HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

Russia in fiction is still a fresh field for novelists. One most interesting book, "The Long Road," by John Oxenham (Macmillan Company, Ltd., Toronto, for sale by Clark Bros. & Co., Winnipeg) has its plot laid in the domains of the Czar, and one gets deeper impressions of the cruel hand of the autocrat upon his inferiors, and new ideas of the vegetation and natural resources of that vast country. The story is a pitiful one of a man stronger and cleverer than his fellows and happy in the love of wife and children, condemned by a cruel Government to journey on and on, never stopping more than ten days in any place. The wife dies of fever, then little Katenka is taken and finally baby Stepan, and the father nursing his wrongs for years is only deterred from killing the governor by the unexpected appearance of a little maid who looks like Katenka. It is a good story, fresh in plot and well told.

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That goodness and faithful devotion to duty in the humbler ranks of life does not always go unrewarded was amply demonstrated recently, when King Edward requested that Mr. John Kirk, secretary of the Ragged School Union of London, England, should be brought before him. In obedience to the command Mr. Kirk, accompanied by the Marquis of Northampton, appeared before His Majesty at Buckingham Palace on May 23rd last. When he made his obeisance the King conferred the honor of Knighthood upon him, and he is henceforth to be known as Sir John Kirk. This is an honor richly deserved, and has given great pleasure and satisfaction to thousands of the King's subjects who have known and appreciated the Christian character and devotion of Sir John during his forty years as visitor and secretary of the Ragged School Union. In addition to knighthood, friends in all parts of the country subscribed to a testimonial, and a cheque for a sum sufficient to keep him and his wife in comfort for the rest of their days was presented to him. Sir John Kirk is still in the early sixties, and has no intention of giving up his present work or position.

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The following students at the third class normal session, at Winnipeg, Brandon and Manitou, were successful in the recent professional examinations:

Eva Bissett, Eva McQueen, Eva Brady, Anna S. Peterson, Jennie Campion, Ingibjorg Peterson, Jennie Campion. E. T. Sirrett, Jessamine Carey, Mary E. Sharpe, Beatrice Carruthers, Eva L. Smith, Laura E. Colbourne, Christina Sveinson, Amy L. Craig, Cleworth Woods, Bessie Farmer, Ethel Smith, Mamie L. Grundy, Jessie Corbett, Maggie Jamieson, Florence Young, Evelyn J. Kelso, Effie Banting, Hattie M. Matthews, Katie Bates, Martha McBain, Ethel Coppinger, Jessie E. McCrae, Laura Dewar, Margaret M. McCurdy, Ethel Douglas, Maggie McGaw, Maggie Fraser, Mary Gray, Vincent S. Irvine, Inez Noble, Bertha Pilling, Jean Rothney. Estelle Thompson, J. Cameron Smith, Constance Wilkinson, Clarence W. Johnston, Lizzie McAuley, Vera Ruddell, Harman Sweet, Lilian Lynch, Charlotte Lynch, Pearl McRae, Elizabeth Little, Robena F. Coubrough, Ella Noble.

LIVING BY PROXY.

There was an ancient who, when urged to dance refused, saying that he kept slaves to do his dancing for him. We carry his principle even more fully into practice in this our day, applying it in every phase of our existence. There seems to be almost no individuality in our lives and less of originality. Take the matter of our amusements, for instance. For the majority of us sport and athletics are confined to watching someone else do it. The other day thousands of people stood in the streets of Winnipeg to watch for the arrival of nine men who were competing in the twenty-mile foot race. The whole crowd had a great love for sport when someone else did the work and its exertions were confined to betting on the result and cheering the winner. On Dominion Day all over Canada people sat in hundreds and thousands to watch baseball or lacrosse or some other game played by a few men for the pleasure of the many whose most strenuous exertions were directed toward consuming peanuts and abusing the umpire. And yet nine-tenths of those people talked and acted as if they knew what outdoor sport was from actual experience. They prided themselves on their knowledge of athletic life and most of them could not have run a block after a street-car without being exhausted.

If this dependence were confined merely to amusements it would not be so serious, though it is impossible to develop one's muscles when another man is taking the exercise. But in the mental and spiritual worlds we are as prone to push the burden on to the shoulders of the few willing ones. In the churches we hire a preacher to do our praying and look after our soul's welfare and a choir to do our praising. We call going to church and listening to these paid servants our Christian *service*, which is about as correct a term as to call eating three meals a day at our employer's table, service.

Our minds are as little exercised as our bodies. They are fed to repletion, for we read and read and read, so much and so often that there is scarce time for the mental digestive organs to assimilate these thoughts of other men and no time at all to think thoughts of our own. In literature we shape our opinions on what some one with more initiative than the crowd says is the correct thing. Knowledge of the drama is confined to accepting the representation of some actor of what the dramatist tried to portray. The responsibility of inculcating morals and manners in children is handed over to a teacher in school or church who is to do for fifty or sixty what the parents should do for three or four. Women accept without demur the decree of a dressmaker in Paris or London as to what clothes they shall wear and when, and men wear the political garments that clothed an ancestor without giving a thought to their fit or becomingness.

It is a pity that we should not "by our own soul's law learn to live." There is in each one the capabilities for an existence independent of others to a far greater extent than we dream. We can accomplish what the minority are accomplishing if we will *do* instead of trying to find some one to do for us. If not we shall be like Kipling's Tomlinson:—

And they came to the gate within the wall, where Peter holds the keys;
"Stand up, stand up now, Tomlinson, and answer loud and high
The good that ye did for the sake of men, or ever ye came to die,—
The good that ye did for the sake of men in little earth so lone!"
And the naked soul of Tomlinson grew white as a rain-washed bone.

"This I have read in a book," he said, "and that was told to me,
And this I have thought that another man thought of a prince in Muscovy."
And Peter twirled the jangling keys in weariness and wrath;
"Ye have read, ye have heard, ye have thought," he said, "and the tale is yet to run:
By the worth of the body that once ye had, give answer,—what have ye *done?*"

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

In view of the fact that for the next two years the press of Canada will contain many references to the National Council of Women, it may be interesting to our readers to know something about this organization. That special prominence is at present and will in the immediate future be given to its movements is due to the fact that in 1909, just two years hence, the quinquennial gathering of the International Council will be held in Canada, the invitation from Toronto having been accepted at the International Convention held in Berlin, Germany in 1904. To this great conference will come representatives from twenty-four nations of the world.

To begin with the smallest body in this organization of women—the Local Council. This is found in many of the cities and larger towns of Canada, and is really a federation of all the clubs and societies in the place which have for their object the betterment of local conditions, especially of those concerning women and children. Purely denominational church societies are not included, but such organizations as the King's Daughters, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Children's Aid Society, Victorian Order of Nurses, societies for the encouragement of art, literature and historical research, Travellers' Aid Society, etc. From some of the older bodies among these the Council idea was first made practical and others such as the last three mentioned above have been originated and established by the federated powers.

The principle is the old one that in union there is strength. Each one of these bodies has a particular work of its own to do, in temperance, in caring for the sick, in dispensing charity. But outside these particular lines there is a large field which no one of these separate societies could cover with success, which by the united efforts of the best and brightest women of Canada, can be worked with good results. For instance, such work as raising the status of married women in Western Canada, opposing the social evil, battling against the ravages of tuberculosis, could not be the work of one or two individuals or societies, but could be made possible by the united efforts of all Canadian women.

The machinery of this council is simplicity itself. In the local bodies every member of every affiliated society is a member of the council, may attend all meetings and speak on any subject, but only the president and certain delegates from each affiliated society or order shall have the right to vote on questions coming before the local council. The national council is composed of the various local councils with a president, secretary, treasurer and executive committee chosen at the annual meetings.

The annual meeting this year is being held in Vancouver and thither have gone train loads of women interested in the uplifting of the mental, moral and physical life of this Dominion, to discuss ways and means of accomplishing the desired elevation. The speakers of the convention are dignified, intellectual, sweet-voiced and clear-headed women who are in earnest, and much good to the country may be looked for as a result of their deliberations.