

TALK OF EUROPE

MR. BONAR LAW has won the contest for the Lord Rectorship of Glasgow University, polling over three hundred votes more than Mr. Bertrand Russell, who has made the fighting of University elections almost a hobby. The result of the contest might be regarded as almost a foregone conclusion, but it cannot be said to redound to the credit of our seats of learning that they should prefer a front-rank politician like Mr. Bonar Law to one of the more distinctly original intellects of our time.

BERNARD SHAW once made some truthful and striking remarks in regard to high starched collars. 'Cloth filled with stiff white mud — unbearable monstrosity —' these were some of the phrases. From a recent *Chronicle* we clip this terrifying item.

'Falling down in a fit, Major Gerald Pilcher, of Ebury Street, Pimlico, was suffocated by the stiff high collar which he wore.

'At the inquest a verdict of accidental death was returned.'

EVERY great event in England is almost certain to have a literary echo. The recent railroad strike began a discussion on railways in literature. The following letter was written to the editor of the *Observer*. Its comment on Frank Norris is of interest.

Sir: Writing on the above subject in your issue of the 5th instant 'Penguin' refers most interestingly to various novels for which the railway has provided either the main theme or several more or less important incidents. There are two comments of his, however, which I should like to traverse. The first is that the greatest of all 'railway novels' is Zola's *La Bête Humaine*, and the second is that the nearest counterpart to *La Bête* is *Dombey and Son*. I think that in making these statements 'Penguin' has overlooked in each case the late Frank Norris's *Octopus*. That powerful novel is not concerned with

the railway as an incidental, merely — as *Dombey* is — the *Octopus* is the railway and the whole plot and motive of the book are concerned with the methods of the railway companies of the United States; and the strength of *The Octopus*, the fine fascination of its style, and the skill with which the story is worked out place it, even in these respects surely, upon a level, at least, with Zola's work. Yours, etc.

S. Elliott Napier.

Cedar Bank, Greenwich.

In England, some have urged the formation of a league of youth whose purpose would be the expression of the will and ideals of the younger generation. The following letter apropos of the league recently appeared in the *British Nation*.

Sir: Mr. Siegfried Sassoon and yourself may be interested to learn that a British League of Youth is already in existence. Mr. Lloyd George is the president, and the official letter paper of the League is headed with the following quotation from Mr. Benjamin Kidd:

'Give us the young. Give us the young, and we will create a new earth.'

This Lloyd Georgian League was introduced into the world by Lord Bryce, the Bishop of London, and Dr. Clifford. Its principal objects, according to an interview with its secretary, Mr. J. Aubrey Rees, are to 'suggest and advocate the claims of Youth in the filling of public offices.' (With this goal in view the selection of Mr. Lloyd George as president may be regarded as an inspiration.) 'To promote and secure the adoption of schemes aiming at an increase in production.'

'We believe,' explains Mr. Rees, 'that Youth hitherto has been "misdirected."' It will be the object of the League, under the presidency of Mr. Lloyd George and with the assistance of the Bishop of London, etc., 'to encourage and organize among the youth of both sexes the study of contemporary history and present-day

political problems and movements.' Toward which object is to be invited the coöperation of the universities, the public schools, and educational leaders generally.

Is it too late for a real League of Youth to be established? Of men and women, say, under forty, who would be allowed to think and act for themselves. Yours, etc.,

Jerome K. Jerome.

Wood End House, Marlow
September 24, 1919.

FOUR plays of Shakespeare are included in the programmes of Berlin theatres for the present winter. The Grosses Schauspielhaus, under the direction of Max Reinhardt, will give in its opening week *Julius Cæsar* (along with two works of Goethe, and one each of Æschylus, Aristophanes, and Hauptmann); the Volksbühne (Bülowplatz), *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Cymbeline*; the Schiller Theatre (Charlottenburg), *As You Like It*.

A SERIOUS conflict between peasants and armed troops has taken place at Riesi, in Sicily, in which four soldiers and four peasants were killed and a number of persons were wounded. For some time past the peasant population of the province of Caltanissetta, in which Riesi is situated, have been kept in a state of unrest verging on sedition over the unoccupied land question. Agitators have been at work stirring up the inhabitants, and inciting them not only to imitate what the peasants had done in some districts of Roman Campagna — that is, to occupy the uncultivated lands — but to take a step further in a revolutionary direction, and to expropriate all the landed proprietors. The region is an important mineral centre, furnishing chemical products for fertilizers, cream of tartar, and potter's clay, and is at the same time also a very fertile soil for agriculture.

The peasants were instigated by the astute agitators to make a general rising and to claim all the land. The ferment reached a point causing serious alarm to the local authorities. Recently some four thousand peasants gathered at Riesi, and decided to carry out their revolutionary theories. They were harangued by the

leaders, who incited them against the landowners, but when the gangs began acts of violence a force of Carabinieri intervened. The peasants, who were armed, fired on the public force, and killed four soldiers, who had come to reinforce the Carabinieri. A regular skirmish followed, and the troops, who were compelled in self-defense to use their weapons, fired back, killing four peasants. Some thirty persons were wounded.

SHE came to meet me at the train,
And when I missed it, came again
With welcome all undimmed; for me
Fresh scones appeared, fresh China tea.
She told me — though some years had
ranged
Since last we met — I was unchanged.
The maid she lent to give me aid
Was not the abashing kind of maid;
No carbon balls with winter store
Were lurking in the bottom drawer;
The linen breathed of lavender,
The midnight biscuit-box was there;
Her choice of bed-time books was mine,
She sent my breakfast up at nine;
The bath was boiling hot, and fit
For kings the things to cast in it.
She did not hunt me out to view
The Ruin, or a cairn or two
Nor seem to entertain, yet still
I had no gaping hours to fill.
Her dinner frock was quite as bad
As mine, the only one I had;
Her food was NOT the homely food
That's best described as Plain but Good;
And when she said Good-bye, I thought
She really meant it all; in short,
She made me feel, though Home is best,
It's good to be a pampered guest.

'Oisin.'

So many of our readers were interested in the Asquith-French debate, that Mr. Asquith's final letter seems well worth the printing. It is quoted from the *Morning Post*:

We have received for publication the following copy of a letter addressed by Mr. Asquith to a correspondent with reference to the preface to the recently-published second edition of Viscount French's book,

1914: