

ing for a list of books he had read recently the enclosed was obtained.

Here is an exact copy of the list, as written in the boy's own hand. In spite of numerous repetitions it should be read through, for only in this way can one get the full, cumulated effect. I copy as accurately as possible. The numbers probably refer to certain volumes in some series or "library."

- 1 James Boys or the Bandit Last Shot
- 2 Chasing the James Boys or a Detective dangerous Case
- 3 The James Boys and Pinkerton or Frank and Jesse as detective
- 4 The Man from nowhere and his adventures with Jesse
- 5 Jesse James and Siroc or a chase for a horse
- 6 The James Boys in Texas
- 25 The James Boys in deadwood.
- 30 The James Boys Blunder
- 35 The James Boys in danger
- 40 The James Boys Mistake
- 45 The James Boys Island
- 50 The James Boldest Raid
- 55 The James Boys dead Shot
- 60 The James Boys and the Box of diamonds
- 65 The James Boys Bad Luck
- 67 The James Boy Surrender or Carl Greens First Triumph.
- 68 The James Boy in the Mountain or Carl Greene the detective Great Surprise

The Bradys and the Factory Girl or a Secret of a poison envelope.

This is what you might call concentrated, or intensive, reading. There is no scattering over the broad field of adventurous heroes. With one exception—in which he has gone astray on the Bradys and the Factory Girl—the devoted young student has been as steady to his subject as ever Carlyle was to the adventurous Frederick, or Macaulay to the adventurous William, or Prof. Sloan to the adventurous Napoleon. He deserves this meed of praise. He has followed the advice so often given to youthful readers, not to scatter their reading, but to choose some subject and read it up thoroughly.

The writing shows that the boy is not wholly illiterate; for while he has no marks for punctuation or the possessive, every word is spelled correctly. He has probably gone through the sixth grade of a public school, perhaps higher; and he is a type of thousands. We are turning them out in great numbers, destined

to vex the souls of Harvard's presidents years to come. We are teaching them the simple art of reading, but either from not holding the pupil long enough or from some internal defect we are not teaching taste and judgment. President Eliot was right when he said lately that the products of our schools love cheap shows and gaudy literature.

## II.

We need not say more about our young friend. His list speaks for itself, and we are prepared to condemn it unanimously. But the question arises, is this the only type of reading for boys that we should be ready to condemn? Is there not quite a different list of boys' books which are even more poisonous to character than books of wild and impossible adventures?

I think there is such a list, and one all the more dangerous because it poses as the very "best reading" for boys, and has the commendation of many well-meaning people. It is a type which some business men would perhaps pat office boys on the head for reading, and yet I should mention in all earnestness that it is, in its ultimate results upon character, even more harmful than books about Jesse James. I refer to the large class of juvenile literature which tends to make boys ambitious to get ahead of their fellows, and ready to worship any success, whether true or false. Such is the tone, whether intentional or not, of many books written especially for boys; and their influence helps to make sharp dealers, unscrupulous lawyers, questionable politicians, and corrupt officials. If the Jesse James books tend to make boys admire outlawry and reckless daring, the lawlessness and recklessness have at least the merit of not being hypocritical and respectable.

Between a Life of Jesse James and a Life of Jay Gould, the former would seem to me less likely to corrupt a boy's ideals. Or take the story of the head of one of our great trusts, as I heard it told to an assembly of young boys, stripped of all possible bad features, just the laudation of overtopping ambition, the worship of financial success, would not the reading of such a life, especially as

it is held up for admiration and imitation, tend far more to have a practical influence for harm in the average boy than any story of wild adventure far removed from his actual life?

But I am not apologizing for the James Boys list! Let us condemn both lists alike.

J. H. DILLARD.

## NEWS

Arbitration of the issues raised by Great Britain, Germany and Italy in their war upon Venezuela (p. 581) appear at the present moment (Dec. 24) to be well within the possibilities.

To President Castro's proffer of arbitration, forwarded through the U. S. government, no reply had been received at the time of our last report, though the American government had specifically invited one (p. 582). But responses were received on the 20th from both Great Britain and Germany, through their respective ambassadors at Washington, who expressed a desire that the dispute be submitted to the arbitration of President Roosevelt. At first the President refused to act, and advised the ambassadors that the international arbitration court at The Hague is the proper tribunal for the adjustment of such disputes. But later in the day, and after a diplomatic intimation that neither the emperor of Germany nor the king of Great Britain were willing to submit the matter to The Hague tribunal, the President took the original proposition under advisement. On the following day President Castro signified his willingness to accept Mr. Roosevelt as arbitrator, and on the 22d diplomatic notes were delivered at Berlin and London to the American diplomatic representatives there, formally inviting President Roosevelt to accept the responsibility. Italy imitated the example of Great Britain and Germany on the 23d. Nothing further had been reported up to the morning of the 24th, except that a lengthy and important communication, explaining the British views of the arbitration proposal, is now on its way from London to Washington. It was delivered to the American charge d'affaires at London on the 23d by Lord Lansdowne, British secretary for foreign affairs, and by the former at once transmitted.

Meanwhile the "peaceful" blockade which had been tentatively established, was abandoned; and on the 19th a war blockade was declared, to take effect on the 20th. It excludes the ships of all nations. The British proclamation of this blockade, dated and made public on the day it became effective, is as follows

It is hereby notified that as the United States of Venezuela have failed to comply with the demands of his majesty's government a blockade by his majesty's naval forces of the ports of La Guayra, Carenero, Guanta, Cumana and Carupano and the mouths of the Orinoco is declared, and such blockade will be effectively maintained from and after the 20th of December, subject to the allowance of the following days of grace:

For vessels sailing before the date of this notification from West Indian ports and ports on the east coast of the continent of America—ten days for steamers and 20 days for sailing vessels.

From all other ports, 20 days for steamers and 40 days for sailing vessels.

For vessels lying in the ports now declared to be blockaded—15 days.

Vessels which attempt the blockade will render themselves liable to all measures authorized by the law of nations and by the respective treaties between his majesty and the different neutral powers.

Following is the text of the German proclamation, also issued on the 20th:

The government of Venezuela having rejected the demand which the imperial government communicated to it, the ports of Porto Cabello and Maracaibo are hereby declared to be under blockade, beginning Dec. 20. Ships under all other than the Venezuelan flag which sailed from West Indian or other east American ports before the publication of this decree will receive a period of twenty days for sailing vessels and ten days for steamers to reach their destination. Sailing vessels from all other ports are allowed forty and steamers twenty days. Shipments under other than the Venezuelan flag lying in blockaded ports upon the publication of this decree are allowed fifteen days to sail. Ships which attempt to break the blockade will be subject to the provisions which apply to neutrals under international law and in accordance with treaty.

A proclamation of the same purport was published by Italy on the 21st. Pursuant to the foregoing proclamations the blockade was effected on the 20th, and since then several merchant vessels have been turned back and others have been seized. The

first vessel to suffer at the hands of the blockaders was a German merchantman. An American vessel, the Caracas, of the "Red D" line, was forced out of the harbor at La Guayra on the 23d. She had been admitted and was partly unloaded when ordered by the blockaders to withdraw for the night; and on the following day, the 23d, was not allowed to re-enter.

Notwithstanding this open warfare, no declaration of war has yet been made by any party to the conflict. The German chancellor explains the incongruity by saying in a newspaper interview published at Berlin on the 20th, that—

This blockade will have the character of a blockade of war and we shall therefore make no distinction as to the nationality of neutrals; but we do not intend to issue a formal declaration of war, Germany and England having agreed for the present only to blockade the coast and not to take any further measures of a hostile character against Venezuela except in the case of an unexpected emergency.

In the same interview, the German chancellor explains that Germany is committed to the requirements of the Monroe doctrine, by saying:

Of course, we have not the slightest intention to make any territorial acquisitions in Venezuela. In that respect the United States government has months ago received from us explanations of a positive character.

Since our last report of this Venezuelan conflict the reply of President Castro to the German ultimatum, then withheld from publication (p. 582), has been published. It is addressed to the German charge d'affaires at Caracas, bears date December 9, and is signed by the Venezuelan minister of foreign affairs, R. Lopez Baralt. It is as follows:

On the afternoon of the 7th instant, a feast day, an employe of the German legation called at my private residence for the purpose of delivering a note from you of that date. Courtesy alone caused me to accept this note under such circumstances.

I think it is necessary before stating the purposes and desires of the Federal executive, to refer to certain points in the first portion of your note which are subject to ratification, in order to reconcile the essential object of the note with the circumstances of the case. The argument which the Venezuelan government recited in its com-

munication of May 9, in which exception was taken to all the doctrines set forth in the preceding correspondence, is cited in the said note as the only argument of the Venezuelan government against diplomatic interference in matters of a certain nature within this note, as in the memorandum of March, 1901. This argument is based upon the highest principles of international law.

The Venezuelan government perceives with surprise that you attribute to it a desire to consider this point only in the light of interior legislation. By citing in our note of May 9 of this year the twentieth article of the treaty of amity, commerce and navigation between the German government and the republic of Colombia of the 23d of July, 1892, our only desire was to add another proof to those already brought forward with regard to the assent of the imperial government to this same doctrine as maintained by Venezuela. Certain cases are now cited as precedents to enter into diplomatic relations to effect a settlement. The cases explain themselves.

The payment of certain credits relating to remote epochs were adjusted with France and the doctrine maintained by Venezuela was then respected. In the convention concluded with Spain in 1898 there appears a simple effect of circumstances analogous to those which determine what you yourself call the "Agreement of the 6th of February, 1896, between the German minister at Caracas and the Venezuela minister of finance." The said agreement referred to claims which previously had been classified by the proper junta and in this agreement the validity of the executive decree which provided regulations for the examination and payment of said claims is recognized and said claims were satisfied in accordance with the law on the subject.

Your observation with regard to the strict limitation of time in which the proceedings are to be brought before the junta are entirely wanting in force, owing to the operation of the general law establishing means to take measures against this government.

Regarding the morality of the judges, it is not possible to admit the partiality attributed to them by the imperial legation. The Venezuelan government believes the act of congress which your note qualifies as nugatory to be in consonance with the principles of equity, and that being retroactive, it tends further to smooth over the difficulties.

The Venezuelan government is unable to discover in its correspondence a single sentence offensive in tone. The desire of this government, notwithstanding the fact that throughout this correspondence it has noted the expressions of opinions little

friendly to this republic, is to ascertain which sentences contain the slightest offense to the imperial government in order to explain the same with the utmost courtesy.

With regard to the publication of the note of March 8, 1901, marked "confidential:" This note lost its confidential character through the publication of a memorandum by the German ambassador to the United States, in which was incorporated the note in question. The Venezuelan government is also surprised at the assertion that its memorandum of August 12 was conceived in offensive terms. The government thinks it can be seen that said document contains only a summary of the opinions expressed by the German ambassador to the United States, with a consequent defense made in a strictly judicial manner and in the moderate tone which is our legitimate right.

I now have to express the opinion and attitude of the Venezuelan government with regard to your final deductions and concerning the motives which led you to present them in the name of the government of the German emperor. It has been decided that since the proper junta is already installed, procedure cannot be dilatory nor differ from the form prescribed by international law. Regarding the other points, each of which comes within a certain law, it is only necessary to call your attention to the abnormal circumstances which have paralyzed any course of action relating to these matters. The Venezuelan government is now considering the appointment of a fiscal agent.

The imperial government desires that the government of Venezuela immediately satisfy the claims of German subjects arising from the civil war, and that the other matters in which the interests of German subjects are involved be arbitrated. In order that this be done it becomes necessary that a declaration be made: If the claims under consideration are just, the Federal executive as the representative of an honorable and cultured government hastens to give assurance that as such these claims will be examined. Treatment with the interested parties will facilitate, hasten or end in the satisfaction of said obligations. The Venezuelan government only awaits such time when the work of pacification, in which it is earnestly engaged, shall permit it to issue an order reestablishing public credit. The claims arising out of the present war, which still devastates the republic, will be treated with all justice under the laws to be passed to cover the requirements.

Upon the special command of my government I refrain from replying to that part of your note which relates to joint action on the part of Germany and the United Kingdom. A power like

Venezuela, which is in need of no stimulus to prompt it to fulfill its legal obligations to its utmost ability, can never expect, in its intercourse with other cultured nations any course of action which shall not conform to the principles of mutual respect and the rules of reciprocal cordiality.

Further complications for President Castro were reported on the 20th. The revolution under the leadership of Gen. Matos (p. 455), which was supposed to have been put down (pp. 551-52), appears to have revived; or, rather, to have been fostered by the Anglo-German alliance. This was intimated by reports of the 18th from Caracas, which were to the effect that the allies had been openly trying to overthrow President Castro and to place Gen. Matos in control of the government of Venezuela. Documents and letters were said to have been seized by the Venezuelan authorities which have proved a connection between the allies and the revolutionists. It was also said that since the destruction of the Venezuelan fleet by the allies (p. 583) munitions of war had been shipped openly from Willemstad, Curacao, to points on the Venezuelan coast, and steamers had sailed from Port of Spain, Trinidad, with the knowledge of the British authorities there, bearing arms and ammunition to the Venezuelan revolutionists near Ciudad Bolivar, better known as Angostura, on the Orinoco river. Close upon the heels of this report came those of the 20th, which told of the capture of Ciudad Bolivar by Gen. Matos, aided by a British vessel, and intimated that from this base Gen. Matos was about to move up to Caracas. One of the reports, a special to the Chicago News, which came from Port of Spain, Trinidad, a British island, and emanated evidently from a pen hostile to Castro, observes that "the seizure of Castro's gunboats by the allies proved an irreparable loss to the government army." For, continues this report, "just before they were seized these vessels had conveyed large bodies of troops to garrison various seaports;" but "these detachments are now isolated at long distances from Caracas and have no means of returning, as the revolutionists hold the intervening country." Farther on, the same report reads:

Although the British and Germans are blockading indiscriminately ports held by the revolutionists and those held by Castro's men, it is believed

here that the allies have had an understanding with Gen. Matos from the outset. The psychological moment in the struggle was when Castro's gunboats were seized.

It further appears that in fact the ports of both parties are not blockaded indiscriminately. Reports of the 23d say that the port of Coro, which is surrounded on the land side by revolutionists, is not blockaded, and that it is believed "that the British and German fleets are working in harmony with the revolutionists and not blockading Coro in order to allow the free entrance of Dutch schooners from Curacao bringing arms and ammunition to the rebels."

Farther down the South American continent, in the republic of Bolivia, another revolution has been for some time in progress, in which the revolutionists were reported on the 22d to have suffered defeat at a battle on the Acre river. This revolution grows out of the operations of a syndicate of British and American rubber producers which has secured a grant of the Acre country, comprising 80,000 square miles on the borders of Brazil and Peru, and rich in rubber products. The grant gives vast powers of government in addition to the land. Sir Martin Conway, the English mountain climber, is credited with having secured this grant in 1901, after thoroughly exploring the country. The boundaries are subject to a triangular dispute between Brazil, Peru and Bolivia; and last Summer Brazil demanded a cancellation of the grant. It was then reported that in consequence a conflict between Brazil and Bolivia was imminent. But the only news regarding the matter since is that of the battle noted above. How the threatening war between Brazil and Bolivia turned into a Bolivian revolution, is not explained by the dispatches.

The Haytian commotions (p. 455) have subsided and a new government has been inaugurated by the assembling of congress and the election of Gen. Alexis Nord as president. Gen. Nord was war minister under the provisional government. He occupied Port au Prince on the 15th with an army which proclaimed him president, and when congress convened there on the 18th it gave him 100 votes for president to 15 opposed, in the face of protests against the usurpation involved in the army procla-