

THE LIBRARY TABLE

MARY OLIVIER: A LIFE

By MAY SINCLAIR. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.

TO have been the mistress of the man she loved, when she might have married him, and yet to reach the certainty that she was not sorry for it—that she never would go back on it—that it was pure and remorseless—that through it she had found reality, perfect happiness and God, is the climax of this chronicle.

In her discovery of perfect happiness Mary Olivier found:

“It had not come from other people or the things you thought it had come from, but from somewhere inside yourself. When you attached it to people and things, they ceased for that moment to be themselves, the space they then seemed to inhabit was not their own space; the time of the wonderful event was not their time. They became part of the kingdom of God within you.

“Not Richard. [Her lover.] He had become part of the kingdom of God without ceasing to be himself.

“That was because she had loved him more than herself. Loving him more than herself, she had let him go.

“Letting go had somehow done the trick.”

Mary Olivier is not a product of environment, nor of heredity, but of her real self and her long struggle for reality, for the recognition of that absolutely “unmoral” beauty of life more than anything else.

The story is developed through each stage of her life, beginning in infancy and childhood, when her keen intuition was swerved from the real truths of life and God, and her logical ques-

tions evaded with answers in accordance to accepted superficial standards of society.

Quite in contrast to the character of Mary Olivier is that of her sweet, orthodox, supremely selfish mother, who demanded that all her children conform to her standards. She never wanted her only daughter to leave her.

And Mary Olivier never left her mother. Rather than marry and take her mother to live with Richard in London, where her mother would have been unhappy, she refused marriage. It would take infinitely more courage to be married and risk losing all the beautiful things than to take the “Thing-in-Itself” in all its freedom. That was her philosophy.

The story of Mary Olivier’s life is a compelling one. It is replete with tense moments of emotion, passion and love of the beautiful. It is a story of a struggle for the recognition of the rights of these moments to the highest places; the struggle for the assertion of the true, natural self, and it is worked out, as Mary Olivier concludes, at the age of forty-five, with an “exquisite clearness and intensity”.

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LEADERS OF THE CANADIAN CHURCH

Edited by W. BERTAL HEENEY, B.A., B.D. Toronto: The Musson Book Company.

TEARS and laughter, the grave and the gay, a fine seriousness and a delicious frivolity, combine to make this a most interesting book. If some philanthropic layman could be induced to place a copy in the hands of