

## AMONG THE BOOKS

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The "O.K." in the title of Robert Watson's new book, *The Girl of the O.K. Valley* (McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 297 pages, \$1.50 net), stands for the beautiful Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. The writer, widely known as the author of a last year's story, *My Brave and Gallant Gentleman*, is a Scot who came to Canada some years ago and is on the staff of the Hudson's Bay Company at Vernon, B.C. He knows, therefore, both sides of the sea, and the beautiful and balmy Okanagan region in particular, and has made excellent use of his familiarity with this portion of our Westernmost Province, and of its people and their ways: the local color is vivid and attractive. The story, whilst revealing the defects of one who has not yet reached ripest experience as a writer, is told with rare directness and force. A crude, harsh, and greedy farmer uncle; his daughter, the handsome, but jealous "cousin Lizbeth;" Kathie, the fatherless and motherless niece and cousin, who comes to the farm home from across the seas; Alick Simpson, the school teacher in the nearby town, a scholar and gentleman, who had silently won out under the handicap of obscure and evil birth; and Bob Crawford, the muscular and impetuous Provincial Police Chief, are the chief figures in the tale, along with the son of a neighboring rich rancher, and Captain Gray and his wife, who turn out to be the good geniuses of the story. Kathie, the "Girl" of the story title, holds one's eye from first to last for her unselfishness and faithfulness. She will even break her own heart rather than break her word or seem ungrateful to her skinflint, grasping, treacherous uncle who had given her a home when she was homeless. Every one will fall in love with her and with her violin, although it seems predestined from the very beginning that it is Alick Simpson who is to have her. The story is well characterized as "a Simon-pure romance, full of charm of atmosphere and vigor of action." It is of additional charm to Canadian readers by reason of realistic delineation of Canadian life as this is exhibited in the wonderful lands of British Columbia.

Polly Masson, by William H. Moore (J. M. Dent & Sons, London and Toronto, 339 pages, \$1.75 net), like its predecessor, *The Clash*, by the same author, is a novel of Canadian politics. It deals with the political

fortunes of William Larned, M.P. for East Badmington in the Canadian House of Commons. The chief political interest of the story lies in the views set forth on Imperial Federation and the problem of French Canada,—views concerning which there will be decided differences of opinion amongst its readers. The book is not, however, all taken up with politics. It contains a love story as well. Larned has many keen political discussions with pretty Polly Masson, an ardent champion of the French-Canadians; but in spite of all differences of opinions, the two are drawn together by the force that laughs at all opposition. Mr. Moore's second volume is a worthy contribution to our growing Canadian literature.

The well deserved fame of Philip Gibbs as a War Correspondent has led to the re-issue of his "Novel of journalistic life in London," *The Street of Adventure* (E. P. Dutton & Company, New York, J. M. Dent & Sons, Toronto, 437 pages, \$1.90 net), written, as the author tells us in his preface, ten years ago. The "Street" of the story is, of course, Fleet Street, famous in the annals of English journalism. It is, indeed, a world of thrilling adventure, crammed with human interest of the most fundamental sort into which this fascinating book introduces its readers. In its pages, comedy and tragedy are strangely intermingled, and its laughter is never far away from tears. There is the record, too, of high endeavor and of ideals nobly maintained. Wherever there are hearts which yield to the charm of the spirit of youth, which sent Francis Luttrell and Katherine Halstead into the strange old street on the quest for the real in life, this tale from the hand of a master will not lack for readers.

There is no story writer of our time more vivid and more massive than Vincente Blasco Ibanez, the author of *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, the immense popularity of which testifies to the power of the writer. It was a book of the War, the War of the land armies of the Allies. The best testimony to the realism of its descriptive passages is the appreciation of these expressed by the men who fought in those armies. His newest book, *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea), from J. M. Dent & Sons, Toronto, 518 pages, \$1.90 net, centres on the devilish work of the