

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

Sarah Bernhardt has been decorated with the French Cross of the Legion of Honor.

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The thirtieth year of the Wagner Jubilee has just been celebrated at Bayreuth in Bavaria.

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Madame Donalda (Miss Pauline Lightsome of Montreal) who has charmed England with her voice, was quietly married in London to Paul Seveilhac, the French baritone.

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W. L. Grant, son of the late Principal Grant of Queen's university, Kingston, has been appointed to the assistant lectureship in colonial history at Oxford.

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Mrs. Sara Jeanette Duncan Cotes, the Canadian novelist, whose home for some years has been in India, is visiting Western Canada and has bought valuable land in Edmonton.

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According to the will of the late Alfred Beit, the South African financier, the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds of "Lady Cockburn and her Children" is left to the British National gallery, while "Mistress Boone and her Daughter" by the same artist, and other art treasures go to Berlin and Hamburg.

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Not in the United States alone have Canadians succeeded in making their mark. Noteworthy achievements by Canadian men and women in the motherland have served to keep Canada favorably in the minds of the British public.

Of Colin Forbes, the Canadian portrait painter T. P. O'Connor has this to say in his bright weekly, *M. A. P.*:

"It is right that a Canadian artist—Canadian to the core in spite of living in many lands—should be commissioned to paint state portraits of King Edward and Queen Alexandra for the house of parliament, Ottawa. Mr. John Colin Forbes came to England for this purpose over a year ago, and the result is to be seen in the Royal Academy, where his paintings, exhibited by command, hold one of the most prominent positions in the show. The King, who is in field marshal's uniform showed a very kindly interest in Mr. Forbes's work, giving him short sittings at every possible opportunity, showing keen anxiety—as he always does—that his different orders and the details of his uniform should be quite correct, and showing the artist now and again, in snatches of conversation, that he has not forgotten his visit to the great Dominion. The Queen was able to give longer sittings, and delighted Mr. Forbes, during the end of his time at Buckingham palace, by paying him a visit one day in his studio when he did not expect to see her again, and posing for him for over an hour.

"It is fifteen years since Mr. Colin Forbes—who studied at the Academy schools, by the way, in the days of his youth—came to this country to paint the portrait of Mr. Gladstone that now hangs in the National Liberal club. It has been called 'the Grand Old Man Eloquent,' for the artist chose a characteristic, powerful attitude—the figure erect, the wonderful eyes wide, one hand outstretched—and the time he spent at Hawarden is one of his happiest memories. In painting his second prime minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, a long personal friendship added to the artist's professional interest in his subject. At present he is painting Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who is giving him sittings when he can spare time at Downing street. He describes C. B. as 'geniality itself.' This portrait is also designed for the National Liberal club.

"The doyen of Canadian portrait painting tells a thrilling story of his first Atlantic journey when the ill-fated steamer Hibernia, of the Anchor line, went down in mid-ocean. Colin Forbes was only a lad at the time. With the artist's instinct to save something of the work that was so dear to him, he cut his mother's portrait out of its frame, before taking to the boats, and thrust the small roll of canvas into an inner pocket. After tossing on the waves for the whole of a terrible day, a ship came in sight, but there were no matches with which to light a signal of distress, everything was drenched and useless. But the young Canadian discovered that his valued picture, carefully protected in his clothing, had kept his box of matches dry. His companion succeeded in lighting a lantern, and the Star of Hope—never-to-be-forgotten name of the passing ship—saw the signal and picked them up.

"Incredible as it seems, Mr. Forbes has been the victim of no less than seven fires, in several instances losing his house and possessions, and always left to deplore the loss of one or another valuable picture. He seems to have borne his misadventures in the same spirit as he takes his success—calmly, cheerily, too deeply interested in his work to be turned aside from his end and object.

"Mr. Forbes was born in Toronto, of Scotch and English descent. He is married, and lives, when he is at home, in Montreal, but there seems every prospect that he will remain for some time on this side of the Atlantic, for he has several important works on hand, including the portrait of the prime minister, and one of Mr. Galloway Weir, M. P."

TELL THE TRUTH.

It is said that a small boy gazing at the picture of George Washington, hatchet in hand beside the cherry tree, exclaimed, "Father how could George have told a lie while the chips were lying round?" What ever measure of truth there may be in this old story certain it is that in the business world of to-day there are many men who make a point of telling the truth only "when the chips are lying round."

In our recent insurance investigations we see the exposure of certain irregularities. These were never dreamed of until a commission had been appointed to investigate. We have had the services of an insurance inspector, but not until a most thorough investigation had been made, was anything of the inner workings of the companies ever found out. The truth is that somewhere there was deception; the truth was never told and things were hid from the light of day that should have been made public at the time. It is the old story of telling the truth when it cannot be helped.

Deception has become a vested right. Men of apparent morality defend it as legitimate business. In England, cheese must be branded "Canadian" in order to bring the top price. Maple sugar made from sugar beets and flavored with maple chips is sold as "Genuine Canadian Maple Sugar," the dealer defends himself on the ground that the people demand the Canadian product and trade would suffer if the truth were told, therefore, he tells the truth only when he is compelled to do so.

The leading packers have made falsehood a business, and deception a part of their stock in trade. Only when the evidence is undeniable not until the "chips" can no longer be hidden from view, do they turn their attention to reform.

The fact is that in the strife of competition we are becoming moral derelicts. We need to build into our national life more fibre and earnestness.

There is grave danger that in the struggle for commercial greatness, wealth may accumulate and men decay. Gold leaves scarred and seamed the mountains and valleys from which man takes it, and sometimes it seems to make bare and barren the hearts and minds of those who touch it. We need to have incorporated into our lives the old fashioned art of truth telling. Whether we stand with hatchet in hand in plain view of our misdeeds or whether the evidence of wrong doing seems remote and difficult of detection, there is only one course to pursue, let the individual, the corporation, the nation—tell the truth.

THE DUTY OF LETTER WRITING.

One of the greatest of the blessings that recent years have brought to mankind and one not often enough included in the list of advances, is the reduction in the postage rates. The story is not new, yet not so old in years, of the brother and sister who, far apart, found the shilling and eighteen pence far more than they could afford to pay for a letter. So they each marked the envelopes in such a way that when the postmaster handed it through the wicket the quick eye could see by the tiny mark that all was well and the letter was handed back because there was no money to redeem it.

That is, fortunately for us, a thing of the past, and yet many a one turns away in disappointment from the wicket in the little town, or watches with a sinking heart the postman pass by the door. The long expected letter failed to come and day by day the little tragedy is performed until "hope deferred" has sickened the heart. There are letters written merely for pleasure, casual pen-and-ink talks with acquaintances that may as well be deferred until one is just in the humor for letter-writing. But there are letters which it is a plain duty to write, which should be a pleasure and may become so.

When the boy goes west to a new position or to take up land, father and mother silently grieve at his going, but rejoice that he has an opportunity to advance. Their interest in all that concerns the new home is pathetic. The line over which he traveled, the town through which he passed, the climate, soil and products of the place where he has gone, are all considered points of interest, and dim eyes study the maps of the geography and try to solve the intricacies of the railway folder.

But this general knowledge is of minor interest. What mother really wants to know is what John has to eat, how he gets his darning and mending done, and what his house is like. Father's chief interest in the grain crop, or the ranching industry is pretty well narrowed down to how many acres John has seeded or how many head of cattle carry his brand.

And while they go daily to the post office and rejoice exceedingly when the letter comes which is read and re-read and lent to the neighbors, the first week that it fails there is grief which to the young is greatly out of proportion to the cause. John was tired or extra busy and concluded that since he had written every week, he could afford to miss one and would write next week for sure. But the regular weekly letter habit having once been broken becomes somewhat intermittent and after long silences letters come beginning "As I have a few minutes to spare" and telling none of the thousand little things that are of more news value to the home people than the fall of nations or the discovery of continents.

It is a shame and without excuse when the home folk are neglected by those away from the home nest which sheltered them so long and so safely.

A man cannot give up and let go of his self-respect without harming his fellows. He is a human derelict, and a constant menace to other crafts on the sea of life.