

BOOKS AND THEIR AUTHORS

ON THE MAKALOA MAT.

By Jack London. 229 pages. Price, \$1.60. The Macmillan Company, Toronto, publishers.

When Jack London died recently a number of manuscripts were found amongst his belongings, some of them which had never been published. They were taken charge of, and the majority of them have now been printed. The last of the list has now been published under the title "On the Makaloa Mat," a volume which is composed entirely of short stories of Hawaiian life and legend.

The book as a whole gives a fascinating description of life on these picturesque islands of the Pacific, and the London touch is prominent throughout the entire list of tales. The stories include all kinds of yarns. The characters in them are mostly native Hawaiians, of half-whites, three-quarter and even even-eighth whites, and are mostly dignified descendants of the former race of Hawaii. Intermarriages with the white inhabitants has brought about a strange mixture of modern ideas and old mysticism, and Jack London plays upon this string in an appealing and beautiful melody of story. The old legends of the race are told through the lips of the old ruling families, and they gain much by their telling from the pen of a master writer. The story called "Shin Bones" is perhaps the gem of the whole collection, and it shows the conflict in the mind of a descendant of the ruling house, between the ideals of his modern education and the promptings of his aged mother. The transition from the old to the new generation has been remarkable, and his mother's worship of the bones of his ancestors leads him into a strange and exciting adventure.

The story of how a successful revivalist induced a Hawaiian hula-house mistress to "tell her soul," and to divulge all the secrets of her past to the chagrin of those connected with it and the amusement of the younger elements in the island, is a splendid bit of work, and is also one of the best in the collection. But all the stories are good, with the true Jack London touch, and they help to perpetuate his reputation as a writer of colorful and worth-while fiction.

BROAD HORIZONS.

By W. Everard Edmonds. 224 pages. \$1.50. The Musson Book Company, Toronto, publishers.

"Broad Horizons" is an unusual type of book. It strikes at once a deeper sounding and higher pitched note in Canadian literature, and deals with big subjects in a tremendous way. At a time when there are big problems ahead of the statesmen of this country, when the national life of Canada, as it were, is in the melting pot, its appearance should be hailed with much satisfaction.

The book consists of a series of short essays dealing with various subjects connected with the government, literature and church life of Canada. The beauty of these sketches which make up the book is found in the splendid way in which they are written. The descriptive work in "Nightfall on the Prairie," "Indian Customs and Legends" and other stories is worth reading, and the historical content of other articles is of great interest to all students who love to connect up the incidents of the past with the future outlook of the Dominion. Every Canadian will be interested in "The Dawn of Dominion," which tells the story of the Confederation of Canada; "The New Era," which deals with Canadian problems of to-day; "The City Beautiful," "The Hudson's Bay Company," and "The Early Ranchers and Cowboys."

"Broad Horizons" is a book which should have a very strong appeal to a wide circle of readers, and as its title suggests, it gives a broad outlook on a number of subjects which are of vital interest to all creeds and classes of people.

OVER THE CANADIAN BATTLE-FIELDS.

By J. W. Dufoe. 80 pages. Price, \$1.00. Thomas Allen, Toronto, publisher.

J. W. Dufoe, a well-known Canadian newspaper man, who represented the Canadian Press at the Peace Conference, is the author of a little book describing an after-war trip over the various battlefields in France and Belgium over which the Canadian troops fought their glorious battles during the war. He was given permission to make this trip by General Sir Arthur Currie, and his

impressions and descriptions of the various areas were published in April, 1919, in the Manitoba Free Press, Winnipeg. At the request of many friends these articles have now been reprinted in permanent form, and they make up an interesting and readable little volume.

The author tells how he travelled over the battlefields of Vimy and Lens, and over the scenes where the Canadian corps broke the flower of the German army in the closing stages of the war. He tells how he followed step by step the Canadian advance during the last hundred days. His descriptions of the battlefields are graphic and yet simple in their intensity. With the graves of thousands of Canada's best manhood on all sides, the observer of Canadian origin could not fail to be impressed with the solemnity and yet the grandeur of the sight. His observations on viewing the scene of the battle of Vimy Ridge are worth recording.

The tide of war had flowed past and left the wrecked countryside vacant, the huts empty and abandoned save for, here and there, a handful of men engaged in salvage work, the roadways, once swarming with life, deserted and silent. Over all desolation and loneliness rested like a pall; everywhere the wreckage of battle, the debris of destruction; everywhere the sense of man's mortality. A grim and melancholy expanse; yet withal holy ground, for here men by the tens of thousands died for mankind.

LEAVES OF EMPIRE.

By William Ewart Grant. 58 pages. Price, \$1.00. The Ryerson Press, Toronto, publishers.

This little book of poems, by a new Canadian poet, William Ewart Grant, is as its sub-title "Poems of Reconstruction and Social Democracy." Throughout the volume are scattered a large number of poetic gems, dealing with subjects which are very near to the hearts of men at the present time, and touching upon the vibrant chords of humanity and world work. The poet, with a fairly touch has transformed his innermost thoughts into little gems of poetic expression, and the result is one which will be very pleasing to all lovers of pure and sweet poetry. The long and short poems are all of a very high type of art. The writer possesses the true poetic gift, and reveals one of the most distinctive notes in the noblest of poetry—that of a passion of true and clean living and for a high standard of ideals in individual, national and international affairs.

Amongst the long poems the best is "Lord Selkirk's Dream," dealing with the dream of Lord Selkirk when he planned to colonize Canada with people from the fighting races of Scotland, so that they could there become a magnificent asset to the Empire in time of stress. How his dream was fulfilled was demonstrated by the splendid response of the Scotch-Canadians to the call of war. The subject is dealt with in a stirring and yet pleasing manner, and this poem alone would be sufficient to make a name for its writer.

The short poems are many, and deal with varied subjects, mostly with the nature life of Canada. One, however, seems to analyze the psychology of the returned soldier who has not been able to settle down easily into the routine of civilian life.

"O list to the wandering wind of the west. The children of daylight have all been caressed, In silence the sun has retired to his rest. An infinite feeling creeps into my breast, An infinite yearning for infinite quest, O wist ye wandering wind of the west. Another little gem is entitled "The Joy of Living."

"When the blossoms appear pink and white On the old apple tree, When the robin is warming the eggs In her nest cozily, When the bee woos the flower for the nectar They willingly give, I tell you, my dearie, it really is pleasant, Most pleasant to live."

These are only two from a splendid collection. This little volume of

poems will be welcomed not only for their distinctive character and worth, but as some of the first flowers of Canada's great and new springtime of national life.

CHOICE EXTRACTS FROM BOOKS.

Books and the War. Authors and publishers are now seeing the war as something belonging peculiarly to literature, to the kind of publication that promises permanence, and not merely to the type of book that gains a hearing because it is avowedly based on the handling of matters of a purely current news interest and that is not expected, at best, to reach beyond a circle of readers limited to the briefest fraction of a generation. Thus the war has become a more important feature in this season's publications than formerly in the sense that the current books devoted to this great theme are more uniformly, lastingly valuable than the multitudinous books of the kind that immediately preceded them. We have fewer war books, but those that we have are vastly better; a number of them, indeed, bid fair to retain a permanent place among the important works of history. It is into history, as a matter of fact, that the war books of to-day and the immediate future are drifting.

Poor Mrs. Ralston holds such a high opinion of everybody," she said, "that she must meet with a hundred disappointments a day." Ethel Dell, in "The Lamp in the Desert."

In the beginning man's struggle was for life, and the mainstay of life was food. Perhaps the original discoverer of wheat was a meat-eating savage, who, roaming in the forests and fields, forced by starvation to eat bark and plant and berry, came upon a stalk of grain that chewed with strange satisfaction. Perhaps through that accident he became a sower of wheat. Who actually were the first sowers of wheat would never be known. They are older than any history, and must have been amongst the earliest of the human race.—Zane Grey, in "The Desert of Wheat."

"One gets so infernally sick of everything happening according to fixed rules," I continued, "and the more you learn the nearer you are to the deadly ability of being able to foretell the future. If we ever do reach that point in our intellectual evolution, I only hope that I shan't imagine the wrong way to go."

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Why read Carlyle? This apostle of work? There is a pretty firmly established theory in the mind of mankind at large that labor is a curse which has descended to us as a result of the sins of our first parents. In consequence of this illogical and irrelevant theology, we are (the majority of us) for ever endeavoring to secure happiness by escaping work. Carlyle's message to his age—a message which is needed even more by us of the present day, is a powerful antidote to the deadening and discouraging mental attitude forced on us by this false theory.

Read in Carlyle's "Past and Present," his inspiring chapter on "Labour" and, if it does not arouse you to a sense of the dignity of work and the responsibility upon you as a laborer—no matter what your calling—think of God pity you! You were better off the earth.

For there is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness, in work. Were he ever so benighted, so forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope for the man that actually and earnestly works," says the four Scotch philosopher, and he lived his own gospel. Mark Twain once wrote, "To be good is noble, but to show others how to be good is nobler—and far easier," but Carlyle not only sounded the trumpet call to work; his whole life was an earnest example of his own teachings.

"Man perfects himself by working," argues Carlyle, and you have only to look out upon Nature and see the mighty trees made tall and strong by buffeting the wind and storm and cold, to realize that he is simply stating a natural law which applies to man as a product of nature. The essay on happiness, contained in the book already mentioned, is commended to those who know the delight of work, as well as to those who do not. "The only happiness a brave man troubled himself with seeking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done. Not 'I can't eat,' but 'I can't work!' that was the burden of all wise complaining men."

Young man, young woman, would you understand the correct relation between work and happiness, read Carlyle on these topics. Older man and older woman, would you remain young and retain the enthusiasm of youth, read Carlyle. In "Sartor Resartus," if you are not to be scared by a little "hard" reading, if you are

Art is the specific. We have little to learn of apes and they may be left. The chief consideration for us is, what particular practice of Art in letters is the best for the pursuit of the Book of our common wisdom, so that with clearer minds and livelier manner we may escape, as it were, into daylight and song from a land of foghorns.—George Meredith.

willing to do some delving in order to obtain the precious ore of thought, you will be carried along through the valley of doubt to the mountains of faith. Carlyle's "French Revolution" is another notable work, but not to be undertaken hurriedly. Preface your reading of it by the perusal of some shorter and more general outline of this revolution, and then read Carlyle slowly for the minutely detailed pictures and the flash and blood characterizations of the chief participants in this great social upheaval. But by all means read Carlyle.

Ralph Connor. To the Rev. J. A. Macdonald, when editor of "The Westminster," is given the credit of the discovery of Ralph Connor, or rather the Rev. Charles W. Gordon. When the latter was down from Winnipeg attending a meeting of the Home Mission Committee, and was trying to impress upon the editor of the church paper the importance of presenting to his readers the needs of the west he was told: "Articles are no good if they have only facts and statistics and exhortations. Give me a sketch, a story, a thing of life. That will touch the imagination and give a basis to your appeal for help." Out of this suggestion grew the sketches that afterwards made up the tale of "Black Rock."

Charles W. Gordon was born in Goderich County, Ontario, in 1850, his father being a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Daniel Gordon. He spent some years of missionary work in the Rockies and at other western points, afterwards becoming pastor of St. Stephen's church, Winnipeg. He went overseas early in the war as chaplain with the 43rd Highlanders of Winnipeg, with the rank of major. His latest book, "The Sky Pilot of No Man's Land," embodies considerably of his experiences of the great war.

Notes of Interest For Booklovers.

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TODAY IN HISTORY

Twenty-one years ago, December 27, 1898, Chinese rebels defeated at Sah-chiao-tsang. Find another rebel. Answer to yesterday's puzzle: Right side down, at hat and shoulder.