

## AN ABLE SKETCH.

Some Canadian Catholic Women Writers of To-Day.

BY THOMAS O'HAGAN, M. A., F.H., D.

It is interesting to note the share which Canadian Catholic women writers have taken in the up-building of a Canadian literature. We hear so little of these intellectual heroines through the press, so mild is the trumpet-blast of their achievements, that we are disposed to ask ourselves at the outset: Have Catholic women writers in Canada done any thing for Canadian literature? But a few weeks ago Mrs. James Sallier, of Montreal, in Catholic literature *claret et venerabile nomen*—was honored by Notre Dame University with the gift of the Lorette Medal—a distinction and honor in which Canadians can justly claim at least a share. Few Catholic readers in Canada have not read the works of Mrs. Sallier, whose gifted pen has, for nearly half a century, labored unceasingly for faith and fatherland. Like Desdemona, Mrs. Sallier owes a double allegiance by right of domicile—having resided during one part of her life in New York, and during another part in Montreal.

Her daughter, Miss Anna T. Sallier, who is well known in the literary circles of Canada, occupies very much the same position, spending as she does part of her time in Montreal, and part in New York. But we Canadians believe Miss Sallier is ours, and we consequently glory in the work of her Canadian pen. Her works too, like those of her gifted mother, breathe throughout the atmosphere of faith, and make for the intellectual betterment and moral uplifting of our people.

It was fortunate for Miss Sallier that, shortly after leaving school, she received generous words of encouragement from two such eminent critics and reviewers as Dr. Brownson and George William Curtis. It is well known that Dr. Brownson more frequently dropped his pen upon an author for slaughter than for praise, while a word of commendation from the accomplished and scholarly editor of Harper's Monthly was, indeed, a literary testimonial to be coveted. The late John Boyle O'Reilly, whose unerring judgment and cultivated taste quickly discerned qualities of genius in a writer, paid his tribute of praise to the work of Miss Sallier, and spoke of her as "one of the few amongst us who did artistic work."

Miss Sallier has been particularly successful in her translations from French and Italian authors; the chief among these being "The Monk's Pardon," "Mathilda de Canossa," "Ubaldo and Irene," "Idols" and "Wonders of Lourdes." Two of her best known works are biographical—"Names that Live" and "Women of Catholicity."

Miss Sallier has also for many years been a generous contributor to nearly all the American Catholic periodicals, and occasionally to some of the English ones. Hers has indeed been an industrious literary life which at its noontide brings the satisfaction of labor well performed, and a share in the glorious work of her noble-hearted and gifted mother, in building up a Catholic literature upon this continent.

Another name which straightway springs to memory when discussing the Catholic women writers of Canada, is Mrs. Berlinguet (nee A. M. Pope). Mrs. Berlinguet, like her brother, Mr. Joseph Pope, late private secretary to Sir John Macdonald, is a convert to the Catholic faith. She belongs to a highly intellectual family which has given to Canada judges and statesmen of acknowledged eminence. Her first literary work was done for McGee's Weekly—a series of sketches of Montreal—and when that journal passed out of the hands of Mr. McGee, she became a contributor to the Catholic World. In 1883 Mrs. Berlinguet visited the Lazzaretto at Tracadie, New Brunswick, where she remained the guest of the nuns, visiting the lepers daily, and having free access to all the records of the institution. This visit to the Lazzaretto as well as one to the Magdalen Islands, she afterwards wrote up for the Catholic World. She was also a regular contributor till 1889 to the Ave Maria, and was for a year on the staff of the Toronto Empire, the London (Ont.) Catholic Record, and has also contributed frequently to the Montreal Gazette and Star. Her published works are a translation of the Memoirs of Pere Vincent, the Trappist, which she found in the Trappist Monastery at Tracadie, and her paper contributed to the Catholic World on the Magdalen Islands, which was issued in pamphlet form. Mrs. Berlinguet has done a good deal of translating from the French for various papers, among others for the "American Catholic Researches" of Philadelphia. She also prepared for the late Bishop McIntire, of Charlottetown, P.E.I., a history of each parish in his diocese, with a short biography of his predecessors in the episcopal office, and of each priest of the diocese. Mrs. Berlinguet, then Miss A. M. Pope, became a Catholic in 1878, under the instruction of Rev. Cornelius O'Brien, D.D., now Archbishop of Halifax, N.S.

It might well be expected that Ottawa, the Canadian capital, whence flows the arteries of political thought and action, would be a centre too of literary life and culture, reflecting much that is best in the higher life of the Canadian people. Nor is the expectation vain. Ottawa has its contingent of bright literary whose contributions to some of the leading magazines of the day give ample proof of the intellectual character of this people of the North. Among the Catholics of the Capital whose names stand for scholarship and literary culture, one of the brightest and most promising is Miss K. Madeleine Barry, whose name attached to any article is always a guarantee of scholarship and good taste.

Miss Barry's first printed effort was a novel, "Honor Edgeworth," which appeared in 1882 under the nom de plume of "Vera." As the writer was then but a school girl in her seventeenth year, it could not be expected that the work would be without imperfections. Miss Barry perceived this, and decided against issuing a second edition, though the first edition was exhausted a few months after its appearance. The book received very favorable criticism from

many distinguished quarters, and Miss Barry, encouraged by this, essayed a second novel, bearing the title of "The Doctor's Daughter," which met with a favorable reception at the hands of both critics and readers. Unfortunately, just at this promising period, our young author's health gave way and she was forced to abandon her literary work indefinitely. Happily, Miss Barry's illness passed away, but since her recovery she has not seriously turned her attention to literature. A few articles contributed at times to the Catholic World and Toronto Week, give evidence of ripened thought and increased skill in workmanship, and augur for this gifted writer, should she again essay the field of literature, increased fortune and fame.

Our song birds in Canada have distinct notes heard only in the North, so have the singers in our literary groves. The voice of Canadian poetry is sweet and strong and full of native timber, but what would our choir be without our tuneful sopranos and our soul-melting altos? We could perhaps part with some of our strong-plummed songsters whose notes warble within the orbit of the bass, but not a single soprano with glorious note shall leave us in the morning of our poetic life. In this Canadian choir whose melody has lately charmed the ear of the literary critics of the Old and the New World, a goodly few of the best voices are those of women whose deep heart notes throb with the inspired love of country, home and virtue.

Among these gifted writers Miss Emily McManus occupies a prominent place. Miss McManus is an honor graduate in the departments of English and Political Science of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, and is at present engaged in teaching.

She has never as yet published a volume of poems, but her contributions to literary periodicals are of such high character as to give her a recognized place among the women writers of Canada. Her happiest and fullest inspiration is wrought out in the subjective mood. The following fine poem from her pen, which appears in a volume of Canadian poems compiled by W. D. Lighthall, of Montreal, and published in London, England, gives an insight into the character of her workmanship. Her theme is the prairie province of "Manitoba."

"Softly the shadows of prairie-land where  
Ripple and rustle down to her feet:  
Murmurs all Nature with joyous acclaim,  
Fragrance of summer and shimmer of flame:  
Voices are raised while the centuries slip—  
Chime of poppy is laid on her lip."

Hark! From the East comes a ravishing note—  
Sweeter was never in nightingale's throat—  
Silence of centuries thrills to the song,  
Singing their silence awaited so long:  
Love, yet it tells to the heaven's blue dome,  
Children have called the wild meadow-land  
"Home."

Deep as she listens, a dewy surprise  
Dawns in the languor that darkens her eyes:  
Swift the red blood through her veins in its flow,  
Kindles to capture her bosom glow:  
What where's the silence that had been—  
"Look to thy future, thou Mother of Men!"

"Onward, and onward! Her fertile expanse  
Shakes as the tide of her children advance:  
Onward, and onward! Her blossoming floor  
Yields her an odorous path to more:  
Onward, and onward! Her waving soil  
Cries: 'shall palpitate, myriads told!'"

Miss McManus has contributed poems to the Kingston Whig, Toronto Globe, Irish Canadian, Educational Journal, Queen's College Journal, and Toronto Week. The last named journal is the highest exponent of literary thought and criticism in Canada, and it is no small tribute to Miss McManus that she should be given a place among the host of scholarly contributors to that excellent periodical.

Miss McManus has also been given a place in a work entitled, "A Woman of the Century," edited by Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore, published in Buffalo, N.Y.

Space forbids me from dealing with more than briefly the work of two other Catholic women writers, the product of whose pens has, from time to time, attracted attention—Miss Frances M. O. Smith, of Lucan, Ontario, and Miss Belle Guerin, of Montreal.

Like Mrs. Berlinguet, Miss Smith is a convert to the Catholic faith. She has written for several well-known Catholic magazines and journals, and has been encouraged and aided in her literary work by no less a distinguished prelate of the Church than the accomplished and kindly Archbishop of Toronto, Most Rev. J. Walsh, D.D., who is a warm and generous friend of every Catholic *litterateur* in Canada.

There is a beautiful mingling in the poems of Miss Smith, of Irish patriotism and Catholic faith.

Here is a poem from her pen full of much daintiness. It is entitled, "My Lady June."

She is here in all her glory,  
With her favors falling free,  
Singing still the same sweet story  
She has always sung to me.  
Oh, the roses blush to meet her,  
Sparkling in their diamond dew,  
And the stately lilies greet her,  
As for her alone they grew.  
How her voice, with joy o'erflowing,  
Reaches Nature's heart in tone,  
Music only hers bestowing:  
She is here—my Lady June.

Memory near her gently pressing  
Lends her song one tender tone,  
And one touch to her caressing,  
For the heart that she has known,  
It may be some picture graven  
With the lines too deep to fade,  
Or some half-forgotten haven,  
For which Faith in youth had prayed,  
But she garlands even sorrow  
With a wreath that dies too soon:  
It will wither ere the morrow—  
She is here—my Lady June.

She would bear for me less gladness,  
Less of loving light to-day,  
If the sun shined not the sadness  
That made shadows on the way.  
For I like to think she knows me,  
And remembers and will care,  
When Life's morn looks back and shows me  
What its noon shall never fail.  
So she ever comes in glory  
With her favors falling free,  
Singing still the same sweet story  
She has always sung to me.

Miss Smith has been given a place in portrait and biographical sketch in the April number of the Magazine of Poetry, for 1893.

Miss Guerin is the only daughter of the late Thos. Guerin, Esq., Civil Engineer of the Canadian government. She was born in the city of Montreal and educated at the *pensionat* of the Congregation de Notre Dame. She began to write while at school, and when she was sixteen years of age sent verses which were published in the Boston Pilot. She has written short stories and verses for the Canadian Illustrated News, and for the different Roman Catholic publications in her native city. Several of her poems have been repro-

duced in English and American papers. Miss Guerin has been warmly received as a writer, and it is her intention to publish, in the near future, a volume of her poems.

With this short sketch and study of some of the Catholic women writers of Canada, I close this paper, feeling deep regret that I cannot do fuller justice to the unselfish labors of that noble contingent of Canadian women writers who are aiding, in however humble a way, in the building up of a distinct Canadian literature.—*Catholic Reading Circle Review.*

## WIT AND HUMOUR.

Noiseless Breakage—The break of day.  
Men who make money by the barrel—Coopers.

The laundress's motto—"Let's soap for the best."

Sovereign contempt—Refusal of a twenty-shilling gold piece.

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When does time fly fast?—When it is urged on by the spur of the moment.

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard," may be good advice, but many a man goes to his "uncle" instead.

Nodd: Your cook has gone, hasn't she? Todd: Yes, but she gave my wife a splendid recommendation.

Merely Reposeful—Hardworker: Idleness is as fatiguing as repose is sweet. Tramp: That's why I ain't never idle.

Kingley: Does your wife try to boss you as much as she used to? Bingo: No; she doesn't even have to try now.

Applicant: I always attend to my own business. Merchant: You won't suit me. I want clerks to attend to my business.

"Well, Johnnie," said a doting uncle to his little nephew, who had been fishing all day, "did you catch a good many fish?" "No, uncle, but I drowned a good many worms."

Shopkeeper to boys causing an annoyance: If you don't clear out I'll call that officer and have you locked up. Boy: There's where you'd be taken in—that policeman's my dad—he is.

Teacher: Well, Tommy, you were not present yesterday; were you detained at home in consequence of the inclemency of the weather? Tommy: No, ma'am; I couldn't come 'cause of the rain.

Mrs. Lumkins: Joshua, I'm going to the dentist's to have a tooth pulled out. You mind the baby while I'm gone. Mr. L. with alacrity: You mind the baby, Jonnie; I'll go and get a tooth pulled out.

"Do you not sometimes have soulful yearnings which you long to convey in words but cannot?" asked the sentimental girl. "Yes, indeed," replied the young man. "I was once dreadfully anxious to send home for money, but I didn't have the price of a telegram."

THE AMATEUR SPORTSMAN, published by the M. T. Richardson Co., 27 Park Place, New York, comes to our table this month richly laden with interesting reading for hunters, anglers and dog fanciers. It contains many appropriate half-tone engravings, instructive and practical articles on Hunting, Fishing, Camping, Natural History, the Rifle and the Dog. It is the purpose of its publishers and owners to make the Amateur Sportsman in all respects a first-class paper for all sportsmen. A sample copy will be sent free of charge.

As you grow older and the heart within you pines for Heaven, as a bird, long imprisoned, pines for the green covert of the woods, don't you find yourself growing more charitable towards sinners? Why should we shed tears over a broken body and have no dew of sympathy in our hearts for a broken soul?

Whenever we deviate from the line of moral rectitude, we must inevitably do a wrong to ourselves or others; justice, which ever leans on the side of mercy, will teach us the right paths in life to walk in, and if we follow its teachings we shall always be on the side of right. He who commits a wrong knowingly and wilfully ostracizes himself from the society of the virtuous and the good.

Cultivate the tenderness within you that yearns over evil-doers and has a tear at hand for rogues and rascals. It is something you will not be ashamed of when you come to die.

The end of education is the formation of character; character rests on the basis of morality; and morality, if we have life and vigor, is interspersed with religion.—Bishop Spalding.

It is important to think right, more important to feel right, still more important to do right, but to be right is most important of all.

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