

# THE WEEKLY GRAPHIC

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### Religion and Politics.

It is much to be regretted that there seems to be a growing tendency to lose sight of the spiritual side of religion and to make religion the handmaid of politics. We have had the spectacle of the clergy throwing the whole weight of their public position into the scale in favour of one or other of different political candidates, and signing public advertisements calling on their congregations to support or to oppose different sides. To do this is to obliterate the great distinction between religion and politics. Religion is concerned with the emancipation of principles, politics, with the devising of the best and most practicable means of giving effect to these principles. It is the duty of the minister to preach the virtues of temperance, honesty, and chastity; but it is for the politician to decide as to whether these virtues can be best enforced by amending our present laws on licensing, bankruptcy and divorce. People who are equally sincere in their belief in a principle may differ widely in their views or the application of this principle. Christianity made slavery impossible by preaching the brotherhood of man, but it did not concern itself with the passing of laws for the immediate suppression of slavery. Legislation that suppresses the outward manifestation of any vice may only drive that vice further down. The evil spirit that returns to a house swept and garnished may take unto itself seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and the last slate may be worse than the first.

Merely belonging to the working class does not in itself confer a monopoly of all the virtues. It is not very easy to understand why it should be considered an all-important qualification in a Labour candidate that he should be engaged in manual labour. If we were going to build a new House of Parliament, there would be sense and reason in electing carpenters, bricklayers, and plumbers, and many of our politicians would doubtless do more good if employed in making benches instead of sitting on them. But politicians are supposed to work with their heads, and not with their hands, and it would be as sensible to elect a judge on the ground that he could make wigs as to elect a man to make laws on the ground that he could make bricks. We want the best men to represent us, and if we can get the best it does not matter whether they come from the cottage or the palace.

### Absconding Husbands.

Much blame is made to attach to absconding husbands who leave their wives and children to be looked after by the community, while they themselves enjoy the freedom and joys of bachelorhood in other lands. That every effort should be made to prevent men absconding and to bring them back if they do abscond, everyone will admit; but it is not so easy to decide what is best to be done with them when they are brought back. Life with the wife they have deserted is not likely to be too happy for either party, and to merely bring a man back and put him in gaol does not materially help matters. Added to this the cost of extradition is often considerable. Perhaps it would be possible to make the absconder pay towards the maintenance of his wife and family without actually bringing him away from the place to which he has absconded. An order made in New Zealand for the payment of a certain sum weekly could be enforced in other lands, and the money remitted here. Similarly, orders from other lands could be enforced in New Zealand against absconders who have taken refuge in our midst. The main thing is to establish some effective means whereby husbands shall not be able to shift on to others the responsibility of maintaining their families, and this could be best done by international agreements to enforce orders made against the culprits.

### A Quaint Idea.

In these days of implicit faith in the power of legislation it seems absurd to suggest any remedy for a social wrong except a legal remedy. But a few old-fashioned people have urged that there would be fewer absconding husbands if there were fewer bad wives. They say that a man will not usually desert a good home where he is well looked after, and that only the worst of men will deliberately abandon their children unless they are compelled to do so in order to escape from domestic discomfort. Many a worker finds that he has married a woman who has no idea of keeping a house, who wastes his earnings, and is careless of his interests, who lacks the motherly instinct necessary for the care and training of his little ones. After a heavy day's work he returns to a meal that is badly cooked and badly served, and to a wife whose constant nuzzling

## The Week in Review.

### NOTICE.

The Editor will be pleased to receive for consideration Short Stories and Descriptive Articles, illustrated with photos, or suggestions from contributors.

Bright, terse contributions are wanted dealing with Dominion life and questions.

Unless stamps are sent, the Editor cannot guarantee the return of unsuitable MSS.

### Home Rule for Scotland.

MR. ASQUITH has not had exactly a rosy time with the Irish Nationalists, but if we can judge from the tone of their official organ, the "Crisis Tara," the Scotch Home Rule party is likely to prove far more intractable than the Irish if it ever gains a representation in the House. There is nothing very startling in the demand for a national parliament, and we can understand the Scots wanting to coin their own law, but these nationalists want to have their own sovereign and their own language, and they propose to offer the Crown to Princess Ludwig of Bavaria, who would be hailed as Queen Mary III. The national language has an uncanny look when printed, and reads like an acrostic:—

Fialaidheachd do'n shogarrach 's enamhan briste do'n eacorach.  
Tir nam beanna, nam gleann 's nan gaisgeach  
Tir nam gleann, nan beanna, 's nam breacan  
"Duthaich nan cluaraan nam fuaran,  
Nan cuaran, 's nam fuar-bheanna."

The word "nam" has a familiar sort of sound about it, but the rest looks like swearing in an unknown tongue. We are told that the word "Tory" is derived from "Tosh-a-Righ," and "Whig" from "Co-tuigee." This explains a lot that was not very clear before. If in the near future we have a Scottish Home Rule party and an Irish party and Unionists and Liberals and Labourites and Social-

ists and Freetraders and Protectionists, and Little Englanders and Imperialists, with side splits in each, British politics ought to get a bit interesting. The voice of the people will be like the voice of many gramophones all emitting a different sound.

### The Workers and Arbitration.

The workers say that they have lost all faith in the Arbitration Court. According to Mr. Justice Sim, the workers regard the Court as a machine for eternally reducing hours and eternally increasing wages, and he does not quite see how this ideal is to be carried out. Mr. E. J. Carey, the Secretary of the Wellington Cooks and Waiters' Union, suggests that it should be done by degrees, and that if the Court fixed a week of 48 hours for men and 42 for women it could go on and reduce it to 36 next time. His Honor suggested a week of 40 hours before they went on to 36, so as to make the steps to what he called the ultimate goal more gradual. Meanwhile, of course, the weekly wage is to go up till it reaches a "living wage," and the standard of a living wage is to go up till every worker is satisfied. Mr. Sim did not think the Court could satisfy all these demands, and said that if the workers wanted all play and no work, with full rates of pay, they ought to appeal to the Legislature. In this there seems much sense. If the Court reduced the hours by 12 a week and increases the wages by a like number of shillings at every sitting it would still be some time before we reached the ultimate goal, whereas Parliament could quite easily pass a law enacting that all days dedicated to the sun or moon, or the old heathen deities, Tiw, Woden, Thor, Saturn and the faithful spouse of Odin, should be observed as close holidays, with full rates of pay. These holidays would be in addition to the ones at present obtaining, and if two holidays fell on the same day the worker would naturally be entitled to double pay. Mr. Carey says that the unions would be glad if both the Court and the Legislature granted them concessions, but it seems to us that the Legislature could do all that is required and do it more expeditiously.

### The Spheres of Each.

This applies to two questions that are brought prominently forward at election time—the question of no-license and the question of the totalisator. A religious man may believe that the best way to promote temperance is by abolishing all public houses, another man equally religious may believe that the suppression of open sales would lead to worse evils in the form of sly-grog shops. A man may feel that there would be less gambling were there no totalisator, and another may be of opinion that the totalisator, if abolished, would merely give place to forms of gambling that would be worse because they would be subject to no supervision or control. That is to say, that while two people may be at one on the importance of a principle they may differ widely as to the best means of giving effect to this principle. For this reason, it is necessary that religion should confine itself to its own domain, and not encroach on the domain of the legislator. As a citizen, a clergyman has a perfect right to his own views on politics and parties, but he loses sight of his high calling when he leaves the Word of God to serve the tables of party, and to openly advocate the cause of any particular candidate.

### Class Prejudice.

The appeal so often made to class prejudice is equally to be deprecated. A man is not necessarily a rogue because he is rich, nor is he necessarily virtuous because he is poor. A man may belong to what people call the upper classes, and still retain some modicum of goodness, and a man may belong to what people call the lower classes and still retain faint traces of original sin.