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appears in the British Medical Journal concerning the condition of the Spanish troops in Cuba coming from Madrid it may be believed. The article is a description of the condition of Weyler's troops. It declares that fully 80 per cent. of them are mere boys from seventeen to twenty-four years of age, who were ordered to Cuba after six weeks' or two months' drill. The large percentage of young men is not much above that of the later regiments of the Union army. Each battalion left Spain 1,800 strong, but one of the most fortunate of these organizations had 320 men last November and another only eighty-two. A column which went to the front with 4,000 men dwindled to 80, and the same thing is reported as occurring "on a higher or lower scale throughout the army." The hospitals are bad; there is lack of food and drugs, while general disorganization prevails. So many of the Spanish soldiers are ill that it is doubtful if they can muster one-fourth of the 200,000 men carried on the Spanish rolls.

GETTING MORE NEIGHBORLY

One who looks over the list of foreign embassies and legations to the United States will find that Persia is conspicuous by its absence. That ancient and sometimes proud empire has no representative at Washington, although the United States has a minister at the Persian capital. One-sided arrangements have existed several years. Persia's last minister to the United States, sent eight or nine years ago, was Hadji Hassan Ghooly Khan. That name was too much for Americans—too rhythmic and salubrious, as it were. The minister was a great man in his own country, but that did not prevent irreverent newspapers from playing on his name. In fact, they played on it so much that he reworked it. Moreover, they discussed the minister's dress more freely than he liked, so Hon. Hadji Hassan Ghooly Khan quietly packed up his personal effects and left the country. Since then Persia has had no minister in the United States, but the United States has maintained its embassy at Teheran. After thinking about it several years the Persian government has concluded that it has long enough on account of Hadji Hassan Ghooly Khan and is getting ready to send a minister to Washington. The first step and an easy way of coming down will be the sending of a representative to the International Postal Congress, which meets in Washington next month. This congress represents an interesting feature of the world's postal service. It is the only institution which nearly all the nations of the earth meet on common ground. It is far more extensive even than the Red Cross. The Postal Union is the result of an international convention of delegates from different countries held at Bern, Switzerland, in 1874, to discuss postal affairs. There were present at the convention delegates from Germany, Austria, Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Portugal, Roumania, Servia, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey, United States and Egypt. As a result of the convention the delegates signed a treaty which took effect July 1, 1875, fixing uniform rates of postage between all the nations named and many other details of international service. The union has proved eminently successful and of great convenience to all the countries embraced in it. Since its original formation other countries have adopted the treaty, until now the union embraces about ninety different countries, including not only all the leading governments of the world but many colonies, provinces, islands, protectorates and dependencies rarely heard of. No other institution in the world is as nearly universal as the Postal Union. A congress of delegates is held every two years, at which many interesting matters are discussed. Persia has been a member of the Postal Union since 1877, and as matters of great interest to that country will come before the congress to be held in Washington next month its government has concluded to send a delegate. At first the Persian postmaster general selected a citizen of the United States, an ex-minister to Persia, to represent that government in the congress, but the new Shah thought this was not exactly the proper thing, so he ordered a prominent member of the Persian diplomatic corps to visit this country with the two-fold mission of attending the Postal Union Congress and announcing officially to President McKinley the accession of the present Shah to the throne. There is reason to believe that this representative will remain in Washington as the accredited minister of Persia, thus re-establishing the diplomatic relations suspended several years ago. In that event American interests in Persia will be better served. These interests are not large, but there are quite a number of American missions in that country and the trade between the two countries is worth promoting. If the next minister from Persia should happen to have a queer name the American press should try and control itself. It would be a pity to have the Hadji Hassan Ghooly Kahn incident repeated just when Persia is disposed to be more neighborly.

READING FOR CHILDREN

Mr. Hamilton W. Mabie discourses pleasantly, in the current number of the Outlook, of reading for children. Mr. Mabie is always interesting, often instructive, and usually sound in his reasoning, but in this instance it will seem to many of his admirers that he goes to extremes in practically condemning all of the so-called children's literature and confining the reading of the little folks to the masterpieces of literature acceptable to mature minds and made classic by the test of time and the intellectual appreciation of successive generations of educated readers. He does go so far as to say that there are many children's books "which are wholesome, entertaining and educative in a high degree; but they possess these high qualities, not because they are children's books, but because they are genuine, veracious, vital, and human; because, in a word, they disclose, in their measure, the same qualities which make the literary masterpieces what they are. It is a peculiarity of such books," he adds, "that they are quite as interesting to mature as to young readers." He does not name any of these books, and evidently does not care to recommend them, preferring to urge the selection of works not written with a juvenile audience in mind. "No greater good fortune," he says, "can befall a child than to be born into a home where the best books are read, the best music listened to, the best talk enjoyed, for in these privileges the richest educational opportunities are supplied. Many things are said in such a home which the child does not fully understand; there is music which is far beyond his intelligence; there are books to which he lacks the key; but the atmosphere of such a home envelops him in the most receptive

years; his imagination is arrested by pictures, sounds, images, facts, which fall in to it like seeds into a quick soil; his memory is stored without conscious effort. It is his greatest privilege that a life so large and rich receives him with unstinted hospitality, and offers him all that he can receive. Now, nothing," he declares, "could rob a child so circumstanced so grievously as to attempt to bring such a home life down to his comprehension instead of leaving him free to grow into it and to it." For the same reason he believes that books beyond the entire comprehension of the child are equally valuable and should alone be put into his hands. Undoubtedly all that he says of such home influences is true. Every teacher knows that the child who comes from such an intellectual atmosphere, the child whose parents are students and readers of the best literature, has an intelligence that the pupil of illiterate surroundings lacks entirely. The books that he recommends, the Iliad, the Odyssey, Herodotus, Plutarch's Lives, Grecian Mythology, Shakespeare, Scott, Hawthorne, Irving—might serve well for the more fortunate child, but would not interest the other in the least, because he is not educated up to them. That they would be the best literature for those with the mental capacity to assimilate them no one will undertake to deny; but just as there are books and books there are children and children. It is not necessary nor even desirable that a child shall understand all that he reads, but there must be enough within his comprehension to hold his interest, else he will not give the book his attention. Children of whatever class are most attracted by the story in a book; they care nothing for its philosophy or its ethics. Now, each one of Shakespeare's plays contains a story, and a good one, with plenty of adventure and excitement, but it is not easy to get at when reading that alone. Many persons of mature years who class themselves as fairly intelligent frankly acknowledge that they find Shakespeare hard reading, and Mr. Mabie will probably find on investigation that the child reared in the most bookish atmosphere who voluntarily reads Shakespeare for entertainment is a rare creature. He will also discover that such modern children will often turn with eagerness from the classic treasures to tales of modern life by very modern writers—the tales he condemns as worthless. Their taste for trashy books is soon gratified and they advance of their own choice to better things. The young readers who have only their own taste to guide them will devour a greater number of the childish books, and may never reach the highest plane, but it is a case of milk for babes. They must have that or nothing, for they will not assimilate the stony meat at the beginning. It would be well if a great mass of current juvenile literature had not been put in circulation because of its triviality, not that it is vicious, but as conditions are with a majority of American children they must come to the classic masterpieces by degrees and must meanwhile feed upon intellectual food of a more common sort. What children need most is intelligent guidance to the best literature, somebody to lead them the path that includes Cooper, Parkman, Fiske, Aldrich, "Uncle Remus," as well as Hawthorne and Irving—writers of history and romance in their own country—and Dickens and Kipling, as well as Scott in the old. Comparatively few have this guidance in their own homes, but fortunately all are receiving it in increasing measure each year from the teachers in the public schools. Wise direction there has opened a new world of books to many a child and led to his abandonment of books "written down" to him because he swiftly passes beyond them.

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF

Chicago has an association composed of the parents of deaf children, which is now trying to secure the passage of a law providing for the extension of the public school system to include such children. The bill is modeled upon the Wisconsin law passed in 1885, under which the schools are now in successful operation. The arguments in favor of the measure are sound and forcible. It is urged, first, as a consideration most likely to affect legislation, that a great saying to the State is erected by such an arrangement, the estimate being that the Wisconsin law has saved \$100,000 during the time it has been operative. How this is done is readily seen. The law in question authorizes local school boards to open day schools for the deaf wherever there shall be a sufficient demand for the same, and provides that a sum of \$150 per annum for each pupil shall be allowed out of the regular school fund. There is no extra cost for buildings, and as such appropriation is necessary only for the payment of special teachers it might be made smaller, though, as ten pupils is as large a number as one instructor can properly look after, this sum named is reasonable. The other reasons urged in favor of the movement are more important. There is no good reason why the State should provide food and shelter for this class of children more than for others, when it is found that they can be educated in the same way that hearing children are. Deafness is not an affliction peculiar to poverty, and the parents of many of these afflicted ones are able and anxious to provide for them at home. In fact, many parents decline to allow young children to go out from their care, preferring that they should lose educational advantages rather than home influences. This is particularly true of children who were not born deaf, but lost their hearing through illness or accident and retain the power of speech, and it thus happens that a considerable proportion of the deaf children of a state lack an education they might otherwise have secured. Under the present law the home ties are not broken, and the child is brought into association with his brothers and sisters. His education can begin earlier, and the accessibility of the teacher is likely to bring her in touch with the parents and secure their intelligent aid and their own choice to better things. The young readers who have only their own taste to guide them will devour a greater number of the childish books, and may never reach the highest plane, but it is a case of milk for babes. They must have that or nothing, for they will not assimilate the stony meat at the beginning. It would be well if a great mass of current juvenile literature had not been put in circulation because of its triviality, not that it is vicious, but as conditions are with a majority of American children they must come to the classic masterpieces by degrees and must meanwhile feed upon intellectual food of a more common sort. What children need most is intelligent guidance to the best literature, somebody to lead them the path that includes Cooper, Parkman, Fiske, Aldrich, "Uncle Remus," as well as Hawthorne and Irving—writers of history and romance in their own country—and Dickens and Kipling, as well as Scott in the old. Comparatively few have this guidance in their own homes, but fortunately all are receiving it in increasing measure each year from the teachers in the public schools. Wise direction there has opened a new world of books to many a child and led to his abandonment of books "written down" to him because he swiftly passes beyond them.

THE GRÆCO-TURKISH WAR

The reports of the trade journals for the past week indicate that the prospect of war in Europe has had an unfavorable influence upon the markets in this country. In the past European wars have stimulated prices and created a greater demand for the staples of this country. If the war should be confined to Greece and Turkey it could not seriously affect the markets, as neither is an important factor in the consumption of the world's surplus of products. Nor is there prospect that such a war would be of long duration if once officially begun. Neither country has revenues and neither has the extensive credit necessary to carry on modern warfare. But for the fact that Greece has once so successfully waged war with Turkey as to secure its independence, it might be assumed, from the very great numerical superiority of the Turkish army, that the conflict between it and Greece would be of short duration. For some cause, Turkey is showing a reluctance to declare war, although Greece has afforded abundant cause for it to do so. This is probably because that power desires to impress the civilized world, which it fears if it does not respect, that it is reluctant to declare war and will not do so until it is made very clear that it has no other alternative. There are probably other reasons, Turkey holds under its domination districts which might take advantage of war with Greece to rise in revolt. Roumania, which has cause for resentment, may, as has been intimated, take the opportunity which a war with Greece would afford to settle old scores. Nevertheless, the army which Turkey can put into the field would be twice as large as Greece alone can muster. It is a fighting army and