

BOOKS OF THE DAY

The November Westminster Magazine, which well sustains its popular attraction, contains glimpses of Iona, by N. Tournier; Oxford stories, by W. S. Wallace; "How Higher Criticism Helps," by Prof. A. R. Gordon; "The Worship of the Celt," by Rev. M. A. Mackinnon. The best selling book in Canada in September, according to careful reports, was R. W. Service's "Ballads of a Cheechako," Canadian all through. Then in order came "Anne of Avonlea," "The White Prophet," "Goose Girl" and "Danger Mark."

RELIGIOUS / COMBINATION.

This is the Hope of the Church Says Saturday Night. "A Son-of-the-Manse" writes to Saturday Night in defence of the rebate system among ministers on the ground that the clergyman is usually underpaid. "Where do you find a class of men so highly educated," says he, "who receive such meagre remuneration?" A man entering the ministry bids farewell to all chance of becoming wealthy, whether he would or no. Mark you, let him be guilty of a stock speculation or of engaging in any secular calling, and he becomes a victim of the very people who cry out against rebates to clergymen as seriously affecting a minister's spiritual prestige.

To which Saturday Night adds: "These opinions bear out the conclusions reached by those who have made special study. The church is, broadly speaking, in a bad way as regards finances. In other professions the ever-increasing expenses of living have been met by augmented incomes, but the clerical income has failed to keep pace with the times. The minister in many country districts is still drawing the same old \$500 or \$600 per year, whereas these sums have not much over half the purchasing power of twenty years ago. In some instances contributions are not coming into the churches as they once did. This is general, as witness a recent tabulation of declines in givings in U. S. churches. When the cement interests in Canada found that competition was too strong, that they were operating plants without making a cent, and in some cases losing money, they amalgamated and made one strong paying concern. This is what the churches should do in the country districts; cut down the competition; assure each church a congregation sufficient to make its support certain and to raise the minister to a point of earthly paradise, where he can feed his horse the oats and hay necessary and buy himself a suit of clothes and his wife a dress whenever required. Cut down some of the church competition by an application of modern business methods."

Combines are defensible when within the regions of fair consideration of those taxed or contributing; a religious "combine" would be in the best interest of all concerned.

FAITH IN IMMORTALITY.

Lately Discovered Letter Shows Franklin's Confidence in Future Happiness. Philadelphia, May 12, 1790.—Dear Child.—I condole with you. We have lost a most dear and valuable relation, (his brother John), but it is the will of God and nature that these mortal bodies be laid aside when the soul is to enter into real life; 'tis rather an embryo state, a preparation for living, a man is not completely born until he is dead. Why then should we grieve that a new child is born among the immortals, a new member added to their happy society? We are spirits. That bodies should be lent us in acquiring knowledge, or doing good to our fellow creatures, is a kind and benevolent act of God. When they become unfit for these purposes, and afford us pain instead of pleasure, instead of an aid, become an incumbrance, and answer none of the intentions for which they were given, it is equally kind and benevolent that a way is provided by which we may get rid of them. Death is that way. We, ourselves, prudently choose a partial death. In some cases a mangled painful limb, which cannot be restored, we willingly cut off. He who plucks out a tooth parts with it freely, since the pain goes with it; and he that quits the whole body parts at once with all pains and possibilities of pains and diseases it was liable to, or capable of making him suffer. Our friend and we are invited abroad on a party of pleasure that is to last forever. His chair was first ready, and he is gone before us. We could not all conveniently start together, and why should you and I be grieved at this, since we are sure to follow and we know where to find them? Adieu, Benjamin Franklin.

The People Are Pleasure Loving. E. T. Root in Delineator. The best Christians think less of getting to heaven than of establishing the kingdom of heaven on earth. Creed and ceremony are less valued than character and service. The truest children of God are more absorbed in doing the will of their Father than in telling Him, however sincerely and fittingly, that they love Him. Worship indeed, must never, can never, die! As well attempt to fill the ocean with a drop, as to satisfy the heart of man with anything less than God! But if there be a real lack of piety and its manifestation publicly, this must not blind us to the undoubted fact, well stated by that Christian magistrate, Mayor Logan of Worcester, "that there is more honesty, truth and charity, more real religious power, in the world to-day than ever before, though it is not all in the church, and does not find expression in the ecclesiastical language of the past."

The Conditions of Life have been more changed since the application of steam and electricity to manufacture and transportation than in all the millenniums which preceded. Men work harder; needing more rest and relaxation, they find it less easy to secure them without leaving their own neighborhood or availing themselves of the arts of popular entertainment. The means of travel and amusement are rendered easy and inexpensive by the same civilization that taxes their energy in toil. And the remedy? Not in vain lament at changed conditions. Just because the motives to worldliness have been strengthened, it is not enough for the church to do as well to-day as it did in the past. What is needed is a church as far ahead of its predecessor as the railroad is swifter than the stage-coach. Shall a people who have quintupled their rate of travel over the earth be satisfied to proceed toward the heavenly kingdom no faster than their fathers?

A Savings-Bank Centenary. In a little town of Ruthwell, in southern Scotland, the people are planning to celebrate next year the centenary of the first savings-bank in the sense in which that term is now commonly used. Before 1810 there were a few concerns and associations for savings in Germany, Switzerland, Denmark and England, springing from the philanthropic movement which marked the closing years of the eighteenth century.

A Word to Parents. Be ever ready to listen to the smallest of little mysteries knowing that nothing too trivial for the notice, too foolish for the sympathy, of those on whom the Father of all has bestowed the dignity of parenthood.

QDD ENGLISH FESTIVITIES.

Functions That Have Come Down From the Dim Past. Uckfield has held its annual pea supper, which owes its origin to a practical joke. Fifteen years ago a plot of land belonging to a resident became from neglect such an eyesore to his fellow-townsmen that they dug it up. The owner resolved to profit by their labor and plant the field, but found, to his annoyance, it already sown with peas. However, anger gave place to amusement, and he told the perpetrators of the joke that they would have to eat the peas. This in due course they did, and the celebration has grown yearly in popularity, with feasts of peas, bacon and other excellent fare.

The Colchester oyster feast, which has acquired world-wide celebrity, is annually preceded by another function. At the opening of the oyster season, the corporation of the Essex town, owners of the Colne fisheries, steam down the river to Brightlingsea, where they dredge for a few samples of the bivalves—a mere prelude to satisfying their appetites on the hundreds that await their coming in the packing house at Pyefleet Creek.

The Fyshinge Feast, held every August at Plymouth, commemorates the deeds of Francis Drake, to whose enterprise the town owes its water supply. "To the pious memory of Sir Francis Drake," is first drunk in water from two golden goblets, which afterwards, refilled with wine, are emptied to the toast, "May the descendants of him who gave us water never want wine." Then, after having lunched off Devonshire pasties, those present go in for amusements until summoned to the feast proper, at which fried trout and sucking pig are invariably served.

In November Clacton-on-Sea holds its whiting dinner. Then this usually tasteless fish undergoes a marvellous metamorphosis, appearing in delectable and unrecognizable guises. Another seaside town, Yarmouth, boasts a banquet which commences with sprats hors d'oeuvre, and, after having run through thirty courses, is brought to a conclusion with sprat biscuits.

Sausages and champagne are Peterborough's specialty. Every October, at Bridge Fair time, the Mayor and corporation proceed in solemn procession to the bridge, beneath which flows the Nen. There a halt is called and the town crier declares the fair open, both in Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire. The Mayor and his guests adjourn to a neighboring hotel, where a repast of the above-mentioned delicacies awaits them.

Equally tasty, although simpler, fare is spread at the annual auction of the White Bread Meadow at Bourne, the rent of which goes to supply poor people with bread. Every Easter a curious custom is observed, the auctioneer putting up the field and accepting bids only so long as a number of boys are running a race over a fixed course. The moment the hindmost boy reaches the goal the hammer falls, and the meadow is knocked down to him, who has made the last bid.

Woman's Sane Suffrage Work.

Mass meetings are being conducted throughout New York state in the interest of woman's suffrage, and the enthusiasm has been greater than ever before. Admirable has been the manner in which the leaders have approached the legislature, to have the word "male" stricken from the state constitution. They have won the respect of all who have studied their methods; the accusation of "lobbying" is undeserved. Forty thousand women are members of the New York State Suffrage Association. All classes are included in this vast enrollment—the quiet home-keeper and philanthropist, the social leader, the college professor, doctor, lawyer, teacher, and a great army of industrial workers. The women, too, have a sound argument. In large stores the married women applying for work have greatly increased in numbers, because their husbands are unemployed. It is easier now for a woman than for a man to get work. The laws governing the work of woman are made by men. Since she is more and more obliged to enter the commercial and professional world, it is only just that she should have a voice in the making of the laws controlling that world.

Voices the General Opinion.

Montreal Star. The government have again made a success in fixing Thanksgiving Day for the month of fine autumn weather. There are always forces striving to induce the ministers to go back to the bad old system when Thanksgiving came late in November, long after we had ceased to consider the harvest to be thankful for, and at a season when the day was fairly certain to be cheerless and gloomy. About the only people really incommode by the change are stock speculators who would prefer not to have two exchange holidays for Thanksgiving. Now they have our own; and they might as well observe that of the United States as well. But the great bulk of the people gain by an early Thanksgiving. They get a real holiday, just at the threshold of winter when a holiday is needed. Then the Monday celebration permits thousands of people to go home for this home festival. Take it altogether, a late Monday in October is the ideal Canadian Thanksgiving.

London Ratepayers and Tithe.

Complaints have long been rife among the ratepayers in several city of London parishes about the burden of the tithes, the commutation of which does not seem to be affected, as in rural districts, by any fall in the price of wheat. In the parish of St. Botolph, Aldgate, the tithes amount to £7,000 a year. It has a large Jewish population, but the reluctance to pay the heavy impost does not arise from religious antagonism. As a fact, the vicar of St. Botolph's draws a modest stipend for a city incumbent; the bulk of the tithes, over £6,000 a year, belongs to some lay proprietors, chiefly represented by the Esdaile family. The parishioners have arranged to purchase the tithes for £131,500 by means of a sinking fund, lasting sixty years.

What True Living Is.

"The utilitarian proclaims as his great principle," said Rev. Prof. Macnaughton, McGill University, "that the object of education is to fit the boy for the battle of life. Yes, of course it is. But the battle of life is not a mere battle for a living. It is much wider than that. The extent of it is not adequately expressed in any formula short of the magnificent declaration of the Westminster Catechism—that man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. There is really very little fear about a living. Anybody with two legs and arms, at least in our country, can be confidently counted on to make a living. He can do that with one hand. The great fear is that he will never enter into life."

NOVELS AND RELIGION.

Dr. Paterson-Smyth on the Power of the Novelist. Rev. Dr. Paterson-Smyth lectured before the Nomads' Club, Montreal, on "Novel reading and religion." He described the novel writer and the preacher as rival teachers of religion—having in his mind a good class of novels. The novelist had a larger audience, and often had a more attractive way of presenting his views than the preacher. People seemed more inclined to heed the words of the novelist than the preacher, and if the former were a spiritually-minded man, and well educated, his influence for good must be great. The novelist, whose works might reach a circulation of 100,000 copies, had a vast influence and a corresponding responsibility. It was very important that he should write in a sane and morally uplifting vein. The object of a novelist was to interest and amuse, as well as edify and instruct his readers, and in this world of dull, tired people, it was part of God's purpose that he should be amused and refreshed. It was a great mistake to try to divorce from God the many innocent things which made life happier. "When one thinks," said the lecturer, "of the pleasure to tired workers of a good novel or a beautiful poem, when one thinks of the enormous circulation such literature gains—one feels thankful for the help that some of them are giving to the cause of righteousness in the world. But I once heard a definition of the modern novel as a book that no nice girl would allow her mother to read. This book dealt openly with problems of sex and was in the main a mischievous addition to modern literature, breaking down the reserve which ought to be kept about such subjects. Such novels were written shamelessly, and quite as often by women as by men. We got in print for our young people to read, for which, instead of fame and money, the writer deserved whipping at the cart tail. Not that a book was necessarily immoral because it dealt with sex. The real danger was in the tendency of much modern literature to paint vice in attractive colors."

CHAFF FROM THE FIELD.

A Lot of Things That Are Readable and Decidedly Amusing. A missionary arrived to take the Sunday services at the Church of Giggleswick-in-Craven. On behalf of the 'foreign heathen' a collection was taken. One of the wardens offered the box to a member of the congregation who did not believe in foreign missions. In a stage whisper, heard alike by congregation and parson, this man said in blank vernacular, "Take it away, lad, I'm not going to give owt." At that period the collecting boxes were taken direct into the vestry. Down came the preacher from the pulpit, forthwith into the vestry, brought one of the boxes, and marched straight toward the gentleman, all the congregation imagining that he was going to shame the unbeliever into giving something. Nothing of the kind. The clergyman merely offered the box to the heretic with the naive remark, "Talk what thou wastest, lad; it has been gathered for the heathen!"

An architect and man of newly gained wealth were consulting as to some details of a new house being built for the latter. "Would you like the floors in mosaic?" asked the architect. The client looked dubious. "Would you like the floors in mosaic patterns?"

"I don't know so much about that," he finally said. "I ain't got any prejudice against Moses as a man, and maybe he knew a lot about the law. As regards laying floors, though, I kinder think I'd rather have 'em unsectarian."

The dear little girl arose, bowed and recited in this manner: "Lettuce Denby up N. Dewing, Widow Hartford N. E. Fate, Still H. E. Ving, still per Sue Wing. Learn to label Auntie Waite."

Then, with the tumultuous applause of the audience ringing in her ears, she sat down in happy confusion. Mother—"Johnny, you said you'd been to Sunday school!" Johnny (with a far-away look)—"Yes, mamma."

Mother—"How does it happen that your hands smell of fish?" Johnny—"I carried home the Sunday school paper, an' the outside page is all about Jonah and the whale."—Western Christian Advocate.

Sunday School Teacher—"What commandment did Cain break when he killed Abel?" Johnny—"Please, there wasn't any commandments then."

Vicar: "All sinners, Mary, will be washed whiter than snow." Many (anxiously): "Not them as truly repents, sir, I 'opes, sir."—The Tatler.

Strange Old World Conservation. Customs traceable back to the end of the Stone Age are still observed by the inhabitants of rural Roumania. There are still in that land 54,000 cave dwellings, in which a quarter of a million peasant folk live. These caves are almost as primitive in their arrangements as the original cave dwellings of the Stone Age. The peasants still use ploughs really no better than pointed stakes. At funerals a repast named coliba is partaken of, consisting of soaked and boiled corn, exactly as corn was first prepared and eaten by the tribes of Europe. Crab apples and wild pears are the only fruit known to the peasant, and his vegetables are wild herbs boiled with oil pressed from the sunflower, hemp and gourd seeds. Medicinal men in rural Roumania are still known as wizards.

Re-opening of the quicksilver mines near Konia, in Asia Minor, abandoned centuries ago, has led to dramatic discoveries. In their depths were found fifty skeletons, with lamps, clay hammers, and other tools made of stone, a quantity of arrows with stone points and a supply of charcoal. The remains are supposed on accurate data to belong to a mining party of the twelfth century.

The Glory That Was Rome's. "What most interested you in Rome?" "In Rome? Say, I'll never forget Rome as long as I live! They had the sweetest little manicure girl in the hotel where I put up that ever trimmed a nail."

In Chicago the police ambulances instead of carrying brandy as a "first aid," will carry spirits of ammonia. The brandy intended for patients was being consumed by the men in charge of the ambulance wagons.

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