

# PAGE FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

## CURRENT TOPICS

When, about twenty-five years ago, settlers from Eastern Canada and Great Britain began to go into the Red River Settlements in what is now the rich province of Manitoba it was not believed that any of the prairie region except that near the United States boundary line was fit for farming. It is now known that the climate in the Peace River Valley and along the North Branch of the Saskatchewan is well suited for the growth of wheat and other grain. It is to this northern country that immigrants are coming this spring and already the farmers have begun to sow their crops. It is not often that on the prairies the spring begins so early. There the spring is a very short season, and summer follows winter very quickly. Every one in Canada hopes that the wheat crop will be a large one for people everywhere depend on the farmer for much of their prosperity.

In Europe the hillsides are clothed with vineyards. The little country of Switzerland is very mountainous but the industrious people have planted grapes on every slope. In Canada grapes are grown in some places but the nights are not warm enough to produce abundant crops of the best grapes. Some Germans who visited Nelson believed that the soil and climate there is suitable for the growth of the vine and a number of German vine dressers have taken up land near the capital of Kootenay and will pursue their calling there. It is to be hoped they will be successful.

The American battleships have reached San Diego in Southern California and have been warmly welcomed to the city and the state. A number of sailors and marines went ashore and the school children, to the number of three thousand, helped to welcome them. It was a bright and happy holiday for young and old in the sunny southern city. After their long voyage the sailors must have been delighted to be once more among their own countrymen, and to hear their country's songs sung by sweet childish voices.

There is to be an election for president in the fall. Already preparations are being made to choose candidates and stormy meetings are being held. A great deal of time is taken up by the people of the United States in selecting their president, who is a very important person and possesses much more power than any man in the British Empire.

The Rhodes scholarships are being given in many parts of Canada. The young man who gets a scholarship can go to the great University of Oxford to complete his education. Cecil Rhodes, the great South African statesman left money so that a certain number of young men of the Anglo Race, whether living in the colonies or in the United States might have the opportunity of studying in the oldest seat of learning in the Empire. He believed in this way that people of distant colonies would be drawn closer together and would love the mother country more dearly. The young man who wins this scholarship must not only be a good scholar but a gentleman and an athlete. That is, he must be strong in mind and body and a better part still, which we call soul. To win the scholarship for the province is something worth striving for.

The fire which destroyed the whole of the inside of the Seal block on Thursday morning showed that there was need of a better arrangement for taking the goods from a burning building. The building to give water-power for the city was destroyed. The firemen will say that not only are fires out too quickly, but everything possible saved from a burning building. Victoria has much to be thankful for that the fire which broke out during the high wind of Friday week did not spread. If once a fire had gained headway in almost any part of the town on that day nothing could have stopped it.

We do not always remember how much we owe to the bravery and readiness of the firemen. Although they make no pretence of being heroes they very often do heroic deeds.

Victoria West school is nearly finished and another somewhere between the North Ward and the Central will be commenced in a short time. Would it not be a good idea to give the schools that are opened after this names that will do more than tell in what part of the city they are. The pupils of a school should take a pride in it and a good name is a help.

The greater number of the striking coal-miners have returned to work though there are still a number who cannot get their employers to grant their demands. In Chester, Pennsylvania, the employees on the train cars will neither work themselves nor allow any one else to do so, if they can prevent it. Though the soldiers have been called in to help the police they find it hard to open the line. It is a great pity that where the convenience of a large number of people is concerned as in the case of the street car, the workers should be able to get their work done without any of the troubles of a strike. There is no strike which does not injure others besides the workmen and the masters but this is especially the case with concerns which the public use.

It is not often, on this continent, that men are in danger from wild animals, but on Thursday in Riverside, California, the elephants of a circus, maddened with fear, on account of an explosion caused by fire, ran to a coal oil tank, exploded from their keepers and rushed through the town. One of them ran into a hotel courtyard and killed a woman.

On Saturday, the 15th, during a terrible flood caused by a wind and rain storm another circus was completely wrecked and two lions escaped and prowled about the city frightening still more the already terrified citizens of Cleveland, Texas. The floods in the part of Texas near Fort Worth stopped the trains. Telegraph and telephone wires were broken down and many people killed.

The president of the South American Republic of Venezuela has, so it is said, treated Americans and other foreigners doing business in that country very badly. The United States has always been looked upon by the republics of South America as a sort of protector. It seems now as though the big brother would have to use force to teach President Castro, of Venezuela, how to behave. The Spanish Americans of South and Central America are not fit to govern themselves. Their territory is rich and they have a fine climate but they are, as a rule, ignorant, indolent and excitable.

President Castro says that the courts of the country will decide whether the business men, who complain of the government, were cheated or not. Until the decision is given he does not think the President or government of the United States has any right to interfere.

How very wicked and foolish men can be is being shown by people near Medicine Hat in Alberta who call themselves Dreamers. They believe, or pretend to believe, that they were born in space to kill their neighbors and to burn their houses. If one man acted in this way it would be easy to believe he was mad, but it is strange that such madness should spread among a number.

The conduct of such people as these is one of the things that show how necessary it is that children should learn when they are young the difference between right and wrong. Nothing that can happen a man or woman is more terrible than to believe that evil is good and good evil.

There is another war cloud in the East. Robber bands from Persia entered Russia, destroyed property and carried off plunder. The Russians, as by treaty, they had a right to do, sent troops to kill the robbers and to burn their houses. If one man acted in this way it would be easy to believe he was mad, but it is strange that such madness should spread among a number.

It is not likely that she will be allowed to go to war with her little neighbor if the other great powers can prevent it.

A terrible railroad accident took place in Melbourne Australia on Monday. Two trains crashed into one another, the cars caught fire and more than forty people were killed. Though Australia is so far away her people seem very near to us. They are our own kith and kin. It is this feeling which holds the Empire together.

The little country of Roumania to the north of Turkey is so far away that we are surprised to hear that the Standard Oil Company, of the United States, have been finding a market for their oil there. The Roumanians, however, do not want the American oil because they have petroleum wells of their own. It is now very hard to find any country in the world too distant to make a market for the productions of another and even small and unimportant events are telegraphed around the world almost as soon as they take place.

If fruit raising is to be one of the principal industries of the province, British Columbia boys and girls cannot begin too young to learn how best to cultivate fruit trees. Every country schoolhouse should have its garden and orchard, however small, and the boys should be able to plant, prune and graft, and the girls to care for the flowers. A very little time given by each scholar under the direction of the teacher or some one in the district who knows about such things would make the schoolhouse the prettiest spot in the neighborhood, instead of being, as it is now too often, the ugliest and barest. What do the boys and girls

live on the earth strange plants and animals which have long ago disappeared. From them they have discovered that great glaciers once covered what are now cornfields and vineyards and buried beneath their crumbling masses are the remains of lost races of men. These and hundreds of other lessons have been learned by a patient study of the rocks.

One of the most noted of the early geologists was Hugh Miller. His only college was the hills, and the mountains of his native land as he tells us in "My Schools and Schoolmasters." The story of the boyhood of this wonderful man is very interesting.

Hugh Miller was born in Scotland on the shores of the beautiful Moray Firth. His father was the captain of a small ship and when his little son was five years old the vessel was lost with all on board. The little lad could not understand that his father would never come back and would run down to the harbor to watch for him, or sit for hours on a hill behind the house gazing far out to sea, looking in vain for the ship with its two stripes of white and its square topsails.

But if he lost his father, the boy had a good mother and a kind uncle. Hugh loved to climb on his uncle Sandy's knee and get the old soldier to tell him tales of the battles in which he had fought in the French wars.

In those days the little children of the poorer people were taught by old women, "nurses," as they were called. As a very little fellow Hugh learned to read at the dame's school and with the help of his teacher, who must have been a wise woman, he found out that he could read stories and books. He was delighted and soon he lived in a beautiful world of his own. Jack, the Giant Killer, Robinson Crusoe and The Pilgrim's Progress were his chief treasures, but these

him only to scour the battlefield in search of the wounded and missing.

The needs of modern warfare not only call for vast enlarging of the battlefield, but also compel the troops to take every advantage of natural cover. This and the fact that wounded men will use their last strength to seek protection from artillery fire, cavalry charges and the wheels of guns by crawling into thick bushes, ditches, and natural holes, will show how difficult it is for the over-worked stretcher-bearers of the Red Cross department to notice prostrate figures not readily seen. Moreover, modern warfare is carried on largely by night attack, and at night, too, the wounded have to be collected. The ambulance dog, however, is independent of artificial light, and relies only on his power of scent. Recently during the great Austrian maneuvers, 200 men were left lying on the field to represent the wounded; and the stretcher-bearers, working against time, overlooked 38 of these. Within 20 minutes the Viennese dogs had found them all. Each dog had about his neck a disk of brandy or soup and a roll of bandages. The wounded man, having made what use he can of this relief, gives the dog his cap or belt and the animal races off with it to the ambulance attendants, whom he then conducts to the spot.

## Intelligence of "Malamutes"

The Eskimo begins to train his dog for sledging work before it is a month old. One of the most interesting features of Eskimo villages are pups tied to the poles of tents or to the ropes which hold them. Their puppy strength in the effort to break away and join the frolics of their elders, says St. Nicholas.

Not until a dog bred for mail service is one year

sisting of pieces of linen buttoned together, suspended from cross poles. A fire was kindled under it, and the flames were fed with bundles of chopped straw. The loose bag filled out, assumed a graceful form, and in a short time was completely distended. At a given signal the stays were slipped and the balloon instantly ascended. Its velocity accelerated until it reached some height, then became uniform and carried it to an elevation of more than a mile. For ten minutes it remained suspended, then fell gently in a vineyard, nearly two miles distant from the place of its ascension.

The first adventurers to make an ascent in a balloon were M. Pilâtre de Rozier and the Marquis L'Arlandes. In the basket of a balloon they, on November 21, 1783, rose to a height of about three thousand feet—Chicago News.

## A Story of Nelson

Capt. Mahan relates the following anecdote concerning Lord Nelson's letter proposing a truce to the Crown Prince of Denmark, dispatched in the midst of hostilities:

The decks cleared of all partitions fore and aft, and all ordinary conveniences removed, Nelson wrote in full view of all on the deck where he was, at the stern of the rudderhead standing, and as he wrote an officer standing by took a copy. The original, in his own hand, was put into an envelope and sealed, with his arms. The officer was about to use a wafer, but Nelson said:

"No; send for sealing-wax and candle." Some delay followed, owing to the man's having had his head taken off by a ball. "Send another messenger for the wax," said the admiral when informed of this; and when the waters were again suggested he simply reiterated the order.

A large quantity of wax was used, and extreme care taken that the impression of the seal should be perfect. Colonel Stewart asked: "Why, under so hot a fire and after so lamentable an accident, have you attached so much importance to a circumstance apparently trifling?" "Send another messenger for the wax," replied Nelson. "The wafer would have been still wet when the letter was presented to the crown prince; he would have inferred that the letter was sent off in a hurry, and that we had some pressing reasons for being in a hurry. The wax told no tales."

## OUR LETTER BOX

We publish the following letter with much pleasure. As the editor could not answer the question, enquiry was made at the Provincial Museum. Mr. Kermode very kindly promises that if the finder will send him a specimen of the bird, he will identify it. If the parcel is addressed to the editor of the Children's page it will be returned when the information has been obtained. Perhaps this will meet the eye of some lover of birds who can tell us all about the tiny builder.

Quamichan, B. C., April 7, 1936.  
Dear Editor—I am writing to tell you about a bird's nest which had been brought to school by one of the boys. This nest was made out of field grass and built down in a hole in the ground, about six inches wide. A little hole about three-quarters of an inch in diameter was left for the mother bird to go in and out. This shows that it must have been made by a bird. The nest was built in the swamp bushes at the mouth of the Soames Creek running from Soames Lake to Cowichan River. If you would be kind enough to let us know something about the bird that built it, you would oblige the whole school. Thanking you in advance, I am, Sir, yours very truly,  
FREDERICK ALIARD.

## WITH THE POETS

The Emperor's Bird's Nest  
Once the Emperor Charles of Spain,  
With his swarthy, grave commanders,  
I forget in what campaign,  
Long besieged, in mud and rain,  
Some old frontier town of Flanders.

Up and down the dreary camp,  
In great boots of Spanish leather,  
Striding with measured tramp,  
These Hidalgo, dull and damp,  
Cursed the Frenchmen, cursed the weather.

Thus as to and fro they went,  
Over upland and through hollow,  
Giving their impatient vent,  
Perched upon the emperor's tent,  
In her nest, they spied a swallow.

Yes; it was a swallow's nest,  
Built of clay and hair of horses,  
Mane, or tail, or dragon's crest,  
Found on hedge-rows east and west,  
After storming of the fortress.

Then an old Hidalgo said,  
"Sure this swallow overhead  
Thinks the emperor's tent a shed,  
And the emperor but a Macho!"

Hearing his imperial name,  
Coupled with those words of malice,  
Half in anger, half in shame,  
Forth the great campaigner came,  
Slowly from his canvas palace.

"Let no hand the bird molest,"  
Said he solemnly, "nor hurt her!"  
Adding then by way of jest,  
"Colombina may I call her."  
"Tis the wife of some deserter!"

Swift as bowstring speeds a shaft,  
Through the camp was spread the rumor,  
And the soldiers, as they quaffed  
Flemish beer at dinner, laughed  
At the emperor's pleasant humor.

So unharmed and unafraid,  
Safe in his basket, he sat and brooded,  
Till the constant cannonade  
Through the walls a breach had made,  
And the siege was thus concluded.

Then the army, elsewhere bent,  
Struck its tents as if disbanding,  
Only not the emperor's tent,  
For he ordered, ere he went,  
Very curtly, "Leave it standing!"

So it stood there all alone,  
Loosely flapping, torn and tattered,  
Till the brood was fledged and flown,  
Singing o'er those walls of Zion,  
Which the cannon-shot had shattered.

What Dolly Thinks  
It is true we're stuffed with sawdust  
And can never learn to walk;  
It is true we have no organs  
And can never learn to talk;  
It is true we're full of dolly,  
And dolly must remain;  
But we're free from faults and follies  
That might cause our mamma pain.

Can you tell us when you ever  
Saw our faces spalled with frowns?  
And we're sure you never heard us  
Make a fuss about our gowns!  
Then we do not tease the kitty,  
And we're always kind in play;  
And we think 'twould be a pity  
For a doll to disobey!

When the parlor clock strikes seven  
Not a fretful word is said,  
And our little mamma tells us  
It is time to go to bed,  
So you see, though we are dolly,  
And dolly must remain,  
We are free from faults and follies  
That might cause our mamma pain.

—Our Young Poets.



Drawn by Norman Alexander, Aged Nine.



Drawn by H. Munday, Aged Twelve, 633 Elliott St.

think about it? Has any school made a beginning, and if it has, will the teacher or one of the scholars please tell the Colonist about it? If you could have a photograph of the school taken it would be published.

When a few years ago, Mr. R. M. Palmer planted an orchard on the Saanich Road a short distance from Victoria, but few even of his neighbors thought much about his work. The trees grew and flourished and before long not only many people in Victoria, but strangers who were visiting in the city, walked or drove out to Mr. Palmer's. They admired the pretty sight and many of them went away and planted orchards of their own. The government employed Mr. Palmer and Mr. Anderson to tell the people in various parts of the country what they knew about the culture of fruit.

Now there are many miles of orchard trees planted in British Columbia and many of them are bearing already. One of the largest of the fruit bearing regions is the valley of the Okanagan but we have many fine orchards, both on Vancouver Island and on the islands in the Gulf of Georgia. Near Victoria and Westminster there are splendid strawberry gardens as well as orchards. Martin Burrill is another gentleman who has done much to promote fruit growing and to find a market for it. There are few, if any men, in British Columbia who have so many acres of orchards as those who have shown that their valleys can be made the "Orchard of Canada."

Every boy in the province, and every girl too, for that matter, should be proud of the Nanaimo boy who has carried off the Dawson Fellowship in Science from the whole of Canada in McGill College. Eleven years ago, Willie Dick was a little curly headed boy in Nanaimo school, with a sturdy body and a good brain. He received a splendid grounding in the Central school from two of the finest teachers in the province, Messrs. James Galloway and John Shaw. He took his first lessons in science from the late Mr. Hunter, of Nanaimo High School and after working for a time went to McGill. His scholarship will give Mr. Dick an opportunity of examining the mines of the country. No doubt this hard working student will make a distinguished scientist.

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman died on Wednesday. His death has been expected for many weeks. The late premier was a Scotchman. His name was Campbell but his mother's brother sent her an estate in Kent, England, and asked him to take his name. He was a wise and good, but not what is called a "big game" man. He was a man who was not to be taken in by those who knew him best can be seen from the fact that the electors of Stirling Burgh have returned him for forty years to parliament. From the King of England to the humblest servant on his estate, the late premier of England will be mourned.

One by one the men who have seen Victoria grow from the little town around the Hudson Bay Port to a beautiful city, are passing away. Since last Sunday Justice Drake has gone to his rest. He has been ill for a long time and was known to but few children. But their fathers will remember him as one who did his duty simply and faithfully, as a gentleman should.

## HUGH MILLER

The rocks have taught many strange and wonderful things. From them they have learned that many of the mountains of our time were once buried deep under the ocean. They know that ages since

he read over and over till he knew them by heart.

By and by he went to the parish school. Here the master had fifty pupils to attend to and little Hugh was left to do as he liked.

He loved to wander for hours on the shore. He managed to get copies of the voyages of Cook and Anson and as he read of their adventures and the places they visited, he determined that he, too, should sail round the world. Like Columbus, at Genoa, he might have been seen on the decks of the vessels listening to the sailors and learning about the ships or tracing the voyages and journeys of his father and his Uncle Sandy on the old maps the good-natured sailors gave him.

When he was ten years old Hugh, like Sir Walter Scott, was considered a dunce, but like his famous countryman, the lad's mind was stored with stories.

He had, too, the rare gift of story telling and might often have been seen in some sheltered cove, surrounded by a crowd of children while he told them of his country's heroes, the sunset and the adventures of Captain Cook or told tales that had been created in his own busy brain.

He loved the great out-of-doors. The sea and the sky in all their changing beauty, the sunset and the dawn had a charm for the bare-footed lad who was richer in his power of seeing and admiring the beauty around him than a millionaire's money.

One day when Hugh was twelve years old, as he and a little playfellow were wandering along the shore they came to a cave in the rocks. Telling stories of giants and smugglers and of his hero, Sir William Wallace, he entered the cave and wandered far in, hunting for shells and mosses.

Suddenly the boys found they were shut in by the tide. The little fellow was in great distress about the alarm his mother would feel. Hugh found a place of safety and comforted him as best he could. About two o'clock in the morning their friends discovered them. They were searching for their bodies at the foot of the cliffs and were delighted to find them safe and well.

Like most boys who love the sea, Hugh delighted in building boats and his imagination changed them into the ships of which he had read. Another of his games was to make images of countries in the sand, to people them with shells, and to fancy that he was their king.

But his happy boyhood came to an end. When he was sixteen Hugh left school without as much book-learning as most boys of his age in Scotland had in those days, but with much knowledge of nature and a mind fresh and active.

He did not go to sea after all, nor did he ever rule over men. He went to work in an old red sandstone quarry and there he found his life's work of which he has left a record in many books.

## ABOUT ANIMALS

### Dog As Soldier's Friend

For dogs to be enlisted in every great army of the world, either in the ambulance department or as scouts and dispatch bearers is surely something of a novelty, says St. Nicholas.

In the Franco-Prussian war out of 123,000 killed and wounded 13,000 were returned as "missing," and who shall say what these men endured? Every war of the future, however, will see the dog lessening its horror. In Germany his education is at this moment being taken to hand by volunteers, specially with nearly 2,000 members, among them some of the most able officers in that country's great army. The war dog proper is used as messenger, scout and scouting service, while the ambulance dog's training includes