

NEW BOOKS

NINE POEMS. By Arthur Bourinot. The Ryerson Press. Pp. 12.

THE ORDER OF GOOD CHEER. By Andrew Merkel. Imperial Publishing Co., Halifax. Pp. 49. \$1.00.

COLLECTED POEMS. By E. J. Pratt. Macmillans in Canada. Pp. 314. \$3.00.

Mr. Bourinot has brought together nine poems published in various places. All show his distinctive poetical characteristics: disarming simplicity, fine singing quality, quiet statement of thought and emotion, and concrete imagery. A stanza of "We Gathered Leaves To-day" will show these qualities:

We gathered leaves to-day,
Maple and oak and beech,
Thinking how he went away,
The boyish twist of his speech.
Autumn is here and frost,
Oh, how can the hills be gay
With beauty beyond our reach
And youth untimely lost?

Mr. Merkel's imagination was caught by the fact that the great naval base, H.M.C.S. *Cornwallis*, was established near the site of the first attempt at settlement in Nova Scotia; the result is a moving poem, *The Order of Good Cheer*. The events are related very simply and directly; to one who knows the country, the poem has an additional appeal, for Mr. Merkel has the gift of making a scene vivid. One feels, however, that the poet was most struck by the leaders' desire to found a settlement where, far from the jealousies of nations, courtiers, and religions, men of good will might live in peace and harmony, and bring to reality man's ever haunting dream of unity and love. He makes the reader feel the idealism of these adventurers, and one is close to tragedy in the closing section, perhaps the most beautiful part of the poem:

Mist filled the chalice of the arching hills
As dawn, the acolyte, approached and lit
The tapers of tall trees . . .
And so swept eddying, between great cliffs,
Like chips upon a torrent, out to sea,
Where all was wrath . . .
Later the wind changed, hauling to the south,
And as the day wore on and darkness fell,
The gale passed and the friendly stars came out,
Lighting a pathway through the tumbled seas.

Despite the quiet benediction of the closing four lines, the reader feels the poignancy of another dream ruthlessly shattered by the greed of man.

The publishing of the *Collected Poems* of Professor Pratt is an event in Canadian literary circles. It is always difficult to assess a poet when his work is scattered in a dozen or more volumes over a period of more than twenty years. Now we can make an attempt to get the stature of the living Canadian poet who has the most work to his credit. Perhaps our best introduction is the admirable portrait by Kenneth Forbes that forms the frontispiece of the volume. Here is a man, big physically, who is about to step off the page into the room; one feels directness and vigor in the very pose. It is the face, however, that holds one: ruggedness and strength, set off by a mingled frankness and vision in the eyes, and a mingled firmness and sensitiveness in the mouth. Here is a man who sees and feels directly; subtlety and meanness are not for him—do those creases about the mouth not suggest scorn of anything mean or selfish? The man Pratt is the poet Pratt.

This is vigorous poetry, direct and strong. It knows the hardness of the fisherman's life, the harshness of the Newfoundland coast, but it appreciates the simplicity and honesty of the average man, the Newfoundland fisherman, the unlettered heroes of the Atlantic gales, and it can see the stark beauty of a forbidding coastline. It does not turn away from the homely tragedies of the fisherman's cottage, but it turns with contempt from the versifier who cuts himself off from the sufferings of mankind, and it turns with loathing from the sadists of Lidice. It can sing the heroisms of the crew of the *Roosevelt*, of the French priests of Huronia, and the common soldiers at Dunkirk. It can indulge in the sheer exuberance of *The Cachalot* and *The Witch's Brew*. It can range from a simple lyric to a long narrative poem. One may quarrel at times with Professor Pratt's sheer delight in words, one may wish at times there was a little more quiet, a little more restraint, but one can never accuse the poet of pettiness or sentimentality. The defects of this poetry are only the excess of its virtues.

There will always be difference of opinion concerning which is the best of the long narrative poems. At present *Brebeuf and his Brethren* seems to be the favourite, but for the present writer this poem has two defects: the poet has had to work with recalcitrant matter and has not been able, because of the very abundance of martyrs and material, to mould it into a perfect form; and secondly, the very loose blank verse tends at times to break down, as late Jacobean and Caroline blank verse did, into rhythmical prose. For the present writer *The Roosevelt and the Antinoe* and *The Titanic* contend for first place, the former because of its simple, majestic mass, and the second because of the poet's almost successful attempt to impose a Greek conception on the story, and both because they show the nobility of the common man when a great crisis faces him. In an age when so many poets have whined at the fate of man, it is refreshing to find such simple faith, such rugged grandeur as Pratt sees in man. Perhaps Newfoundland will forgive us if we appropriate him as the true voice of Canada.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS. By H. McD. Clokie.
Toronto, Longmans, Green and Company, 1944. Pp.
viii, 351.

This volume is a very welcome addition to the small list of textbooks on the subject of Canadian government and politics, and it differs from those which deal generally with the history and purposes of Canadian institutions to the neglect of the actual working of the institutions themselves, in that Professor Clokie concentrates "on the more neglected side of governmental machinery."

Professor Clokie, Head of the Department of Political Science in the University of Manitoba, begins his study by raising the question whether there is a Canadian state or nation; sketches its history briefly from colony to Dominion; describes the general principles of the Canadian constitutional system; discusses the major and minor political parties and the electorate; then turns his attention to the actual working of the system in legislation and administration through Parliament, the Cabinet and the Civil Service; and concludes with chapters on the provinces and Canadian federation, local government and the problems of the future. The appendix contains the original British North America Act, with changes made by subsequent Acts inserted either in the text in italics or in footnotes in their respective places, together with such other significant Acts or documents as the Statute of Westminster, Succession to the Throne Act, Seals Act, and Letters Patent, Instructions and Commission for the Governor-General, the Declaration of War, etc.

The book as a whole provides a very useful approach for the student or general reader; and, while not claiming to be definitive, does present a definite view on almost every aspect of the subject, which may be checked or modified from the list of books for further reading added to each chapter. However, there are certain errors of fact that should be corrected in the next impression or immediately in a supplementary list of dates: such as, 1749 for 1748 the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, 1745 for 1755 the dispersal of the Acadians (page 18); 1848 for 1849 the repeal of the Navigation Act (page 24); and on page 21, *two* years for *one* re the American Revolution and the Quebec Act. These and others of a similar nature cannot be blamed on the printer, and in any event detract from the authority of the work.

D. C. H.

YOUNG LADY RANDOLPH: The Life and Times of Jennie Jerome,
American Mother of Winston Churchill. By Rene
Kraus. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

It is interesting to consider whether this biography would have been written had not the war brought the genius of Winston Churchill to the attention of the world, and thus directed interest towards the great man's mother. It would be a matter of distinct regret had it not been written, and by Rene Kraus. It is delightful biography.

The daughter of one of the pioneer financiers in the days of the beginning of America's fabulous wealth, Jennie Jerome was a child of exquisite beauty—attested by reproductions of photographs. As a very young woman, she had already developed that personal magnetism which, along with "beauty, brains and infinite tact", made her confident that the future for her would be far from ordinary. Shortly after her debut at a party of the most spectacular brilliance, the family left New York for Paris, leaving behind the indulgent father, who continued to exert a certain control over his family's affairs and those of his favourite daughter from across the Atlantic. In Paris life was enthralling to the youthful Jennie, who soon became an intimate in court circles, and of the Empress Eugenie, a friendship typical of those made by this remarkable woman in that it lasted during the lifetime of the Empress. Later, after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, England, the country that was to become her home, brought to Jennie the opportunity for that full living for which her "strength, vivacity and inexplicable magnetism" fitted her. Her marriage to the brilliant, erratic Lord Randolph Churchill, their life at Blenheim and in London, their travels over Europe and around the world, give material for a love story of high order. The beautiful, talented American who became London's foremost hostess, who in her drawing-room became a power in the political world, who gave to the British Empire a son who is now the world's most striking figure, supplied Mr. Kraus with a subject which must have been very much to his taste and to which he has done full justice.

M. L. SMITH.

KEPLER AND THE JESUITS. By M. W. Burke-Gaffney, S.J.
The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee. 1944.
\$2.00.

This book is very readable. Father Burke-Gaffney writes a clear, fluent English, and he can set forth abstruse matters with lucidity. Now and then he enlivens his narrative with a touch of humour, such as this sudden gleam in a sober paragraph on Scaliger: "He [Kepler] summoned up courage to write to the French scholar, now living on a pedestal in Leyden." The illustrations are choice.

This is not a biography of Kepler, although it tells much of his life; the book justifies its title by emphasising his relations with a surprising number of Jesuits. They are, in the order in which they came into his life: Fathers Christopher Grienberger, Nicholas Serarius, Johann Ziegler, Jean Deckers, Lorenz Suslyga, Christopher Scheiner, Odon van Maelcote, Maximilian Marsili, Johann Cysat, Paul Guldin, Nicholas Zucchi, Albert Curtz, and Johann Sigersreiter. The bond that linked Kepler and the Jesuits so freely was the scientific knowledge and interest which they had in common. In 1607, for instance, Father Ziegler sent him an account of the observations of Halley's comet which he was able to make or to gather, so that the famous

astronomer might use them to best advantage. It was Father Curtz who finally published the Tycho Brahe commentaries which Kepler had had in his keeping for years.

With all these priests Kepler's relations were friendly or, at least, very courteous; but one among them, Father Guldin, was his friend. Through his good offices, Kepler believed, Father Zucchi made and presented him with a telescope all his own. By a happy circumstance, Father Guldin was stationed at Sagan several months after Kepler moved there for what proved to be the last years of his life.

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth century form an astronomical epoch. Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Galileo, and lesser stars illumined the terrestrial firmament; Copernicus had lived within the memory of living men. Galileo with his telescope brought the sky nearer and revealed new phenomena. The great age comes to life in these pages.

As an illustration of Father Burke-Gaffney's quality, take this summing up of a controversy: "With regard to the date of the Crucifixion two points are certain:

1. Christ was crucified while Pontius Pilate was Governor of Judea, i.e., between the summer of A.D. 27 and the spring of A.D. 37:

2. The day of the Crucifixion was a Friday.

Not so certain, though coming to be accepted by most students of Scripture, is

3. Christ was crucified on the day on which the Jews eat the Paschal Lamb. This third point is indicated by Saint John (13:1; 18:28; 19:31). Now, the Jews eat the Paschal Lamb on the night of the first fourteenth day of the moon after the spring equinox, which was known to the Jews as Nisan 14, or the fourteenth day of the month of Nisan.

Therefore, our three points lead to the conclusion that the Crucifixion took place on Friday, Nisan 14, between the summer of 27 and the spring of A.D. 37. But Nisan 14 was a Friday only twice between the summer of 27 and the spring of 37, namely on April 7, 30, and April 3, 33 . . ."

The author took his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering from the National University of Ireland, and after several years of practical experience did graduate work in astronomy in Canada, Ireland, France, and Georgetown University in Washington, where he obtained his doctorate in 1935. He is now Dean of Engineering at Saint Mary's College in Halifax. Father Burke-Gaffney hopes to have ready in the not far distant future a larger book on the life and works of Kepler.

ROGER SUDDEN. By Thomas Raddall. McClelland & Stewart.
Pp. 358. \$3.00.

Mr. Raddall should need no introduction to readers of *The DALHOUSIE REVIEW*, for by now all of them should have read *His Majesty's Yankees* and his collected short stories, *The Pied Piper of Dipper Creek*. *Roger Sudden*, the story of the founding of Halifax, is a firmer novel than *His Majesty's Yankees*; the reader feels a more skilful grasp of character, and a more cunning blending of diverse material. The novel starts in Kent, the home of the Suddens; then it moves to London—or more correctly Southwark—to the site of the future town of Halifax, and throughout Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. It ends with the fall of Louisburg. The hero is a Jacobite. France has betrayed the Jacobite cause, the Chevalier is only a shadow of himself, and the English Jacobites are mere sentimentalists. Utterly disillusioned, young Sudden decides to make the world his oyster: he will serve the interests of only one man: Roger Sudden. He achieves his goal, and because he has more faith in the French cause he invests all his profits through a Louisburg merchant. When the siege of Louisburg begins, Sudden is merely an onlooker; it would be unfair to the reader to tell how his Kentish—not his English—blood is aroused, and how he meets his death. In nothing is Mr. Raddall's development more clearly shown than in his ability to make such a character and his fate not only plausible but also acceptable; one feels that the author has surely been studying the picaresque heroes of the 18th century. The author may have falsified the date of d'Anville's expedition, he may be a little unfair to the mass of Acadians, but one does not read historical novels for exact history—one goes to readable historians for precise information; rather one reads novels for a convincing picture of a period in the mass, and Mr. Raddall had given us, in this robust, panoramic novel, the vigor, vulgarity, pulsating life of the eighteenth century, a side that is not represented in Addison's *Spectator* or the sentimental comedies of the period, but is found in Smollett, with whom Mr. Raddall has much in common.

B. M.

CRISIS IN HEAVEN. By Eric Linklater. Macmillans in Canada.
Pp. 103. \$2.00.

This play has for a sub-title "An Elysian Comedy"; it is, however, a very topical play. Robert Burns and Alexander Pushkin were to hold a public discussion on "The Poet and his Responsibility", under the chairmanship of Aristophanes; when they failed to arrive, a violent quarrel broke out among the Elysian audience and soon resulted in a war. How was peace to be restored and assured? Much against his will, Voltaire is mated with Helen of Troy, since Peace must be the offspring of Reason and Beauty. Irene (Peace) is born mature from Helen, and early learns that she must be attractive if she is to rule men.

Even that is not enough: Peace must also have a mate—who other than a common British soldier by the name of Courage? Will that guarantee peace? Not according to the poet Pushkin:

Courage without imagination is like a ship without a pilot. You cannot live unless I help you.

To which speech Irene replies:

Because I have a husband, shall I not have a friend?

Such is the underlying philosophy of the play. Individual scenes and speeches are also delightful. The caricature of the modern English poet whose heart was always with the masses but who fled to America for safety when the fight against Fascism began is not too harsh when we think of the poetical refugees spread out from Montreal to Hollywood. Lest the philosophy run away with the pleasure, Mr. Linklater has enlivened the dialogue most delightfully.

B. M.

THE LETTERS OF JOHN MCLOUGHLIN FROM FORT VANCOUVER TO THE GOVERNOR AND COMMITTEE. Second Series, 1839-44. Edited by E. E. Rich, with an introduction by W. Kaye Lamb. Toronto, The Champlain Society, 1943. Pp. xlix, 427.

This is the sixth volume in the Hudson's Bay Company Series published by the Champlain Society and the second volume dealing with McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver letters. The introduction of both has been written by W. Kaye Lamb, who will write also the introduction to the third and final volume of the letters now in preparation. These letters and the three instalments of the introduction will provide complete account and authoritative interpretation of one of the most striking figures in the history of the Hudson's Bay Company on the Pacific Coast, whose activities had an important influence on the future boundaries of both Western Canada and the United States.

The main theme of these letters, and that to which Dr. Lamb pays most attention in the introduction, is the controversy between Dr. John McLoughlin, Superintendent of the Columbia District, and Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Company, over the methods of conducting the trade on the North West coast,—a controversy finally much embittered by the attitude of the latter towards the death of the former's son, John McLoughlin, Jr., at Stikine, in April 1842; but the letters are packed full of first-hand information on the actual course of events in that region from San Francisco to the Panhandle, of contacts with Americans and Russians, of the attitude of the Company to missionaries and settlers in the valley of the Columbia, of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, and of the varied activities of the Factors and Traders in conducting the complicated business of the Company over a wide area.

The volume is well edited, and adequate biographical notes of characters other than the chief actors in the drama are provided in an appendix.

D. C. H.

GREEN SONG AND OTHER POEMS. By Edith Sitwell. Macmillans in Canada. Pp. 35. \$1.65.

This slim volume contains Miss Sitwell's poems written since 1942. These poems need to be read frequently, for they do not yield their richness of thought and perfection of technique to him who runs and reads. Much of the power of Miss Sitwell's poetry comes from the beautiful interplay of vowel sounds and from the rich cadences, especially the falling rhythms that are used to end periods of thought. Here is an example:

For there is a sound you heard in youth,
A flower whose light is lost—
There is a faith and a delight—
They lie at last beneath my frost
When I am come like Time that all men, faiths, loves, suns defeat,
My frost despoils the day's young darling.

Miss Sitwell's themes are as old as Time: grief that the fires of heart and mind do not always blend, grief of a mother for her dead child, the song of a king's former love. This is a volume that all lovers of good poetry will want to own and mark.

B. M.