



AT THE SIGN OF THE MAPLE

A WOODSTOCK WRITER.

WOODSTOCK is a name of Old Country traditions, sacred to the memory of Fair Rosamond and the Stuart cause, with Sir Walter's story to give it the true romantic interest. Woodstock has had Canadian namesakes in both New Brunswick and Ontario and the latter has produced a poet who may yet make the pretty town a prouder spot than aspiring Hamilton or bustling Toronto. "Environment has nothing to do with genius," says a warning voice. Yet I refuse to believe that the three poets of Ottawa were uninfluenced by the beauty of that city of hills and river. Isabel Ecclestone Mackay is a name familiar to all Canadian readers, for the writer bearing it must be known wherever the *Toronto Globe*, the *Chicago Red Book* or the New York *Harper's Magazine* are on the sitting-room or library table. Mrs. MacKay is doing such good work—stuff of such enduring fabric—that we must all feel glad that she is receiving continental recognition. Those who have met this Canadian writer with the Scottish forefathers, are pleased on personal grounds at her success, for hers is a nature to make friends out of admirers. Consequently, it was one of the good days in January when there came to the "Sign of the Maple" a poem in an envelope with the Woodstock post-mark. "The Gate of Dream" is characteristic of this writer's exquisite fancy and will appeal to all who have cherished the hope of some day finding the key to "the ivory gate and golden."

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THE TIRESOME TANGLE.

THEY were three women who had met by accident in a tea-room down town and, while they waited for the buttered toast and "dear-little-pots-of-tea-and-besure-to-bring-lemon-as-well-as-cream," they talked of tragedies, in the way we have of discussing "unhappy far-off things." Messina had been dismissed with a shudder and the *Republic* disaster with congratulations, when a fair-haired matron said plaintively:

"Don't you think it's horrid, the way our papers exploit those scandalous murder trials?"

"They wouldn't exploit them if the people didn't want to read the stuff," said the Busy Woman vigorously. "An editor told me the other day that he hates the sight of the Hains trial, or whatever it's called, in his paper but that his readers want it and that the women are more anxious for such sensational rubbish than the men are."

"But what class of women?" said a woman with a Dear Lady Disdain aspect—"the women who throng to the cheap matinees and read the thrilling serials in the evening papers."

"Exactly," replied the Busy Woman, "and such persons are in the majority and it is the majority for whom an editor must cater. Personally, I don't care at all about this stuff, because it is always the same dreary mess. But it is amusing how sentimental some men can become over the woman in the case—describing her as an innocent angel, a sort of blue-eyed lamb and all the rest of it, when every woman knows that is all nonsense."

"I should say so," said Dear Lady Disdain briskly; "but only a very nice man or an extremely stupid woman is taken in by such talk. A 'fluffy ruffles' sort of woman, with wide-open, appealing eyes, can make men think she is an abused angel and when we women smile, the men (bless their blundering hearts) think we are jealous. But I suppose we women are just as mistaken in our judgments of men. My brother Ted says that a woman usually picks out an absolute cad and worships the ground he walks on."

"The great pity about these murder affairs," said the fair-haired matron languidly, as she dropped a second lump into the steaming Ceylon, "is that

the man doesn't make it more thorough. If he would only shoot the woman as well and then himself, it would rid the world of three good-for-nothing people and save the government all that fuss."

"It sounds very simple," said the Busy Woman drily, "but that kind of murderer is nearly always a coward, who does not dare to be thorough. They're all a bad lot and aren't worth talking about. But I'm sick of slush about the 'lady' and hope there won't be another angel of this sort in a hurry. A married woman who gets drunk and flirts is hardly an object for compassion. I'd rather spend my sobs and sixpence on the decent poor women in Toronto who are trying their best to keep the wolf from the door these cold days. I found a plucky little widow last week who is working from six in the morning till seven at night to keep her three kiddies in clothes and send them to school.

LITTLE GATE OF DREAM

By Isabel Ecclestone Mackay.

Little Gate of Dream!
Tell me where you hide
In the wall that circles round
All the great Outside?

Once, Sleep took my hand
Led me where you are
Whisp'ring, "You may find the way
By the evening star!"

Glad, I hurried through
To the great Outside—
Strange, that such a little gate
Joy so vast can hide!

Then Sleep said, "Enough!"—
Would not hear me pray,
Drew me longing, sighing, back
To the Ways of Day!

Little Gate of Dream,
Tell me where you are?
Long and long I've searched in vain
By the evening star!

Strange, this life we live
Ringed by bliss about—
Not forever, Gate of Dream,
Can you shut it out;

Though so far you seem,
Though so close you hide,
Some day I must wander through
To the great Outside!

As she was born in Tipperary County, she's making a cheerful job of it, too. Of course, some people would rather become teary over a worthless little goose who brings about a murder or two and gets her picture in the New York *Sunday Journal*."

"Have a crumpey," said the fair-haired matron. "Do you know, the Empire gown is doomed? There aren't to be any more after February."

"All the spring styles are the simple life kind of costume," said Dear Lady Disdain pensively. "But those simple affairs are ruinously expensive, for you have to go to the very best tailors."

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THE HELICONIA CLUB.

YES! That is the name of it! It is composed of about three-score-and-ten of Toronto's writers, artists and musicians—of the sex which does not, as yet, exercise the franchise. It is a

fine club with capable officers—not such a ghastly jest as is the Toronto Women's Canadian Club. The dear things belonging to the latter organisation have not summoned breath or courage to introduce their own speakers but are still depending on the timely services of Mr. Byron Walker, President Falconer and other amiable citizens. The Heliconians had a supper the other evening which, according to all reports, was a delightfully jolly occasion and at which the name was decided upon. What, in the name of all that is rational, induced the choice of a name which is affected, cumbersome and which lends itself all too readily to profane parody? Five syllables make an awkward mouthful and are enough to alarm the everyday toiler.

The papers declared (and who has ever known a Toronto paper to say the thing that is not?) that Mr. Goldwin Smith had suggested the name. What had Mr. Goldwin Smith to do with the club? He is our most distinguished citizen and Toronto "points with pride" to him every day in the week. But if seventy Toronto women of credit and renown cannot get a name for their organisation without telephoning or driving to the "Grange" for advice on the subject, then they are sadly lacking in that initiative which club women must possess. What is the use of proclaiming social independence of mere man, having our own five o'clock teas, luncheons, suppers and theatre parties, if we resort to man in the first quandary and ask him to please give us a name for the club? It is mortifying—indeed it is—and I would wager the last bitter-sweet chocolate in the box that neither Hamilton nor Winnipeg would have behaved in this clinging-vine fashion.

The idea of the club is excellent, the officers are efficient and experienced women who have practical knowledge of "arts and letters" but alas, alas—who wants to be called a "Heliconian"? It is classic—but we are mere Canadians and three syllables would have been plenty.

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A BRAVE RECORD.

EVERYONE who has read that story of the sinking *Republic* must have put the paper down with a choky feeling of admiration for the men who sent relief and the men who stayed by the ship—to say nothing of the women who refused to go into hysterics and the Canadian girl who gave up the life-belt to a terrified Italian and went back into the dark for another. It is a story to make ordinary fiction seem tame and tawdry and it warms the blood to think of the sturdy heroism which held firm control amidst the tumult of a wintry sea and finally placed a shipload in safety. We see so much and hear so much in these days of human pettiness and greed—we are so bitterly conscious, at times, of our own struggle to live within hail of the ideal—that pessimism is upon us in the turmoil. But anyone who could read of that struggle in the dark, of the Marconi messages flashing to the shack in the sand and thence across the sea, without a thrill of big belief in the race, must be hardly fit to live in a Saxon land.

No one, save those who have been through the ordeal, knows what it means to be aroused from sleep to a realisation of ocean peril, to the sight of cold, dark waves through the shivering gloom. The record on the *Republic* of the White Star line was a splendid one, for both passengers and crew, although those who came through that night, will hardly forget its terror and suspense. But the honours belong to the captain, the mate and the man who worked the "wireless." The passengers were transferred and in comparative safety when the captain and his loyal companion were left in the grey, wintry seas, to wait for their ship to go down.

The conduct of the women passengers was generally commended and we must admit that, since woman is less exposed to the chances and dangers of life than man, it requires a greater effort for her to face sudden peril with calmness. The hysterical woman is an object of dread to all hearers and beholders and she seems to have been pleasingly absent from the *Republic's* list.

The wireless messages, however, flash out of the scene more vividly than anything else and leave us baffled before the mystery of the waves.

CANADIENNE.