

THE ----National Monthly Of Canada

CONTENTS FOR MAY, 1903.

Current Comments.

- Sir Oliver Mowat (with frontispiece.)
- The Dominion Coat of Arms,

By J. Macdonald Oxley.

- The Future of Canada, By Frances Cassidy.
- High Park, Toronto (illustrated,)

By Demar.

Miss Alicia, By Harvey O'Higgins.

Banked Fires, By Arthur Stringer.

Fashion Plates,

Suggestions to Housekeepers.

Home Department.

Literature.

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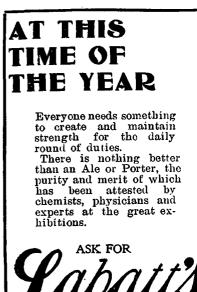
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The Sure Sign.

AVE you ever had anyone say to you with almost convincing " Well, assurance, Spring is here at last," and a few days later had atmospheric evidence to the contrary? If so, you will agree with me in treating the observation jokingly. However, when a friend of more than usual caution made the statement this season, I felt compelled to prove to him I said, "I, too, his error. used to foretell the departure of winter, but, really, all the old signs and tests have The robin has forfailed. feited his old-time reputation of official announcer of Spring in trying to rush it along in February. April has evidently changed places with March on the yearly



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programme; the trees shoot forth their leaves one day and, on the next, wish to draw them in again; the weatherman is hopelessly at sea; the oldest inhabitant has fallen from his exalted position; and even your own senses cannot be trusted to—...''

"True," he said, "all the old signs have failed; but there is a new and infallible sign. When the ambitious youngsters of the male persuasion arrange themselves on every field in positions mathematically correct and attitudes all but professional, and talk learnedly of balks and strikes—then, fail all other signs, Spring is here. These be the small brothers of the young men who, last season and for many seasons, sent floating over the well-trimmed ballfield that most characteristic of all summer sporting cries, 'You're rotten!' These be the youngsters that, in a few short years, if ambitions be not blasted, will stride forth leisurely to the home-plate, spit on their hands and rub them in the sand in that careless fashion which is at once the envy and ambition of every fifteen-cent admission. These be human barometers, and it is Spring, and Spring alone, which brings an aching for the feel of the bat and the slap of the ball."

I admitted that he might be right, but I insisted upon waiting for proof. Now, having waited from week to week without seeing Winter return, with him I say, "Heed not the feathered songster's advice to lay aside winter underwear; be not deceived by the speculative weather-man or his accomplices; mistrust the painted calendar; place no faith in budding tree nor in the weather eye of the octogenarian; but when, at every vacant lot, your ear is greeted by the cry, 'Make him hit it !' or the earnest injunction, 'Get 'em over, Skinny!' make haste to take up the carpets, for Spring has come."

An Insurmountable Obstacle.

Stapleton : "Women will never be successful as politicians."

Caldecott : "Why not?"

Stapleton : "Not built that way. It is possible that a woman might saw wood—but she could never say nothing."

366