

HOME JOURNAL

Life, Literature and Education

IN THE WORLD OF LITERATURE AND ART.

A new patriotic song, entitled "Canada" has been published. The words are by W. A. Fraser, the well-known Canadian author, and the music by Dr. Albert Ham.

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George W. Cable, the author of "Old Creole Days" and "Madame Delphine," was married recently to Miss Eva Stevenson of Kentucky. Though both are southerners their new home will be in Massachusetts.

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This year's Nobel prize of £8,000 for scientific research has been awarded to Prof. Ramon y Cayal of Madrid University, and to Prof. Golgi of the University of Pavia.

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Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) celebrated his seventy-first birthday on the last day of November. He may have passed the allotted span in years but not in spirit.

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Lieut.-Governor Dunsmuir, of British Columbia, has endowed a chair of mining and chemistry in the McGill university college of British Columbia. It will be known as the Robert Dunsmuir professorship in memory of his father.

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Madame Patti has made her last appearance in public as a professional singer. Her farewell was given in the Royal Albert Hall before an immense crowd. She sang the two songs that have been her favorites through her long musical career, "Home, Sweet Home" and "Comin' thro' the Rye". She will sing, hereafter, only for charitable purposes.

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A book of unusual interest to the Canadian reader, and especially to the Canadian from the maritime provinces is "Power Lot" by Sara McLean Green. "Power Lot, God Help us," the Nova Scotia people called the tiny hamlet set on the rocky hill, but it was the place where a man was made, and where the loyal men and women lived who wrought his transformation helped by the sea and the sky and the clean air.

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A right-minded wholesome boy loves a good book of adventure as he loves a good meal. Get him one. But get the right kind. Tales of high-waymen and hold-ups, of detectives and the unraveling of criminal mysteries are the wrong kind but the boy devours them in lieu of anything else for the spice that is in them. Get him "The Adventures of Billy Topsail," by Norman Duncan. Billy is a boy he will love—honest, manly and square, with no gush or sentimentality. His life is a series of adventures with the sea and the snow of his Newfoundland home. Seal fishing is as exciting as the holding up of a train and capturing a devil-fish is away ahead of capturing a criminal. Billy is carried away on an ice-floe, nearly drowned by his Newfoundland dog, finds a pirate's cave and gets lost on a high cliff. In fact, "Bill is a bright boy" and if you don't "know Bill" the loss is yours.

DEFINITION OF AN EDUCATED MAN.

"A person with a body strong and vigorous, with a will which obeys the mandate of his intelligence, with an intelligence so fully informed and trained that it can obtain more knowledge when ever occasion requires, and can also discriminate on the knowledge obtained; with a conscience keenly sensitive to the claims of the moral law, with a religious nature responsive to the Divine will, with an emotional nature exalted and in accord with right causes, and averse to their opposites."—Dr. Tracy.

IS GOODNESS A SYNONYM FOR DULNESS?

The novelists and dramatists answer "yes." They picture the villain as tremendously, brilliantly clever in his iniquity. Is his brilliancy the result of the wickedness, or does the wickedness follow the brilliancy? The author is vague on this point. The hero wins his way in business and in love unhindered by any special goodness except—a few showy surface virtues that blind the eyes of the heroine to his usually shady past.

In the back-ground, valued only for his usefulness, is the stupid "good" man, who loves the heroine, serves her abjectly, and whose only consolation consists in loving her and watching another man with more brains win her. Is his goodness responsible for his stupidity, or is he good only because he is too dull for anything else?

Or, are the authors wrong in the premises of their argument?

TO WHAT END?

There is a friend—I know she is a friend because she listens with no limit to her patience—who gives ear unto all my soaring ambitions and clever schemes, and, when I have relieved my mental system of the load upon it, avenges herself by saying, "But, to what end?" Sometimes I can give just cause, and a reason for the hope that is in me, and waste no time in hastening to the defence of my beloved projects. Some other times, and they are many, this sharp little question punctures the bubble of my dream and it vanishes into thin air. Being human, I feel angry with the hand that holds the stiletto, rather than with my flimsy mental fabric.

It is a weapon mercifully cruel. It pierces all shams—its point is turned by all that is genuine. It is a pity to leave it in the hand of a friend for only casual use. I will hold it in my own hand and wield it to test the stuff of my visions. To what end is my daily toil? I work over-time or shirk the tasks of the day; I hoard my store or spend it lavishly; I live the life of the ascetic or one of sybaritic indulgence,—all to what end? Life is too short, too full to do even a small proportion of the things there are to do, to be lived blindly, feeling the way without any look ahead.

WHY DO I TAKE A SIDE IN POLITICS?

Every young man should ask himself the above question or better the modification of it, 'Why do I take the side I do in politics?' To be a Conservative because one's forbears are such, or to be a Liberal because one's relatives are Liberals is an inglorious admission for a man endowed with reason to make, and is in a sense a reason for considering whether that person should have the franchise. Few young men, nowadays, take up a trade or profession because their progenitors did, then why don't the old political coat of one's father or grandfather? Every man should exercise his franchise, not unthinkingly but conscious of the responsibility put on him when it was so conferred.

Lord Rosebery has voiced the above thought under the term 'hereditary politics', and describes the situation in the sentences below. If men only studied a little more carefully the tenets of their party, and thoroughly imbibed its true principles we should have less political corruption than at present. Unfortunately in the breed of men to-day there are too few possessed with daring or virility to stand out against the corrupt influences in the party they belong to, and, as a consequence, all are carried down in the

fall, all are disgraced; the party by the deliberate intentional wrongdoing of grafters, the remainder by their weak-kneed complaisance. Nowhere is this so plainly shown as in the attitude of both parties towards temperance where efforts, or lack of such have done more to retard a real progressive movement on this great question than any other thing.

"When it is considered how hereditary is the transmission of politics in this country, it seems rather wonderful that, after reading, travel, and thought, the family dogmas are not more often questioned. Men are netted early into political clubs; or fall, when callow, under the influence of some statesman; or stand as youths for some constituency before they have considered the problems of life. Many never consider them at all; but those who do must often find themselves in disagreement with the politics which they have prematurely professed. Some, too, must find that, while they remain staunch to what seem the fundamental tenets, the party itself, under erratic guidance, or lured by the prospect of monetary advantage, is wandering far from its fold; and so, while they themselves remain orthodox, they are isolated by the unorthodoxy of their friends. Add to which the politician sees the seamy side or comfortless interior of his own party alone; he is not admitted to the drawbacks of the opposite faction; so that the one in some respects seems more alluring than the other. If all these things be considered, it will seem marvelous that there are not more political conversions or perversions than there are."

It is well known that, dare one, or even a few, in a party to express themselves, how soon they are ostracized as depicted in the italics of Dalmeny's proprietor, hence we see so little independence. As a nation of young people we are too conservative in our views, using the word in its non-political sense, and lack proper independence in thought and action.

TRAITORS TO THE CAUSE OF ART.

No window, not even the milliners', gets the careful scrutiny that is given to the window displaying the picture-dealer's collection. Almost every passer-by scrutinizes the array more or less carefully and goes away with some kind of impression. A peaceful landscape, a liberty-breathing sea-scene, a beautiful face, a joke from the brush—one of these sends the observer along his way a little lighter in heart, or higher in mind, and has therefore fulfilled the mission of art.

But there are fads in pictures, and a present day one shows a desire for the morbid that is not pleasant. A dealer's window recently displayed a collection of pictures in which skulls, bare, grinning, horrible, were shown. Aside from the gruesomeness of the things, there was the unwholesomeness of them from a moral point of view. One of the prints depicted two skulls, male and female, in the act of kissing. Could anything be more disgusting to the eyes of the person of ordinary refinement than to see the symbol of love brought down to the level of the carnal, as if love itself were merely of the body and not of the soul? There is nothing uplifting in such a representation. It is degrading. Another of these blots upon the good name of art represented a number of skulls all lying on the same level. There was the intellectual king, the degenerate, the strong morally, and the evil and base. The point of the print was obvious, that death brought all down to the same footing, that when the last breath on earth was drawn there was no difference between pure and impure, between him who had "fought wild beasts at Ephesus" and him who had deliberately wallowed in the mire. There is nothing uplifting in such a representation. It is untrue.

Knowledge of the "old masters" and the technicalities of art is not an essential in determining the value of a picture. If it has beauty and truth it is a good picture—if it has not these, a good home is better without it.