

relations to his friends, for practically all we get to know of him is in relation to the discharge of his official duties, but even in these he has not only displayed tact and dignity but has shown also that touch of personal sympathy which also wins the hearts of men and which, like mercy, 'becomes the throned monarch better than his crown.' This quality of kindly human feeling on the part of the King crops out even in the discharge of duties that are irksome and disagreeable to him. Thus on the occasion of his accession when making the infamous Declaration which brands as idolaters so many millions of his Catholic subjects it was noted that when he came to the hateful words he hurried over them with the greatest possible haste and said them in so low a tone that they were practically inaudible—thus showing his personal sympathy with Catholic feeling in the matter and his personal distaste for the duty which Parliament had stupidly and perversely thrust upon him.

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Apart from his personal qualities, EDWARD VII.'s career as a King—short though it has been—has been very promising. It is true that under the present régime of constitutional monarchy the King no longer possesses such powers of producing rapidly tremendous results for good or evil as attached to the sovereign in the old days, when the monarch was absolute and supreme. Still, there are a great variety of matters, none of which in themselves are perhaps of very great significance, on which it is very important that the King should steadily and consistently arrive at sound judgments, and in the multitude of these small but not unimportant routine duties of kingship EDWARD VII. has so far made no false step. So far as the larger sphere of kingly activity is concerned, there have been two occasions on which he has exhibited qualities of statesmanship which go far to show that his reign is at least opening out on right lines. The first was his decision, immediately after the late Queen's death, to adhere to the plan of sending his only surviving son—the Duke of Cornwall—to open the first Parliament of the Australasian Commonwealth, and to even extend the Duke's mission so as to make it embrace practically the whole of the British possessions. We do not make much of the sentimental side of the incident, for there is no reason to suppose that the King's feelings as a father are any stronger than anyone else's, and many thousands of good men have had to make precisely the same sacrifice without ever being considered as special heroes or martyrs on that account. But what we do think noteworthy is the sagacity shown by the King in seeing the desirableness of such an undertaking at such a critical period of the Empire's history, and in realising the appreciable effect it would be likely to have on the tide of colonial loyalty and Imperialism. The second occasion on which the King has displayed statesmanship of the right kind has been in connection with the termination of the late war. According to the cables in Tuesday's papers Home newspapers are agreed that the King used his personal influence to secure peace, and they predict that he will be known in history as 'The Peacemaker.' It is an honourable and glorious title, and the King that deserves it has deserved well of the world.

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It would indeed be a calamity if anything should happen to cut short a career which promises so well, and we associate ourselves with the regret which has been universally expressed at even the passing prospect of such a possibility. As we have already mentioned, the latest intelligence as to the King's health is entirely reassuring and satisfactory, and it would appear that the important ceremony has been more or less definitely fixed to come off in a few months' time. We can only hope that his Majesty's recovery will be rapid and complete, and that King and people will celebrate the Coronation more gladly and gratefully than ever, because of the disappointment and trial they have been called upon to pass through.

Messrs Croxford and Sons, plumbers, gasfitters, and bell-hangers, in notifying their removal to more commodious premises at 12 Frederick street, take the opportunity of thanking their patrons for past favors, and intimate that they will be prepared to carry out work in future in that manner which has given such satisfaction in the past. They have in stock a large assortment of incandescent fittings, pendants, brackets, hall lamps, chandeliers, bath and lavatory basins, and other sanitary appliances. They guarantee that all work entrusted to the firm will be carried out at the lowest possible rate and in the best style of workmanship...

## Notes

### Pernicious Literature.

Modern education (so called) has brought into existence a mass of literature of the most pernicious kind, and it is the duty of those who have control of the young to exercise vigilance lest the youthful minds should be polluted and degenerated by its influence. Every week there pours from the press a weak, washy, flood of trash which is dignified by the name of fiction, but which is designedly written to stimulate the baser passions of its readers, and finds a ready market among those who have been taught to read, but have not been taught to think. It thus comes about that the tone generally of literary thought and effort exhibits a marked decadence, and that form and style no longer display the polish and excellence of the older writers. This indicates that the great army of readers swallow their food at a gulp, and that without masticating it. It would be bad enough were the diet wholesome; it is often ruinous to the moral digestion. The mere 'gutter' literature of the 'penny dreadful' class, is, of course, beneath contempt, though there is too much reason to fear that its circulation among boys is greater than might be expected. The books are not prurient, it is true, which is about the only virtue they possess, but the adventures with which they deal are so exaggerated, the language so bombastic, and the sympathy with lawlessness so marked, that they may be likened in their effects upon the moral health of the young, to some disease in its operation upon the physical system. Their low price, their gaudy external appearance, their public display in shop windows, particularly recommend them to young lads, who are thus insensibly taught that to be lawless is admissible if only the law breaker be courageous.

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The catalogue of every public library, no less than the records of those which are 'circulating,' prove that fiction constitutes the bulk of the literary pabulum of their patrons. Some of the fiction is merely inane, and perhaps does no greater harm than waste the time and enfeeble the intellect of its readers. These attributes are sufficient to condemn it, but they do not lead to the active practice of vice, except as a remote consequence. What are more terrible and more directly incentive to vicious thoughts are the books which, under cover of elucidating some social question, abound in details which poison ten for every one who is instructed. There are some newspapers, even, which profess to castigate vice, yet seem to take a delight in describing it. Everyone cannot touch pitch and remain undefiled. The bad seed may germinate even in the purest of minds. If it be said that current fiction reflects the mental fashion of the hour, and that history records the recurrence of healthy reactions, we must remember that the literature of the day is contemporaneous with an almost universal ability to read. It was not so when the masters produced their works. When Sir Walter Scott poured forth his series of romances, and Dickens and Thackeray took the reading world by storm, the circle of readers was limited to a class which may be said to have inherited the influence of education, and brought to its reading elevation of thought and purity of taste. But the readers of the literature of to-day have just come into the acquisition of a new sense, which they have not yet learned to employ to advantage. It needs guidance in the same sense that a child who is just learning to prattle should be guarded from the influence of improper conversation. Parents and guardians of the young should exercise the same caution about the mental as about the physical food or about the clothing. Much greater care should indeed be exercised with respect to the former, as neglect of the one may merely injure the body, while supineness about the other may work inconceivable mental harm and even imperil the soul.

### Tuberculosis.

The paper on the diseases of stock read by Mr Gilruth, Government veterinary expert, at the Dunedin Agricultural Conference, is not very pleasant reading. The authority of the speaker is not open to reasonable question. Among the earliest, if not quite so, of the experts selected by the Agricultural department when it was galvanised into activity by the late Sir John McKenzie, he has not only enjoyed an extensive practice in the Colony, but has more recently paid an extended visit to Europe to make himself acquainted with the latest points in bacteriology. It may therefore be reasonably inferred that Mr Gilruth knows what he is talking about, and when he declares that one cow in every ten supplying milk for human consumption, and one bullock or heifer of from three to five years of age in every twenty, are suffering more or less from tuberculosis, the most dreaded of all diseases in civilised communities, the statement is an alarming one. Without going into the question, yet unsettled by scientific men, whether the germ of bovine tuberculosis, or consumption, finds a congenial 'host' in the

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