

scientific theories, we can find them in the writings of the young Canadian author, Professor Robert Kennedy Duncan. In poetry, when you have supplied yourself with the old and tried masters, you may yet well afford space for the music of Lampman's verse, the melody of Campbell's "Lake Lyrics" or the mystic songs of Carman and Stringer. May we not be too busy, in the midst of our great material development, while real estate, railways

and grain elevators are discussed from Sydney to Victoria, to reflect upon the needs of the bookshelf and to take thought for what volumes shall be placed there.

Out of pages of the best books the boy may unconsciously absorb the inspiration for a notable deed or work and may look back, after a lifetime of endeavour and achievement, to the bookshelf in the home of his youth as the source of many an

be placed there. Out of their pages, the boy may defence against weariness or lonely hours, since—

"Books are yours,  
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies  
Preserved from age to age; more precious far  
Than that accumulated store of gold  
And orient gems, which for a day of need,  
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs."

# Books Canadian Authors Might Write

*A Number of Interesting Topics That Await Treatment*

By LINTON ECCLES

OF the various authors who at one time or another have aroused my envy, two impressed me most by their amazing industry, though as to one of the two I could tell a story, that is vouched for in Wine Office Court, Fleet Street, of "ghosts" behind the pen. The two men, Andrew Lang and William Le Queux, were somewhat differently moulded and actuated. The one was and the other still is a maker of books to the making of which there seems no end. Either



Rev. H. A. Cody is one of the Numerous Frontier Clergymen Who Have Written Books About the Wilds of Canada. His Latest Work is "The Long Patrol," a Tale of the Mounted Police.

of them could have come to Canada and found abundant new material to practise upon, though neither, so far as I remember, ever "discovered" Canada for himself. Which, anyway, is no loss as it happens, for Canada will be in better hands when she is really discovered by the people in Canada.

It seems to me there are so many Canadian books waiting to be written that, along with whatever of optimism nature put in me, I could wish had been

added the "how" of handling the art, or shall we say the machinery, of book-making, not that that would have been the right or proper spirit to work in. For one needs to rid oneself of materialism, so far as that is possible, in the business of writing. Such a heap of stuff about Canada has been written to sell or to sell something, that it is quite a refreshing change to come across a thing that has been produced in print for the love of it.

Maybe, the fault that there has not been more of this labour of love lies at the door of Canada and her people. We are so confoundedly prosperous—that is, most of us—so busy thinking and talking of and turning over money, that it would seem so much wasted time to drudge hours on hours with the pen without making our fellow Canadians pay for it in hard cash. Perhaps when some of us have "made enough" in the day's grind in the marketplace, we shall have leisure to think of the barren bookshelves, though, indeed, that would be knocking on the head the idea that the best literature is born in the garret.

But those unwritten masterpieces, those books that Canadian authors might have written, may be writing at this moment, perhaps will write in the next few years. What are they?

IF ever the vanity possessed me of wanting to see my name staring out from the title-page of a real bound volume, I fancy I would like to make the contents deal with the history of the land, when it was first conquered—I mean before Montcalm and Wolfe, in the interests of their kings, disputed over its possession. I would like to follow in the footsteps firmly planted of Champlain and Jacques Cartier and La Salle and—who was that big-hearted, venturesome Recollet priest from Old France who sailed up the St. Lawrence, celebrating mass here and there, at Kingston for one place, to the faithful few who had been landed by Champlain to become Canada's first rural settlers? Taking a big jump down the ages, I would love to write up the border campaign of 1812, and particularly Laura Secord. Ye slothful brothers of the pen, what a real, red-blooded, ready-made heroine we are neglecting in her! Then I would wish to air my reading of Canadian political history in a full-blown Confederation novel. Sir John A. Macdonald, whom but to mention on a Tory platform is to ensure a round of cheering, has already appeared in the pages of fiction, but why not again and again? Couldn't one of us dig up the records and reminiscences of those stirring times and reproduce with descriptive fire some of those hard-hitting bouts between "John A." and George Brown? And it is surely time Sir Wilfrid of the White Plume was made on paper the hero of romance he already is in the hearts of his French-speaking compatriots. William Lyon Mackenzie, too, is an historic figure we have too long left out in the cold.

The early days of such cities as Kingston, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and, with a flying leap across the prairies, Macleod, Alberta, and Victoria, ought to produce a round dozen of romances. Quebec city has not been neglected so badly, but a patriotic public could do with more of its history and romance attractively served up. The story of the Selkirk Settlers, and the more recent adventures of the Barr Colonists, would make excellent telling; and, in fact, though the prairies look uninspiring enough from the railway car, especially now that the grain is all cut, they hide many and many a human story of struggle for gain and of the play of the primal passions in the process. The lumber camps have been done and done well, but not overdone; and the sugar camps, a curiosity to us of this new generation, have been passed over. Then, what a chance for a good grain novel, written by a man or a woman who could see poetry in the growing,

the garnering, and the giving of it to feed the old world's hunger?

We have had the Mounted Police once or twice, and now Ralph Connor has "done" the famous force in his "Corporal Cameron," but there is matter for a score of items in future autumn lists yet waiting to be dragged from those mostly silent sentinels of the still pathless Territories. And the romance of railroad construction. Frank Packard has shown us the way, and others may well follow his lead, and even get down from the foot-plate which he loves to the picturesque if somewhat disorderly gangs who are paid, to them, fabulous wages for laying the iron roads.

And, somewhere near the end of my imagination and at a point where I should have to leave the story-telling to my Canadian-born brother, I would like to see some good Eastern country-life stories—romances, love on the farm with rivals and other developments, but not forgetting the picturing of the scenery. We are still waiting for a Canadian city-life novel and for one based on countryside politics in Ontario. Camping and hunting in Algonquin wait to be discovered and described, and the Porcupine and Cobalt mining fields have hardly been turned over, even in "news correspondence" to the city newspapers.

YES, my brother and sister pusher of the pen and tapper of the typewriter, there is much good work in front of us to do. And, since most of us still have to look to the material end, one could wish that the home literary market showed a more buoyant and promising tone. We are likely for some years yet to go on asking and trying to answer the question, "Has Canada a literature of her own?" And some few who care keep alive the hope that before many more publishing seasons have waxed and waned they may be able to refer seriously and with pride to the trade of making books about Canada in Canada by Canadians. A trade, be it borne in mind, that will consist of the writing and the commissioning of books, the printing, the publishing, and the copyrighting of them, the illustrating, the engraving, the binding, the distributing, the selling, and the reading of them, all by Canadian people in Canada, and without having to go to New York or Chicago, Philadelphia or London for advice.

A few weeks ago that good Canadian bookman, Mr. Melville Hammond, voiced a regret in his book page in the *Toronto Globe* that, "Purely Canadian books do not loom very large in the autumn announcements of Canadian publishers." It is a regret that most of us will share, particularly so as British and American writers helped again to fill the void. To say that Canada has no authors and artists to make and illustrate books would be untrue. I know they are not many, but they are certainly good in quality, and, given the encouragement in their own land which they ought to get, they would grow in grace and in number.

The journalistic profession is naturally and inevitably the training ground of the writer of books, and here I think the Canadian papers show a distinct weakness. Pick up your newspaper, daily or weekly, and separate the "special" matter from the stuff that is common to the make-up of any journal with any pretensions at all, and you will see what a poor showing it makes. The average Canadian reporter, even the practised hand at the game, is so tied to the wheel of routine assignments—most of which could be pooled by the agency method—that he gets next to no chance of writing anything out of the ordinary. It is a misfortune that this should be so, even on newspapers that could well afford to be more liberal-minded, because it cramps whatever tendency to originality a man on the editorial staff may have, and keeps him down to the dead level of the routine reporter. Also, it is starving the breed of future authors right from the cradle.



J. Castell Hopkins is Known all Over Canada for his Imperialist Proclivities, his Numerous Biographical Works, and his Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs, First Published in 1901.