

Truth's Contributors.

A WORLD FOR FOOLS.

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A youth of more than average self-conceit was opening a milk bottle, and not knowing just how to manage it, he pinched his fingers in the wire spring. He burst out with the refreshing ejaculation, "Why can't those idiots make things so that one can use them without being hurt?" But actually the spring was all right. A dull child could easily get through the danger of using it after being once shown. The real idiot in the case, if that word must be used at all, was the clumsy operator. He was not bright enough to take it in the right way, but instead of good naturedly laughing at his own expense, he stood up and began to sling around the abusive word "idiot."

Thereupon arose certain reflections. A large class of persons accuse others of folly because they do not understand them. The maker of books which the readers cannot comprehend with one reading must be a fool. The inventor of a machine which needs some natural intelligence, and a little careful study of it to run it efficiently, is a fool. Few persons can pinch their own fingers without calling some one else a fool for being the innocent cause of it. Many seem as if they would like to live on without having to think about anything, or, in other words, they would like to live in a world planned to be the home of fools, instead of a world where each person must exercise some intelligence in adapting himself to his conditions and surroundings. It does take so much trouble to understand things in their true lights and relations! How much effort would be saved if everything came out so that it would be understood at a glance, without any thought from us! But if that were the case then this would be a world for fools, and not for wise men. "The earth was not made for the indolent, the active rule." Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. Ceaseless change and activity of both body and mind is the first law of success. The youth, or man who contends against these principles would find his appropriate abode in a world made for fools.

Many persons illustrate this in the management of their own bodies. I have heard an intelligent and trusted old physician say that at forty a man is either a doctor or a fool. That is, he has observed and studied the wonderful machine which was given him to do his work with in this world, until he understands its ways, and can draw out its strength and humor and cover up its weaknesses, and so get every day the very best possible service from it, and he knows much more about his physical constitution than his regular physician does. Except in rare and extreme cases, he knows what to do with himself without consulting any one. If this be not true at forty, then, according to the saying above quoted, the man is a fool. But how much thinking and observing are necessary before a person can know himself so thoroughly. How much attention to the effects of certain things, how much self-denial in other things, what comparison of one time and condition with another. A weak person becomes so wearied and discouraged by the process that he says, in effect, "Why was I not born in a world fitted up for fools, and then I would escape all this bother." There is reason to suspect that so far as the body is concerned

most people had rather live in a world for fools than in one designed for wise men. Then their intemperance in eating and drinking; their indolence in neglecting proper exercise, and the art of breathing; their senseless tax, beyond endurance, laid upon their complaining bodies, in both work and amusement, would never stand as an indictment against them. The world made for fools would pity its fools, and they would never be required to reflect upon what they might have been had they been wise. Oh, it is dreadfully inconvenient to live where one is expected to act wisely, and must himself pay the account if he does not.

But there are men who want a world for fools who stand on a much higher plane than the general one above indicated. Politicians, for example, who want the world to accommodate itself to their old, effete, and exploded notions of government and civilization, instead of climbing to their newstop, and from thence noting the masses of men awaying to and fro in constant ferment and change. "E pur si muove,"—"and yet it does move," said the much persecuted Galileo, and since then it has been many times proved that the world moves. The masses of men are never quite satisfied, and they never ought to be. They are true prophets, realizing in their thoughts the possibility of a better day about to dawn. But their upward movement has always been hindered by the slowness of their mighty rulers, even in countries where the people are supposed to govern themselves. The ruling class have always been afraid to trust the people, and so the typical politician, as he is made up from the facts of the past history, is a manager of government who never moves one step in advance until he is literally pushed forward by the crowding multitude around him. Politics lifts up before mankind few men like William the Silent, and Victor Emmanuel, who were willing to advance before their people, leading them up to a right appreciation of liberties and blessings for which they did not themselves realize that they were fully prepared. The rule has been that the politician has stood, holding the people back as long as possible, fearing their influence, and wishing that he could repress them, and only stepping forward under compulsion. In behalf of such politicians why was not this world fitted up to be a world for fools? It would be an innocent recreation to many of us to know if some Canadian politicians, before five years, do not wish that their lot had been cast in a world made for fools, when they learn what the deep and mighty convulsions lying under the movement for prohibition of the liquor traffic means. It would be so much more easy for politicians to keep their place, and have a nice, good time, if this world had been made for fools! Indeed some of them seem to think, and openly say, that as far as politics are concerned it is a world of fools.

There are also many ecclesiastics who want a world-made for fools. They have become familiar with their own routine work, and the scales have grown over their eyes, and they do not perceive that the thought of mankind is ceaselessly active on religious questions. Ideas of political liberty are germinated in religious convictions. The people feel that whoever, or whatever else may be dead, God is not dead, and that under the direction of a never-wearying Providence, He is leading the human race through the wilderness, into the Promised Land. Men know instinctively, that God is on their side, and that violent changes and disruptions are necessary before He can do for them all the good He will. Therefore the multitude is not at all disturbed by

variations from old methods in religious teaching, and in the manifestation of religious life. But it would be much more comfortable for the dignified ecclesiastic, if the people would not think. Then he would not need to think himself and to readjust himself, which is so disquieting an operation. In other words, in his present mind, he had rather be in a world designed for the sake of fools. But this is not such a world, and all who are incapable of readjustment will find themselves coming out far in the rear.

What of those who neglect all the opportunities this world affords for discipline, and the cultivation of virtue, and the formation of grand and noble characters? Surely no condition of human life could be better adapted for such a purpose, if we admit what seems to be a self-evident truth, that tests of virtue, ready at hand, are necessary to its perfect development. Yet men pass through this life in neglect of the privilege it gives to make the best of their character, and then indulge the hope that in some future state they will have a chance of doing what this world gives them so favorable an opportunity of doing. Such conduct looks very much as if those who pursue it would prefer to live in a world made for fools.

TORONTO, Ont.

THE FUTURE OF PALESTINE.

BY TRAVELLER.

The shore-line which bounds the Mediterranean on the south-east is one of the straightest in the world. The current of the Nile brings with it the soil of Upper Egypt, and spreads it along the coast of Palestine almost as far north as Jaffa. The traveller who approaches the Holy Land from Egypt sees before him an inhospitable beach strewn with wrecks and backed by glaring yellow sanddunes. For two hundred miles from Port Said this harbourless coast stretches northwards to the promontory of Carmel. Gaza, Ascalon, Joppe, and Caesarea have no natural harbours; and the small port once formed at these cities, behind the dangerous reefs are now, with the exception of Joppe, choked by sand, and entirely unused.

But on reaching the Carmel promontory, crowned by its light house and its white fortress-monastery, a new scene opens before the eye. A bay, three miles deep and eight miles across, runs in with a regular sweep. At the south end is the small walled town of Haifa, the ancient Hephra or "haven" of Jewish times. On the north, the famous town of Acre—the last Christian stronghold in Palestine—rises from the sea, girt with the walls which were first built by Crusaders, and afterwards repaired by the famous Syrian chief, Dhuhr el Amr.

The scenery of this bay is perhaps the most charming to be found in Palestine.

On the south is Carmel—a long dark ridge, clothed with dense oaks, in which the fallow-deer, the roebuck, and the gazelle are found; while at its north-west or sea extremity the monastery stands, surrounded with rich vineyards, attesting the fertility of the mountain-soil. The ridge is narrow, and the northern slopes very steep; while to the south a maze of deep precipitous valleys, full of clear springs, divides the block of hill into an intricate system of spurs and rounded tops. The long hog's-back whence these run out rises to about 1700 feet above the sea, and forms a protection from the bay in the time of the winter gales, which beat from the south-west. The promontory and reefs which run out below

the mountain, also break the force of the sea; and thus the Haven of Carmel is the place in Palestine where the small-boats can touch in all weathers during the winter.

On the narrow plain between Carmel and the shore stands Haifa, a town of 4000 inhabitants squeezed in between four brown walls a century old, and presenting the usual picturesque and half-ruinous appearance of Levantine towns. Above it stands an old square tower, in whose walls the shot and shell of the English guns of 1840 are still sticking. Between Haifa and the promontory is the neat village of the German colony, and beyond this the ruins of Haifa's Atika and the ancient rock cut cemetery of Jewish tombs.

About a mile north-east of Haifa, the Kishon enters the sea, flowing down under the brow of Carmel from the broad inland plain of Esdraelon. Rows of tall date-palms, standing on the sand dunes which have gradually forced the stream northwards, surround the lagoons at its mouth.

Following the line of the bay, we arrive next at the Beirut river, which runs into the sea just south of Acre, and which repeats the scenery of the Kishon mouth. The name of the Beirut is scarcely less familiar to us than that of the southern stream, as being the famous scene of the discovery of glass; and the white sand, which was thought by the ancient sailors to have such peculiar properties, is still heaped up on either bank, where the rapid current runs down to the sea with a perennial supply of clear water.

The view northwards from Haifa is striking. The long line of the Galilean mountains rises gradually from the ladder of Tyre to the crags of Jebel Jermuk, and behind these appear the snowy dome of Hermon, eighty miles away. In the evening, about sunset, the colouring of this view is marvellous. The mountains are suffused with a flush, at first of mellow amber colour, but gradually deepening to a rich rosy red. Long blue shadows slowly creep up the slopes, and the tall minaret at Acre stands out white against them. The brilliant hues fade rapidly, a dull leaden colour spreads over the hills; and over the smooth waters of the bay, while only the top of Hermon, 9000 feet above the sea, still reflects the sun's rays for a few minutes longer.

The roadstead of Carmel is capable of being easily made into a good harbour. A breakwater might run out from the mountain, already quarried by the Germans; while the line of beach is sufficiently wide to admit of quays and buildings extending along it. At Acre are remains of the old medieval port, and of the tower of Menarah ("the lighthouse") on its rock at the entrance; but the small port has been filled up with sand and stones, and even if reopened would be exposed to the full force of the storms blowing on shore, unbroken as at Haifa by the mountain-ridge.

Napoleon called Acre "the key of Syria;" but the dictum applies still better to Haifa. Not only does it possess a sheltered harbour, but it forms a natural landing place, whence main roads lead in every direction. The maritime plain extending from Carmel to the Ladder of Tyre, communicates by three passes with the inland plateaux of Esdraelon and the Buttaul. The main routes to Sidon, to the corn plains of the Hauran, Damascus, to Upper Galilee, and along the coast north or south, all radiate from Haifa. The town is already gaining, while Acre remains a ruin, the position of a civilization ever ready to become a port of call. Haifa is the