary success he achieved in the difficult position of Viceroy of India. Never before in the history of that country has there been an instance of a Viceroy being so universally beloved, and when he left, the carriage in which he and Lady Ripon drove was crammed full of flowers presented by the grateful people. He married one of the most beautiful women of her time, and for more than 50 years she was his faithful helpmeet in both his public and domestic life. Her recent death evoked universal expressions of sympathy from all classes, and had much to do with Lord Ripon's retirement from any active part in politics.

Attention has recently been directed to the great danger that arises from the indiscriminate sale of sweets to children. A little boy, aged 7, died from an acute attack of gastro-enteritis, induced, as the medical evidence went to show, by an over-indulgence in sweetmeats. A correspondent, commenting on this case, points out that the working classes are never too poor to spare a penny for lollies, and that this deplorable habit of eating unwholesome, highly-coloured sweets is much on the increase amongst the young. To this habit some would attribute the bad digestion from which so many children suffer nowadays, the rapid decay of teeth, necessitating the use of false ones at an early age, and a general lowering of juvenile efficiency, both mentally and physically. It has even been suggested that a law should be passed making the sale of sweets to children under 10 illegal. Of course, everyone knows that most children eat more sweets than is good for them, if they get the chance, but we believe that actual deaths from this cause are of rare occurrence, and probably a wise parental control would prove more efficacious in checking undue indulgence than would any legal restraint. If, however, a youngster of tender years was known to be wasting his substance and ruining his health by excessive addiction to sticky lollies, his parents might be empowered to take out a prohibition order against him on swearing an information to that effect before a magistrate.

An important conference of clergy of almost all the different religious bodies was held in Auckland last week to consider the formation of a Christian Unity Society. As the proceedings were not open to the Press we are unable to state the nature of the deliberations that took place, but the following resolution was passed unanimously: "That a Christian Society be formed, which shall afford to all who join it, opportunities for common prayer, mutual study, and discussion, and the cultivation of a spirit of Christian brotherhood; and that a committee be formed to draw up a constitution for the society and to convene its first meeting." The object is to form a society in which men of different schools of thought can meet and discuss various points on which they agree or disagree. There is no doubt that many of our differences are such as might be dispelled by fuller knowledge. Most people are woefully ignorant of the views held by any church other than that to which they themselves belong. Also, there are many who have only the very haziest ideas on the doctrines of their own church. Many differences that at present exist were originally due to political rather than doctrinal reasons, and the state of things that gave rise to them has long since passed away. A clear recognition of this fact would probably do more than anything else to lead to a better understanding between the different religious bodies.

There is no doubt that on the main essentials of the Faith all Christians are agreed. The Apostles' Creed, and in all probability the Nicene Creed, would be accepted by all as an expression of their belief. Then again on matters of social reform, such as No-license, the different churches have shown a remarkable spirit of unity. Being thus agreed on what we might call fundamentals, there is every reason to hope that in course of time minor questions of church government and church doctrine will be amicably adjusted. For there can be no two opinions as to the waste both of men and of effort that ensues from the present divisions of Christendom, and this is especially noticeable in a sparsely populated country like our own. Added to this, there is the still graver matter of the harm done to religion itself by the spectacle of rival, and often warring, sects within the church. It is sincerely to be hoped that as Christian Unity Societies arise in different parts of the world, we shall be led to a clearer understanding of each other's positions, and from this clearer understanding will spring mutual respect and sympathy, without which there can be no unity worthy the name.

The American women are copying their English sisters and agitating for the suffrage. Dr. Aked has stated that if their wishes are not granted they will resort to daggers and dynamite. Exactly why a love for such essentially anarchistic weapons should be adduced as an argument for conferring the power of making laws on their users, the learned doctor does not condescend to explain. If people who display a love for murderous bombs are on that very account to be deemed fit persons to elect our legislators, then we have a splendid argument for extending the suffrage to prisoners in our goals, and to lunatics convicted of homicidal tendencies. The wild excesses, both in speech and action, of the suffragettes at Home have done much to prejudice their cause, and rash speeches, such as that of Dr. Aked, are not calculated to assist the movement in America. Constitutional changes are best effected by constitutional means, and wild excesses of the kind we have been accustomed to read about lately only tend to bring ridicule on their perpetrators.

In this connection it is interesting to note that there is already one town in America where women reign supreme, though as yet no suffragette has ever visited it. With only one or two unimportant exceptions the town of East Claridon, Ohio, is completely under petticoat administration. For years past almost all the men have been leaving the town to seek their fortunes in Cleveland, some thirty miles away. The consequence is that most of the public offices have, one by one, become vacant, and they have gradually been filled by women. Miss Nellie Cleator presides over the post-office, the school teachers are all mistresses, all the church offices, including that of sexton, are held by women, and though an aged minister still conducts service, yet he is assisted by the head-mistress of the public school, and it seems probable that she will eventually succeed him. The only doctor is a woman, a graduate of Ohio University, and women do most of the work on the farms, and drive the teams that traverse the dusty roads. It is said that perfect harmony and goodwill prevail in the town under the new regime, and such few men as still remain are resigned to their fate.

The suggestion that Maori should be made an optional subject for the University matriculation examination met with the warm approval of the Otago University Council. Dr. Hoeken, in bringing forward the motion, drew attention to the large amount of literature in the Maori language that had been collected by Sir George Grey, and the many excellent translations of the Bible made by Maori scholars. He urged that the study of Maori, as a dialect of Polynesian, was of great importance from an ethnological and linguistic point of view. But the greatest gain from its inclusion in the University course would undoubtedly be for the native himself. It would offer him an inducement to enter for matriculation, and would help to lighten the great difficulty he at present experiences from the fact that all his studies have to be conducted in a language that is not his mother tongue. The headmasters of our various native schools have frequently drawn attention to this very serious handicap from which their pupils suffer as compared with the pakeha, and it is to be hoped that the recommendation of the Otago Council will be favourably received by the authorities.

Lord Hugh Cecil, who has taken such a prominent part in the Education controversy at Home, is one of the best debaters in the present House of Commons. He is a Tory to the backbone, with a touch of mediæval monastic religious fervour, and his speeches often rise to the height of great orations. He is possessed of a fine literary sense, and has considerable humour, and a delicate play of wit and fancy. The Conservatives just now are weak in debate, and when Mr. Balfour is away, Lord Hugh is the only one able to give a strong lead against such practised speakers as Asquith, Lloyd George, Winston Churchill, and other great men on the Government benches. In spite of political differences, Lord Hugh and Mr. Winston Churchill are the best of friends in private life, and it will be remembered that at the latter's marriage Lord Hugh acted as best man. Though possessed of considerable courage in public life, he has not yet summoned up enough courage to get married, much to the disappointment of Society mamas, who would like to capture him for their daughters. To become the wife of Lord Hugh Cecil would be to obtain a much-coveted position in English society.