



PAGES IN WAITING

In a recent utterance of Mr. Gilbert Parker there is sounded at once a note of warning and of encouragement to Canadian writers, of warning against narrowness, "There is only one literature, and that is English,—one height to reach, that of Shakespeare and the other great masters;" of encouragement, in that the very slowness of the growth of what may be called purely Canadian literature, gives larger promise for the future. The maple is not the oak—yet it is no mushroom growth, and must have time to come to its full beauty and strength.

Mr. Parker considers that the very lack of quick recognition in Canada has been a benefit, as tending to keep writers from the sameness of style resulting from over-production, and throwing them more upon individual lines. Just one word of suggestion here. Is it altogether unreasonable that colonial stories and poems should seem to attract wider notice in England than in the lands where they are written? Do they not bring to English readers fresh scenes, fresh ideas, little glimpses into the lives of their kindred beyond the seas? Are not we charmed by pictures of life and manners in other countries than our own,—especially, perhaps, in India or Australia?

Shall not our writers, then, seek an impartial verdict from a wider public, rather than the kindly one, possibly not altogether unprejudiced, of friendly home critics?

Let us remember, to quote Mr. Parker once more, that "One little thing, poem or story, perfectly done, though after its first appearance it may never be heard of again, is a thing that cannot be lost, for in it the author has expressed himself."

With foundations laid broad and deep, the superstructure will be reared in time—shall we not see to it that none of its lines are marred by narrowness or self-seeking on the part of the builders?

And withal, because many hardly know what has been done and what is doing among ourselves, it may not be amiss to suggest to busy readers, a few among the books in which something of our life, national and domestic, is being gathered up.

WHAT NECESSITY KNOWS, by L. Dougall, is an eminently readable story. The scene is laid in the Province of Quebec, and both country and people are described by one who knows whereof she is writing.

Curious, tragic events and characters are interwoven into every-day life with a skill that

makes one feel that strange as the fiction is it may yet be truth.

An English family, seeking to adapt themselves to the conditions of the new country some fifty years ago, are painted in "their habit as they lived."

Sissy Cameron, with her fitful, wayward nature—conquered at last by the patient love of the man she had flouted; the successful, attractive young clergyman and his brother—each with his peculiar weakness; the woman loved by both, and through whom both rose to a higher level. These and many others stand out very clearly before us. The tragical incidents arising from the "Millinte" excitement in '43 are graphically wrought into the story, the traditions of eye witnesses having early impressed themselves upon the mind of the writer.

Especially vivid and beautiful are the descriptions—fields and woodland, sky and cloud, sunshine and rain—one sees and feels them all. Full of incident and strongly developed characters, the interest is fairly sustained through, what may be considered in these days of brevity, a perilously bulky volume.

The name of Mrs. Traill is justly honored and venerated throughout the land, and one could wish that her charming books might have a place in every household—written for the children, many of them, yet dear to their elders.

PEARLS AND PEBBLES, (Wm. Briggs, Toronto), is a pretty, well-got-up volume, containing delightful little essays on out-door matters—the birds and plants the writer loves so well; sketches and stories of Indian and early life in Canada; and an interesting biographical sketch of the author's life, by Miss FitzGibbon.

COT AND CRADLE STORIES are what their name betokens; they are written by the naturalist out of the poet's heart for the little children, and they touch us all.

LOST IN THE BACK WOODS, (Nelson & Sons, Edinburgh), enchanted an earlier generation as the "Canadian Crusoes," and though one-half regrets the change of name, the old charm remains, the old interest in Hector, Louis and Catherine, three children lost in the woods near the Rice Lake, actually within a few miles of their own home.

Their ingenuity and industry in contriving to make a home for themselves for nearly