

## NEW BOOKS

THE CONSTITUTION OF CANADA. An Introduction to its Development and Law. By W. P. M. Kennedy, M.A., Litt. D. Milford. Toronto. 1922.

"There is no adequate modern book on the government of Canada", says Dr. Kennedy in a foot-note, but unfortunately he makes little attempt to supply the deficiency. True, he gives us an adequate title. *The Constitution of Canada* arouses a hope that this is a work that might compare favourably with that of Bagehot, Dicey, or Low, or—to seek the nearest Canadian parallel—with Goldwin Smith's *Canada and the Canadian Question*. On closer examination, however, it proves to be no comprehensive survey of the field, but a series of essays, partly constitutional, mostly historical, having little connection with one another. The bulk of the book is devoted to a political history of the days before Confederation; the constitution since 1867 receives only 119 pages out of the total 458; and an attempt is made to state and develop the "framework and scheme of government" in a chapter of 21 pages. The book ends with a number of disconnected chapters on Canadian federalism, distribution of powers, and the imperial relationship. A more significant title would undoubtedly be: "Essays on Canadian History and Government."

The method of approach to the subject is also not above criticism, though this necessarily depends on the aim of the book. If it is to be a study of the constitution and its development, would it not be more effective if the institutions and officers were taken separately and the historical changes noted? Why not take the governor, for example, outline his position, his powers, the possibilities of the office, and then illustrate historically the ways in which these were used and misused, how they depended on the personality of the incumbent, how on the attitude of the Colonial Office? These questions are all taken up in the narrative, but it is essentially a history. The historical facts are not brought to bear with sufficient force on what is, presumably, the central study,—the constitution. The emphasis is laid on the procession of governors rather than on their costume and destination. While it is true that the constitution is continually in motion, we often like to stop it, to ask it a few questions, to enquire where it thinks it is going, before allowing it to pass on. A moving picture is all very well, but for some purposes a photograph is more useful. The truth of this has been recognised by Dr. Kennedy (notably on pp. 161-65) but a fuller recognition would make the book much more valuable.

Aside from these two grievances as to title and method, there is much to be thankful for. One is grateful for the study, albeit a brief one, of the government under French rule: constitutional writers tend to forget that Canada was once a royal province of France. The research work on Sydenham and Bagot is extremely well done, and

presents a wealth of material that can be found only in the Parliamentary Papers or the original documents. The chapter on "The Nature of Canadian Federalism" is a reprint of an article of the author in the *Canadian Historical Review* (with additions on disallowance), and it well merits the wider reading that it is sure to receive. "The Distribution of Legislative Power" is the best thing of its kind in so small a compass, and is equal to the work of the late Professor Lefroy at his best. The chapter on the position of Canada in the Empire is unsatisfactory, but so is the position. The theory of sovereignty promulgated by Professor Laski finds frequent illustrations to worry Austinians, but it may be questioned whether the "current theory of sovereignty" (p. 453) is really Austinian, and whether the present anomalous position of Canada in the League does not involve a tacit admission that the old theory is now dead.

There are, of course, a number of isolated statements that may be questioned. "The citizens of Canada are first of all Canadians and secondly citizens of a particular province" (p. 5). Perhaps, after all, Austin's theory rested on a "natural law". But what of the present agitation for Nova Scotia to retain her membership in the Commons? Or Mr. Corning's resolution? Or the insistence by each province that it should be represented in the federal cabinet? The Supreme Court of Canada, we are told, "has been a remarkable success" (p. 341). This can be regarded only in the light of a discovery, and like most discoveries must be proved if it is to be believed. In one place in the book (p. 379) it is stated that county court judges are removed by the governor-general after joint address, but the true procedure is given later (p. 394). Finally, is it not a little rash to say without qualification that "once the imperial government declares war, Canada is at war" (p. 452)? It may be so; but it must be remembered that Canada was not formally at peace until the Canadian Parliament had ratified the peace treaty; power to make war and power to declare peace usually reside in the same body. The sole indisputable fact in these matters to-day is that the Dominions scarcely know what is now their place in the shaky framework of the old international law.

R. MACG. DAWSON.

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SOME IMPRESSIONS OF MY ELDERS. By St. John Ervine. George Allen & Unwin. London. 1923.

These essays, whose author is well known as a novelist, play-writer, and dramatic critic, first appeared in the *North American Review*. They offer an attractive bill of fare: George William Russell (A. E.), Arnold Bennett, Chesterton, Galsworthy, George Moore, Bernard Shaw, Wells and Yeats are assuredly names to conjure with. Mr. Ervine groups these writers as "the men who guided in greater or less degree the opinions of the young men and women of the early twentieth century in the islands of Great Britain and Ireland." With their personalities as well as with their books he is intimately acquainted, and his impressions are fresh and vivid. It is apparent

that the influence of Bernard Shaw has been stronger with him than that of any other of his "elders"; and a little of the Shavian egoism, love of contradictions, and tendency to dogmatic utterance on the most varied subjects is perceptible in the present volume. But there is also a sureness of touch and a brilliance of style not unworthy of that master of paradox. Of Shaw Mr. Ervine would have us believe, indeed, that his self-praise and wilful eccentricities are but the elaborate camouflage behind which an essentially shy and humble-minded man conceals himself,—a view which, if it puts some strain upon our faith, at least furnishes a useful corrective to the popular idea of mere cleverness marred by flippancy and vanity. "He is a Don Quixote without illusions. When he tilts at windmills, he does so because they are windmills in private ownership, and he wishes them to be driven by electricity and owned by the local authority. In print and on platforms Mr. Shaw brags and boasts and lays claim to an omniscience that would scandalize most deities, but no one that has the ability to distinguish between sincerity and mere capering is in the least deceived by his platform conceit." With Mr. Galsworthy he is in less complete sympathy. He deprecates his supersensitiveness to suffering. "I imagine" he says, "that when Mr. Galsworthy goes into a garden, his delight in it is dashed by the thought that somewhere near at hand a thrush is killing a snail!" Yet surely this writer's vigorous and keen analysis of the causes, psychical and social, that are responsible for human wreckage is not the work of a mere sentimentalist; it is his humanity of feeling, joined to his clearness of outlook, that gives vitality and poignancy to his novels and plays.

Mr. Ervine gives us a bright and amusing sketch of George Moore, whose erratic personality and brilliant writing he finds strongly attractive. One would have wished to have had more light shed upon the life and the work of George William Russell (A. E.)—that enigmatic and singular figure in poetry and politics; but in regard both to him and to Mr. Yeats our essayist shows little sympathy with the Celtic mysticism which informs their verse and forms such an integral part of their ideals. A genial and friendly picture is drawn of Mr. Chesterton, and the critical appreciation of Arnold Bennett's realistic fiction has genuine value. One hesitates to point out faults in a volume so pleasant and informative as this for the most part is, but many readers will be struck painfully by the pages of virulent abuse of the Irish people, which as coming from an Irishman seems singularly ill-judged. In still worse taste is the sneering reference to the Roman Catholic religion in the opening essay. In spite of these and a few other blemishes, however, this is a book to be read and enjoyed.

E. R.

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A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN BANK OF COMMERCE, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE OTHER BANKS WHICH NOW FORM PART OF ITS ORGANIZATION. By Victor Ross. Toronto. Oxford University Press, 1920-22. 2 Volumes.

The title of this monumental work on Canadian Banking does scant justice to the subject-matter which follows. Not only does it

tell in ample form the story of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, but it gives much valuable information on the history of Canadian Banking in general during the earlier years of provincial and national life. Volume I opens with an interesting sketch of "Early Banking in Upper and Lower Canada" followed by detailed accounts of the Halifax Banking Company, the Merchants Bank of Prince Edward Island, the Gore Bank, the Bank of British Columbia, and the Eastern Townships Bank—all financial institutions absorbed in turn by the "Commerce". Then come ninety pages of varied articles of special historic and descriptive interest, bearing in one way or another on Banking, its joys and sorrows. The second volume is devoted to the story of the origin, growth and expansion of the Canadian Bank of Commerce itself, apart from the various amalgamations just mentioned. It was practically a child of the Confederation period, the doors of its first Toronto office having been opened for business in May 1867; its growth has been concurrent with that of United Canada,—its development on a vastly greater ratio than that of the Dominion. A gain in assets from \$2,997,081 in 1868 to \$440,310,703 in 1918—an average annual increase of nearly nine million dollars—certainly indicates progress. The story of this expansion in all its forms—historical, technical, and picturesque—is told clearly and with wealth of detail in the volumes before us. They unmistakably represent the highest form of literary effort as yet put forth by any Canadian banking or mercantile institution, and are indispensable to the student of the financial growth of the Dominion.

Both volumes are profusely illustrated: we have excellent portraits of Sir Edmund Walker, President; of Sir John Aird, General Manager, and others prominent in the life of the Bank, together with no fewer than 140 views of buildings, places of interest, bank notes, and other objects connected with the institution and referred to in the text. Paper, binding and general finish of the work are of the best, and in all respects the Bank is to be congratulated on the issue of so attractive a chronicle.

J. P. EDWARDS.

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NEWFOUNDLAND VERSE. By E. J. Pratt. The Ryerson Press. Toronto. 1923.

This is a noteworthy volume of poetry. Its themes, often tragic, are handled with intelligence and imaginative power; and though the writer's style is not free from crudities and occasional obscurities, yet his language has often a vividly picturesque quality that holds the reader's attention fast. Except for a few poems written during the war, they are strictly "Newfoundland Verses," dealing with the clouds and sea and rugged coast, the ice and fogs and storms, the experiences and feelings of those whose lives and deaths are conditioned by these things. Such a subject-matter lends itself to realistic treatment. Mr. Pratt describes it with simplicity and directness, avoiding all obvious sentimentality, while he brings to light its deep pathos and its not infrequent heroism. "The Ice-floes"—a poem descriptive of the excitements and dangers of the seal-fishery—is characteristic of

the author's best qualities; and "Rachel", the story of a mother whose son the sea has taken, has real beauty.

E. R.

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A LUCIANIC DIALOGUE. By W. F. R. Hardie. Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 1922.

This delightful little book by Mr. Hardie of Balliol College, Oxford, has been awarded a Gaisford Greek Prize for 1922 and is already providing pleasure and amusement to an unusually wide circle of readers. Modelled after the style of Lucian's well-known *Dialogues of the Dead*, and imitating with extraordinary success the subtle and elusive Lucianic idiom, the book bids fair to become itself a classic in a small way. Although the Dialogue is written entirely in Greek, the diction of Mr. Hardie should prove no serious stumbling-block to anyone who, like the old gentleman in Goldsmith, "hasn't altogether forgotten his Classics".

Socrates in Hades has become thoroughly bored with the routine of affairs in the lower world, and earnestly desires—by way of diversion—to make the acquaintance of some of earth's leading citizens who still enjoy the light of heaven. So he commissions Pollux to convey down into the shades the persons of Mr. Lloyd George (at that time still Prime Minister), de Valera, Trotsky, Dean Inge and Mr. G. K. Chesterton. The melancholy Dean and Mr. Lloyd George are first ushered into the presence of the Attic philosopher; but the statesman, though he greets Socrates effusively, can recall nothing about him except that he is a Greek! Thereupon he is taken to task sharply by the learned ecclesiastic, and almost immediately disappears from sight,—to return, however, in a few minutes full of apologies and also, to everybody's amazement, fully posted on the subject of Greek philosophy and philosophers. The sudden accretion of knowledge, it presently appears, is to be traced to a hasty consultation of a copy of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* which, according to Pollux, he has been able to smuggle across the Styx unknown to Charon. Soon the remaining *Dialogi Personae* appear, but Trotsky, de Valera and finally Mr. Lloyd George are put to utter confusion and rout by the skilful dialectic of Dean Inge and Mr. Chesterton. Socrates himself takes a hand in it, and is clearly on the latter side. He highly insults Mr. Lloyd George, in one instance, by scoffing at the game of golf which he has just had explained to him, and by inquiring if Braid and Vardon are Persians or Spartans, that they take an interest in such a trifling pastime.

Finally, the Dean and Mr. Chesterton elucidate for Socrates's enlightenment the doctrines and tenets of the modern schools of Freud, Coué and Einstein. The Theory of Relativity is explained at some length in Aristotelian terms and, curiously enough, the Greek provides a much more intelligible medium of exposition than—generally speaking—does the English language, in spite of the latter's extraordinary wealth of technical nomenclature. The cinematograph and Charlie

Chaplin are brought under review, and Mr. Chesterton has to acknowledge now, though he wholly despises the entire "movie" art, as soon as he sees Chaplin on the screen "I bite my lips, but still I laugh."

At the conclusion of the conversation, the Gloomy Dean expresses a desire to forego the remainder of his natural course of existence upon earth, and to remain and converse with Socrates, but—the fates forbid.

The Dialogue is embellished here and there with cleverly introduced quotations from Homer and the Greek dramatists, quite after the manner dear to Lucian. Mr. Hardie's descriptions of modern institutions in the language of two millennia ago could hardly be improved upon. He is not, perhaps, quite so successful in his renderings of personal names. Sometimes he simply transliterates; again, he attempts a pure or *quasi* translation. On one occasion at least we are glad that the significance is made clear from the context; otherwise we might experience a difficulty in recognizing Shakespeare under the covering of the name *Dorypaltes*.

A. D. FRASER.

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THE POETICAL WORKS OF WILFRED CAMPBELL. Edited with a memoir by W. J. Sykes. Hodder and Stoughton. London and Toronto.

This edition of Campbell's poetry will be welcomed by all interested in Canadian literature. It includes not only all the poems (exclusive of dramas) published before his death, but a large number of others which did not appear in permanent form during his lifetime. The book before us, therefore, gives us the opportunity to judge of his work as a whole and estimate his rank as a poet. The editing has been done with care, and the memoir is excellent,—a worthy record of the life of a brilliant and highly gifted man.

Wilfred Campbell had keen imagination, strong feelings, and a quick eye for the beauties of nature. These qualifications, so important for a poet, are apparent in almost everything he wrote; yet his verse but very seldom reaches that excellence which gives it an assured place in literature. He was too fluent, too careless of technical perfection, and he published much that was second-rate. We should recognize, however, that we owe not a little to him. He taught his countrymen that the woods and fields, the lakes and rivers of their own land are rich with matter for song; he gave expression to the Canadian's love for Canada, and to that larger patriotism which unites him with the Empire; and in such poems as "Lazarus" or "The Question" he attacked problems more profound and far-reaching than any other Canadian writer of verse had discussed. Two of the finest poems in this volume are elegies,—tributes to personal friends, "Summer Death" in memory of the Hon. Arthur Dickey, and "Bereavement of the Fields" in memory of Archibald Lampman,—the latter probably the most beautiful poem of this kind that has been written in our Dominion.

E. R.