

Educational Notes

By "SPECTATOR."

"Mother Nature Stories," one of the latest books for boys and girls, has found its way a little tardily to the Christmas bookshelves in Vancouver and elsewhere. The author is Mr. R. S. Sherman, principal of the Admiral Seymour public school, Vancouver, and the illustrations are from the pencils of Maud Sherman and the author. If Santa Claus is wise his pack will be heavy with numerous copies; but the jolly little man had better not look inside until the Christmas rush is over, or there will be great danger that the reindeer bells will not jingle in time, for the dear old boy would be so fascinated that, with team straying on the green boulevards, he might be found, oblivious of all else, under the silvery rays of the December moon, or the most modern electric lamp, immovable until he had devoured the last sentence of the last page.

The book stands the acid test of a perfect book for boy or girl; while to these it is as engrossing as a fairy tale, it has at the same time an impelling attention for those who were boys and girls a generation ago. The statements will be found to be scientific facts, while the style exhibits literary gifts of a high order. The sketches have already appeared in "School Days"; but those who have delighted in them in these pages will hasten only the more quickly to enjoy them once more in their new dress. The book will prove brimful of interest from Alpha to Omega, from "Cheetwoot, the Black Bear," to "Skookum Charlie" and "Skunks I Have Met."

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The spacious days of Gladstone and Beaconsfield and Salisbury belong to the past almost as much as do the spacious days of "Good Queen Bess." Could these three worthies rise from their graves, one can fancy the exultant chuckle in the throats of the latter two at the woebegone face of the great Victorian Commoner looking in vain for his political grandchildren. But a moment later his woe would be theirs, when they should find themselves in the midst of a Radical conclave in an erstwhile Conservative caucus room.

In a recent speech, delivered in Glasgow, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, foreign secretary in the Baldwin administration, uttered these pregnant words:

"I am profoundly impressed by the insufficiency of the service rendered by the better part to the poorer part in all communities. Those well-to-do classes, who expect the politicians to keep things straight, and who blame them if things go wrong, are living in a false paradise. I urge them to make their motto the old one of the territorial aristocracy—'noblesse oblige.'"

Just so. Wealth is a trust, as genius is a trust, as bone and sinew and muscle are a trust—for service, not for self-gratification. And in this connection Eton and Harrow and Rugby, and Christ Church and Baliol and Trinity College must again open their doors wide to the poor scholar of a new renaissance.

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Mr. G. H. Corsan, who has been directing the Toronto Star's free swimming campaign, says: "I have taught half a million people to swim. I have conducted free swimming campaigns in more than two hundred American cities, over a period of a quarter of a century.

"Since the passing of the Eighteenth Amendment, bringing in prohibition, there has been a wonderful improvement in the condition of the boys coming to me for instruction. You would think you were in a different country. Formerly many of them were dirty,

and my first day's work was getting them clean. For half an hour we would wash them, taking them in relays. One boy in Troy was so dirty that he had to stay for three washing periods. His father was a drunkard. The boy hadn't been washed for two years.

"It is simply astonishing the change that prohibition has made. The boys come cleaner and better nourished. Prohibition has been good for athletics. Look at the records that are being broken. The babies are healthier. The people are building good homes, and are giving up shacks and tenements."

True; and the speaker might have added:—The foe to be dreaded by the Commonwealth of Nations, the great British Empire, is not a Soviet Russia, or a rehabilitated Germany, or an Orient awakened from a sleep of centuries, but just Old King Alcohol, the Tamerlane of a new age, disguised in poisonous robes of laughter and mirth.

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In "Pilgrim's Progress" we have the picture of a fire issuing from behind a wall, and an attendant pouring on water to quench it; but in vain. For on the other side of the wall an equally diligent worker is feeding the flames with a continuous stream of oil.

The picture has its modern parallel. We are at special pains to educate our least-gifted children; we have our Child Welfare societies of altruistic men and women; we have our philanthropic and would-be regenerative Juvenile Courts. And yet the evil these agencies are meant to combat and overcome only grows apace.

And why? Mainly because we shut our eyes to the fact that our methods fail to attack the evil at its source and remove the main cause. We do nothing to restrain the mentally unfit from reproducing their kind.

Just recently a deputation waited on the provincial government to ask for the erection of a home for these unfortunates, in the midst of broad acres of arable land, where they could live happy and contented and withal useful lives; where they could be guarded from society, and where society could be guarded from them. These worthy petitioners have eyes to see.

The writer once remarked to the late Dr. Charles K. Clarke, Canada's leading alienist: "Morality is a costly thing." "Yes!" replied the doctor, "but immorality is more costly still."

The setting up of the institution asked for would be the first step in the right handling of a great social menace, and would prove an investment that would

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