

## The Book World

### A NEW POEM BY A BRITISH COLUMBIA WRITER

ALL lovers of good literature, but especially such as are firm in the faith that in British Columbia, with all its wealth of natural scenery and climatic amenities, we have the future home of a native literature that shall be unique and characteristic, will welcome with enthusiasm a new poem that has just been published in book form by Mr. Lionel Haweis, of the library staff of the University of British Columbia. Mr. Haweis is already well known as a poet of rare charm and originality, and those who admire his work will certainly not be disappointed in this, his latest venture.

"Tsoqalem: A Weird Indian Tale of the Cowichan Monster," as the poem is described on the title page, is written in the literary ballad form and is based on a real story of a member of the Cowichan tribe of Indians on Vancouver Island. This fact is brought out in the interestingly written foreword by Professor Hill-Tout, in which he gives some account of the customs and superstitions underlying the poem as well as its historic groundwork. That Professor Hill-Tout is the one authority on the customs and folklore of the native races of British Columbia lends weight to his assertion that Mr. Haweis "has been eminently successful in maintaining the true Indian atmosphere"; and the fact that the poem was accepted by the Royal Society of Canada as part of their proceedings of 1918 is further warrant of its ethnological soundness. A special local interest attaches to the inscription that the poem is from the archives of the Vancouver

Vagabonds' Club, an organization that is doing much for the promotion of literary taste and talent.

The story, in common with most ballads, has a tragic ending. The youth, Tsoqalem, who is the hero, is the son of a chief and medicine-man. The boy grows up wild and headstrong, and his father, in order to work his regeneration, subjects him to an ordeal which is to bring this about. This consists in lashing him four times across the face and eyes with a branch of bramble thorn, at the same time uttering magic words to complete the charm. An Indian maiden, witnessing the punishment and pitying him, speaks words of cheer and kindles the spark of love in the youth's heart. The meeting of the two, after Tsoqalem has spent a season in fasting and meditation and the charm has begun to exercise its regenerative influence, is very beautifully told:

"For lo! surpassing all denial  
Of all that only seems—

There stood the maiden of his Trial,  
The Virgin of his Dreams!

"At half-a-cast she stared amazed  
To find him where he stood,  
Tracked down as though the trail  
were blazed

Athwart the tangled wood;  
And lo! she knew, as well she gazed,  
Tsoqalem was grown good.

"And he, Tsoqalem, dared not move  
For awe of such a sight,  
Which proved—if any sight could  
prove—

The world so full of light."

The tragic sequel of this love tale that begins so idyllically I shall leave the reader to discover for himself, but shall take time to quote only a few stanzas here and there, which for