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## Literary Notes

**M**R. ALSTON RIVERS, of London, announces the publication in October of Mr. Lawrence J. Burpee's "Search for the Western Sea." Though nominally a volume of the Story of Exploration series, edited by Dr. J. Scott Keltie, secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, Mr. Burpee's book will be brought out in a more elaborate form than any of the preceding volumes.

The "Search for the Western Sea" is really the story of the exploration of Western Canada, or what we now call the West. Throughout the whole period of French rule in Canada the great object of discovery was the Mer de l'Ouest. As the course of Canada took its way westward this alluring sea was ever before the explorer's ambitious eye, and when the country became British no man had yet crossed the mighty boundary of the Rocky Mountains. The task was finally taken up by British explorers, and finally completed by Alexander Mackenzie, the first explorer to find the overland route to the Pacific.

To that mine of historical wealth, the Dominion archives, the author of this volume resorted for some of his material which, transmuted by literary alchemy, becomes the romantic and stirring story of Western discovery and development. Special arrangements are being made for a Canadian edition of this book, which will contain a number of maps and about sixty illustrations, including rare portraits of early Western explorers and pictures of long-forgotten trading posts.

\* \*

"How Doth the Little Spelling-Bee," by Owen Wister, is a delicious bit of fun at the expense of the "fonetick" folk who would reform spelling and abolish orthography. The author of "The Virginian" and "Lady Baltimore" enters with zest upon the description of Chickie University and its absurd students. When they had assembled, the scholars sang this irrational anthem:

My spelling 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of spelling-bee,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
Land where my fathers dide,  
For spelling simplifide  
Let freedom ring.

It is perhaps unnecessary but irresistible to add that this volume is dedicated neither to President Roosevelt nor Mr. Andrew Carnegie. (The Macmillan Company.)

\* \*

This autumn will see the fifteenth printing of "The Divine Fire," the book which made the reputation of Miss May Sinclair. "The Helpmate," Miss Sinclair's new novel, which has been running as a serial in the "Atlantic Monthly," will be published next month by Henry Holt & Company. It is not so strong or sane a work as the former, and is marked by the neurotic morbidness which disfigures the fiction of several of our modern novelists. Emotional excess is its chief defect, which leaves the reader anxious for a good, breezy, out-of-doors book, by way of relief.

\* \*

Those gasoline specialists, the Williamsons, have devoted themselves to the motor yarn with a zeal untempered by discretion. The "honk" of the automobile is heard in every chapter, and the love story, which is dragged in by the hair to give the narrative a human interest, is so badly manufactured as to halt dismally. A superlatively beautiful and "culchawed" heroine from the U.S.A.—Chicago preferred—an English chauffeur, who is a duke incognito, and then the chapters go "chug, chug," while the scent of the gasoline hangs o'er us still. A cake of violet soap should be given away with each Williamson auto-yarn.

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