THE SUBURBAN LIBRARIES

By COUNCILLOR G. MANNING.

One of the most interesting ways of using one's time is to read a book. But the choice of the book, or in other words its subject matter demanded, is decided by the mental content of the individual making the choice. Some people prefer novels which express in various ways the love of man for woman or woman for man, others prefer detective stories, and quite a few appreciate stories constructed on a background of religious thought or ideals. In this way, by reading such stories, individuals live for a time in a world of make believe. The imagination is stimulated, the emotions are aroused, and curiosity engendered. In other words, the reader experiences what are called "thrills" without the least effort or expenditure of will power. Because of these experiences novel reading has become most popular, and successful novel writers make a fortune. To meet the growing demand for books, libraries were founded, so that by co-operative effort the books could be secured on loan for the lowest possible cost. The suburban libraries of Christchurch have grown up or have been established to meet this need, but the question now arises—are such libraries fulfilling any necessary social function? Men and women utilise the hours of their leisure time organising and administering the suburban libraries, but for what purpose?—to provide reading matter at the lowest cost to the members.

A New Purpose.

The reading of novels provides a method of using time in a very pleasant way. But it may also provide a method of relaxation from concentrated mental effort. This latter assertion inclines to the statement that novel reading is secondary or complementary to sustained mental effort. Therefore mental effort, being in the main constructive, or the endeavour to arrive at judgments in the relations of classes of facts, should be the experience of every healthy individual. Such experiences lead on to further mental development, and encourages logical thinking. But where are the facts to be secured on which the mind is to be exercised? Facts are perceived through experience or by research. The experiences of the individual, being very limited, the major facts are accumulated from the researches and experiences of numerous other persons. These are entered into books. Therefore by reading books which contain the facts or experience secured by others the knowledge of the reader is widened or deepened, and the judgments to be made are considerably increased. By this way education is experienced, and the wisdom of the individual enlarged.

An Instrument with a Purpose.

Thus by the printing of books which deal with the facts of reality, with life in all its phases, with nature in its several ways of expression, individuals can understand the forces of nature, the problems of life, and the institutions evolved by man.
in society. He may then be able to work or think out for himself a philosophy of life which is in harmony with the laws of nature. He may realize what citizenship means, its duties and responsibilities. His life may become ordered according to the realities of life and not according to his prejudices, his fears, his superstitions. He may secure liberty of living instead of being shackled with the habits, fears, prejudices, superstitions, and ignorance. To achieve the possibility of this liberty for the individual the suburban libraries can be utilised for the provision of the necessary books.

The End in View.

With that suggested added function, namely, the provision of books the reading of which provides the facts and experiences of life, the suburban libraries will become a force in adult education. To my mind, and I may be wrong, the real function of a library is to provide books which have an educational purpose and which are too costly for the individual to purchase. To-day the libraries are expressing this function more and more. Great credit is due to the men and women who organise these libraries.

The greatest social movement of this century is the adult education movement. The production of the necessities of life has reached a stage where the individual can now be released for a number of hours at least from hard toil. This release makes possible the individual's attention on higher pursuits, namely, mental development, knowledge, and education. In other words makes possible his cultural development. Thus adult education facilities have been provided to meet such a need. The Workers' Educational Association makes provision for lecturers and classes. These lecturers stimulate an interest in their students for further knowledge on any special subject. This further knowledge can be gained by reading books which have been written on special subjects. The books demanded should be available in the libraries. The suburban libraries could provide the books for students who live in the area for which the library functions. The most expensive books should be available in the reference section of the central library. By such a scheme where each institution has a special function to perform, the facilities for education would be secured in the most efficient manner. Thus each institution would become a real social service, contributing its share to social well being and human happiness. Happiness through individual expression is the end and purpose of life. The suburban libraries can contribute to this end, but let it be remembered that good will towards an end without mental effort is useless. On the other hand the organisers of the suburban libraries cannot do much towards this end without the practical support of the citizens individually and through the other social institutions. Democracy is on trial, it will only be retained and progress when the citizens who comprise the democracy understand and appreciate the liberty they enjoy.

This understanding comes through education.

Mr E. J. Bell, Chief Librarian at Christchurch, recently completed a tour of Marlborough, Nelson, and West Coast libraries, made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Libraries in Canterbury will also be visited.

Mr Bell inspected many libraries, where he met members of the committees and discussed with them problems on library matters. Reports upon these libraries will be forwarded to the Carnegie Corporation. The other portions of the Dominions will be visited by the Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin librarians. These visits from trained librarians should prove of great value to the smaller places.

On Thursday, November 13th, Mr F. W. Reed, the world authority on Dumas Pers, performed the opening ceremony of the new Public Library at Whangarei, North Auckland. The New Zealand Library Association was represented by Mr J. Barr, chief librarian at Auckland, and also by Mr E. J. Bell, chief librarian, Lorns' Institute, Auckland. The building, which cost about £7,000, is a single storey reinforced concrete structure, faced with bricks. The main departments comprise a lending library, reference room, children's library, reading room, offices, workshops. Twenty thousand volumes can be shelved in the lending library. The interior walls have been finished in pleasing tones, the lighting and heating systems are modern, and the whole building possesses an attractive appearance.

Whangarei has a population of 7,660. The Borough Council controls the library, and is to be congratulated upon its enterprise. Miss May Bain is the present librarian.

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Linwood Library Gazette
The Official Organ of the Linwood Public Library
Vol. 2. January, 1937. No. 4

EDITORIAL
Our attention has been drawn to the mutilated condition of certain American magazines. We sympathise with those readers who find that a portion of the story they are reading has been cut out of the page, but unfortunately can do nothing to remedy the evil. This mutilation is the work of the Customs Department of New Zealand, the reason being that certain advertisements are considered objectionable, and removed before being allowed on sale in the Dominion. Owing to the American practice of placing reading matter and advertisements together the result is that portions of stories or articles are destroyed. So it is either a case of taking the magazines in this condition or discontinuing them altogether.

Owing to pressure on our columns the Editor has, this month, relinquished the space usually taken by him.

The next Conference of the New Zealand Library Association will be held in Wellington from Tuesday, February 16th, to Thursday, February 18th, 1937. Special attention will be given to the needs of the medium-sized and smaller libraries; the proposed National Library Service will be discussed; details of various library methods will be explained; and the librarians of the larger centres will be prepared to give advice on library matters.

Our readers' opinions upon any matter relative to Library matters are welcomed.
Address all correspondence to "The Editor," Linwood Public Library.

NON-FICTION RECENTLY PURCHASED
Don Gypsy. Adventures with a Fiddle in Barbary and Andalucia. By Stannie.
As with his former book, Raggle Taggle, he creates a new theme in travel literature. It is a book so individual but of such universal interest that there is nothing with which to compare it. An autobiography of one who has become an authority on Spain, and who has travelled many times as a wandering minstrel through the colourful country. It represents a wide knowledge of gypsies, and an experience of their friendship in every-day life. In view of the fighting in Spain the glimpses of Spanish history, and the places he visits makes this book most interesting reading.

Fangs of the Sea. By N. Caldwell and N. Ellison. Something quite new, and very good. We have had big game fishing for sport, but here we read of netting sharks for commercial purposes. Full of action and adventures with shark, devil fish, shark, crocodile, and octopus. This book will be quite popular.

The Southern Gates of Arabia. By Freya Stark. A book that will hold the close attention of all readers who are interested in the history of the country and the people. It represents the work of the Customs Department in mutilating portions of stories or articles in magazines.

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NEW NOVELS
BY OUR REVIEWER.

And Then You Wish, by John van Bruten, is a story written in a realistic vein, revolving mainly round Blanche Bowen, a widow in her sixtieth year. The other characters, among whom is her daughter Madeline, a capable but unsympathetic young woman of thirty-four, and Glyn Haden, her solicitor's clerk, are merely foils to illustrate the character and nature of this elder woman. Mrs Bowen, who is not too well off, shares her daughter a small flat in West Hampstead, but does not get much joy out of their association, and it is not until her meeting with Glyn at a performance given by the local repertory, of which she was a supporter, that joy really comes to her. Glyn Haden shared with her an enthusiasm for the stage, and had written some fine plays which he had difficulty in producing. How she helped him, and after many rejections succeeded in getting one of them produced in a worthy reader's white to follow. The Times Literary Supplement, in summing up the character of Blanche, says, "What she did for Glyn Haden she had done for her own sake as well as his, and she alone, among the more important people of the story, finds real pleasure in keeping the help of others. From the first she makes a strong claim upon our sympathy and affection."

The Need We Have, by A. Hamilton Gibbs, is a story of an Irish farm, the main characters being Moira and Jim O'Neill. Moira is deeply in love with her husband, but despite her obvious devotion Jim allows her mind to become poisoned against her by the daily insinuations of the elder Mrs O'Flan, and in the crisis his wife, a disappointed suitor, pays a visit to the farm. Deliberately misconstrued, Moira becomes so overcome by Jim's distress that she runs away, aided and abetted by Dinny, a young brother-in-law, arriving at a small seaside village. Here they are befriended by an eccentric but good-natured doctor, through whose instrumentality, and after some exciting happenings, a reconciliation between husband and wife is effected. The story is of a conventional type, based more on sentiment than reality.

Time Piece, by Naomi Jacob, although usually writing on Jewish themes, the author has on this occasion drawn her picture from a Yorkshire family, her heroine being Claudia Moir. The young lady of the Victorian age, who for the period is singularly enterprising. Having a gambling father and ineffectual brother, she early takes upon herself to run her home, and plans as much as possible for the future of her brother and sister. Married young and deserted by a superficially charming man, she becomes useful to her father-in-law among the intricacies of running his large wine business. She has a second marriage, and becomes furthermore absorbed in business interests and the care of her own and her brother's children.

The nature of her characters are rather too sharply drawn, and in some instances too appallingly open to deceive any sensible woman, but Miss Jacob's eccentricity has the gift of story-telling and the knack of keeping one interested.

SOME RECENTLY-PURCHASED FICTION

Action for Slander .......... Mary Borden
Anything Can Happen ......... Angel Unawares ......... Nettie Syrett
Art Gips with Fate .......... H. St. John Cooper
Blue Silver ............... A. G. Hales
But Storm—Outlaw ........... The Case of the Hare's Body, Christopher Bush
The Cavern .......... Angus McVicar
Check to Your King ........... Robin Hyde
Clue of the Bricklayer's Aunt ......... Nigel Morland
Connie Morgan in the Arctic .......... J. B. Hendry
Contraband ............... Dennis Wheatley
Co-op ................ Upton Sinclair
Crisis .................... Bennet Hobbert
Crocus ................. E. W. Godfrey
The Dark Frontier ......... Eric Ambler
The Desert Castle Mystery .... Creagh, H. Snow
Demon of the Air .......... E. M. Rees
Devil's Breez .............. H. Pendexter
Eggs and Baked .......... Jno, Massefield
Fatal Accident .......... C. W. Mills
A Feather in her Cap ......... A. G. Hale
Five Against the Law ...... Stone Cody
Frugal Armour .......... Diana Patric
Ghosts of Sin Chan ......... Albert Gervaise
Great Aunt Lavina .......... J. C. Lincoln
Gumption .......... Rupert Grayven
Haunted Abbey .......... Patrick Leyton
The Heart in the Box .......... M. G. Girrson
The Hedge and the Horse .... Hilaire Belloc
Heyday and Maydays ......... Anne Hepbell
High Noon ............. Max Saltmarsh
Hooded Thunder .......... Ruby M. Ayres
Into the Sunset .......... J. Gordon Jackson
I, Had to Happen ......... Louis Bloomefield
The Jest of Life .......... Arthur Edgar
The King Bird Rides ......... Max Brand
The Knight Errant .......... Edgar Jepson
Loburn Grove .......... J. B. Priestley
Lady Cynthia Claudio's Husband .... Stephen McKenna
Level Crossings ......... Phyllis Bottome
Lights are Bright .......... Alan D. White
McLean Finds a Way .......... Geo, Goodchild
Maine Fever .............. C. V. Usborne
The Mask of Providence .......... W. B. Nichols
Mary Lavelle .......... Kate O'Brien
Mas With the Pity ......... W. Townsend
Moral Holiday .......... Gerard Fairchild
Mister in the Bookshop .... Carolyn Wells
The Need we Have ............ A. Hamilton Gibbs
Pagan Pramble .......... Norman Davie
Peggy Harker .......... Stephen McKenna
The Passionate Adventure .... Sheila Burn
Post-Mortem Evidence .... Sydney Fowler
Renaigade Guns .......... J. L. Raub
Sage Brush Knights .......... Chas. A. Barnes

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Slick-fingered Kate ............. Roland Daniel
Snatch Game ................... Jno. G. Brandon
Three Rounds Rapid .............. Rex Hardinge
Together and Apart .............. Margaret Kennedy
Tomahawk Rights ............... Hal Evarts
Vulture's Wings ................ Petty-Officer Davis
Yellow Turban .................. Leslie Webster

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

In “Tomorrow,” the magazine recently placed on the table in the Non-Fiction Room, there is a page devoted to studies of “The Library,” conducted by the Society of Otago Librarians.

A recent number, December 23rd, deals with “A National Scheme—Some Suggestions.” Beginning by pointing out that the greatest defect in New Zealand libraries is the almost entire absence of co-ordination, and that there is, in fact, an equal absence of system. “Tomorrow” suggests that New Zealand be divided into four areas, which would contain a large city library, a University library, libraries in secondary cities, and a very large number of smaller distributing units; a lead must come from the Government, for without Government sympathy and support nothing on a national scale could possibly be undertaken; they insist that a Library system is an integral part of the National Education system, and that the antique custom of granting library privileges only to those able to pay a subscription is now thoroughly discredited; it is common sense that a Free Library system should supplement a Free Education system.”

The Chair has quoted freely in order to show that the Society of Otago Librarians is in step with the Report presented by Messrs Munn and Barr. It is heartening to find as one travels along the highway signs that the Report is increasingly being used in the endeavour to improve library conditions in New Zealand.

Christchurch has made a very fine start, and we heartily congratulate both the City Council and the Canterbury University College Council on having surmounted some of the initial difficulties, and, though it will probably be some considerable time before we at Linwood are enabled to become part and parcel of a Christchurch Free Library system, we are definitely encouraged by the “signs of the times.”

Reports from Rangiora state that since the library was made free more than 800 residents have enrolled. This borough of 2000 people is to be heartily congratulated upon its public library service. The library has been entirely reorganised, and the lending library possesses a most attractive appearance.

Both Wellington and Auckland have Societies of Associated Librarians, and are doing good work.