TYNE COT CEMETERY, PASSCHENDAELE

H. F. CHETTLE

PASSCHENDAELE ("Pasture Valley") was a village midway between Ypres and Roulers. It was quiet and well-to-do, surrounded by farms, copses, and cultivated fields between water-courses. A single-line railway ran south of it, with a station on the road leading south-east to Moorslede. The south-west road to Broodseinde, runs almost level as far as the railway crossing; fifty yards west from that point was a barn, from which the country fell away, very gradually, west and north-west, and no equal height intervened between this barn and the coast, from Nieuport to Furnes. As yet neither Passchendaele nor the barn had become historical. Westroosebeke, the next village to the north, had a name in history, but in July, 1914, Passchendaele had none.

The invasion of Belgium by the Germans, begun on the 3rd August, 1914, was relatively slow in reaching Passchendaele. The fortress of Antwerp fell on the 8th October. By the 13th October the 7th Division of the British Expeditionary Force, which came too late to relieve Antwerp, but helped to cover the Belgian retreat from Ghent, had reached Roulers and had joined the 3rd Cavalry Division; and by the 16th these forces had retired through Passchendaele to a line west of that village. These were the days of advance and retreat and skirmishing.

The 7th Division turned due east towards Menin, while the 3rd Cavalry Division, on their left, advanced towards Roulers; but both were held up. The cavalry were relieved by General de Mitry's 2nd (French) Cavalry Corps, and billeted in Passchendaele. Next day Passchendaele was occupied by the French cavalry, but it was evacuated on the 20th. On the 21st the 2nd Division pushed forward towards Passchendaele again. But the way was barred for nearly three years to come.

On the 31st July, 1917, the British army had begun the offensive known as the Battle of Ypres, 1917; and by the 3rd October they had reached a line $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Passchendaele Church, and more than a mile from the barn. The barn had been named by the competent branch of the army "Tyne Cot," or "Tyne Cottage" —why, I do not know; the names in that region were very varied, and this one lay within Hillside Farm, Augustus, Hamburg, Beecham, Seine and Marne. The ground rose, however slowly, to

Passchendaele, and the advance had to be continued; but Tyne Cot was no longer a barn. It was, in fact, a collection of five or six ferro-concrete, loop-holed machine-gun shelters, known as "pill-boxes," and in that water-logged country (water-logged when the proper course of husbandry was interrupted) servin someg of the purposes for which entrenchments were used in France.

On the 4th October, in heavy rain, the 2nd Australian Division fought their way up to Tyne Cot. On 9th October the 66th Division pushed on, in similar weather. On the 12th, the 22nd, the 26th and the 30th October the attack was renewed, and Passchendaele itself was passed by the 5th Canadian Infantry Brigade on the 6th November.

One of the pill-boxes at Tyne Cot was unusually large, being nine feet high. It was used, after its capture, as an Advanced Dressing Station; and on two sides of it, as early as the 6th October, British, Canadian and Australian soldiers were buried. The graves, at first scattered in no order, developed by the end of March 1918 into a cemetery of two "plots" and, in all, about 350 graves—122 of which were Canadian. The 33rd and 50th (Northumbrian) Divisions and two Canadian units (the 6th Brigade of Field Artillery and the 5th Infantry Brigade) had dug these graves. On the night of the 12th-13th April, however, the British forces holding the Passchendaele Ridge were reduced, in consequence of the critical state of the fighting further south, to a line of outposts; and three days later the line was drawn further back. For more than seven months Tyne Cot was in enemy hands. Then in one day, the 28th September, "the British Divisions"—to use the words of the Despatch—"had passed far beyond the farthest limits of the 1917 battles." The thousands of soldiers of the Empire who lay unburied, or in unmarked graves, on those battlefields were avenged. It remained to recover and re-bury them, so far as might be, and in any case to record their names for ever.

The battlefields of that autumn campaign of 1917 have been described by men who knew them at first hand. If I may assume a general knowledge, however imperfectly realized, of the conditions in which Passchendaele was first won, it will be easy to understand that for many thousands of men the report "Killed in Action," or the "Missing; presumed Dead" which put an end to suspense, was the last news that the Army could give. And of this class it may be said with little hesitation that by far the greatest number, here as on other fields, are those who carried out their duty to its utmost limit and fell in the enemy's lines; it is the special limitation of the hero's epitaph. For some thousands of others their comrades,

or the staff of the Burial Officers,[1] had provided sepulchre in small groups of graves, a few of which (as Tyne Cot) became the centres of future permanent cemeteries; many of them were found and concentrated—often without any clues to identity—into permanent cemeteries; and many of these disappeared in the tide of war. In no instance that I know of were the graves wilfully destroyed by the enemy. In a few instances (the task being as hard for the Germans as for our own armies, and carried out, I think, with the same care, though naturally not always with the same accuracy in recording British units) they had been gathered into German Military Cemeteries.

Here then, about 1921, was a permanent cemetery like twelve hundred others in France and Belgium. The graves were marked with wooden crosses, bearing inscriptions of aluminium tape. The cemetery was surveyed; each grave was numbered, and a nominal roll drawn up. The French and Belgian Governments had secured for us by law the perpetuity of these cemeteries, and were buying the sites, one by one, at their own cost. Trained gardeners, ex-service men from all parts of the Empire, had begun the work of maintenance which they are carrying on to-day. The Army had finished its task. The Imperial War Graves Commission had been established, representing in its personnel, its funds, and —above all—its control, the share of bereavement which the United Kingdom and each Dominion had borne. What has since been done, and what will be done, with Tyne Cot Cemetery?

At Tyne Cot Cemetery the Commission's work has been begun, but not yet completed; the procedure already carried out in the majority of cemeteries will be applied to it. The next of kin of every soldier known to be buried in it will be asked to amend or amplify the inscription suggested for the headstone; and the same type of headstone will be erected over each grave. The badge of the unit (a beaver for the Canadian Engineers, a maple leaf for all other Canadian units) will be engraved at the top of the stone; then the "regimental particulars", age, and date of death; then the cross, or another symbol of faith; then, if the next-of-kin wish it, and choose it, a short expression of personal feeling.[2]

When the headstones are in position and the cemetery is otherwise complete, a Register of the graves, based on information supplied by the Army and the next-of-kin, will be published. I need not describe these Registers in detail; the Canadian Government is purchasing a copy for the next-of-kin of each officer or man who fell in the Canadian forces.

1 The Canadian corps was one of the first to organize the burial of its dead in action on a basis proportionate to the offensive of 1917.

2 At the foot of a well-known Major-General's headstone in France is carved the single word, "Tommy."

The cemetery is not merely a place of headstones; other permanent work has already been let to contract. It will be walled and planted. The Great Stone—the "Stone of Remembrance"—will stand on the east side of the cemetery. The "Cross of Sacrifice," with a bronze sword fixed to it, will stand on the big block-house in the middle,—visible, probably, from the Channel off Nieuport. And this cemetery will contain in addition one of the Memorials bearing the names of those who have no known graves.

Nearly 100,000 soldiers from the United Kingdom and the Dominions fell in the Ypres Salient, and are not buried in known graves; four, or perhaps five, Memorials in the Salient will together bear their names. The new Menin Gate, on the east side of Ypres, leading from that town to the battlefields of 1914-1918, will be erected by the Commission to commemorate about 60,000, including all those who came from Canada, Australia, South Africa and India. The officers and men who fought in the forces of Great Britain and Ireland will be divided among the Menin Gate, the Tyne Cot Memorial, and perhaps another. The New Zealand Expeditionary Force will have the names of its unidentified dead recorded on Memorials at Tyne Cot, on Messines Ridge, and in Polygon Wood. All these will have their uniform Registers, but each Memorial will be specially designed.

The eastern plots of Tyne Cot Cemetery are laid out in the form of a fan, with paths radiating to the central block-house. They will be bounded by a semi-circular flint wall, fourteen feet high and about five hundred feet long. At each end of the wall there will be a domed chapel, carrying the stone figure of a kneeling angel; and 119 panels, along this wall and in three recessed buildings behind it, will bear the names which can never be associated with a grave. The conjunction of the two methods of commemoration at one place is more than accidental. There can be little doubt that some of the dead buried here, whose headstones bear no names, will have their names carved on the Memorial which is to look down from the upper end of the cemetery, over the graves, the Stone and the Cross, to that corner of Belgium which they guarded.

The ruins of older civilizations stand to suggest to us that no earthly names can live for ever on this earth. We can only guarantee the memory of our dead against the calculable factors of decay; and that guarantee will be given to the British and Dominion dead of the greatest armed struggle of which our records tell. It convulsed one continent and shook the rest of the earth; it carried away a million of the Empire's men and women; and out of it have come these momuments and records, which will remind us that "their name liveth for evermore."

OUR NEGLECT OF THE LIGHT ESSAY

NORRIS HODGINS

NOW that an attempt is being made to develope in Canada a literature distinctively Canadian, it is but natural that we should examine rather critically those writings of Canadians that come our way, to see whether we can find in them the germ of nationality—the stamp of shire. This is not an easy thing to recognize, particularly in the literature of a very young country that has until recently been largely dependent upon the markets of other countries for an outlet for its literary productions. For such a condition has at least two influences upon the literature of that country at variance with the idea of the development of a national cast in her writings: first, the environment of the writers in their workshops is not likely to stimulate a national consciousness, because, lacking a background of their own literature and surrounded by the works of their *confreres* in the older established countries, they must inevitably imbibe something of the philosophy and the style of the writers elsewhere[1]: and, second, they are led consciously or unconsciously away from the truest delineation of their national characteristics and thought by the demands of their markets.

But to me there is one thing in our writings that is easy of discovery—a trade mark, as it were, of our nationality in the world of letters—and yet an undesirable thing. It is the absence, or the comparative absence, from our Canadian literature of the light essay as such. It is the lack, in our contribution to the thought and entertainment of the world, of those delightful little chats on something or on anything, of those charming bits of philosophy on subjects grave and gay, that have filled such an important place in the literature of France, England, and other civilized nations since the days of Montaigne. These, I contend, we have neglected—and to our own impoverishment—in our efforts to build up a Canadian literature. But, to uphold my contention, I must, in the words of the stage villain, "produce my proofs"; and it is to do this thing that I have set out in the present essay.

Perhaps it would be as well to clear ground somewhat by

1. I do not mean to suggest for one moment that this state of affairs is unhealthy, or that it makes for less worthy productions from the pens of these workers. The influence of outside reading is decidedly the reverse. But, it must be admitted, this is a factor that is opposed (fortunately, I think) to the fullest development of the ideal of nationality (or provincialism) in the works of a young nation

answering, at the outset, two questions that have been put to me by several persons with whom I have discussed this subject of the light essay and its place in our Canadian literature. The first is, "What do you mean by the term 'light essay'?" And the second, "Whom do you include amongst Canadian writers? Do you mean Canadian-born, whether writing in Canada or elsewhere, or do you mean men who write in Canada, irrespective of their place of birth?"

By *light essay* I mean the essay or sketch that is read primarily for enjoyment—the essay that gives no information, or that, giving it, presents it in such form that the reader absorbs it unconsciously, unsuspectingly, as the victim in a certain type of penny-dreadful takes laudanum with his coffee,—the sort of thing that certain mellow bachelors read on sunny hillsides on hazy October afternoons, or before an open fire, with pipe and mug at hand, on bleak December nights—the sort of thing that a few householders peruse in bed on Sunday mornings, or by the light of the library lamp on those quiet evenings when their wives are out to "bridges"—the sort of thing that business-girls, students for the ministry, and statisticians read not at all. I mean discursive essays of the type of Montaigne's *Of Coaches*, of Lamb's *Old China*, of Holbrook Jackson's *Going to Nowhere*, of Max Beerbohm's *Going Out for a Walk*, of Christopher Morley's *Unanswering Letters*. I mean essays of the type found in Robert Lynd's *Pleasures of Ignorance*, or in H. M. Tomlinson's *Old Junk*.

What part is played by essays of this nature in Canadian literature? What part should they play? Have we a reading public that would appreciate material of this sort? If not, why not? Have we writers that can produce this sort of thing? What are the factors that will encourage its production? These are some of the questions that I have asked myself in connection with this subject. It does not necessarily follow that I am prepared to give answers of finality to all of them; but I have at least sought for what might appear to be reasonable replies in each case.

And in the matter of deciding which writers shall be included in a study of this nature I have simplified matters by accepting *all* who have come to my attention. If writers come from foreign lands and produce light essays for Canadian consumption, we may adduce the fact that we have in Canada a reading public that can appreciate whimsical and semi-philosophical writings. If we produce in Canada men who can write essays of this nature—and if we can hold them—this must show that we have here a healthy atmosphere for the production of *belles-lettres*. If we can produce these men

but cannot keep them, it might suggest that these writers are exotics, born out of place or out of season, and that they must go to friendlier climes to secure appreciation.

Before taking up specifically the light essay and its place in Canadian literature, let us glance just a moment at our accomplishments in general in the field of letters. Have we in Canada a literature? If so, what is its status? What are its main characteristics? In answer to the first of these questions we have, on the one hand, the information that "in a *kultur* map of the world, published in Germany in 1913, Canada shared with Africa the distinction of 'having no assignable culture' "; and we have, on the other hand, the vociferous assurances of our youthful, but lusty, Canadian Authors' Association that we have already accomplished much valuable work in the literary field. Somewhere between these two extremes lies the truth,—that we have made a beginning in literary work, but that our literature has not flourished as it should have done, nor does it exhibit as yet that degree of permanence that we should like to see. And as to its main characteristics, the outstanding thing in Canadian literature is undoubtedly our poetry; the names of Archibald Lampman, Bliss Carman, Marjorie Pickthall, etc., are proof of this. Next in importance would probably come our political and historical works—whole shelves of them. We have many nature-studies of interest, and books of animal life of the Roberts variety. And in the field of fiction we have our occasional *Maria Chapdelaine*, and our hundreds of novels and short stories of the "popular" Ralph Connor—Nellie McClung type.

But of the reflective or discursive essay we have few examples, and it is for this that I make a plea. The essay is, in my opinion, almost a necessity to permanence in our literature. We cannot have a literature of politics alone. Few short stories survive the generation that produces them; few works of fiction pass over into the classics. It is the poetry and the philosophy of a people that are handed on from generation to generation, and that give to the literature of a nation its individuality. Montaigne wrote for all time when he undertook the discussion of his varying topics in the 16th century. Lamb and Hazlitt have outlived most of their more serious-minded contemporaries. And I should not be afraid to wager that Max Beerbohm's sketches will grace the shelves of many an inglenook when even our very best sellers have been consigned to the limbo of forgotten things.

A closer study of the situation, with particular reference to the place of the "light essay" in our literature, but establishes the general

rule of its rarity. If one were to go out looking for material of this sort, one would at once be struck by the fact that no one knows just where to look for Canadian essays. Booksellers, publishers, librarians—all look blank when asked for them, although even in Canada one does not need to search long for books by English or American essayists. And the net result of such a search would be a few volumes—mostly by Stephen Leacock and Peter McArthur—excellent books, some of them, but not sufficiently numerous to disprove the rule of scarcity. The same will be found to hold true in the magazine field, only more so. Our popular Canadian magazines, and the magazine sections of our Sunday papers, have little or nothing of this nature.[2] A few reflective or whimsical bits may be found in our farm papers, notably in *The Farmer's Advocate;* and in the files of *The University Magazine* (a periodical now, unfortunately, no longer appearing) a goodly sprinkling of charming specimens are to be found. But these are the exceptions, not the rule, and as such will be dealt with later.

When we turn to the evidence produced in our histories of literature we find our suspicions justified, our rule confirmed. In his *History of English-Canadian Literature to the Confederation*, Roy Palmer Baker hints at something of the nature of our light essay appearing in *The Nova Scotian* (of Joseph Howe and Judge Haliburton fame) a century ago, and states that *The Literary Garland*, a magazine that flourished in the forties, "did for the Canadas what *The Nova Scotian* did for the Maritime Provinces. It made use of verse, memoir, essay, sketch, and novel." The essays and sketches mentioned were apparently produced by new settlers, either from the Old Country or from the United States, who brought their culture with them. And when this generation passed, the essay apparently passed with it. At any rate we hear much less of it in histories of later periods. In his section on "English Canadian Literature," in volume 12 of *Canada and its Provinces*, T. G. Marquis devotes 32 pages to our fiction, 24 to poetry, 11 to history, 9 to travels and exploration, 5 to biography, and 14 to general literature—of which one paragraph refers somewhat remotely to the light essay, its kith and kin. In this paragraph he says: "Canadians, like all northern people, take life seriously. There is a marked lack of humour in poets, novelists, and dramatists[3]—

2. An exception should perhaps be made in the case of *The Canadian Magazine*, which has recently been publishing under the titles "Thrown Out," and "Thrown In" a monthly dissertation by the editor of the magazine himself.

3. This is perhaps not so true to-day as it was when written. Stephen Leacock's work need only be mentioned to show that the foregoing charge is now bnt partially true.

and without humour there can be no true greatness." *So our general rule is that the light essay has had a small part in our literature.*

Let us look now for some of the things that might explain this general dearth in our literature of material of a whimsical or semi-philosophical character. The main reason is undoubtedly our youth, with the things that go with life in a pioneering country: lack of scholarship, lack of leisure, lack of appreciation, lack of a reflective atmosphere. Prof. Pelham Edgar, of Toronto University, summed up our situation very nicely in an article that appeared in *The University Magazine* of October, 1912, when he said:

> It is not that we have been numerically small, for Athens and Judaea were smaller, but that we have been quite extraordinarily busy with our hands, having had no slaves to fell our forests and to build our roads, and equally busy with our wits amassing wealth, having had no accumulated reserves of fortune to permit of easeful and care-free meditation. Money we now possess; but such is our lust for ever-increasing stores, that money has brought with it no leisured class; and literature, we must remember, is not the recreation of a few hours wrested from days and years of labour. Lack of time, therefore, measurably accounts for lack of literature; but had we the time, I fear that we have so long neglected as to have lost the faculty for thinking about things which, to the man of affairs, seem useless enough, yet which for literature are really the things that matter.

And Macaulay, in his essay on Milton, seems to have characterized our present situation exactly, when he said that in the literature of a country we find poetry predominating during its pioneer years, with science and philosophy following some distance behind. "Nations," he says, "like individuals, first perceive and then abstract. They advance from particular images to general terms. Hence the vocabulary of an enlightened society is philosophical; that of a half-civilized people is poetical."

A study of our people will show that we have but a small reading public for the light essay, simply because we have in Canada few people who are not pioneers, or imbued with that spirit of restlessness that is so fatal to philosophy, however light, and that comes from the pioneer's profound reverence for *doing* and his yet more profound ignorance of *being*. We are cursed with a belief in Longfellow's new-world doctrine that, "Life is earnest!"—that we must "Act, act in the living present." We in this country are still like the cow during her early hours on grass, when she rushes about nervously nibbling the choice clumps before another gets them. We have not yet reached the ruminating stage at which Bessie lies down in the shade of a tree to chew her cud.

Now I have attempted to classify the people of Canada (although necessarily roughly) in an endeavour to find out whether we have *any promise of a reading public for reflective writing*, and I have come to the conclusion that our greatest hope lies in two constituencies—those in the older rural districts that have already supported several generations and who are now getting away somewhat from pioneer life and pioneer ideas—and, in some of our older cities, a few small groups of men who have inherited comfort.

We can divide the people of our rural districts into three groups. First we find the *pioneers*—the men who are still clearing the land and building roads, men to whom philosophy or whimsy is of no interest. From these the demand comes for poetry of song, for religious works, and for stirring tales. Then we have a large—a deplorably large—group of men who are naught but *clods*. Chill penury, lack of learning, hard driving misconceptions of life, make of them a class that has no value so far as the intellectual life of a country is concerned. And last, we have on some of our old concessions a small but promising group of *civilized* people—and I mean by "civilized" what Macaulay meant—people who are now tasting of the fruits from the trees planted by their pioneering forefathers. This rural group is, to my mind, perhaps our most important constituency from the standpoint of reflective writings.

I do not mean by this that they are our greatest readers of light essays—in many cases they are denied the opportunity of seeing such—but rather that in these districts may be detected something of the atmosphere in which the light essay is ever to be found. Anyone who is at all acquainted with life in such communities will understand what I mean—the reflective attitude of mind of the better-class farmer, the speculative character of the conversations between neighbours on those nights of winter when the wind howls in the chimney and the "men folks" put their feet on the stove damper, the real wit and humour that comes into play when such men come together at threshing or wood-cutting time. And it seems more than a coincidence that one of our few markets for essays of a non-topical nature is in the farm weekly; that where our other magazines refuse such essays, these periodicals pay for this material from three to five times the price they pay for articles of an agricultural or scientific nature: that Peter McArthur's work appeared for years in *The Farmer's Advocate* before *The Toronto Globe* took him up.

Then, turning to the city, we find the pioneering spirit even more in evidence there than in the country, even less of this reflective atmosphere that is so necessary to the growth and develop-

ment of the light essay. Here again we may divide the public into three great groups, with again the leading group known as *the pioneers*. This class includes most city dwellers of ambition, and may be further subdivided into our four well-known urban-pioneer types: (a) Pioneers in finance and business—men who are building up business as others are building roads or ditching swamps, and who are not interested in anything of a philosophical nature; (b) Social climbers; (c) Seekers after pleasure; (d) The near intellectuals of the tea-pouring persuasion. Common to all of these is the pioneer's idea that everything may be accomplished by "push" and "go". It has been shown repeatedly that tremendous energy, if skilfully directed, can accomplish wonders for the first two (i. e. in business and in social climbing), and we on this continent have made the not unnatural mistake of supposing that the rule applies to others as well. So we have our hectic parties of men and women relentlessly pursuing pleasure from midnight frolic to cabaret, from cabaret to dance hall—not knowing that happiness is one of the few things that come not from *doing* but from *being*. And we have our tea sets gabbling ferociously of the latest books. Have you read *Babbitt*? Have you read *So Big*? Have you read *The Conquest of Fear*? These are the questions that are nervously asked and nervously answered by harried hostesses and guests—pioneers, these, putting so many books behind them each month as a pioneer axeman puts behind him an acre of cleared land. But all absolutely lacking in literary appreciation! Then again, we have the deplorably large number of *morons* in city as in country. And finally, in some of our older cities, we have a small group of readers who patronize the counters of light essays (from English and American authors) that are to be found in our better bookshops.

So much for the Canadian situation in so far as the reading public is concerned. Let us now look at it from the writer's standpoint. Here, as well, we find certain conditions that are unfavourable for the production of the light essay. Amongst these are lack of scholarship, lack of atmosphere, lack of leisure, lack of comradeship, and lack of encouragement. We are not yet a nation of readers, and so cannot expect to be a nation of writers. We lack the old-world atmosphere of hedge-row and sleepy inn. We lack leisure, what Theophile Gautier calls "the tenth and most delightful of the Muses." It will be remembered that when Montaigne decided to write, he gave up his law practice and retired behind walls upon which he caused this legend to be inscribed: "In the year of our Lord 1571, at the age of 38, on the eve of the Kalends of March, his birthday,

Michel de Montaigne, weary of enduring the servitude of law courts and public offices, and with all his faculties still alert, yielded himself to the care of the learned maidens, with them to pass in peace and quietness whatsoever span of life might further be allotted him." This leisure we lack, even in a small way. We have not yet learned to sit still a minute. And, more specifically, there is lack of encouragement for writing. But of this, more anon.

Summing up, then, the *general situation* in Canada with regard to the light essay, we find examples of this sort of writing rare—owing, in general, to the fact that we are not sufficiently far advanced as a nation either to appreciate or to produce work of this nature; and we find, further, that apparently much of what we have produced was written a century ago.

But when we come to look at the specific exceptions to the rule, things appear more hopeful. As we have already seen, we have in Canada a couple of constituencies already welcoming reading material of a reflective nature. And on the other hand, in the midst of the desert we find some most refreshing oases of light essays that have been produced by modern Canadian writers. Two or three of our own writers have already produced enough of these to make possible the publication of a few books. And in the late *University Magazine* Sir Andrew Macphail included some things of very great charm. Before beginning this essay I looked through three dozen issues of this delightful periodical, and in these I found a dozen or so really fine specimens of the "light essay." There were, besides, many descriptive pieces, and a large number of general essays of power. But I am dealing here with but one type.

Might I specify a few of these that caught my eye? I shall give them in the order of their publication, the first being from the issue of October, 1908, and the last from the issue of October, 1919: *Alice in Wonderland*, by Archibald MacMechan; *The Devil and The Deep Sea*, by Stephen Leacock; *Why Newspapers are Unreadable*, by B. K. Sandwell; *Winter*, by Eileen B. Thompson; *Certain Aspects of Feminism*, by Sir A. Macphail; *The Intellectual Asset*, by Jacob Salviris; *A Treatment for Insomnia*, by Henry Carter; *Literary Atmosphere*, by W. G. Peterson; *The Man of 45*, by Alan Sullivan; *The Irrelevant Rose*, by A. MacMechan; *Eben Picken, The Bookseller*, by Eileen B. Thompson.

So here we have on one hand a small reading public that might be interested in light essays, and on the other a few writers who have shown their ability to produce material of this sort. But to-day, in the absence of the *University Magazine*, we find these promising writers either rusting, or, like Miss Thompson, writing

for the English magazines. And on the other hand our readers receive not Canadian essays, but English and American.[4]

Something is wrong, and that something is lack of encouragement. There is in Canada practically no demand for the light essay as such. Our book publishers are friendly towards it, but essays are not usually written in bookfuls. They are more often produced singly for magazine publication, and afterwards collected; and how many magazines in Canada, or users of magazine material, offer anything to the essayist?

Our magazines seem to shun all but topical articles,—those sketches that have some news value, but little more permanence as literature than have the stories appearing from day to day on the front pages of the morning paper. I may be wrong in my estimate of our editors as a whole, but I have a strong suspicion that without previous fame Charles Lamb, if he were alive, would find difficulty in marketing in Canada his *Dissertation on Roast Pork*, the late Sir Robertson Nicoll his essay *Never Chew Your Pills*, A. A. Milne his sketch *A Word for the Autumn.* And in this I am backed up by no less an authority than Sir Andrew Macphail, who gave it as his opinion, during a conversation that I had with him recently, that the only outlet for the essayist in Canada to-day is the pamphlet—published through some local bookseller.

The trouble with our magazines is that they are too much like glorified newspapers. The typical Canadian magazine (and in the term magazine I include the Sunday papers, etc.) has held too strictly to the rule to accept naught that lacks in news value. The essays that I have noticed upon their pages have usually been either news stories from the press gallery of the House of Commons humorously treated, or else something from the pen of some man who has already become famous (or even infamous) and so carries in himself a potential headline. So to-day the would-be writer of light essays must go for his inspiration, not to the pleasant companionship of country inns, nor to the wind-swept reaches of the open prairies, nor to the lackadaisical atmosphere of the sun-soaked city park, nor to the rumbling solitudes of the seaside—but rather to the Press Gallery. Or, if he would write something apart from the perishable news of the day, and is at the same time desirous of having his work appear in a Canadian magazine, he must first go out and "make his name" as a railroad president, or a pork packer, or a political boss, or even as an author of books or articles that find sale in the United States of America.

4. Here, again, I wish to make myself clear. Literature recognizes no boundaries, and I should be the last person in the world to wish to make Canadians read nothing but Canadian productions. But from the standpoint of building up a Canadian literature it seems unhealthy to have no bond of union between our readers and our writers.

I am aware that the magazine editor would probably reply to this by saying that his magazine is run for money, and that he must give the people what they want. He must also remember, however, that he is responsible for the tastes of his readers. Unless the magazines set the pace, we shall never have people reading anything worth while. We do not suddenly wake up and find non-readers, or readers of Ring Lardner's stuff, clamouring for Beerbohm. They must learn to appreciate, and our magazines must give the lead. Nor is it necessary to sacrifice readability and entertainment for permanence. True humour is not dependent upon time and place. And little by little our magazines might, if they so wished, help to build up a real literature for Canada. On the other hand, so long as the *news story* is taken as the standard of excellence of the magazine article for Canada, we need expect no general elevation of the literary tastes of the country. So long indeed will the average intelligence of the readers of our magazines remain at the level of the intelligence of their editors.

In conclusion, let me make a plea for more of this pleasant, reflective sort of material in our Canadian literature. There may not be much of this offered us; but there is some. There may not be at present much demand by readers; but their taste may slowly be developed. I do not make a plea for a literature of essays, but I do ask that some niche be apportioned to these in the temple of literature that we are trying to build in Canada. Poetry alone cannot make up a literature in this day and generation when verse plays so small a part in the lives of the people. The novel alone cannot make up a representative literature, for there are so few amongst the thousands of stories published that have any excuse for longevity. History and science have their place; but they do not make for refinement, for culture. We need the essay. The little reflective sketches to which I have attempted to draw attention constitute a very delightful and a necessary part of any literature. They fill a place—the place of a friend. They are the things that coax us into easy chairs before the fire after a hard day's work. They are mellowing and comforting, like a chat with a friend who is neither a moron nor a pedagogue. Their words fall upon our ears like the pleasantly discursive conversation of friends who leave their business at the office, who refrain from shoptalk, who never try to sell us anything. And of such conversation we cannot have too much.

AENEAS AT SEA: CHARYBDIS AND AETNA

Aeneid III, vv. 554-587

(In the Metre of the Original).

Then, o'er the wave afar,
    Trinacrian Aetna is sighted,
And, with a mighty moan
    of the deep, we hear in the distance
Beaten rocks and strand—
    wrecked voices fitfully calling:
Shoals are leaping aloft,
    and sands with surge are commingled.

Father Anchises then:—
    "In good sooth, here's that Charybdis,
"These are the terrible rocks—
    these crags that Helenus warned of:
"Rescue now, O fellow mates,
    and as one man rise to your oar-hafts."

Just as 'twas bid, they do,—
    Palinurus, leading the vessels,
Turned his roaring prow
    right round to the waves on the lefthand,—
Leftward all of the fleet
    with oars and winds came a-bending;

Up to the sky we're borne,
    on arching billow, and likewise
Sunk to deepest shades,
    when passed the wave from beneath us.

Thrice did the hollow rocks
    resound in their craggy recesses,
Thrice, with high-flung foam,
    beheld we the stars all a-dripping.

Meanwhile, the wind and sun
    have sunk and left us aweary,
And, not knowing our way,
    we drift to shores of the Cyclops.

Spacious a harbour lies—
itself unmoved by the wind-blast's
Entrance; but Aetna is near
by, thund'ring with fearsome destruction.

Sometimes, lo, it flings
out, up to the heavens, a black cloud,
Smoking in pitch-dark whirl,
and with ashes glowing in whiteness:
Balls of flames it uplifts
and licks the clusters of star-land.

Other times, and the rocks,
the innermost torn from the mountain,
Belching, it vomits up;
and the stones that are massed into liquid
Heaves, with a groan, to the light,
and boils from depth the profoundest.

'Tis said, Encela-dus,—
his frame half burned by the lightning—
Lies beneath this mass,
and giant Aetna, above him
Superimposed, breathes fire
from bursted furnaces blazing:

And when, wearied he shifts
his side, the Sicilian island
Quakes with his murmured groan
and veils the sky with a smoke-cloud.

That night we endure
throughout these measureless portents,
Sheltered in woods, nor see
what cause is creating the din, for
Neither were blazing stars
nor heaven bright with their clustered
Radiance, visible, a
dark veil obscuring the sky, while
Deepest night the moon
detained, imprisoned in rainclouds.

H. MELLISH.