

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

A HINT ON LIBRARY MAKING.

SOME years ago, having settled in London and in a neighbourhood not far from the principal centres of the second-hand book trade, I sat myself down, so to speak, to collect a library. Since then I find that I have, on an average, bought a book a day; some persons may be interested to know the result. In the first place, a library—and we speak, of course, of the ideal library—is not a mere collection of books, but a collection with a character. Its formation consists in the discovery and accumulation of the greatest original productions of the past, the most valuable sources of information; in fine, of the materials, it may almost be said, of thought, study, and actual intellectual or literary activity. Having settled what one is attempting, it is absolutely necessary to form some idea of the scale and proportion to be adhered to. Most libraries, perhaps, and almost all collections, grow, as it seems, unavoidably, certainly unrestrainably: the dazed proprietor sometimes looking on in helpless confusion, as the Directors of the East India Company did upon the increase of the territories which now become a vast empire. My own idea of size is that a good-sized study, in which a man can reach any volume in three or four steps from his own working chair, should contain what is wanted; and that, as for number, an excellent representative collection which omits no important field of human thought or production may be got together in the form of, let us say, 1,500 to 2,000 volumes. This I am inclined to think a rather liberal estimate even for an individual of the most human tastes surrounded by a group (which should not be too large) of sympathetic borrowing friends. To attempt to be exhaustive, even in any single branch, is to go to the British Museum (where, after all, there is no "subject-index"), or to go mad. But to be representative is still possible.—*The St. James' Gazette.*

BEAUTY AND PHYSIQUE.

BEAUTY is a result of circumstances, such as personal freedom and mode of life and of continuous diet, not of intelligence and still less of the acquisition of knowledge, which latter can only benefit the individual whose features are fixed past serious change before study is even begun. A man or a woman who inherits his or her face and mental habitude, though it may greatly affect its meaning, can no more alter its shape than assiduous training can turn a smooth fox terrier into the wiry kind from Airedale. It may even be doubted, strange as many will deem the assertion, whether continuous education will produce beauty, whether the growth of intelligence will even in ages yield the physical result which we notice the authors of Utopias always assume, as if it were a scientifically demonstrable consequence of the new society. The most beautiful black race in Africa, a tribe of Nyassaland, on whose looks even missionaries grow eloquent, and who are really as perfect as bronze statues, are as ignorant as fishes, and, though they have discovered the use of fire, have never risen to the conception of clothes of any kind. The Otahaitan when discovered was as uncultured as the Papaun now is; yet the former approached as nearly to positive beauty as the latter does to positive deformity. The keenest race in Asia and, as all who know them assert, the strongest in character, the Chinese, is decidedly the ugliest of semi-civilized mankind, while the Hindoo, if sufficiently fed, is, even when as ignorant as an animal, almost invariably handsome. The Circassians, who know nothing and are rather stupid than exceptionally intelligent, are physically a faultless race—far more so than the Germans, who, though the best trained people in the world, display a marked commonness of feature, as if the great sculptor—Nature—had used good clay, but taken no trouble about the modelling. Some of the very ablest among them belong to the flat-nosed, puffy-cheeked, loose-lipped variety. The keenest race in the world, and probably the one most susceptible to culture, the Jew, presents few types of beauty, being usually at once hook-nosed and flabby-cheeked, though in physique, as in thought, that race occasionally throws out transcendent examples. The tamed Arabs of Egypt, who seem to possess poor brains, and, of course, have no education, are often extraordinarily handsome; while in 1860 the grandest head in Asia, a head which every artist copied as his ideal of Jove, belonged to an Arab horse dealer, who, outside his trade, knew nothing. No modern men of culture would pretend, in mere perfectness of form, to rival the old Greek athletes, who intellectually were probably animals, or the Berserkers, who were for the most part only hard-drinking soldiers. The royal cast, which has been cultivated for 1,000 years, seldom produces beautiful men and still seldomer beautiful women; most princesses, though sometimes dignified, having been marked, as to features, by a certain ordinariness often wanting in the poor, and especially the poor of certain districts like Devon in England and Arles and Marseilles in France. Devon is no better taught than Suffolk, but mark the difference in peasant forms. In the last century the ablest men in Europe were remarkable for a certain superfluity of flesh, of which Gibbon's face is the best known and most absurd example; and in our own time intellect, even hereditary intellect, is constantly found dissociated from good looks, and even from distinction, some of the ablest men being externally heavy and gross, and some of the ablest women marked by an indefiniteness of cheek and chin, as if they had been carved by the fingers in putty. No stranger ever saw Tennyson without turning round,

but Browning would have passed unnoticed in any English or Austrian crowd. The air of physical refinement, which is what continuous culture should give, is precisely the air which is often lacking among the cultivated, as it is also in many aristocratic families. Indeed, though caste must mean more or less hereditary culture, it is doubtful if it secures beauty. It does not in the royal houses, and in any regiment, though an officer or two will probably stand first, the proportion of splendid men will be found greater among the non-commissioned than the commissioned officers.—*London Spectator.*

BRIDE OF THE AUTUMN SUN.

O, GOLDEN rod! sweet golden rod!

Bride of the Autumn Sun;
Has he kissed thy blossoms this mellow morn,
And tinged them one by one?

Did the crickets sing at thy christening,
When, in his warm embrace,
He gave thee love from his fount above,
And beauty, and cheer, and grace?

He brightens the asters, but soon they fade;
He reddens the sumach tree;
And the clematis loses its sunny bloom,
But he's true as truth to thee.

Scattered on mountain-top or plain,
Unseen by human eye,
He turns thy fringe to burnished gold
By love's sweet alchemy.

And then, when the chill November comes,
And the flowers their work have done,
Thou art still unchanged, dear golden rod,
Bride of the Autumn Sun.

—*Sarah K. Bolton, in Ladies' Home Journal.*

CHRISTIANITY'S DUTY TO THE INDUSTRIAL SLAVES.

THERE is a sense of right, after all, which can be reached and stirred without personal vituperation, by men called and set apart to holy offices, if they are sincere and candid, and if their lives agree with their preaching. Is it said this would foster violence and provoke insurrectionary clamour? Telling the truth has generally been safe in the long run, and it was never safer than it is now, when the truth is likely to be told at any rate. An earnest and patient treatment of social wrongs by a wide and large-hearted Church is as likely as Congress or the courts to heal discontent and forestall insurrection. Suppose the Churchmen and the dissenters had seen their duty, and had discharged it with clear-sightedness and courage; who can doubt that English statesmen, Parliament, and people would have found out in less than three generations that, through monstrous manufacturing interests and their incalculable profits, England, since the factory system came in, has made itself infamous by the most hideous and brutal form of slavery ever known to the civilized world—the white slavery which, on a vast scale, has tasked, tortured, and slaughtered children under ten years of age, exterminated chastity and decency in the dwellings of factory workers, turned men into brutes, and made society into a hell? Would Lord John Russell's remark still be true, that "it takes England forty years to accomplish a reform admitted to be necessary"? More than half the religious organizations, large or small, are at present practical contradictions of the sermon on the mount. It does not need an ostentatious hierarchy to open the door for the "prince of this world," of whom the Saviour said, "he hath nothing in me," letting him in where he does tenfold the mischief he could do by persecutions, seductions, or infidel arguments outside. He buys up the property, holds the keys of pew doors, puts rich families in the foremost seats, hires and pays the choir, raises funds by lotteries and theatricals, tells the "lower classes" to stay out in the streets or patronizes them with a mission chapel in the outskirts, makes a fashion plate of the female worshippers, sees to it that parish offices and all other marks of distinction are assigned to prosperous merchants, politicians, and leaders of society—never to mechanics and day labourers who have no qualifications except piety and good sense—suits the preacher to the tastes of the ruling set, and "runs the concern." What is all this parochial mammonism and snobbery but a surrender of the kingdom of the crucified to his adversary? Where is the divine brotherhood? Meantime, prudent care is taken to keep the holy language and handsome ceremonial safe, and not to put St. Dives into the calendar.—*Bishop Huntington, in the October Forum.*

A GENEROUS FRIEND TO LETTERS.

THE late John Boyle O'Reilly, whose soul "is but a little way above our heads," was never found wanting when a friendly service was demanded of him. He had no petty jealousies to overcome, no envious anxieties for personal success to set aside. He gave himself freely and fully, hailing with delight the good in another's work as though it were his own. His sympathies were perfect, his expression of them was considerate to a rare degree. He listened eagerly and patiently, ever ready to speak the stimulating word of approval; or, if fault was to be found, finding it in a way that had no power to wound. His skill at detecting a flaw was unerring, but not content with marking down the error he would suggest one remedy after another, and never rest until the cure had been

effected. "Your work rings true; but I wish you had more purpose," he said once. His own purpose, as many know, was always heroically high. This is but one small view of a many-sided character that had the fire of genius in it. Yet the glimpse is significant and may afford opportunity for reflection, showing as it does how his influence worked good in younger writers. His intention, expressed a few hours before his sudden death, was to devote more time in the coming years than ever before to the higher forms of literature. In his loss there has been lost not only the product of his own mature mind, that would have gained him wider fame, but also all that he would unselfishly have aided other men to do.—*From "The Point of View" in October Scribner.*

SHOULD DEAF-MUTES INTERMARRY?

Is the continued intermarriage of deaf-mutes in the United States tending to establish a deaf-mute variety among our population, and, if so, ought it not to be discountenanced? An animated controversy, of especial interest to the students of heredity, has recently been waged over this question between well-known experts. Max Muller, Professor Cope, Professor Newcomb and Professor Alexander Graham Bell are among those who favour the affirmative position, and their openly expressed opinions have aroused a storm of criticism from the advocates of the opposite view. These, naturally enough, are to be found mainly in the ranks of the afflicted persons themselves. Prof. W. G. Jenkins, an instructor in the American Asylum at Hartford, has come forward as their champion, and replied with spirit and ability to the arguments adduced; but the evidence, while it fails to prove that the intermarriage complained of is dangerous to society, impels the belief that it may be highly injurious to the individual. The objection to Professor Cope's assertion that the "evolution of a deaf-mute variety is not more improbable than that blind species of animals should arise" is sound. There can be, of course, no precise analogy between the blind fishes of the Mammoth Cave, whose conditions preclude the necessity of sight, and beings living in an environment from which they are differentiated only by abnormal variation. The same is true of the criticism of Professor Brewer's attempt to fix the number of generations necessary to establish a new variety, and of the objection to Professor Newcomb's scheme of hereditary transmission, that it would require the marriage of congenitals with congenitals through successive generations and the elimination of those having full possession of all their faculties. It is maintained, with justice, that success in the progressive development of new species in other cases does not warrant the belief that the attempt would be equally successful in a process of deterioration, and if the perpetuation of a deaf-mute variety were to depend on rigorous selection among those whose heredity had already become fixed, with this deliberate purpose in view, there would be little cause for alarm. Statistics have always been forthcoming to prove that, in the next generation at least, the offspring of deaf-mutes are as free from liability to the inheritance of the parental defects as the offspring of parents similarly afflicted as to their other organs, and the tables used by Mr. Jenkins to show the restriction in the growth of the deaf-mute population, in spite of unfavourable circumstances, are interesting and encouraging. At the same time, nothing is proved and nothing can be proved against the ultimate reproduction of such defects in future generations. The absence of definite knowledge as to the true cause of deafness in all cases tends still further to baffle the predication of heredity, and the argument as to the demonstrated improbability of a succession of afflicted progenitors receives additional force from the marital tendency under discussion. But experts are agreed as to the universal disposition to recurrence after the lapse of generations. The fact that there have been no deaf-mutes among the offspring of pupils of the Clarke Institution and the Horace Brown School who have intermarried proves nothing as to future generations, and while the immediate results may not be apprehended as disastrous, consideration for posterity should therefore make converts to the conservative view.—*New York Tribune.*

THE GREAT ST. CLAIR RIVER TUNNEL.

SCIENCE has again been victorious in accomplishing what nature seemed to have forbidden. The St. Clair River with a mighty current divides the United States from Canada and forms a barrier to continuous railway transportation which has hitherto been crossed only by the tedious and costly method of using steam ferry boats. For many years the Grand Trunk Railway Company has desired to close the gap in its great highway between the Atlantic and the west, but though various schemes of bridging and tunnelling were discussed they were relinquished on account of natural or commercial objections. The character of the earth underneath the river made the practicability of boring a tunnel in the ordinary method very doubtful, but it was left to Mr. Joseph Hobson, chief engineer of the Great Western Division of the Grand Trunk Railway, to propose and to carry out the plan of starting at the surface of the earth and boring downward and thence across with a steel shield having cutting edges and forced through the clay by powerful hydraulic pressure. As fast as the shield cut its way a section of the tunnel consisting of an iron ring, four feet ten inches long and composed of thirteen segments bolted together was put in place and the walls of the tunnel were thus completed without brick or stone as the shield