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Linwood Library Gazette

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body."

Vol. 1, No. 11



AUGUST, 1936.

THE LIBRARY SITUATION IN CHRISTCHURCH

By Dr. G. M. L. LESTER.

The City of Christchurch is turning in its sleep and dreaming dreams of libraries and museums. Dreaming, let us hope, dreams which may be translated into realities in the next few years. When the libraries which now serve Christchurch were instituted, a library was looked upon as a miscellaneous collection of books, where subscribers could borrow books for amusement, recreation, and perhaps for what was then called "improving the mind." The idea was, that if people wanted to read widely and to supplement the reading which their own bookshelves afforded, they should club together and buy more books that they could enjoy in common. There was no clear idea that a well-organised library was an essential part of the educational machinery which it is the duty of every progressive city to provide for its citizens. The consequence has been that the libraries of Christchurch have been, and still are, of much the same scope and character as the lending libraries which at seaside resorts help people to dispose pleasantly of their leisure hours, and that the really educational part of a library, the reference department, has been sadly neglected. We find, however, quite in early times traces of a wider view of the scope of a library in the name Mechanics' Institute, which was attached to many of the early libraries, and in these Institutes there lay the germ of a reference library. Later on the group of intelligent and able men who I used to meet with such pleasure many years ago in the Trades Hall, by founding the Workers' Education Association, proved that they

at least fully valued the education value of literature. In spite of this the city still lacks a good reference library. A full well-organised reference room is of course the most important part of any library, and no city is complete without one. The circulation of miscellaneous literature may perhaps be left to private enterprise, but it is the plain duty of a city to provide for its citizens a reference library. And this for two reasons—(1) In the first place such an institution provides for men and women what we may call adult, or post-graduate education. No sensible person thinks that his education ends with school or college days. The experience of life which he cannot shirk, will continue the development of one side of his mind and character as long as he lives, but there is another side of his development which depends very largely on books. Books are expensive things, and the high priced book of to-day may be almost useless tomorrow. Surely it is the duty of a great city to put at the disposal of all those who wish to use them seriously these indispensable aids to the development of mind and character. (2) There is another and most important side to the work of a reference library. It is obviously to the advantage of a modern city that its tradesmen, its merchants, its craftsmen, its professional men should be the best of their kind. Not only should they be well and truly trained, but as their work in life develops they should be kept in touch with all that is best and most modern in the theory, practice and method of their vocation in life. This means in many cases an outlay on books, periodicals, and journals which is absolutely prohibitive for most men. Surely it is only fair that the city should

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If, as I hope, the interest which has been aroused in our library and museum system is to bear fruit, it is the many and not the few who must do the cultivating. Those who have been in charge of the existing institutions have been condemned to share the disheartening fate of the ancient Israelites, and to make bricks without straw. Plan after plan has been abandoned, ideal after ideal has been postponed for lack of money, and in a democratic society it is demos who holds the purse. No wiser or more helpful words have been written on this subject than those which I read this morning in the "Press":

"Christchurch could hardly mark the occasion (of its centenary) more fittingly than by recapturing the spirit of its founders and building a worthy library or museum."

I would add "Why not both?"

NEW NOVELS

By Our Reviewer.

The House Next Door, by Sophie Cole, relates the varying fortunes of a happy-go-lucky and somewhat Bohemian family named Smith. Algy has enthusiastic ideas for trying to better the fortunes of the family, but being a bungler his various schemes meet with disaster. Jemina, the daughter, becomes an actress, has a trying time, including a romantic interlude, but eventually gains the success she deserves. Robin, another member of the family, is engaged to an empty-headed young woman whom he gives up in favour of Madoline Strang, a next door neighbour, who throughout the book acts as a foil to the bohemianism of the Smiths. In the end even Algy makes a success of a twopenny lending library. The vagaries and adventures described make light and breezy reading.

The Grim Game by Sydney Horler, is another story of Tiger Standish, the amateur detective, in which he has to unravel the machinations and curtail the Power of Ronstadt, of which Kuhnreich is a sinister and scheming dictator. Among the many secret agents he has to grapple with a lovely blonde spy named Elsa Brendt. What the particular plot was and its unravelling is best told by the author himself, and readers, however credulous, may be sure of a thriller of the first water.

The Vanishing Idol, by Geo. Gibbs. The story centres round a stolen emerald Buddha, which is supposed to have been among the lost treasures

of Angkor, but the secret hiding place of which is known to a bankrupt English adventurer named Colonel Fonteney. The other characters in the book are a party of Americans on a "Far Eastern Luxury Cruise," consisting of Kendall, a young lawyer, Mrs Craig and her daughter Judy, Lili Daland, a film star, and Murray Dale, her leading man. There is a description of the cruise and adventures, surreptitious nocturnal visits to each other's cabins, and a number of love affairs, but the main theme is Fonteney's theft and smuggling of the Emerald Buddha out of Siam, to be ultimately defeated by Colonel Daskam of the British India Secret Service.

"And so a man certainly heartless, and apparently invincible, who bumps off many others in the course of the story, is at last himself bumped off."

**SOME RECENTLY PURCHASED
FICTION**

Adam and Even in the Garden of Edenbridge C. Hamilton
Afterglow Ruby M. Ayers
Bandits of the Barren F. C. Robertson
Behold Here's Poison Georgette Heyer
Black Wilderness Louis Kaye
The Call of Love Henry St. John Cooper
Cardyce for the Defence Bruce Graeme
Caroline Richmal Crompton
A City of Bells E. Goudge
Cowardy Custard Baroness von Hutton
Everything is Thunder J. L. Hardy
Family Symphony I. C. Clarke
The Far Pursuit Ottwell Binns
Faster! Faster! E. M. Delafield
The Five Red Stars Ben Bolt
A Fresh Deal E. W. Savi
Greengates R. C. Sheriff
The Grim Game Sydney Horler
The Hammer of Allah Douglas V. Duff
Hollywood Madness Mis Pat Macgill
Hoop of Gold G. M. Attenborough
The House Next Door Sophie Cole
Island of Fear Hulbert Footner
Mountain Men Jackson Gregory
The New House Lettice Cooper
Penrose Mystery Dr. A. Freeman
The Posse of Crystal Creek Tevis Miller
Raffles Under Sentence Barry Pirowne
Scar 77 Graham Seton
So They Began John Guthrie
Solomon My Son John Erskine
So Many Paths Simon Dare
To-morrow Will be Lovely May Christie
Torch Bearers Hugh Pendexter
Trouble at Gayi Mrs Baillie Reynolds
The Vanishing Idol Geo. Gibbs

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Linwood Library Gazette

The Official Organ of the
Linwood Public Library

Vol. 1. August, 1936 No. 11

Library matters have been brought prominently before the public during recent months. The Dominion is becoming "library minded." We have evidence that the Government is anxious to help those that help themselves, the Hon. M. J. Savage's recent message to Linwood Library showing that it only remains for local authorities to stir themselves and set their "library-house" in order, when the moral and financial assistance of the nation's political leaders will be forthcoming.

It has probably become apparent to our readers that when libraries are the subject of national discussion, it is not so much the supply of light fiction that is implied, it is that more substantial and lasting branch of literature—non-fiction. After all, it is hardly reasonable to expect the Government or municipal authorities to equip libraries with a preponderance of novels, which are mostly of a short-lived usefulness; rather should we expect assistance more on the lines of a supply of books that educate and elevate.

It is our opinion that never was the time more opportune than the present in which to concentrate on giving the reading public a generous measure of books calculated to

Our readers' opinions upon any matter relative to Library matters are welcomed.

Address all correspondence to "The Editor,"
Linwood Public Library.

impart useful knowledge in palatable form. Books of travel, history, and biology can be of far more absorbing interest than the ephemeral novel, a fact that is becoming increasingly apparent to our own readers.

In the non-fiction section of "Our Library" during any evening may be found numbers of subscribers browsing among the books that help to mould character and shape the destinies of their lives. This section is more popular than ever before, and now that there is the probability of more leisure for citizens we anticipate still greater popularity for "non-fiction." Increased leisure means increased recreation, and we are confident that many of our subscribers will realise that recreation applies to the mind as well as to the body.

No doubt some of our readers are of the opinion that "non-fiction" is synonymous with "non-entertainment." To such we would advocate a short course of travel books and biography. The old adage, "Truth is stranger than fiction" still holds good, and when these "adventure" books are written in the modern breezy style then the reader obtains more thrills and excitement than from Wallace or Oppenheim.

We do not suggest that readers should confine their attention to "general literature" to the exclusion of fiction. Good fiction has its own educational value, and of course provides many pleasant hours of entertainment, but we do entreat our subscribers to read that class of book that leaves an imprint upon the mind, an imprint that is lasting and beneficial, although, as the patent medicine advertisements say—"pleasant to take."

As forecast in our previous issue, the Committee has decided to raise the minimum period of "Juvenile" subscriptions to six months. This means that

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the subscription rate for children will now be two shillings for a half-year instead of one shilling per quarter.

The subscription rate for Old-age Pensioners will be increased from half-a-crown to three shillings and sixpence per year.

These alterations will take effect as from September 1st of this year.

FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR

It is regrettable that some unscrupulous persons are giving the Library Committee some anxious moments and adding to their many problems.

For some time past some of the illustrated papers, periodicals, and magazines in the public free reading room have been illegally taken from the tables and reading desks in that room.

As it is very difficult for the librarians on duty to keep close oversight on this room, it is therefore quite easy for any one possessing a dwarfed mental and moral standard to secrete a paper or periodical about his person and walk out with it.

As the Committee have been unable to definitely charge any individual with the theft, it has been decided to take the public into their confidence and ask for their co-operation in an endeavour to bring the culprits to book. It has also been decided to close the free public reading room at 8.45 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. until further notice.

The Chair invites the public who use that room to assist the Committee in their endeavour to stop this most annoying and wicked practice.

COMMITTEE MEETING

At the monthly Committee meeting, held on Tuesday, July 21st, the chair was occupied by Mr A. Brettell, president. The treasurer presented his monthly statement. Accounts for £68/8/3 were passed for payment. New subscribers for June were as under:—Adults 49, Old-age pensioner 1, juveniles 25. Resignations were—Adults 41, juveniles 13. The total number of subscribers on July 31st was 1828. Books issued during the month totalled 9525, and those placed on the shelves were fiction 68, juvenile 41, a total of 109.

A vote of thanks to Mr J. M. Anderson for a generous donation of a parcel of books was carried.

It was decided that the rate of subscription for juveniles be made 2/- for a half-year instead of 1/- per quarter, and that the Old-age pensioners' subscription be increased from 2/6 to 3/6 per annum.

In view of the mutilation of periodicals in the public reading room, it was resolved to close that section at 8.45 each evening instead of 9 o'clock.

Mr M. Rolls and Mr M. Rolls, Jun., were appointed delegates to the St. Albans Library annual

meeting, and Mr A. E. Salvesson was authorised to represent Linwood at the Spreydon Library annual meeting.

NON-FICTION BOOKS RECENTLY PURCHASED

The Shape of Things to Come, by H. G. Wells. This is the book on which the film "Things to Come" was based. The reviewers all agree that the book is worthy of the highest praise, and I should like to quote largely from them, but space allows only brief extracts.

Harold Dickson says: "One has the impression that in this volume Wells has gathered together all his knowledge, all his fierce indignation, all his passionate sympathy, and all his talent."

Professor H. J. Laskie says: "Indeed it may be said with emphasis that this is the most important book he has written since the War."

My Autobiography, by Benito Mussolini. Recently we placed on our shelves "My Struggle," by Adolf Hitler. Now we are following with Mussolini's autobiography. Born in lowly surroundings, he developed into an ardent socialist, later as a soldier he served in the Great War. From then onward his dominating personality carried him forward to power. He is now in full limelight, and the world is wondering what is to be the outcome of his amazing activities. Is it for weal? Is it for woe? Time alone can answer, but this book helps us to learn something of this dynamic person.

A Million Miles in Sail, by John Herries McCulloch. This is a book that is sheer delight to a lover of salt water, and the tales that are told about it.

"Do you want to go aloft, me lad?" queried the mate.

"Yes, sir," was the eager reply. Squinting upward, the mate said "All right, go up aloft and overhaul the gear on the royal and stop it."

For us to go aloft with the boy, and, having reached the royal yard, to "overhaul the gear and stop it" is a thrilling episode the first time, especially if one has had a similar experience.

"A Night off the Cape" has a quality that gets under one's skin, and the terse, vivid writing makes it real. The final chapter is splendid: first an amusing time with a U.S.A. warship, and last a tribute to the men who went down to the seas in ships, with a letter from Count von Luckner. A most interesting and at times thrilling million miles at sea.

Three Lands on Three Wheels, by Jan and Cora Gordon. The authors of this most interesting book need no introduction to our readers of the non-fiction department in our library.

France, England and Ireland are traversed by means of a motor bike and a box side car, the wandering wardrobe as a friend christened it.

Many and various were the adventures they encountered, and in this book we have them related to us, in their own humorous, whimsical style, that makes their books so attractive.

A book we can recommend, sure of the reader's approval.

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King of Air Fighters: The Biography of Major Mick Mannock, V.C., by Squadron-Leader Ira Jones. In the records of the Royal Air Force Mick Mannock, V.C., will for a long time stand as the ideal air fighter. Modest in demeanour, courageous to the highest degree, he was "The most inspiring figure in aerial warfare of the Great War." Of all the aces, either British or German, Mannock was unsurpassed with 73 official victories.

Mr Jones has done a great service to the world, and this epic of adventure, courage, and of success will for generations appeal as a splendid legacy of inspired self sacrifice.

NEW BOOKS FOR JUVENILES

GIRLS.

Eileen, The Lone Guide, by Marjory Royce.

Schoolgirl Chums, by Kathlyn Rhodes.

Told by Eileen, by A. Massie.

Madge Hilton, by Agnes C. Maitland.

The Duchess, by Frances B. Arthur.

The Adventures of Jasmin, by L. E. Tiddeman.

A Term to Remember, by May Wynne.

A Young Pretender, by Dorothea Moore.

A Rebel at Rowans, by Irene Mossop.

"Veronica Grayson, 'Ronnie' for short, took a dislike to the Rowans at first sight. She made herself thoroughly unpopular with the girls and mistresses by her defiance. Fortunately she found a staunch friend with whom she got into many scrapes and adventures, and finished up by becoming a staunch Rowanite."

Odd One Out, by L. D. Stranger, is a story of an English family who settle in Cape Town. Into the story is woven a fascinating account of life in South Africa.

BOYS.

The Secret Service of the Air, by Michael Poole.

Jerry Smashes Through, by Godfrey F. Pullen.

Air Fighters of the Andes, by G. Gibbard Jackson.

Air Aces of the North, by Bracebridge Heming.

Tudorvale Colours, by R. A. H. Goodyear.

Grey Shadow, by George E. Rochester, describes the amazing exploits of Captain Guy Ellis of the British Secret Service in Germany during the war, his marvellous elusion of the net spread for him, and his secret entrances not only into Germany, but into Germany's secret places earned him the title "The Grey Shadow." A clever air pilot. The Grey Shadow sends home information of enemy aerodromes, and organises the escape of British prisoners of war.

Pirates 'Gainst Their Will, by G. Gibbard Jackson, describes what they were really like in real life. We all know them in fiction, but here we have them as they really were, and the story centres about the most fantastic figure amongst them, Plantin of Madagascar.