

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MERE AUTHOR

BY ARTHUR STRINGER,

Author of "The Wire-Trappers," "The Prairie Wife," "The Prairie Mother," "Are All Men Alike," Etc., Etc.

I was born in Chatham, on the River Thames. My advent, apparently, did not set either the town or the Thames on fire. I seem to have dropped into the town with a splash, though at the age of four I fell into the river, with a loud one. My memory of this is dim, and not altogether glorious, for I was given castor-oil and put to bed between blankets. And it's a fact, however, that the best of me, for at the age of eight I triumphantly swam across it, but, on the return trip, losing my wind, through remonstrating with a town-constable who was carrying off my clothes, I was for the second time almost committed to a watery grave. That old River Thames, indeed, was a great factor in my life-history. In it, at the age of six, I caught my first fish, a gigantic sun-fish which was, I suppose, about four inches long. It's always a stupendous adventure, that first fish. There may be a thrill in the first kiss of love, in the first taste of fame, in the first glimpse of the sea, or in one's first



ARTHUR STRINGER Author of 'The Wire-Trappers' and 'The Wire of Life.'

drive through Paris in the early spring. But these later thrills are as nothing compared to your first tugging and flapping shiner with a bent pin in his jaw. They are echoes, imitations, and nothing more.

Engaged in Piracy.

It was on the pellucid waters of this drowsy and sun-steeped river, too, that I first engaged in piracy, mastered artillery by firing off a cannon made of gas pipe and two wheels of an abandoned hand-car, raided peaceful orchards and melon-patches, and acquired that spirit of careless courage which later permitted me to face editors and income-tax collectors without so much as a skip of the pulse. It was this alluring if slightly martial waterway, too, which stimulated my adaptive faculties, awakened my spirit of invention, and caused me to be the originator and author of what was known to my clan as "The Stringer Wriggle."

This advent accomplishment is something of which I have always been inordinately proud. To the outer world which, unhappily, knows little of the old swimming-hole beside its three huge buttonwoods, about two hundred yards directly below The Abbot's, it may require some explanation. But as the summer days lengthened into June and the river-water warmed with the kindly sun, that prison of the soul known as a school room became more and more oppressive. More and more, during that last sedulous hour of wisdom-seeking, our glance would steal to the lagging clock-hand. And as the call of the swimming-hole became more urgent, as the itch of apparel became more unendurable, we used to take time by the forelock, as it were. This we did secretly and cautiously under the inquisitorial eye of the pedagogic lady who fondly imagined we were giving all our time and attention to the pursuit of the three R's. The process began a good half-hour before school was out for the day. It consisted of untying a shoe-lace one moment, of undoing a button another, of casting off a main-stay or two and loosening a brace in still another.

The result was, that although we appeared to be youths all fitly and

duly apparelled, our clothing hid from our bodies even as the sword hung above the head of Damocles, by nothing more than a thread. On the stroke of four we were off, out-speeding the cottontail for the three old buttonwoods. Two minutes later we were squatting about their water-worn roots slipping from our garments like a butterfly from its imprisoning cocoon, taking our heads and gutters like a scurry of Aleutian seals making for the deep.

"The String Wriggle."

Now, practice had made me so perfect in this rite of secret preparation during school-hours that by the time I reached the first buttonwood one seismic wriggle of the body sent every particle of clothing from my carcase and crowned me with the honor of being the first to "take my duck." That wriggle was something distinctly and peculiarly my own. It became the envy and pride of our gang. And while it has been going down in history, for to many it still remains the one distinctive and commendable accomplishment of my career, it has often caused me to sit and ponder just how I escaped the dire catastrophe of being prematurely and ignominiously denude in classroom during those critical moments in the neighborhood of four o'clock when I was so frequently called to the platform for recitation.

Another early factor in the development of those imaginative faculties on which the literary worker must ever depend, unless, of course, he turns to the movies, was a certain strawberry-patch just on the outskirts of the town. There were many acres in that patch and as I remember them they were the sort of strawberry-patch which ought to have been sited with a cheese-knife, huge luscious, melting, cloying globes of crimsoned sweetness dripping with winey juices. Just why any deluded berry-grower ever actually paid two-score voracious small boys to invade that berry patch on the pretence of picking his fruit for him was a mystery always beyond my understanding. We did pick a few quarts, it's true, as a matter of form. But, O the quarts and quarts of the ripest and juiciest we tucked away!

Yet this patch-owner, who was a good church-member and piously desirous of befriending the poor, issued an annual edict that only needy youths would be given employment on his land. I recall, with some slight abashment, the pathetic, touching histories of destitution which I periodically poured into that credulous ear. It was there, beside the old snake-fence of that simple-hearted fruit-farmer, that I created my first and probably finest piece of fiction. Without quite knowing it, I became an author. I was launched on that mysterious career which still stands so bewildering to my small son, who repeatedly inquires just why he should be punished for telling the same sort of stories that his parent gets paid for doing.

But I'm leaving out important events as I go along. On Tecumseh Park, which lies in the angle between the Thames River and McGregor's Creek—the base on which we retired with our pirate-craft when too closely pressed by the enemy—I also won renown, for there doubtless trying to emulate the Cheetah whose name alone must have been an inspiration, I out-Tecumseh'd Tecumseh by attempting, and almost succeeding, to scalp my quondam chum and playmate, Benny Baxter. There was an exchange of compliments, I remember, between Benny's parents and mine, and I gravely considered running away to sea to escape threatened incarceration in the county jail.

First Literary Efforts.

But it was during the enforced sojourn in a neighboring hay-mow, to escape Benny's big brother, that my literary activities first got under way. I solemnly started my romances, but most of my manuscripts, as I remember it, were later used in the manufacture of box-kites. I'd already learned, however, the permanence of written word, for during the erection of the new pickle factory I

SORES SPREAD ALL OVER FACES AND BODIES

Mrs. Howard Houlette, Waskateau, Sask., writes:—"I wish to tell you of the benefit we have received by using your valuable medicine Burdock Blood Bitters. My children started to break out on their faces in small white pimples which kept getting larger each day. Pus would form under the scabs and they would come off, and each time they were as large as a twenty-five cent piece, and would spread all over their bodies. I was nearly in despair and sent to the village for a bottle of good blood medicine. The druggist sent me a bottle of Burdock Blood Bitters which I commenced giving them at once. In about ten days I saw an improvement and they grew steadily better each day, and in one month the sores had all disappeared. All blood and skin diseases are caused by bad blood, and to get it pure and keep it pure you must remove every trace of the impure and morbid matter from the system by a blood cleansing medicine, such as BURDOCK BLOOD BITTERS.

A remedy that has been on the market for the past forty-five years, and one without an equal for all diseases and disorders of the blood. Manufactured only by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

had, unobserved by the workmen, inscribed in their fresh cement-work my own name and that of the young lady of my momentary favor, side by side and duly enclosed in a heart. The lady in question took umbrage at this public advertisement of a relationship so essentially personal. A coldness shrew up between us; we no longer shared the same raspberry all-day sucker, and year after year those united names, so touchingly bracketed with their enfolding heart, served to bring home to me the solemnity of ever committing to enduring form the acknowledgment of an emotion which cannot identify itself as permanent. The resultant blight, I remember, turned me to poetry. The spelling was more or less phonetic, imagistic, but producing the impression desired, as it were, and my earlier lines were written mostly in blank verse, for the simple reason that rhymes, in those days, were a good deal of bother to me. Of my longest poem, which seemed a very beautiful one to me at the time, only one line remains. It is, as I remember it, from the passage where Hector and Achilles are eating after muckelone and green corn together after an artillery duel somewhere in the vaguely denominated suburbs of Troy and the former rather inhospitably informs the latter that he intends to make him in the words of the poem "Hop-scotch out of Troy as tame as a toad."

The homely directness, the artful alliteration, the acute knowledge of animal life, all condensed in this one line have apparently made it imperishable to me. The masterpiece itself, alas, is now as completely vanished as are the creations of Sappho and Eratosthenes. But I can dimly recall showing it to an elderly Church of England clergyman—and while I cannot be sure, I have the ways fancied it to be that delightful and gracious old gentleman, Archdeacon Sandys, known in those days as the Racing Parsy—who solemnly congratulated me on at least being neither slavishly classical nor pedantically historical. That my recited critic discreetly and surprisedly suggested to my parents that I forthwith be kept fully occupied with the baser labors of Scott & Liddell and possibly Lempiere's Classical Dictionary was at the time unknown to me. But the sacred fire had been kindled, and was not to be quenched. . . . Other things, of course, have happened in my life, as they happen in all lives. But the episodes I have mentioned, it seems to me, are the significant ones, the vital ones. The later occurrences, after all, have mostly been mere repetitions, prosaic shadows, of that earlier vision which has faded into the light of common day.

THE FUR TRADE OF AMERICA.

By Agnes C. Laut, 341 Pages, 33 Illustrations, 8vo. \$7. The Macmillan Co. of Canada.

The volume of beautiful furs never wanes. There is romance in the story of every piece, from the bear-skin before the medieval hearth to the school-girl's "hippet." Miss Laut has made an original and fascinating book out of all the material belonging to this subject. The first of its three sections deals with the use of furs as an art. Chapters are included on fashions and modes in furs, historic furs, and also a technical examination of different kinds of furs from the viewpoint of the connoisseur. Part Two deals with the market value of furs—in particular, the transfer of the market to the United States during the war; it discusses the dyeing industry which was localized in Germany previous to 1914, but which is now well established both in England and in the United States. This part of the book also describes the transport of furs from the arctic regions to civilization. Part Three recounts the story of the trapper. Some of the material for this portion of the volume is taken from one of Miss Laut's earlier works. "Fur" in kettles and boilers is due to the action of boiling the water making certain carbonates in the water adhere to the vessel used. Increasing the exemption of the married man is not going to make children any more welcome in some homes. It's the little things that count. Many a girl's whole summer has been spoiled by a little freckle.

Irish Canadian Poems

Many Irish poets of Irish descent have contributed to Canadian literature. "Irish and Canadian Poems" by M. A. Hargadon, with introduction by George H. Ham, is the latest contribution. Mr. Hargadon, the author, has already published a number of books of poetry in Ireland, and these volumes achieved considerable success there and in Great Britain as well. This author, who has just emigrated from his twenties, came to Canada some years ago. The present volume is made up of poems that deal with Irish and Canadian subjects, half of them Irish and half of them Canadian. A wide field is covered, from "An Old Hawthorn" the first piece, to "The Only One" the last poem which concludes the book. There are three poems to Canadian heroes who lost their lives in the great war. A country school, the crossroads well, Irish Roads, April in Ireland, Banff, Lake Louise, Acadia, Sligo Bay, a pretty little baby and Stella and many other subjects are sung with freshness and simplicity which make a direct appeal to the reader. Mr. Hargadon's is the brand of poetry which can be easily understood by the people, from the child to the connoisseur, from the peasant to the professor. The quotations



MICHAEL A. HARGADON Author of Irish and Canadian Poems.

which are given are samples taken at random from the book: A poem on Lake Louise contains these lines: This lake is God's best picture, that is why He hung it on the mountains at the sky And set it in so beautiful a frame; Art galleries of heaven have none the same.

This is a stanza from "April in Ireland": A wavy lake of freshest green Drowns all the sombre of the leas, Pale cowslip fingers on the hills Give fragrance to each passing breeze;

The pearly marmors of them showers Beat velvet leaves out on the trees. A verse from a poem to a Canadian hero who lost his life in the war reads: The oak that is strongest may fall in the blast, But a forest will grow from the seeds that it casts:

Thus, each drop from the breast of this flower of our race Will spring up in a soldier to stand in his place. These are the concluding lines of a poem on Banff: There is no lovelier place to live, And when at last I die, I think my soul will come to Banff Instead of to the sky: For here there is no sorrowing, No suffering nor care, And up so near to paradise.



Nervous Breakdown

The extreme depression and discouragement which comes over one at times is the most alarming symptom of nervous exhaustion. This letter is a message of hope to all who find themselves in this unfortunate condition. Mrs. Geo. T. Tingley, Albert, N.B., writes:—

"For years I was in a very nervous, run-down condition, was much depressed in spirits and suffered a great deal at times. The least noise would irritate me and at times I felt as though I certainly would go crazy. I consulted different doctors to no effect. A friend advised the use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food and I can truly testify to the great benefit it has received. There was a marked change before I had finished the second box and when I had used a dozen boxes my nerves were thoroughly restored and I was entirely relieved of those terrible feelings I used to have. I shall ever be ready to testify to the benefits of this wonderful medicine, feeling sure that it will give to others the quick and permanent relief I have given me." Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50c a box, all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Ltd., Toronto.

Entirely New Treatment for Bronchitis, Catarrh, No Internal Medicine to Take

Years ago the profession fought Catarrh by internal dosing. This upset the stomach and didn't remove the trouble. The modern treatment consists of breathing the healing, soothing essence of Catarrhose. which goes instantly to the source and the trouble. Catarrhose is successful, because it penetrates where liquid medicines can't go. The balsamic vapor of Catarrhose drives out the germs, soothes the irritation, relieves the cough, makes Catarrhal troubles disappear quickly. For bad throat, coughs, bronchitis, Catarrhose is a wonder. Two months' treatment one dollar. Small size, 60c. Sold everywhere. The Catarrhose Co., Montreal.

It seems enfolded there, Irish exiles will find a responsive feeling when reading these lines: The foreign roads are strange and long, And exiled eyes must often fill For sight of long white roads that wind Like ribbons round an Irish hill. After disappointment it is a consolation to read lines like these: Perhaps the flowers of heaven are little flowers That here at birth were broken on the ground; Perhaps the hours of heaven are happy hours That here we often sought but never found.

Many of us will be reminded of our school days when we read "The Country School" and about— Those early mornings when with gentle care My mother washed my face and combed my hair, And led me to the gate beside the road, And sent me on my journey with a load

Of exercises, lesson books, a rule And that fat face an urchin brings to school. Some delightful lines addressed to a lady contain the following: Stars are not old when half way they have to tread

The highland walks of God While in your eyes the stars we may behold You are not old Here are some lines from a love poem: I have a thousand joys, and all of these Are visitors she sends; with one I rise At dawn; ne comes with every passing breeze;

At night one lays the lid down on my eyes. "Irish and Canadian Poems" have been favorably reviewed by the London Times, the Dublin Freeman's Journal and many other papers. Bliss Carman, Arthur Stringer, Professor F. O. Call, Rev. J. B. Doilard, Robert J. C. Stead are amongst many who have written their testimonies to the high literary merit of the book. Illustrations appear on many pages of the volume. The pictures drawn by the author's pen remain in the memory clear as the illustrations are imprinted in the book.

"Irish and Canadian Poems" by M. A. Hargadon, with Introduction by George H. Ham, are published by The Modern Printing Co., 29 Dowd Street, Montreal, price one dollar per copy, post free.

TELL HIM NOW.

If with pleasure you are viewing Any work a man is doing If you like him or you love him, tell him now; Don't withhold your approbation Till the person makes a error, And he lies with snowy lilies o'er his brow;

For no matter how you shout it, He won't really care about it. He won't know how many tears drops you have shed; If you think some praise is due him Now's the time to slip it to him. For he cannot raise his tombstone when he's dead.

More than fame and more than money is the comment kind and sunny And the hearty warm approval of a friend; For it gives to life a savor, And makes you stronger, braver, And it gives you heart and spirit to the end;

If he earns your praise bestow it; If you like it let him know it; Let the words of true encouragement be said; Do not wait till life is over, And he's underneath the clover For he cannot read his tombstone when he's dead. —Illinois Central Magazine

ANIMAL STORIES.

Macmillan Company's Reprints Tales By Major Roberts. Jim, the story of a backwoods police dog, is the title of a volume of the newly reprinted eight volume edition of Major Charles G. D. Roberts' animal stories. These volumes are handsomely printed on good paper and carry the illustrations of the original edition. They are published at the remarkable price of \$1.10 per volume. These famous short stories lead one into thrilling situations where a wild bird or bear narrowly escaped from danger, or where men are brought into extraordinary relations with the inhabitants of the wild. Other volumes are: The Secret Trails, The Backwoodsmen, Kings in Exile, Neighbors Unknown, Hoof and Claw, Feet of the Furtive, Children of the Wild.

SPECIAL REVIEW OF "MARIAM OF QUEEN'S"

By Lillian Vaux MacKinnon
Reviewed by J. A. M. Edwards, M.A.

This is a story of special interest to the people of Kingston. Mrs. MacKinnon appears before the public with her first novel and this charming tale of university life should appeal to a wide circle but particularly to people who are intimately acquainted with scenes described. Kingston is a great city for a story and the romantic atmosphere which the University gives makes a splendid setting for the major part of the narrative. Miriam Campbell is a determined, spirited, girl, who, in spite of a snobbish mother and a conceited sister, decides to go through college at all costs. Her father is sympathetic and she goes—and thereby hangs a tale. The usual round of college experiences unites her, but Hugh Stewart, whom she has met in Cape Breton during the summer, is a kind of bright shadow—if there is such a thing—who follows Miriam all through college. And, of course, the

inevitable happens. The charm of the book lies in its poetic style and its high literary quality. The author also is good at character sketching. A day with Mrs. Dan Rutherford tells all that is necessary about her and the reader knows what to expect ever afterwards. If we criticized the author for anything, it might be on account of her snobs. There are a lot of them in the book and one is reminded of Jane Austen with all those foolish women who live to get into society, or to stay in. Then too, Miriam might have seemed more human if she had had a little more life in her. Nevertheless, it is a good story. The story is of Queen's, the end of Principal Grant's time, but many of the incidents described, such as the Freshmen's Reception and the Convocation, are still among the leading annual events in the life of Kingston.

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S STANDPOINT

Some Hints for The Literary Aspirant—Why Manuscripts Are Not More Frequently Accepted—Canadian Writers Must Take the "Game" More Seriously.

By Edward Moore.

NOTE.—Not only is Mr. Moore official reader and literary critic for one of the largest Canadian publishing houses, The Hyerston Press, Toronto, but he is also a regular contributor to a number of the leading Canadian magazines. In consequence he is in a position to appreciate both the merits of the question and his suggestions should be of especial interest to new writers.

A little over a year ago the clever young editor of one of the most successful Canadian magazines was promoted to an assistant editorship with a well-known weekly in Philadelphia boasting a circulation over 2,000,000. So soon as his new position became known he was bombarded with a barrage of stories and articles from all over Canada from people who evidently concluded that he would be favorably disposed toward Canadian writers. I happen to know that he is just that, and wants to buy at least a fair share of matter produced on his side of the border. But when he notes that the stuff which is sent him is almost altogether without the faintest vestige of quality, or even hints at dealing with subjects such as are likely to be acceptable to his editor, he is likely, very likely, to ignore them. I don't mean to say that he is likely to ignore them, but his inclinations may have been at first—against the Canadian literary product.

But what's the reason? Simply this, that about ninety-nine per cent. of the writers in Canada are trying without training or preparation to break into a profession in which the highest type of technical equipment is necessary. Isn't it true now, you people who have sent rolls of sheets torn from a school scribbler and inscribed in pencil with "Pomax," which you and your friends thought were "Just like Robert V. Service's," or others of you who have half completed novels of the West stowed away between next week's clean pyjamas and last Fall's light union suits in the second-from-the-top bureau drawer?

Then you would have us stop writing? somebody suggests. Not at all. This is intended to be encouraging rather than destructive. By all means keep on writing—if you feel you have to, want to, ought to; if desiring to express yourself for the benefit of your neighbors and the world, in general is greater than your wish to eat and sleep.

What I would have you stop doing is thinking that by scribbling off a few pages of verse which your minister or school principal assures you are "Nice, quite the equal of Robert Stead's," you are going to draw an ough royalty to buy a Rolls-Royce. Or that if you send in forty or fifty thousand words of a tale, "most of which is true, because I know it happened," it is going to sell sufficiently to allow you to live like Harold Bell Wright.

No, as our English cousins say, "Such things are not 'done.'" And primarily, Don't start out to write a novel first. You'll waste a terrific amount of time and patience and what is perhaps worse these days, good Canadian paper-pulp, if you do. No. Pester the editors with special articles and short-stories till you get your type-setter trained to ambly along with much attention to the spirit level, and till you yourself get a speaking acquaintance with editorial methods. There's only one way to do this.

When you know how to get your stuff together and what field you can really treat well, if you have a worthwhile story to tell and can build up some characters a little different from George Barr McCutcheon's or Hopkins Moorehouse's—of course we have no reference to this admirable gentleman's personal proclivities which are not well enough known to us to warrant comment—then you may try your hand at that novel. When you get it done to your satisfaction leave it alone for six months and then read it and write it over; again. Do this three or four times. Might as well do it before it goes to the publishing houses as afterward. And then, you may have a presentable novel.

If the publishing house hangs on to it three or four or even seven weeks before sending you a contract for a royalty at ten per cent., or what is more likely, sending it back with a note that "it seems to lack the necessary strength to assure sale in Canada," don't jump to the conclusion that they are stealing it. Put yourself in the weary chair of the publisher's reader for a day. This very morning, when I had on my right hand a pile of manuscripts at least two feet high, the gathering of different work, six others arrived on one mast. Those ran the gamut from "Pomes" of the character described above, and of which the reading of one stanza will reveal the unavailability, to a heavy treatise from a well-known divine, in the West, by the way, on "The Second Coming," covering which abstruse subject there are already a score of volumes on the market.

You can be assured, speaking generally, that your manuscript will get anywhere the attention it merits. If it comes out in the mail-cage, readable, and in a form to give the impression that its writer knows at least a little of the "game," you need have no fear but that it will be given all the reading and consideration it deserves. But if it shows at once that the writer doesn't even know, nor care, how his offering should reach the publisher, it will very naturally get short shrift.

If your Christmas turkey were to come to you from butcher Jones or half-punctured with blotchy spots over its intended-to-be-noble breast and a drum-stick missing you would have one exceedingly expressive word to apply to that bird. And about the same word is applied to manuscripts which present similar impressions.

Know your business before you send any manuscript to a publisher. You can't make any worth-while success at it until you do. This is proven indisputably by the fact that the writers who are winning not only plans of the big royalties but also the laurel wreaths of honor from the bookworld today are with exceedingly few exceptions, those who began in, and graduated from, either the newspaper or the short-story field. This brings us naturally to another moral which was formerly uttered by a man much wiser than either you or me: "Go thou."

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GIRLS! GROW THICK LONG, HEAVY HAIR WITH "DANDERINE"

Buy a 25-cent bottle of "Danderine." One application ends all dandruff, stop itching and falling hair, and in a few moments, you have doubled the beauty of your hair. It will appear a mass, so soft, lustrous, and easy to do up. But what will please you most will be after a few weeks use, when you see new hair—fine and downy at first—yes—but really new hair growing all over the scalp. "Danderine" is the hair that fresh showers of rain and sunshine are to vegetation. It goes right to the roots, invigorates and strengthens them. This delightful, stimulating tonic helps thin, lifeless, faded hair to grow long, thick, heavy and luxuriant.



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Warning! Unless you see name "Bayer" on tablets, you are not getting Aspirin at all. Why take chances? Accept only an unbroken "Bayer" package which contains directions worked out by physicians during 21 years and proved safe by millions for Colds, Headache, Earache, Toothache, Neuralgia, Rheumatism, Neuritis, Lumbago, and Pain. Made in Canada.