

at PAGE FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

CURRENT TOPICS

The United States fleet has reached Magdalena Bay in Southern California. During the month of May the ships will be in San Francisco and then it is intended that they will sail for Puget Sound. The governor has invited Admiral Evans to visit Victoria and Vancouver. It is possible that the commander will probably be Rear-Admiral Thomas, second in command. Admiral Evans retires from command while the fleet is in San Francisco in May. His place will be taken by Rear-Admiral Charles Sperry. At present it is intended to send the ships across the Pacific to the Philippine Islands. They will call at Australia on the way and then come back to New York by way of the Suez Canal.

It is a wonderful thing to think of these battleships passing round the world. It shows that the people of the United States have the utmost confidence in the friendliness of the nations of the world. If the fleet were to meet an enemy on the ocean we could easily believe that the fleet would be a fair one but in the narrow channels like the Suez Canal or the Straits of Gibraltar or even in the Mediterranean Sea the fleet might be taken at a disadvantage. But there is little doubt that having already proved the swiftness of the ships and the capability of the officers the fleet will return in safety. The trip will, however, cost our neighbors a great deal of money.

There was a terrific fire at Big Timber near Butte, Montana, last week. The town was almost destroyed. No loss of life is reported but hundreds of people must be homeless.

A machine has been made that will traverse the air. This is not a balloon but a sort of flying machine called an aerodrome. It was made by Professor Andrew Graham Bell of New York. It did not fly far before it broke but it did fly, which is the important thing. So many wonderful inventions have been made in the memory of living men that nothing now seems impossible.

When we can speak to people hundreds of miles away and listen to the voices of singers or orators who have been long dead when men have learned their messages can be carried across sea and land to ships whose position is not known what wonders may we not believe possible?

Mr. Lloyd George, who some months ago settled disputes between masters and men in the north of England and so prevented great loss and suffering has a plan for giving work to many thousands of the idle people in Great Britain. He hopes to see a great number of factories established in England to make manufacture of aniline dyes. These dyes which are produced from coal have been made chiefly in Germany. If this plan succeeds and the British immigration who have come and are still coming to Canada do well, we may hope to hear less of the suffering and poverty of the old land.

A great many of the members of the parliament at Ottawa as well as thousands of good men and women throughout Canada believe that it would be better for this country if the manufacture and importation of cigarettes could be stopped. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has been asked to introduce a law that would have this effect but he and his ministers do not think it would be wise to do so now.

This will not make much difference to Victoria (so far as the boys are concerned), for we have a law that forbids any one to smoke in public places. It is a pity that this law is so often broken for there is a boy who does not know that smoking is bad for him.

There is trouble in the negro republic of Hayti in the West India Islands. Some of the white residents of the island have been killed and it was said that all are in danger. A number of people have taken refuge with the French ambassador. From the despatch it would seem that the black men believe that their white neighbors wish to take the government out of their hands as some of them tried to do not long ago. They are very angry with the way the French have treated the negroes and the French ambassador and subjects of that country have been treated. French, German and British warships are on their way to Hayti and if they arrive in time they will protect the white inhabitants of the Republic.

The heavy rains of last week have done much damage in Washington and Oregon. The Columbia and other rivers are very full and in some places have overflowed their banks and carried away bridges and damaged the railroads. In some places there have been heavy landslides.

In the state of Michigan there is a great college called Ann Arbor, whose students have disgraced themselves, their college and their country. Because one of their number who acted like a coward at a theatre was roughly treated by a policeman, the young men wrecked the building and destroyed everything in it. The young men who had so little self-control as to do this are given little promise of ever making good citizens. It is a pity that these lads above the crowd of rowdies that loaf around the street corners.

The boys should read Mr. Dawson's speech in Wednesday's paper. It is as interesting as a tale and it is true. Mr. Dawson is going to print a newspaper which will tell the people of England all about Canada. Though still a young man, Mr. Dawson has done more than most old men.

Canada is getting a very large income but she is spending more. Much of the money spent is for railroads and other public works. So far Canada has, on the whole, managed her public business well. She has had dishonest servants who have cheated the people. Many of these have been found out and punished but there are others who have been successful. No member should ever get an honest man's vote who has had anything to do with a dishonest piece of work or one that has cost too much.

Almost ever since the settlement of Canada began the farmers have looked upon the forest as an enemy. Trees have been cut down and burned by thousands to clear the land. Lumbermen have been allowed to do their work in the most wasteful way. Beautiful trees that would have furnished shade for houses and shelter for the cattle were uprooted and the farms left bare and desolate looking.

But within the past few years all this has been changed. It was found that a great part of the timber in the United States had been cut down and that unless great care was taken there would soon be none left. The prairies of Manitoba and the Northwest were for the most part, destitute of trees and as they were settled an increased demand for lumber arose. Ships came to Victoria and Vancouver from all quarters of the globe to buy fir and pine and cedar. Now even the people of Canada begin to see that unless great care is taken it will not be a great many years till our forests, vast as they are, have disappeared.

The people of the United States want to buy our wood to make paper. This pulp wood, as it is called, is made from spruce, fir and some other trees. The trees need not be very large and straight so that the forests from which the best timber has been cut would still give pulp wood. Of course the people of the United States are quite willing to pay for all the wood they want but there are many business men in Canada who think that it is foolish to sell this pulp wood to manufacturers in the United States. They say that if the paper was made on our own side of the line it would give work to Canadians and there would be much more money spent in the country than if the wood alone were sold. They want the government to make a law charging an export duty on the pulp wood. It is believed that if the government do this it will pay the paper manufacturers of the United States better to build their mills in Canada than pay the price of the wood, the duty and the freight to bring it to the paper mills of the United States. However this may be, not only the Ottawa government but the government of British Columbia has resolved to put a stop to the waste of trees. There are forests in Alberta, on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, and these are to be reserved. Trees are being planted on the prairies and it is found that if care is taken

they will grow. New forests are being planted in the eastern provinces. In British Columbia, although miles of forests have been destroyed by fire we have still the grandest evergreen forests in the world and we have learned in time how important it is that we shall take care of them.

There is, as most of you know, a Liberal Government in England. The leader of the government is Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. In Canada we should call the British premier an old man but many British statesmen have been active long after the time when most men are satisfied to rest. In the English parliament there are two houses. The House of Commons represents the people. The House of Lords is not elected. It is composed of gentlemen who hold their seats because they were born owners of titles and estates. Although not elected by the landowners they really represent them. Since no law can be passed without the consent of this body many people in England think it should be reformed or done away with altogether and this government was expected to find a way to make the change. Many of the wisest and best of Englishmen believe that laws would be changed too easily if it were not for the House of Lords.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman has been ill, and it is feared he never will recover. Mr. Asquith has been acting as leader of the government but no step has yet been taken towards making any law against

maim, it will be a great present. My mother says folks are getting presents when they're mairrit. Everyone thought this was a good idea. "Yes," said Eliza, "let us children get up a wedding present for her all by ourselves." The school-bell rang, and Eliza had just time to arrange that a meeting should be held, after dismissal, down in the hollow by the oak tree, where they could meet undisturbed. "For," said Eliza, "we must not let Miss Mervale find out."

While the school was assembling the news quickly spread among the pupils; so that by the time they were seated in their seats, nearly everyone in the room had been made acquainted with it.

This, then, was the cause of the "uneasiness" that prevailed in the Lakewood school, that afternoon. However, the lessons dragged on till the time for dismissal drew near; when, all at once, little Mollie Snow's feelings overcame her, and she burst out crying. "No," Miss Mervale left her desk to find what was the matter with Mollie and to comfort her. When questioned, she blurted out:

"Eliza Burton says you're going away from us to get married. You ain't, are you?"

Poor Miss Mervale blushed a deep crimson, but taking Mollie on her knee, she dried her tears and said:

"Yes, Mollie, it is true. I am going to be married; but you must not cry. I am not going far away. My home will be in Corwell; so I will be able to come and see you often."

Mollie smiled at this assurance, and seemed quite satisfied.

Miss Mervale had been teaching in Lakewood for about five years, and had been liked exceedingly, both by the pupils and their parents, in fact, she was voted by common consent, "the best teacher we ever had." So it was with feelings of real sorrow that the children received this confirmation of the report.

Promptly after the meeting took place in the hollow by the oak tree, a secluded nook, not far from the school house. The talking was begun by Eliza Burton.

"Well, you see my news was correct; so I think we ought to give her a wedding present. We'll like

which are about the same thing," Eliza said. "I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll get Miss Mervale a silver water pitcher, and when we are giving it to her, we'll call it a carafe; it sounds more stylish."

This was a fine idea. The committee was empowered to go into Corwell and purchase the finest "carafe" they could get for the money. Eliza Burton was to prepare a speech which would be recited by Phil Brooks, who was selected to make the presentation and the ceremony would take place at the public examination on the last day of the school term.

Everything was carried out as decided. The committee went into Corwell accompanied by Mrs. Burton, and bought the silver "carafe." Eliza set to work on the speech, commencing it thus:

"Dear Miss Mervale, as you have decided to terminate your connection with Lakewood school, after being with us for five years, we, the pupils of the school desire to present you with this carafe as a slight memento of our regard and esteem, and so on. After wishing every happiness in her future life she concluded it with a verse of poetry:

For now we sever, each from each,
And learn that we have lost in thee;
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How great indeed our love should be.

The Examination Day came at last. All the inhabitants of the Lakewood district, large and small, were present in their best clothes. There were also several visitors from Corwell, amongst whom was the "lawyer chap" who was going to marry Miss Mervale.

The examination exercises, consisting of questions and answers, interspersed with songs and recitations, proceeded slowly, the children thought; but at last it came to an end, and the chairman, Eliza Burton's father, arose and made a brief speech, expressing the regret that all felt at losing the services of so valuable a teacher as Miss Mervale. "However," he concluded, "the children themselves have something to say on this point. I will now call on Master Phil Brooks."

He paused, and the door of the vestibule in front of the school opened, and Phil entered, bearing the silver "carafe" on a red velvet cushion. He advanced directly to the front, stopped abruptly in front of Miss Mervale, scraped his throat nervously, and began:

"Dear Miss Mervale—"
And then, whether it was the unusual significance of the occasion, or the sight of the tears that were starting in Miss Mervale's eyes, that flustered him, it is impossible to say; but the grand speech that Eliza Burton had taken such pains to write, and he to learn, went out of his head completely. "What he did say was:

"Dear Miss Mervale—here's a jug for you."

And trusting the pitcher into her hands, he turned and fled out of the school.

Half of the children tittered, and the other half glared at the awful wreck Phil had made of the great ceremony. Miss Mervale could not help smiling, in spite of her tears; but she thanked the children so sweetly that they felt quite consoled.

If one were to ask a pupil of the Lakewood school what a carafe was the reply most likely would be, "something Miss Mervale did not get for a wedding present."—Donald A. Fraser.

NATURAL HISTORY

Kindness Among Ants

Sir John Lubbock, in a lecture treating of the subject of ants, told the following touching story: Amongst a colony of ants which he had observed, one ant was born a cripple.

It was most pathetic to watch the tender care which was shown toward the unfortunate ant.

This is like the well-known story of the blind rat which was led about by two of his comrades, each of which held in its mouth the end of a stick which the sightless one held firmly between his teeth.

It is interesting to look upon such instances of sympathy among animals, when human beings so often act differently to each other and drive the weakest to the wall.—Children's Missionary Magazine.

A Goliath Spider

Our common house spider is the dread of the housemaid and death to the unwary fly, but otherwise seems to be a harmless insect. Its bite is sometimes poisonous, but cases are rare where its bite has been fatal in temperate climates. As we approach the equator, however, we find that spiders, like all insects and reptiles, become more venomous as well as increase in size.

As far up in the mountains of Ceylon and India there is a spider that spins a web like bright, yellowish silk; the central net of which is five feet in diameter, while the supporting lines, or guys, as they are called, measure sometimes ten or twelve feet long; and riding quickly in the early morning you may dash right into it, the stout threads twining round your face like a veil, while, as the creature who has woven it takes up his position in the middle, he generally catches you right on the nose, and though he seldom bites or stings, the contact of his large body and long legs is anything but pleasant. If you forget yourself and try to catch him, bite he will, and although not venomous, his jaws are as powerful as a bird's beak, and you will not forget the experience.

The bodies of these spiders are very handsomely decorated, being bright gold or scarlet underneath,

Tree Planting

Peter lived on the prairie. When he was three years old, the first railway train came through. Uncle Peter carried the small boy to see it. A boy on the train threw a peach to Peter. He ate and laughed with delight.

"Don't throw away the stone," said Uncle Peter. "We'll plant it."

Peter's chubby brown little hand patted the soft earth over it. That first season he watched the peach shoot up and grow and send out a few leaves. The next season it was big enough for Peter to jump over it. The next season it was so tall he couldn't.

When Peter was eight years old there were seven peach-trees on his place. One for each of the family, and not one of them had ever tasted anything so good before. He planted all the stones.

Today Peter is a big boy. He has eight well-grown peach-trees, which carry health and light to all the neighborhood. And he has a young orchard coming on, which will some day bring more money than all his father's crop.—Youth's Companion.

WITH THE POETS

Tickle-Toe Time

When the summer, still half-hearted,
Wooded the tender buds which started,
With their little lips half-parted,
Bigger for the sun's heat.

Then we freed us from the tether
Of the hated wood and leather,
Rushing forth to greet the weather
In a barefoot burst of bliss.

Ouch! I still can feel the trouble
At the first step on the stubble,
As the tender sole bent double,
Cringing at the sand's rude jolt.

But the flat stone warmly pressed them,
And the turf of turt care them,
And the water, how it blest them
Kissing at the throbbing vein.

Wayward feet, by wounds tormented,
Snuggled in the mire contented,
Germes! They were not yet invented
To alarm the indiscreet.

Germes, indeed! What self-respecting
Germ would dare be caught infecting
Mother Earth's who water protects
Her own baby's battered feet?

O ye men of might and Mammon
In your quest for stuff and gammon,
Pause a moment and examine
These days by the side of those.

Ho, these barefoot days diverting;
Ho, to watch the water flitting;
Ho, to feel the summer purring;
Up between your tickled toes!

—Edmund Vance Cooke in the Circle.

WITCHERY

Love, my thee,
dying close,
witchery
fair one's heart,
see: "Forsooth,
my heart,
mine;
thine."

—Frederick J. Scott.

engaged an actor for his
a week. He "made good"
insisted that his stipend be
blatant.

—A big success in the role.
ent, "what do you suppose
it?"

Miss Mervale's Presentation

The pupils of the Lakewood school were evidently in a state of great excitement. During the afternoon Miss Mervale had noticed an unusual and all-pervading restlessness that distracted the attention of nearly every one of her fifty-four pupils; but she was entirely unable to account for it.

Strange to say, Miss Mervale herself was the unconscious cause of the disturbance. At the noon hour, Eliza Burton, the biggest girl in the school, had come racing back from her hastily despatched dinner, with the last course still in her hand, and bursting into the select circle of her companions, who always partook of their luncheon under the large maple in the corner of the school grounds, exploded with the startling intelligence:

"Miss Mervale's going to be married!"

"What?" cried the general chorus.

The information was repeated.

"She ain't, yer foolin'!" drawled Timmy Simpson, sceptically.

"I won't let her get married," whispered little Mollie Snow, with her eyes coming into her eyes at the thought of parting from her beloved teacher; for, in Mollie's experience, women that get married usually went away somewhere and never came back, like her oldest sister, who had been married several months before.

"But it's true," persisted Eliza. "My big brother was in Corwell this morning, and he came back with the news. He says she is going to marry a lawyer fellow in Corwell."

"Why, that's the chap as is alius comin' here to see her," exclaimed Timmy. "I know what he was after; I seen it in his eye. I guess it must be true."

"Well, of she's to be mairrit," broke in wee Bessie Murray, whose accent betrayed the country from which her parents had lately arrived, "Ef she's to be

her mairrit, we'll see tae gie her a present. My mother says folks are getting presents when they're mairrit."

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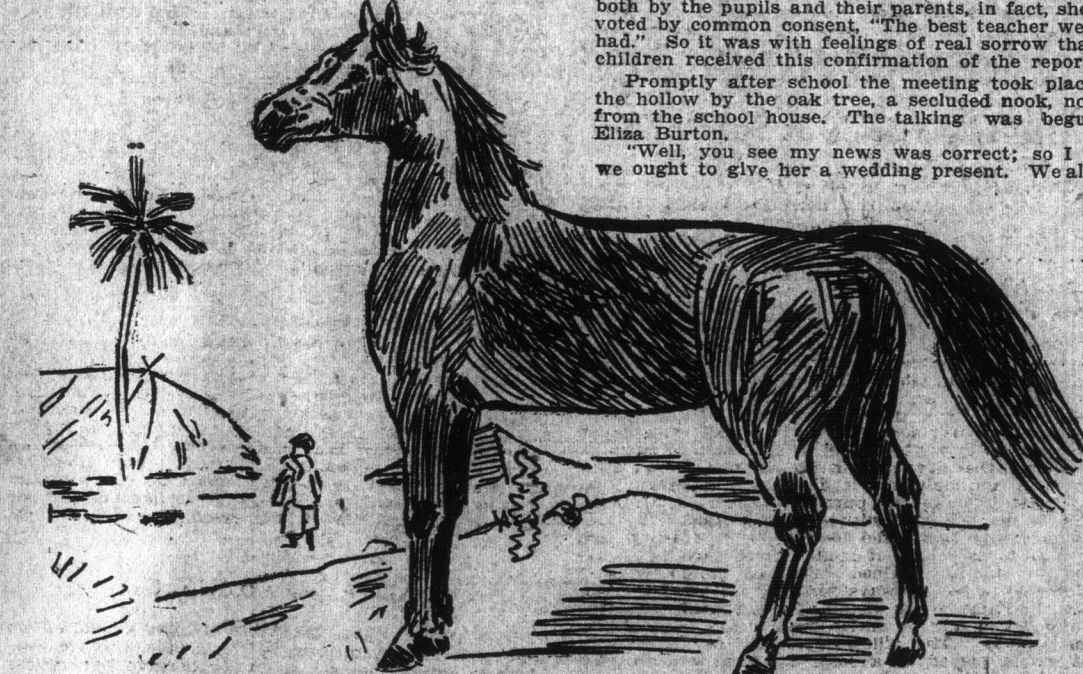
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Drawn by William Ready, Aged Twelve Years, Norwood, Oak Bay Avenue.



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