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Literary Notes

It is not often that the "Atlantic Monthly" contains a poem covering eleven pages of the magazine. But in the September number of that Boston publication there is found a poem, "Mary Armistead," by E. W. Thomson, which takes up the space aforementioned. The poem, relating to events in April, 1865, is called "a veteran cavalryman's tale," and tells in rather hackneyed and uninspired verse of the bravery of a Southern heroine. Mr. E. W. Thomson is a Canadian who was for some years on the editorial staff of the "Youth's Companion." He has written some picturesque stories, but, after careful reading of this eleven-page poem, the reader wonders why the editor gave up nearly a dozen good pages to "Mary Armistead."

The death of Mr. J. Macdonald Oxley in Toronto last week removed a writer whose books for boys were among the best of such fiction. Of late years Mr. Oxley had devoted himself to business but he will be long remembered as a writer of wholesome and vigorous stories which were welcome both in Canadian and English publications.

Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts is not altogether given up to stories about salmon and the other hauntings of the silences. In the recent issues of the "Windsor Magazine" his poetry has been appearing with pleasing regularity. His latest verse shows the poet's unvarying allegiance to his first love of sky and sea. The eight lines entitled "Under the Pillars of the Sky" are worth re-reading.

Under the pillars of the sky
I played at Life—I knew not why.
The grave recurrence of the Day
Was matter of my trivial play.
The solemn Stars, the sacred Night
I took for toys of my delight.
Till now, with startled eyes I see
The portents of Eternity.

Most publishers will shake their heads over the aspiring young poet with his quires of impassioned verse. "Poetry doesn't sell" is the dismal reply frequently given to the youthful author who is sure that the world will listen to "his" songs, however deaf it may have been to less stirring strains. But the world is not so unready, after all, to recognise the poet "with straight-flung words and few." The Yukon poems by Mr. Robert Service, entitled "Songs of a Sourdough," have met with a cordial reception, as their strength and originality deserved. The publisher, William Briggs of Toronto, has issued a fifth edition of these robust songs which have given their young author an assured place among Canadian writers.

Mr. Theodore Roberts, who is now at his Fredericton home, has written a new novel, entitled, "The Red Feathers," which will be published in Canada by the Copp, Clark Company. Mr. Roberts is at his best in a thoroughly romantic story, and a novel somewhat in the style of his three-part story, "The Survivors," published in the "Canadian Courier," ought to please a public which gets more than enough of shabby melodrama and too little of healthy romance. Mr. Roberts can do much better work than has ever been accomplished by G. B. McCutcheon or Robert Chambers, whose "best sellers" have flooded Canadian counters with their rubbishy imitations of Anthony Hope and others. But those who have followed the magazine career of Theodore Roberts hope that some bright October day the spirit may move him to write such poetry as "A Vagrant's Epitaph," which blossomed in "Scribner's" about three summers ago.

"The Weavers," a novel by Sir Gilbert Parker, which has been running in serial form in "Harper's Magazine," will be one of the autumn novels and will probably be extensively read, as it is some time since the world has had so serious a work from the Anglo-Canadian novelist.

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