

AN OLD NOVEL

One of the pleasures of the Christmas season was the opportunity to read a novel, written seventy years ago about people and places in Wellington county by a writer who spent her later years in Fergus. The name of the novel is a rather strange one, "The Cromaboo Mail Carrier," and we never knew that such a book existed. This page has often dealt with books about Wellington county, and we thought we had heard of most of them. There are few novels in the lot. Fred Jacob wrote two novels, based on life in Elora in his youth. "Yon Toon o' Mine," written about Fergus by James Black Perry, was almost a novel but could more truly be classed as a series of sketches of his native town. The other works were mostly poetry, or history, or sketches, or short stories, or even books of sermons and family trees.

This book was brought to our attention by the King's Printer in Toronto, Baptist Johnston, who loaned us a copy of the book and sent the following explanation:

I am forwarding to you, under separate cover, a copy of "The Cromaboo Mail Carrier," written by my great-aunt, Mary Leslie, in the 70's, under the nom de plume of James Thomas Jones. It relates chiefly to the Guelph district and Hamilton. Some of the characters were so thinly disguised that my Aunt was threatened with a law-suit for damages, and on that account the book was withdrawn from circulation. Her old house, I believe, still stands. It is on the Eramosa Road, three miles north-east of Guelph. She died at our house on Russell Hill Road, Toronto, about 1921.

That sounded interesting and the book