

Ian Maclaren

On the
Platform.

SO this is Ian Maclaren, this the man who has moved the world to a beautiful emotion; the wielder of that magic pen which has dropped laughter and tears; the creator of a poor little Scotch glen whose inhabitants have become beloved heart friends to a million people all the wide land over.

We gaze and gaze, with every sense absorbed in vision. We see not the man but the author; we hear not his words but the voices of those Scotch peasants. So near they are, as their creator stands before us, that it would seem a natural thing if they should step from behind the tall platform screens in answer to his voice—Burnbrae, Weelum Maclure, Margaret H. ve, Jamie Soutar and the others. They would need no introduction; we should recognize each one.

What must the concentrated gaze of so vast an audience be to the object of it—strongly compelling, surely. For in such instance it holds not a curiosity only—that indeed is the smallest factor—but a responsive regard. Ian Maclaren has no need to seek the sympathy of his audiences—that is his to the degree of a personal love, at the beginning; and were he ever so dull and dry, yet the people would endure him, and find excuses for him for Drumtochty's sake.

But Ian Maclaren is neither dull nor dry. He is a most genial conversationalist, one whom we instinctively desire to face across the fireside and to whom we would say, "Friend, this is our hour of communion. We pray thee speak to us"; being sure of the humor, the tenderness, the broad generous conceptions of life that would drop from his lips.

Very humorous lips are they; giving the face a whimsical expression, which indeed suggests at times a Dickens' illustration. It is the first suggestion we receive, as the author talks—that of a keen appreciation of humor, and an almost whimsical love of fun. The tender sentiment so apparent in the Drumtochty sketches, and "The Mind of the Master" is discovered rather in the rich modulations of a voice which holds untold reserves of inflection. The humor is revealed as he treats of the subject matter of his lecture; but even as we listen and laugh, we are aware of the power to thrill, and move to high emotions, which lies ever beneath.

Ian Maclaren's voice is English and his ordinary speech has just a touch of the burr. Yet, he can drop into the purest and most delightful Scotch.

One of the little things to note is, that he hardly credits his Canadian audiences with their full measure of understanding, as instanced at Massey Hall, when he frequently translated words from Scotch into English where no such translation was needed. English Canadians have

read Drumtochty and listened to Jessie Alexander for nothing; and as for

Scotch Canadians, the language pulses through them with every heart beat.

Ian Maclaren is a Grossmith of the lecture platform. His humor is as fine and dry, as intellectual, as that in the satirical musical monologues of the English entertainer. It is an amusing fact that his splendid Scotch audiences, true to their national trait, fail occasionally to appreciate his point, and, as the lecturer expresses it, with an enjoyable laugh, "take the joke into their serious consideration."

His nationality betrays itself not alone in the tongue touch, but in the quiet reserve and absence of mannerism upon the platform. Genial he certainly is—and a genial Scotchman (he is generally one tempered to mellowness by a few years of English residence) is rare enough to be a delight, and delightful enough to be rare—but he is neither tragic nor emotional.

The best part of his lecture, to many in his audience to whom he is first and always the author of Drumtochty, is the reading, be it brief or long, from his best known books. And, to his good judgment be it said, that he reads as a gentleman should, simply, naturally, quietly, as one who, picking up a volume, finds in it something worth voicing, and gives it to the friends gathered about him.

The author of Drumtochty impresses those who meet him as one worthy of so high an honor—and could we say more?

—FAITH FENTON.

MISS JESSIE ALEXANDER has a gift possessed by few platform readers, and which must be an invaluable aid in her profession, that of author-dramatist. She is able to take the humorous and pathetic incidents of daily life and resolve them into effective and enjoyable sketches.

Her "London, as seen from an Omnibus," and "Bargain Day," are instances of this.

Had Miss Alexander not chosen the platform she would have been a writer. She is an artist in both professions.

MR. FRANK YEIGH, is to be congratulated on the latest of his series of national picture lectures. "Our Empire" is not only entertaining from both a picturesque and literary standpoint, not only splendidly educative, but it is wholesomely stirring in the broad patriotic sentiment which we, as members of that Empire, should nurture and openly acknowledge.

Mr. Yeigh's lectures should be in demand for all Young People's Associations, whether they be of the church or state.

THE first recital of the season of the Toronto Conservatory of Music was given at that institution last Monday evening, October 19th, by the faculty of the Conservatory School of Elocution, and proved an unqualified success. A fashionable audience filled the hall and received with appreciation the presentation of a programme which served in its rendering to display the talent of the performers, who showed a high order of histrionic ability.

The readers and impersonators were, Mr. H. A. Shaw, B.A., Principal of the School; Miss Nelly Berryman, Assistant Principal; Miss Ida Wingfield, Miss Gertrude Trotter and Mr. C. LeRoy Kenney. Miss May Kirkpatrick, pupil of Mr. Edward Fischer, contributed a piano solo, and Miss Maude Lane, Miss Ethel Lazier and Mrs. J. Walker, vocal pupils of Mr. Shaw, contributed selections.



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Ian Maclaren's NEW BOOK:

"Kate Carnegie."

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