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HINTS ON GENERAL READING.

LETTERS TO A YOUNG MINISTER.

NO. V. HISTORY.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—A course of historical reading cannot well be prescribed for one who has not laid a good foundation at school. Where this preparatory work has been done, the student may outline more work of this kind for himself than he can easily perform. But advanced in life, with no previous habits formed for books, and with but a limited area from which to select, it is impossible to do more than suggest what may be read to the best advantage.

Your tastes and associations will incline you to seek for knowledge of certain times and countries in preference to others; your imperative needs will awaken enquiry as to conditions of mankind, forms of government, social, scientific, or political, as well as historical bearing upon your subjects, which are within your reach at such times.

If, on the other hand, you are determined to become a student of history in reality, and have the means to carry out your intention, there are a few hints which will help you, and a course of reading, safe and concise, may easily be laid down. What is the particular type of your memory? Do you well remember dates? If not, it may now be too late to attempt the creation of a new faculty. Besides, you would surely be discouraged at the outset by attempting a form of discipline so unnatural to you. Is your memory tenacious as regards chronological order? Do historic associations bring up their connecting links to your mind? Do periods divide themselves off, and chapters arrange themselves into verses, within the limits of your present knowledge of events local or general? This may be a test as to your powers of retaining facts as collated by the historian. Tables of dates, so dry and forbidding to some, are radiant with instruction to others. If you have the statistical faculty well developed it may be worth your while to try a close systematic course of history, providing you have the necessary time and the books. In that case make free use of historical maps and unite a study of geography with your historical reading.

Ancient History would include a very extensive outline, into which we shall not enter farther than to recommend a few works of surpassing value. Rawlinson's "History of the Five Great Monarchies of the Eastern World," with Le Normands' "Oriental Nations of Antiquity," and "Layard's Discoveries in Nineveh," are especially good. On Egyptian History, Dr. J. P. Thompson, Osborne, and M. Russell, have written excellent books. Of course you will not neglect Rollin—about whose writings there is a charm—and Josephus, whose details, though not always to be trusted, are alone in Jewish History. Greece and Rome have had a host of historians. George Finley's "Greece under the Romans," and Arnold's "Histories of Rome," are excellent. Rankes' "History of the Popes," and Hallams' "Middle Ages," will afford an important link in bringing down your knowledge to more recent times. Mills' "History of the Crusades," also will fit in here to good advantage. In Spanish History, Prescott's works deserve special mention, especially as they trace with marvellous interest the connection of the old continent with conquests in the new or American world. Motley's "United Netherlands" and "Dutch Republic," are unique in their sphere, showing not only the history of Spain and Holland, but the antagonisms of the Romish and Reformed religions. Germany, Sweden and France you may trace in the "Life of Frederick the Great," and some of the chapters introductory to that most captivating work Allison's Europe. If you wish to obtain the key to the "Eastern Question," and at the same time to read a most captivating military story "read Kinglake's War in the Crimea."

Our own modern historians differ so much in style, political prejudices and friendly prepossessions, that generally one is required to balance the others. If we take English History, Macaulay will always stand unrivalled for impassioned use of contrasts, minuteness of detail and glowing imagery; Froude in seeking to recover characters who had fallen under the lash of other historians, has often inclined to the extreme of unmerited severity; Carlyle is a rough and not very reverential essayist, a con-

firmed cynic, yet there are so many admirers of his terse, keen, grotesque and gnarly passages that we cannot venture to condemn him decisively. There is greater variety of taste in regard to the writings of Carlyle and Shakespeare—though so very different—than any two who have ever written for the ages.

It will be readily seen, therefore, that one who has read on any period only the writings of Macaulay will see the characters of that period through a rich gingham of mingled truth and fiction. Under Froude's solitary guidance a student would be ready to do battle for bad men and monarchs around whom that historian has thrown the mantle of his excessive charity. Without an antidote, Carlyle would leave a reader sick at heart with all the world, and disposed to snarl at every eccentricity of his fellowman. We would say, in no case read one of Carlyle's historic works till you have first perused thoughtfully a similar history by a moderate writer.

Among American historians, some of whom we have already named, Wash, Irving ought to have a place. His "Conquest of Granada and Spain," his "Life of Columbus" and "Mahomet and his predecessors," are among the purest and most graceful of historic writings. His "Salmagundi" and "Knickerbocker" can scarcely lay claim to the name of history, but they are classics in their way, exceedingly humorous and entertaining.

I have incidentally mentioned Allison's History of Europe. Do not be deterred from reading this work by the comprehensive name given to it. It is, in fact, but the History of Europe during a most exciting period—one that must always stand out prominently before the eye of the student—from the commencement of the French Revolution in 1789 to the Restoration of the Bourbons in 1815. That brief epoch, however, included the marvellous career of Napoleon, and required twenty volumes from Allison to do it justice. It is a masterly work. Burton's and Robertson's Histories of Scotland are the best on that country, whose peculiar social and political conditions deserve careful study.

Bancroft's History of America, in 10 volumes, is a work of solid excellence. Having a near relation to the United States, and meeting frequently their more intelligent citizens, you would do well to read carefully Bancroft's comprehensive descriptions of American forms of political and civic government. They have complicated machinery—wheels within wheels—which can only be understood by observing the circumstances under which they originated. No newspaper definition of the American methods of electing a President for instance, will suffice to place you on an equality in argument with one who has read Bancroft carefully. A thorough democrat himself, he delights in laying bare before his readers the very formation of each democratic institution.

The outlying countries of this Continent—Central and South America are full of historic interest, especially at those periods when they were brought more directly under European control. No more romantic and tragic story has ever been told than the Conquest of Mexico and Peru. To understand the restless, revolutionary spirit of these countries, it is necessary to see what elements have entered into their populations and the curse which fell upon their conquests with that perfidy and cruelty which marked the earliest relations of so-called civilized with pagan life.

The works indicated scarcely deserve to be understood as an outline: but they are among the works which will meet essentially the tastes and most pressing needs of a man brought face to face with the active mental life, and ambitions of the nineteenth century.

THE LYRE BIRD.

One of natures singular and beautiful freaks is found embodied in the lyre-bird, an inhabitant of the mountains of Australia. In seems strange enough to find this large bird classes with the wren family, whose tiny warblers of English hedge-rows, but science pronounces them of similar construction, however different in appearance. The name of lyre-bird has been bestowed on account of the resemblance of the tail feathers of the male to an ancient

lyre, but the natives of Australia call it *bullock billy*, in imitation of its wild, shrill cry. The color of its plumage is rich rather than brilliant. Mostly of a dark brownish gray, is brightened by a red on the throat, and the short feathers at the base of the tail.

It is very shy in its habits, choosing haunts among the thickly-wooded cliffs which are almost inaccessible to the most daring hunter. Its nest is generally placed in the crotch of some tree very near the ground, as it is not a bird of lofty flight, and loves best to hide among the low undergrowth of the forest. Its nest is roughly built of sticks and leaves, of a round form, with the entrance on one side, and seen from a little distance resembles a heap of forest rubbish tumbled together by chance: but, inside, nothing could exceed the softness and delicacy of the feather lining supplied by the mother.

In this downy nest she deposits one single egg of ashy gray spotted with brown. As she only nests once a year, it is natural that these birds should not be very numerous. They are generally found in isolated pairs, and the male jealousy resents any infringement upon his domain, fighting with a good will any other suitor that may dare to cast eyes on his lady. This jealousy is often made use of by the natives to entrap the bird. They fasten a tail from some captured bird upon the head, and concealing themselves in the bushes, move sufficiently to give a natural swaying motion to the feathers. When the male sees the female, he is seized with his advances, furious for battle, and falls an easy prey to the hunter.

The lyre bird might properly be called the Australian mocking bird, for, beside its own peculiar note, it imitates the song of other birds, and even human voices. A saw mill was at one time situated among the Australian mountains where these birds were known to have their haunts. On holidays, when the mill was stopped and all was still, from out the wild, unbroken forest came sounds of human laughter and singing, barking of dogs, even an imitation of the rough, rasping noise of the saw, mingled with notes of all kinds of birds, and at intervals the sharp, shrill *bullock-billy*, which betrayed the lyre-bird as the imitative singer. Efforts have been made to raise the young of the lyre-bird, but they invariably droop and die after a few months of captivity.—HELEN S. CONANT, in *Harper's Magazine for August.*

THE FLYING MACHINE.

For centuries men have tried to invent a machine by means of which they could safely fly through the air. We have indeed, in ancient fable, the account of an attempt of this sort on the part of Ixion.

The invention of the balloon brought mankind nearer to this end; and it has long seemed as if the principal of the balloon, applied to floating the human body in the air, would sooner or later succeed.

Professor Ritchel, of Connecticut, now claims to have solved the problem, and to have constructed an apparatus by which a man can sustain himself in the "air as easily as an oarsman guides his boat."

The machine devised by him is light and simple. A bag, inflated with gas, shaped like a horizontal tube, twenty-five feet long and nineteen in diameter is attached to a small car, composed of light metallic rods, securely fastened together. The occupant sits on a narrow seat as he would on horseback, and sets himself in motion by means of a fan placed underneath the seat, which revolves rapidly, the fan making two thousand revolutions in a minute.

Another fan in front of the car, also revolves, and its use is to move the machine backward and forward. A simple system of gearing also enables the operator to turn the machine to the right or the left as he pleases. There seems to be little doubt of the effectiveness of Professor Ritchel's machine, which is light and easily managed, and has always proved its flying qualities.—*Youth's Companion.*

LITERARY.

FROM DIFFERENT STANDPOINTS. By Pansy and Faye Huntington. Emo. Price \$1.50. Boston: D. Lothrop & Co.

If there is any better writer of Sunday School books than "Pansy," we should like to make her acquaintance, she has a rare tact in story telling, and knows quite as well what to omit as what to say. Even the sternest critics, of S. S. Literature surrender to Pansy, in spite of themselves, and confess that her books are worth reading.

"From Different Standpoints" is not quite so broad in its range as some of her previous works, but is more intense. The story is so full of life, though made up largely of letters and journals, the characters are so sharply drawn with so thorough an insight into the possibilities of human nature, and the religious element is so high a type, and yet so natural, that the most careless reader is fascinated, and feels the inspiration of a noble Christian life. Such books are a valuable addition to any S. S. library, and will supplement the best religious teachings of Bible-class or pulpit.

As to the double authorship of the book, Faye Huntington is so nearly the double of Pansy, that her separate work cannot be detected.

Wide Awake for October, published by the same house, is a capital number. This serial is \$2 a year.

CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION.

The following is the list of names for the several constituencies in the Maritime Provinces, as far as we have been able to make them out correctly. Nomination is to be on the 10th, and the Election on the 17th.

NOVA SCOTIA.	
OPPOSITION.	GOVERNMENT.
Antigonish.....A Longley.....Ray	Antigonish.....A McIsaac
Cape Breton.....W McDonald.....N Mackay	Cape Breton.....McLeod.....Young
Colchester.....Thos McKay.....Dr Page	Cumberland.....Dr Tupper.....J B Duffus
Digby.....J C Wade.....Dr Smith	Guysborough.....A Ogden.....John A Kirk
Halifax.....Daly.....Jones	Hants.....Richey.....Power
Inverness.....Dr Cameron.....S Macdonnell	Kings.....Woodworth, M.P.P.....Dr Borden
Lunenburg.....Kaulbach.....Church	Pictou.....Hon J Macdonald.....Carmichael
Queens.....S Bell.....Forbes	Richmond.....Benoit.....Flynn
Shelburne.....Freeman.....Coffin	Victoria.....Campbell.....Macdonald
Yarmouth.....Flint, Independent.....Killam	

NEW BRUNSWICK.	
OPPOSITION.	GOVERNMENT.
Albert.....Geo Connell.....J Wallace	Charlotte.....G S Grimmer.....S B Appleby
Gloucester.....Barrs.....T W Anglin	Kent.....Renand.....
King's.....Jas Donville.....Sharp	Northumberland.....Hitchell.....Shewhall
Queen's.....Wiggins.....G C King	Restigouche.....Haddow
St John (city).....Hon Mr Tilley.....De Veber	St John (city).....Palmer.....Burpee
Sandwich.....Armstrong.....Burpee	Westmorland.....R J Chapman.....Sir A J Smith

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND.	
OPPOSITION.	GOVERNMENT.
Kings.....McDonald.....McFadyen	Mutart.....D McIntyre
Prince.....Howatt.....Perry	Queen's.....Hackett.....Yeo
.....J C Pope.....SinclairBrecken.....McGill

FLASHES OF THOUGHT.

OUR LIVES.

Our lives are songs; God writes the words,
And we set them to music at pleasure;
And the songs grow glad, or sweet or sad,
As we choose to fashion the measure.

We must write the music, whatever the song,
Whatever its rhyme or metre;
And fit to be said, we can make it glad,
Or if sweet, we can make it sweeter.
—*Christian Observer*

Age is not all decay; it is the widening,
The swelling of the fresh life within, that
withers and bursts the husks.—*Geo. Macdonald.*

The articles of our Christian faith hang together like a chain. When one is broken the whole is broken. This is what makes error so fearful.—*Hedinger.*

Paul had three wishes, and they were all about Christ—that he might be found in Christ; that he might be with Christ; and that he might magnify Christ.

Kind words are better than gold, and the voice of a friend has saved many a man from ruin.

Prayer is, in the highest conception of it, a state rather than an act. A full fruition of its benefits depends on a continuity of its influences. Reduce it to two isolated experiments daily, and separate these by long blank hours in which the soul has no glimpse of God for its refreshment, and how can prayer be other than a toil and often a drudgery?—*Phelps.*

Learn to think, and you will learn to write. The more you write the better you will express your ideas.

Mirth should be the embroidery of conversation, not the web; and wit the ornament of the mind, not the furniture.

It is rough work that polishes. Look at the pebbles on the shore! Far inland, where some arm of the sea thrusts itself deep into the bosom of the land, and expanding into a salt loch, lies girtled by the mountains, sheltered from the storms that agitate the deep, the pebbles on the beach are rough, not beautiful; angular not rounded. It is where long white lines of breakers roar, and the rattling shingle is rolled along the strand, that its pebbles are rounded and polished. As in nature, as in art, so in grace; it is rough treatment that gives souls, as well as stones their luster. The more the diamond is cut the brighter it sparkles; and in what seems hard dealing, there God has no end in view but to perfect his people.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

To enjoy a thing exclusively is commonly to exclude yourself from the true enjoyment of it.—*Thoreau.*

God does not call us always to labor as man counts labor. He sets us often in solitary and hard ways, laying upon us only burdens of suffering and utter weakness and helplessness. And then when life has gone and the world says, "This man lived in vain," God reckons up the account, and over against the loss and emptiness and waste of life he writes: "Well done, good and faithful servant."—*Selected.*

The religion that renders good men gloomy and unhappy can scarcely be called one. Dr. Blair says, in his sermon on Devotion, "He who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven."

We are not saved by faith without works; for there is no such faith in Christ. Nor are we saved by works without faith; for no works but those that flow from faith are acceptable to God.—*Bethune.*

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

COLORED PHOTOGRAPHS.—No one has yet succeeded in producing photographs in the natural colors, although the list of those who have attacked the problem and failed is unusually long. The Court photographer of Vienna has, however, made some practical steps in that direction. His process is said to depend upon analyzing light into the primary colors, red, blue and yellow, taking a photograph by each, and then combining the result in the printing. A plate is first chemically prepared so as to receive only the yellow tints of the object to be depicted, and a negative of this plate is put under the press, the cylinder of which is covered with yellow paint, so that in this impression nothing but the yellow parts of the object are painted off. A similar process is then adopted with the other two colors, and after three separate impressions the picture is complete. The system, however, does not seem very promising, and is certainly the reverse of simple.

A new material for the manufacture of paper has recently been discovered in South America. The parties interested are rather reticent about the facts connected with the matter, but enough is known to warrant the statement that the discovery is looked upon as important, and will likely have considerable effect on the manufacture of paper in this country as well as in Europe. The article grows wild, and to a great height, being, when full grown, taller than a man, and in some cases reaching higher than a man on horseback. It is of a brown color in its natural state, but is easily bleached to a pure white. It is said to be stronger than hemp and the samples shown confirm the statement. A party of English capitalists have taken hold of the matter, and have made a contract, which they claim is exclusive for gathering and exporting it. This claim of exclusiveness is, however, rather doubtful, as the quantity to be had is said to be inexhaustible. A party who has tested it says he will make a No. 50 thread that cannot be broken by the strength of ordinary fingers without snapping.

Dresses should never be put away dusty or thrown down in a heap. Silk dresses should be wiped occasionally with a clean piece of soft flannel. Wax spots from candles may be removed from silk or satin by laying a piece of blotting paper over the place, and holding a hot iron above it. The wax will be drawn by the heat into the paper, which, when greasy, may be removed, and another piece substituted till the whole stain is removed. Grease may be taken out of woollen dresses in the same manner.