

boys and girls who are now preparing themselves for the work of good citizens. Highly to be commended is the aim. If they can do anything to make our boys and young men better citizens, they deserve the warmest welcome. In the form of reading lessons, the most important facts about the machinery, local and imperial, by which the British citizen is governed, about the industrial and social life of the empire, and about the extent, constituents, and characteristics of the empire itself, are presented to the more advanced boys and girls in the schools. The last chapter of the book on government is devoted to the duties of the citizen with respect to voting, taxation, public health, education, the poor, maintenance of law and order, public spirit and public opinion. The general title of the other volume perhaps gives no very definite idea of its contents. The portion dealing with the life, industrial and social, of the citizen, describes such subjects as national industries, associations of workers, co-operative societies, friendly societies, the state and labor. Varied and numerous illustrations are scattered throughout both volumes. The illustrations are excellent and typical. But one would prefer to see the text based upon them. If a good illustration were made the starting point of the descriptive portion, a much more interesting book would be the result. For example, the illustration of the House of Commons which is given, is that of Mr. Gladstone introducing the Home Rule Bill. Such a picture might be made the centre of a story sketching the important officials and the business of the House, and the history of a bill. Both volumes aim at comprehensiveness. I think they would have been more successful if they had been content to present typical sketches. They would have been more interesting; they would have given clearer impressions; and the few important facts would have been more easily grasped and remembered by the youthful reader. The first chapter in the book, on government, seems to me to be all that could be desired in this respect. It has for its subject the meaning of citizenship. The story of Paul and the mob at the temple is given as an illustration. Although the description is not reinforced by a picture, the impression is more vivid than that of any other chapter. A reading book — in fact every book put into a child's hands — should not sacrifice interest to anything else. Interest is education's first law. One does not ask that reading books be picture books; not that they should aim at amusement, but that they should attract, so that the instruction aimed at should be readily grasped, vividly pictured and easily retained. Otherwise the value of a book is purely disciplinary. Training may be more important than instruction, but books, such as the above, are written for the purpose of exciting the reader's interest and increasing his knowledge of the state in which he lives. There is at present a class of educational writers which wishes to give school boys pellets of useful information nicely coated in the reading lesson form. Do not such educational physicians turn us against the reading lesson? Surely the first thing to be considered in selecting matter for reading books is whether the extract is really literature or not. A reading lesson surely should be first and last a lesson in literature. The character of the information contained in the selection should be of sec-

ondary importance. Messrs. Mathew's and Strachey's books are by no means devoid of interest. They have all the qualities which could be desired by one who believes with the authors that the boys and girls can best be taught important facts through the reading lesson. The lessons are short and well chosen. Difficult and strange words are explained in brief notes appended to each lesson. The type is clear and large; the book is well bound — not too large — and cheap. One sympathizes so strongly with the authors in their wish to impart to our future rulers the more important facts of government and social life, that one is tempted to suggest another way, though the danger be great. In the first place, one would say, "Do not attempt too much." Would it not be better to place in the hands of the older boys and girls simply a book of selections, containing sketches, which are recognized as of exceptional literary merit, of some of the more important things in the government of a state, etc. The object here is simply to awaken an interest in such matters. Then as the boy approaches to manhood civics should be studied as botany is studied. The objection to this leisurely mode of instructing "our masters," I suppose, is that the boy, who needs school instruction most, because he has less opportunity afterwards of reading, must leave school early and go to work. This is a serious objection and perhaps may force us to resort to the cramming process. But the future ruler does not step out of the school door into dense darkness. The press, cheap and good literature, illumine his path. The itinerant lecturer and the itinerant university do much, and can do more, in acquainting the citizen with the workings of the machinery of government. (One of these books, and perhaps the other, is written by an Extension lecturer). Of course, the wandering lecturer must start from his auditors' position, and, like a guide, point out each important piece of machinery and show how it works in relation to the rest. (It is safer to criticize than to suggest, but the importance of the object warrants the venture.) For example, one might begin with such a question as "What machinery must I set in motion to obtain redress for this infringement of my rights? Or, "What must I do to get a law passed for a certain purpose?" Such questions as these might be made the starting point for a trip through the law courts or through parliament. The lecturer would have to give up the express train and betake himself to the more leisurely stage coach, from which he and his party could get fairly accurate and complete views of the different objects passed. — W. C. M.

#### The June Magazines.

*La Revue Nationale* (J. D. Chartrand, Montreal), gives promise of becoming one of the leading reviews of Canada. The printing is large and clear and the cuts well executed; its treatment of public men and questions is fair and marked by ability, and all students of French-Canadian literature will find in this attractive periodical that which promises well and that is deserving of their support. . . . In the June "Atlantic Monthly" Mr. Percival Lowell has a second article on Mars, equally good with the first — considering the Water Problem. . . . As a