

## The Paths of the Righteous

MISS LILY DOUGALL belongs to a Montreal family, associated for many years with journalism. The names "Graham" and "Dougall" are known throughout Canada, wherever the *Star* and the *Witness* have gone. Miss Dougall has several novels of unusual note to her literary credit and the latest of these, "The Paths of the Righteous," is likely to add to her artistic reputation.

Miss Dougall's work does not belong to that light and easy class known as popular fiction. In all her narratives there is a curious strain of mysticism which is stimulating but never sensational. This element is found in "The Paths of the Righteous" but in somewhat different manifestation to that which it assumes in "The Mermaid."

The writer has lately taken up her residence in England and the scene of the latest story is a small village of the Od Country, where the forces of Establishment and Dissent work out their salvation with much local discomfort. The last General Election in the British Isles is brought into the plot and the modern struggle with regard to the educational movement is graphically depicted. The hero may be regarded as old Mr. Ward, the uncle of the Vicar, who is a Canadian and a Dissenter and who wishes to test the character of his nephew, Rev. Compton, before revealing to the latter the existence of the Ward fortune. The Vicar is a bigot of the most High Church type, who can see no hope for Presbyterian, Baptist or Methodist. In spite of his narrowness, the character is not misrepresented and one feels an admiration for the Vicar's honesty and integrity.

There is little of the "love" interest, as the average novelist would interpret the expression. In fact, the book is intended as a serious study of conflicting religions and political ideals and the only affair of the heart intruded on the reader's attention is one which has been cruelly thwarted by the purblind Vicar, because, forsooth, the suitor was a Methodist and a social inferior.

To the Canadian reader may come a feeling of impatience, as he reads all this elaboration of the views of the Churchman and the Nonconformist. In this blessed country, where there is no Established Church, where, in numerical strength, the denominations follow the order—Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian—such a state of strife would be an impossibility, and the Canadian recognises that he is saved from much, as he reads this chronicle of ecclesiastical snobbery.

However, the writer's grace of style and subtlety of humour save the humble annals from tedium and one lays the novel down with the conviction that Miss Dougall comes as near to the better class of fiction writers as any other Canadian novelist. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.

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