

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

READING OF BOOKS.

(By M. Kennedy, Fergus, Ont.)

There are hundreds and thousands of persons who are ruining their minds by a kind of literary debauch. They struggle to learn a little of everything, and they end by knowing nothing. It is for this reason that we would utter a word of warning to indiscriminating devourers of books. They commit mental suicide, and although no disgrace attaches to this species of self-destruction, yet disgrace is not the only thing we have to fear in the course of our brief pilgrimage. We are not speaking of those whose function in life is to learn, who must read widely. Carlyle spent nearly thirteen years among musty German histories, but the world reaped the benefits of his dreary toil, in the "Life of Frederick II," but rather to those whose time is limited, and whose cravings for knowledge are importunate, to them we say that the essentials of thought and knowledge are contained in a few books—carefully chosen. Let them exercise a wise self-restraint and master a few good books to the last syllable. Diffuse reading engenders loose thought or no thought, while concentrated reading results in wise and practical thought. Thought influences the conduct of life, and therefore the diffuse reader is usually a failure, while the reader who concentrates his efforts rarely misses success.

Ruskin was the greatest master of English that ever lived, and he was rigidly kept to a very few books until he reached manhood. Under the care of his mother he read the Bible six times and learned most of the book by heart. Pope was read again and again, and in the evenings the Waverley novels were read aloud. A narrow early training, some people will say, but the purport of it is plain: his intellect was kept clear of rubbish. Of course he read many other authors, but until manhood was reached his range was restricted. It will be found in all the walks of life that the men who most influenced their generation, despised superficial knowledge. They learned thoroughly all that they thought it necessary to learn within a very limited compass; they learned, above all, to think, and they were then ready to speak or act without reference to any authority save their own intellect.

Reading is a pursuit that brings happiness and blessings; on the other hand over reading brings on, mental deadness and complete instability. If you know the Bible thoroughly you are educated; if you know Shakespeare, you are educated. There is no shame in being ignorant of facts. The shame lies in not being able to recognize the true nature of facts when you meet them in the course of daily life. Let those of scant leisure keep to a select number of books, and they may be sure they will taste the high luxury of powerful thought with far more keenness than they would if they raced at a mad gallop over acres of half-remembered verbiage.

After a basis of solid culture has been obtained, the object of reading is to gain amusement. The books we have had reference to have been those of a serious nature, books destined to train the mind. We would add to those, books that will delight and rest the mind. No one was ever the worse for reading good novels, for human fortunes will always interest human beings; and the humblest and most laborious in the community, may without scruple read the harmless tales of fictitious joys and sorrows, after they have secured that narrow, minute training which alone gives grasp and security to the intellect.

THE ROYAL TOUR.

The Royal train that the Grand Trunk Railway System will furnish for Prince Arthur, the distinguished visitor who is coming to Canada next month, will be the finest and most luxurious in the world. It will consist of four cars including a Pullman composite buffet smoking car, a Pullman dining car, Pullman compartment sleeping car and the Grand Trunk private car "Violet." The entire equipment will be a revelation to those accustomed to railway travel.

First in order will come the "Viceroy" the composite car. Twelve deep-leathered-upholstered chairs invite the smoker, rivaling in luxurious comfort the lounge in an alcove of the same apartment. Conveniently joining the smoker is a buffet with a barber shop and white tiled bathroom annexed to it. The architecture of the interior of this car is a simplified treatment of the German "Modern Style," the finely grained "Kodo" wood being dark brown with a conventional flower motif in masonry to lend color to the paneling. Blending harmoniously with this the furnishings are of deep olive and brown with the burnished gold metal lamps contrasting effectively with the tout ensemble. A portion of this car is provided for the storage of baggage.

No less attractive will be the second car, the diner "Munroe" which in architectural design and beauty is entirely different to the "Viceroy." Here the Flemish style prevails: the richly carved oak, stained and Antwerp brown, extending in a wainscoting to the lower portion of the ceiling which is removed off, making the car seem like a dining hall of a palace. The lighting of this car is also unique, for beside the chandeliers in the ceiling a small cordelabrum hangs over each of the ten tables, and antique lamps are hung at intervals along the sides of the car. Third in succession, but equal in beauty will be a Pullman compartment sleeping car containing seven communicating state rooms and two drawing rooms. Each compartment has its individual color scheme and furnishings and its complete toilet appertences each rivaling its neighbor in exquisite furnishings. Covering the floors of these three cars is heavy "Wilton" carpet of exquisite designs and of a color to harmonize with the surroundings.

The three cars referred to above were awarded the Grand Prix at the World's Fair at St. Louis in 1904, and are conceded to be the handsomest, most luxurious and comfortable in the world. The last car on the train will be the "Violet," the handsome private car built for Sir Charles Rivers-Wilson, K.C.M.G., C.B., president of the Grand Trunk Railway System, and will be occupied by Prince Arthur and his entourage. In addition to its beautiful architectural designs, the richness of its furnishings, the large, comfortable bedrooms, the roomy dining-room and spacious cozy observation end, and its interior air of elegance, it is a car which offers all requirements for comfort and ease in travelling. Two of the rooms in the "Violet" are supplied with baths, cleverly concealed from view in the floor of the car. A library containing the latest books has been installed, and everything that will tend to make the Prince's visit while on the Grand Trunk a pleasant one has been done, while a trip over the only double track line in Canada will give the visitor a good impression of Canadian railways.

The entire train will be electrically lighted from power generated in the baggage compartment of the composite car, special turbines and dynamos having been installed for the purpose. A telephone

system will be provided, whereby communication can be had by 'phone from one car to the others while train is en route, and while train is standing connection will be made, giving the opportunity of using the local circuit of long distance lines at any point.

The Prince will take the train at Ottawa on April 20th, and will be conveyed by the Grand Trunk from Ottawa to Toronto, Hamilton and Niagara Falls, then back to Montreal; from thence the party will proceed by the Intercolonial Railway for the tour through the Maritime Provinces.

A STRANGE MARRIAGE.

No marriage in English royal circles has met with so little popular favor as that of Princess Fna of Battenburg, the grandchild of King Edward VII. of England, with Alfonso, King of Spain. All of us who are familiar with English history, remember how much trouble former similar alliances have occasioned in England.

They think of the ill-starred marriage of Henry VIII. with Catherine of Arragon, whose divorce from the King occasioned the prelatial national English Church. They will think of the dreary alliance between Philip II. of Spain, the special friend of the Low Lands, and his worthy consort, "Bloody" Mary, a pair well mated, but so utterly uncongenial that the "mirthless king," very soon after the wedding, left his consort, never to appear again in England.

They will think of the insane desires and hopes of James I., the buffoon among English kings, who sent delegates to the Synod of Dort, and was brimful of Calvinism, whilst at the same time he earnestly sought the marriage of the heir to the throne with the Infanta of Spain.

And now Fna of Battenburg is to be sacrificed to the insipid Alfonso of Spain. Of course she had to forewear the faith of her fathers and turn Catholic. The Pope graciously makes the change as easy as possible. But what a fate, to be compelled to accept a faith which your own grandfather, on his accession to the throne had to denounce under oath; and to be assisted (easily) into that faith by the very man whom your grandfather, on his accession, had to denounce under oath as "Antichrist!" The Christian speaks of the whole thing somewhat in these words:

A stronger argument against such a political conversion can never be presented than that which is now offered by the fate of a young girl, little more than a child, who is compelled to reject Protestantism, which she at least externally embraces, and that for reasons which have nothing to do with a real and voluntary change of personal view. It is cruel to herself and an insult to the principles of true religion.

That is the common sense view of the matter, and will unquestionably be shared by all well thinking people.

Hope township last week voted on local option, which carried by a majority of 51. There was a total vote of 665 polled, which was large, considering the stormy weather. The local option people expected a much larger majority.

Dr. J. G. Paton, the veteran missionary to the New Hebrides, has been thrown out of a buggy while journeying to address a meeting in Australia. The horse was frightened at a passing train, the engineer and guard of which, witnessing the accident, stopped the train, and conveyed the injured man to the nearest doctor. No bones were broken, and Dr. Paton was able to proceed to his appointment.