The Crimson Blind

By FRED. M. WHITE

CHAPTER XLVI.

Littimer's Eyes Are Opened.

Lord Littimer sat on the terrace, shaded from the sun by an awning over his deck chair. From his expression he seemed to be at peace with all the world. His brown, eager face had lost its usually keen, suspicious look; he smoked a cigarette lazily. Chris sat opposite him looking as little like a hard-working secretary as possible.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing for her to do. Littimer had already tired of his lady secretary idea, and had Chris not interested and amused him he would have found some means to get rid of her before now.

But she did interest and amuse and puzzle him. There was something charmingly reminiscent about the girl. She was like somebody he had once known and cared for, but for the life of him he could not think who. And when curiosity sometimes got the better of good breeding Chris Would baffle him in the most engaging manner.

"Really, you are an exceedingly clever girl," he said.

"In fact, we are both exceedingly clever," Chris replied, coolly. "And yet nobody is ever quite so clever as he imagines himself to be. Do you ever make bad mistakes, Lord Littimer?"

"Sometimes," Littimer said, with a touch of cynical humor. "For instance, I married some years ago. That was bad. Then I had a son, which was worse."

"At one time you were fond of your family?"

"Well, upon my word, you are the only creature I ever met who has had the audacity to ask me that question. Yes, I was very fond of my wife and my son, and, God help me, I am fond of them still. I don't know why I talk to you like this."

"I do," Chris said, gently. "It is because unconsciously you yearn for sympathy. And you fancy you are in no way to blame; you imagine that you acted in the only way consistent with your position and dignity. You fancied that your son was a vulgar thief. And I am under the impression that Lady Littimer had money."

"She had a large fortune," Littimer said, faintly. "Miss Lee, do you know that I have a great mind to box your ears?"

Chris laughed unsteadily. She was horribly frightened, though she did not show it. She had been waiting for days to catch Littimer in this mood. And she did not feel disposed to go back now. The task must be accomplished some time.

"Lady Littimer was very rich," she went on, "and she was devoted to Frank, your son. Now, if he had wanted a large sum of money very badly, and had gone to his mother, she would have given it to him without the slightest hesitation?"

"What fond mother wouldn't?"

"I am obliged to you for conceding the point. Your son wanted money, and he robbed you when he could have had anything for the asking from his mother."

"Sounds logical," Littimer said, flippantly. "Who had the money?"

"The same man who stole Prince Rupert's ring—Reginald Henson."

Littimer dropped his cigarette and sat upright in his chair. He was keen and alert enough now. There were traces of agitation on his face.

"That is a serious accusation," he said.

"Not more serious than your accusation against your son," Chris retorted.

"Well perhaps not," Littimer admitted. "But why do you take up Frank's cause in this way? Is there any romance budding under my unconscious eyes?"

"Now you are talking nonsense," Chris said, with just a touch of color in her cheeks. "I say, and I am going to prove when the time comes, that Reginald Henson was the thief. I am sorry to pain you, but it is absolutely necessary to go into these matters. When those foolish letters, written by a foolish girl, fell into your hands, your son vowed that he would get them back, by force if necessary. He made that rash speech in hearing of Reginald Henson. Henson probably lurked about until he saw the robbery committed. Then it occurred to him that he might do a little robbery on his own account, seeing that your son would get the credit of it. The safe was open, and so he walked off with your ring and your money."

"My dear young lady, this is all mere surmise."

"So you imagine. At that time Reginald Henson had a kind of home which he was running at 218, Brunswick Square, Brighton. Lady Littimer had just relinquished a similar undertaking there. Previously Reginald Henson had a home at Huddersfield. Mind you, he didn't run either in his own name, and he kept studiously in the background. But he was desperately hard up at the time in consequence of his dissipation and extravagance, and the money he collected for his home went into his own pocket. Then the police got wind of the matter, and Reginald Henson discreetly disappeared from Brighton just in time to save himself from arrest for frauds there and at Huddersfield. A member of the Huddersfield police is in a high position at Brighton. He has recognized Reginald Henson as the man who was 'wanted' at Huddersfield. I don't know if there will be a prosecution after all these years, but there you are."

"You are speaking from authority?"

"Certainly I am. Reginald Henson, as such, is not known to Inspector Marley, but I sent the latter a photograph of Henson, and he returned it this morning with a letter to the effect that it was the man the Huddersfield police were looking for."

"What an interesting girl you are," Littimer murmured. "Always so full of surprises. Our dear Reginald is even a greater rascal than I took him for."

"Well, he took your money, and that saved him. He took your ring, a facsimile of which he had made before for some ingenious purpose. It came with a vengeance. Then Claire Carfax committed suicide, thanks to your indiscretion and folly."

"Go on. Rub it in. Never mind about my feelings."

"I'm not minding," Chris said, coolly. "Henson saw his game and played it boldly. I could not have told you all this yesterday, but a letter I had this morning cleared the ground wonderfully. Henson wanted to cause family differences, and he succeeded. Previously he got Dr. Bell out of the way by means of the second Rembrandt. You can't deny there is a second Rembrandt now, seeing that it is locked up in your safe. And where do you think Bell found it? Why, at 218, Brunswick Square, Brighton, where Henson had to leave it seven years ago when the police were so hot upon his trail. He was fearful lest you and Bell should come together again, and that is why he came here at night to steal your Rembrandt. And yet you trusted that man blindly all the time your own son was suffering on mere suspicions. How blind you have been!"

"I'm blind still," Littimer said, curtly. "My dear young lady, I admit that you are making out a pretty strong case; indeed, I might go farther, and say that you have all my sympathy. But what you say would not be taken as evidence in a court of law. If you produce that ring, for instance—but that is at the bottom of the North Sea."

Chris took a small cardboard box from her pocket, and from thence produced a ring. It was a ruby ring with black pearls on either side, and had some inscription inside.

"Look at that," she said. "It was sent to me to-day by my—by a friend of mine. It is the ring which Reginald Henson shows to Lady Littimer when he wants money from her. It was lost by Henson a night or two ago, and it fell into the hands of someone who is interested, like myself, in the exposure and disgrace of Reginald Henson.

Littimer examined the ring carefully.

"It is a wonderfully good imitation," he said, presently.

"So I am told," said Chris. "So good that it must have actually been copied from the original. Now, how could Henson have had a copy made unless he possessed the original? Will you be good enough to answer me that question, Lord Littimer?"

Littimer could do no more than gaze at the ring in his hand for some time.

"I could have sworn—indeed, I am ready to swear—that the real ring was never in anybody's possession but mine from the day that Frank was a year old till it disappeared. Of course, scores of people had looked at it, Henson amongst the rest. But how did Claire Carfax——"

"Easily enough. Henson had a first copy made from a description. I don't know why; probably we shall never know why. Probably he had it done when he knew that your son and Miss Carfax had struck up a flirtation. It was he who forged a letter from Frank to Miss Carfax, enclosing the ring. By that means he hoped to create mischief which, if it had been nipped in the bud, could never had been traced to him. As matters turned out he succeeded beyond his wildest expectations. He had got the real ring, too, which was likely to prove a very useful thing in case he ever wanted to make terms. A second and a faithful copy was made—the copy you hold in your hands—to hold temptingly over Lady Littimer's head when he wanted large sums of money from her."

"The scoundrel! He gets the money, of course?"

He does. To my certain knowledge he has had nearly £70,000. But the case is in good hands. You have only to wait a few days longer and the man will be exposed. Already, as you see, I have wound his accomplice, the Reverend James Merritt, round my finger. Of course, the idea of getting up a bazaar has all been nonsense. I am only waiting for a little further information, and then Merritt will feel the iron hand under the velvet glove. Unless I am greatly mistaken, Merrit can tell us where Prince Rupert's ring is. Already Van Sneck is in our grasp."

"Van Sneck! Is he in England?"

"He is. Did you read that strange case of a man being found half murdered in the conservatory of Mr. Steel, the novelist, in Brighton? Well, that was Van Sneck. But I can't tell you any more at present. You must wait and be content."

"Tell me one thing, and I will wait as long as you like. Who are you?"

Chris shook her head, merrily. A great relief had been taken off her mind. She had approached a delicate and difficult matter, and she had succeeded beyond her expectations. That she had shaken the man opposite her sorely was evident from his face. The hardness had gone from his eyes, his lips were no longer bitter and cynical.

"I may have been guilty of a great wrong," he murmured. "All these years I may have been living under a misapprehension. And you have told me what I should never have suspected, although I have never had a high opinion of my dear Reginald. Where is my wife now?"

"She is still at Longdean Grange. You will notice a great change in her, a great and sorrowful change. But it is not too late to——"

Littimer rose and went swiftly towards the house. At any other time the action would have been rude, but Chris fully understood. She had touched the man to the bottom of his soul, and he was anxious to hide his emotion."

"Poor man," Chris murmured. "His hard cynicism conceals a deal of suffering. But the suffering is past; we have only to wait patiently for daylight now."

Chris rose restlessly in her turn and strolled along the terrace to her favorite spot looking over the cliffs. There was nobody about; it was very hot there. The girl removed her glasses and pushed back the banded hair from her forehead. She had drawn a photograph from her pocket which she was regarding intently. She was quite heedless of the fact that somebody was coming along the cliffs towards her. She raised the photograph to her lips and kissed it tenderly.

"Poor Frank," she murmured. "Poor fellow, so weak and amiable. And yet with all your faults——"

Chris paused, and a little cry escaped her lips. Frank Littimer, looking very wild and haggard, stood before her.

"I beg your pardon," he began. "I came to see you because——"

The words died away. He staggered back, pale as the foam beating on the rocks below, his hand clutching at his left side as if there was some mortal pain there.

"Chris," he murmured. "Chris, Chris, Chris! And they told me——"

He could say no more, he could only stand there trembling from head to foot, fearful lest his mocking senses were making sport of him. Surely, it was some beautiful vision he had come upon. With one unsteady hand he touched the girl's sleeve; he pressed her warm red cheeks with his fingers, and with that touch his manhood came back to him.

"Darling," he whispered, eagerly. "Dearest, what does it mean?"

Chris stood there, smiling rosily. She had not meant to betray herself; fate had done that for her, and she was not sorry. It was a cruel trick they had played upon Frank, but it had been necessary. Chris held out her hand with a loving little gesture.

"Are you not going to kiss me, dear?" she asked, sweetly.

Frank Littimer needed no further invitation. It was quiet and secluded there, and nobody could possibly see them. With a little sigh Chris felt her lover's arms about her and his kisses warm on her lips. The clever, brilliant girl had disappeared; a pretty, timid creature stood in her place for the time. For the moment Frank Littimer could do no more than gaze into her eyes with rapture and amazement. There was plenty of time for explanations.

(To be continued.)

INDIAN RESERVE AGAIN DISCUSSED

BY CITY COUNCIL YESTERDAY EVENING

The Mayor and Committee Empowered to Enter Into an Agreement With Government.

The Indian reservation question was again before the city council Monday night, when it was decided to empower the mayor and a special committee to enter into an agreement with the provincial government for the acquisition of the reserve. For many years past this has been a troubled question with different city councils and provincial legislatures. The Indians are wards of the Dominion government, and so far no agreement has been presented which proved acceptable to all parties. A couple of years ago it was proposed that other land might be provided which would serve the purpose of a reserve better than that now occupied by the remnant of a once powerful tribe—the Songhees—but the arrangement fell through, the lands offered not being acceptable to the Indians. Then a monetary consideration was suggested, but the right of the aborigines to dispose of their birthright was raised, and the efficacy of the conditions imposed was challenged. Private corporations have also made several attempts to secure the lands, which are practically in the heart of the city, and a great eyesore in their present state, but their efforts have always been checked in the interests of the city. It now appears to be an accepted principle that if the reserve is to change hands it must be under the control of the city, and that no individual corporation be given a monopoly. On this latter point Mayor Morley takes a very definite stand. His Worship is arranging for an interview with the government pursuant to the following report, which was adopted at the meeting last night:

To His Worship the Mayor and Aldermen of the Corporation of the City of Victoria:

Gentlemen:—Your special committee appointed to deal with the acquisition of the Songhees Indian reservation beg to report that till the correspondence and resolutions on the subject have been laid before and have been considered by your committee, your committee is of opinion that in the interests of the city of Victoria it would be advisable that your committee, along with His Worship the Mayor, should be empowered to arrange and enter into an agreement with the provincial government dealing with the matter, subject to the ratification thereof by by-law and the vote of the ratepayers thereon. We therefore recommend that we be so empowered.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

J. STUART YATES.
LEWIS HALL.
JAMES A. DOUGLAS.

THE RUSH TO WEST.

The rush of settlers from the central states has reached proportions beyond the highest estimation of the railroad authorities, says a Calgary dispatch. Figures by the Dominion and other reputable land agents in the central states show that sixty-two thousand Americans will come over to Western Canada this spring from Nebraska and Iowa.

Dominion Land Agent Bennett, of Omaha, sends figures showing that large loads of household goods for settlers have actually been arranged for shipment. Trains from the East are arriving in Calgary in three sections.

The settlers are after wild lands mostly, and among all of them they are bringing in a great deal of money. The demand for city property in all the towns in Alberta has simply turned the heads of many speculators.

Many settlers from the southern states are passing into the Okanagan country. The winter wheat land is attracting many settlers from Washington and Oregon, and the irrigated lands those from Colorado and Western Nebraska.

THE SABBATH OBSERVANCE BILL

SALE OF GOODS ON SUNDAY PROHIBITED

Shooting at Targets, Marks or Other Objects Will Be Forbidden If Measure Becomes Law.

A dispatch from Ottawa says: Mr. Fitzpatrick's bill respecting the Lord's Day prohibits on Sunday the sale or offering for sale or purchase of any goods, chattels or other personal property, or any real estate, or the carrying on of a person's ordinary calling, or the employment of any other person to do on that day any work, business or labor in connection with such calling.

Special Exemptions.

In the province of Quebec such sales at church doors of country parishes as are permitted under the law of the province are exempted. Works of necessity or mercy are also exempted, as, for example, necessary or customary work in connection with Divine worship, selling drugs and medicines, work of physicians for the relief of sickness and suffering, receiving, transmitting or delivering telegraph or telephone messages, conveying travellers and His Majesty's mails, maintaining fires or doing urgent repairs in cases of emergency, or other work of a like incidental character, essential to any manufacturing process which otherwise could not be carried on during the other six days of the week; continuance to their destination of railway trains in transit when the Lord's Day begins, which are loaded exclusively either with live stock destined for immediate shipment at any ocean port, or with perishable goods, or with both; the carriage to the next divisional point on any railway, or to the next regular port of call of any vessel, of any freight which is in transit by such railway or vessel when the Lord's Day begins.

Games and Entertainments.

The following provisions are of interest: It shall not be lawful for any person on that day to engage in any game or contest for gain, or for any prize or reward, or to be present thereat, or to provide, engage in, or be present at any performance at which any fee is charged, directly or indirectly, either for admission to such performance or for any service or privilege thereof. When any performance at which an admission fee or any other fee is so charged is provided in any building or place to which persons are conveyed for hire by the proprietors or managers of such performance, or by anyone acting as their agents, or under their control, the charge for such conveyance shall be deemed an indirect payment of such fee within the meaning of this section.

No Excursions Allowed.

It shall not be lawful for any person on the Lord's Day to run, conduct or convey by any mode of conveyance any excursion on which passengers are conveyed for hire, and having for its principal or only object the carriage on that day of such passengers for amusement or pleasure, and passengers so conveyed shall not be deemed to be travellers within the meaning of this act.

It shall not be lawful for any person on the Lord's Day to open to the public any park or pleasure ground or other place, maintained for gain, to which an admission fee is charged, for any service or privilege.

It shall not be lawful for any person to advertise in any manner whatsoever any performance or other thing prohibited by this act.

It shall not be lawful for any person to advertise in any manner whatsoever any performance or other thing which if given or done in Canada would be a violation of this act.

It shall not be lawful for any person on that day to shoot at any target, mark or other object, or to use any gun, rifle or other engine for that purpose.

The Penalties For Violation.

Violation of the act for each offence is punishable by a fine of not less than $1 and not more than $40 and costs.

Every employer who causes the act to be violated is liable for each offence to a fine of not more than $100 and not less than $20, in addition to any other penalty prescribed by law for the same offence.

Every corporation which causes its employees to violate the act is rendered liable to a penalty not exceeding $250 for the first offence, and for each subsequent offence to a penalty not exceeding $500.

INDECENT POST CARDS.

Efforts Made to Suppress the Distribution of These Through Canadian Mails.

In view of the reports that there is a tendency to dispatch indecent post cards through the mails, the superintendent of the provincial police, F. S. Hussey, has issued a circular which is to be distributeted very freely. The letter reads as follows:

"The postal authorities find that His Majesty's mails are being made the means of distributing throughout the country postal cards of a very indecent and suggestive character.

"The Criminal Code of Canada makes it a criminal offence for any person to manufacture such cards or to expose them for sale.

"Section 179 of the said code reads as follows: 'Every one is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to two years' imprisonment who knowingly, without lawful justification or excuse, manufactures, or sells, or exposes for sale or to public view, or distributes or circulates, or causes to be distributed or circulated, any obscene book, or other printed, typewritten, or otherwise written matter, or any picture, photograph, model or other object tending to corrupt morals.'

"The police have been instructed to take proceedings against all persons exposing for sale such cards."

PREPARING FOR PRINCE ARTHUR

PUBLIC RECEPTION UPON HIS ARRIVAL

Entertainment Provided For the Royal Party Here—Transportation Facilities Arranged For Trip.

In as far as they can be made in advance the preparations are complete for the visit of H. R. H. Prince Arthur, son of the Duke of Connaught. It is anticipated that he will reach the city on Wednesday next. The exact time of the arrival of the Empress liner of course cannot be definitely foretold.

The Prince will be driven to the parliament buildings immediately upon his arrival. If the weather is suitable a large platform will be erected in front of the buildings, where the formal ceremonies will take place. Should the weather not be propitious the reception will have to take place in the legislative chamber.

His Honor the Lieut.-Governor will extend to the Prince on this occasion a formal reception to the province. He will also be greeted by the members of the government. On behalf of the city of Victoria there will also be extended a reception, and an address will be presented to him. His Royal Highness will then proceed to Government House, where he will be the guest of the Lieut.-Governor. Provision has been made by the government for the accommodation of ten members of the Prince's staff at the Driard during the stay in the city.

On Thursday morning the Prince will leave for Duncans on a fishing tour. The train conveying him and his party will leave the city at 10 o'clock. The train for use on the E. & N. line will be made up of the following: The sleeping cars Wakefield and Vincennes and the dining car Sandringham.

Automobiles will be taken up to facilitate the touring of the country in the Cowichan valley. The night will be spent at Duncans, and on Friday the party will return to Victoria, leaving the same night by the Princess Victoria for the Mainland.

The train to be used by the Royal party on the trip across the continent is now on its way westward. The private cars Cornwall and York, which formed part of the train placed at the disposal of the Prince and Princess of Wales on their visit to the Dominion, will be included in the number. There will be four other cars in the train as follows: Baggage car No. 1,769, the dining car Clandeboye, the sleeping car Andover and the compartment car Canada.

On the trip through the Dominion the party will be accompanied by W. R. Baker, assistant to the vice-president of the C. P. R. He will on the tour represent the latter company and see that the Prince and his party lack for nothing that the company can supply.

THE INAUGURATION OF LITERARY SOCIETY

Interesting Lecture Delivered By Rev. H. H. Gowen Before Alexandra Club Last Evening.

In connection with the inauguration of a new literary society at the Alexandra club, a lecture was given by Rev. H. H. Gowen Tuesday evening.

Mrs. Powell opened the proceedings with a short speech, in the course of which she spoke of some of the difficulties that had occurred in the past with reference to literary societies. The absence of gentlemen among them was a decided loss on both sides, to the ladies by withholding an element of inspiration and to the gentlemen by withdrawing them from those influences which cultivated women alone can exercise on the mind and manners of the sterner sex. She thought that the Alexandra club should be viewed as an auxiliary to the tourist society, as an aid in building up and advancing the "prestige" of Victoria. She thought that the large attendance of ladies and gentlemen, who had so kindly responded to the invitation, was due partly to interest in the formation of the society, for which there was ample scope in Victoria, and also to the presence of Rev. Mr. Gowen, who is always a persona grata among Victorians.

Mr. Gowen, who was warmly cheered, was then called upon to speak by Sir Henri Joly de Lotbiniere, the chairman. The reverened gentleman quite agreed that the Alexandra club should undoubtedly prove a valuable auxiliary to the Tourist Association, and he felt proud to be present at the birth of so influential a society. He made a humorous reference to some children, who were discussing the rival claims of their respective churches. One little girl said, with great pride: "We have matins every Sunday," to which her companion replied: "But we have linoleum all up the aisle."

To come back to the subject of his lecture, "The Poets of To-day," he wished to suggest that, if any of these were present, he hoped they would not think any reflection was cast on them by any of his remarks or by the fact of their names not being mentioned. Some imagine that the woods are full of poets, that they grow like berries on the bushes; others would dispose of present day poets like the writer who below the heading, "Snakes in Ireland," made the terse remark: "There are none." It must be remembered that opinions are always liable to be prejudiced by personal feelings and surroundings, just as the man who was out to take an inventory, and was discovered one hour later asleep, with a bottle under his arm and the one entry in the inventory form, viz., one revolving carpet. It was difficult, therefore, to estimate how far present day poets were affected by unconscious influences, and that of the age in general, which is sometimes regarded as too materialistic for the production of real, poetic feeling. Some imagined that every poet nowadays had to pay for the edition of his poems in the first place (and that heavily), for the advertisement in the second place, and then had to work hard to get people to read them. Was it then true that the world was more materialistic than in the time of Homer, than in the Augustan or Iron Age, than in the Elizabethan or Renaissance, or than in the 18th or 19th century, when Macauley considered that age was the best which produced the most animal comfort and ease? There was a continual fight going on lest materialism should kill thought, but when it was regarded only as so much nutrition for thought, then the scope of the poet would only be enlarged by it and all the triumphs of scientific discovery would be hailed as fresh material from which the garment of the spirit could be woven. Poets might be compared to a water system.

First—Those like perennial springs of water, such master creations as Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, etc., who have to be waited for, just as the children of Israel waited for Moses at the foot of the mountain; watched for with patience, not joining in the idolatrous calf worship or returning to the fleshpots of Egypt.

Second—Came the distributing rivers, which transformed the dusty wastes into fertile plains.

Third—The reflectors, lakes and ports, the result of the gathering of the waters, reflecting the trees and the clouds and all the glories of nature, and yet alas, some times revealing something of the muddy bottom. How are the poets treated and what was being done to make them heard? What happened to the batch of unfledged poetlings that were brought up for trial in our Reviews? All were charged with the misdemeanor of bringing out poems, some were discharged with a caution, some were ordered public flogulation, some spoke in a language which no one seemed able to interpret. Even Shakespeare was only esteemed in his day, for that part of his work which appealed to the lower nature; Milton sold his incomparable epic, "Paradise Lost," for £5; Keats was told to go back to his pill-making; Wordsworth and Coleridge were ridiculed for the issue of so-called trash; Ruskin and Browning fared no better. So uncertain were many of their own opinion that they took poetry second-hand, as it were. A passage was seen at the head of a novel, which attracted attention, and on which an opinion was based, but they waited till the poems appeared in a cheap edition before they read them in extenso.

First, in the material presented for study the speaker considered the poetry, which, during the last century, was called the poetry of the future. Amongst these was Walt Whitman, who personally claimed the chief place. He considered he had achieved undying fame, as the Apostle of Democracy, Americanism and materialism (or spiritualism), but the prophecy of one age was not always fulfilled, as was seen in his case. It was said of Southey, by a sarcastic contemporary, "Southey will be read when Homer and Shakespeare are forgotten, but not till then!" In company with Tennyson and Browning in the "Trinity of Song" is Algernon Swinburne, who appeals to a large audience. In the beginning of his career he wrote somewhat too freely, in what was considered then, an irreverent spirit, an impression which it has taken years to overcome, but for pure melody he has no equal at the present time.

Extracts from Tristram and Isentle were then read in a very impressive manner.

The speaker continued that there was, however, a certain lack of observation in his poems and also a monotony like a stream of water from an artificial fountain, the same water appearing over and over again.

Alfred Austin, the poet laureate, had been hardly dealt with, as he himself dealt severely with Tennyson and Browning. This was partly owing to his filling an obsolete post and from his manner of posturing in it, as if people were continually hanging on his every word, to hear his pronouncement on public events. Some of his lyrics were very fine, as "If you were here."

There was a class of poets who were also novelists, such as George Meredith and Thomas Sardy, also George Macdonald, just deceased.

Eden Philpots gave great promise and had written some exquisite pieces in the Devonshire dialect. Amongst the younger writers might be mentioned Benson, Watson, Davidson, Thomson. A touching little poem, "The Child's Prayer," was then recited.

William Watson was likely to be appointed poet laureate as he was in touch with the present government and far more popular than Austin.

It was difficult to say much about Rudyard Kipling; since his illness he had either taken the advice of his critics and was going slowly and waiting an opportunity later of speaking with the strong note, which was heard in the past and looked for in the future, or he has played out. The author of "The Recessional" had surely somewhat more to say.

In Henry Newton they had the strength of Kipling with more restraint.

Perhaps the best representative of England to-day was Stephen Phillips, who might be looked upon as the "maker of poetical drama." His "Paolo and Nancesca," his "Herod," "Ulysses," "Sins of David," "Christ in Hades," are among the great poems of the Victorian age.

In Canada they had Charles Roberts, Bliss Carmen, and in America G. Santayan, George Woodbury, Edith Thomas, L. Imogen Gurney and Edwin Markham. It could be seen therefore that genius was not dead, even if the notes were not very strong, and there would be voices to speak again if they were only looked for as in the past.

Sir Henri Joly then proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Gowen for his very able lecture, and expressed his admiration for the large amount of information which he had given in so short a time and in so agreeable a manner.

C. H. Lugrin seconded the vote and the proceedings terminated by the reading of several touching poems written by a local poetess, Mrs. Hopkins, nee Miss Bessie Nuttall.

Mrs. Powell urged all those who wished to join the literary society to give in their names to Mr. Cooper, convener of the society. The subscription was $1 yearly, which should be sent in to the secretary at the club, with the name of the intending member. Members of the Alexandra club will pay 50 cents only.

Several lectures will be given before the season closes in May, details of which (with the rules of the society) will be given shortly. It is hoped that many gentlemen as well as ladies will avail themselves of this opportunity of meeting those interested in the study of modern literature.

Victorians are to be congratulated on the possession of an up-to-date ladies' club, where, even those who are only making a short stay, can be received as temporary members, thus adding to the advantages that tourists enjoy, who make any stay in this lovely island city.

It is also a matter for congratulation that Mr. Gowen, who is so gifted a student in literature, was kind enough to let the club enjoy the fruits of his study. The very large and influential company that assembled last evening was proof positive of the appreciation accorded him in this city.

SPOKE TO THE MEN.

Fred B. Smith, Distinguished Y. M. C. A. Official, Delivered Several Addresses in Vancouver.

"The greatest meeting for men ever held in Vancouver," was the verdict of those who were present at the gathering addressed by Fred B. Smith, International secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association, in the Vancouver opera house last Sunday afternoon. Standing room only was to be had at 3 o'clock, the hour advertised for the commencement of the meeting, and one hundred men were turned away. It is estimated that 1,500 were present. The meeting also was remarkable for its duration. Starting at 3 o'clock, it was after 5 before it was dismissed. Mr. Smith himself is a wonderful man; tall, dark, well proportioned, he looks what he is—a man strong in every particular. In his addresses he appeals to men's better nature, asks them to be strong, to lead the Christian life. Two hundred men and boys expressed their determination to do so at Vancouver on Sunday.

Besides the meeting in the opera house, Mr. Smith addressed a gathering of boys in the Y. M. C. A. gymnasium on Sunday morning at 9.30, spoke in the Wesley Methodist church at 11 o'clock, and addressed another men's meeting at 9 o'clock in the evening.

A number of members of the local association, among them Secretary Northcott, who went over to hear Mr. Smith, returned on Monday evening. To them he stated that there was a probability of his spending a considerable time on this coast in about a year. During that period he would visit Victoria.

COWICHAN NOTES.

Cowichan Station, March 19.—The house of J. La Fortune, near Mill Bay, was destroyed by fire last Friday. The family only succeeded in saving a few articles. There was no insurance on the building.

A. H. Lomas has been appointed government agent for this district in place of J. Maitland Dougall, who has retired. Mr. Lomas has held the position of constable here for a number of years.

Development work is to be commenced on another claim on the Koksilah mountain immediately. This is becoming quite a busy camp.

The Cowichan and Koksilah rivers are in good order for fishing now. Some good takes of steelheads are reported. The Jock Scott seem to be the fly to get them with.

J. West, who has rented the Mayo ranch for the last year, has moved with all his stock and effects to a farm which he recently purchased near Somenos.

A farewell dance was given to the young people of the West family last week in the Cowichan hall and proved a great success.

Services are now being held in the new church here by Revs. Messrs. Leakie and Dunlop.

A SMOKING CONCERT.

Victoria-United Will Give an Entertainment on Saturday Evening at Sir Wm. Wallace Hall.

On Saturday evening a smoking concert will be held under the auspices of members of the Victoria-United Association Football Club. It will take place at Sir William Wallace hall, Broad street. The arrangements are in the hands of an energetic committee, who are preparing an excellent programme. It will be contributed to by the best local musical and dramatic talent. Cigars, cigarettes and tobacco will be supplied in large quantities, so that a pleasant social time is assured those attending. The Ladysmith players will be guests of honor. A large number of tickets have been disposed of, and more should be sold before the entertainment. A crowded house, therefore, is expected. As has been previously stated in these columns, the Victoria-United club, in the determination to make the past season a successful one, have gone behind financially to a slight extent. For this reason they are desirous of wiping off all debt, and the smoking concert is expected to accomplish that purpose. All lovers of good amateur sport should make a point of supporting the club in this commendable effort.

RAILWAY FATALITIES.

A Midway dispatch says: "Two men were killed last week on the line of the V., V. & E. railway construction a few miles west of Midway, the fatalities being due to premature blasts. One accident happened on the work of T. J. Gallagher, and the other on that of Johnson & Anderson.

"The second accident, which was the more serious, occurred at 5 o'clock Sunday morning in a tunnel some three hundred feet from the mouth. The night men having finished drilling and two holes were being spitted, when one or two went off, and seven laborers were showered with rocks. The first row of holes knocked two men down ,and when the second went off they were covered with tons of rock. J. H. Quinn, the foreman, when taken out was found to be in bad shape, with broken limbs and many bruises. A Finlander, Mat Lake, was terribly injured and died before reaching the railway hospital at Midway. His left leg below the knee was gone, one eye out, jaw broken and the body terribly bruised.