



Life, Literature and Education.

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

THE JUNE-TIME.

By Eleanor C. Hull.

Oh, there's no breeze like the June breeze that has swept the rosy clover,
That has blown across the meadows and the daisies' drifted snow,
That has played among the tree-tops, that has strayed the woodland over—
Oh, there's no breeze like the June breeze, sweet though all the breezes blow.

There's no sunshine like the sunshine which the month of June discovers,
With its golden gleam of brightness and its tender warmth of tone,
Soft as kiss of little children, fair as bliss of happy lovers—
There's no sunshine like the sunshine which this month has made its own.

Oh, there's no time like the June-time, made of happiness and honey;
Then it's sorrow to the background, and rejoicing to the fore.
All the ways of June are gracious, all her days are sweet and sunny—
Oh, there's no time like the June-time, best and blest forevermore.
—From Lippincott's Magazine (June).

PEOPLE, BOOKS AND DOINGS.

An act has been passed in Bermuda forbidding the use of automobiles on the island.

On June 8th the Czar travelled from St. Petersburg to Reval to meet King Edward. This journey, which usually takes twelve hours, is the longest the Czar has taken for nearly four years, and the most extreme precautions were taken for his safety along the route, the track being closely watched by a cordon of soldiers, and special guards placed at all stations and bridges.

At an address before the Canadian Club, at Charlottetown, P. E. I., recently, Principal Peterson, of McGill, made a strong plea for the teaching of poetry in the public schools. He expressed his opinion that too much stress is laid on the mechanical element in education, to the detriment of the intellectual. Poetry, he asserts, is the teacher's most effective aid in instilling wholesome thoughts into the minds of the pupils.

A deputation of Indians, twenty-five in number, have arrived in Ottawa from British Columbia, to present in person their protest against restrictions of their fishing and hunting privileges on their reserves. They have already seen the Minister of the Interior and the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs, but declare that they will not leave until they have laid their case before the representative of the King, Earl Grey.

At a meeting of the Royal Society of Canada, held at Ottawa in May, a paper was read by Mr. Moses Coatsworth, of London, Eng., proposing to

adopt a "Rational Almanac," i. e., to divide the year into thirteen months of 28 days each, thus disposing of 364 days, the 365th day to be celebrated as Christmas Day, without being included in any of the months. The extra quarter of a day annually would be accounted for by an extra day once in four years, as in our present leap-year.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

There is, perhaps, no accomplishment more desirable than that of being a good conversationalist. Conversation is the staple, the bread-and-butter art. All must, to some extent, engage in it. Compared with other accomplishments, it is as pure air to a heavily-perfumed atmosphere. Music, for instance, is an occasional delight; in surfeit, it becomes unbearable. Who, it may be asked, ever tired of really bright, entertaining conversation? And yet it is one of the most common things in the world for people to spend years of practice in attaining music as an accomplishment, without giving one thought in regard to what constitutes agreeableness in conversation.

Looking about upon our acquaintances, it is not hard to discover the elements of this much-to-be-desired art. To acquire them may not be so easy. It is easily seen that ideas really lie at the back of all best conversation. Originality of thought, with ease of expression, form the basis; so that really the art begins with cultivation of the mind. In this it is similar to that of painting. The artist first gets his idea or mood in his mind, then, by delicate or sweeping manipulations of the brush, he proceeds to express it upon canvas. The conversationalist, having his thought in mind, likewise proceeds to express it, but the brushes and pigments which he must use are chiefly words, and, according as they are strong or weak, clear or involved, delicate or coarse, is his status as a conversationalist revealed.

There is no doubt that a ready wit adds much to the power of a conversationalist; but there is a quality which counts for more, the knowing when to talk and when to leave off talking. Is there a bore under heaven equal to the man or woman who talks incessantly, especially if the least tendency to shine or show off be in evidence? The best conversationalist is by no means the one who talks the most, nor the one who talks continually on heavy subjects. Rather is he or she the one who knows how to adapt himself or herself to the mood of the company; how to draw others out, and yet who is ever ready to speak the fitly-chosen word, or, when occasion offers, to direct the general conversation to a desirable subject—and all this in a manner as natural and unostentatious as effective.

Finally, there are the finishing touches, the fine strokes of the brush, without which the effect must lose immeasurably—the pleasing voice, the use of good English, erectness of posture, animation of countenance, subtleties of expression, of which every good conversationalist must be master.

It is, then, not easy to be a good conversationalist; but, for the sake of the pleasure that can be conferred, the influence that can be exerted by means of it, accomplishment of the art is surely worth while.

MAN AND THE FARM.

It is a common complaint that the farm and farm life are not appreciated by our people. We long for the more elegant pursuits, or the ways and fashions of the town. But the farmer has the most sane and natural occupation, and ought to find it sweeter, if less highly seasoned, than any other. He alone, strictly speaking, has a home. How can a man take root and thrive without land? He writes his history upon the field. How many ties, how many resources, he has!—his friendship with his cattle, his team, his dog, his trees; the satisfaction in his growing crops, in his improved fields; his intimacy with nature, with bird and beast, and with the quickening elemental forces; his co-operations with the cloud, the sun, the seasons, heat, wind, rain, frost. Nothing will take the various social distempers which the city and artificial life breed out of a man like farming, like direct and loving contact with the soil. It draws out the poison. It humbles him, teaches him patience and reverence, and restores the proper tone to his system. Cling to the farm, make much of it, put yourself into it, bestow your heart and your brain upon it, so that it shall savor of you and radiate your virtue after your day's work is done!—[John Burroughs.]

With the rapid construction of railways in our country, and the opening up of new territory, there falls upon the managers of our railways and others the important business of giving names to points upon the line which will in the future be the sites of our towns and cities. If an example is wanted of how stupidly this work can be done, one has only to look at a map of the United States. Names the most meaningless are found in every State. What connection, for instance, is there between Peru, in New York State, with the land that the Pizarros conquered; or between Cairo, Illinois, with the Egyptian city? Could there be anything more hopeless in nomenclature than Smithville, or Tompkinsville? We recommend to those whose duty it will be to find names for new towns in Canada, the two following simple rules: The first is, wherever possible, take and, if necessary, adopt the Indian name. The Indian names are usually full of meaning, and they are, also, almost invariably musical. What could be more euphonious than Winnipeg—a simple form of the Indian name, "muddy water"—or more majestic and descriptive than Saskatchewan, meaning "the swiftly-flowing river"; or, Assiniboine, meaning "the stony or rocky mountains"? The second rule is, if there is not any Indian name, pick one which has reference to some incident in the early history of the place. Successful instances of such names are Pincher Creek—so called because a pair of pinchers were

found on the site of the town as the sole and melancholy record of the massacre of a band of early prospectors by the Blackfoot Indians; Moose Jaw (where the Indians saw Lord Dunmore mend his Red River cart with the jawbone of a moose); Stand-off, recording the successful "standing-off" of the Montana sheriff by a party of whiskey traders; or Baie des Chaleurs, recalling the heat of the day when Cartier first sailed its waters. Where there is neither Indian name nor any early incident which can supply one, take the locality and try to find some name which describes it. Such names are Swift Current, High River, Sweet Grass.—[Canadian Life and Resources.]

SOME NOTES FROM MY OLD LOG, IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Experiences Amongst a Quaint and Singular People.

I have come across some leaves from my old journal, written in South Africa during an eventful year of my life, and before that long and fateful war which made the Transvaal a sister colony.

The history of that war is, in part, the history of our own land, for, wherever its story is told, amongst the foremost of its heroes must always stand the names of the gallant Canadian boys who laid down their lives for queen and country.

What has transpired in South Africa since then has been as an open book, which all may read who care to do so; but, all the same, I venture to think that my old-time memories of the quaint habits and customs of the Dutch of South Africa may not be without some interest to our readers, and perhaps tend to explain, somewhat, why our sister colonists cling so fondly to their old traditions, and apparently lack the vim and vitality which are such marked characteristics of the Canadian settler wherever he may pitch his tent.

But my resurrected journal shall tell its own tale:

"I must find a niche somewhere amidst my jottings for my little 'scrap-bag' of odds and ends about the Dutch of South Africa and their Old-world ways, which I gathered here and there, sometimes from one, sometimes from another; sometimes from answered queries of my own; sometimes from the 'chit-chatteries' of the hotel table and general room; and notably from John, our driver, whose powers of observation are of no mean order.

"To understand this quaint people, and how it happens that they differ so much from the colonists of any other part of the world, it is necessary to take an imaginary kerchief, and with it to wipe away from the mind's tablets somewhat more than two centuries of time, and with them all the progress other countries and people have made therein. The Dutch of South Africa to-day probably differ very nearly as much, not quite, because of their national phlegm, from the Dutch of Holland as they do from ourselves. Had an offshoot of our nation planted itself as a community, like these old Hollanders did years ago, in some far-away land, inaccessible, partly because they chose