

## CANADIAN POETRY

(From Page 4)

But space is limited and so we can only give a passing mention to John Reade, the author of "The Prophecy of Merlin;" Arthur Weir; the two Scotts, Duncan G. and Frederick G., both real poets; Isabella Valency Crawford; S. Francis Harrison (Seranus); Agnes Maule Machar, the poet of the Thousand Islands; Marjorie Pickthall, who died lately in Vancouver, deeply lamented by all lovers of Canadian literature; William Wye Smith and many others too numerous to mention. Many of these are still alive and doing good work. We look to get even better as Canada increases, acquires national consciousness, and our writers feel the sympathy and obtain the support of their auditors. A sonnet which lately appeared in the Canadian Bookman, by F. O. Call, is particularly fine.

**The Cathedral Builders.**

"Above dark portals rise two lofty spires  
That pierce into the blue. The sunlight falls  
Across the gorgeous gloom, on oaken stalls  
Worn smooth by praying hands of monks and friars.  
Tall windows gleam with many colored fires,  
As in the magic caves and mystic halls  
Of ancient tales, and from the carven walls  
Echo the wailing songs of vanished choirs.  
And through the gloom the ghostly builders pass  
Who carved their dreams of beauty on the stone,—  
The nameless ones who wrought and died unknown;  
Their lifeblood glows upon the painted glass,  
And from each spire dead hands that held the hod  
Stretch upward, clinging to the robes of God."

**The Prairies.**

The Poets of this portion of Canada will not detain us long. The Great North West has been too busy developing its immense material resources to afford much time for the Muses. We look, however, to the future, and to the culture arising from the three great Universities now functioning there, to produce abundantly in the future. Yet the Prairies have not been without some poets who are worthy of consideration. First and foremost was that great Irishman, Nicholas Flood Davin, for many years a leading figure in political life in Regina, a man, who, as he said, was "afraid of nothing but God and wrong doing; and held it cowardice to shrink from endeavor thro' fear of failure." In 1889 he published, at Regina, his "Eos, an Epic of the Dawn, and other Poems," the first purely literary work printed and published in the North West Territories. The product of stray moments in a busy and somewhat turbulent life, it is in many places rough and very uneven, but there are striking passages here and there which are excellent—forcible and strong—a token of what he might have done had he given that attention to literature which he did to law and politics. The book is exceedingly rare. The writer has never seen it offered for sale, but was fortunate enough to receive a gift of a copy from a generous friend.

It is difficult to decide whether to class Wilson McDonald as a poet of Ontario, the Prairies, or the Pacific. He has lived in all and written of all. We prefer, however, to class him with the Prairie writers. A wandering artist, lecturer and poet, he published in 1918 his "Songs of the Prairie Land," which contains some really good work. He is at home in the older verse forms as in what is known as free verse, and while his theological ideas may not please everyone, we must admire his beauty, his purity and his truth. Many will remember his noble sonnet on Pauline Johnson, written in Vancouver, at the time of her death:

"She sleeps betwixt the mountains and the sea  
In that great Abbey of the setting sun;  
A princess, poet, woman, three in one;  
And fine in every measure of the three."

And when we needed most her tragic plea  
Against ignoble summits we had won,  
While yet her muse was warm, her lyric young,  
She passed to realms of purer poesy.  
Tonight she walks a trail past Lilloet:  
Past wood and stream; yea, past the Dawn's white  
fire.

And now the craft on Shadow River fret  
For one small blade that led their mystic choir.  
But nevermore will Night's responsive strings  
Awaken to the "Song her Paddle Sings."

The third and last of the Prairie Poets to be mentioned is Robert J. C. Stead of Calgary, who has published several volumes of verse, "The Homesteaders"; "Prairie Born"; "The Empire Builders"; "Songs of the Prairie"; and "Kitchener." Like many of our writers of today he has been strongly influenced by Kipling. Indeed, he has been often called the "Kipling of the Prairies." Some people seem to regard this as a reproach. It is in reality a compliment, for the Kipling cult is a virile, clean, patriotic influence, full of color and romance, and intensely readable.

**The Pacific Coast.**

We claim Pauline Johnson as one of the poets of the Pacific Coast. True she was born in Ontario where her earliest work appeared. But she spent so much time among us, and, as many think, did her best work here, that we cannot help classing her as one of our own people. So much has been written about her, and she was so well known to so many personally and especially to all readers of Canadian literature, that we shall do little more than mention her. Her position in Canadian letters is assured. One can only deplore the fact that she was taken from us at a time when she was in the prime of her power and when her work had reached its full maturity. What she could have given us had she been spared can only be guessed from those noble poems she

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