

Before bringing this brief survey of recent French-Canadian literature to a close, I would like to mention a few other young authors who have made promising beginnings in the course of the last five years. First, Pierre Baillargeon, who has produced three satirical books of portraits and maxims and who is more an essayist than a creative writer. Also, his French-born wife, Jacqueline Mabit, whose first novel about the friendship of two school-girls, is remarkable, but entirely European in style, atmosphere and setting. Then, there is Félix Leclerc, a storyteller endowed with a delightful fancy, but lacking in craft and correctness of language. Then, too, there is Jean Simard, author of Félix, a fine book of satire in which a naughty child makes merciless observations about the prejudices and manners of a conventional society. And last, but not least, Yves Thériault, whose Contes pour un homme seul is the most morbid book published in recent years in French-Canada. The author is obviously obsessed with death and sex, and his characters are motivated more by primitive instincts than by conscious feelings. His style, though faulty at times, has strange powers to cast a spell upon the reader. Thériault is undoubtedly one of the most promising new-comers in our literature.

I hope that notwithstanding its shortcomings this survey indicates that French-Canadian letters are coming of age and that they can enrich the spirit of English-Canadians, just as English-Canadian literature can enrich ours. In conclusion, I would like to say a few words about literature and national unity.

At a time when the world is emerging from a conflict which has stained the four corners of the globe with blood, men of good-will sense the greater and greater need of sincere collaboration between nations, to assure not only peace but the progress of civilization and culture. That is why great thinkers, such as Paul Valéry and T.S. Eliot, have hailed the most intensive interchange of ideas and opinions between the different nations which form the human commonwealth. A similar need applies in a country like ours where two ethnic groups live side by side. Such exchanges can take place in various ways: interprovincial meetings, bilingual reviews and papers, the translation of the better works of one language into the other, and the organization of lectures such as this series. While material interests can divide nations and groups, the higher interests of the spirit and civilization can lead to a mutually respectful unity amid legitimate diversity. In Canada, natural meeting-ground of the Anglo-Saxon with the Latin world, it is altogether fitting that any movement towards "rapprochement" should be greeted with enthusiasm. To the international aspect of the problem of peace and progress is added here a national aspect, because Canada is the fruit of two autonomous cultural traditions. Occupying a common territory, our two ethnic groups should know one another in order to understand one another. The hour has come to work towards a union of the cultures, with a view not to the absorption of one by another, but to a free and loyal collaboration. A country which has inherited the culture of Shakespeare and the culture of Racine would be ill-advised to repudiate either. A better knowledge by each group of the literature of the other could not but have happy results towards the achievement of national unity, the common goal of all Canadians worthy of the name.