

back, and recognized his captor as a rich patron of music.

Abie was taken into an ante-room, sobbing: "Oh, please, mister, lemme go. I forgot. The music it was— Lemme go!"

The patron sent the others away and had a little talk with Abie. "Why do you sing?"

"Because I can't help it. I feel so bad here." And he clutched his heart. *Grossvater* he is got to go by the Island, mommer she is sick, and I—I can't help it."

The patron took him up in the choir-loft, and standing near the great organ, Abie sang again. He wondered why the ladies and gentlemen all had tears in their eyes, surely they were queer, but he wished they would let him go. Mommer might wake up and miss him.

The patron took him home in an automobile, asking him questions all the way, and just before they stopped before the tenement where Abie lived he made him some astonishing promises.

THEY found Mrs. Zuskin lying just as Abie had left her.

The dreadful look was still on her face, only much plainer now.

Abie kissed her, but she did not stir and she did not answer when he called her.

The patron bent over her and listened at her heart. Then he tried to draw Abie away. "Come, my boy, I'm afraid you can't wake her—she—"

Abie's eyes dilated and he threw up his hand to stop the word. "No, no, she's awful hard to wake it up, but she always hears this."

He sat down beside her, took her hand in his

and began to sing in their mother-tongue. To the man listening, he seemed to cry, Come back! Come back! in the heart-stirring tones of a child, lonely and grieving for its mother.

Slowly the warmth came back to the hand, the blood to the lips, and she opened her eyes.

Abie gave her some medicine and helped her to sit up.

"O, mommer!" He sobbed hysterically. "You mustn't sleeps it so sound any more."

"I was dreaming, Abie. Such a lovely dream about—"

Then she noticed his new-found friend. "Mommer, this here gentlemen he is going to takes it care of us. He is going to have me learn how to sing in churches he—"

And then the whole wonderful story was told. How they had met; how Abie was to be educated; how *Grossvater* was to come home; how they were all going to the country until mommer was well again, and how, henceforth, everything was to be just as it should be.

Then the patron left, promising to come again the next day and bring *Grossvater* with him.

"Abie, we have got it to-day what many peoples have not in all their lifetimes, two good friends," said Mrs. Zuskin, happily.

Abie threw himself on his knees beside her. "Mommer! The gentlemen says I can sing!"

"Jah, lieben, like an engel. You called me back from—Ach! Never mind, but *Gott sei dank* Abie, you called me."

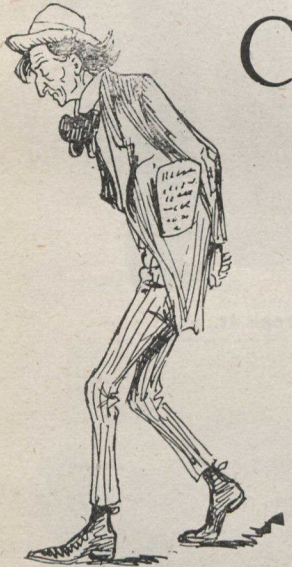
"Mommer."

"Jah, lieben."

"You won't never go it again so fast asleeps, will you? For all the musics and everythings I wouldn't care it nothings, mommer, if you didn't wakes it up."

The Great Novel Coming

By J. SMITH-SMYTHE



CANADA is waiting for her great novel, which has not yet been written. It would be possible to give quite a list of clever ladies and gentlemen who are duly qualified Canadians, and who have sent forth stories of more or less merit—but it seems to be generally understood that the book has not yet made its appearance. We are all waiting for the master novelist and his immortal story—or series of stories. I use the masculine, though the literary genius on arrival may turn out to be a woman—another George Eliot instead of another

Charles Dickens. That is quite possible, though it does not happen to accord with my own premonition. I think it will be a man, and my reason for so believing is that I have for some time had a growing conviction that I myself am to be the Child of Destiny; it is my pen that is to shed glory on my country and triumphantly lay at rest the question—Is there a Canadian literature?

It is, indeed, quite a while since this impression got into my head. At first I was disposed to put the idea aside as a suggestion of the satan of vanity. But I have got over that stage. Reason duly asserted itself, and reflection compelled me to admit that I was really equipped in an exceptional way for the call. In the self-argumentations that arose from time to time on the subject I had to confess

... knowledge of men and things was unusually wide. ... was not merely that I had lived a good many years and traveled about a great deal, but that I had special aptitude for reading human nature. I could not deny that in a general way the human heart was an open book to me, and, what is perhaps more significant still, it was an open book which I read with sympathy as well as understanding. I loved my fellow creatures, and that is one of the hall-marks of the poet or novelist of the first rank. Then I could not help admitting, further, that I possessed the dramatic instinct in a high degree, nor could I deny that I was gifted with a fertile imagination and had uncommon facility in the management of dialogue, besides possessing descriptive powers far beyond the average. In short, I had to own up that the country had a right to look in my direction.

After all this it may perhaps be asked why I

haven't produced the Book. The question is so reasonable that I do not hesitate to answer it—the time has not yet come. I quite agree with my accomplished compatriot, Sir Gilbert Parker—a Canadian novelist I will really regret having to eclipse—that no man is prepared to write a novel that will grip the reading world until the theme, and subsequently the plot and characters, have literally taken possession of his mind. I feel the profound truth of this. Sir Gilbert tells us that his own most successful stories were practically written in a condition of trance. Now, this necessary afflatus is something that cannot be forced or hurried, and I am waiting for it. I can only report up to the present the somewhat dim and distant glimmering of the theme, but as yet the plot has not begun to reveal itself and the characters are still in the dark.

It is going to be a mining story, however. I think I may say this with some certainty, but whether Cobalt or Porcupine I cannot yet tell. I am just letting the matter simmer in my brain, and meanwhile am doing a little in the way of absorbing local atmosphere. This process (an essential preliminary to the writing of a great work of fiction) is going on during occasional intervals of loitering—in view of my serious purpose I do not say loafing—in the down-town brokers' offices. It is not convenient for me to visit the mining district itself just now, and I am not sure that there would be much advantage in doing so. The atmosphere, especially in those places where they have blackboards and arm-chairs for visitors, is just as good, I think, for a novelist's purpose as that which circulates around the mines themselves. As they allow smoking it is decidedly thicker, if there is anything in that.

I HAPPENED in at a little private exchange of this description the other day, and just sat around for a while, listening and breathing and making mental notes. There was a young gentleman, tall and slight, and in his shirt-sleeves, in charge of the ticker. I suppose he was a competent broker; he certainly was if he had as great facility at broking as at using cigarettes, cuss-words and slang. Business was not brisk, as it happened; so he was very leisurely in his movements, occasionally snipping off a piece of the tape, glancing at it and then jotting down quotations in the columns on the board. Meanwhile, conversation was going on among the droppers-in, who constituted what the young broker would probably call an interesting bunch. They were all gentlemen with a distinctively Cobaltish and Porcupiney air about them; stoutly built, clean shaven, and with an optimistic look in the eyes.

Of course nobody there had any suspicion of

my real object, so it was merely a coincidence that during my stay the germs for novels were tossed about in profusion in the stories that were exchanged. We heard, for example, of Dempsey, who grub-staked a prospector to the extent of fifty dollars and got two hundred and fifty thousand as his share of the claim that was located; and of Doolan, who less than two years ago was down and out with drink. He went to a gold-cure sanitarium; there met a widow who was a fellow-patient, but had \$20,000 a year; married her; took a flier in Porcupine with a little of her money and cleaned up some \$300,000; and of Snapperly, who planked down \$35,000 for 10,000 shares of Dollinger when the thing was only a prospect, and is now rolling in wealth. These are just a few of the nutshell novels that were published impromptu; not to exclude the queerest luck-episode of them all, the case of Ferguson the Fortunate, who took a big chance on Gray-Booster when it was around a dollar, and is now holding a wad of shares quoted at one cent asked.

Yes, it is going to be a mining story, and it is on the way. The Canadian novelist is coming.

Americans in the West

A READER in Coos County, New Hampshire, finds fault with an inscription which appeared under a picture in the CANADIAN COURIER of June 7th, and the article which it illustrated. Owing to an error in the editorial office, the people in the picture were labelled "Germans" instead of "Ruthenians." The letter is so amusing, it is reproduced in full:

Editor "Canadian Courier":

Sir: The enclosed page is from the June 7th issue of the "Canadian Courier" and came under my notice at an hotel here to-day. The writer of that article should consult an oculist; there isn't a single German in the group, nor is there one characteristic of the German about anything in the picture. Greeks, Italians, Hungarian, Polish, or anything you like, but German—never! Characterizing this picture as a "German Wedding in Regina" is a libel on the Germans, and I am qualified to make this statement, because I know whereof I write, being a full-blooded German.

The concluding sentence of the second paragraph should be taken "cum grano salus." Those from the States who have been accustomed to sing a certain tune to different words, if they are genuine Americans, can never be anything but Americans, whether they be temporarily in Canada or Timbuctoo. Don't run away with the idea that the real son or daughter of "Old Glory" would ever discard the red, white and blue and adopt a monarch's colours in place of it. Go out to Western Canada and see how these Americans—alleged Canadians—celebrate July 4th. I have been there and have seen. It will make you think, and think deeply. All this talk about the genuine American ever becoming a British subject is the veriest rubbish. The Yankee goes where there is a dollar in sight, and just now the Canadian North-west looks good to him. The Yankee goes there and grabs the dollars while the native is looking on and still thinking it over, and when the Yankee has made his pile, back he'll go to the land of the free, where all men are born equal, and where bums, loafers and parasites—so-called royalty—are not tolerated.

Yours truly,
LOUIS MILLER.

Milan, N.H., July 8th.

When the letter was received it was sent on to the COURIER's Regina correspondent, who answers as follows:

Editor "Canadian Courier":

Sir: I have read with much interest and amusement the letter from Mr. Miller re my article in the "Canadian Courier" of June 7th. In referring to "The New Canadians" I was thinking particularly of the foreign speaking, though including newcomers from many parts of the world who are realizing that Western Canada is for them a land of opportunity; that the country repays them infinitely better for effort expended than their old homes possibly could have done; people who have the decency to recognize facts; to appreciate a country in which lives and property have every protection; where provision is made for the education of their children and where distress has but to be discovered to be relieved.

I have been in the west over three years, closely associated as a newspaper woman with all phases of life and all movements. My experience has not been limited to the capital city, but I have formed a wide acquaintanceship throughout the province in the capacity of editor of the official page of the "rural women's clubs." In a long list of acquaintances I have been fortunate in numbering many born Americans, probably all of whom are doing very much better than they would have done in "the States." It is only right and natural to love the land of one's birth, but the better class of these are making up, or have made up their minds to do

(Concluded on page 22.)