

flood. If he did create an empire, it was merely as a means towards the end of ceasing the course of a foe which he was unable to conquer, and not as the vast and skilfully conceived termination of a splendid and world-embracing design.

If it be true that Beust was driven by his sovereign from public life, then men are not deceived when they expect that as his life was in the hour of his glory so also must it be in the hour of his decline. In the season of his greatest success he was but the servant of a single will, the servile instrument of an ambitious king. To effect the king's desire, to hearken to the slightest whisper which dropt from above, to turn reverently his gaze upon the upper powers, to watch with changing colour the splendour and magnificence glow and fade round the throne, to meekly bow when the royal accent fell nervously upon his ear—this was the life of Beust. But to the great roar of the weak masses who sobbed and sighed and beat the unhearing air, and shook the palace where he dwelt, and penetrated the secret council chamber of the king and echoed from the golden dome which shone above the jewelled throne, his ears were forever sealed, to the tears which fell from blinded eyes and saturated again the soil already saturated with blood, his eyes were forever shut, and to the agitating questions which came up from the toiling myriads on every hand, the great Minister's tongue was forever dumb. He was the friend of the king, and the foe of the people, and when he had lost the favour of him to whom he had sold his soul, why should he seek the confidence of those whom he had betrayed? He fell when the subtle king had used him to the full, and no bed of roses broke his heavy descent to earth. No one comforted him when the palace door had shut behind him, for its closing was as secret as its opening had been. He went forth from its portals as he had entered them—alone. When he crossed the golden threshold he was crowned arch-king over many sovereigns, and when he passed away from the glittering court room he became the humblest subject's slave.

Yet even in the humiliation of his decline, and amid the darkness of his closing days, history has bestowed on Beust the title "great." Nor can it be denied that history, with its unfaltering measure of justice, even in this single instance, has given a hurried judgment, which future ages shall reverse. Estimated by a single deed, viewed from a single point of vision, yes, from many points of vision, he was indeed unworthy of a title to future fame. But it is not from these single deeds, or from these single points of vision that history considers its subject, and gives the verdict which shall live as long as the foundations of love and liberty. History looks at the many acts, at the myriad influences, at the countless displays of genius, at the innumerable achievements of its subject before it writes in indelible letters the word "great" or the word "small." To the passions of the subject, to the influence of the generation, to the circumstances and necessities which ordained inconsistencies, history extends a leniency similar to that leniency which, in the administration of justice, is termed mercy. And history is right in its method. For these are but transitory effects which have resulted from causes which in no wise shall endure. And when this leniency is extended to Beust, and his weaker and less noble deeds are redeemed by his great achievements, and offset by his circumstances, history will estimate him as he was estimated by his closest contemporaries, and the tongue of the generations shall this at least proclaim, that had there been no interval of action between Beust's cradle and his coffin, the most enchanting chapters which have been written in the historical romance of the nineteenth century would never have thrilled the hearts of gods or men.

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Toronto, September 1st, 1896.

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The Irish Convention is regarded in Dublin as a great success, and it is a great success, for it proves to demonstration that what the Irish people love is a declaration in favour of impossibilities, or at least of ideals so visionary that they have not the least relation to anything within their reach at the time at which they proclaim them. This is what irritates a practical Irishman like Mr. Healy into the attitude of disaffection which he takes up.—*London Spectator*.

The Appraisal of Literature.

MR. GEORGE ILES, formerly a resident of Montreal and a sometime contributor to THE WEEK, read a paper before the recent meeting of the American Library Association at Cleveland, giving such valuable and timely suggestions to Librarians and Public Library Boards that we reproduce it almost in full. A better guide to the books in a library than a mere catalogue of titles and authors is something urgently needed. Mr. Iles is a man with literary gifts and tastes as well as a man of business; and his suggestions are worthy of serious consideration.

A good many of us can well remember the typical American museum of twenty years ago. It contained many valuable specimens drawn from the realms of earth, air and ocean; it had received rich gifts both from science and art; but truth to tell, the general effect of it all was not alluring. An atmosphere of dreariness repelled ordinary mortals; it was reserved for the lonely and athletic student to find any meat and drink in the shelves and cases. To-day how great the contrast as one enters the National Museum at Washington, the Museum of Comparative Anatomy at Cambridge, the Museum of Natural History at New York! How has the marvellous change from dullness to fascination come about? Why is it that instead of perfunctory glances at minerals and skeletons we are held by one vivid interest after another, until we regretfully hear "All-out" from the janitor at the close of the day? Much must first be credited to the discoveries and inventions which in the past twenty years have so largely increased the capital of all museums. Much also has been done by giving collections a reasoned order; by connecting as a series all the forms intermediate, let us say, between copper ores and copper ingots; in bringing clearly to view such genealogical trees as those which show the horse descended from a creature about the size of a fox, and which bid man reluctantly acknowledge his poor relations of the cavern and the glade. But an improvement equal to any other in importance consists in labelling every specimen fully and clearly instead of bestowing only its name. Indeed, Prof. Goode, Director of the National Museum at Washington, goes the length of defining a museum as a place where instructive labels are accompanied by well selected specimens. It would seem that the curator, taught by the inquiries of the visitors to whom he has displayed his treasures, and desirous to win attention at every step, has taken the printer for his partner and sought to say once for all everything that may awaken the visitor's interest, to answer every question he is likely to ask. It is only the eyes already instructed that pause before a mineral ticketed "bauxite from Georgia," but if instead of a ticket we read a label which tells us that bauxite is the basis of the aluminium manufactured by electricity at Niagara, the specimen at once comes home to our business and bosoms. A crystal, a bone, a bird, a bit of ore, however remarkable it may really be, cannot say so, for it is dumb; we owe gratitude to the man who enables it to tell its story, to explain whence it came, what it is good for, what it means in the great scheme of interpretation which the philosophers build deeper and higher for us every day.

While the museum has been advancing in wealth and in methods of making that wealth available to the plain people, the public library has borne it fraternal company in the service of popular culture. As the museum has been enriched by new gifts from the explorer, the discoverer, the inventor, so has the public library received new wealth in the provinces of art and science, scholarship and research, history, poetry and romance. And better modes of classifying its treasures, new and old, improvement in every detail of administration, have brought the public library to vastly extended usefulness, and notably in the co-operation more and more intimate which has in consequence sprung up between it and the museum. Not so many years ago teachers thought it great gain to have their books enriched by illustrations. To-day, whenever desirable, the teacher may pass from mere illustration to the thing illustrated—the piece of armour, the spray of coral, the gleaming crystal, which invites examination in the museum. It is the keynote of the new education that impressions should be immediate, that to rest satisfied with a word when one should know the thing the word is about,