

A Winter with the Scottish Society of Vancouver

For nearly six months of the year winter occupies himself in playing practical jokes upon us. As we love the sun, and the sun is always willing to shine upon us for several hours every day, winter makes himself busily obnoxious to all by dragging thick clouds between us, and so reduces the free open world to a room with curtained windows. He shakes the clouds with the East Wind or a blast from the bitter North, and brings down the icy rain upon our heads till we take refuge in rubber shoes and waterproofs, and scud along the streaming streets for our friendly firesides. In his angrier moods he chases us with his whips of hail, and sleet and snow.

But he no longer has us at his mercy, as he once had when human invention was in its infancy. Our ancestors had to endure Winter's darkness unreprieved, drag their heavy feet through deep-mired roads, shiver in draughty stone rooms with unglazed windows, breathing airs, either of withering cold or a mildness acrid with wood smoke. They had few books to read, and only a few persons could read the books they had. And what had they to read by in the long dark hours when Winter puts his extinguisher on the sun about four o'clock in the afternoon? A feeble wick floating in oil or a guttering candle. The school boy was happiest when he lay on the hearthrug and read by the dancing light of the fire.

In our days Winter has had a sad overthrow. If he rain outside, and

he is doing it to-day, it may well be he is weeping his own misfortunes. He can no longer oppress us with darkness in the streets, while within our own homes and our halls of meeting we can make little summers for ourselves with hot pipes and electric lighting. The time was when for six dreary months men scarcely ever met more than a dozen of their neighbours at one time, except in church, where too often they must suffer chilblains for their soul's sake. Now our chief meeting time is the Winter, and when Spring comes round, our pleasant society life comes to an end. We scatter for the country and the seaside, while the city with its concerts, its stage plays, its operas, its lectures on the great world around, buries itself in a hermitage. I almost fear that one day Winter will come back, mild and mealy-mouthed, and make plea for favour with us on account of the chains with which we have bound him.

Three years ago we told of the Scottish Society of Vancouver, when it was only an infant in swaddling clothes. Every year since it has waxed larger and stronger, although its only fare has been high-thinking and sweet music, with one dance to liberate the superfluous energy of its members. Like many of the other societies it is now near the end of the active season of 1924-5. For the first time in its history the Scottish Society has had a settled home for the Winter, and in the Rotunda of Glencoe Lodge it has held two meetings in every month. Year by year the Society has made a satisfactory increase in its membership, and it is pleasant to see that the great majority of the members are regular in their attendance at these meetings. The programme for the past session has been exceedingly varied and attractive. In every society it happens once and again that a lecturer fails to fulfil his engagement through illness, but a capable substitute has always been available. For a star of the first magnitude in the lecture world it is necessary at times to make arrangements far ahead, and already a beginning has been made in the preparation of the programme for 1925-6.

In the present year, after the Society had elected its office-bearers last September, the season was opened in October with a concert, which was followed at an interval of a fortnight by a lecture from Professor F. G. C. Wood of the University on

his favourite subject, "Sir James Barrie and His Plays." On that occasion Mr. Robert Allison Hood and Miss Jessie Robertson gave a dramatic reading from one of Barrie's playlets, "The Old Lady Shows Her Medals." November brought a Hebridean concert from Dr. James Patterson and Mrs. Jean Houston, and Dr. Patterson very happily connected his songs with a story of Highland travel. If these pleasure-givers repeat their concert another year they must remember that half past nine o'clock is not a time to finish so delightful an entertainment.

Later in November Professor W. L. Macdonald gave a thoughtful appreciation of Robert Louis Stevenson, and one meeting in December concluded the year 1924. This was a social evening, when members and their friends made better acquaintance, a great deal of fine music was heard; the ladies of the society provided scones and cakes which they had baked, and brewed tea and coffee for the company.

In January Mr. D. M. Telford spoke of "Ian Maclaren," and the pathos of the Bonnie Briar Bush, while the honorary treasurer, Mr. James Inglis Reid, came next with the sterner side of Scottish life and told of the Covenanters. February first turned to Scottish humour, which was treated by the first vice-president, Mr. R. A. Hood, with whom was that skilful amateur actor Mr. Alan B. Stevenson, who acted the Tollbooth scene in Rob Roy, and impersonated Bailie Nicol Jarvie. A few days later the society held its annual dance, when the programme made a suitable compromise between the beautiful but sometimes intricate Scottish measures, and the lazy

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SALE OF BUILDING AND SITE.

SEALED TENDERS, addressed to the undersigned and endorsed, "Tender for the purchase of Old Post Office Building and Site, Vancouver, B. C." will be received at this office until 12 o'clock noon, Thursday, April 30, 1925, for the purchase of the building known as Old Post Office Building and the Site on which this building stands, which property is situated on the south-west corner of Granville and Pender Streets, Vancouver, having a frontage of seventy five feet on Granville Street by a depth of one hundred and thirty feet on Pender Street.

Building to be sold on the understanding the Department of Public Works to have occupation of same, rent free, until January 1st, 1926.

Each tender to be accompanied by an accepted cheque on a chartered bank for the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars, payable to the order of the Minister of Public Works, which will be forfeited if the person tendering decline to carry out his bid. The balance to be paid in equal instalments at yearly intervals, with interest at six per cent. per annum: the last instalment to be paid January 1st, 1928. Bonds of the Dominion of Canada and bonds of the Canadian National Railway Company will also be accepted as security.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the highest or any tender.

Any further information required may be obtained on application to the undersigned.

By order,
S. E. O'BRIEN,

Secretary.

Department of Public Works,
Ottawa April 2, 1925.