

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

The Ontario public schools are to be given a new set of readers, and those in use at present are to be recalled.

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Mr. Maurice, the Canadian artist, has two pictures on exhibition in Paris; one at the salon of the Societé Nationale and the other at the Luxembourg.

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Knox College, Toronto, conferred the degree of doctor of divinity on Rev. Hugh McKay, B.A., missionary to the Indians at Round Lake, Sask.

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The President of France has conferred the Cross of the Legion of Honor upon Andrew Carnegie in recognition of the work he has done in the interests of Peace. The presentation was made by Baron de Stourmelles de Constant at the banquet of the Peace Congress in New York.

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At Charlottetown, P. E. I., diamond medals have been given to Capt. John Champion and Capt. Daniel Fraser; watches to Jas. Cahill, William Leavitt, Geo. McBeath, Chas. McNeill, Frank Skerry, Chas. Perry, John McCabe and Wm. Smith for rescuing the crew of the schooner of A. J. McKeen, wrecked last November.

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Sir Ernest Cassel's magnificent marble palace in Park Lane is being embellished with 60 tons of Canadian blue marble, about which the Princess of Wales is so enthusiastic, and which beautifies many of her rooms in the Marlborough House.

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The story of "Ben Hur" as dramatized has just been given on the stage for the 2,500th time in New York City. Beside it has been given five hundred times in Philadelphia, a thousand in Columbus, Ohio, fifteen hundred at Drury Lane Theatre, London, Eng., and two thousand in Chicago. It is calculated that six million people have seen it during the eight years it has been in drama form.

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No singer since Adelina Patti was ever so careful of the voice as the little tenor Signor Bonci. He refuses all social invitations, lives only among his intimate friends and seldom ventures into the theatre except when he is going to sing. Rarely has he been seen in one of the city restaurants where his colleagues gather daily. Signor Bonci has learned from experience that his voice can be kept in condition only by careful living and a limited amount of singing. He therefore follows very strictly his rules of conduct. In these days in which singers are eagerly chasing after every kind of social attention his case is striking.

THE COAL MINERS AND THE ANTI-STRIKE LAW.

Last year under the name of the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act, a bill was brought into Federal Parliament and has since become law. This act provides for the constitution of boards of investigation whose duty it is to deal with any differences between employee and employer which cannot be settled without recourse to strike or lockout. Until disputes have been submitted to this board, investigated thoroughly and reported upon, it is an offence for employees as a body to quit work or for employers to close

down on purpose to keep the men out. The master acting contrary to the provisions of this law is liable to a fine of from a hundred to a thousand dollars for every day or part of day that the lockout exists. The men who go on strike (that is, cease work in a body as the result of a common agreement or understanding) shall be liable to a fine of from ten to fifty dollars for each day or part of day that the strike continues. Penalties are also imposed on the persons exciting or encouraging in any way either employers or employees to violate the provisions of this act. After the disputed points have been investigated by the board and its recommendations have been reported, the parties are at liberty to accept or reject its findings as they see fit.

The first to test the strength of the new law are the mine workers of Alberta and British Columbia. They have asked the mine operators for fortnightly pay, eight hours a day and a general increase in wages of ten per cent. They object to the condition insisted upon by the operators that the agreement between the latter and the men might be changed if the laws of the land imposed new burdens upon the mines or miners. The two forces have not yet discovered a basis of agreement, and the men in most of the Western Canadian coal mines have quit work. They maintain, however, that they have not violated the new law because they have gone out as individuals without a general understanding or direct orders from the union, thus avoiding, they believe, rendering themselves liable to the penalties named in the act.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the law may prove adequate to this situation and speedily manifest it, for with scarcity of fuel added to insufficient means of transportation the prospect of another winter of discomfort and suffering seems imminent.

THE HAGUE CONFERENCE.

In 1898 the first Peace Conference of the nations of the world met at the Hague in response to the call of the Czar. At that conference three planks were laid in the platform of the peaceful intercourse of the nations—provision for arbitration and mediation, the Geneva Convention of 1864, and the rules for the government of maritime warfare. The question of the limitation of armaments was brought forward by Russia but was set aside as involving useless discussion.

The second Peace Conference will meet in the same city this year some time in June. For the past year diplomatic discussions have taken place in the various capitals as to the matters to be brought before this second conference, and now these have been collected and formed into a program issued by the Russian Government. A noticeable omission from this program is the reduction of armaments, omitted on the ground that its discussion led to nothing at the former meeting. But some of the powers are of the opinion that a Peace Conference without disarmament negotiations is Hamlet without a ghost. Those who most strongly disapprove of ignoring this important detail of the peace movement are Great Britain, United States and Spain, who

each have put themselves on record as reserving the liberty of submitting to the second Conference the question of the reduction or limitation of armaments in addition to the items on the prepared program. Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary are the chief powers endeavoring to prevent the appearance of this obnoxious subject. Italy, persuaded by Germany, will likely follow her ally's example, and while France has a strong peace party, the foreign office is inclined to side with Russia.

CHANGES IN POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

A surplus in the revenues of the Canadian Post Office Department is not a thing of which to be proud so long as there are so many crying needs in the service which that money ought to relieve. Western Canada has suffered much because postal facilities have limped along so far in the rear of commercial expansion, and complaints have come from every direction about the inadequacy of the provision made to serve the public.

Postmaster-General Lemieux has seen the need and is endeavoring to bring about improvements. The estimates for the coming year call for \$50,000 to be devoted by the Department to the institution of free delivery in cities of ten or twelve thousand whose annual revenue amounts to \$10,000. If the revenue reaches the required amount and other conditions are favorable, the minimum population will not be insisted upon. Provision has also been made for the liberal increase in salary to postmasters, a step in the way of reform that will meet with the approval of Canadians in general.

New arrangements have been made in our postal dealings with Great Britain and the United States. With the latter an agreement has been made whereby newspapers and periodicals mailed in the one country and addressed to the other are subject to a rate of four cents a pound prepared by stamps. It is a conservative estimate that for every ton of printed matter going from Canada to the United States there are twenty tons make the journey across the border into the Dominion, which means that Canada has all the work of distributing and none of the revenue arising from this immense amount of literature. As matters stand now the only way for American magazines to avoid paying the new postage is to send the periodicals by freight or express into Canada and have them mailed from a Canadian post office at domestic rates, in which case Canada gets the benefit of the revenue returns.

Up to the present time the rate on British newspapers and magazines has been eight cents per pound, a rate so high that comparatively few Canadians could afford to buy the press products of the Mother Country. With a desire to encourage freer intercourse between Great Britain and Canada and a wider knowledge each of the other, the British Postmaster-General has agreed to reduce the postal rates on registered newspapers, bona fide magazines and trade journals, published at regular intervals of not more than one month, to two cents per pound, packets to be limited in weight to five pounds. In return for this consideration the Dominion Postmaster-General undertakes to convey, free of ocean transit charges, all such journals sent to Canada by vessels under contract with the Canadian Government. Such an arrangement should make it possible for every Canadian to take a British periodical which will keep him in touch with the world and quicken his interest in the problems and welfare of the Empire.