

no attention, but administers his department as it ought to be administered, and lets the aldermen take care of themselves. If he is a nervous man, afraid of the council—which most of them are—he tries to obey the mandate and skimps his department. In this particular city there were a certain number of arc lights, each of which was certain to be in use and each of which cost a fixed sum per year. Yet the aldermen cut down the item by twenty per cent. The departmental head paid no attention to that, but chopped something off another part of his expenditure. He didn't want to. He knew he shouldn't. But he was afraid to do otherwise.

There is only one thing that will keep a departmental head in a city hall from being ruined for life, and put in the "pathetic figure" class, and that is courage. Not mere courage, but confidence in himself and his intentions, and a tactfully controlled contempt for the weaknesses of the administrative system. In a certain big Canadian city there is such a man. He is a big, rollicking chap, who has ideas about efficiency and reads the latest books on engineering and knows all the little wrinkles of all the little businesses that are mixed up in his department; something about electrical work, pavement work, engines, pumps, paving, excavating, street railways and so on. He has more good humour and philosophy than you could crowd into ten ordinary men. He has a laugh that is a disconcertant and a smile that thaws water pipes. The aldermen half love him, half fear him. They do what he says, because they know if they don't they'll make fools of themselves. He is not afraid of his job. He knows he could get another one better if he wanted it. He draws the munificent salary of eight thousand a year. Enough? Of course it is enough, because he happens to be a curious kind of man who is content with last year's automobile and isn't afraid to be seen eating in a quick lunch counter. He loves his city and he loves his work. But one of these fine days a big corporation will cast its eye round and will see this man. It will offer him fifteen thousand or fifty thousand. At first he will want to refuse, because, as I said before, he loves his city and his job. But after all, fifty thousand or even fifteen thousand is about as human a bait as could well be tickling any man's nose, and he can easily develop the habit of driving next year's model and eating in fashionable clubs. What is more, the big corporation would appreciate such work as this man does. It would pay him well to begin with and would let him know very soon whether it liked his first annual report or not. But is there praise for this man in his present position? No. Virtue is its own reward. He knows what he knows and is content to know that he is doing his work well. Who would take his place? Probably a perfectly well-meaning engineer, just as clever technically as the other man, or more so. But unless he had this other man's qualities he would soon deteriorate into an ordinary city servant, and his department would deteriorate accordingly.

THERE is a movement coming to the rescue of the city official. There are two goals ahead of the cities. One is government by commission or something of the sort, which is a deep and an involved subject not to be discussed here, and the other is the Municipal Survey and the Bureau of Municipal Research. As things stand at present the average citizen, or even the average alderman, cannot tell which of all the departmental heads is doing good work and which is doing bad work. You may say the Health Department is better run than the Works Department, but it is not fair to compare two such different departments. To judge the Works Department you should be able to place it against other works departments that have similar problems to deal with. You should measure your health department against other health departments. You may then find that the Works Department in your city is really better run than the Health Department. But how can you find these things? By travelling from city to city and spending years studying the departments in question in order to understand them? That is impossible. The Municipal Survey scheme is the only real alternative.

This is not intended as an advertisement for Municipal Surveys and the Bureau of Municipal Research in New York City, but even if it were it would be doing good and not harm. Seven or eight years ago the administration of the city of New York was the subject of inquiry by a number of citizens. They saw that no mere surface inquiry would avail them anything and they began an expert investigation. They employed accounting experts, law experts, engineering experts and health experts to criticize privately not only the handling of the money, but the doing of the work of the city. In the water works department of the city it effected an increase of \$4,000,000 per year in the

revenue, or forty per cent. on a \$10,000,000 basis. At the same time it cut down the operating expenses of the department \$200,000 a year. It had not increased the water rates. It merely made the department efficient. In other departments it did likewise. But the result with which I am concerned in this article is the fact that it revealed which of the city officials were good officials and which

were bad ones. It was the means of having the good men recognized and the inefficient or dishonest men removed. In thirty-two other cities in the United States it has done the same thing on different scales. It has been invoked in Toronto recently and is expected to do good there. It is the one hope of the city official who is doing honest work.



Pity the Poor Hangman!

AN ex-hangman has just died in England; and his life story consequently figures in the press. It seems that he resigned his position prior to his death because his "nerve was broken" by the discovery that he had hanged two innocent people. He went to the judge who had pronounced sentence in one case, and told him what he had learned. The judge tried to comfort him by saying that it was not his fault if he hanged twenty in their innocence. "Take and hang them yourself, then," replied the hangman; and he never executed another man.

I HAVE always felt that there is something radically wrong in the attitude of society toward its own servants who do for it what we sometimes call its "dirty work." It is looked upon by the majority as a disgrace to be a hangman. The hangman himself very often wears a mask to conceal his identity; and, in the old days when there was no regular official but the Sheriff merely picked up whom he could for the job, the vigilant newspaper reporters tried every strategy to find out who he was. Now all this is very, very unfair of society. It insists upon murderers being executed for its own protection; and then it visits a sort of social ostracism upon the man who actually does the executing.

YET what has he done? He has killed a man for the safety of his fellow-countrymen. If that were not the motive in the execution of the criminal, then the execution was murder—and the murderers were society-at-large. The disgrace does not lie, surely, in the fact that the executioner has killed a man. The soldier does that. And the more men the soldier kills, for the safety of his fellow-countrymen, the more do we pile honours upon him. Consequently, if we were logical, we should not shroud our hangmen in disgrace—we should cover their breasts with medals. They have taken upon their shoulders a most disagreeable duty for the rest of us—they have killed a man for our advantage—why do we mask the hangman and paint portraits of the soldier?

ONE very evident reason appears on the surface. The soldier does his vicarious killing under circumstances which call for great personal courage; the hangman is never afraid that the murderer may turn the tables and strangle the executioner with his own noose. I rather fancy that if we analyzed our feelings, it would be right here that we would find much of the material for our sentiment toward the unfortunate agent of society who does our official killing for us. It is not a cowardly deed—in fact, it calls for a lot of courage, "Dutch" or otherwise—but it looks like one. The victim has not a sporting chance. If society would permit the executioner and the murderer to fight a duel, we would all feel better about it. In that case, we would be willing to go on supplying executioners *ad lib.* until one of them bowled over the murderer—provided, always, that we never heard anything about the executioners' families or other details touching the results of their "taking off."

WE are an awfully "squeamish" lot when it comes to dealing with the rough side of life. Yet we do not propose to get along without the rough side. We only propose to delegate certain people to live on that rough side—and never to tell us anything about it. Sometimes we go farther and never want to so much as see them—even if they will consent to talk of something else. The hangman is one of these "substitutes" of ours. He goes to the wars for us. And we treat him as Ian Maclaren's Scotch folk treated their solitary police-

man. I wonder if we couldn't invent some plan which would rescue him from this uncomfortable position and ourselves from our hypocritical quandary. It certainly would save us from momentary twinges in our self-respect whenever we hear of the woes of the public executioner.

WE might take a hint, for example, from the army, and arrange to have criminals executed by some system under which no one could quite tell who did it. A firing squad will be ordered to shoot a deserter. Only some of the rifles are loaded with ball-cartridge; and the soldiers do not know which men have them. They all fire together—the deserter falls—but no one will ever know whose finger it was that released the fatal bullet. In some such way, we might impanel a jury of citizens who should all take seats in a room, with no knowledge which of them seats himself in the chair so arranged that his weight springs the trap in the next room. Or—better still—his weight might make the electric connection which sent a deadly current through the occupant of the "chair."

WHY should this be any harder a task for a jury than it is to compel them to bring in a verdict of "guilty," which starts all the trouble? If a jury did not find the prisoner "guilty," the hangman would never be called in. I only throw this off as a hastily-hatched suggestion; but what I am getting at is that the community should arrange in some way to do its own hanging if it is going to visit with such cruel ostracism the "substitute" whom it now sends to the firing-line. If we could only shake off our hypocrisy, this would not be necessary; but can a leopard change his spots? Life is hard enough to live through, with the softening aid of all our hypocrisies; and we shall never give them up. We are far more apt to add to their number.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

"The Miracle and Other Poems"

A BRILLIANT woman's service to Canadian literature will be recognized, by the critical reader, in Mrs. Sheard's new volume, entitled "The Miracle and Other Poems."

One is entertained, in perusing the book, by the very great diversity of subjects and convinced of a breadth of experience which makes the same substantial—a quality missed in the Pickthall poems, which latter are merely the exquisite products of fancy. On the other hand, Mrs. Sheard is less unerring than Miss Pickthall, as touches perfection of form and charm of language. Yet, invariably, Mrs. Sheard's verse is attractive in its treatment, whether that treatment be lyrical, contemplative or dramatic. And it is all three.

In "The Crow" occur four exquisite lines of which, in emotional subtlety, one must go for the counterpart to the highest sources:—

"Or did'st thou sit upon the bare, brown branches
And hear the sap go singing to the trees?
Did'st watch with keen, far-seeing, downward
glances,

The leaves unlock their cells with fairy keys?"

Such lines are interspersed throughout the songs. The two long poems, "The Miracle" and "In Egypt," are intensely dramatic in the reality of the figures which are made to move and live and speak before one.

On the whole, "The Miracle and Other Poems" is a book I would not be enraged to receive from a well-meaning friend for a Christmas present. And that is the highest praise from one who is quite unable to love a book merely because a fellow-Canadian wrote it and whose book-giving friends have been largely patriotic. (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.)

M. J. T.