

Literary Notes

"CHILD OF DESTINY"—By W. J. Fischer. William Briggs, Toronto.

Dr. W. J. Fischer, having served considerable apprenticeship at verse-making, and having shown that he is no mean songster, now apes the example of Stringer, Roberts and Campbell, his brother Canadian poets, and aims at literary versatility by producing a novel. It would have been better for Dr. Fischer to have stuck to his verses. His reputation will suffer by his latest effort. Dr. Fischer, though he means well, will never be a novelist—just because he is a poet. He has poetic limitations. As evidenced by the "Child of Destiny," his book, the author's head is reared so far above the earth in the ethereal atmosphere of the clouds, that he sees little of what goes on here below. When he does get a glimpse, the world appears altogether out of joint—which it is not. The first essential of a novelist is a vision of the world of the lives, hopes and ambitions of those who comprise it. That does not come through a library window. A man must go outside and feel the pulse of the throbbing life there. You can dream poetically in a Morris chair, but novels are written better where the cushions are not so soft.

"Child of Destiny" is melodramatic and improbable. It is not a picture of life. The characters are intended for ordinary people, but some of them have a supernatural touch that is quite grotesque. The story itself is a hackneyed one, a fact, however, that would matter little if handled by a writer who understood something of construction; who would appear more convincing by having his character, Arthur Gravenor, do less cursing at remorseless fate in the disappointment of the love affair; by being careful that the Child of Destiny be kidnapped in a manner less open to suspicion that the author is the guilty party; and by avoiding the amateurish conclusion of "explanation letters."

Here is a love scene from "Child of Destiny":—

"You may think yourself an ordinary girl, Gracia," he interrupted, "but that is your humility. To me you are the greatest, noblest, sweetest woman I have ever known—an angel dropped from the skies, beautiful as the snow and lovely as the stars in the blue heavens. With you always near my life will be a path of roses. Without you it would have been cold and cheerless."

"Ah, Jerome, love is sweet when sanctified upon the altar of a noble heart like yours, and its rose-time is joyous. Oh, I am so happy—so happy. Yes, I love you, dear."

Dr. Fischer writes good poetry and prose-poetry, but the great Canadian novel will not be his contribution to literature.

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"THE BIOGRAPHY OF A SILVER FOX"—E. Thompson Seton. Copp Clark Co., Toronto.

An animal story is agreeable during the summer vacation. Mr. Ernest Thompson Seton, our Canadian, has another one this spring. His subject is an old one, Renard, the fox, but he treats it in an original and interesting manner. There is no moralising—just the life history of the animal who is after all not so bad as he is painted.

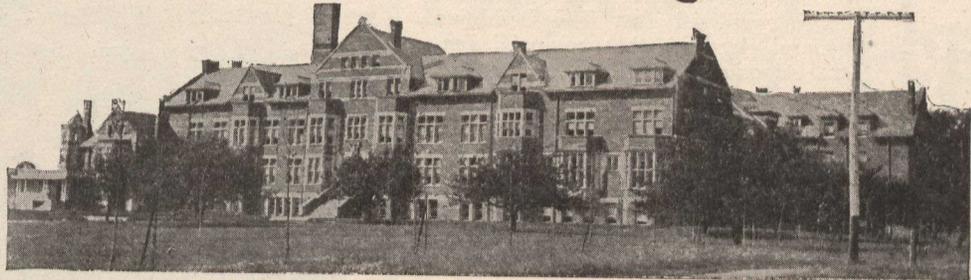
DONALD B. SINCLAIR.

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THE ANNUAL REVIEW.

ADVANCE pages of *The Canadian Annual Review* for 1908, which appears this week, indicate a wealth of information regarding Canada in the volume as a whole. It is a verit-

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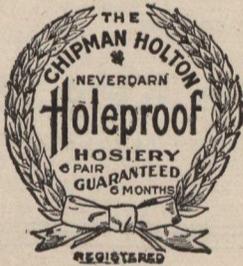
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