

## THE POEMS OF MARJORY PICKTHALL (By W. R. Dunlop)

Someone has said that, in the matter of personal and social charm, a woman is meritorious indeed when praised by a woman. If it be a cynicism it cannot obtain with equal force in literary comment, where naturally the motive of rivalry is rarer to find; and there are times when a woman's testimony to the work of one of her sex has a peculiar graciousness, as when Christina Rossetti spoke of Mrs. Browning as "our greatest poetess."

It is less than one short year since "the little streams of Duna" called Marjorie Pickthall "home"; and it was doubly pleasant, therefore, to hear Mrs. Holt Murison's informed artistic appreciation in St. John's Presbyterian schoolroom recently, under the auspices of the Women's Guild. It was both an appreciation of merit and the remembrance of a friend. Within the pressure of an hour it did not claim to be comprehensive or analytical; but the selective readings were well chosen and the salient points in a charming personality were sympathetically touched upon—her winsomeness, her filial love and her poet-quest for beauty of form and ideal. Of English birth and training, she spent her last two years in this province, while she was still entering the bright meridian of life, with affectionate thought of pastoral England, but with the growing impress of the West on a poet nature. In the case of some authors it seems almost permissible to estimate them, not alone by what they wrote, but by the presumptive product of the years that were not to be. Of such is John Keats. Miss Pickthall, in her own sphere is another and she is not without points of likeness to the young Endymion.

Interest in the address was increased by a reading from the original of one or two poems not yet published, including "Vision," a name suggestive of the gifted writer's forward look to the pleasant land of Beulah, while "Ebbtides" likewise has now a personal pathos of its own. Representative quotations were given from both of her volumes of poems, and the quality of her thought is well implied in the title of the latter of the two—"The Lamp of Poor Souls." Reference also was made incidentally to her novel "The Bridge," written in Victoria, and to her sonnet "Canada to England," which, like another by Bliss Carman, is of the silken threads which weave the web of Empire.

The lecturer was critical of the critic, at least of that class of the genus who were hesitant or negative in appraisal. It is part of the burden. Byron was naturally critical of Jeffrey, yet the latter was a prince of reviewers. Miss Corelli has a penchant for rapping the critics; and even the gentle Mrs. Browning in "Lady Geraldine's Wedding" makes her poet say:

"And because I was a poet and because the public praised me  
With their critical deduction for the modern writer's fault."

Perhaps the best that can be said is that there are critics and critics. A brass plate does not make a physician. Yet even great doctors will differ. Whether Miss Pickthall deserves the tribute of one of her critics, who puts her in the chief place in Canadian poetry, can only be solved by the mellowed judgment of time; but those who have read into the soul of much of her writing will easily place her high among those who have given the fine quality of vision and idealism to Canadian verse.

The anniversary of her death is on the 19th of April, not unfitly associated with beds of primroses decking a poet's grave.

### CANADIAN TRADE WITH ARGENTINA.

#### A Famous Exhibition.

Manufacturers of agricultural machinery, and seed merchants in Canada, would do well to pay attention to the growing commerce with Buenos Aires. And especially to observe

that there is one of the celebrated annual exhibitions being held there in May, from the 5th to the 13th. Specimens of threshing, milling, and bread-making machines, of seed-wheat, seeders and graders, will be interesting. All are in demand there and will be shown with instructions and literature from different countries. These exhibits are free of duty, and if manufacturers have no agent in Argentina, they may consign to the Department of Agriculture there. The exhibitions on the grounds of the Sociedad Rural Argentina have a world-wide fame, and participation would be of the utmost benefit to Canada.

DONALD DOWNIE,

Argentine Vice-Consul for Western Canada.

## OPTOMETRY

The word "optometry" comes from two Greek words meaning "eye" and "measure." Therefore an optometrist is literally an "eye-measurer." The appropriateness of the name becomes apparent when one realizes that eye conditions with which optometrists have to deal require measurements of the utmost exactness to determine whether or not defects are present, and, if they are, the precise kind of lens grinding required to correct them. "Measuring," in this case, means determining the exact curvatures of each eye, the difference between its focal and linear length, and the tension of both internal and external ocular muscles.

The practice of optometry as it exists today may be said to date from the discovery that bad vision is not the only nor even the main symptom indicating the need of glasses. On the contrary, it has been found that keen vision often is associated with great ocular discomfort and with headaches, nausea and other distressing symptoms, due to a strained condition of the eyes, but admitting of unimpaired vision. Suitable lenses in such cases do not necessarily make the sight better—only more comfortable—but may add greatly to the endurance of the eyes.

Lenses aid sight by putting the eyes in correct optical adjustment for the work they have to do. During childhood and youth a single pair of glasses ordinarily suffice for both far and near vision. Later in life additional help is required to focus the eyes for near work, hence "reading glasses" become necessary.

Eyes otherwise perfect are almost certain to require help for reading and other near work between the ages of forty and forty-five and thereafter, owing to a hardening of the crystalline lens of the eye which interferes with focusing at near points. The necessity for holding a book or paper away in order to see the print clearly indicates this condition and an optometrist should be consulted.

The only way to know that your eyes or your child's eyes are functioning without strain and without waste of energy is to have them examined.

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