

THE AUTHOR OF TO-DAY.

ALICE HEGAN RICE.

NO writer on this side of the Atlantic is so prominently in the public eye to-day as the author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and "Lovey Mary." Indeed few books have been published of late years that have arrested the attention of so large a section of the reading public.



It has for some time been matter of remark that "Mrs. Wiggs" has maintained its sales for a singularly long period,—in fact, much longer than the ordinary run of novel. However true this may be, there seems little doubt but that "Lovey Mary" will equal if not outstep it in the popular estimation. In Canada the sale of the latter book has opened with an extraordinary rush, which has served to make it preeminently the book of the hour.

Attention is now being naturally directed from the books to the author. Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice, whose claim to fame rests on her creation of the inimitable characters of Mrs.

Wiggs and Lovey Mary is a native of Louisville, Kentucky. The daughter of a house which has been for many years a centre of social life and hospitality, she early acquired a freedom of utterance and a breadth of vision that well qualified her for literary effort. She became interested in the people of the poorer section of Louisville and there discovered the characters of her books.

Mrs. Rice's first book appeared under her maiden name, Alice Caldwell Hegan. Since then the youthful author has entered the state of matrimony and "Lovey Mary" bears on its title-page the signature, Alice Hegan Rice. Her marriage took place on the 18th of last December.

Both "Mrs. Wiggs" and "Lovey Mary" are unique in many respects, presenting to most people an entirely new species of fiction. The same atmosphere pervades each alike, while "Lovey Mary" only differs from "Mrs. Wiggs" in being a more pretentious and possibly a more successful effort in the same direction. A quaint, dry humor adds the spice of life to all Mrs. Rice's writings and gives her books that human interest which is their most important characteristic.

CANADIAN AUTHORS AND THEIR BOOKS.

SIR GILBERT PARKER, M.P.

WERE a contest to be inaugurated with the object of discovering by popular vote which of our Canadian novelists stood highest in the estimation of the people, there would be little doubt but that the honor of precedence would devolve upon Sir Gilbert Parker. No other author who can lay claim to Canadian birth quite fills the same niche in the hearts of the nation as the man who wrote so delightfully and sympathetically of "Pierre and His People," who thrilled the springs of romance in his "Battle of the Strong," and who made good his claim to sterling literary ability in "The Right of Way." No nation need be ashamed of the record of such a man, and in his success can be read the promise of greater things in store for Canadian literature.

Sir Gilbert Parker is a native of Eastern Ontario. He was born in the village of Camden East, in the county of Addington, on the 23rd of November, 1862, the son of the late Captain J. Parker. He was educated at Trinity University, Toronto, and since his graduation he has seen life in many different parts of the globe. 1886 found him associate-editor of The Sydney Morning Herald in Australia, and about the same period he travelled extensively among the South Sea Islands. His further journeyings made him familiar with Quebec, Northern Canada and Egypt.

With the appearance of "Pierre and His People," in 1892, Gilbert Parker sprang into prominence. He had seized on a vital subject, full of hidden possibilities, and he had worked his new-found "claim" with all the ardor of an enthusiast. Henceforth his name was to be heralded forth as the exponent of the French-Canadian, of his life and his country.

"Pierre and His People" was followed at intervals of a year by several novels of lesser importance, all, it is true, giving promise of better things to come. Mr. Parker was merely

getting into training, testing his powers and watching his opportunity. Then appeared "When Valmond came to Pontiac," his first novel of undoubted power. The French-Canadian was still the central figure in his work and the history of Quebec furnished the theme of the romance. A year later both England and America welcomed the "Seats of the Mighty" with loud acclaim, and on its appearance Mr. Parker stepped to the forefront of the romancers of the day.

The following year "The Pomp of the Lavilletes" was published and "The Battle of the Strong" in 1898. A year elapsed and then came out "The Lane That Had No Turning." All three tales quite carried out the promise contained in "The Seats of the Mighty," but they were more or less hack-work. Then the world was greeted with an entirely new creation, "The Right of Way." That this novel is Sir Gilbert Parker's chef d'oeuvre few will deny. In its pages he has passed from the realm of pure romance into a deeper and more analytic region.

Sir Gilbert Parker has resided for several years in England and in 1900 he was elected member of the British House of Commons for Gravesend in the Conservative interest. His knighthood was conferred on him last year and the act has been taken as a direct compliment to Canada. In his parliamentary life, Sir Gilbert has been recognized as more or less a Canadian representative, and he has always been careful to safe-



Sir Gilbert Parker.

guard Canadian interests in the British Parliament whenever questions relating to the colonies came up.

Sir Gilbert's latest contributions to literature include a volume of short stories, entitled "Donovan Pasha," with scenes placed in Egypt, and a valuable two volume historical treatise on Quebec, a city which he has always venerated as the most beautiful and interesting place of habitation in the world.