



Life, Literature and Education.

[Contributions on all subjects of popular interest are always welcome in this Department.]



E. Wyly Grier, R.C.A.

PEOPLE, BOOKS, AND DOINGS. THE JAPANESE CONSUL.

Hon. T. Nosse, Japanese Consul-General in Canada, who has been brought into much prominence of late by reason of the "Japanese question," is described as a gentleman of very pleasing manners and much refinement. He was born in 1860, at Ashmory, a small town on the coast of the Sea of Japan. In 1880 he went to the United States, where he was successively attached to the Japanese Legation at Washington, and the Consulate in New York. Returning to the East in 1885, he became Deputy Vice-Consul of Japan at Fusan, Corea, and was subsequently appointed as Vice-Consul at Chefoo, China, and Consul at Chemulpo, Corea. In 1896 he was established as Consul at Vancouver, B. C., where he did all in his power to promote trade between Canada and Japan, meeting with such success that the total exports to Japan were increased, within a very few years, from about \$8,000 to over \$500,000. In 1899 he was sent as Consul to Chicago, and three years later was transferred to Montreal. In 1904 he was appointed to the Consulate in Ottawa, where he has won golden opinions on every hand. His commercial talents are remarkable, and he is devoting his life to promoting commerce between Japan and the British Empire.

ESPERANTO.

The extraordinary interest which is being shown in Esperanto, the new "universal language," invented by Dr. Zamenhof, is becoming a matter of some concern to those who feel that language should grow, and that its dignity is being mutilated by this invasion of a made-to-order article.

Nevertheless, the Third Esperanto Congress, which met at Cambridge in August, was accorded a hearty welcome by the great University, and was regarded as a most successful convention by the large body of Esperantists assembled from every part of Europe. During the Congress, sermons were delivered in Esperanto by Monsignor Giambene, Keeper of the Archives to the Sacred College of Indulgence, at the Vatican, and by Rev. W. B. Selbie, of the Congregational Church, while High Anglicans and Evangelicals united at Great St. Mary's in using a Book of Common Prayer in Esperanto, which has been approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dr. Zamenhof is one of the few innovators who have lived to see their ideas meet with widespread success. He is a Russian Pole, and was nineteen years of age when he invented Esperanto. At that time he was living at Bielstok, then inhabited by a mixed population of Russians, Germans, Jews and Poles. Noticing that frequent and bitter misunderstandings took place, chiefly because of the inability of the opposing parties to explain themselves in so many languages, he devised Esperanto, and published his first pamphlet regarding it, at his own expense, just twenty years ago. Now his language is spoken by numbers of people in almost every country in Europe, more than twenty monthly journals are published in it, and there are flourishing Esperanto Circles in India, China, Japan, and the United States.

Only the invention, however—not the idea—can be said to be new. Bacon, Descartes and Leibnitz, all had dreams of a universal language, and made some attempt towards its realization. At a later period, Dr. John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, essayed a similar task, and, a little later, Schleyer invented the much-discussed Volapuk, which, however, failed in establishing a foothold, probably because of the fact that it is almost as difficult to learn as an ordinary language.

Esperanto, on the contrary, is exceedingly simple. It is made up of but 2,000 root-words, from which all others, by a system of prefixes and suffixes, are derived. For example, from bovo (ox) come bovino, cow; bovido, calf; bovaro, herd; bovineto, heifer; bovaio, beef; bovisto, herdsman, etc. The grammar consists of but sixteen short rules, which can be mastered in an hour. There are no irregular verbs, no indefinite article, no grammatical genders. The parts of speech are distinguished by vowel endings, the vowels, a, e, i, o, added to the root, invariably forming adjective, adverb, verb and noun, respectively. The vowels also give the conjugation of the verb.

As may be seen, but little fault can be found with Esperanto on the ground of its being unmusical. Although it is altogether unlikely that it will ever supplant other languages for general conversation, its advantages, as a commercial medium are obvious, and would seem to render any question as to its final adoption for that purpose superfluous. It is interesting to note that Lord Roberts, the famous British soldier, is President of the British Association of Esperantists.

AN ARTIST OF DISTINCTION.

The subject of to day's sketch, Mr. Edmund Wyly Grier, one of the artists of whom Canada may be proud, was borne in Melbourne, Australia, Nov. 26, 1862. His father was Charles Grier, L. R. C. P.; his mother, Maria Agnes Munro, granddaughter of Alexander Munro, the third and last of the Monros who for three generations occupied the Chair of Anatomy in Edinburgh University.

Mr. Grier's parents returned to England in 1866, and came to Canada ten years later, the future artist receiving his education at Upper Canada College, Toronto. In 1879 he went to London to study under Legros, at the Slade School of Art, and later worked at Julian's, in Paris, and in the Scuola Libera, Rome. In Paris his drawing gained high commendation from Robert Fleury, the friend and adviser of the famous Russian, Marie Bashkirtseff. He exhibited his first picture in the Royal Academy, London, Eng., in 1886, and his fine picture of the Hon. Edward Blake, in his robes as Chancellor of the University, exhibited in 1895, is the sixth from his brush which has gained the high distinction of being admitted to that highest institution of art in the British Empire. Mr. Grier has evidently found the Blake family admirable subjects for portraits, for he has since painted the excellent portrait of Mr. S. H. Blake which was so admired at the recent Toronto Exhibition.

Mr. Grier's fame is not, however, confined to Great Britain or her colonies. In 1890, his picture, "Be-reft" (of which a full-page illustration appeared in "The Farmer's Advocate" Christmas number for 1906), was awarded a gold medal at the Paris Salon, no insignificant distinction, since in the Paris Salon, if anywhere, the gladiators among the artists of the world meet.

Some of those in Canada whose portraits Mr. Grier has painted are, Prof. Goldwin Smith (for the Bodleian Library, Oxford); Chief Justices Sir William Meredith, Sir George Burton, William G. Falconbridge, Sir William Mulock, J. D. Arnour (for the Dominion Government). He has also painted notable portraits of Sir John A. Macdonald, Sir Oliver Mowat, Sir Sandford Fleming, Frederick Wyld (awarded silver medal at the Pan-American Exposition), W. K. MacNaught, Hugh Ryan, Mrs. Edward Blake, Mrs. Strachan, Mrs. Eber Ward, Lady Mulock, Mrs. Falconbridge, Mrs. A. T. Wood, Mrs. J. K. Kerr.

An increasing number of commissions in the United States necessitated his taking a studio in New York, and Mr. Grier works there two or three months each year, this fact of itself proclaiming the repute in which he is held. As a rule, work seeks the true master of it. One of his portraits occupied a central place in the National Academy of Design, New York last winter.

In 1895 Mr. Grier married Florence Geale, daughter of Mr. J. Geale Dickson, of Niagara. At present he and his family live in their home overlooking one of the many pretty valleys in the outskirts of Toronto.

THE DRAMA OF LIFE.

The literary or historic drama, exhibiting, as it does, a picture of human life, consists of comedy and tragedy. So life itself is made up of light and shade, joy and sorrow, success and failure. The reality ever remains, whether truly or falsely represented. But while this is true, it is also true that in real life we ourselves hold in appreciable measure the power of choosing between light and shade. As to the men of old, so Providence is ever saying to us, "Choose ye." In choosing between industry and idleness, between activity and indolence, between virtue and vice, we determine largely whether our life shall be one of joy or sorrow, whether it shall be one of success or failure—a comedy or a tragedy.

No one's life, however, is wholly a comedy, or wholly a tragedy. Life is neither a laugh nor a cry.

"Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destin'd end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day."

Man is not complete master of circumstances. Extraneous forces, both of mind and matter, are ever moulding him, and shaping his activities, his ambition, and his destiny. It is quite true that strong natures are capable, in a measure, of marshalling the forces about them. But let us look for a little into that oft-quoted proverb from Sallust, that "Every man is the architect of his own fortune," and I think it will become apparent that the maxim contains less truth and less philosophy than it is usually accredited with. We are prone to accept the ipse dixit of noted men without examination. Critically considered, the proposition under review is false and absurd. Face the facts: One's position in life is often a matter of birth, always more or less so. Over the circumstances and conditions of his birth man has absolutely no control. One man is born to be a king—born heir-apparent to a throne; millions are born peasants, doomed to toil for bread. In the nature of things this is so, and must continue to be so, unless a totally different order of things should arise, for all derive sustenance from the products of labor, the difference being that the peasant toils for it, the king does not. The one sits in a high place and receives admiration and homage, the other dwells obscure. The one may have as little to do in ordering his fortune and his destiny as the other. Then, again, men are born with widely-different constitutions and temperaments. One man starts from vigorous parentage, from whom he inherits physical robustness or unusual vigor of mind, while another is handicapped by hereditary weakness or proclivity to disease. Further, one man is born with special qualities which develop into controlling force in some particular line, as business, finance, professional pursuits, etc. Another man evinces no marked aptitude, and so remains in the rank and file. Someone will reply, "But much can be done by training." This is true. But how much easier to train special abilities than