

has fallen in love, marries a buck private who is embarking shortly for overseas, so that her child may have a father. The novel is true in all its details. Destitution, disease, under-nourishment, lack of heat, frequent moves and all kinds of bereavements brought about by the pre-war depression, are not called up by the novelist with the view of supporting a thesis. They have all been observed by the author and described with objectivity. None of the characters is a hero and none of their actions is praised to the skies or harshly blamed. The author never intervenes in the narration and Bonheur d'Occasion is thus a species of reporting but it is so true, so alive and so human that it ranks among our greatest novels. Gabrielle Roy's style is terse, familiar, poor in imagery; but the accumulation of true and moving circumstances is deeply impressive. Bonheur d'Occasion was the first masterpiece of a sincere and talented author.

The first novel of Roger Lemelin, au pied de la pente douce is also a description of the prosaic daily life of the common people in a poverty-stricken parish, but it lacks the unity of atmosphere and style which contributes so much to the greatness of Bonheur d'Occasion. The two parts of this novel are, indeed, almost separate, the second drawing our attention to the rivalry of two young men for the conquest of the same girl, while the first is a brilliant satire of the whimsicalities of some devout people. Like Bonheur d'Occasion, Lemelin's novel is realistic, but it is in no way serene or plain. It is uneven; in its best parts it is highly picturesque. Episodes such as the parade of the parish band, the wrestling match, the meeting of the political club, the parish bingo, the high mass and so on are very finished satire of the parochialism which survives in some parts of Quebec. The main qualities of the novel are the animation of the narration and the colouring of the dialogue.

In their novels, Germaine Guèvremont, Gabrielle Roy and Roger Lemelin stress the life of a whole community in preference to that of an individual character. Robert Charbonneau's novels are, on the other hand, studies of the inner man. Roger Lemelin, for instance, confesses that when he starts writing he feels himself "in front of a shapeless body, a species of nebulous ball," of which he tries to discern the essence, the veins, the organs, the living strengths, and from which he forms characters. In spite of their personal peculiarities, these characters remain parts of the whole atmosphere of his novel. Robert Charbonneau seems to proceed differently, and to draw from the mind of his principal character a drama which remains inward, even if his hero is at strife with his environment. In Charbonneau's first two novels, hardly anything happens, but a succession of psychological changes in the two or three principal characters. There are, of course, in Fontaine two or three incidents, which lead to an unexpected dénouement; but his second novel, as ils posséderont la terre, is an analysis of a mind filled with hesitation, uneasiness, fruitless meditations and projects. Charbonneau's characters are "des inadaptés", that is "misfits," handicapped by complexes and restraints developed by a backward education at home and at school. The insight of the author makes up for the lack of animation in his novels, but unfortunately, while too many of our novelists content themselves with descriptions of the outward manifestations of their characters, Charbonneau devotes his attention too exclusively to the exposition of inward impulses and struggles.