

THE WORLD WINDOW

Harry Lauder Tells Of His Sorrow and Solace.

Harry Lauder had become to many people a synonym for close-fistedness, but after reading "A Minstrel in France" (Toronto, McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, \$2), one gets a truer view of a large-hearted, simple-minded and kindly human creature, stricken to the heart with our common sorrows, because pierced through and through with the loss of his only son in battle. The eighth and ninth chapters of this book, telling of his premonitions, the reception of the telegram with the fatal news, the realization of that bitterness, the anguish endured by himself and his wife, the solicitude of his friends, and the gradually returning conviction in all its fullness that the future would bring again the broken joys, are as impressive as anything of the kind in literature. Their simplicity, their directness, their candid truth, carry conviction. "We shall come, some day, his mother and I, to the place where he is waiting for us, and we shall all be as happy there as we were on this earth in the happy days before the war. My eyes will rest again upon his face. I will hear his fresh young voice again as he sees me and cries out his greeting. I know what he will say. He will say me, and his voice will ring out as it used to do. 'Hello, Dad!' he will call, as he sees me. And I will feel the grip of his young strong arms about me, just as in the happy days before that day that is of all the days of my life the most terrible and the most hateful in my memory—the day when they told me that he had been killed. That is my belief. That is the comfort that God has given me in my grief and my sorrow." This is the language of deep and sincere feeling, couched in exquisitely simple and beautiful Saxon English.

How Harry Sang to the Boys in the Trenches.

But Harry Lauder was not the man to give up the light in useless reaping. At first, "no thing was further from all my thoughts than that I should ever step upon a stage again." Then his friends pleaded that he should not retire at his age and wither away in dry rot. "There'll be plenty for me to be doing," he told them. "I'll not be idle." Then another sort of argument came to him. "People wrote to me, men and women, who, like me, had lost their sons. Their letters brought the tears to my eyes anew. They were tender letters, and beautiful letters, most of them, and letters to make proud and glad, as well as sad, the heart of the man to whom they were written." There was one message these letters bore. "Don't desert us now, Harry!" And so he began to think of them. And there were others of whom he had to think. There were three hundred people in the cast of "Three Cheers," at the Shaftesbury Theatre, London, and he began to hear that unless he went back the show would have to be closed, and all of them would be out of work. "It's what John would have wanted," was the plea that finally prevailed with him. He took the train to London, "and as I rode in the train it seemed to me that the roar of the wheels made a refrain, and I could hear them pounding out those two words, in my boy's voice: 'Carry On!'" But one must read the account Harry Lauder gives of the demonstration that greeted his return to the stage. Harry was not satisfied with this, however. He conceived the idea of singing to the men in the trenches. The official objection that it had never been done was overcome at last, and that is the reason for what is one of the most amusing, inspiring, touching books that have been written. Humour and pathos are never far apart, and this the whole secret of Harry Lauder's success as a minstrel, and will make his book a classic in a class of its own.

Unlaureated Poems By Rudyard Kipling.

When Rudyard Kipling makes an anthology of his own poems it becomes more and more of a wonder how anyone else came to be poet laureate while he lived. These are the poems the laureate should have written, or else these are the poems that should have been laureated. It is not that they are the best of Kipling, but they are the best for the occasion. Of these "Twenty Poems" (Toronto: The Macmillan Co. of Canada, Ltd., 30 cents), sixteen are selected from previous volumes and four have appeared in magazines or newspapers since the war began. These are "The Sons of Martha," "The Long Trail," "The Holy War," and "For All We Have and Are." In all these poems, as well as in those written since the Germans showed their hand, there is a fine appreciation of British principles, as well as of British facts. They are principles of service as "The Sons of Martha" declares. The Sons of Mary smile and are blessed. "They sit at the Feet—they hear the Word—they see how truly the Promise runs; They have cast their burden upon the Lord, and—the Lord He lays it on Martha's sons!" "The Long Trail" is a splendid sea piece, and recalls the glories of "The Last Chantey" and other great sea poems. Is taunt on page 14 not a misprint for tant? "If" is a poem all young men should have over their desks or in their haversacks, where they can see it daily and study the whole duty of man as experience has taught it. There are old favourites like "Our Lady of the Snows," "Gunga Din" and "Mother of Mine," but the new ones are of an equal vintage. "The Holy War" might well stir people to read Bunyan's entrancing book. "The Glory of the Garden" is among the happiest of Mr. Kipling's patriotic verses, and the whole volume makes one look forward to the peace of victory, which we trust Mr. Kipling will be spared to write, and we shall all long to read.

Peat Fertilizer Has Future in Farming.

A movement is on foot in America for the utilization of peat as a fertilizer. There was a time in the history of American farming when manure was carted to the nearest river and dumped in. But it is realized now that the richest soil may be exhausted, and fertilizers of every description are sought and valued. Peat has been used in Ireland and elsewhere for manure purposes, and when mixed with sewage, which is done when cesspools are cleaned out, the combination is ideal for farm purposes. It is pointed out in the valuable report of the Commission of Conservation in an article on peat as a source of fuel, that the nitrogen content of peat is very high. It becomes, therefore, highly valuable for the manufacture of ammonia and other nitrogen compounds. As nitrogen is one of the principal elements upon which plant life depends, the amount taken out of the soil by a crop must be returned in some way if the fertility of the land is to be maintained. Sulphate of ammonia is the most common nitrogen compound used for this purpose. The demand for this product has been increasing so rapidly in recent years that in all civilized countries coking plants are being adapted to the recovery of the nitrogen content in the fuel in the form of ammonia, which is then combined with sulphuric acid to form ammonia sulphate. Thirteen bogs in Ontario are reported by the Commission of Conservation to have a fuel content of 43,000,000 tons of 25 per cent. moisture peat. The content of nitrogen corresponds to 560,000 tons, which would yield 1,800,000 tons of ammonia sulphate. The quantity of peat mentioned could, if all were burned in a by-product-recovery-producer-gas-plant, produce sufficient power gas to generate approximately 40,000 h.p. continuously day and night for 100 years. Either in its natural form or thru manufacture peat is destined to play an important part in farm work, as well as in other ways.

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"THOU ART THE MAN"



HERE AND THERE RAMBLINGS

By PETER QUINCE.

Canals to Relieve Freight Congestion
In the hurry to develop the rail-road facilities of this country, Canadians are disposed to give but too little thought to canals and inland waterways generally, other than those linking up the Great Lakes with the St. Lawrence River. Canadian railways and railway builders have pretty well exploited the country in the past, and if they are not going to continue doing so in the future it is only because the country has at last been awakened to the advantage of public ownership of public utilities, and has impressed upon the leaders of political parties at Ottawa the fact that public ownership of railways must now give place to mere public subsidizing. Freight and passenger rates are of supreme importance in the development of national life. With a nation-owned transcontinental road, Canada will have control of rates to an extent which the nation's government never before enjoyed, and it is to be expected that when the stress of war conditions is over and matters of transportation have returned to a more normal working basis, an all-round readjustment of rates may be looked for, such as will greatly help in further national development.

Making Farmers Work Their Land
A recently arrived Work Their Land English newspaper for the nation records the fact that at Buckingham a day or so before publication, Farmer John Robert Gough, of College Farm, Maidmoreton, was summoned by the board of agriculture for neglecting cultivation. He was ordered to give up possession of the farm in fourteen days, and to pay a fine of \$50, and \$250 in costs. Gough had occupied the farm, which comprised 200 acres, for over thirty years. The above is a remarkable illustration of the way in which the British Government is seeking to it that every available acre of land in the British Isles is set to work to do its share in producing food. Evidently it matters little what a man's position may be. If he is an owner of land it is up to him to see that all of it is enlisted in the national food-raising campaign, and furthermore, it is necessary for him to be able to show that the land is producing an amount of food as near as is reasonably possible to its maximum power of production. Before the war an Englishman's land was his own, to do what he liked with, just as his home was his castle. What he did with either was nobody's business. The war has changed all that. His land is now his own, and he may work it as he will, in so far as he does work it for the national good. It has come to be as though he were a holder of the land in trust for the nation. Whatever profit may accrue from the working of it belongs to him, but he must by no means allow it to lie idle to the detriment of the national welfare. In times past theories along this line were preached by advanced socialists. They said the land should belong to the public good. All vacant land should be made to produce food, in order that food might be plentiful and cheap. Had the war never happened this might have continued to be merely a theory for another hundred years. But the war came, and imperative need demanded the cultivation of every possible acre of soil in Great Britain. The socialistic theory of five years ago has been put into practical effect because there was no escape from so doing. It has been found an entirely workable theory, and there is little reason to suppose that when the war is over and done with there will be a return to the easy-going conditions of other days. England has learnt what it means to

depend upon foreign countries for her food. She will in the future do all that is possible to develop to the utmost her own food resources. It is impossible that the result should ever be sufficient to feed her own people, but it will greatly help, and above all, it will exert an influence upon food prices, and that is the main point. The land will be working to make life easier for those to whom the cost of food of primary importance, and its being worked in that manner will provide employment for a vast number of workers who might otherwise have to seek their livelihood in the Overseas Dominions. In the Great Britain of the future we shall see all the land set to work, the rate of wages for farm labor set by law and may be placed upon the statute books in the commercial life of the province. As time goes on other canals will be built, and each will do its share in providing cheap transportation for the products of factory and farm. Toronto will one day soon be an ocean port. The building of the multi-talked-of Georgian Bay Canal with an outlet in some way close to Toronto's harbor would give a tremendous impetus to the growth and development of this city.

The Wedding Month
In days gone by Comes Round Again June used to be known as the month of roses. We know it as the month of brides—and it is hard to say which of the two designations is the more charming, or which brings to the mind's eye a more pleasing idea of the most lovely of months. Even in war times June has not lost its distinction as a month of marriages. Upon every hand do we see evidences of that fact. While the month was a good week away those of our more enterprising shopkeepers displayed in their windows all the delightful beguilements that most interesting of the fair sex, and particularly the younger ones, at this most magical season of the year. Beautiful garments of the most entrancing daintiness, but before which the eyes of mere men are covered with sweet confusion, were displayed with most engaging cunning, and side by side with them were seen vast and varied assortments of those delightful articles that one occasionally buys to give away as wedding presents, but by no manner of means ever thinks of purchasing for one's own use or enjoyment. I use the word enjoyment because usefulness so seldom enters as a consideration in the purchase of many presents. That, of course, is all very fitting and proper in ordinary times. Why buy useful things? Let the groom do that. It is his privilege. If somebody does not do it he will have to. The young couple will get the necessary things some way or other, while the unnecessary and beautiful things will, in many cases, be entirely ignored, if not omitted, as all right in ordinary times. Now that we are at war and the useful things have mostly advanced in price, pretty well up to the high standard set by the useless or luxurious ones, it would, perhaps, be as well to confine our wedding purchases to such things as have to be bought anyway.

CRUSTS AND CRUMBS

By Albert Ernest Stafford

IN THE SPLENDID LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN by Lord Charnwood, which I wrote about last week, I was interested to find several references to Walt Whitman, the ninety-ninth anniversary of whose birth occurred on Friday, May 31. Whitman was a contemporary of Lincoln, ten years younger, but an intense admirer of the great president. No greater tribute has been paid to Lincoln than in the four poems by Whitman, "Memories of President Lincoln." I look forward to the time when no school reader of the higher forms shall omit "When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd." It is only as children are familiarized with the majestic rhythm of the long rolling lines that the prejudice against the form of his verse will die out. We are none of us without prejudice. Perhaps Whitman, himself, was prejudiced against rhymed metres, but not against the great poetry of the language in whatever form. Many of our critics are unable to see the poetry in Whitman because of the form. Even Whitman, himself, adopted rhyme in the noble "O Captain! My Captain!" which as fully indicates his own relation to Lincoln as anything he has written. But take these three lines from "Hush'd be the camps today" and was the trite reflection ever voiced more beautifully, more impressively?

is needed," Lincoln, on his part, showed his appreciation to the slight extent permitted him. Having had him pointed out as he passed a window, he said: "Well, he looks like a man," and a copy of his poems having come into his hands in an office he was visiting he spent an hour or so reading aloud passages which appealed to him. Allons! after the great Companions, and to belong to them! They, too, are on the road—they are the swift and majestic men—they are the greatest women, Enjoyers of calms of seas and storms of seas, Sailors of many a ship, walkers of many a mile of land.

No more for him life's stormy conflicts. Nor victory, nor defeat—no more time's dark events, Charging like ceaseless clouds across the sky. In this there is the transmuting power which every great poet exhibits, the ability to take the commonplace and transfigure it, robed in immortal language. Who can read the wonderful Funeral Hymn and not be stirred to the depths? Hear the last lines:

I cease from my song for thee— From my gaze on thee in the west, fronting the west, communing with thee; O comrade lustrous with silver face in the night. Yet cease to keep and all, retrievements out of the night. The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird. And the tall, thin, and the echo arous'd in my soul. With the lustrous and drooping star, with the countenance full of war; With the holders holding my hand, nearing the call of the bird, Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory ever to keep, for the dead I loved so well. For the sweetest wisest soul of all my days and lands—and this for his dear sake, Lilac and star and bird twined with the chant of my soul, There in the fragrant pines and the cedars dusk and dim.

LORD CHARNWOOD EXPRESSES his indebtedness to Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days and Collect," from which he says, he has derived much light. It is characteristic of the big men that they do justice to each other. They are magnanimous. They can make allowances. They do not entertain petty spite and jealousies, and envy they put away from them. There was none of these things in the nature of either Whitman or Lincoln. Whitman was always intent on "The great Camerado, the lover true for whom I pine." Lincoln realized his ideal for him, and he paid him many noble tributes. Lord Charnwood says he was one of the first who began to see the greatness of Lincoln, "sauntering in Washington in the intervals of the labour among the wounded by which he broke down his robust strength, and seeing things as they passed with the sure observation of a poet." Lord Charnwood quotes one of Whitman's pictures of the President. "The party makes no great show in uniform or horse. Mr. Lincoln on the saddle generally rides a good-sized, easy-going grey horse, dressed in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty, and looks about as ordinary in attire, etc., as the commonest man. The entirely unornamented cortege arouses no sensation; only some curious stranger stops and gazes. I see very plainly Abraham Lincoln's dark brown face, with the deep-cut lines, the eyes always to me with a deep latent sadness in the expression. We have got so that we exchange bows, and very cordial ones. Sometimes the President goes and comes in an open harouche" (not, the poet intimates, a very smart turn-out). "Sometimes one of his sons, a boy of ten or twelve, accompanies him, riding at his right on a pony. They passed me once very close, and I saw the President in the face fully as they were moving slowly, and his look, the abstracted, happened to be directed steadily in my eye. He bowed and smiled, but far beneath his smile I noticed well the expression I have alluded to. None of the artists or pictures has caught the deep the subtle and indirect expression of this man's face. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago

WALT WHITMAN'S BIRTHDAY

falls for us in Canada in lilac-time, and reminds us of the sacrifice of the great President in Washington on Good Friday, April 14, 1865. The Whitman Fellowship usually celebrate the birthday of the poet by a dinner or banquet, or some such observance, but in this year the war the Toronto Fellowship has decided to intermit such a celebration, and in lieu of this, the president of the local Theological Society is going to speak on Whitman and the Great Companions this Sunday evening in the Canadian Foresters' Concert Hall. An interesting feature of the occasion will be the exhibition of the splendid cast which Mr. J. L. Banks, the sculptor, has made of Walt Whitman's head, the model of the great cliffs where the Indian paintings of centuries ago still survive at Bon Echo Lake, 25 miles from Kala-dar on the C.P.R. This idea was conceived by Mrs. Flora Macdonald Denison, founder of the Bon Echo Whitman Fellowship, and is to be memorial of the centenary of the poet to be celebrated next year Mr. George W. Morris, of Buffalo, has undertaken, out of his admiration for Whitman's writings and spirit, to carry out the work, upon which he is already engaged. "It is the unveiling next year, when it is hoped the war will be over, it is expected that there will be an unusual gathering of Whitmanites, including John Burroughs, Horace Traubel and other American devotees, as well as some from overseas.

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