

THE OLIVE LEAF

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London, 1915.

DECEMBER blasts are sharp and shrill,
 But over all the sense of ill
 Lies brooding dark and dire.
 We may escape the biting blast,
 But not the war-fog clinging fast
 Beside the winter fire.
 Outside disaster grimly stalks,
 And close beside the terror walks
 With silent foot and slow ;
 While overhead the light is dim,
 The shadows growing yet more grim
 And dense than coming snow.
 O patient God, Thou Lord of all,
 On men the consequences fall
 Of every foolish deed.
 But Thou art good, and Thou art strong.
 Pray send Thy summer smile along
 The darkness of our need.

w.o.c.

Our Country.

Is there a man with soul so dead
 Who never to himself hath said :
 " This is my own, my native land ; "
 Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
 As home his footsteps he hath turned,
 From wandering on a foreign strand ?

So sang Sir Walter Scott, and, whether we have visited foreign parts or not, we shall all appreciate the beauty of his poetry, and the truth of his words. Who has not felt his heart

thrill at the bare memory of his boyhood's home ? No matter where it was situated, or amid what surroundings, among the romantic hills, on the barren plain, or by the stormy sea—no matter where, the recollection of it has the power of stirring all the tender sentiments and fond emotions of our nature. Age does not dim these ; when the years have passed, and the eyes have grown dim, and the things of yesterday are forgotten, these early memories grow more and more distinct and abiding. The American national hymn begins " O beautiful our Country ! " and that is the sentiment which inspires all national hymns that are worth anything. They are redolent of the soil, and the scenery, and the breath of infancy and childhood. The early impressions are never effaced ; the early affections are never superseded, and in this sense the words " Our Country " never lose their power. It is the same in all lands, and among all peoples, although the sentiment is enhanced when " Our Country " stands for the worthy and noble historical associations, the kindly deeds, the lofty character, of its inhabitants.

But it is not always used thus. It is sometimes abused and abused, and, since the loftiest things distorted become the lowest, the abuse of the term becomes most mischievous. Our standing quarrel with the military regime is that it is invariably guilty of this crowning sin ; it takes our holiest and best ideas and sentiments, and the words that express them, and prostitutes them to its own selfish and base uses.

Thus in the words that greet us on every notice board " Your Country needs you," the word " Country " has a wholly different connotation, which yet rests for its appeal on the natural and earlier one. We may be sure that Our Country never needs us to destroy and desolate any other people's Country. The

word is used in a different sense and means only that the Government of our Country, and its controlling and fighting classes which are at its back "need" men to cover up their mistakes, to carry out their aggressions, and to secure their ambitions. These people, however, are only a section of the inhabitants of our Country, and have no right to monopolise its interests, or power, or resources, for their own advantage. But they do, and since they make the laws, and control the forces of the nation, they have things pretty much their own way. It does not follow, by any means, that they are right, or that their interests are those of the people as a whole, which they seldom are, although it is necessary for them to persuade the masses that it is so, for without the people they could do little. Unfortunately it is easy to persuade them, and they are then used for their own undoing. This is happening continually.

But the King! The King is a representative man, at the head of the nation, and all the sources and functions of law, order, authority, etc. He represents "Our Country" in its corporate life, for all these things depend from him and upon him in his official capacity. He stands for them all; so that, to "honour the King," becomes the highest duty, and often the character of the King is such—as happily it is at present—that it is a joy and a privilege as well as a duty. But whenever the authority of the earthly sovereign is strained so as to conflict with or cover that of the heavenly Sovereign, which is just as real, tangible, and pressing, then the higher law always applies. We ought to obey God rather than man. The difficulty is that we do not sufficiently acknowledge the higher law as to obey it.



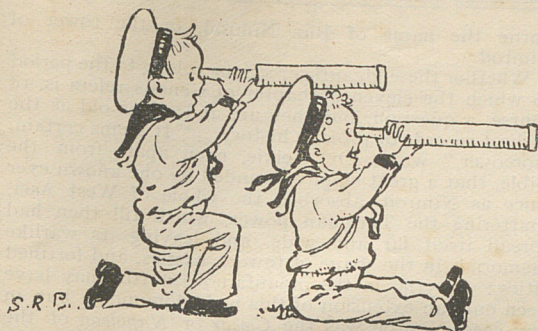
OUR COUNTRY.

Wanted to Know.

THE following very clever nonsense verses may amuse many more than our young readers. They are written by Mary Pickard Rollins, and appeared in a most readable American contemporary, *Good Housekeeping*. They have the brightness and go of much American minor verse, and constitute a good lesson of English literature as well.

"WHAT, WHEN, WHO, ETC."

- Pray, what did T.
Buchanan Read?
And what did E. A.
Poe?
What volumes did Elizer
Wright?
And where did E. P.
Roe?
Is Thomas Hardy now-
adays?
Is Rider Haggard
pale?
Is Minot Savage?
Oscar Wilde?
And Edward Everett
Hale?
Was Laurence Sterne?
was Hermann
Grimm?
Was Edward Young?
John Gay?
Jonathan Swift? and
old John Bright?
And why was Thomas
Gray?
Was John Brown? and
is J. R. Green?
Chief Justice Taney
quite?
Is William Black? R.
D. Blackmore?
Mark Lemon? H. K.
White?
Did Mary Mapes Dodge in time?
Did C. D. Warner? How?
At what did Andrew Marvell so?
Does Edward Whympers now?
What goodies does Rose Terry Cooke?
Or Richard Boyle beside?
What gave the wicked Thomas Payne?
And made Mark Akenside?
Does Henry Cabot Lodge at home?
John Horne Tooke what and when?
Is Gordon Cumming? Does G. W.
Cable his friends again?



Our Brave Defenders.

WHAT kind of world-warriors will you be,
Who spy so steadfastly over the sea?
Upon you, in a generation hence,
Will devolve the duty of home defence:
Say, what do you look for, what will you be?

Will you join the tempting army spies—
The "Scouts" who crawl, or the man who flies;
The "Boys' Brigade," with its "Christian aim,"
Or the "Tiger Cubs"?—They are all the same.

Better by far you were dead to-day
Than to give yourselves to the futile fray,
By which men seek the Kingdom of God;
A garden of good in a bloody sod.

To slay and slaughter, to murder and kill
On a wholesale scale, with unbridled will;
To "crush"; to create a chaos on earth,
Is not a mark of your noble birth,
But that of the brute, with sharpened claw,
With crimson'd fangs, and insatiate maw.

Here is no defence; it is danger dire
And destruction of home with blood and fire;
A foolish, futile, and maddening thing
Which can only defeat and disaster bring.

There's a truer defence, and a nobler aim,
Which does not prepare to murder or maim,
But brings the defender a spotless fame
And honours the Angels of God acclaim;
But 'twill test your manhood and courage too,
And call for the best you can do and know,
For 'tis never an easy path to go,
Where the many around you call out "No!"

W.O.C.



Heroic Captain.

A THRILLING story of shipwreck was related by the passengers and crew of the British steamer "Umzumbi," of London, on their arrival

at Brest after the occurrence. Seventy-three persons, including seven women and nine children, were cast ashore on the rocky coast of Molene Island, off Ushant, in the middle of the night. They were cared for by kindly fishermen, and later rescued by the Government tug "Titan."

The "Umzumbi" was bound from Capetown to London with a miscellaneous cargo and £80,000 in gold, contained in four huge treasure chests. When off Ushant at two o'clock on the Sunday morning the vessel encountered a dense fog. Speed was reduced and the foghorn sounded. Suddenly the vessel struck a rock. A large hole was torn in her bow, and she filled with water so rapidly that it was feared the passengers would not have time to get to the boats.

The captain ordered eight guns to be fired and the boats to be launched. The passengers hurried on deck, some of them in night attire. Those who remained to dress were warned that the ship would have to be abandoned immediately. There was no panic, and according to the passengers, the women and children "behaved splendidly." A lifeboat and several fishing smacks put off from shore in response to distress signals, and when they came alongside the passengers were found huddled in the ship's boats, half submerged in water. Heavy seas were breaking over the vessel, and the greatest difficulty was experienced in taking off the women and children, who were drenched to the skin and suffering severely from cold.

The captain of the "Umzumbi" refused to leave his ship, although there was every probability of her sinking. He insisted on the officers and crew going ashore and making a report of the disaster. The captain remained on board alone until the evening, when he consented to abandon the wreck, and left in a tug, completely exhausted.



The Bible Class.

THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL HISTORY.

FROM the new beginning after the Flood, the stream of history runs on with just a glimpse here and there of its progress. It is by no means a detailed history. At first the family of Noah is followed to the death of its founder. The teaching of this story from the genealogical standpoint, is that Noah was the father, not of the new race that peopled the earth after the Flood, but of the three related peoples whose history is the history of Palestine. This account ends with chapter ix.

The narrative next gives an account of the distribution of the descendants of Noah's sons, in other words of the origin of the peoples (x.-xi.). The larger

part of these two chapters is devoted to a general survey of the Human Race and its Divisions (x. 1-9). On this subject two different views seem to have been held.

The first was that the various peoples, each with its peculiar features, language, customs, etc., had their origin in a gradual dispersion along genealogical lines. This view is stated in chapter x., which contains the Table of Nations, the authors from whose narratives it was mostly compiled agreeing in teaching that the diversity in language, etc., among mankind is the result of the dispersion to the various quarters of the earth.

But this was not the only view of the matter current among the Hebrews. A more primitive one is taught in the story of the confusion of tongues, in chapter xi. 1-9, which begins with the declaration that at first **the whole earth**, or all the people on it, were of **one language**, literally *lip*, and they had all **the same words**. There had thus far not arisen even variations of dialect among them.

There is, however, one curious and interesting link between these two narratives differing so widely. It will form the point of our lesson, and it is to be found in the story of Nimrod, the first conqueror, the first mighty potentate and ruler by the authority of force in the earth, and what happened in the metropolis, the most important city in his empire. This is the story of chapter xi. 1-9.

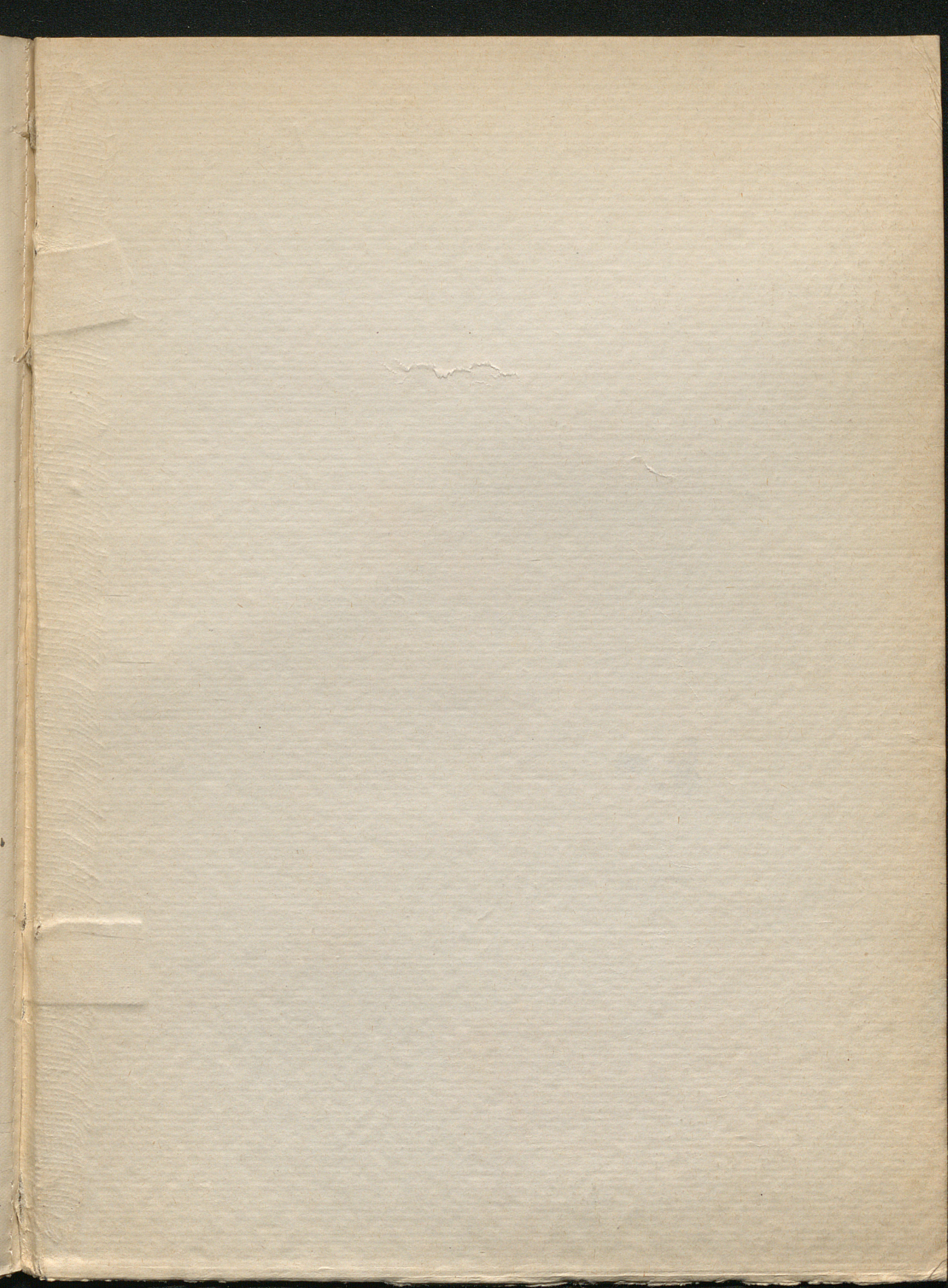
Early in the Table of Nations (chap. x. 6) mention is made of Cush, the son of Ham, and the names are given of his sons, and two of his grandsons, all of whom became the heads of powerful tribes. The Cushites spoke a language very closely allied to the Hebrew, Arabic, and other Semitic idioms, as if they and the Semitic races had originally lived together, and been of the same stock. They were a branch of the great family which had earliest left the common centre and risen to civilisation. Three of the chief Cushite peoples settled in the neighbourhood of the Persian Gulf. From a division of this great race rose the first great wars of conquest of which we have mention. At a very early period, a Cushite chieftain, Nimrod by name, the Alexander of his day, apparently with the help of the Semitic populations of the mouths of the Tigris and Euphrates, after a fierce struggle conquered the Turanian Accadians already long settled in Mesopotamia. The narrative is very brief. "And Cush begat Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one in the earth" (chap. x. 8). He is described as **mighty in hunting**, like many of the Assyrian kings. The phrase **before the Lord** apparently denotes the highest degree of the quality in question. His prowess became proverbial (chap. v. 9). "The beginning"—the nucleus—of his kingdom, we read, consisted of four cities—"Babel and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar," and, naturally, the territory belonging to them. Of these early cities, Babel—the *Bab*, gate or temple of the god El, afterwards known as the mighty Babylon—needs no identification. From this centre he made great conquests and built cities, including Nineveh, also a great historic place. This pre-historic conquest still finds a silent corroboration in the earliest monuments that have been preserved. The oldest ruins as yet known are those of the gigantic brick buildings at Borsippa, and more than twelve miles from it in a straight line, the huge mound known as Babil, which marks the what was once the centre of ancient Babylon. Here we find, says Dr. Geikie, the most interesting memorial of the great city, in the vast heap which has immemorially

borne the name of Birs Nimrod, or the tower of Nimrod.

Whether these gigantic erections belong to the period to which the eleventh chapter of Genesis refers is, of course, a question, but they are at least as old as the earliest records of profane history. "It seems certain, moreover," writes Dr. Geikie, even apart from the Bible, that a great empire, founded by one known ever since as Nimrod, absorbed the whole of West Asia, shattering the Turanian power, which till then had spread itself far and wide, and leaving its warlike memorials in the shape of towers, castles, and fortified cities; Assyria, in the mountainous north, may have been only an extension of this wide dominion; but, in any case, Nimrod was the *Cæsar* or *Napoleon* of the first races of men.

The building and arrest of "The Tower of Babel" and the "confusion of tongues," are evidently connected with this glimpse of the first great military empire. Bunsen sees in the narrative a hint of the providential breaking up of Nimrod's empire, and the subsequent dispersion of the population; resulting in such a formation of dialects and languages no longer understood except by the tribes in which they had sprung up, as happened at the dissolution of the Roman Empire. The Assyrian tablets brought to England by the lamented George Smith are sadly mutilated, but they give sufficient of the ancient traditions to give us a clue to the ancient interpretation of the event as being due to another revolt against the Divine authority and an attempt to be independent of God, as in the case of the Flood. This ended in overthrow and confusion. Echoes of the same tradition have reached us from other sources also; even Western antiquity is not without a tradition of the same kind, and the hieroglyphics of Egypt add their testimony to the recital of Genesis. In all there is the same explanation. The most curious and suggestive of all are the Jewish traditions of the building of the Tower and its consequences. "After the flood," say the Rabbis, "men were afraid of another similar visitation, and forsook Palestine, the pleasant land, where Noah had last lived and sacrificed, and settled all together in one place, the plains of Shinar. There they no longer yielded themselves to the gentle guidance of godly Shem, the son of Noah, but cast away from themselves the Kingdom of God, and did homage to Nimrod, the son of Cush, the son of Ham. For Nimrod was a man mighty in strength and in power. . . . Curious as these rabbinical stories are, they are in harmony with what seems to us the only conclusion from the Bible narrative. Very significant is the explanation: 'Though all were not so foolish as to think of conquering heaven, and driving God from His throne, yet they complied with Nimrod's wishes. Many saw in the tower a real safeguard against men being scattered, or drowned (again) by a flood. Others believed the scheme would advance the idolatry they loved. Therefore . . .'"—the quotation is too long to quote further.

Modern history has taught us the same lesson, and notoriously the present world-wide war. It comes to this: Militarism ends in despotism and war, and these in slavery and general confusion and overthrow in deluge and destruction. Wars, at their best, are a revolt against the Divine government of man's life and an attempt to capture the administration of God's empire and to control its affairs by force. All history is a standing witness to the consequences and the futility of the attempt. And yet we pray, even in the high places of our revolt, "Our Father, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. . . ."



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