

Plt Hon Sir Robert Borden

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<sup>2</sup> CANADA'S  
UNDEVELOPED LITERARY  
RESOURCES



By BECKLES WILLSON



To welcome every talent, to hail every invention, to cherish every gem of art, to foster every gleam of authorship, to honour every acquirement and every natural gift, . . . . . to lift ourselves to the level of our destinies.

*T. D'Arcy McGee.*



<sup>3</sup> AN ADDRESS DELIVERED  
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## CANADA'S UNDEVELOPED LITERARY RESOURCES

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BY BECKLES WILLSON

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IT is an amiable habit of Canadians, both at home and abroad, to complain of the average Englishman's lack of knowledge of Canada. We find a never-ending source of entertainment or indignation, according to our several temperaments, in the too-prevalent blunders concerning our geography, population, customs or climate. Knowledge of this Dominion of ours is commonly assumed to lie chiefly in a statistical direction, in facts relating to our cities and public men; newspapers and our railways—to the externals of life.

But surely these misapprehensions are venial—they are the mere minutiae of ignorance. What does it matter if an Englishman, with his vivid and always expansive interest in an Empire of some twelve or fifteen million square miles, fondly imagines that Cape Breton is on the mainland, that a tramway connects Montreal with Winnipeg, or that they build ice-palaces in Vancouver? I would rather a thousand times that Canadians exchanged knowledge of this kind for an understanding of truths more vital, of the things pertaining to the heart and soul of the nation. We may laugh at a foreigner's blunders, but let us sometimes ask ourselves (always in the safe and sheltered retreat of the Canadian Club) if we, as Canadians, know Canada, as, let us say, a Swede knows Sweden, or a Scot knows Scotland—know the truths of our own origin and annals, our own natural history, our flora and fauna, as well as those facts of another kind which, it seems to me, ought also to be known, the fruits, not of our farms and orchards, but of our inner life, our literature and our art?

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In a substantial and somewhat sequestered building at Ottawa there are housed the priceless ingredients of our natural history. Thanks to the knowledge, the industry and the ability of my friend, Dr. Arthur Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, treasure after treasure is constantly being added to that already vast collection. Nothing that can illumine our annals, from Jacques Cartier's era to that of Lord Strathcona, State papers, private letters, old journals and diaries, paintings, drawings, engravings, maps, the net is spread far and wide, and everything of interest is garnered within those four walls to illustrate the story of Canada. And what a truly wonderful collection it is! How inspiring and yet how simply diverting, even for the hurrying man in the street, even for the young children! And yet, ladies and gentlemen, if you have ever stood on Scutari Point or on Cape North, looking in silence and solitude towards "all the airts that blaw," you will have gained some idea, faint it may be, but not ineffective, of the silence and the solitude of that national treasure-house at Ottawa at high noon. A Cabinet Minister of high rank startled me the other day by confessing that even he, although somewhat closely concerned, had never once crossed the portals. I have met Canadians wandering about the British Museum gazing spell-bound at manuscripts and mementoes, who had never even heard of this museum at Ottawa. And yet I would engage to take a youthful specimen of a Canadian boy and hold his delighted attention for at least an hour with the pictures and relics there. How can we possibly know Canada when we habitually neglect such sources of self-knowledge and education as these?

I have spoken of the Archives as full of the ingredients of history. Those bulky annual reports of the Archivist for the past thirty years are something more than that. I could easily demonstrate to you that they are full of the ingredients—the raw material—of poetry and romance as well.

Now, at the risk of being thought unpractical, I say that poetry is what we want in this country, that romance is what we all need in our daily lives. "I pity the man," wrote Sterne, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba and cry, 'All is barren.'" And so it is and so is all the world to him who will not cultivate the fruits it offers." Romance concerns the deeps, the fierce struggle, the pathos, the aspirations, the adventures, the color of life. No land could be explored and settled as ours has been,

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no people could so have adventured into the wilderness without heroism, love, suffering, romance. How much this romance adds to a country, peoples it with good spirits, invests it with associations, endears it to those who dwell in it and call it home! You are shown a village, or a hill, or a lake, or a river, and you immediately see it with the eye of the mind, of the memory; it is connected with romance and it straightway becomes transfigured and glorified. It is Shelburne plus an ideal Shelburne with its pageant of Loyalists, such as Haliburton beautifully describes in "The Old Judge," or Annapolis Royal redolent of the seventeenth century. Or it may recall legendary or poetic associations, some character none the less real because he or she never actually lived, some event that never observed what has been called the cheap formality of taking place. For if the hero or the legend has been consecrated by the love and faith of generations of men and women, that makes it real for us, that constitutes romance. Think of old Scotland, how bleak, how ineffably bleak and barren much of it would be without its myths and legends and ballads, without the fruits of the genius of Scott and Burns.

We, then, have our history and our romance; we have our legends, our traditions, our ballads; I well believe that these are cherished by the members of the Canadian Club; but I would say to every Canadian man and woman—Do you know our history and our literature? Do you know the stirring deeds enacted by our sires and forerunners? Do you sit around the fire on a winter's night and tell them to your children? If you take a pleasure and a pride in these things, how much richer you are, how much more attractive your native land seems to you, how much more love you bear it in your hearts, how much prouder you are of it!

You will say that, of course, it is my business, as a writer, dealing occasionally with historical themes, and the business of a handful of others sailing, as it were, in the same boat with myself, to make ourselves acquainted with these things, to read these Archivist's reports, to dig out these memorabilia,—that it is natural for us to derive even entertainment from the process, but that it is unreasonable to ask a man of affairs, a busy clerk in a store or office, a weary farmer or artisan to delve into these records in the hope of finding amusement or relaxation. Well,

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I agree to that. I agree that it is the function of the historian and romancier and the poet to search diligently for and smelt out the pure gold from all this ore and carry it to the assay office of public opinion. I agree that it was for these few and not directly for the many that such institutions as the Archives were established and are now being maintained. But let us give them credit, let us understand at least the beneficent work they are doing in binding the scattered fragments of our past together and in stimulating the national consciousness, let us take a due pride in those labors, and, moreover, let those whose talents lie that way be encouraged to use them for our advantage, for the enlightenment of foreign nations concerning us, and for our national character and renown.

Sometimes I think the great mistake we make is in regarding ourselves habitually as a new people, and this Canada of ours as a new country. We are an old country, and this portion that you and I inhabit is the oldest part of this old country. Nine-tenths of Russia, seven-eighths of America, are new countries, Australia is a new country, New Zealand is a new country, South Africa is a new country, but Canada has long and storied centuries behind her. When you read the narratives of Champlain and Lescarbot and remember the raw and barren conditions of most of Europe over three centuries ago, when mariners were beating up our coasts and courtiers were building our first forts and holding revel in our forests, you see what a mighty transformation has come over the universe since Port Royal and Quebec were founded. Why, gentlemen, the whole universe is a new world. And we can go back to a previous century, to Jacques Cartier, a generation from Columbus, and Columbus was born and lived his life in the Middle Ages!

And not only are there these three centuries of history, but something might well be urged on behalf of the character and quality of our history. It is not only full of great events, but think of the vast sum of individual activities! It is not like the chronicles of Poland or Portugal, the uprising and downfall of one tyrant after another, while peasant and serf remain benighted and inert, but an epic of a whole people, a people constantly achieving real things in the face of moral and physical obstacles, of tens of thousands faring forth into the wilderness, animated, it may be, by pure sentiment the reverse of battle, or in a spirit of adventure.

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Canada's imagination, I have heard someone say, is principally confined to the prospectuses of land and mining companies. They do not hesitate to tell us that, because we are a northern country, because we dwell for certain seasons of the year in low temperatures and amidst snow and ice, that we must necessarily remain an unpoetical, an unromantic and an inartistic people. Was there ever such a fallacy? Northern countries! why, they are producing to-day the greater part of the literature, the best paintings, the best music, and even the finest terpsichorean art of the world. Why, have they forgotten that Thorwaldsen, the peer of Canova, was an Icelander! It is not to Italy and Spain and Greece that the world is looking for masterpieces in the arts, but to Russia and Germany and Norway. The isothermal line of genius has been moved northward a few latitudes, and romance has deserted the Spanish Main and the South Sea Islands for the North and the South Pole. There is no reason, climatological or racial, why Canada should not be not only an artistic country, but the seat of the world's art, the centre of the world's literature. One would have thought that certain philosophers would tire of affixing labels on people and things, of imagining that you can exhaust a nation's possibilities by a phrase. You remember they said that Scotland was an inartistic country, that it could never produce a good painter and it sounded very plausible until art came to be taught north of the Tweed and the latent qualities of the Scottish people were educated—drawn out—and then what happened? Why, only last year, at the Royal Academy, in London, I heard a young English painter complaining that more than half the prosperous members of the Academy were Scotchmen (I fear he used an improper adjective), and that if he himself had been blessed with a Mac to his name, his pictures would have been as much in demand as those of MacWhirter or Hunter or Orchardson or Graham or Andrew Gow or David Murray. Here is a change indeed! And *apropos* of supposed national limitations, I am tempted to refer, in parenthesis, to another striking change. Some of us who are approaching fifty may recall the time when there was supposed to be no more humour in Scotland than there were snakes in Ireland. Whether it was that Calvin had exorcised the one as rigorously as St. Patrick is said to have done the other, I know not, but the

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general opinion was that the Scotch possessed an inherent incapacity for rollicking fun and light-hearted drollery. Suddenly, it appeared that the Scotch were the drollest race in Europe—I will not trouble you with a list of their achievements—but I believe that all our great humorists are Scots, and Sir James Barrie and Mr. Anstey Guthrie and Mr. Moffatt link hands with Mr. Harry Lauder and Mr. Wilkie Bard in making all Anglo-Saxendom split its sides with laughter. There was a wonderful old nineteenth century joke about a Scotsman's head and a surgical operation. Somehow, you never hear that story now.

The genius of a nation does not really change; its qualities are merely latent. I remember reading an old French treatise on music, in which the writer observed that, in spite of the talents of Handel, not only were the boorish Germans unmusical, but that, owing to certain defects in auricular construction which they shared with the Lapps and the North American Indians, they must forever remain incapable of the higher harmonic perceptions. This dictum ought to have discouraged the Germans from attempting to compete with the French and Italians instead of stimulating them to produce Mozart and Mendelssohn, Schumann and Schubert, Liszt and Wagner, and to become the chief musical country of the world.

Again, you remember, it was in 1820 that Sydney Smith penned his famous observation about American culture.

"The Americans," he wrote in the *Edinburgh Review*, "have done absolutely nothing. In the four quarters of the globe who reads an American book? Or goes to an American play? Or looks at an American picture?"

Well, no great period elapsed before half the civilized world might have retorted: "We are all reading American books—books by Washington Irving and Fenimore Cooper and Longfellow and Prescott and Emerson and Hawthorne and Poe, whose works are translated into every European tongue." In 1820, America had a population of between nine and ten millions—far more than Canada has to-day. Has Canada done "absolutely nothing?" Let us look into this matter.

When we speak of a knowledge of Canada, let it sometimes be not only of material things, not only of politics (which with us, I fear, does not mean the science of government of the people for the people, but rather the sordid scramble of



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politicians for place and power), but knowledge of the Zeitgeist of Canada, knowledge of the mind and intellectual tastes tendencies and achievements of our people. For, believe me, without this knowledge of what is valuable and permanent in ourselves, how can we possibly convey to others any just idea of our status as a civilized people—those others to whom as yet Canada is still only a name on the map, or perhaps the second biggest wheatfield on earth? I, for one, should like to tell the world occasionally of what we have done, not in terms of dollars or tonnage or mileage, but in terms of literature and art. We are fond of speaking of our undeveloped resources—well, gentlemen, I am here to tell you that one of the biggest undeveloped and neglected resources in the Dominion is our native art and our native literature. The mine has only been penetrated by a few bold and enterprising spirits, but if the samples they have withdrawn were to be inspected by all our people, that mine of our natural genius would be seen to contain pure gold, enough to make us all the richer.

A writer in the London Times a few weeks ago said in effect, that what the Canadian Government might well advertise for in Europe, is fifty poets to proceed at once to that materialistic country to supply the pressing needs of the population. Now, that gibe is very amusing, and I hear some Canadians say: "Ah, yes, we are very materialistic. We ought to go in for these things more." If, however, the English critic had put it in this way, "Fifty Canadians poets want immediately a million Canadian readers," then, I think, it would have exhibited a greater knowledge of Canada and of our literary achievements.

You will all readily understand how disconcerting it is for a Canadian author or a lover of Canadian letters to enter a Canadian house and amongst the rows of books he encounters there to find so few of Canadian origin. You would imagine sometimes that we had no native literature, that we had produced nothing which it was worth while for a Canadian of taste to read, when, as a matter of fact, considering the size of our population, we have been unusually prolific in works of history, philosophy, romance and poetry, and that amongst those works are many which are read, and read with delight and instruction, by Englishmen. We are far more literary than the Americans were when they boasted twice our population. Some of you may be

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surprised to learn that in the library of an English nobleman who takes a keen interest in Canada—I refer to the Duke of Argyll—there are no fewer than 150 works by Canadian authors, all produced within the last ten years, that is, since 1903!

In a recent charming little volume on Canada by Mr. Bradley, he says:

“It is only people who know Canada and know how it stood in its own estimation and in that of the world prior to 1898, who can realize the transformation that has come over it.” “There was no particular reason,” he goes on to say, “why all this should not have come some years earlier and that is the odd part of what the future historian will have to tell of a wonderful epoch. If it has surprised the world, it is not too much to say that it has surprised the Canadians themselves almost more. For they knew that the conditions which suddenly set the ball rolling had been there, but lying fallow, as it were, and though steadily insisted upon, rejected by the world for years.”

That is it—that is what I want to insist upon to-day: that what we have in our literature and in our literary fields has been too long and too generally lying fallow. I wish I had time to point to you some of the poetical riches, for instance, which lie all but hidden under your feet.

I wish I dared indicate to you more than one or two poems which have given pleasure these many years past and have served to convince me that

We are a people for higher dreamings meant,  
But damned by too much government.

If you doubt whether the divine afflatus has wafted through this land I should like you to look through the poems of Isabella Valancy Crawford, whose “The Sea and the Ship” was praised by Swinburne; of Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman, Wilfred Campbell, Marjorie Pickthall and others. I am sorry I must not speak to you of the literature of Quebec, because, though much of it is beautiful literature, it is in French, and that language, for some reason or other, we will not take the trouble to master, although it would admit us into much that is charming and lofty and truly representative of Canada. Confining myself to English alone, we have produced and are constantly producing, works of which no country on earth need be ashamed, but on the contrary would be proud of. It is undeniable that a great deal

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of good work, clever work, has met with scant success amongst us. Only the other day I was looking through what purported to be a review of the leading names in our literature, and I was surprised to find no mention of that of Beattie Crozier, an original and painstaking thinker, author of a History of Intellectual Development, whose autobiography, "My Inner Life," is full of literary charm. Again, a few years ago, there was a book written by Professor George Wrong, of Toronto, called "A Canadian Manor and its Seigneurs." I was delighted to find the London *Spectator* speak of that work as an enthralling narrative, couched in faultless, and at times, eloquent English. Now, one would think that it would be a matter of pride in our people to acquire a copy of that book and read it and place it on their bookshelves in a conspicuous place and call the attention of visitors to it. Well, the other day I mentioned it to a gentleman who is the lucky possessor of a small library of books. He surprised me by saying that he had never read that book, but he surprised me still more by saying that he had never even heard of it. I don't think Haliburton is read as he deserves—I don't mean so much "The Clockmaker," but other works of his, notably "Nature and Human Nature" and "The Old Judge," and I wonder how many of you have read the works of Todd, and Kingsford, and Bourinot.

On the other hand, if Canada yet be, as I heard a London publisher once assure his hearers, the poorest book market on the face of the earth (by which I suppose he meant for works other than fiction), she is not altogether unappreciative of native productions which arouse her interest. And even in former times, piety had a good deal to do with it. I cannot believe that, before Sir Joseph Pope's volumes appeared, the various Lives of Sir John A. Macdonald had any great merit as literature. Yet it is certain that tens of thousands of them were sold. I was once shown, as a curiosity, an invoice sent by a firm of wholesale merchants to a small shopkeeper in Ontario, which ran somewhat in this fashion:

- 1 gross crash towels.
- 5 cases whisky.
- 1 case 12 Macdonalds red.
- 1 case Macdonalds green.

The latter entries referred, of course, to a popular biography

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of the eminent statesman, bound in red or green, without which no Ontario household at that time was considered complete—at least no Conservative household. I am rather afraid that that is the way many of our people have, especially in the rural districts, of regarding literature as so much parlor furniture, to occupy so much space, but not necessarily to be read. Well, I don't object to that: it is an outward sign of an inward aspiration after literature. It reminds me of the story of the Westerner who, having newly acquired wealth, promptly added a library to his house, and proceeded to fill it with sets of standard authors. When they were all in their place, he found he had still a shelf to fill. So he called again on his bookseller who, after hearing of his predicament, said to him: "Have you got Thackeray?" "Thackeray? Thackeray? No: ought I to have him?" "Oh, most certainly," replied the bookseller, "a standard author—quite indispensable." "All right," agreed the customer, "but look here, about what's Thackeray's *width*?"

I don't think Sir Gilbert Parker, who, after all, is our most brilliant and universally popular author, has any reason to complain of neglect by Canadians, or Ralph Connor, or the late Dr. Drummond, or Mr. Robert Service, or Miss Montgomery, or Mr. Basil King, or Mr. Stephen Leacock, whose "Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town" is crammed full of life and humour.

But I never could understand why it was so necessary for Englishmen or Americans to tell us what was of signal merit in the literary productions of our own writers before we troubled to read them. That is a mark of provincialism which we might get rid of, as the Americans assuredly, within the past twenty years have done. *Apropos* of that, I remember that rather more than twenty years ago a brilliant young writer, who happened to be visiting New York, sent to a certain long-established magazine there a couple of tales about India. The editor read them, and recognized that they were astonishingly good, but the author was an Englishman, absolutely unknown, and the editor was then engaged in publishing the works of English authors of reputation. So he returned the manuscript and the young man promptly sent him two other tales, even better than the first. I forget how many tales were sent altogether, but the young man was most persistent. He wrote to the editor, "I am going to send you a story every other day until one is accepted."

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But all his persistence was fruitless; all were rejected. Shortly after this, "Plain Tales from the Hills" and "Soldiers Three" were published in London, and the fame of Rudyard Kipling crossed the Atlantic, reaching the sanctum of the editor of the magazine, who immediately wrote or cabled to Mr. Kipling, asking for contributions from his pen, and offering a large sum for the American copyright. I am glad to be able to say that the young author refused; he had offered his little masterpieces on their merits, and they had been rejected because London had not yet set its stamp of approval upon his work. Overtures were made for years, and considerable sums offered, but it was now the author's turn to reject, and no tale of Rudyard Kipling found its way into the pages of that magazine.

I mention this anecdote merely to illustrate a disposition which has its counterpart amongst us. We are a little sluggish in acclaiming our own geniuses until the far, faint cry from Fleet Street or Broadway reaches us.

A result which must inevitably flow from this lack of spontaneous and consistent appreciation is that our poets and romancers and painters and philosophers must leave us, as they have been forced to leave us in the past. I often think of how many men, prominent in the public eye, whom we could afford to lose if we could only induce Bliss Carman or Gilbert Parker to return and dwell amongst us, or Dr. Crozier, or Charles Roberts, whose early love and zeal for his native land was crushed and withered by the neglect accorded him here compared with the welcome to him he received below the Border. I hope I do not betray any confidences when I mention that when I first met the author of "A Sister of Evangeline," now nearly twenty years ago, he said to me:

"You know, if I depended upon my fellow-Canadians for my bread and butter, I should soon starve to death."

I know what the experience has been of many others who might, had they been encouraged, have spread the glory of Canada far and wide. I could narrate some pathetic instances, the long-drawn-out, tragic neglect of Charles Heavyside and Charles Sangster, of Emile Neligan and Isabella Crawford.

But why go into these things? I believe there is a remedy for this national neglect of merit, and I also believe the time has come to apply it, so that before I take leave of you I shall

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venture to indicate one or two methods which I think we might well adopt.

I am reminded that I have spoken of Canadian art and Canadian painting amongst our undeveloped resources. What I have said about our literature—the analogy I have hinted at between our potentialities and those of foreign nations—may also be applied to our pictorial art. Here, too, we are on the threshold of great and enduring things.

I could cite the parallel phenomena of art in Norway and Denmark and Poland, all so recent, and so sudden. Is Canada, then, standing still amongst the northern nations? Are there no evidences of worthy artistic achievement? Here again I ask: Are you acquainted with the sum of our accomplishment? Have we this knowledge of Canada? If all our people could only have the privilege of traversing a gallery hung with the productions of native talent within the last twenty years, they would be astonished. Surveying two canvasses by Mr. Homer Watson, an Englishman not long ago said to me: "I had no idea you had any man in Canada who could paint like that! Why is it I have so often been told that Canada had no good painters?" "Because," I said, "Canadians hardly know it themselves. You know a merchant is sometimes too busy to take stock."

That is it: we have been too busy to take stock of our artistic possessions and achievements: soon some critic will do it for us, who will justly appraise the beautiful work of Mr. Morrice, William Brymner, George Reid, Robert Harris, Henri Beau, Henry Sandham, Mr. Russell, Bell-Smith, Suzor Cote, and others. I will not touch upon the art of sculpture, except to remind you that in Phillippe Hébert we have a Canadian sculptor whose work will compare favorably with that of any sculptor living. But if you really wish to see what a wealth of landscape themes this country affords, merely glance at the published watercolor drawings of Mower Martin. Russia and Norway, Sweden and Denmark are poor in comparison.

Art is a great thing—pictures, good pictures, an inestimable possession for a country. I shall never forget the remark made to me by him whom I consider the greatest living man amongst us, one of the very ablest financiers and administrators, when I found him, at the close of a day's hard official toil, seated at an easel, paint brush in hand.

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"After all," he said, "this is the thing that really matters to me. Any fool can make money."

Our people, I am convinced, have the receptivity—the potentiality of appreciation. But art and the productions of our artists must be more accessible to us. We must know more of what is being achieved in our midst.

Our woods, our lakes, our legends, our sea-ports, offer worthy themes for the brushes of our artists. But a race of artists, whether poets or painters, cannot live without appreciation; they languish in an unsympathetic, unresponsive soil.

It is long since governments regarded painting and poetry and music as outside the sphere of their functions. It is to the everlasting honor of France that she has led the way in these matters and now art schools, conservatories of music and prizes for literature are a feature of many states and municipalities. The individual patron on a generous scale has all but disappeared, and it therefore becomes the duty of the people collectively to encourage any manifestation of genius in its midst, to seek out and reward those who have rendered service to the state by their intellectual gifts and efforts, who have created or stimulated the ideals and the purpose of the nation.

In the arts, in poetry, in written romance, in painting, there is, as you are all well aware, something besides the divine afflatus, something more than fine frenzy and fervor—there is technique. And technique in the arts is not achieved in a day: it is something to be slowly and sedulously acquired. In the meantime, while he is learning his trade, too many natural geniuses droop and fall by the wayside. But let us assume that they emerge from this ordeal and give sterling proof of the metal of which they are made, by the production of a useful or stimulating book or poem or picture, our loyalty to ourselves and our national genius should make us all ready to become the patron of such a man or woman.

"I have always had in mind to do something for art and literature," Sir Wilfrid Laurier said, many years ago. "I agree that Parliament should do something for the encouragement of such things amongst us." Well, I believe the Parliament of Canada has done nothing for art and literature: we have even no official fund out of which to remunerate talent or to relieve necessity. At the same time, it is only fair to say that several of our poets and writers have been given posts in the civil service and so

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saved from either destitution or emigration. But this is not enough. Surely there should be sufficient private munificence amongst us to establish, let us say, an annual prize in each of the Provinces for the best poem, the best picture or the best essay of the year. It has been found to answer in other countries—why should it not answer in ours? If the provincial prizes were open to all Canadians, it would also have the effect of showing where most genius and talent reside. Let a competent body like the British Academy adjudicate.

Even this is not enough. It is worth an effort to bring Canadian literature into our homes and into our lives. I applaud catholicity of taste. We want nothing narrow or provincial. Let us, as literary pilgrims, visit many shrines, but let us be familiar with our own. I offer you a practical suggestion. Why should we not have in every Canadian city and town a circulating library of Canadian literature? I don't mean a pretentious institution, but some modest source from whence could be procured by those desirous of obtaining that knowledge of Canada of which I have spoken, volumes of history, of poetry, of *belles-lettres*, wrought by our own people. To show how easily a beginning may be made, I have put my precept into practice. I have myself made a selection of twenty-five volumes, which I have offered to the Mayor of Windsor, Nova Scotia, for the use of the people, on condition that three other citizens will do likewise. If every community in Canada did even so much, what a difference it would make—what a spirit it would infuse into our people! It would nurture a taste and a love for our own poets and for the works of those who portray the life and legend and scenery of our native land. I believe this idea might even be worthy the practical consideration of the Canadian Club.

Whatever happens, I urge upon our rulers and our leaders this question of the intensive culture of our fields of art and literature. It is only by such culture, it seems, to me, that we can rightly produce the fruits of our national genius.

England, at the dawn of her literature, hung on the lips of her ballad-makers. The heart of old France moved responsive to the stirring lays of her jongleurs and troubadours; Scotland was inspired to great deeds by her minstrels; Wales by her bards. Let, us, too, practical as we are, immersed in commerce as we are, rally to our own men, to our own singers and seers, who belong



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to us, were reared amongst us, know our lives, are steeped in our history, in the lore of our woods and streams, who can, as no alien can, interpret for us and celebrate for us all the past and the passing manifestations, the secret, the glowing or the homely threads in the ever-changing fabric of our national life.