

A FALG FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS

CURRENT TOPICS

Castro, the president of Venezuela, is so ill that the Vice-President has to act in his place. In the meantime Holland is considering what it will do.

There was a terrible flood at Hyderabad, in India, which drowned three thousand people. Such loss of life very seldom takes place except in the crowded cities of India and China.

From all directions there come reports of accidents by people who drive their motors at too great speed. During the fair week there was very fast driving in Victoria, and it was a great mercy there was no serious accident.

There are many heroes among railroad men. We do not know how often they save the lives of the passengers by risking their own. A few days ago an engineer, Charles Livingston, was killed on the National Transcontinental Railway, near Winnipeg while trying to save his train. There were thirteen persons on the supply train and all were saved except the brave fellow who stuck to his post.

The editor is very much ashamed to see that St. Nicholas was stolen out of the Ladies' reading room at the Carnegie Library. The naughty girl who did this has punished herself by having the book properly taken from the magazine into the reference library. How could any one who loves reading be so selfish and so dishonest? Those who behave in such ways bring disgrace upon the whole city, and in time they will be found out.

Earl Grey has returned to Ottawa. He and his friends only came as far west as Okanagan, where he has a large farm in the dry belt. It is not dry now as water has been brought into it by irrigation. It used to be thought that the desert could only be made to blossom as the rose by a miracle. But we have seen how men can make wheat and fruit grow in land that was thought fit for nothing, in Alberta, British Columbia and in Washington.

There is a wild but beautiful tract of land in East Kootenay which Game Warden Bryan Williams wants the government to keep for a game reserve. Out of all the land in British Columbia he believes a space thirty miles square should be set apart for the survivors of those wild creatures which once roamed over the whole country. Hunters have not yet destroyed the game in this region and he thinks the animals should be allowed to inhabit it.

All German fathers from the Emperor to the peasant teach their sons some useful trade. President Roosevelt is following this example. His son, Theodore, has gone to work in a large carpet factory. If he is as capable and as honest as his father, he will, some day, be a great manufacturer. Both in the United States and in Canada the poor, who may become wealthy and honored, but it too often happens that the sons of great and wealthy men are useless, extravagant and wicked.

The strike of the C. P. R. machinists is over. Everyone must be glad that the men went back to work and that their wives and children will not suffer in the winter that is coming. The strike was not a disorderly one, so there will be no hard feeling now that the men have gone back to their work. Wise men are trying to find a way to make great quarrels between workers and their employers as possible, and no doubt they will succeed. There will always be careless and lazy workmen who will be dismissed. But employers will not be allowed to treat their men unjustly.

Several new school districts have been made and the boundaries of others changed. This shows that British Columbia is being settled. The children who come here are more fortunate than were those who first settled in Eastern Canada. Here schools are built as fast as there are children to fill them. There many girls and boys had to pick up what education they could get home or at night schools. The children at a distant school. Yet it will be well if the men and women who are growing up now are as wise and upright as their grandfathers and grandmothers.

The Grand Trunk Pacific railroad from Edmonton to Prince Rupert is being built into British Columbia very quickly. The question of how supplies are brought to the men who are working at the two hundred miles in the centre of the province is puzzling the government and the contractors. It is not a supply road should be built from the coast to the stations on the C. P. R. into the country through which the Grand Trunk Pacific runs, but whether Revelstoke, Golden or Kamloops would be the best place to start from has not been decided. The company will ask the government to build this road as soon as possible.

The corner stone of the new University school was laid on Wednesday. The building will be a fine one and the grounds will be large. This boarding school will give boys from the country a chance to get a good education. The school will be a fine one and the grounds will be large. This boarding school will give boys from the country a chance to get a good education. The school will be a fine one and the grounds will be large. This boarding school will give boys from the country a chance to get a good education.

The new wing of St. Joseph's hospital was opened last week. The Sisters of St. Ann have now one of the largest hospitals in Canada. In more than fifty years ago the nuns began their work in the little town of Victoria and lived in the little shanty Dr. Helmcken spoke about, the very bravest and most hopeful of these good women. The nuns have dreamed that such splendid buildings as St. Joseph's hospital and St. Ann's convent would be built, even in so long a time as fifty years. But they did their work day by day, and they never dreamed of people all through the province remember the kindness they received from the sisters who nursed them.

All the children in Victoria who have admired the beautiful house which they call Dunsmuir Castle, were sorry to hear that the old lady who owned it was dead. She loved little ones, and though few Victoria children have seen her, for she has been ill a long time, she took an interest in them and liked to hear about them. Her husband, the Hon. Robert Dunsmuir, was not only the discoverer of Wellington and Comox mines, but he was the founder of the coal trade, the principal builder of the E. & N. railroad and a business man who was ready to do anything he thought was good for the city or province. He was, too, a member of the government and helped to make many useful laws. In years to come the name of the Hon. Robert Dunsmuir and his wife will be known among the founders of British Columbia.

Thirty years ago last July England, Russia, France, Germany, Austria and Turkey signed a treaty at Berlin by which the Balkan provinces north of Turkey were given certain powers. This treaty the powers agreed should not be broken unless notice was first given. Bulgaria was made a principality, but tribute was to be paid to Turkey. Without any warning this treaty has been broken by both Austria and Bulgaria. Austria has seized the two little countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria has made her prince a czar and has declared herself an independent new government does not feel itself strong enough to force Bulgaria to return to her old position. Russia is angry with Austria. What will happen no one can tell. You will need to get out your maps and to read the newspapers. A great European war would cause trouble and distress all over the world.

There never was as much city work going on as there is this fall. Wherever you go men are busy. Water pipes and sewer pipes are being laid in all

directions. The city engineer is making haste to put in the pipes that are to carry water to fight the fires and the permanent sidewalks are being laid along streets that were a few years ago out of town. It looks as if Victoria would soon be as clean and comfortable a city as one could wish to live in. But though the city is doing so much, there is plenty left for people, young and old, to do about their own homes before everything is trim and tidy.

The wages paid these men will keep away hard times from many homes this winter. When we read that people in other cities are suffering from want of food, we ought to be very thankful that no one here is either cold or hungry.

The visit of Lord Milner to Victoria was a great honor to our city. This great man was not born a lord. He was a doctor's son, and his mother was the daughter of a general who had been made governor of the little Isle of Man. But Alfred Milner was clever and industrious as a boy. When a young man he wrote for the newspapers and it was no doubt then that he learned how great the British Empire was growing. His knowledge attracted the attention of the men who were governing the country, and he was sent to Egypt. There he worked with Lord Cromer and came to understand affairs so well that he wrote a book which taught the English people much about what was going on in that great country. When a wise ruler was needed at Cape town, in South Africa, Lord Milner was made governor. He remained there for many years, and during the war and undertook the work of making peace after it was over. If South Africa becomes a united and powerful part of the British Empire, it will be in a great degree owing to the efforts of Lord Milner. It must not be thought that the work which Governor Milner undertook was easily done. He had many and powerful enemies, but he went quietly on his way, doing what he believed to be his duty. It is such men who make empire-builders.

Mr. Fletcher, who is employed by the Dominion government to study all kinds of insects, was here a short time ago. On Friday week he talked to the teachers about nature study and showed that many of the insects who had done most for the world had spent years of their lives in nature study. One of these was a young man from Victoria, Dr. John Todd, who had helped to find a cure for the sleeping sickness, which killed thousands of people in Africa. Other nature students have found out about the mosquitoes carried over and whole regions had been made healthy by its destruction. But the lecture was too long for the school children. Mr. Fletcher showed that the world has been changed in the last century by men who looked out into this wonderful world with keen eyes and thought about what they saw. Little James Watt, watching the steam making his mother's kettle lid bob up and down, Benjamin Franklin, looking at the lightning and sending his kite up into the clouds; Humphrey Davy, studying the gas in the coal, and in our own time Edison and Marconi, making a use of the electricity. Frankly told down to earth, and Pasteur and Koch, peering at the tiny things that enter into our bodies and cause disease and death. These, and thousands of others have, by studying the world around them, done great things for mankind. Even to understand what they did is worth long study, but who knows what boys or girls can find out for themselves who learn to watch the world around them with keen eyes?

And now I, too, whenever I see the huge, shuffling beasts, with their waving trunks and little rolling eyes and their air of pathetic majesty, I, too, murmur: "I will remember what I was. I am sick of rope and chain. I will revisit my lost loves and playmates masterless."

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"Don't you remember Toomah?" she cried. This name made me feel "warmer" in the memory hunt, though still vague.

"Jungle Book?" I asked. She nodded, then shook her head, and said, "No, it couldn't be Kala Nag after all," and added, in word-perfect Kipling, "He'd served the Indian government for 47 years, and as he was fully 20 years old when he was caught, that made him 70. And he remembered pushing at a gun stuck in deep mud, and that was before the Afghan War of 1842. No, it couldn't be Kala Nag."

I expressed my relief at the removal of the doubt. But her mouth corners did not lift. She looked at the great grey beasts with sorrowful eyes.

"But perhaps he feels bad, just like in the verses," she said.

"What verses?" I asked, interested to see yet another instance of the way the "Jungle Book" stamps itself on child minds.

And she said, softly and without a falter—

I will remember what I was. I am sick of rope and chain. I will remember my old strength, and all my forest life. I will not sell my back to man for a bundle of sugar-cane. I will go out to my own kind and the wood-folk in their lairs.

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to make one pound of honey, must go from hive to flower and back 2,750,000 times. Then, when you think how far these bees sometimes fly in search of these clover fields, oftener than not one or two miles from the hive, you will begin to get a small idea of the number of miles one of the industrious little creatures must travel in order that you may have the pound of honey that gives them so much trouble. What to Eat.

THE AUSTRALIAN BOTTLE TREE

It was like a real bottle, thirty feet high, covered with the bark of a box tree, and with a gum tree growing out where the cork ought to be. Such was the way in which an Englishman described the first bottle tree which came under his notice, and truly, one who does not know the tree, its sudden appearance in his pathway, often in the midst of dense scrub, must make a vivid impression.

The lower part of the trunk is thick and cylindrical, decreasing in size towards the top, its shape being that of a gigantic living bottle, from the neck of which spring the only branches and leaves that the tree possesses. In this respect it carries to an extreme the peculiarity of most Australian trees, namely, their lack of branches for a considerable distance up the stem. The bark is of a grayish color and is very hard, but the wood inside is soft and moist. The same way as sugar cane, but as it lacks its sweet, pleasant taste, it is rarely used in this way. This peculiar characteristic of the tree, however, makes it a valuable food for cattle, indeed, during the long droughts which occasionally visit Australia, hundreds of settlers have to thank the bottle tree for saving them from ruin.

Sometimes for more than a year and in some districts for still longer periods, scarcely a drop of rain falls. Every blade of grass is dried, tanks become empty, creeks no longer run, and in many cases dry up altogether, as do nearly all water holes and lagoons; cultivation is impossible, and fodder for cattle and horses is extremely difficult to procure. Then the bottle tree comes to the rescue. Every scrub is searched for these living bottles, and wherever there is heard the ringing of axes as the stumps are felled, the trunk has been stripped of its bark, the cattle are brought to it, if within easy distance, and there they remain until neither leaves nor wood are left. In places where no water is to be found, the settlers have no choice but to drive many miles in order to obtain a wagon load of this great treasure. Sometimes, instead of felling the animals free access to the trunk, the settlers cut the trunk into strips through the cutter, and thus make a substitute for proper chaff.

In many instances, during a drought, except for prickly pear and the foliage of trees, cattle are fed on these living bottles alone, and the have been the means of saving large quantities of stock. It seems strange that in the absence of rain these trees should retain their moist interior, as the majority of others look dry and drought-stricken. But throughout all the bottle tree flourishes, lifting its dark green leaves towards the sky, whether the farmers and squatters turn longing eyes in hopes of the wished-for rain.

When the dry season ends, and the land in a very few weeks is covered with fresh green grass, the work of the bottle tree is done; but, mindful of its past usefulness, no farmer, unless under absolute necessity, tells this tree, and it may often be seen sitting in solitary grandeur, its strange shape outlined against the blue sky, while the land at its base has been put under cultivation, or has been converted into grazing paddocks for the cattle.

A certain cricket club in the Midlands recently engaged a new man. About the same time they bought a horse to pull the roller. Shortly afterwards the ground man approached the club secretary.

"It's about this 'oss," he explained.

"What's wrong with him?"

"Nothing at present," was the reply. "But I want to know who will be responsible if the 'oss meets with a bad accident."

"Well," said the puzzled secretary, "I suppose you would be responsible."

"That's resign!" was the unexpected rejoinder. "The poor brute hasn't the speed in him to get out of the way of the roller, and I shall be running him down and flattening him out some day."

The club took the hint, and the ground man has now a better horse.

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WHAT I SAW AT THE VICTORIA EXHIBITION

R. HOLLAND, AGE 10

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