



Life, Literature and Education.

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

PEOPLE, BOOKS, AND DOINGS.

A training school for aeronauts and constructors of airships has been opened at Chemnitz, Germany.

Prof. W. H. Schofield, a Canadian, has been selected by Harvard University as her representative at the University of Berlin. He was born in 1870, and received his early training at Peterboro Collegiate Institute and Victoria College, Toronto. Later he took post-graduate courses at Harvard, Paris, Christiania and Copenhagen. Since 1897 he has been on the teaching staff of Harvard University. Prof. Schofield has also written several books on literary subjects.

Montreal, May 28.—Miss B. Gatién, sixteen years old, pupil of Miss Marier, this city, scored a triumph at a concert in Karn Hall last night. She sang the Bohemian song from Carmen, and was brought back seven times by the audience. One man in the audience presented her with a check for \$1,000, in order that she might study abroad. Critics predict a brilliant future for this young singer.—[Toronto Globe.]

Ernest Thompson Seton, the noted author, and Edward A. Preble, of the U. S. Biological Survey, have left for a six months' trip to the Barren Lands north and east of Great Slave Lake.

Dr. and Mrs. Workman, the noted U. S. explorers, have arrived in Paris, after many months of exploration in the wilds of the Himalayan Mountains. Last summer they camped at the highest altitude ever attempted, 21,300 feet. They report having found a native village far above the timber limit, at an altitude of 12,000 feet.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF "PLAY."

Almost at every turn these days pamphlets descriptive of various summer resorts and spots adapted for outings, are to be found. Very pleasant bits of literature these are, too, breezy with suggestions of the great Out-of-doors in which it seems natural for people to live during the summer months, filled with pictures of dashing rapids, quiet pools, glistening waterfalls, Peterboro canoes, and fish about which one may tell stories. Even the names of some of the places, as Stewart Edward White has noted, are enough to give one thrills, vague longings, undefinable restlessness to be off to where the "red gods" call. Temagami, Matawabika, Wuskigama! smell of pine woods, rush of running water and murmur of trees! The music of them! Ah, why may we not all talk Ojibway?

Each year, it seems, the call of the red gods is stronger, and now not only the birds, but people, migrate every summer from the cities and towns—a great exodus out from the

dust and noise towards the endless solitudes, bound to where petty care may be laid aside for a little time and the pressure of things forgotten. For there is this about camp life, it makes you forget things. A great trouble may, of course, haunt you, arising like an ill-favored ghost even from amidst the green shades, but the little worries and annoyances fall from you. Things do not matter. You have enough to eat; the sky is a roof for you; if it rains, you can creep under your canoe; the driftwood along the shore provides you with your fire; it is a thousand years since you were troubled with the things of time. Live for the day, and build up muscle and energy, and warm red blood that will carry you through another year of grating and scraping among your fellows for a livelihood and the right to say you are a man!

But why all this to farmers? Farmers can take no month of mooning among the river-gods. For the country must be fed, and to feed it, it is not sufficient to cast the seed into the earth. With a grub for every root and a bug for every leaf, it is chase, chase, chase, and the "deil take the hindmost."

And yet it is very necessary that the farmer shall take a holiday. He needs it. Everyone needs it—a holiday, a change—else how is it possible to keep the rifle of the mind-life, the true life, bright and crisp, and the sympathies broad? "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," is as true of the man of fifty as of the boy of ten. The man who is not afraid to put a little variety into his life, is not the one who is likely to grow crochety and narrow, hide-bound in his own opinions; he is little likely to be the crank of the neighborhood.

The farmer cannot, perhaps, take a two weeks' jaunt (although, if he can afford it, he is foolish if he does not). Neither does he need it for the sake of his physical well-being, as does the man shut up within the four walls of "business." Every day of his life the fifteen tons per square inch of the atmosphere above is pumping energy into his veins. But yet he needs variety. He needs the day off once in a while—the day on which he bundles his whole family into the big democrat and drives off with a few friends to have tea beside the big waterfall or the lake, which he wouldn't see once in a ten-year otherwise. He needs the jaunt to see the old chum ten miles away, to find out how he treats the problems of keeping a straight-backed herd and wrestling corn and oats and wheat from the soil instead of pigweed and Canada thistle and bladder campion; the trip on the Farmers' Excursion to the Agricultural College, to get a glimpse at how things are being done at the big school; the day or two spent at the Exhibition in the fall, with a night at the opera, and something new to talk about on the return home.

All this does not take much time—just a snatch now and again "between times"—but the benefit is incalculable. The greatest minds of the world have recognized the value of "off time," "play." Ruskin has written an essay on it. Herbert Spencer used to lament often, in his

later years, that he had not given up more time to it. Play is never useless. It helps to prevent breakdowns and to stave off senility.

But for each, it must be to choose the kind which suits him, whether sport, or city visiting, or merely quiet excursions among one's friends—such play as proves work is of little value. Only that which is thoroughly enjoyed can prove a tonic to either mind or body; but this should not be neglected.

COUREUR-DU-BOIS.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT AND THE "NATURE" SCHOOL.

President Roosevelt, who is a veritable Goldwin Smith, although sometimes in a less-polished and gentlemanly fashion, for striking at grievances in general, has of late been scoring the "Nature" school of writers, the leading lights of which are Ernest Thompson Seton, William J. Long, Jack London, and our own Chas. G. D. Roberts. "I don't believe for a minute," he says, "that these men who are writing nature stories and putting the word 'truth' prominently in their prefaces, know the heart of the wild things. They don't know, or, if they do know, they indulge in the wildest exaggeration, under the mistaken notion that they are strengthening their stories," and he scores it as an "outrage" that such literature is being put in the schools as "natural history."

Mr. Long comes in, perhaps, for the President's most biting criticism. In regard to one of the most popular stories by this author, he says:

"As a matter of fact, the story of Waycees is filled with the wildest improbabilities and a few mathematical impossibilities. If Mr. Long wants us to believe his story of the killing of the caribou fawn by the wolf in the way that he says it was done, he must produce eye-witnesses and affidavits. I don't believe the thing occurred. Nothing except a shark or an alligator will attempt to kill by a bite behind the shoulder. There is no less vulnerable point of attack; an animal might be bitten there in a confused scuffle, of course, or seized in his jump so as to throw him; but no man who knows anything of the habits of wolves, or even of fighting dogs, would dream of describing this as the place to kill with one bite. I have seen scores of animals that have been killed by wolves; the killing or crippling bites were always in the throat, flank or ham. Mr. George Shiras, who has seen not scores but hundreds of such carcasses, tells me that the death wounds or disabling wounds were invariably in the throat or the flank, except when the animal was first hamstrung."

If Mr. Long's wolf killed the caribou fawn by a bite through the heart, as the writer asserts, the wolf either turned a somersault—or pretty near it—or else got his head upside down under the fore legs of the fawn, a sufficiently difficult performance. Waycees would have had to do this before he could get the whole breast of the animal in his mouth in order to crush it and bite through to the heart. It is very unlikely that any wolf outside of a book would be fool enough to attempt a thing like this, even with a fawn caribou, when the

killing could be done far more surely in so many easier ways."

In regard to Mr. Jack London's "White Fang," he observes:

"Reading this, I can't believe that Mr. London knows much about the wolves, and I am certain that he knows nothing about their fighting, or as a realist he would not tell this tale. Here is a great wolf of the northern breed; its strength is such that with one stroke it can hamstring a horse or gut a steer, and yet it is represented as ripping and slashing with 'long, tearing strokes, again and again, a bulldog,' a bulldog not much more than a third its size; and the bulldog, which should be in ribbons, keeps on fighting, without having suffered any appreciable injury. This thing is the very sublimity of absurdity. In such a fight the chance for the dog would be only one in a thousand, its victory being possible only through getting a throat grip the instant that the fight started. This kind of realism is a closet product."

And he calls Mr. Roberts to time as follows:

"Now, in this 'Night Trail' story of Mr. Roberts' a man catches a lynx in a trap, ties it up, puts it into a bag, and, swinging it over his shoulder, starts through the woods with his burden. On his way the man is attacked by eight wolves that form themselves in a crescent at his front. He is armed with an axe, and as well as he can he fights off his wolf assailants. In the crisis, in order to give the lynx a chance for its life, and perhaps a chance to ergate an effective diversion in his own favor, the man slashes the sack open, cuts the lynx's bonds, and sets it free. The lynx, according to Mr. Roberts, goes into the fray with the wolves with a sort of savage exultation. Several of the wolves receive slashes which send them yelping out of the battle. Now, the thing is so utterly ridiculous that any man who knows both the wolf and the lynx loses patience. Real wolves would have made shreds of a real lynx within a twinkling of the time they closed in to the attack."

All of these writers, the President argues, have really written, to a great extent, only charming fairy tales. John Burroughs and Stewart Edward White, on the other hand, he eulogizes as men who see the truth and tell what they see. The reading public, which has been for so long under the charm of the very popular writers whose work has been so depreciated, will probably be little pleased with these criticisms of the "big stick" man, and members of the attacked coterie itself are already at him tooth and nail. And yet there are two sides to the story. In the first place, the President speaks from a broad, first-hand experience of field and forest, and, while as a hunter he may not be able to feel the nature-lover's sympathy with the animal world, he is probably in a position to criticize regarding many points of animal behavior. In the second, he is undoubtedly right in his classification of the "Nature" writers as natural-history writers. While John Burroughs has probably underrated the intellect which in the opinion of many of the later scientists obtains among all the lower creatures, his observation has been