

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

Allan Ross, a Scotch Canadian, now seventy-five years of age, and who has lived at Treherne, Manitoba, since 1892, has just published a volume of poetry.

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Edward Hagerup Greig, the Norwegian composer, died at Bergen, Norway, on September 3rd. He was born at Bergen in 1843 of Scotch ancestry, and received his musical education at Leipzig and Copenhagen. His best known work is the music of "Peer Gynt," Ibsen's play.

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Some rare Browning books have been put on the market, the property of Stuart M. Samuel, M. P. A "Pauline" with an autograph inscription on the fly leaf, and which sold a few years ago for £145; a set of "Bells and Pomegranates" eight parts, presentation copies to W. J. Fox, Browning's early critic and friend; proof sheets of several parts of the same edition; presentation copies of first editions of "Christmas-Eve and Easter-day," "Balaustion's Adventure," "Fifine at the Fair," "Red Cotton Night Cap Country" and others. The same library contains a copy of Alice in Wonderland (1865) with five of the original drawings by Sir John Tenniel; a series of presentation copies of Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, Gibbon, Longfellow; also several of Coleridge's books with MS. additions and a presentation copy of "Aids to Reflections." Besides all this treasure, Mr. Samuel owned many important autograph MSS., including two pages of Lamb's Essay, "Dream Children," and two folio pages and six lines of Scott's Waverley.

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"Carmichael," by Anison North, London, Ont.—the William Weld Co.—is described on the outside cover as "A realistic picture of Canadian rural life: the story of a family feud and its outcome." This gives a very inadequate idea of its reality. It is at once an unusually charming, well-written and captivating novel—breezy of the soil and beautifully human. From beginning to end, it is full of bright thoughts, of pure thoughts, of an appreciative estimation of the weaknesses and of the joys of life. It deserves the widest popular circulation—should, in short, be in all the homes of the people, not alone because it is good, because of its beauties of sentiment, or of the lessons it conveys, but because it appeals to the reader on its own true worth. Of Canada redolent, every man, woman, girl and boy will profit by its reading, besides being wholesomely and absorbingly entertained. It is a book to read in summer, and a book that will bear re-perusal around the fireside in winter. There is nothing preachy about it, nothing goody-goody, nothing flighty, but there is an abundance of—well, attractive narrative, picturesque truth about homely people and delightful glimpses of rural life. The satiated woman of society cannot fail to be pleased in its reading any more than the liver of the purer—the simple life. A word of praise for the publisher is merited, for the William Weld Company have performed their share remarkably, artistically and well—Toronto World, Canada.

CONSISTENCY.

Somebody says "Consistency, thou art a jewel!" and some other body says: "Consistency is the bugbear of the shallow mind," which two statements would appear to be at least mildly contradictory. Yet allowing for the variation in the meaning of "consistency" both are right. The man had in mind the firmness which makes an individual's actions the natural outcome of his principles, the entire accord of his belief and con-

duct, and that close unity of mind and act is as a precious stone.

The second man might properly have said, "Consistency, thou art a paste" in the meaning which the word presented to his mind. To him it was not the harmonizing of principle with action, but the maintenance of the relationship between to-day's principle and yesterday's. And he was right in attributing the effect to maintain such a relationship to the shallow mind.

The fundamentals of right and wrong are the same world without end, but no man has ever had a perfect grasp of just what comprises right or wrong. He must live and learn and suffer to gain his education in that direction. And if his attitude to-day is precisely that of yesterday or of last week or of last year, he may be consistent, in a narrow sense, but he is not growing. His mental view-point must change leading first to a change of belief and then of action, if life is to mean progress in his case.

Too many men refuse to acknowledge even to themselves a change of mind resulting from an increase of knowledge, lest an accusation of instability be brought against them. They quote as a warning in intellectual and moral as well as material matters that "rolling stones gather no moss," as though moss were a desirable thing to gather or as if the polishing process of rolling was not a thousand times more valuable.

In fact, change for the better, is a component factor of true consistency. Nature is consistent—we hear much of her immutable laws—yet nowhere is there more frequent change, seen in the changing seasons, the plant growth from seed to bud, flower and fruit. But one must guard against substituting hearsay for knowledge, impulse for principle, and talk for action. If imperfect knowledge leading to impulsive and premature announcement is made the basis of final action, the charge of inconsistency is maintained, and the base imitation of the jewel of consistency is exposed in the shallow mind of the possessor.

ABOUT RICH MEN AND FOOLS.

As matters stand to-day, although we have a few enormously rich men in the United States and a great many rich enough to live in luxury on their incomes, and although gigantic combinations of wealth have attained great power and have often misused their power both in economic and in political affairs, and although we have families that have preserved and increased great fortunes for several generations—in spite of all our real and manufactured scandals of plutocracy—well balanced students of American economic conditions have no fear of the rich. There are in fact, occasions when we are called on to pity them, occasions when they are most unjustly treated, occasions even when they are denied the share of power and influence to which they are fairly intitled. For instance, the American Press, is, as a rule, not fair nor just in its treatment of many rich men. It ridicules them and repeats false statements about their personal character and habits until the public comes to have a wholly incorrect conception of them.

As to the danger to American social and political life from the rich, the surest proof that we are not yet debauched by them is the present tide of hostility to wealth that expresses itself in legislation and in the public prints. The rich have won power and still hold it in industry—as they always have and to a degree always must; but they have visibly lost political power and, in the best sense, they have never had great social power among us, simply because of wealth. Just now rich men in America are paying such pen-

alties that few men of moderate fortunes envy them. And Socialism, or anything like it, has for several years got its strongest support in the United States from one rich man who makes money and notoriety by it and who seeks by it to further his personal political ambitions.

That there are dangers to society from rich men is admitted; but there are greater dangers from fools, and there are more of them.—*Worlds work.*

THE TRUSTEE OF THE COUNTRY SCHOOL.

Possession is nine points of the law and no less of law abiding and patriotism. The owner takes better care of the house than his tenant does; the man who has a clear title to a section in Alberta is more interested in the legislative and educational and commercial prosperity of that province than the transient visitor or the unattached salaried worker. The man on the land has his own fortune and progress wrapped up in the country and being so bound together, he is anxious to do something to advance their joint interests, the country's just as sincerely as his own.

Just what to do is a more difficult problem to solve. He has not money enough to be a public benefactor in the usual acceptance of that term. Politics and law-making have their attractions but special qualifications are necessary, and openings for this kind of service not very plentiful; city and town offices of trust and honor are not proportionate in quantity to the number of men competent and willing to fill them; and in the rural districts there are still fewer opportunities for public service to the country.

But there is one office that the public-spirited man in the country can hold and that is the trusteeship of the school in his district. It isn't a large sounding honor; there is no fame to be gotten out of it and less money. It is a thankless task and he who undertakes it becomes an unflinching target for the criticism of the country side. In that it bears a strong resemblance to the position of the teacher of the same school except that the latter has a salary attached as a solace.

But there are some advantages adhering to the position as crowded in among the disadvantages, and certain qualifications are as necessary to holding it with credit as in filling more lofty places. The rural school trustee has in his hands the reins that guide the future of the community. His judgement selects the teacher, his oversight keeps the work and equipment of the school in good order, and his opinion is the pattern upon which the people of the district mould theirs. The moral and intellectual health of the country depends upon the tone of the separate districts, and these in turn upon the schools, and the man who helps to ever so slight a degree to create a good spirit of citizenship and loyalty in the little red schoolhouse, has done an amount of service for his country that cannot be measured.

It requires no mean capacity to be a rural school trustee—a good trustee. One of the weaknesses of our schools is an outgrowth of the idea that anybody can be a trustee. There never was a greater mistake. To begin with, he should have an interest in the welfare of the school district, not an impersonal sort of feeling, but a healthy, human interest in the people within its borders. He should have some education, the more the better, but not to the preponderance of books and booklearning over practical knowledge. He should know something of modern methods and modern difficulties in the work of the teacher. He should be able to view any matter connected with the school from the standpoint of the taxpayer, the parent, the child, the teacher, and yet have clear enough judgment and firm enough will to withstand the demands of any one of these groups, if such demands are based upon ignorance or unreason. He should be patient, slow to speak, slow to wrath, but ready for speech and righteous indignation at the occasion demands. And, last of all, he must have an unflinching supply of that most uncommon of all commodities—common sense, without which, though having all the others, he can do nothing.]