

Governor-General of Canada. The destruction of property at Washington and the huge British losses at New Orleans make melancholy reading." These sentences might have been written by our Canadian Jeremiah, Prof. Goldwin Smith. They convey distinctly the impression that, on the whole, England and Canada got the worst of it. Nothing could be more disingenuous. It is a shame that a Canadian—not to say a Canadian Professor of History—should be willing to sign his name to a contribution in a foreign periodical falsely damning his own country. The results of the campaign were not on the whole disastrous to England. The war was removed from Canada to the States. Their seaboard was harried from south to north. They were driven off the lakes. Their capital was burned. Their trade was ruined. The Union was endangered and another season of squeeze would have made the Eastern States willing to conclude peace on their own account, leaving the West and South to go on if they chose. Plattsburgh and New Orleans were British defeats. New Orleans the Americans may be justly proud of; Plattsburgh is a disgrace only to the memory of Prevost. It is no particular credit to the Americans. These, Mr. Editor, I submit, are the true lines to take in discussing the results of the campaign of 1814. I am sorry that a Professor in my old University should bring a loyal Canadian institution into disrepute by such a perversion of the proudest record of his country.

It is of the greatest importance that our youth should have implanted in their minds correct ideas of their country's past. If this article is a specimen of the teachings of Professor Wrong I, as a Canadian, say he is not to be trusted as a Canadian Professor of History. I have tried to state succinctly wherein I think Professor Wrong has not done Canada justice. I acknowledge that as he was writing for an American magazine he had to sugar his pill. But he was not called upon to sacrifice truth to please the people for whom he was writing, and I invoke your aid, as the editor of a loyal Canadian outspoken and independent journal, to summon Professor Wrong to the bar of outraged Canadian feeling.

M. A.

Toronto, 14th April, 1896.

Earth's Enigmas.

IN taking up a volume of stories by a man who has made his mark as a poet, one very naturally begins to read more from curiosity than expectation of real enjoyment. But if such is the attitude of the reader when he opens "Earth's Enigmas," by Charles G. D. Roberts, he will soon find that he has fallen upon a book that it will be hard to lay down until the last page is reached.

Many of the stories in this volume have appeared from time to time in different periodicals, and have made those who are watching the career of our brilliant Canadian writer realize that if he is great as a poet he also possesses great possibilities in prose fiction. Now that these stories have been collected and given to the world in a dainty piece of book-making, by Lampson, Wolfe & Co., it will be surprising if the Canadian public, at least, does not unhesitatingly recognize that a new prose writer, with qualities of the first rank, has added his quota to the powerful literature that is slowly but surely beginning to make itself felt in this northern land.

The stories show great imaginative penetration, fine descriptive power, and seriousness; three things that are needful for abiding work: and although they lack dramatic reality, the other qualities are so marked that the most casual reader is held captive by the charm of each tale. The title of the book, "Earth's Enigmas," is an odd one, and if a reader should begin at random among the sketches—as we are apt to do with short stories—he would wonder why it had been so called. But the first story, "Do Seek their Meat from God," dealing with the mystery of the struggle for existence, should show the most careless why the title was chosen. This story, with its companion sketch, "The Young Ravens that Call upon Him," and the powerful piece of word-painting, "Strayed," all touch upon enigmas that must ever appeal for solution to all thoughtful minds. In these the writer is finely serious: he is before mysteries of life, and handles them as only a poet could. In his workmanship, too, he shows the same characteristics that

have marked his poetical work since "Memnon" appeared from his youthful pen some eighteen years ago. His artistic conscience never slumbers, and he carves and chisels his style with the care that is so noteworthy in writers like Maupassant,—of whom, indeed, he would seem to me a student. He is a master of English prose, and some of his word-pictures stand out with great vividness. Nothing could be finer than his drawing of the ewe wildly rushing after the eagle which has flown homeward with her young lamb. "The lamb hung limp from his talons; and with piteous cries the ewe ran beneath, gazing upward, and stumbling over the hillocks and juniper bushes." But his book is full of such touches, and give further evidence of the genius for observing details of nature and of life which Roberts has so admirably displayed in his sonnets.

If these intensely strong and tragic sketches are interesting, the reader will find no less attractive such stories as "Within Sound of the Saws," "The Butt of the Camp," and "At the Rough-and-Tumble Landing." As might be judged from the titles, these deal with the work and lives of the humble toilers in a lumber country. The writer, from his residence on the St. John and Miramichi rivers—great lumber streams—is peculiarly well fitted to handle these themes. In "Within Sound of the Saws," he has succeeded in making the mill town a reality to one who was born within sound of the saws, to whom the news that the mills were to close down was very much as if the sun were about to be removed for a season, and who measured the return of Spring, not by the first robin, but by the buzz of the saws, the dull clang of the deals, and the heavy clatter of the mill carts. No second-hand observation could ever have produced this paragraph:

"In the middle of the mill worked the 'gang,' a series of upright saws that rose and fell swiftly, cleaving their way with a pulsating, vicious clamour through an endless and sullen procession of logs. Here and there, each with a massive table to itself, hummed the circulars, large and small; and whensoever a deal, or a pile of slabs, was brought in contact with one of the spinning discs, upon the first arching spurt of sawdust-spray began a shrieking note, which would run the whole vibrant and intolerable gamut as the saw bit through the fibres from end to end. In the occasional brief moments of comparative silence, when several of the saws would chance to be disengaged at the same instant, might be heard, far down in the lower story of the mill, the grumbling roar of the great turbine wheels which, sucking in the tortured water from the sluices, gave life to all the wilderness of cranks and shafts above."

It is the same with "The Butt of the Camp," and "At the Rough-and-Tumble Landing." In the one he has pictured with great truth the boisterous life of a lumber-camp; in the other, with graphic power, the most perilous work that a daring axeman can tackle. It is well for us to know what our toilers do, and we could have nothing better than these stories to introduce us to one phase at least of the life of the Canadian labourer.

"The Stone Dog" is strongly imaginative; but lacks sufficient reality to make it appear, even for a moment, possible—lacks, in other words, that power which makes it seem quite natural that the animals should talk in the "Jungle Book." "The Eye of Gluskap" is likewise a highly improbable tale, but the fine local colour and charm of style make it exceedingly attractive. "A Tragedy of the Tides" is in every way powerful. It is a historical sketch of the time of the struggle between the French and English in Acadia, and would serve as the kernel for a strong historical novel.

But all these stories are well worth reading; and although some are slight, and some are lacking in dramatic truth, there is none which has not an attractiveness of its own. In attempting to point out the most noteworthy thing about them we select the fidelity and power with which he has drawn nature. They are New Brunswick and Nova Scotian stories, and Roberts has as truly—although not as fully—pictured the face of that part of our great Dominion as has Hardy his Wessex coast or Egdon heath. If Roberts had done nothing else, this is something of real worth. Tantramar, we learned to love in his verse, but in these prose sketches he has once more given us Tantramar and Fundy, and to them he has added glimpses at other parts of the Maritime Provinces which his poetry left untouched. This is a hopeful sign. These stories are rich