

Mr. Fraser would, if pressed, admit. The figures are so flat and artificial that they literally seem to flicker like bodyless shapes on the printed page. It is as if Mr. Fraser had lifted up into his book certain romantic elements of early Western life and dissociated them altogether from humanity. So that through his 306 pages we get no sense of reality, no reaction to life itself.

While this is strong adverse criticism of the book, it is made because the book and Mr. Fraser are not yet beyond criticism. Surely out of his experience Mr. Fraser could give to Canadian literature a real tale. Surely out of his acquaintance with the West he could recreate a real man or woman or two of those early days and through them register in legitimate and artistic fashion something of the romance, the strangeness, the allurements of those vital times. In this book he has not done it. He has not struck reality on half a dozen occasions. Of course, if the reader can tolerate or ignore an almost utter bankruptcy of power in creative description, a most careless and crass use of the English language, and a superabundance of stereotyped Westernese, for the sake of a manner of adventurous and redhandkerchiefed yarn-ing, he can probably read the book through and with some enjoyment, but hardly otherwise.

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OUR HOUSE

By HENRY SEIDEL CANBY. Toronto:
The Macmillan Company of Canada.

THERE is something of the pleasure in this book that is offered by fine china, bright mahogany, and modern beamed ceilings. It is the pleasure of smooth and finished and successful artificiality. It is the pleasure of well studied interiors, of a bit of classic statuary set with a deliberating eye under the personal direction of the House Beautiful on the edge of a well-placed table by a fire, of books in properly arranged profusion of invitation on a library table. The au-

thor of "Our House" does not achieve (to honour him by putting him in good company for comparison) Sir Harry Johnson's vital urbanity as in "The Gray Dombey's". He has no Galsworthian paragraphs, nor are his pages tarred with the black and hasty ardours of a Wellsian brush. Yet, by some power, the book, slight as a tyro's tale, is quick and moving on occasion. There is a faint bouquet about it that is alike inviting and rememberable.

The story is the story of Robert Roberts, born in a little town of good houses and fine trees far enough from New England to be different. Millington's delightful suspicions and self satisfactions born out of provincialism are delicately set in behind the developing character of Robert Roberts, who would be a college man and a writer. Business and money and golf and Millingtown seemed to him to make inadequate bids for the name of life. This implied criticism of Millingtown on the part of one of her sons troubled Millingtown. As it watches Robert Roberts go on in quest of his career, the town, in the persons of his father, his mother, his Aunt Jenny, the golf club devotees, and Jen, is in turn mystified, saddened, hurt, exasperated, amused and resigned. Mary Sharpe who lives in Millingtown, but is of New England, has certain disillusionments to offer to provincial persons. She becomes eventually the reality of life for Robert Roberts. Katherine Gray is his romance. In setting these two women over against one another with Robert Roberts between them and Millingtown and New York in the surroundings Professor Canby has made for himself an opportunity to study the workings of a young man's mind and heart in a certain possible and fairly plausible situation. That he has not exhausted the possibilities of analysis is obvious as the story proceeds to its conclusion. To say that he has suggested more than he can portray might be to leave him too complimented. It might mean that