

elation, in the Main Library on College Street, last week, there was not to be seen a man or woman of that old type. If they were there it was as converts from the School of Repression, taking post-graduate work under the newer school—the school that has for its motto: "Make the Library Human. Attract people to the library. Make it the social centre of your community. Take down the 'Silence' signs. Obtain the quiet you require by subtler means."

George Locke, the Chief Librarian of the city of Toronto, is the apostle of this new library spirit. He has not only transformed the Toronto library system, but has had a great deal to do with humanizing the libraries of the rest of the province. There are no forbidding signs in his reading rooms. Instead of that, he makes his rooms so attractive that one actually feels reluctant to leave his comfortable chair and the atmosphere of quiet industry in the big hall of the Reference Library on College Street. Just last week here was a special display of books on gardening, and seed catalogues all ready for the citizen who thinks he has no use for libraries, but has a great deal of use for gardens. Here was a war-map in relief and a list of the latest publications on Russia, so that anyone interested in the recent changes there might have all available light on the subject.

It was in one of Locke's branch libraries that the dogs were counted—not stray dogs, that might make a nuisance of themselves, but dogs whose owners take them for walks and who are enabled, by Locke's tolerance of the dog, to combine their duty to the dog with a duty to their minds. The libraries throughout Ontario, like the branches of the Toronto Public Library, are becoming community centres. The children are encouraged to come and to enjoy themselves. They are assisted to find the kind of books they want, and through the children parents are often brought into the library who might not otherwise have come.

This is the counter-influence to the collegiate snobbery, of which complaint has been made. Locke, for example, is a man with high standing in the academic world. But he is quite as much at home with the remotest intellectual as he is with the man who comes to borrow a book about "Spite Fences" or to read in the Encyc. Brit. the article on cut-worms. The spirit of the Ontario Libraries is a spirit of service!

STORY OF A STORY

TWENTY-FIVE years ago a poem of mine appeared in the Toronto Globe. It was a poem of anti-corruption based upon the evil-doings of Ottawa. Some months later I walked into a bean office in the town of — and was accosted by a big doctor who was an omnivorous reader and who said unto me,

"Say, I've read that poem of yours in the Globe. Mark my words, you'll make your name in literature. I spotted three other Canadian writers before they became famous. I'm not going to be fooled on you."

So mote it be. I wanted to become a litterateur. What ex-High-schooler of about twenty doesn't? Especially if he has had a poem in the Globe; particularly if the year before that his first poem of all had been printed in the Globe?

But literature to me in those days meant poetry. Ah, the Muses!

This is a great country for poets.

CHAPTER TWO.

FOUR years later I wrote a Canadian novel. It took me three months, most of it in a hickory grove on the north shore of Lake Erie—not the south side—with a fanning-mill sieve for a desk slung from the trunk of a pig hickory and capable of being revolved round the tree so as to keep the MSS in shadow. The music of storms should have been in that epic. I worked at it from early morning till dark.

In the fall of that year I took the completed novel to my friend the doctor, who had predicted my literary career.

It was a Saturday evening. After dismissing his last patient for the day he came to me. If ever a patient needed a tonic I did.

"How are all the folks?" he said.

"Haven't any," said I.

"Oh," said he. "Pardon me. I thought for the moment you were——"

To relieve his confusion I forked up the manuscript.

"I have a novel here, Doctor—a Canadian novel. I thought perhaps you'd like to——"

His huge face cracked into a psychic smile.

"Oh, surely," he said in a most alluring way. "Just what I've been waiting for. Glad you've broken into literature. Hmm! Yes, I'll read this in bed to-night. I always read in bed."

We went to bed. My room adjoined his. I slept—not. Up till three o'clock I heard the tireless flip-flap of those MSS.

Sunday morning. "Well," said he, with a smile, "I read part of that story. You've got some good strong sentences there. But it's a little hard to read. Will you read me—that chapter?"

I did. It was an awful experience.

"Just a moment," he said, whiffing his cigar. "There you have two young people at the piano. He turns the music. She sings. I would say just there, 'And as he turned over the pages of her music he fancied himself turning the pages of that young life.'"

I read no more. He seemed relieved. Before I went he said, candidly,

"No, I don't think that's the story that'll make you. Try a short story. Write me a good one. Don't care a copper for time or place. Just put strength and conviction and passion into it. Send it along. I'll write you my opinion."

CHAPTER THREE.

I WROTE the aforesaid story. It took me a month. It was a very sad but stern yarn of a young woman, a wealthy person of some sort, a young man who was her son, a missionary in the mountains—and an act of revenge of some sort. I compacted that story of all the loose passion I had, wrote it as legibly as a copybook with a Spencerian pen and sent it to my friend the Doctor.

CHAPTER FOUR.

YEARS have passed, as they will in all good stories. Now and then I met my friend the Doctor, once at a dinner given to a lady litterateur of his home town, and at which he, as chairman, made an eloquent speech. Afterwards, at the hotel, he gazed at me, but without recognition. I was relieved. At that time I was not making literature. It was now seven years since I sent him the story. He had not replied. I said to him not a word.

Again and again I met him. For a period of years he knew me. He told me incidents enough to make a book. He was a very original man, who should have written books. But neither of us ever mentioned that story.

Years again. We drifted apart. There was no correspondence. I had almost forgotten the story. The original novel I had long since burned in a back yard.

CHAPTER FIVE.

TWO years ago a young man who writes a bit now—and then said to me in a club,

"By the way, I have a story which I should like you to read. I'd value your opinion."

"All right," said I. "Send it along."

Having become myself an alleged critic, it was comforting to determine that he should not have to wait long for my opinion. He was a gay, somewhat bohemian young fellow who, as I knew, wrote nothing but smart things. This story would be a smart thing. I knew it.

That evening a cylindrical parcel awaited me at the house.

"Oh," said I. "My friend loses no time. This is the story."

I opened the parcel. It was—an MS.

But it was not typewritten. I wondered at this because this young man was strictly up-to-date and had access to typewriting machines.

I read the story. The handwriting was peculiarly legible. The story was sad—oh, so sad!

"I can't understand it," said I. "What on earth made Baker write a sad story?"

Later I said—"By George! He's stolen that plot somewhere. I've read this before. But—where?"

And as I went to bed I knew——

This was the story I had sent to the Doctor.

It was twenty years old.

Oh, heavens!

(The other story came next day.)

Poynton of Sayre's Range

(Concluded from page 12.)

"Ten minutes by train."

It required some perseverance on Rayson's part to persuade the liveried footman to convey a message to the Lady Cicely, but in the end he won out and he was shown into a small apartment to await the lady's pleasure.

"You wish to speak to me?" enquired a soft voice. Rayson started out of the reverie into which he had fallen.

"That is what I have come for, miss," he said, bluntly. "I have been in the trenches and am just recovering from some scratches. There is a friend of mine in a hospital in France who is not likely to ever get out of it unless a miracle happens. He gave me a letter which I am to hand to a lady after his death. You see, he expects it and is not afraid. We punched cows together out West and I know he is a man right through. He never squeals. He isn't squealing now, and he would be real mad if he knew I was butting in this way."

"What do you mean?" she enquired, her lips trembling a little in spite of her attempt to be haughty.

"Oh, I guess I am not telling the story as it should be told, but I want Poynton to get well. He is too good a man to let die. Why can't you go and save him?"

"This is absurd. I do not know a soldier named Poynton."

"Of course I beg your pardon for contradicting you, but he says you know him and the letter is for you, but I can't give it till he is dead. Here it is. See, that is his writing. You may recognize it. He is a captain and wears his one-eye glass——"

"Where is he?" She was white now and her voice shook so he could scarce make out the words. Then she flushed. "This may be a trick," she said.

"If it is, then I am the guy that is fooling you, and not Poynton. Wire or get someone to wire and find out. Then, when you know I am not lying, if you have the heart of a woman get out there as quick as the Lord will let you and 'pull one of the best men God ever made out of the hole.'"

With that Rayson got up and hobbled out of the room. She was after him like a shot.

She placed a trembling hand upon his arm. "You must wait. The car will take you back," she said.

His foot took a lot of healing and a couple of months in a convalescent ward still saw him using it gingerly.

ONE day visitors came to see him. They waited until he came in from a car ride which he and several others had enjoyed, thanks to the kindness and thoughtfulness of some of the people nearby who owned cars and daily gave some of the invalids an airing.

When he caught sight of his visitors he gave a jump, a loud laugh of joy rang out, and he hastened forward with outstretched hand.

"Well, old-timer!" he cried, delightedly, seizing Poynton by the hand and shaking it vigorously. Then with a certain degree of embarrassment he turned to Lady Cicely and awkwardly offered his hand. "I beg your pardon, Miss; you will excuse me, I know. I am so glad to see old Poynton on his pins again. Gee, Poynton, if we could get away for a three months' furlough and spend it on the hurricane deck of a cayuse alongside some cowpunchers, we'd put on fat and colour, eh?" suggested Rayson.

"It would be—er—great—that is to say, most delightful," answered his friend. "We are going out there for our honeymoon."

"Just to think that our Poynton was a lord all the time and we never knew it!" whispered Snell.

"And I just want to say that he's a man from the ground up. A better man than any of us, and—and I'd do anything to show him I mean that with all my soul," added Big Dick Curno. "He saved my life—my rotten life, d'ye hear? Pretty nigh lost his own doing of it, too. I'll never forget that, no siree!"