

THE LIBRARY TABLE

CANADIAN LITERATURE AND CANADIAN YOUNG PEOPLE.

That there is a sure way of interesting young people in Canadian books and magazines was shown at a meeting of C. G. I. T. girls in a Methodist church recently. The speaker of the evening had three lately published Canadian books before her—"The Bells of St. Stephen's," by Marian Keith; "Openway," by Archie P. McKishnie; and "The Woodcarver's Wife," by Marjorie L. Pickthall. After telling something about the authors, she read aloud extracts from each of these books. The reading was greatly appreciated, and several expressed a desire to buy the books, while all the girls were eager to read them.

Here is an opportunity for leaders of young people's societies to spread the work of Canadian Book Week throughout the year and build up an appreciation of Canadian literature among coming Canadian citizens.

"TILlicums OF THE TRAIL." By Rev. George C. F. Pringle. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto; \$2.00.

Mr. Pringle, who is in charge of the Presbyterian Coast Mission, which ministers to the settlers, fishermen and loggers on the lonely British Columbia coast, has achieved a most interesting piece of work in this book, "Tillicums of the Trail."

While these tales lack climax and plot, as is almost inevitably the case with "true stories," they derive a twofold interest from the setting in which they occurred and that in which they were told. Adventures in the Yukon, told to soldiers at the Front, in dug-out, rest-billet and trench!

This book should do something to help explode the idea that "man" and "minister" can not be synonymous.

"THE THREE KINGS" and Other Verses for Children. By Donald A. Fraser. Cusack Printing Co., Victoria, B. C.; 50 cents.

Boys and girls, and their elders, too, will be glad to know that Mr. Fraser has published a little volume of verse for children. Here are many charming nonsense rhymes and some more serious verse.

Mr. Fraser is a teacher and knows what young folk like. He writes about birds and beasts, and boys, having afternoon tea, about work and play and the happy Christmas time, about trees and flowers, and such queer creatures as Tinkle and Tankle, and the Raggerwitch that lived in Zimbashsee (you will be glad to hear that Mr. Fraser has "squinked" this "awful, borgous Raggerwitch").

In more serious vein is the sonnet entitled:

In God's Cathedral.

In God's Cathedral there is naught but praise;
The columned firs uprise in stately trust,
And bear the azure dome with quiet thrust,
Their plummy capitals in light ablaze;
Below in shade the younger hemlocks raise
A pale green mist like incense-smoke that must
Bear upward from repentant, yearning dust
Some prayer for pardon and for hope that stays.
The faithful ferns have spread their pleading palms,
And listen as the organ-wind resounds,
While choral birds chant sweet their holy psalms;
All passion flees, and peace alone abounds.
To God's Cathedral bring no jarring tone;
Heart of my soul, bow thou before the throne!

Many of the rhymes are illustrated by amusing little pictures, and the book is one that should give pleasure to many.

"NEIGHBOURS." By Robert Stead. Musson Book Co.; \$1.75.

"Neighbours" is a pleasant story and has a real value as picturing pioneer conditions which are rapidly passing into the realm of history. The wheat prairies of the Canadian West form the background for a tale of the struggles and love affairs of a group of young people from one of the Eastern Provinces. The plot is somewhat improbable, and the characterization not of the strongest; but there are many beautiful descriptive passages and a saving vein of humour runs through the story, while the style is often vigorous and always clear and readable.

"The Key of Dreams." By L. Adams Beck. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto. \$2.00.

There is surely only one offence more heinous than offering sugar-coated poison to children—that of offering a book, well, even excellently written, subversive not only to recognized Christian ideals, but to common morality.

One would not ask of any author that he deny, evade, or fail to deal with the sad and sordid phases of the life of his characters, but there are ways and ways of treating every subject, and one cannot but deplore and condemn the way Mr. Beck has chosen. With every subtlety at his command—and he is a master of the silver pen—he has sought to make vice seem attractive, and the yielding to sensuous passion inevitable.

The book abounds in descriptive passages of rare and poetic beauty, a glamour of mysticism overhangs the plot, the character work is carefully done; why should all this excellence be marred and undone by a moral atmosphere comparable only to a malarial swamp?

The exaltation of Buddhism is to anyone having even an elementary knowledge of the actual facts, not only objectionable, but ridiculous; while Mr. Beck's indictment of Western civilization cannot possibly be taken seriously if he has no further grounds on which to base it than those he puts forward in this book.

Mr. Beck is evidently a dreamer; one could wish that he would either dream better dreams, or else wake up.

"The Bells of St. Stephen." By Marion Keith. McClelland & Stewart, Toronto.

Readers of Mrs. Donald McGregor's (Marion Keith) previous books will welcome this happy and wholesome little tale, the scene of which is laid in a fashionable church in a country town.

The story is interestingly written. As one reads it, one has a feeling that it must really have happened. The gentle compromising old minister, the self-satisfied mill owner, the socially ambitious Helen; eager, sympathetic Mary the second; lively young Peter, their brother; the girls of the church with their fun and their festivals; Mrs. McCann, the charwoman; dear old Johnny Petatie, with his garden and his beautiful faith—surely we've met them all! And certainly we are glad to meet them again.

There are many delightful touches of humour running all through the story; the incident of the rummage sale is particularly happy.

While it must be said that the action is at times a little jerky, "The Bells of St. Stephen's" is a truly charming story and will bring pleasure to many.

—L. A.

Owing to the need for special revision of our lists at this time, and unavoidable delays affecting other departments, this issue is No. 3 of Vol. XX. of the B. C. M. Space and dates are being checked accordingly.