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Weird Partnership of a Czech And Scot

In Mr. J. Murray Gibbon's New Story, "Pagan Love," an Exciting Novel of the New York Labor World, There is Abundant Food For Controversy—Readers of This Story Are Bound to Have Strong Likes and Dislikes.

By Prof. W. T. Allison.

Happy is that author, yes, thrice-blessed in royalty returns, who can stir up violent likes or dislikes in the hearts of his readers. A. S. M. Hutchinson, author of that famous big-seller "If Winter Comes" and its opulent younger sister "This Freedom," which has sold to the tune of 120,000 copies in England alone within two months of publication, has been fortunate enough to discover the secret how to divide a house against itself, to make the critics fall upon one another in vehement difference of opinion, and to embroil whole communities. At a recent meeting of the Winnipeg branch of the Dickens Fellowship, the five hundred usually peaceful citizens who attend the sessions of that organization nearly came to blows over the merits or demerits of "If Winter Comes." As Hutchinson is a literary son of Dickens, it was decided that a profitable evening might be spent in discussing his first popular success. The evening's proceedings began with a lengthy critique of the book in question by Canon E. Wharton Gill, the Honorary President of the Fellowship. In private life and in the pulpit Canon Gill is the most genial and kindly-spirited gentleman imaginable, but "If Winter Comes," which he had read four times, had so thoroughly exasperated him that when he came to criticize it in public he swept through it like a devouring flame. He condemned it from every angle, spilling over almost every page acidulous disparagement. As he waxed eloquent in disdain his audience greeted him with applause and with murmurs of dissent. As soon as he set down there were any number ready to praise the story, its style, plot, and characters, just as strongly as he had condemned them. The meeting became warmer and warmer as the debate proceeded. Although Mr. Isaac Brooks, President of the Fellowship, is a lawyer accustomed to violent scenes in court, he became anxious as to the outcome. The title of the book was transformed in his subconsciousness to the phrase, "If Bloodshed Comes," so when angry disputants began rising in dozens, fearing the consequences, he exercised the authority vested in him and summarily brought the meeting to a close.

What Would They Do With "Pagan Love"? I shudder to think what would be the consequence if any branch of the Dickens Fellowship or any other literary organization were to discuss in open meeting Hutchinson's latest novel, "This Freedom." I have no doubt there would be a Donnybrook Fair, for this story would probably pit men against women, or at any rate the new men and women against the old-fashioned men and women. No, it would never do; "This Freedom" is too inflammable a story to be dissected in public. Its clever author must be satisfied with the family rows it is producing in private. I should like to nominate in its place for public criticism by the Dickens Fellowship, or any other organization that takes an interest in new books, "Pagan Love" (McOlelland and Stewart, Toronto), a new novel by J. Murray Gibbon, Montreal. With a wisdom akin to that of Mr. Hutchinson, Mr. Gibbon has produced an up-to-date story which is bound to divide the critics and the reading public, to say nothing of Scotsmen, New Yorkers, labor leaders, Czechs, romantics, moral uplifters and the fair sex. I read this story with avidity to the last line of the last page; in other words, I found it intensely interesting, but if I were at liberty to discuss the plot, which in fairness to Mr. Gibbon and to the readers of his book, I am unable to do, I could register my own personal reactions. But for the reasons stated I must await some more convenient season, at a Caledonian society or in a labor church, at a Dickens Fellowship or at a special session of the Women's Canadian Club, provided I am assured beforehand that every person in the audience has unravelled the astonishing plot.

A Poor Scot and a Millionaire Czech. In the meantime, however, I may be permitted to say that the two principal characters in this story are Walter Oliphant, an impetuous young Scotchman, a returned veteran who has failed to obtain employment on the London press, and Neruda, a millionaire Czech-Slovak on a visit to England. Oliphant and Neruda meet under dramatic circumstances. The starving Scot is about to end his misery by plunging to his death in the Thames, but when he arrives on the river bank a hand is stretched up to him out of the waters by a drowning man. Acting on instinct, he grasps it and saves the other fellow's life. The rescued man is very well dressed and proves by his speech to be an American. He informs Oliphant that he was not trying to commit suicide, that he was hit on the head by a robber, and plumped into the river. He professes intense gratitude, takes his rescuer to a hotel for breakfast, and a warm friendship springs up between the two. The ex-soldier is very shy, but before he has recovered from a sickness caused by his malnutrition, Neruda has learned his story, and in turn tells his rescuer all about himself. Like many forgers in the United States, his career has been remarkably successful.

Emigrating from Bohemia at the age of ten, and animated by the Czech national slogan, "Not by strength but by the spirit shall ye conquer," he got a job as breaker boy in a Pennsylvania mine, picking the slate from the coal for nine hours a day with an oil lamp to lighten the darkness. "The coal dust got into my lungs," said he in relating the story of his life to Oliphant. "I decided to try something else, so I beat my way on a freight train to Philadelphia. There I sold newspapers and picked up English at a night school. Then I came to New York where I clerked in the office of 'The World,' studied at the Y.M.C.A., became a reporter, wrote features for the Sunday Supplement, worked on a city desk, did press agent stuff on the side, got into a printer's shop. For a while I drifted about more or less aimlessly. Then twelve years ago I took up the study of salesmanship and personal efficiency—two years later I got my chance and now—here I am—President of a ten million dollar concern. That's what America did for me, a Czech peasant, and that's what America can do for you, and perhaps more, with your college education, if you only set your mind to it. 'Not by strength, but by the spirit shall ye conquer.' I tell you, America looks good to me."

The Study of American Efficiency. And America soon looked good to the young Scotchman. Neruda paid for his passage to New York, gave him a position as assistant editor of his house organs, and urged him to study efficiency literature. One of the most amusing chapters in this story is that in which we see this cultured young Scotchman absorbing the highly colored vocabulary and the optimism of the self-help literature circulated by American success colleges and correspondence schools. Mr. Gibbon must have made quite a collection of this sort of stuff, for though ridiculous, such passages as these sound like the real thing—"In addition to your prayers, shave yourself every morning. As you dress, repeat to yourself inspiring sentences. As you are brushing your teeth, say to yourself firmly: 'Let me never be the Skeleton in the Family Cupboard.' "When you are buckling on your garters, repeat these words three times: 'I will not be a Has-Been. I will not be a Has-Been. I will not be a Has-Been.' "When you are tying your necktie, say four times: 'Why should I not be a Pierpont Norman? Why should I not be a Pierpont Norman? Why should I not be a Pierpont Norman? Why should I not be a Pierpont Morgan?'"

"Be god-like in your bearing. Grab off opportunity. Don't be afraid to be a Rockefeller. Learn to talk, and cash in on your conversation. Concentrate on Confidence. Get busy with old Tempus Fugit. Say 'Boo' to worry. Be virile, vital, valiant, versatile, invincible, vigorous. Know yourself for a Giant. Cultivate health, hope, happiness, hilarity, boldness. Prime yourself with pep, pugnacity, psychology and perfection. Purify the soul with purpose and publicity. Vibrate your solar complex. Conserve every moment. Develop your Conscious Cosmos and incarnate your essential quiddity. Put punch into your pith and ginger into your jocosity. Carry on your face the lines of rectitude and integrity. Move among the Brighter Intellectuals and the Masterfully Tactful. While your dinner digests, read Ruskin's 'Crown of Wild Olives.' Cultivate Art. You can study Michael Angelo while you are sipping soup."

Strike-Making and Strike-Breaking. This was very entertaining to a graduate of a Scotch university. But Oliphant soon discovered that he was part of a machine, an octopus with a hundred arms. Neruda had made much of his money out of the printing business. He published labor papers in various languages, and of course his editors pretended to hand out wise counsel to the toiling foreigner. This was all very well, but the astute Czech also published house organs for employers and in order to compel the capitalists to contribute to his efforts he sent his agents among the employees to foment strikes to convince the worried manufacturer that he could not do without his soothing literature. Neruda was both a strike-maker and a strike-breaker. Mr. Gibbon describes the ramifications of this treacherous system and the realistic details which he works into his story will no doubt convince the general reader that some American labor leaders are running with the hero and hunting with the hounds. Investigations into American labor troubles show that the agent provocateur has been known to bring about strikes, but surely this is very exceptional. The moral of the story, however, is that treachery involves much excitement and in New York considerable gun play. Although his career as an employee of the Neruda system and special favorite of the Y.M.C.A. President of the company began peacefully enough, he was not in the office a week before he found himself in an

atmosphere of intrigue. The whole piece was full of spies and Neruda confessed that he was protected by his own force of detectives. The great interest which the president took in Oliphant involved him in peril, but he welcomed this for he was devoted to his Czech employer who promoted him rapidly and raised his salary every month or so. And he really enjoyed New York life with its theatres and cabarets. Moreover he became very much interested in a British Columbia stenographer, her father, an old Rocky Mountain miner, (one of the most delightful characters in the book), and their circle of friends, artists and singers belonging to the Canadian colony in New York. Descriptions of the evenings spent by Oliphant with the Canadians form most refreshing reading, for it is here Mr. Gibbon reveals his skill as a dialogue artist. But here I must wind up my discussion of the story before the plot thickens too much, before the real romance begins and before the guns begin to play. I feel sure that I have said enough to whet my readers' curiosity in a most original narrative. —W. T. ALLISON.

Literary Notes. An interesting feature of Canadian Book Week this year was an exchange of speakers between Winnipeg and Toronto. H. Gerald Wade of the former city gave an illustrated lecture on Canadian authors to seven audiences in Toronto and Ontario towns, while Vernon McKenzie, editor of Maclean's magazine, addressed the Dickens Fellowship, a meeting in the Public Library, and various clubs and schools in Winnipeg. One of his addresses was entitled, "Some of the More Human Characteristics of Canadian Authors." We hope the good example set by Winnipeg and Toronto will be followed by other cities next year.

The palm for thorough celebration of Book Week this year must be awarded to the Women's Canadian Club of Calgary. The campaign of public speaking, newspaper publicity, and general educational effort that this organization planned and carried out successfully was wonderfully complete. With the co-operation of school teachers, ministers, service clubs, and newspapers, few citizens of Calgary today are ignorant of the objects of the Canadian Authors' Association in establishing this annual festival.

According to reports of the American Library Association, the French-Canadian idyll, "Marta Chapdelaine" by Louis Hemon, has a place among the ten best selling novels in the United States. H. G. Wells' "Outline of History" holds first place among books of general interest.

There are many aspiring short story writers who ought to be interested to learn that the London "Tatler" is offering a first prize of 200 pounds and a second prize of 50 pounds for the best short stories submitted before Dec. 20th of this year. The required length of the story is 2,500 words.

"Nerves and Personal Power" (T. Allen, Toronto) by Dr. D. Macdougall King is one of the bravest books ever written by a Canadian. The late Dr. King, brother of Premier MacKenzie King, was practising his profession in the city of Ottawa when, at the age of thirty-five, he was stricken suddenly with influenza, complicated by double pneumonia. Tuberculosis of an acute type manifested itself after this attack. Owing to the great fight for life made by Dr. King, he actually won in a duel with death. It took him several years in Colorado to conquer tuberculosis. During that time he wrote "The Battle of Tuberculosis and How to Win It" (1917). For two years Dr. King practiced his profession in Denver, then without warning or apparent cause a new affliction came upon him, progressive muscular atrophy, which owed its origin to some organic nerve degeneration. He was a physician and knew that he was doomed. Death might approach slowly but was inevitable. In the touching preface which he has written for this book, Premier King says that in spite of the fact that his brother knew that every hour's effort would hasten the progress of the disease, he decided to write this book in order that he might pass on to fellow-sufferers and his profession some benefit from his own tragic experience. From month to month he toiled courageously at his self-imposed task. He completed his book before he died, in the spring of 1922. The book is characterized by a cheerful tone and has much to say of the secret of happiness. It makes a special appeal to all who are suffering from nervous disability.

Lawrence Binyon, English poet and art expert, who is Deputy Keeper in charge of the British Museum collection of Oriental prints and has a house in the Museum, has lately received a new French honor that gives him the rank of Officer of Public Instruction. Mr. Binyon is of course well known in France and was invited to represent English men of letters at the Moliere celebration in Paris this year. His "Selected Poems" were recently published by Macmillan.

Not many things succeed better in giving the mind a good jolt than a perfectly naive revelation of the point of view of some nation that regards our own form of civilization as "barbarous." That China in 1793 so regarded the England of that day, Bertrand Russell shows us in "The Problem of China," recently published by the Century Company. In the latter part of the 18th Century a British ambassador arrived in China to re-

NORTHERN ONTARIO FIRE RELIEF WORK

A MESSAGE TO MAYORS, REEVES, MUNICIPAL OFFICERS, ASSOCIATIONS AND TO THE PUBLIC GENERALLY.

The need for money and supplies is still urgent. Winter weather is now upon the Northern Ontario fire-swept regions.

IMPORTANT!

Will all those who wish to send clothing and other supplies please first write the undersigned Committee for information as to what is now most needed, and for directions as to where and when to ship?

This will avoid over-amounts of certain kinds of supplies. It will save food, fruit, etc., from the danger of freezing in transit. It will help very much in the work of distribution.

Keeping the Committee advised of all help that can be given will be in the real interests of the fire sufferers, and tend to make your gift fully effective.

Northern Ontario Fire Relief Committee ROYAL BANK BUILDING, TORONTO

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Advertisement for REX cigarettes featuring a portrait of a man smoking a cigarette. Text includes: "Supreme quality and proven excellence. The flavor is delightfully mild, yet soundly satisfying." Price list: "10 for 15¢, 25 for 35¢". IMPERIAL TOBACCO COMPANY OF CANADA, LIMITED.

quest further trade facilities. The answer of the Emperor Chien Lung admits that the British memorial is cast in terms which "reveal a respectful humility on your part that is highly praiseworthy." But "Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in abundance and lacks no product within its own borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. But as the sea, silk, porcelain which the Celestial Empire produces are absolute necessities to European nations and to yourselves,"—the limited trade hitherto permitted is, after many more condescending words, graciously allowed to continue. "What I want to suggest," says Mr. Russell, "is that no one understands

China until this document has ceased to be absurd." —W. T. A. SOME ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION Vol. I. of the Layman's Library of Practical Religion. The Mission Book Co., Toronto. Price 50 Cents. This book is the opening number of a series which is to be issued by a group of writers of the Church of England in Canada. The purpose is to convey to those who are not trained theologians but who have enquiring minds, a clear presentation of different aspects of the Christian faith. The first volume deals with some of the fundamentals: God, Christ, Bible, Prayer, Faith, Holy Communion, Immortality. The di-

ferent writers have succeeded well in making their articles not only instructive but interesting. The people of this community will be specially attracted by Bishop Bidwell's valuable contribution. Of the other, Canon Cody and Dr. Patterson-Smyth will probably make the widest appeal. Though all are good, the writers have the modern print in view, and are very capable of presenting the old faith in terms acceptable to the modern mind. The attractive form of the book and its low price should help to secure the wide circulation which its value deserves. Oh, there is a charm which morning has! Expect it not, ye who till noon upon a downy bed lie.