

OUR LITERARY YEAR

THE WRITERS OF CANADA PUBLISHED MANY BOOKS.

Although the Poets Were the Most Industrious of the Literary Men, a Number of Novels and Several Interesting War Books Were Also Published in the Dominion.

THE writers of Canada have been by no means idle during 1917. It is true that no novel has been written which makes one feel that Canadian literature is hastening towards the time when it will demand the recognition of the world, but at least our writers of fiction are busy, and there are signs that some of them feel ambitious to do big things. Still it has, as usual, been to writers of verse and not to writers of prose that the reviewers have been able to apply superlatives, and the book which attracted the most attention was "A Canadian Twilight," by Lieut. Bernard Freeman Trotter, published shortly before Christmas. There was a tragic interest centred in this slender volume because Lieut. Trotter was killed in France last May. With the young poet life was only beginning, and his remarkable poetic gift had only just commenced to blossom. There were only a few poems in the book that represented his mature powers, and they were marked by nobility of sentiment and exquisite beauty of utterance. Even the poems written in childhood by Lieut. Trotter displayed his poetic instinct, and one feels that Canadian literature suffered a very genuine loss when the young man's life was sacrificed in the great game of war.



A scene from "Which One Shall I Marry," at the Grand on Wednesday, Feb. 13th. Bargain matinee and night.

Practically all our poets are singing of the war, and a good deal of their verse is not the sort that endures. Patriotic poetry, with its commendable but trite sentiment, can be written so easily that versifiers toss it off and make the mistake of thinking that rapidity indicates inspiration. Robert J. C. Stead, of Calgary, wrote one inspiring poem in 1916, after the death of Lord Kitchener, and he has published it in a volume entitled "Kitchener and Other Poems," but the other poems are hardly worthy of the one that brought Mr. Stead his reputation. Another poet, Mr. A. C. Stewart, wrote a stirring bit of verse entitled "The Shell," which also gave the name to a book, though here again one set of verses made the volume worth while. The book of war poetry most even in quality throughout was "In the Battle Silences," by Canon Frederic George Scott, of Quebec, who went to France as senior chaplain of the first Canadian Division. Other poets have also been busy writing and publishing war verse, two more volumes issued this year being "Marching Men," by Helena Coleman, and "The New Joan," by Katherine Hale. One of our poets who possesses a striking lyrical gift is Robert Norwood, and in searching for subjects he has kept almost entirely away from the war. His most ambitious effort of the twelvemonth was his blank verse drama, "The Witch of Eodor," though, oddly, "The Piper and the Reed" did more for his permanent reputation among Canadian poets. A new volume by Dr. A. D. Watson, to which he gave the poetic though not highly original title "In the Heart of the Hills," might be added to the list of the best Canadian poetry. Perhaps "Songs of a Young Man's Land," by Sir Olive Phillips-Wolley, should also be mentioned, although the poet is still an Englishman before all else, and only a Canadian because he is an imperialist, in spite of his long life in the Dominion. His name and title alone stamp him as something different from our own native poets.

An even dozen novels by Canadians have been published during the

year, unless one can still count Basil King as a Canadian. As this author has been living in the United States and writing about Americans ever since he made his reputation, perhaps it is just as well not to lay claim to "The Lifted Veil" and "The High Heart." Of the Canadian novels written here in the Dominion, our preference was for "Up the Hill and Over," by Isabel Ecclestone Mackay. This story of life in an Ontario village is unpretentious and delightful. The plot is thoroughly feminine, but Mrs. Mackay has handled her material well. Rev. H. A. Cody is another of our novelists whose literary workmanship is good. Sometimes his stories are just a trifle stodgy, but it is practically always safe to recommend them as good samples of Canadian fiction. His annual novel is entitled "Under Sealed Orders," and deals with a power development company, a theme with more romantic possibilities than a person might think at first glance. In "The Inner Door" Alan Sullivan made an earnest endeavor to present a study of the problem of capital and labor, but the subject proved too big for him and he failed to make his story convincing. No author in Canada possesses a more finished style than Mr. Sullivan. Perhaps his English is a little too highly decorated, though it is polished and easy, but Mr. Sullivan has yet to find the secret of creating and presenting character. He writes well, but he writes about puppets.

The series of novels that L. M. Montgomery began with "Anne of Green Gables," has now reached "Anne's House of Dreams." These gentle and wholesome little stories are much beloved by a great number of women who like pretty fiction, and this authoress maintains her standard. Another writer who has his special public is Ralph Connor. They know exactly what to expect and he never varies from type. In "The Major," Ralph Connor has written a characteristic novel of Canada moving into the war. In our opinion, it is distinctly above his average. A rather disappointing, though not uninteresting novel, was "Kleath," by Madge Macbeth, Ottawa's best known literary woman. The story bears a melodramatic plot elaborately contrived—a tale of mystery and revenge, seduction and crime such as has been used hundreds of times in the movies. Although entertaining

melodrama, "Private Peat," by Harold R. Peat, is a fresh and breezy story of a First Contingent boy, who went through the first terrible year and rounded out his experiences by finding an English wife. Two doctors have described the war as seen by men close behind the lines, Dr. George G. Nasmyth calling his book "On the Fringe of the Great Fight," and Prof. William Boyd giving his the title "With a Field Ambulance at Ypres." The letters of Lieut. Wells, of Montreal, who was killed at Vimy Ridge, have been published under the title "From Montreal to Vimy Ridge and Beyond," and another collection of letters by the Sunny Subaltern, Lieut. Billy Gray, are entitled "More Letters from Billy." "Best o' Luck" records the adventures of an American who joined the Canadian forces, and "Crumps" is the work of Louis Keene, a Montreal newspaper artist who saw active service in a machine gun corps. Though the sword is mightier than the pen at the present moment, some of the Canadian lighters are still wielding the lesser implement.

The books of the year have included several volumes written to mark the jubilee of Confederation, such as "Confederation and Its Leaders," by M. O. Haslam, "The New Era of Canada" and "The Federation of Canada." Last of all, it is probably necessary to mention "The North American Idea," by Dr. J. A. Macdonald, a book that might lead a stranger to think that Canada is a poor relation that has to flatter a rich and prosperous uncle who lives next door, even though in doing so slights are cast upon the virtues and achievements of other worthy relatives and friends.—The Mail and Empire.

Marching Men.

Miss Helena Coleman, of Toronto, has issued, under the title "Marching Men," a little book of war verses which is praiseworthy. Her delight in the out-of-doors, "where orchards bleeted with spring gale climbing up to crown the radiant hills," is expressed in language which breathes the spirit of true poetry. She pays beautiful tribute to the gallant dead—who are not dead:

"Say, rather, with youth's larger trust into the featureless far unknown, 'Chalons' later, They spring from earth's receding dust."

Their death has inevitably altered those who loved them; "not even you may of us ask that we be as before":

"Leave us our tears, love's heritage, Cloud-mist that blur your captured height; Leave us our griefs, the lamp of age, 'The salt' flame of night."

Many readers will consider "In France's Flowered Fields" the finest of this collection. Like many of the other poems, it is addressed to the heroic dead, "dwelling in silences so vast no thought to that high tower may climb." Of these she writes:

"France, when coming springs shall break In foam of bloom to hide thy scars, And flowers of human kindness make As a sign of smiles and wars."

"Forget not these our sons who came At that first wild, bewilderment cry, With their young British hearts aflame Upon thy tragic hills to die."

"And since upon thy heart lies now The richest ransom ever paid— White roses torn from England's brow Beside thy broken lilies laid."

"Be thou our friend forevermore, In lieu of common anguish bound, That we may know the sons we bore Lie not in unregarded ground."

Halifax Horror is Historic.

Not only does the Halifax munitions explosion rank as one of the greatest disasters in the history of the Dominion, but it will be recorded as one of the most appalling and tremendous in human history up to this time.

The Halifax disaster is the most terrible explosion in the number of lives lost, in the last quarter century. Indeed, few catastrophes of any nature exceed it in the number of dead. Among them are the Messina earthquake, in 1908, when approximately 200,000 lives were lost; the Mont Pelée volcanic eruption on the island of Martinique, in 1902, when 40,000 persons lost their lives, and an earthquake in the interior of Italy, in 1915, when 35,000 dead was the toll.

The Iroquois theatre fire in Chicago, in 1903, claimed 575 lives, while the sinking of the oceanic steamship General Slocum, in the East river, New York, in 1904, left a death list of about 1,400. In 1906 the earthquake and fire in San Francisco took the lives of approximately 1,000 persons, while the loss of the steamship Titanic, in collision with an iceberg, in 1912, resulted in a toll of 1,503 dead.

In 1914 the steamship Empress of Ireland went down in the St. Lawrence river, with the loss of 1,027 lives. There followed the sinking of the Lusitania by a German torpedo, and the steamship Eastland, in the Chicago river, in 1915, with death lists respectively of 1,195 and 812.

In October last year it was reported that 4,000 persons had lost their lives in a munitions explosion in Austria, but the report never has been confirmed.

Clubroom for Old Sailors.
The Arctic explorer Stefansson, who ought to know—has knocked the foundation out from under several old sayings which had come to be regarded as solid facts. Among other things he says authoritatively that frost-bites cannot be remedied by rubbing snow on them; that there is no harm in eating snow when you are thirsty; that Eskimo houses are well ventilated and are not generally ill-smelling; and that in his whole experience north of the Arctic Circle he has never encountered anything so bad, so sudden, or so disconcerting as a typical North Dakota blizzard.—Popular Science Monthly.

Over 4,000,000,000 cigarettes were sent from America to China last year.

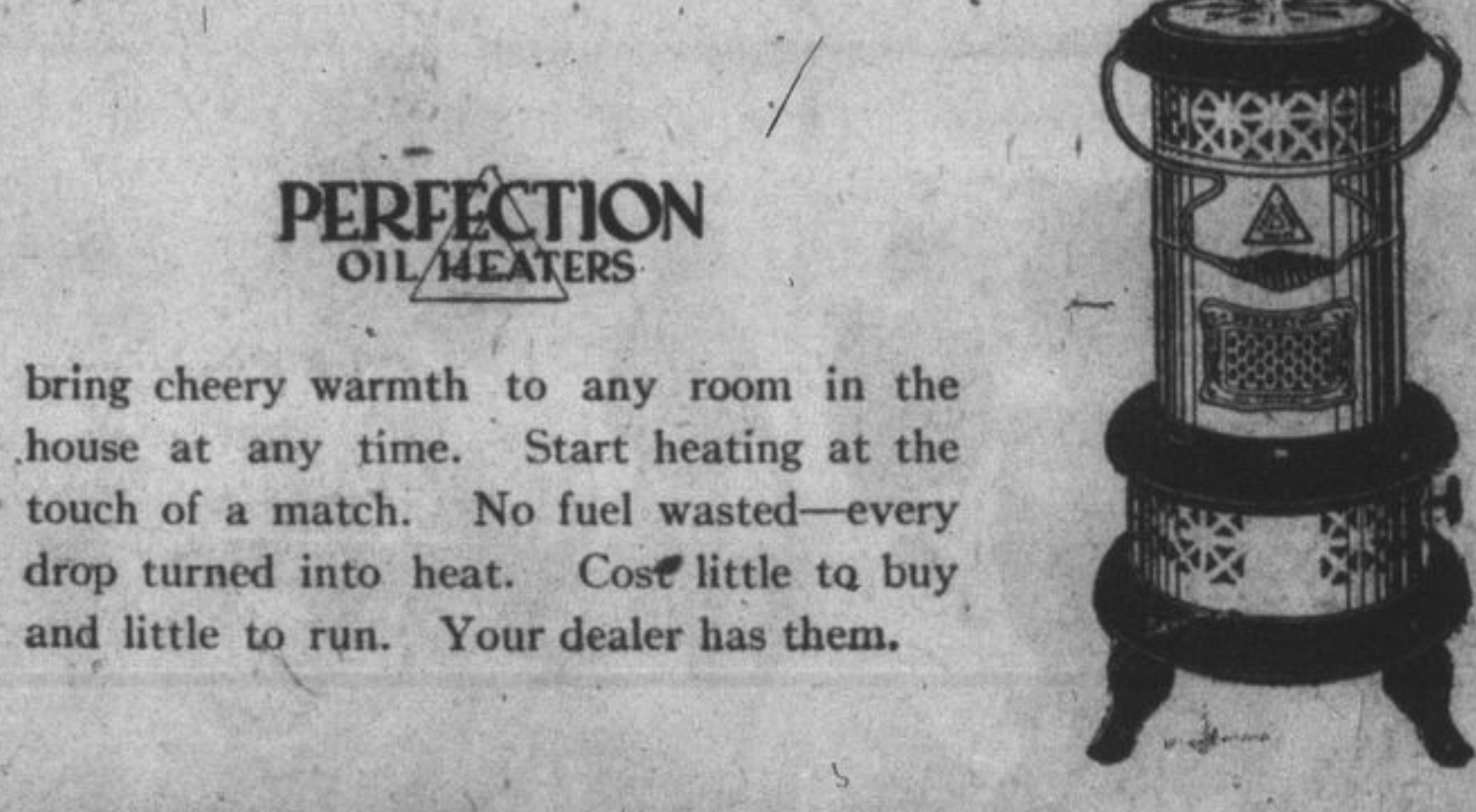
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CANADIAN HISTORY.

Its Importance and the Facilities for Studying It.

At a session of the Ottawa Teachers' Association, Dr. Adam Shortt emphasized the importance of studying Canadian history. In discussing the topic "Some New Lights on Canadian History," he divided his subject, dealing first with the importance of Canadian history, and secondly with the facilities for the studying of it.

The place given to the study of Canadian history by those studying history in the mother country was most important, he said, as the expression of the Empire was of more significance than purely domestic problems. In dealing with colonies, Britain had been the first to extend self-government to new settlements. Britain's pre-eminence in colonization was due largely to the fact that she chose lands in the temperate zone, and carried out a democratic policy forced upon her by her own emigrants with the sympathetic support of British statesmen at home.

After the United States broke away, it remained for Canada, as the most important colony, to develop the spirit of independent self-government. The process of adjustment of commerce and tariff had led to Britain's expansion in other directions. British people were clamoring for more information of colonial establishments. This demand has given rise to the establishment of a historical movement, under the direction of Dr. Shortt, whose business it now is to utilize the reports, documents, petitions, etc., found in the Archives. This will afford a unique opportunity for the study of Canada by Canadians and by the motherland.

After being confined to the General Hospital for the past seven weeks the death took place of Thomas Franklin, a well known farmer of Mallorytown. The deceased was a son of the late John Franklin, and was born in Escott township seventy years ago.

Mrs. Clarissa Ann Mottashed, widow of the late John Mottashed, died on Thursday at the home of her niece, Mrs. R. P. Watson, second concession of Thurlow. She was born in Thurlow in July 1831. The township of Lansdowne Rear has given \$1,500 to the Red Cross fund.

Cocoanut Oil Makes A Splendid Shampoo

If you want to keep your hair in good condition, be careful what you wash it with.

Don't use prepared shampoos or anything else, that contains too much alkali. This dries the scalp makes the hair brittle, and is very harmful. Just plain mulsified cocoanut oil (which is pure and entirely greaseless), is much better than anything else you can use for shampooing, as this can't possibly injure the hair.

Simply moisten your hair with water and rub it in. One or two teaspoonfuls will make an abundance of rich, creamy lather, and cleanses the hair and scalp thoroughly. The lather rinses out easily and removes every particle of dust, dirt, dandruff and excessive oil. The hair dries quickly and evenly, and it leaves it fine and silky, bright, fluffy and easy to manage.

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