

# The Literary Women of Montreal.

TALENTED WRITERS WHO CALL THE METROPOLIS HOME.—THEIR WORK, AND ITS CHARACTER.—GLIMPSES OF THEIR PRIVATE LIFE.—AN ARISTOCRACY OF TALENT.

By Miss E. Botting.

THE term literary is used in this connection, not in its broader sense to signify all who have literary tastes, for they are legion, but in its more confined signification, to include those who, whether in greater or less degree, have used their pens in the production of Canadian literature. Of the place which the women of Montreal hold among Canadian writers,



MISS LILY DOUGALL.

America—Miss Dougall was born and brought up in "Ivy Cottage," at the head of Drummond street. After some four or five years' residence in New York, she has spent most of her time in England, where she especially prefers to live in Oxford, not so much on account of its classical associations as because many of her friends reside there. Of recent years, Miss Dougall has spent the winter in Montreal, and the arrangement of the literary evenings at her pleasant home, on Elm avenue, is now one of her greatest pleasures.

The first of her books, "Beggars All," appeared in 1891, and at once attained great popularity. The work done since has not been so generally popular, but has been valued by the most critical class of readers. As a writer in Literature says: "Miss Dougall in her 'What Necessity Knows,' has gone the furthest of any writer towards achieving a great Canadian novel." Several of her books have been translated into German—one appearing in The Hamburg Nachrichten (Bismarck's journal)—and one also into Italian. For the encouragement of authors who are prone to consider the publisher as a sort of speculator, with an eye single to his own advantage, it may be stated that Miss Dougall has invariably found the publishers, both in England and America, to be not only just, but generous.

In an article of this kind, any description of her books, individually, is impossible. To put it briefly, the originality of their conception, the insight into human character and motive, the gleams of quick-flashing humor, the lovely bits of scenic word-painting, the poetical touches—"the leaves of the lime had not been long enough out of the curl-paper buds to have quite lost their crimp"—the easy, natural flow of language,

the honest way of attacking problems, all combine to render her stories charming, as well as powerful, the kind of book one rises to put down, and stands to finish that chapter—and the next.

Miss Dougall is a conscientious worker, revising all her writing at least three times. The local coloring is painted in on the spot, except in the story "A Madonna of To-day." "It has always been a matter of amusement to me," said Miss Dougall, with one of her sunny smiles, "that the critics have always considered the descriptions in 'The Madonna' more true to nature than in any of the others, whereas it was written in England while the scene is laid in the Rocky Mountains, which I never saw and never expect to see."

In collecting material for her latest, and perhaps strongest, story, "The Mormon Prophet," Miss Dougall met with a rather unique experience. It was her wish to visit Kirtland, Ohio, the home of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet. But, application to the Governor of that State and of the adjoining, the inspector of prisons and every other public official, revealed the astonishing fact that not one of them had any information to give concerning Kirtland or any resident thereof. After that it was not surprising to find that these "one wife" Mormons were exceedingly moral, even to the extent of excommunicating the man who does not pay his debts.

Miss Dougall and her friend finally procured comfortable lodgings in a Mormon farm-house, where she lived their life, read their books, accompanied them to church, and studied them thoroughly, while her hosts, though evidently consumed with curiosity, had too much native refinement to inquire what it was all about.

A book that during the year, since its publication, has attracted a great

deal of attention by virtue of its merit is "Diane of Ville Marie," by Miss Blanche Lucille Macdonell. On her father's side, Miss Macdonell comes of U. E. Loyalist stock, her mother being a French-Canadian, from whom she inherited her love of literature, especially history and old romans Francais.



MADAME DANDURAND.

Miss Macdonell's first venture in publication was made at the age of 16, and was a good deal like that of Miss Alcott's "Joe." Without consulting anyone, or asking for paper, which might have aroused suspicion, she wrote out her story on the leaves of a copybook, ruled in leadpencil, and sent it to Frank Leslie's Monthly. Great was the astonishment of her