

CHRISTMAS BOOK SUPPLEMENT

THE SEASON'S BOOKS IN REVIEW

(Continued from Page 21.) who hides his identity under a nom de plume. He has laid the main scenes of the narrative in the Georgian Bay region, the first writer, so far as I know, to exploit this district as a field for romance. The plot centres round buried treasure, planted on an island in Georgian Bay in the days of the old regime. The hero finds not only gold but a fair maiden on the island in question, and after many adventures, which keep the reader in pleasant suspense, wins both.

Judy of York Hill—by Ethel Hume. (Thomas Allen). A story for girls in their teens. It describes the jolly life led by Judy and her companions at York Hill, a Canadian boarding-school. This narrative is not only entertaining but elevating, and will no doubt have a large circulation among school girls.

The Timber Pirate—by Charles Christopher Jenkins. (McClelland & Stewart).

A hair-raising story of adventure among the pulp and paper makers in the mountain fastnesses back of the north shore of Lake Superior. The timber pirate carries out the orders of a mysterious master-mind known as J. C. X.—a power behind gigantic business enterprises.

The Bells of St. Stephen's—by Marian Keith. (McClelland & Stewart).

Once more this novelist of the manse introduces us to a group of old Scotch-Canadian characters. The background of the story is a prosperous church in an Ontario town. The heroine is Mary, the minister's

neice, a dashing girl with copper-colored hair and an impertinent chin. When she arrives in the town to keep house for her uncle nothing short of a commotion is caused in church circles.

The Dust Flower—by Basil King. (Hodder & Stoughton). As far as style goes, this is easily one of the best novels of the season. Basil King has invented a most unusual plot for his new story. His hero, flitted by his lady love, goes out



V. P. LAURISTON Author of "The Twenty-First Burr."

and makes love to the first woman he meets, a stranger to him, poorly educated and living in poverty. She is the dust flower. He resolves to educate her in order to bring her up to his own status of refinement. Although he learns to love her, the first girl still tugs at his heart

strings. As the action of the story proceeds, the first girl shows that she still loves him, and he is torn in mind, being unable to decide which one he should marry. A sudden tragedy frees him finally from his inhibition, and, strangely enough brings happiness to all three.

The Twenty-First Burr—By Victor Lauriston. (McClelland & Stewart).

A clever mystery story. A strange telegram, an unidentified handprint, the unexplained past of Adam Wainwright, the ghostlike "man in gray," an irrefragable chauffeur, a strange collection of tiny burrs—these and several other factors contribute a more-than-usual complexity to the plot.

Rangy Pete. — By Guy Morton. (McClelland & Stewart).

A cowboy story of the far west, with an original hero who has the shrewdness of a David Harum and the humor of a Happy Hawkins.

Carnac's Folly.—By Sir Gilbert Parker. (Lippincott).

Sir Gilbert's last two stories were not up to his usual standard, but with this novel he is once more seated in the saddle. It is already high on the list of big sellers in the United States. It will probably seem a trifle melodramatic to Canadian readers, but there is this to be said for it that its author has returned to his homeland for scenic setting and subject matter. It is a romance after the style of "The Seats of the Mighty."

The Poisoned Paradise.—By Robert W. Service. (McClelland & Stewart).

Robert Service is now living in Paris. He has spent several winters at Monte Carlo, and has chosen that wicked spot as a background for the first novel he has written for several years. Hugh Kildair, the hero, after frequenting the gambling hell for a time, meets Professor Durand, who persuades him that he has an invincible mathematical system by which he can ruin the casino and pay off part of France's national debt. He employs Hugh as a body guard and the story proceeds to describe fights and murders for the possession of the new system, the hold-up of the casino, and thrilling man-hunts in Corsica.

Neighbors—By Robert J. C. Stead. (Hodder and Stoughton).

"Neighbors" is the story of Frank Hall and Jean Lane, neighbors in childhood in a little Ontario town; neighbors again, fifteen years later, on adjoining homesteads thirty or more miles north of Regina. This is a vivid and faithful story picture of the building of a homestead community, in pioneering days when Re-

gina was still a shack town. Mr. Stead went through the homesteading experience himself when he was a small boy in Manitoba and he writes from first-hand knowledge. In this volume he has injected a good deal of humor and has produced what might be called an idyll of Saskatchewan. His story lacks complexity but its defect in this respect is partly made up by its charming descriptions.



F. P. GROVE Author of "Over Prairie Trails."

Salt Seas and Sailor Men—By Frederick Williams Wallace. (Hodder and Stoughton). This and a companion volume, "The Shack Locker," are collections of short stories of the deep-sea fishing fleets of Canada's Atlantic coast. No more faithful or varied tales of seafaring adventure in Canadian waters have ever been published. Mr. Wallace is himself the son of a sea captain and in his youth served before the mast, rounded the Horn, and worked for years in the fishing ships off the banks of Newfoundland. There is plenty of humor in these stories, interesting information, and sufficient adventure to absorb the most jaded reader.

God's Green Country—by Ethel M. Chapman. (Ryerson Press).

Somehow Canadian novels exhibit a tendency to deal either with the wider aspects of our national life or with city conditions. Very infrequently is every-day life in the agricultural community considered to possess much romance. Miss Ethel M. Chapman has stepped into this little-touched field and has shown that it does possess a world of romance. In her story she presents

"MR. EAST, MEET MR. WEST" By Robert Stead, Author of "The Homesteaders," "The Cowpuncher," "Dennison Grant," and "Neighbors."

The story is told of two Englishmen, fellow-passengers through the South Seas, who were wrecked together on an uninhabited island, the sole survivors of their unfortunate ship. The difficulties of a situation, at best somewhat embarrassing, were increased by the fact that they had not been introduced. On the long journey from England an introduction no doubt could have been obtained, had either troubled to take the initiative but the golden opportunity was allowed to slip by, and now they found themselves strangers in a strange land. The predicament was one to test their training and traditions, but they emerged from it with the conventions unscathed. By a sort of unexpected understanding one took the northern end of the is-



ROBERT STEAD Author of "Neighbors."

land and the other took the southern and so the long years dragged by.

So matters progressed—if matters may be said to progress when they do not progress—until another wreck occurred, and an American was cast up upon the sandy shore. He immediately encountered the occupant of the northern half of the island, and burst into language approximately like this:

"Well for the luvva Mike! Look who's here! How do, Robinson Crusoe! Glad to make your acquaintance. I thought you died when I was a kid; at least, I never heard of you since. A fellow has to advertise or he soon finds himself both ends of his own procession, don't he? My name's Hawker, Moses Hawker; I'm a garage man at East Aurora—you know, Fibert Hubbard's home town—some burg, I'll say—and I made enough money in three years to take a trip around the world, and here I am. I'm forty-six years old and I belong to the Rotary Club and the Masons and my wife's a Methodist and I guess I look like a Baptist, eh, you old alfalfa patch? Well, shake on it. We're likely to be here for quite some time, and we may as well get acquainted. Whatta Y' got for neighbors? Any humans, or just some of our 'mutual ancestors'?"

Of course it was no time until, acting as a general go-between, he had brought the two Englishmen together, and, as the conventions had been observed by a formal introduction, they forthwith became fast friends. Indeed, the Englishmen had so much more in common with each other than with the American that the garage man from East Aurora was in danger of becoming a rank outsider and experiencing himself the isolation from which he had rescued them. He turned out to be something of a bore, and a horrible egotist; and it was only a very real appreciation of the great service he had done them which caused the two friends to continue to treat him as a member of their community.

The story is, of course, a caricature. Truth, expressed in simple terms, is usually not sufficiently striking to command an audience in this blatant age, and the truth-teller must needs take on some of the boisterousness of his competitors in the clamor for the public ear. (That is why I begin this article with an incident.

life at one of our typical agricultural colleges and follows her hero from the school through the difficulties and joys of an agricultural representative's job.

ENGLISH FICTION.

This Freedom by A. B. M. Hutchinson (McClelland & Stewart).

The outstanding English novel of the year. Can a married woman have a business career and still do her duty by her husband and children. This is the theme of the book, in developing it Mr. Hutchinson deals with the very much changed and changing conditions of home life, of married life, of social life, and particularly with the way in which these changed conditions are affecting the lives of children.

"Tell England" by Ernest Raymond (McClelland & Stewart).

A romance of glorious youth. In two episodes: school and the war. The story of the life of three boys, carried through their school days, to war time and experiences at Gallipoli. This remarkable novel has brought fame to its author, who served as a chaplain in the British army

rather than with a serious annunciation of principles; to catch your interest, Mr. Reader, you understand, and so perhaps envelope you into reading something quite good for you, but which you would on no account read if it were not presented with a vaudeville introduction. You must have noticed this practice in the opening paragraphs of the magazine articles you read; it is a standardized item of literary bait, so to speak. Well—

It is peculiarly the business of authors to introduce strangers to each other; to build up, in them, new friendships, and so to establish those bonds of sentiment upon which all must rely to hold a somewhat precarious society together. It was before the annual convention of the Canadian Authors Association in Ottawa this spring that the Rt. Hon. Sir George E. Foster sounded a note that might well be heard and harkened in every home in Canada. He spoke of authors as interpreters—as those who make the people of one part of the country intelligible to the people of other parts of the country, or of other countries—and emphasized the need there is for just such interpretation in a dominion such as ours.

The supreme tragedies of history, no less than the minor irritations of everyday life, arise, for the most part, out of lack of understanding. They are ashes of disaster, heaped in memory to the absence or incompetence of interpreters. They are misapprehensions of misunderstanding. The combats of life, great and small, are not so much the collision of irreconcilable principles as they are the clash of prejudices. Understanding of one's neighbor is the only cure for prejudice, the interpretation is the only means of understanding.

How much this understanding is needed in Canada only the wilfully thoughtless can fail to appreciate. To make the voice of Nova Scotia articulate on the great plains; to interpret the Western freedom and pioneer force of Alberta to the habitant of Quebec; to portray the life of Ontario so that it may be understood and appreciated in British Columbia, and to breathe the atmosphere of the Coast through the Prairie Provinces; above all, to touch the sympathies of class for class and creed for creed as can be done only through the chords of a master literature—surely this is a work of statesmanship and nation-building not less important than that which falls to the lot of any other class of citizens. It may presumably be held of equal rank with the building of railways, the establishment of industries, the physical subjugation of the wilderness, the creation of the machinery of law, finance, and government. And it is the work of the Canadian author.

I do not say the Canadian author has done all this, but I do say unless the Canadian author does it it must remain undone. Unless the Canadian author can introduce Mr. East to Mr. West, and, trifling a little with their weaknesses and foibles as well as with their virtues, bring them to understand each other as, I am afraid, they do not always understand each other; unless the Canadian author can do this I know of no one who is likely to accomplish it.

Such, then, is the place which the author occupies in serious nation-building. Whether he occupies it creditably or otherwise depends not only on his literary skill and his sincerity of purpose, but upon his audience. If his audience appreciates the service he is rendering, and if it shows that appreciation in a practical way, the Canadian author can be counted on to do his share.

What is a practical way? Let me suggest: There is more joy in the Canadian Authors Association over one humble individual going into a bookstore and buying a book by one of its members than over ninety and nine prominent citizens singing "O Canada" at the Canadian Club—and filling their bookcases with imported publications.

during the war. It is the best story of school life in England since "Tom Brown's School-Days." The latter half of the book gives a very fine picture of the war in the Gallipoli region. This story is bound to become a classic of the war, for it breathes an noble idealism.

"Spinster of This Parish" by W. R. Maxwell (McClelland & Stewart).

Anthony Dyke, a big virile explorer burns into the life of a young English girl, who is living in a mid-Victorian atmosphere, with the effect of an exploding shell. After a series of events leading up to a crisis, told as only Maxwell can picture it, this seemingly ill-assorted couple defy convention and leave England for a venturesome expedition into the Andes in search of a store of sapphires. This is a remarkable novel from the pen of a writer who has stood at the top of his profession for years.

"Pilgrims' Progress" by Jeffery Farney (The Ryerson Press). This, Mr. Farney's twelfth novel, (Continued on Page 23.)

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