

EDITORIAL.

There appears in this number the text of an address delivered at the opening of the Public Library on the 30th ultimo, furnished by the chairman, Dr. D. C. Canegata, with request for publication.

LOCAL.

Readers will note the specially attractive parts of the serial "The Pearl of the Army" to be presented at the theatre this evening. We are able to recommend this film as a capital screen production.

The "Creole" with 70 bags of United States mail brought to St. Thomas by the s. s. "Martha Washington", arrived at Frederiksted on Saturday morning. The mail for this town was received Saturday afternoon.

The postmaster says it was very heavy letter mail which occasions for the post office being opened until 7.45 p. m. The Pocahontus replaced the Virginia this trip and arrived at Frederiksted Saturday between 6 and 7 p. m. She brought no States mail. The letter mail from St. Thomas and Porto Rico was received and delivered here at noon yesterday.

The Navy Band entertained the public with a concert last night. Light was provided by a lamp kindly loaned by Mr. Boje which illumined the bandstand with exceptional brilliancy.

The s. s. "Korona" left New York on Wednesday, 5th inst., for these islands, omitting Dominica, St. Lucia and Demerara.

The s. s. "Parima" will leave New York on Wednesday the 12th inst.

FATHER DAILY'S ADDRESS AT OPENING OF LIBRARY AT CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX, DECEMBER 30TH 1920.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen: The "Twentieth Century" has been characterized as a "Reading Age." The appellation is so much of a truism that it demands no proof. I go further and state that a veritable epidemic of reading is raging. Go to any large city and make your observations. Take New York City for instance. In the subway, on the surface cars and on the elevated trains everyone is occupied with his daily paper or favorite author.

We are astounded at the constant output of the press. And yet all that is regulated by the common laws of demand and supply. It is the persistent demand for literature that keeps the printing press going day and night. In New York City alone there are 58 dif-

ferent morning papers with a daily circulation of over 3 millions. There are 40 different afternoon papers, and some of those papers run three or four editions. In the United States there are 1379 weekly periodicals with an average issue of 28½ millions. Then add the bi-monthly, monthly and quarterly magazines which run the whole gamut of intellectual subjects.

In New York City alone there are 189 well stocked libraries with many valuable private libraries not listed. In these libraries one can secure accurate information on every conceivable subject. In the United States every city has its libraries, and every town of importance has its library which serves as the people's bureau of information. These facts prove the American people are a reading people. And from books and tourists I know for a fact that those conditions are duplicated in Europe. And so it should be. A nation that is not a reading nation is not a thinking nation. And the nation that is not a thinking nation will fall by the wayside in the forced march of the world's intellectual progress.

"Man must read." That is equivalent to saying: "Man must eat" for reading is as necessary for the mind as food is for the body. When a man partakes of nutritious food he extracts the substance from the food. That substance passes over and becomes flesh and blood, bone and sinew. It makes him stronger and healthier. When a man assimilates mental food through good reading he develops intellectually and becomes mentally strong and vigorous. The analogy between physical and intellectual food is most striking. In the physical order our health does not depend so much upon how much we eat as upon how much we digest and assimilate. In the intellectual order the benefit we derive from reading is determined not by the amount of reading we do, but by the amount of intellectual food we assimilate and make our own. Years ago I met a brother and sister 16 and 18 years old respectively. Both were omnivorous readers. However, their methods of reading differed vastly. The girl would skip through a book of 300 pages in a single day. It would take the boy a week to read the same book. The girl was constantly nagging at her brother and calling him slow and poky. The girl ran through the book to get the story or plot. The boy read, weighed and compared. Then he would review the book with his sister questioning the accuracy of the author's quotations, and pointing out the author's rash and unsupported statements. The girl invariably had to acknowledge that she had not noticed the inaccuracies or unwise statements. There is a difference between reading and reading.

The selection of our books is not a matter of slight importance. There is

an old adage: "Tell me your companions and I will tell who you are". I can say with truth: "Tell me what you read and I will tell you what you are". Through reading we imbibe principles, and create ideals. A good book is a source of noble inspirations and generous impulses. Good reading has taught many a man to look upward, to think upward and to live upward. On a certain occasion a man of sterling worth was approached by an admirer who said: "There are some characters that are strong, but not beautiful. There are other characters which are beautiful, but not strong; your character is both strong and beautiful. What is the secret of your strength and beauty of character?" The man of worth simply answered: "I have a friend". The short answer spoke volumes. It meant a friend had come into his life and had been to him a source of lofty inspiration and generous impulse. Many a man can say the same thing and when pressed to make known the friend's name with an indescribable gesture can point to his favorite author.

A good book is a true, reliable friend. We may have recourse to it day or night. It is always in good humor. It is always ready to instruct, entertain or amuse. A book to be good must be good in every detail. In the physical order you cannot say a man has consumption, otherwise he is all right. If a man has consumption there is no other way. A single chapter suggestive of immorality mars a book and gives the death blow to many an innocent heart. A good book is the best of friends. A bad book is the deadliest of enemies. I characterize as good books those publications which give us solid instruction, useful information or innocent amusement.

By good reading we come in contact with the best thoughts of the best minds. Many a young mind has been carried to lofty heights through close friendship with books. We all know what books meant to Abraham Lincoln. His mother was left a widow when young Abe was a mere child. They were extremely poor. And the country school—ungraded and with short sessions—offered not the opportunity for an ordinary elementary education. But Abe loved books and saved his pennies to buy them. His discreet, solicitous mother directed his reading. The reading of history and biography moulded his character and chiselled his career. In fact, history ranks among those sources of knowledge best calculated to impart breadth of mind and ripeness of judgement. History deals with the past. It is a record of events. And through the medium of history we see the rise and fall of individuals, states and nations. But to produce the desired effects more than a cursory glance is required. It is necessary to study the circumstances