

to cast stones at those who choose to live in the shadow of active volcanoes.

The word "tax" is indeed the proper word to apply to our fire loss, for any loss from fire is a tax which in the end is distributed over the entire community. It is not a matter of indifference to Mr. A. that Mr. B.'s garage burns down from a cigarette stub thrown near a heap of oily waste. Mr. A. will pay part of the loss in the increased insurance premiums on his own property. It is not a matter of indifference to Mr. A. that Mr. C.'s wood-lot is destroyed by the smoldering fire of a careless camper. The wood-lot may not be insured, but the price of fuel and lumber is affected by an accumulation of just such accidents.

It is time for Americans to change themselves to a nation of fire-fighters.

## THE AGENDA OF THE ARMS CONFERENCE

AS the host of the foreign Governments to be represented at the Conference that is to begin its sessions at Washington on November 11, the Government of the United States has drawn an outline of subjects to be considered. In doing this the American Government has no intention, as it is clearly understood by all concerned, to exercise any control over the discussion or to limit it in any way, but acts for the convenience of the participants. Informal inquiry has undoubtedly secured information of what other Governments have in mind, and this tentative programme has been drafted in the light of that information. The outline of subjects to be considered, or agenda, as transmitted by the United States to the principal Powers, is as follows:

### LIMITATION OF ARMAMENTS

1. Limitation of naval armament—Basis of limitation. Extent of limitation. Fulfillment of conditions.
2. Rules for control of new agencies of warfare.
3. Limitation of land armament.

### PACIFIC AND FAR EASTERN QUESTIONS

1. Questions relating to China—principles to be applied.
2. Application to subjects:
  - (a) Territorial integrity.
  - (b) Administrative integrity.
  - (c) Open Door—equality of administrative and industrial opportunity.
  - (d) Concessions—monopolies and other economic privileges.
  - (e) Development of railways.
  - (f) Preferential railroad rates.
  - (g) Status of existing commitments. Questions relating to Siberia. Similar questions relating to China.
3. Mandated islands.

The topics which we mentioned last week as being likely to be under discussion at the Conference—such as "the

Open Door," possible trusteeship for China, revisions of taxes, tariffs, currency, and legal procedure in China—are all specific questions which would come under one or another of the headings in this programme.

Although questions as to armament come first on the programme, there is no indication that they will necessarily come up first for discussion. On the contrary, there is every indication that, in whatever order the subjects are considered, the decisions as to armament, if any decisions are to be made, must wait upon the settlement of certain questions of policy. Armaments are tools used by nations for the purpose of defending or enforcing their policies. If a nation's policies are not questioned or likely to be questioned, it will have little occasion for using those tools. If its policies are in danger of being questioned or resisted, it will either have to abandon its policies or find some tools for defending or maintaining its policies. If a nation is strong in men and resources and believes its policies are right, it is not likely to abandon them, and therefore is likely to find some tools by which to persuade other nations not to interfere. In a group of strong nations such as are to assemble in Washington it is therefore imperative that there should be some understanding as to one another's policies and some agreement as to a mutual course of action concerning them before there can be any real limitation of armaments. No one with reason expects this Conference to result in disarmament or anything like disarmament; but every one may reasonably expect a limitation or even reduction of armaments if the United States, Great Britain, and Japan can agree on certain policies in the Pacific and Far East. It is for that reason that the Pacific and Far Eastern questions on this programme are much the most important of all questions to be discussed.

It is true that concerning Europe as well as the Far East there are problems remaining unsolved. To France those problems are paramount. Month by month France has come to realize more and more her growing isolation on the Continent. As one of her journalists, Jacques Bainville, says in "La Liberté" concerning the withdrawal of American and lessening of British troops on the Rhine, it would be unjust to leave to the French the whole task of mounting guard and then reproach them with having too many soldiers. "If we are obliged to maintain costly armaments," he adds, "it is not for our amusement. It is because we have not a good Peace Treaty. There is the reply all ready, if at Washington any one should raise the question of French militarism."

This states clearly the relation between European problems and the question of land armaments, for the maintenance of armies in the world to-day is largely for the enforcement of European policies. Naturally, therefore, the French are chiefly interested in the subject of limitation of land armament and the policies that affect the European Continent. The policies concerning the Pacific and the Far East can be enforced only or at least chiefly by naval armament, and it is naval armament which is imposing on the Governments of the United States, Great Britain, and Japan their principal financial burdens. Therefore, so far as those three countries are concerned, naval armament and the policies of the Far East and Pacific are going to be the prime questions under discussion.

## IMMORTAL D'ARTAGNAN

THE love of adventure and romance never dies. The imagination still craves for it in literature. Neither the realist nor the psycho-analyst can banish it. If the modern novelist does not satisfy this longing, we may always turn to the old masters of romance—and to whom more often than to the first Dumas, that great novelist of adventure from whom plot and intrigue, the clashing of swords and the gallop of horses' hoofs, the splendor of the Court and the jest of the tavern, masked ladies and gallants with sweeping plumes, came so abundantly and so gayly? Probably, too, when Dumas is named, most of us think first of D'Artagnan, although the prisoner of the Château d'If and Chicot who jests and fights his way through the beloved Valois romances may have each his adherents. Robert Louis Stevenson, himself no mean romancer, exclaims: "Not even my friends are quite so dear as D'Artagnan."

It was inevitable that "The Three Musketeers" (so called, as the old jest goes, because there were four and only one was a musketeer) should be meat for the movies. Three separate versions have been—and still are, we believe—on the screen. It was equally inevitable that sooner or later Douglas Fairbanks must act D'Artagnan. Nature has given him many requisites for the part. The joyous smile, the lively optimism, the readiness in resource, the ceaseless activity, all are common to the actor and the part. He is not the perfect or complete D'Artagnan because he is sometimes acrobatic where D'Artagnan was agile; a comical gymnast who leaps tables, throws benches, or scales walls where D'Artagnan was a brave and brill-

iant swordsman. But Douglas would not be Douglas without his own peculiar pranks, and probably his audiences like him all the better as he is. His performance assuredly has dash, and it has also the feeling of romance and ardor. As this version of the story is arranged we have before us only the youthful, impetuous, reckless fighter and adventurer, not the wily, long-headed campaigner and cavalier that D'Artagnan became—and this also fits well with Douglas Fairbanks's gifts.

Altogether, the new screen play of the immortal romance is a spirited and enjoyable performance—a striking contrast to the senseless “comedies,” the mawkish vampire plays, and the trite Wild Western thrillers from which the art of the screen has not yet freed itself. When we think of D'Artagnan hereafter, we shall be apt to vision him through the cheerful grin of Douglas.

A special word of credit should be awarded this version of “The Three Musketeers” for the pictorial skill with which it reproduces the Paris of Louis XIII. The streets, the houses, the vehicles, the shopkeepers, as well as the palaces and courtiers' costumes, have been planned and grouped with elaborate art and picturesque effect. The acting, too, apart from the central figures, is generally, but not invariably, good. Cardinal Richelieu is notably well done, with quiet, deliberate effec-



DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS IN “THE THREE MUSKETEERS”

D'Artagnan

Athos

Porthos

Aramis

tiveness; D'Artagnan's comrades in arms are a bit too much subordinated to him; that is natural enough, but the Dumas lover rather misses the full flavor of Porthos's personality, while Aramis is far from being the elegant, subtle Jesuit and gallant of the book.

The popularity of such a picture play as this suggests that the literature of

adventure has not yet been fully searched for dramatic episodes that may appeal to the eye without offending either one's taste or one's reason.

Romance like that of Dumas's D'Artagnan is what an old writer had in mind when he spoke of “that which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney-corner.”

## OUR UNKNOWN LANGUAGE

BY BEVERLEY NICHOLS

IT is a well-worn joke to affirm that Americans speak a different language to us Englishmen. The “la-di-da” Englishman who prefaces every remark with “By Jove” and the coarse, blustering American who can say nothing without first ejaculating “I guess” are fortunately only products of the music-hall, but the difference in accent is there clearly enough, and, if anything, it is a pleasant difference. The concise tones of the New Yorker, the soft drawl of the South—we should be as sorry to lose these as we should regret the disappearance of the Irish brogue or the Scottish burr.

But there is another aspect of our common language which is fast being forgotten. Very few Englishmen, and I would venture to say even fewer Americans, realize how astonishing rich is the English language in history and legend. Every hour of the day we use phrases which have behind them centuries of custom. The business man in his sky-scraper, dictating a business letter in a businesslike way, would probably be surprised if you pointed to some of his phrases and said, “That repre-

sents an old superstition which has been handed down from the Roman Empire,” or “That word is really the relic of a piece of old English economic history.” But it would be true none the less, and in these days of careless speech and slipshod language it would be an extremely valuable lesson if we could realize how many of our words and phrases are not only words and phrases, but little poems and histories in themselves.

For instance, how many people realize that when talking about their “Adam's apple” they are giving expression to a legend nearly as old as the hills?

The legend is that when Adam ate the fatal apple a portion of the succulent fruit stuck in his throat and made the lump which for ever after men have to carry as a warning. Hence the man with a big Adam's apple is supposed to be all the more wary of Eve!

Such phrases are scattered richly throughout our language. For instance, when we say that something is “not worth a rap,” most of us imagine that a “rap” means a rap of the knuckles. But the true origin of the phrase dates from

George I, when the “rap” was a counterfeit coin in Ireland which passed itself off for a halfpenny, but was really worth practically nothing.

It is the same with the phrase “mare's nest,” of which we make frequent use nowadays. “Mare” here has nothing to do with a horse. The word is a corruption of Mara, a particularly malevolent demon, possessing, according to our forefathers, a nest filled with marvelous jewels and gold. Whether he existed or not, he certainly influenced our speech, for whenever we refer to “nightmares” we are again unconsciously evoking the same evil being.

Some of our expressions which seem absolutely meaningless have a sound historical basis, such as “blue stocking.” To-day it means a bookworm of the female sex. It has nothing to do with anything so indelicate as hosiery. But in the sixteenth century in Paris and Venice there really were societies of learned women who wore bright-blue stockings to distinguish them from their ignorant sisters.

In the same way, when you talk about a “baker's dozen” you are actually re-