

Some of the New Books

Of the making of books there is it for his soul's good. An unusual apparently no end, but there is a thing about this young author from limit to the individual capacity for the maritime provinces is his gift of reading them; and of the thousands of apt quotation—especially from books published in the English Browning and Wordsworth, so apt language every year no one person that while using them to explain his can read more than a very small own words, he is really giving the percentage. And because the number reader new light upon the passages of those that can be read is so com-

quated.



SIR GILBERT PARKER—AUTHOR OF "THE WEAVERS".

paratively small, a portion of time devoted to a careful selection of what is to form one's mental nourishment cannot be considered wasted. The books which are spoken of in this article are not the only good works of recent publication; in fact, there may be many others of a higher standard of purely literary excellence, but these have been chosen for three reasons: they are stories of human interest, they are brightly and carefully written; they all appeal to the Canadian reader. None of them are volumes prepared "for the Christmas trade"—a modern scheme that has ruined some writers—which often means that the author wrote with one eye fixed on the pen and paper, and the other unblinkingly directed upon the public.

In proof of that statement we will put "Carmichael" by Anison North first on our list—a Canadian story by a Canadian writer and one of which you have already had a taste that will make you want to get it all and then pass it on to your friends. Other new writers, whose names are before the Canadian public this year for the first time, are John Brown Maclean, and R. W. Service, the former a writer of prose and the latter of poetry. Mr. Maclean's book, "The Secret of the Stream" is not a nature-book as its title would suggest, though its every page breathes the spirit of the nature-lover. It is a book on life, that broadest of all subjects about which none of us can gather more than mere scraps of knowledge and of which we are so eager to know.

There are twelve chapters all leading up to the author's belief that "Christ is the only true solution for the riddle Man;" and these divisions include "The Commonplace World," "Harmony," "Influence," "The Vision of Man," "The end of the Day," "Apocalypse." But while this book deals with the great topic under chapter-headings like these, it is not to be enjoyed only by the intellectual and leisureed. He who runs may read and the wayfaring man, though simple, can gather from

From east to west is a far cry in Canada, but no farther apart are Maclean on the Atlantic and Service in the Yukon than are their works—yet both have the root of the matter in them. "Songs of a Sourdough" by R. W. Service had some attention called to it in a former issue of this paper. Every song in it breathes the energy and indomitable spirit of perseverance of the North. Poems of such virility could only have been born of hardships and difficulties met face to face. They are crude at times, sometimes coarse, but they picture a life that has both crudity and coarseness and fine strength beneath the rough crust. In style and treatment traces of Kipling are plainly discernible, but young writers always have a master at first and Kipling is a safe guide.

The men and women who have read "The Seats of the Mighty," "Pierre and His People," and "The Right of Way" know what Gilbert Parker can do with Canada as a background, and have learned something of Egypt from his "Donovan Pasha." These readers will be delighted to know that "The Weavers," a story of England and Egypt, shows the same fine workmanship and dramatic strength of Parker's earlier works. David Claridge is the hero, and the fighting in the Soudan and struggles with the fanatics of the desert make a picturesque background for him, but the interest of the book lies in the heroism of self-abnegation and altruism. David is an English Quaker lad who goes to the East to look after an estate left by an uncle in Damascus. He wins high honor with the ruler, but by accident kills the brother of one of the ministers in defence of an Englishwoman. To expiate his unintentional crime he remains in Egypt devoting himself to the uplifting of the country in spite of intrigues and perils from enemies in the old home and the new. An American paper says of it:

Considered simply as a work of fiction, "The Weavers" will take high rank, not only for the originality of its con-

ception, but for the brilliant fashion in which it is worked out, its dramatic strength, its subtle studies of character and the rush and sweep of its action. Its power is felt at every stage. Not alone is it the crowning achievement thus far of Sir Gilbert Parker's genius as a novelist; it is, perhaps, the strongest novel of the year.

Last in this list of books, but not by any means least, comes the newly published "Letters of Queen Victoria" given to the public by the authority of King Edward, edited by Mr. Arthur Benson and Viscount Esher. The difficulty of the editor's task may be imagined when it is remembered that the collected papers and letters of the Queen comprise between five and six hundred volumes, and from this immense amount of manuscript selection of the greatest interest to the public had to be judiciously made. Three bulky volumes contain the result of that selection. The letters cover the period that elapsed between the accession in 1837 and the death of the Prince Consort in 1861. These letters were written to many people and covered a great variety of topics, but those addressed to King Leopold I of Belgium about family affairs and to her ministers regarding the affairs of the country will prove of greatest interest to British readers. The mutual love and trust between husband and wife and the happiness of all the family relationships is repeated over and over again in these letters, and the evidences of the Prince's growing popularity in England are often mentioned.

For a person who grew "daily to dislike politics more and more," the Queen had a marvellous grasp of the political situation, both domestic and foreign. She knew what was going on and had her own opinion about every move in the Government, an opinion which, woman like she often held too tenaciously. Her ministers knew that she knew and even from her girlhood they learned to admire the mind which she gave to the enormous task of governing a great empire well. The book ends with the cry of a heartbroken widow on the death of the Prince Consort, in a letter written to the King of the Belgians:—

"Osborne, 20th December, 1861.
"My own dearest, kindest Father.—
For as such have I "ever" loved you!
The poor, fatherless baby of eight months is now the utterly broken-hearted and crushed widow of forty-two; My "life" as a "happy one" is "ended!" the world is gone for me! If I "must" live on (and I will do nothing to make me worse than I am) it is henceforth for our poor fatherless children—for my unhappy country which has lost "all" in losing him—and in "only" doing what I know and feel he would wish, for he "is" near me—his spirit will guide and inspire me! But, oh! to be cut off in the prime of life—to see our pure, happy, quiet domestic life, which "alone" enabled me to bear my "much" disliked position, cut off at forty-two—when I had hoped with such instinctive certainty that

God never "would" part us, and would let us grow old together (though "he" always talked of the shortness of life—is too awful, too cruel! And yet it "must" be for "his" good, his happiness! His purity was too great, his aspiration "too high" for this poor, "miserable" world! His great soul is now "only" enjoying "that" for which it "was" worthy! And I will "not" envy him—only pray that "mine" may be perfected by it and fit to be with him eternally, for which blessed moment I earnestly long. . . ."

A CHRISTMAS POEM.

Shall I tell you, little children,
How dear Jesu—long ago—
Came to comfort Holy Mary.
Came to love and help us so?]
Shepherds watching on the mountains
In the silence grand and still
Saw the Star that rose in brilliance,—
Saw the Star—grow brighter still;

Felt they all the glory on them;
Something new, unknown and strange,
As the winds of Heaven rose softly
Into murmuring hymns of praise

Which seemed to say "God with you!"
"On earth be peace," and then,
"If ye seek Him in a stable,
Ye shall find the Christ of men."

And the wise men travelled swiftly,
For the prophecy had said
They would find our Savior lying
Where the lovely bright Star led.

Yes! they found Him, little children,
In a manger filled with straw,
Cattle round Him, lowing softly;
Mary crooning loving song.

Bowed the wise men low and humbly;
Gifts they brought for our dear Lord;
Reverence paid the patient mother:
Glory gave alone to God.

Old the stars are, little children,
Yet they shine back Christmas night,
As once long ago in Bethlehem
Where the Christ-child saw the light.

O! Be happy, little children!
He was once a child like you,
Each the Christ gift holds to-day, dears,
Who is pure and good and true.
ALAN GRANT.

CHRISTMAS SONG.

Why do bells for Christmas ring?
Why do little children sing?

Once a lovely, shining star,
Seen by shepherds from afar,
Gently moved until its light
Made a manger-cradle bright.

There a darling Baby lay
Pillowed soft upon the hay,
And His mother sang and smiled,
"This is Christ, the Holy Child."

So the bells for Christmas ring,
So the little children sing.

—Lydia Avery Coonley Ward.



THE REAL THING IN INGLE NOOKS.