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Books And Their Authors

MEMORIAL POEMS.

By Henry Falk Lowenstein. Published by the Author at Kansas City, Missouri. Dedicated to the American Legion.

This little booklet of thirty poems is indeed interesting. Although dedicated to the American Legion, it does not concentrate on war subjects, by any means, but what there is of the recent world conflict is very good. The best recommendation of the thirty poems contained is the thirty-first, which comes on a separate leaf along with the book. Here it is:

The Old Rent Hog.

The old rent hog, he starves the poor
And drives the children from his door,
And with a heart of hardest flint,
He every morn puts up the rent,
And every night lies down to snore.
And all day long he roots for more,
Until no further he can bore;
Then filled his pounch he is content,
The old rent hog.

And when he sprawls out on the floor,
And when you poke his snout that's sore,
He comes at you for every cent,
His mangy back all bristling bent,
And smears himself with human gore,
The old rent hog.

JESS OF REBEL TRAIL.

By H. A. Cody. 277 pages. McClelland and Stewart, Toronto. Price—$2.00.

Many Canadians have already read "Glen of the High North," "The Touch of Abner," "The Frontiersman," "The Unknown Wrestler" and other books by H. A. Cody. His work is long since well known. Here we have another book of his, even better than those which have gone before. In some ways it resembles "Glen of the High North," but yet is entirely different from any of the others.

"Jess" when we first meet her is the daughter of a wealthy society woman in a large Canadian city. By some mystery unsolved in the opening paragraphs, this woman is not really her mother. It is the wish of her highly situated parents that she marry a foppish young man who will shortly be in possession of a title. It is her will that she will not; partly because she doesn't want "Lord Fiddlesticks," and partly because she has found a man more to her liking.

In the course of events Jess runs away and joins the crew of the "Eb and Flo." Captain Tobin did not want her, which made small difference to her. Ebenezer, the son, wanted her a little too much after he got acquainted with her. At any rate she attached herself to the little sailing tub and started out on her "rebel trail" when the first fair wind came along.

The trail took her back into the secrets covered by the dust of years, lead her into sorrows and joys, but was eventually a good trail for her. The book is delightful as a whole, its characters delightful individually.

QUILL'S WINDOW.

By George Barr McCutcheon. 385 Pages. Frontispiece in Color by C. Allan Gilbert. The Ryerson Press, Toronto. Price $2.00.

The name of the author is enough to recommend this book. Stirring romance is at once the idea of the reader when he reads the name of George Barr McCutcheon. Back to his mind come the characters in "Sherry," in "Graustark" and a score of other best sellers.

The title "Quill's Window" is a puzzler at first glance. There are so many things that it suggests. It might refer to the lattice of some mediaeval beauty's bower, might be the portal through which some aged philosopher views the world as it passes by, might be any number of things. It really is a queer rock formation on an abrupt hill in a level part of the state of Indiana.

There is a girl in the story, in fact the girl is mostly the story, as is customary with McCutcheon tales. She is beautiful, young, and answers all the other requirements of a McCutcheon heroine, including the fact that she is wooed by two men. That one of them wins her is a foregone conclusion.

Intermingled with the main plot of the story are many interesting sideglances at characters of the country about. Stories of the region, half truth, half legend, mix in with the general narrative and give an insight to the life of the people of that district. There is just enough mystery and tragedy to the story to finish it off into a capital yarn.

RED MEEKINS.

By W. A. Fraser, Author of "Bulldog Carney," "Mooswa," etc. 297 Pages. McLelland & Stewart, Toronto. Price, $2.

Men of the north country always find favor with readers, and "Red" Meekins is a genuine man of the north country. He is a combination well known in the mining districts of Northern Ontario, miner, guide, trapper, handy man, anything that calls for the work of a man in those parts. About his rugged figure there is an air of forests, rocks, rivers, canoe portages, lonely nights beneath the stars, frying bacon and bear steak.

"Red" Meekins is a northern town "roughneck" when he has nothing better to do. At least that is about the way he would be classified by passing tourists. If he can turn his hand to something with a whiff of danger in it, with also a few dollars at the end, he is ready to do so. All the time in all places, he has his eyes wide open for prospects of the main object of his existence, Gold.

In his search for the coveted mineral, and some of the many expeditions, successful, unsuccessful, and indifferently satisfactory as the case might be, "Red" displays those characteristics of those men who lie and murder, "who risk starvation and exhaustion to be millionaires for a day in a land where there is nothing to buy, the crude humor, the childlike outlook, and unshakeable philosophy which no other life can breed."

The Englishman concerned in one of "Red's" adventures thought them most extraordinary chaps, and a most extraordinary country, the place where he landed, especially when he saturated his trousers with nitroglycerin and was in danger of going to the skies if he happened to sit down heavily or scratch a match in the wrong place.

Sir Hall Caine and Book Prices.

An interesting story which shows directly how interested some authors become in the marketing as well as in the writing of their books, is at present going the rounds of the Toronto publishing houses. Mr. E. W. Walker of the Ryerson Press, Toronto, spent some time with Sir Hall Caine in May last, making final arrangements for the Canadian publication of "The Master of Man" recently placed on the market. In the course of negotiations Sir Hall Caine asked rather pointedly: "What price will you place on the book in Canada?" and on the reply being given: "It will be necessary to make it two dollars, Sir Hall," the veteran author stopped for a moment in consideration.

"I suppose that seems necessary" he said, "under present book making conditions, but I would much rather see a lower price on my new book. Look here, Mr. Walker, I'll make the book for you. My son is interested in a book-binding establishment and I fancy we can keep the usual profits down so that the price can be made a little less. Furthermore, I am quite prepared to have my royalty per copy reduced to make a lesser price possible."

Sir Hall was as good as his word and besides doing what was suggested, has had the considerable shipment of "The Master of Man" for Canada sent out in his own steamers, thus further reducing the cost. All this will explain a matter which is occasioning some note, why "The Master of Man," a book of some 451 pages with triple the letterpress of the average novel, and with tri-colored wrapper, can be purchased in Canada for one dollar and seventy-five cents when other novels of an ordinary size are priced at two dollars.

Notes of Interest to Booklovers.

Contrary to the usual picture of successful novelists being given a great deal of attention by their publishers and revelling in publicity are stories told of Knut Hamsun, the Swedish genius, whose "Hunger," and "Growth of the Soil," have been almost universally proclaimed. Recently Mr. Alfred Knopf, who publishes the Hamsun books in the United States, made a special trip to northern Europe to get acquainted with his new author. Negotiations for a meeting were altogether unavailing and the facts as to Hamsun's habits as a recluse were then made known. It appears that he will not under any consideration see a newspaper man, and that negotiations with even his Scandanavian publishers are carried on largely by mail. Hamsun's books, including new editions of "Pan," and "The Dreamers," are being issued in Canada this fall by The Ryerson Press, who now publish the Knopf "Borzoi" books in Canada.

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Reflections of the war continue to come out in unique ways. Here is an entirely new one. Readers of Mary Borden's "the Tortoise" have wondered where the vividness of the descriptions of hospital life in the book came from. When one learns that the author is really Mrs. Spears, wife of General Spears, who occupied a prominent part in the French campaign, glimmers of appreciation begin to come. But going further, one finds that Mrs. Spears was not at all satisfied to bask in borrowed honor and, being fairly well to do, she outfitted herself an emergency field hospital in France and furthermore ran this herself for the better part of two years. It is said that dozens of our Canadian boys were looked after in this hospital and that the hands of the clever lady with strong literary genius has rested often on the heads of some pain-wracked lad. No wonder the hospital descriptions are vivid.

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500,000 copies of Harold Bell Wright's "Helen of the Old House," is announced as the first edition for America. This constitutes a record which in all probability will be carried out also by the actual sales. Notwithstanding the fact that this author is frequently criticized by the authorities for his lack of literary style he does seem to have the faculty of getting under the skin of the book-buyer for his previous novels have had the largest sale, within specific periods, of any volumes published. The new novel is strongly democratic in tone, and while most strongly human, outlines with what one supposes is a bit of propaganda, the modern relations between capital and labor.

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Some years ago Miss Ethel Greening was exceedingly well known as a society leader in Toronto. Then, during an around-the-world tour, came a bit of spirited romance with a marriage to a Roumanian gentleman. Ten years residence with her husband in that little-known but most romantic country has given an unusual background for letterpress description and this has been taken full advantage of in a new book placed on the Canadian market by The Ryerson Press. The book may be considered to be a standard work so far as its treatment of Roumanian life and manners are concerned. The second part of the volume deals in an intensely interesting way with revolutionary days in Russia and other cities particularly the career of a remarkable Canadian, Colonel Boyle of the Klondike.

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A girl pirate, foundation for romance surely, is one of the outstanding characters of Jeffery Farnol's new novel, "Martin Conisby's Vengeance." This is the long-expected sequel to "Black Bartlemy's Treasure," and, like the earlier book, is a romance of the high seas in the roaring, bounding Elizabethan days.

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The recent publication in Canada of Sir Hall Caine's epoch-making story "The Master of Man" brings to light a rather interesting incident which occurred during his visit to Toronto a decade or so ago. Sir Hall Caine had been invited to dinner one evening then by a publisher who was at that time a good deal in the public eye, to meet other members of the trade in Toronto. When the meal, a rather sumptuous one, by the way, as was natural under the circumstances, was about to begin with no evidence of any grace being asked, the lion of the evening turned to the host saying, "Excuse me, sir, I never like to begin a meal without grace. Will you not allow my dear friend, Dr. Briggs, to say it?" Dr. William Briggs, who was at that time head of the House which bore his name, and who has since been given the term Book Steward Emeritus of the House which now uses the trade name The Ryerson Press, is well known to be strongly Irish, and it is said that he rose to the occasion admirably.

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Few Men Dread Death Itself

A PHYSICIAN of long experience told the Ohio State Journal the other day that, when the time comes, few men dread death itself for *themselves*.

What they do dread, he said, is leaving *their families* unprovided for.

He told of some sad scenes where men about to die repented bitterly of their failure, while yet there was time, to assure the future of those dependent on them for material support.

If your physician told you that there was "no hope for you," would you face the inevitable with the peace and calmness which only the knowledge that you have provided for the future comfort of your wife and children could bring? Or would you have fears and regrets?

Life is uncertain. Surely no man who really loves his wife and children will put off the duty of insuring his life? Procrastination has robbed many wives and families of the protection that they sorely needed.

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