

duced. In including him in the present article I have stretched the scope of my title, for Monsieur Girard neither frequented the Soirées nor did he work in connection with their members. Yet his work indirectly owes its origin to them, and with this confession I would conclude that with him and Nelligan and Lozeau I have touched on the most interesting figures in the literature of that old New France beside the St. Lawrence's great stream.

After several rather amateur attempts at play-writing and in addition to two volumes of short tales, M. Girard has written four novels wherein he has essayed to paint the life of French Canada under the old French régime, in Papineau's days, again in 1860, and lastly to-day.

Of his first novel "Florence", which deals with the events of Papineau's ill-fated rising, the least said the better. It is an *erreur de jeunesse*, a young author's attempt to find his feet, and is marked with all the hatred for the flag of England, out of which every young French Canadian has to grow.

But his next work, "Marie Calumet", founded on the popular French Canadian song of that name, is without doubt a masterpiece of its kind. Too *gaulois*, even *grivois*, for most English ears it remains, however, as a masterly portrayal in Zola's manner of the apathetic, almost animal existence of the *Habitants* of Quebec. It is the frankest and wittiest novel in Canadian literature—an essay in Rabelaisian style. As a work of art, racy of the soil, it is probably the closest sketch of Canadian life yet portrayed. But the reader must be prepared to be shocked, if he turns to it. It is the strong crude vintage of youth determined at all costs to tell the truth.

It narrates the history of a farm girl who becomes the "engagée", as one says in French Canada, of M. le Curé. For the Curé of Ste. Apollinaire visiting his old friend the Curé of St. Ildefonse, discovers the latter (his housekeeper having died) living alone with his niece, a charming young girl of sixteen. The ménage, once the Curé's pride, is now in terrible disorder. The visitor is a man of the world, while the host is merely the type of unworldly Country Padre who lets things slide. "You must have a new housekeeper," says the cleric, "or the world will talk, and you know you are fond of good eating. I have the very girl for you—Marie Calumet."