

## CURRENT EVENTS.

AMERICAN SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.—In paying homage to the nation's dead at Arlington on the 30th May last, President Coolidge recalled the issues and the deeds that made heroes of those buried there and admonished the living of the trends in society and in government—of the lack of respect for law, and the over-centralization of Federal Government—the breaking down of the solidarity of the American system which rests fundamentally on strong State government.

With the theme that government in a democracy is fundamentally a local matter, after having given full meed to the upholders of law and defenders of the Constitution in crises in our history, the President, with much earnestness and deep conviction, surveyed the present day evils, social and governmental.

According to the newspapers those who listened to the President recognized that in no previous utterance had he shown himself so earnest. It was a distinct message for Memorial Day and an inspiration for the future to reform evils that have grown up in the dual system of government.

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SHALL A MINISTER WRITE?—The following item appeared in the July number of the "Empire Review":—"At the instance of a Socialist, the only non-capitalist of the Cabinet has been prevented from earning a living by his pen. Every other Cabinet Minister but Lord Birkenhead has private means of his own; and most of them must do, at least, an hour's work daily on the average, either minding their estates or keeping an eye upon their business. They could probably not be Ministers without this accessory revenue, as under modern conditions all a Cabinet Minister's income may go in taxation and social entertainment. Yet Lord Birkenhead, under a recent ruling, is to be debarred from spending probably less than an hour a day making enough to live upon when his only capital is his brain, which must perish with him. It is another instance of mediocrity's intolerance of genius and the revenge taken by fools upon intellect. But the matter cannot halt there. Ministers' salaries will have to be raised to a sum sufficient for their own needs and that of their office; and some adjustment is necessary to enable a public man to reach his audience. As it is, a Cabinet Minister may go to his constituency out of election time, and speak to an almost empty room and be barely reported in a local paper. His one chance of getting across the footlights to millions of voters may be through the medium of a popular national journal. Is it wise to deny him his opportunity? As it is, readers of many journals are fed upon such tawdry trivialities that a change cannot fail to be salutary; and only by an article specially written for them by a Minister can they perhaps be got to take a part in the nation's affairs at all. There are Ministers who would be paid £10,000 a year to write for them; there are others who would be paid nearly as much not to. But

give them the chance. Authorship is too rare an art not to be worthy of its hire."

The same number contained one of Lord Birkenhead's brilliant biographical sketches of the English judiciary, which had been running in that magazine for over a year. It is now announced that these sketches, as well as some still unpublished ones, will shortly appear in book form. The last mentioned sketch is of Lord Westbury, who died on July 20th, 1873. Some of the older members of the Bar will remember an epitaph of this eminent Judge, which was suggested by a legal wit, *apropos* of his judgment in the famous "Essays and Reviews" controversy, which is reported in 2 Moore, N. S. 375, *sub nom. Williams v. Bishop of Salisbury*. Lord Birkenhead quotes a few lines of this "epitaph," but it is worth being reproduced in full:—

"Richard Baron Westbury,  
Lord High Chancellor of England.  
He was an eminent Christian,  
An energetic and successful Statesman,  
And a still more eminent and successful Judge.  
During his three years tenure of office,  
He abolished  
The time-honoured institution of the Insolvent's  
Court, the ancient mode of conveying land,  
And  
The eternity of Punishment.  
Towards the close of his earthly career,  
In the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,  
He dismissed Hell with costs,  
And took away from the orthodox members of the  
Church of England,  
Their last hope of everlasting damnation."

M. J. G.

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**JURY DUTY WORTH WHILE.**—We are informed by the daily press that Montreal's problems with respect to accommodating jurymen are on the road to solution. To make jury duty not only comfortable, but comparatively attractive, the quarters laid out in the new court house, which will be finished this fall, provide for palatial accommodations for jurymen, running on individual private rooms and baths, dining room and a billiard room and lounge. The daily stipend for jurymen has also been increased to five dollars a day. All of which prompts our muse to sing:—

When the Montreal lawyer finds business grow poor he  
May abandon the Bar and serve on the Jury.

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**THE SECURITY PACT.**—A complete accord on all the main points of a Security Pact was reached in the course of conversations at Geneva on September 2nd between M. Briand, the French foreign minister; Austin

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Chamberlain, British secretary for foreign affairs, and M. VanDerveelde, Belgian foreign minister. M. Vanderveelde went so far as to say to the press there was nothing left but the regulation of details so far as Paris, Brussels and London were concerned. The three allied statesmen are awaiting the report of the committee of jurists now sitting at London, before finally drawing up the basic principles of their attitude toward Germany.

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