

Canada, but not reading of his works. He has lately visited his chief publisher in London and looked at the books of account. Australia, he had found, had always bought twice as many of his books as Canada. Sweden, France, Poland, had always bought more copies; little Denmark, with a population of three million, bought more than his native country, and, he had been interested to note, that, during the past year, the country of Czeko-Slavia had passed into the list which bought more of his books than did Canada.

Canadian Indifference—U. S. Alertness

It is difficult to discuss this subject without touching on one's own career as a presumable writer. Some six years ago I prepared a series of so-called inspirational letters, addressed to Canadian bank clerks. They were sent to the three Canadian editors who should have been interested. The first never answered the letter, the other two expressed a wish to buy the material, but after consulting with others they said that they were afraid that, after all, their readers would not read the articles. While this discussion was still going on I sent the stories to a much larger and more pretentious U. S. magazine and received a telegraphic acceptance at a price just two and a half times the figure for which the material was being offered in Canada. The nett result of this was that five thousand copies of that magazine came into Canada every month, for twelve months, containing my writings, and they were read by Canadian financial men. In other words, Canadians were willing to read what a Canadian had to say to them about Canada—so long as it came under an American cover.

Difficulty of Finding Publishers

A short time ago I attended a dinner in honor of a famous London publisher. The talk naturally centred on what MSS. were accepted and which were not. A Vancouver literary man—who should certainly have known better—made a speech and said that the discussion was all nonsense; that there never was a good MS. but which found a publisher. I cannot conceive of a statement more ill-considered and more unkind than that. Why, any list of successful books reveals the names of numerous authors who confess that success in finding a publisher came as a pure accident, after untold humiliation. An American novelist now famous at one time sent a story to an editor, and never heard from him. Thinking that this was the way of editors she bowed her head and gave up. Twenty years later, when that magazine was changing its offices, that MS.

fell out from behind a desk, was pronounced a masterpiece and success followed. Surely it is not difficult to let imagination go a step further and to think of the scores of writers who, after pouring out their souls on a story, receive cold and unsympathetic treatment, and meekly hide away their MS. and their secret. For my part, I venture to say that there are to-day more good stories committed to the flames or to garrets than there are in print.

First Experiences of Connor, Service, and Drummond

Of our own writers in this respect: when Ralph Connor wrote *Black Rock* he tried all the Canadian publishing houses, and it was only printed finally by some Presbyterian friends, who, regarding it as a semi-religious work, paid the printer. Within twelve months of its appearance twenty pirated editions appeared in the U. S. Robert W. Service tried "*Songs of a Sourdough*" on all the publishers in Canada (and in justice it must be said on various publishers in the U. S.) and finally sent the MS. to a Toronto house with his own cheque for \$500 to pay the cost of printing. When Dr. Henry Drummond wrote the collection of poems, afterwards published as "*The Habitant*," he failed to interest a Canadian publisher, and the first glimmer of interest he aroused was when Putnam's of New York wrote him asking if he seriously thought that five hundred copies of such a book would sell in Canada? Dr. Drummond showed the letter to my father.

"Stands Toronto Where It Did?"

One author I know of wrote a story of Canadian flavor and placed largely in Canada, and sent it to two so-called publishing firms in Toronto, and was frankly told that they did not undertake to publish any books, even Canadian books, on their own account, but merely bound up sheets furnished by U. S. and English publishers. This particular work did find a home with another eastern Canadian publisher, a new house devoted to Canadian books and exclusively Canadian books, the first of its kind I think and therefore deserving of mention, the Graphic Publishers, Ottawa.

"The Enemy Within"

Each autumn during Canadian Book Week our Organization in the East endeavors to create interest by bringing to Montreal or Toronto some of the distinguished Canadian writers now living abroad, Arthur Stringer, Basil King, Frank Packard, Harvey O'Higgins, and many others, so that they may stimulate Canadian authorship by declaring themselves Canadians. Now, no worthwhile national reform seems possible without bringing into promi-

nence the enemy within. Here he is, the writer of a letter to the editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, October 27, 1926:

"Sir, Canadian Book Week is here again. I suppose we shall be bombarded through the press and by air and harangued to buy books by Canadian authors. All the expatriates will foregather in their native land for this glorious week of exploiting, and then return to the land of their publishers.

"The ice, snow, dog teams, French-Canadians and Mounted Policemen have been great money makers for them. Every day we hear of the want of immigration and yet we allow the Martha Ostensos with their Wild Geese to nullify it all. Canada's greatest curse, so far as immigration is concerned, is her novelists. Either censor Canadian novels or suppress them for the country's good. . . ."—and much more.

What a Novel Is—and Isn't

Rudyard Kipling was said to have given Canada a bad advertisement in his poem, "*Our Lady of the Snows*." Oliver Curwood is said to misrepresent Canada in his novels. But these people are not Canadians. Would anybody advocate suppressing their works in London and New York? A novel is not necessarily a publicity essay, an advertisement of the country where it is placed, it is not even a history of that country. It is merely a cross-section of some small phase of the country's life, picturesque, social, romantic, or even sordid. Canadian novelists' stories are no more a libel on Canada than Dickens' story of *Oliver Twist* was a libel on England.

"From the Mass the Masterpiece"

We all hope to see this country emerge into nationhood and survive as such. If literature is an integral part of a country's rise what is the best way of developing it? Surely not this doctrine of breeding an inferiority complex. Must we not rather cultivate a body of literature, from which the great will naturally emerge. Great books, like great trees, do not grow

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