

Canadian History Readings.

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The Readings in Canadian History, dealing chiefly with persons and events, striking episodes and personal incident, have a charm for the youthful or the mature reader. They should be placed within reach of every school and home, and no library, public or private, should be without them.

The volume is an attractive one both in variety and the interest of its contents. It contains nearly 350 pages, and is handsomely bound. It will make an appropriate Christmas or New Year's gift for any Canadian either at home or abroad. The volume may be obtained during this month for *One Dollar*, by addressing the EDUCATIONAL REVIEW, St. John, N. B.

Home Study.

There is considerable discussion of the question, in newspapers and elsewhere, of home study for pupils. Some would do away with all home study. This may be taken as the view of parents whose children are not able to stand the strain of too much study, especially after a day spent in school; or of parents who have occupation for their children at home. Teachers are generally of the opinion that more or less of home study is desirable. The writer of a paper, read at the Westmorland County Teachers' Institute recently, expressed the opposite view, and according to the reports of the discussion which followed, his views were condemned by the teachers present.

Some parents want the society of their children in the home circle during the evenings, without too much worrying over lessons up to late hours. In some homes, especially where there are no servants, the services of

the older children are required as helpers. In others, children have to practise music or other special exercises after school, and in others the claims of society call children out to parties often until late hours.

An English writer says that the difference between the German schoolboy and the English is that the former goes to school to learn and the latter to play. Till six years this German lad is left entirely alone so far as an education is concerned. Then his evil hour arrives, and for eight years he works; and work in a German school does not leave much leisure for frivolity, being of the most exacting sort, both at home and at school. But the German lad manages to get through it somehow and arrives at manhood with a sound mind in a sound body. He leaves the gymnasium or real-schule at fourteen, better educated than many of our own young men who leave the university. In the English school, between out-door sports and the study of Latin, on which subject two-thirds of a boy's time is practically wasted, for it is of no earthly use to him in after life, education is not that serious business that it is to the German school boy.

This is the opinion of the English writer. That it is in great a measure true, we have no doubt; and there is in it a lesson for us. Too often the work of the schools is not of that serious character that its importance demands. It is subordinate to too many things—amusements, society, and other distracting occupations. Too often the children in our schools are listless or absorbed. The German child has his heart in the work. In visiting a school in Nova Scotia recently, the writer's attention was called to some children of German parents, whose accuracy of statement, intelligence and enthusiasm in their work was most marked. This is a characteristic of the German mind, which looks upon education as a preparation for life—a serious business that does not permit of too much trifling. The German idea of all work and no play for the schoolboy cannot be imitated entirely in this country; but it is a menace to the country's best interests if education is not treated more seriously so that it shall become the absorbing occupation of boys and girls between the ages of six and fourteen. And when we speak of serious work we mean work without that worry and nervous strain, incident to long hours and weary tasks to be learned from books; but work that will interest and bring into play the activities of the child and make him think and do.

Are home studies a wearisome iteration of lessons instead of an absorbing occupation? Are they a strain instead of a wholesome stimulus to children? Do they appeal to memory only and not to the investigating spirit? do they sap the vitality of growing children, deprive them of needed rest and make them unfit for study the following day? Are not the amusements and frivolities of life a serious check to both home and school study? These are questions that parents and teachers should carefully consider; and they should come together and consider them. We shall return to the subject again.