

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

Tolstoi, who has been very ill, has recovered sufficiently to resume his literary work, but is still confined to the house.

The oldest evening paper in England, *The Globe*, has been taken over by the Harmsworths. There will be no change in the policy of the paper.

G. D. Rhodes of Victoria, B. C., took all the final year prizes at the Royal Military College, Kingston, except one. He won also the sword of honor and the gold medal.

J. S. Plaskett, who has charge of the big telescope at the Dominion observatory, sighted a wandering comet of large size which is approaching the sun and daily growing more brilliant.

A monument to the memory of William Knisely, who fell at Hart's River in the Boer War, was unveiled in Court House Park, Cayuga, Ont.

A German merchant has left £5,000 to found a church in Constantinople for all denominations on the condition that the sermons shall be preached in Esperanto.

J. H. Chabot, B.A., received the University silver medal at St. Boniface, and Alexander Bernier carried off the bronze medal at the same college.

Miss Q. A. Elkerton successfully passed the intermediate examination in music at Moulton College, Toronto, and also won the Nordheimer prize for vocal music.

The degree of doctor of literature has been conferred by Oxford University upon Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling. On the same day Lord Curzon was publicly installed as Chancellor of the University.

Prof. Alexander Stewart Herschel, the distinguished astronomer, died at the observatory house, St. Lough, Bucks, where his grandfather, Sir William Herschel, and Sir John Herschel made most of their world-famous discoveries.

The Toronto *Globe* recently offered a prize for the best poem whose theme was some event in Canadian history. Over seventy manuscripts were received and the prize was awarded to Mrs. Isabel Ecclestone Mackay of Woodstock. Her poem is entitled "Marguerite de Roberval" and is a splendid account of a moving incident in Canada's early history.

The large group of spots on the sun, noticed in Washington by Prof. Peters of the United States Naval Observatory, were photographed by Messrs. John R. Plaskett and W. E. Harper of the Dominion Observatory. They are the largest group of sun spots seen for some time, and are estimated to be 100,000 miles long by from 25,000 to 30,000 miles in width.

A fund of \$50,000 is being raised by popular subscription in New York State for the purpose of erecting a monument to the late President McKinley. The obelisk is a pure white marble shaft eighty-six feet in height with a base of six feet; it tapers very gradually to the top. The obelisk rests upon a pedestal fourteen feet high, the base of which is twelve feet above the street level.

Mme. Melba took part in an unusual ceremony in Middlesex, England, the other day, when the corner stone of a new building for a talking machine company was laid. Several records of Mme. Melba's voice were deposited in the stone. The prima donna is said to be a large stockholder in the company, to whom she has given the exclusive right in England to reproduce her voice in exchange for a considerable interest in the corporation.

During six days the historic city of Oxford is to be the scene of a commemorative pageant that in many respects will be the most notable affair of its kind ever given in England. The city and University of Oxford are rich in historical associations. During the week a number of the most memorable events in their history are to be reproduced in a series of magnificent tableaux. Two thousand persons are to take part in these tableaux. The Prince and Princess of Wales are the patrons of the affair, and the professors and fellows of the university and the several colleges have supervised the preparations.

Beebohm Tree is directing the dramatic features of the pageant, which will include historical episodes put into form by some of the leading dramatists of England. The music, which will follow the historical development of that art with great fidelity, will be under the direction of Sir Hubert Parry, professor of music at Oxford. Edwin A. Abbey and other distinguished artists assisted in designing the costumes.

The first scene to be presented will be the foundation of the city of Oxford in the year 738, according to the legend of St. Frideswide. The next scene occurred in 1002, when, in consequence of the plots against himself and his nobles, King Ethelred the Unready issued an edict that on St. Brice's day all the Danes throughout the kingdom should be massacred. The representatives of that race in Oxford sought sanctuary in a church built by St. Frideswide, but the infuriated citizens burned it down and slew them all.

Other scenes will represent the coronation of Harold Harefoot, the funeral of Amy Robsart, an Elizabethan procession, the visit of James I to Oxford in 1605, and the expulsion of Fellows of Magdalen by James II in 1687.

WEAK LINK IN THE EDUCATIONAL CHAIN.

The swing of the pendulum in popular conceptions of education is plainly in the direction of the utilitarian. It is now not so much culture or discipline of the faculties by drill in languages and mathematics as training by means of a class of subjects co-related directly or indirectly with the prospective life-work of the individual. Especially on the part of young men is there a manifest restiveness in relation to those studies that aforesaid played so conspicuous a part in the curricula. The modern overflow of young women into the industrial and commercial world has carried along with it a similar tendency. Hence, the easy advent of the study of nature and the natural sciences, manual training, commercial courses, electrical engineering, agriculture and domestic science.

In all this, two things require guarding against: one the proneness to take short-cuts in education, regardless of the fundamental truth of experience that the best in nature and in art, likewise, is the product of slower growth; and the other, the substitution of the mere material product for the life itself, as the end in view. While the drift cityward, with attendant perils to humanity, continues, with little abatement, it is reassuring to realize that its dangers are recognized and, further, that the twentieth century has dawned with a well-defined appreciation of the blessings of

rural life and contact with the comparatively unadulterated benefactions of nature—fresh air, sunlight and wholesome food. The multiplication of schools and colleges of agriculture and attention of schools and colleges of agriculture, and attention to the farm and its interests in our school systems and literature, are therefore among the most hopeful signs of the times. There agencies should be more generally taken advantage of by young men, for the double reason that they invest farm work with before undreamed-of interest, and make it more profitable.

We should have read history to poor purpose did we not perceive the evils of urban congestion and, further, that an education that gravitates only to the material must fail in its final result. Endowed with a threefold nature, man cannot long rest unsatisfied, as Lecky, the historian, points out; and to abandon the higher for the lower in the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, or even the purely intellectual, will warp the nature and ultimately bring unerring penalties in its train. History, if it teaches anything clearly, discloses that one by one those nations became degenerate and perished when, at the height of material prosperity, they forgot that only the good endures, and laid the emphasis upon the material and the sensual instead of upon man and character. Babylon, Greece, Egypt and Rome, despite the splendor of material achievement, sank into ruin. Human nature to-day is much the same as twenty centuries ago, and requires the same regenerating and preserving influences. The genius of Christianity has been the saving element in the life of the British nation, and there never was a time in the history of England, Canada and the United States when press, pulpit, school, parliament and home should so recognize and act upon this truth as in these halcyon days of progress. Any educational agency that fails in cognizance of the laws and principles underlying a sound morality, will prove a chain with a breaking link.

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."

THE ALL-RED ROUTE.

One question brought forward at the recent Imperial Conference in London, Eng., which is on the way to become a reality rather than a mere topic for discussion, is the proposition to establish a new rapid transit route between England and the East, via Canada. An all-British service of a speed to compete with the American lines is the essential feature of the idea. New steamers of the most up-to-date construction can make the voyage across the Atlantic in four days; the transcontinental service through Canada by rail is becoming more and more efficient, and with as prompt a service established on the Pacific, the "all-red route" from Great Britain to Australia, China or Japan can be carried out in at least twenty-four hours less than the time taken in crossing through the United States, and several days less than the route through the Suez Canal requires. With a line of this magnitude in active operation Canada would be the connecting link between East and West and the highway over which an immense amount of the world's commerce would pass. She could extend her own markets in both directions. From the standpoint of the Empire there would seem to be great advantage in the establishment of this improvement in facilities of transportation. The self-governing Colonies will be brought nearer to one another and the Mother Land, and increased opportunities of investment will be given. The cost of such a project would be large, but at the Conference none of those interested seemed to think that the countries involved would grudge the expenditure. The Australian representative estimated that the annual subsidy required would be from three to four hundred thousand pounds, and stated without hesitation that the country he represented would be willing to devote a hundred thousand of it if a twenty-one day service could be assured.