

Musings by the Way.

(By "Sator")

I am afraid a great many otherwise most estimable people are "skippers." It is not immoral to be a "skipper," indeed sometimes—but then it is mostly one's own fault—it is quite and absolutely necessary to become a "skipper." But as a general thing "skipping" is not good for one, and it is a bad style to get into. Above all don't let children begin to "skip."

Of course, by "skipping" I mean the uncommendable practice of skipping over all descriptions of scenery, all reflections and moralizings which are often the author's best work, but which, in one's eagerness to discover how Lord Clare gets out of a tight place, and how he proposes to the fair and haughty Lady Isobel, we too often skip, and regard as unnecessary padding. So, many people can race through an ordinary novel in an hour or two, by the careful elimination of all which is not exactly the story itself. If you have chosen a book which has a superabundance of "foreign matter" in it—well that is your fault for choosing it—and the author's for writing it.

In order to arrest one's attention at the very start, sometimes a tale begins with "Blow out the light," or "Well I never!" or "The already death-blue lips murmured 'Revenge!'" And in a tale of this sort there is not as a rule much for the reader to skip. Some—myself included—would probably "skip" the whole thing.

If we were reading an article in the *Contemporary*, or the *Nineteenth Century*, let us say, then of course we should naturally read it all. But supposing we were reading one of Walter Scott's Waverley novels, or one of Whyte-Melville's, or one of Hall Caine's, or even one of Marie Corelli's, by "skipping" we lose a great deal of excellent English, and of fine thought. Besides, if we skip extraneous matter in reading, why not in other things? Big hats for instance! But seriously—don't skip—and above all don't allow your children to get into the habit of skimming through a book on the pretence of reading it, and don't let your children read too much rubbish and excitable tales. 'Tisn't good for them.

There are many people who would like to "skip" a good deal in our Church services, and have a little extra singing at the expense of leaving out some of the prayers. Indeed I know some Churches where the prayers are (or were) cut short so that the choir might perform an anthem with Miss So-and-so as soloist. Quite wrong! Just as wrong as is the custom of beginning the service with a hymn. To me it always seems quite out of place, spoils the order of worship, and there is no authority for it.

Well then, you will say, let us "skip" the sermon! Be it so. In these days of much talk and little practice, I quite think a good many sermons might be "skipped." In the ordinary service at any rate. But how refreshing it would be to have—if even only occasionally a sermon all by itself so to speak, and not dragged into Morning or Evening Prayer where there is no place for it. The only authorised place for a sermon according to the Prayer Book, is in the Holy Communion office, and if this were made, as it should be, the chief service of the day, then the sermon or homily comes in its proper place, and the service is of just a nice length, and is infinitely less monotonous than either of the other two services, besides being the One Great Service our Lord Himself gave us.

No, if you want to "skip" don't skip this great service. Mattins and Evensong are often unduly padded with hymns and anthems and sermons, whilst here is a beautifully ordered service, parts of it all ready for singing, opportunities for two or three well-chosen hymns, and the sermon comes in, in a most appropriate manner and is not tacked on the end as is the case in the other services. There is nothing to "skip" here. It is true our English office is somewhat dislocated, but it remains a very beautiful, holy, and inspiring service, without any long and sometimes not suitable lessons or psalms which we may wish to "skip."

What infinite charm there is in a garden—particularly if all or part of it is our own handiwork. I have recently seen some of Messrs. Black and Son's plates of English gardens in their series of Colour Books. We cannot all aspire to such perfection of loveliness as we find in a large and

perfectly planned English garden with the old castle or manor as a background, but we can all make our New Zealand gardens beautiful, by bestowing upon them a little more thought and a little more *planning* than we usually do.

There is no need for much expense either, but there is need to plan and contrive. Without going so far as the Japs go, in having distorted dwarfed trees, miniature Fujiyamas, miniature lakes, &c., in a garden of a few yards square, yet something of the sort might well be attempted. A small garden must be trim and neat, whilst a large one might well have a "wilderness" in a part of it. It is not a question of expense; it is a question of taste. More—it is a matter of education, most necessary for all of us, and especially for our children. Instead of "skipping" over in a desultory fashion, more or less useful or useless books, or rushing madly off to tennis tournaments or "teas" every afternoon, let them be trained to take an intelligent interest in gardening. If averse to it at first they will soon become fond of it, and the result will be most gratifying in more ways than one. *Verbum sap.*

Church of England Men's Society.

Watchword: "Prayer and Service."

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Wairoa.

During the visit of the Bishop to Wairoa in October he held a short Mission Service, and afterwards formed a Branch of the C.E.M.S. Eleven men came forward for membership, and received their badges.

Taradale.

A meeting of the C.E.M.S. was held on Tuesday, 4th October, most of the members being present. The Vicar gave a short address, after which there was a good chat about the various ways in which we might work for the Parish. Two delegates