



Col. Theodore Roosevelt.
Whose funeral took place at Oyster Bay last week.

Height and Hearth.

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH.

Thy pace I can not keep,
The hills are cold;
Far down the home lights gleam
By barn and fold.

Thy eager feet can mount
Fame's star-fed way,
Mine for the meadows long,
The common day.

Speed thou—the gleaming heights
With cheer essay!
I at my cottage-door
Will watch and pray.

In Hill Trails.

Why Read?

WHY don't farmers buy more books? A bookseller was the speaker. He was in a position to know, at least in regard to a considerable portion of country, and the question was, for the moment, a poser.

After-reflection brought the answer: In some localities farmers do buy books, and have learned how to buy books of the best kind, too. In other localities where, it must be admitted, literature is conspicuously absent, the lack would most likely be filled if the farmers knew what to buy. It is so easy to go into a bookshop and spend a considerable amount of money without receiving any real value therefore,—for not all booksellers know anything of the books they recommend, or have a care, in the slightest degree, for the kind of literature they put forth from their shops. Their sole object, all too often, is to make sales; that accomplished nothing further remains. Were things as they ought to be, no one but a real book-lover and book-discriminator should keep a bookshop, and he should buy no book, no matter how great the demand, that has not the recommendation either of himself or some other competent critic. Such a proposition, however, smacks of a rather too Utopian flavor for hope of realization.

In the meantime the farmer who would read but has no money to waste is rather helpless in the matter of his buying, and it is in the hope of meeting this need to

some small extent, so far as our readers at least are concerned, that we shall resume in these columns, as soon as possible, the "Among the Books" department, which was largely eliminated during the War. As before no space whatever will be devoted to books that are not for one reason or another, "worth while."

IN the very forefront of consideration of this question of reading may be stated, almost as a postulate: *Everyone should read.* Moreover everyone should cultivate a love for reading. That done the benefits are self-evident. In the first place, a love for reading, satisfied by reading-matter of the right kind, broadens the interests,—and, it may be stated as invariably true, not a single broadening of the interests can take place without adding to the pleasures of life. The man or woman who loves reading is, in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, happier than the one who does not. The mind is, indeed, the greater part of man, and when it is filled with interests (what a wealth that word suggests!) the greatest condition for happiness—granted other conditions of life, physically, etc., are normal—is assured.

This is, in itself, a great consideration, but there are many other reasons why everyone should cultivate the habit of reading. One of them is that acquaintance with the best books and magazines not only brightens one's own intellect and life, but makes one more ready for real conversation when one goes out among other people. The person who does not read at all is, in conversation, confined to gossip, personal hobbies, domestic affairs, local sport, etc. The reader, on the other hand, has a world of talk far beyond these opened to him, no matter where he may be. Politics, world-events, world-religions, literature, history, travel, modern science, the science of agriculture included—each of these names a door through which the real lover of reading has travelled, or may travel, and by which he has entered into a fascinating thought-land from which he cannot return without some gleanings of fair fruits and flowers in his hands. What remains, then, but to find others who have ventured through the same doors? Then the curtains of the mind are raised, and tongues are untied; soul meets soul, friendships are formed, and the path of life brightened by pleasure and profit.

ALL is grist for the mill of the real lover of reading. The daily and weekly newspapers satisfy the natural curiosity of the mind in regard to what is going on in the world; the better classes of magazines add to that information and suggest deeper avenues for thought-investigation; books supply mental stimulus and satisfaction for every mood,—for every need, indeed, from the technical up.—If one is tired and wishes to be soothed or amused, here is a book that can answer that desire; if one wishes the keener pleasure of exquisite literature that may at the same time provoke thought, there is another which can satisfy; does one wish information on any subject, here it is, on the printed page; does one need actual help on anything from building a poultry-house to handling a great enterprise, there are books and pamphlets innumerable to supply the need.—And the whole benefit will be realized if one never loses sight of one important proviso,—that *Reading must supplement thought, not take the place of it.* One must read to think, use all one's reading as a stimulus to more, and yet more thinking. In general books must be taken but as avenues to lead one on trips of exploration on one's own account.

THIS, of course, presupposes that one must not become a mere sponge for other people's ideas as recorded in books but must read with discrimination, taking care to cultivate a taste for the best only. . . . When one becomes trained in music one soon learns to detest all of the "common" that has intruded itself under the name of music. Cultivation of the taste in drama—even in the movies leads to disgust at anything unworthy that is presented on the stage. In short one may become a connoisseur in everything, and so with books: the enjoyment of real literature soon makes one impatient of all that is poor and common that has found its way into print.

A very important matter, then, is to make a good start.

In the hope of helping to satisfy literary taste, many critics of distinction have made lists of "Best one hundred books". Sir John Lubbock, for instance, has given such a list in *Pleasures of Life*; President Eliot of Harvard another in his "Fifteen Foot Shelf of Books," etc. But the trouble with most of such lists is that they usually name books that may be appreciated by seasoned readers, if one may use such a term,—such, as a rule, as need working up to by a long course of training in reading. Moreover, since excellent new books appear every year, it is almost too hard and fast to fix upon any "best" one hundred.

Perhaps the most satisfactory way is to accept no one person's dictum in regard to the selection of one's library, but to dabble for oneself, here and there, among those books recommended most highly by the best reviewers, choosing here, rejecting there, as suits one's own idea of pleasure and fitness.

Only so can one become such a book-lover as is described by "A Bookworm" in the *Fellowship of Books* (Bell & Cockburn, booksellers, 210 Victoria St., Toronto). "The lover of books," says he, "may be distinguished by one trick he has which betrayeth him. If he is in a strange house he makes straight for the shelves; before anything else he hastens to take stock of the library; blue china cannot turn him aside, nor pictures detain him. There are other peculiarities by which he may be known. If he passes a bookseller's shop he may not choose but stop; if it is a second-hand shop, which is at all times more interesting than a shop of new books, his feet without any volition on his own part draw him within it. However, poor he is, his shelves grow continually larger with new additions. However large his own library may be, every other man's library is an object of curiosity to him for the strange and unknown wonders it may possess. . . . I, who write this paper, am one of these lovers of books. I love them beyond all other earthly things. . . . To me they are as living things, and possess a soul. It gives me a glow of pleasure, even after many years of experience, to buy a new book. Even to carry it home, cut the leaves, turn over the pages and look in it here and there, is joy enough to last a whole evening."

WE are in the heart of the winter. The evenings are long; chores do not occupy all of the time. Why not, then, make some effort to find out what gives "The Bookworm" the keen pleasure he finds in books? Surely the discovery of ever so little of it, and appropriation of it for oneself—for this is something that can be taken freely if it can be found—must make the quest well worth while.

A Letter From Mons.

IT is beginning to seem a long time since the armistice was signed, yet we are still ready to hear, and never tire of hearing, the story of how the men at the front, in different parts of the line, received the great news. The following interesting letter has been very kindly given us for publication, by Mrs. Peter McEwen, Wroxeter, Ont.

Mons, Nov. 16th.

Dear Mother.—*La guerre est finie.* I'll bet that's the best news you've heard for a long time. I know its the best I ever did. I've always thought it was far harder for the people at home than for us and there must have been a wonderful sigh of relief go up when it came through. There was none of the wild excitement here you might expect. It was almost too big to realize I think and then we hardly credited it for a while. Some even grumbled that the Bosches were not half licked, especially the Canadians. When we did know it was true we got some ribbons and got decked out but now we're back to the old routine. The Belgians were the most pleased though, and we had a most triumphal entry into *Champ-de-Sar*, a little village near Mons, two nights before peace. We were the first English troops and the Canadian infantry had only gone before us a few hours. They rushed out and seized anyone on foot and kissed him and nearly pulled him to pieces—and incidentally pinched all his badges and buttons as souvenirs! When we halted they brought us coffee and pancakes and did everything they could.

We were really very lucky for our part has been really historical. We were attached to the Canadians and ended up the war in the very town where the British army began it. I mean the famous retreat in 1914.—Almost on the identical fields. It was hard on some of the poor fellows though. I saw some lying there dead where they had fallen only 10 minutes before "Cease Fire" was declared. One of them had been on the same spot in 1914. I was talking to Hal McLean of Wingham the night before last at the theatre here and he must have been one of the very first to get into the town: I saw him at the last Arras show in Sept., and the very next day he got the military cross for good work in front of Beiry.

The censorship has been relaxed now, so this is why I can mention names of places, etc.

I've talked to some fellows who have been prisoners among the Germans and they tell some harrowing tales. The Bosche must have been terribly hard up at the last. His transport was almost entirely prisoners, dogs, donkeys and his own men. I've seen some of his horses dead and they were mere skeletons, and the civilians here tell us they were mostly Russian ponies. With this transport though he has swept the country clean. I mean, has left practically nothing of his own behind and it must have been a colossal work. Most of it was done at night too, and I well believe what we are told, that he was completely tired out. At the same time, our prisoners tell us, our planes would come over and from about a hundred feet up would sail up and down the packed roads and simply pour down machine gun fire and bombs.

I saw quite a sight the other day—two in fact. First was the formal entry into Mons of the Canadians, Gen. Currie and his staff and then yesterday a march past before Gen. Horne of the First Army. It took two solid hours and then there was only about one company of infantry and a battery of artillery for each division in the area. It was a most impressive sight. I saw too, the burial of some of those who fell on the last day, in Mons cemetery. Half the