

NEW BOOKS

OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN FORCES IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914-19. THE MEDICAL SERVICES. BY Sir Andrew Macphail. Published by the Authority of National Defence under Direction of the General Staff. Ottawa, 1925.

It is unfortunate that controversial dust has dimmed for the public the shining significance of Sir Andrew Macphail's official history of the Canadian Medical Services in the Great War. Partisans have seized on the disputatious matter, and made the most of it, but what do the points in dispute amount to? Sir Andrew Macphail avers that Canada was not prepared for war; that equipment for the Canadian Corps was makeshift and had to be replaced by sounder British stuff, from boots to transport waggons. That is true. When the world's war trumpet blew, Canada was unprepared, absorbed in the works of peace, and that is Canada's glory. But not for a moment did Canada hesitate. To her lovers at that time she seemed like Britomart, the Lady Knight in Spenser's faerie dream, hastening to the field and buckling on her armour as she ran. "Everything was sacrificed for numbers" is another complaint, and the sufferings of our soldiers on Salisbury Plain are held to have been the result. But bad as Salisbury Plain was, would Valcartier through a Quebec winter have been any better?

The Bruce Report, and the indiscretions of Sir Sam Hughes frankly discussed, have also opened many vials of wrath. The fact is that Dr. Bruce in his Report made impossible recommendations. When he was appointed in the place of General Jones, he failed to bring improvement into the Medical Service, he was relieved of his command, and General Jones was reinstated. The failure of Sir Sam Hughes as Minister of Militia was not unlike the failure of the old Colonial Office to govern Canada. The man three thousand miles away cannot understand or control the far distant conditions. On Nov. 9, 1916, Sir Sam Hughes made a speech which must have given aid and comfort to the enemy. The same day the Premier demanded his resignation, which he received three days later. That ended the career of the Minister of Militia.

All this contentious matter may be set to one side. The true significance of this most notable of government publications lies in its clear, succinct survey of the entire activities of the Medical Service, its origin, development, function in the field and behind the lines from first to last. If nothing more were published than the first Table on p. 249, the book would be a treasure and a source of pride to every Canadian, as it proves what not one in a thousand has any inkling of,—the extraordinary efficiency of our Medical Service in this latest war. Wastage of war is a term well-known. In the old wars far more died from disease than from wounds. Thanks to our devoted physicians,

surgeons, orderlies, stretcher-bearers, nurses, the ratio was completely reversed. Out of every hundred deaths in the C. E. F., the ratio was ninety-one *plus* died of wounds; eight *plus* of disease. The British ratio was still more remarkable; ninety-four *plus* died of wounds, five *plus* of disease. The American ratio was more like that which used to prevail, being forty-eight *plus* died of wounds, fifty-one *plus* died of disease. We are accustomed to the praise of our soldiers, but we do not realize how magnificent was the achievement of our doctors and nurses. The same is true of the Canadian Red Cross, and of every form of war activity at home and abroad. They never failed.

Sir Andrew Macphail is not an arm-chair critic. He went to the war as Captain in No. 6 Field Ambulance, a most dangerous service. He knows what war is at first hand. Therefore he speaks with authority; he has had access to the primary authorities. When the dust of the various controversies has settled, it will be seen that this "blue book" (bound in red) is a monument to the ability of the Canadian people to deal with a sudden, terrible and unforeseen crisis. It is a book for the medical specialist and the student of war; but even the layman will find entertainment in it, for it displays all Sir Andrew Macphail's well-known gifts of expression, of ironic wit, of pithy phrase, of understatement, of vivid description. His notes on the Mud in Flanders, his account of one march through France, his apology for "the humble, friendly louse" deserve to become classic. While disclaiming all intention of joining in the chorus of fulsome praise for the C. E. F., he has two brief restrained sentences which make all other praise of the army look pale.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN

LIFE IN MEDIAEVAL FRANCE. By Joan Evans, B. Litt. Oxford University Press. 1925.

This book, which treats of its subject in a scholarly spirit and in an attractive style, will not only interest the general reader but give valuable assistance to all serious students of French history. It bears the mark of much painstaking research, and the author has illuminated her recital with a great wealth of relevant and often curious detail. The period included in French Mediaevalism—from the close of the Dark Ages to the beginning of the Renaissance,—was that in which was first secured the political unification of the nation, and included the rise and fall of the feudal system, while it witnessed the blossoming of that splendid art, mis-called Gothic, which enriched the world with the glorious architecture of the great French cathedrals and their scarcely less wonderful sculptures. Of all this Miss Evans gives a clear and comprehensive account. The development of the monastic Orders, the causes leading to the Crusades and the far-reaching consequences flowing from them, the economic conditions and the social life of the people in town and country, are some of the topics of which her book treats. Numerous and excellent illustrations add to the attractiveness of the work, which may safely be recommended to all who are interested in "the pleasant land of France."

E. R.

THE ODES OF HORACE. Rendered into English Prose by Richard A. Zerega. Nicholas L. Brown. New York. 1924.

Except Pindar, Horace is the least patient of translation of all the ancient poets, and the work of Horace most difficult to translate is the *Odes*. Mr. Zerega's version deserves the praise due to clearness and fidelity, though his habit of altering the normal English order of the words is sometimes irritating. It is, of course, nonsense to say, as the publisher's note says, that Mr. Zerega or anyone else "has enabled those who cannot read the Latin to judge how truthfully Horace spoke when he said that his verse would 'outlive monuments of brass'". Rather is it especially true of any translation of the *Odes* that, as Gildersleeve puts it, "in its transfer to a foreign language the word loses its atmosphere, its associations, its vitality."

In the interpretation of the *Odes*, also, some progress has been made which we expect a new translator to appreciate. It seems unnecessary, for instance, to interpret the *Integer Vitae* as either a juxtaposition of unrelated ideas or a rather dull joke. But it is only fair to Mr. Zerega to say that his work seems a labour of love, and it is good now and then to find a man spending his time in the company of those ancients whose wit and wisdom have survived so many generations,—as they will survive us and all the noise we are making.

E. W. NICHOLS.

THE BACKWOODSWOMAN. A Chronicle of Pioneer Home Life in Upper and Lower Canada. By Isabel Skelton. The Ryerson Press. Toronto.

In this book Mrs. Skelton has given us a very interesting and well-drawn picture of those women, both French and British, who by their courage and practical ability under tremendous difficulties, hardships and dangers, helped to lay the foundations of what was destined to become the Dominion of Canada. In treating of the French part of her subject she has taken as typical representatives three notable figures,—Marie Hebert, the earliest woman settler in French Canada; Mother Marie de l'Incarnation, the clever and devoted nun who was the first head of the Ursuline Convent at Quebec; and the youthful heroine, Marie Madeleine de Verchères, who at the age of fourteen, with no more help than that of two untrustworthy soldiers and her own younger brothers, defended her father's fort for more than a week from a great horde of Iroquois Indians. The early history of French Canada is indeed crowded with heroic and romantic episodes, and of this rich material Mrs. Skelton makes good use. When she comes to the pioneers of Upper Canada, the women of whom she writes are less individually noteworthy, or at least are less well-known; but on the other hand, she is able to bring before us vividly and with much detail the primitive social and economic conditions in which these hard-working "backwoodswomen" passed their lives.

Her account of the coming of the Loyalists is full and clear, and is free from the onesidedness and exaggeration to which an over-

zealous patriotism has sometimes led Canadian writers. Her description of the trials and ill-treatment endured in their passage overseas by the emigrants from Great Britain and Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century makes painful reading, but it is apparently based on a careful study of all available evidence. One may be permitted to regret that the author did not include the Maritime Provinces in her survey; in their story she would have found both women and incidents of pioneer life well worthy of being held in remembrance.

E. R.

BEN JONSON. Edited by C. N. Herford and Percy Simpson.
 Volumes I and II. *The Man and his Work*. Oxford.
 Clarendon Press. 1925.

In some ways, Jonson is the most interesting of all the Elizabethans. Whereas all the ascertained facts about Shakespeare can be printed on a single octavo page, the recorded incidents of Jonson's life are many and picturesque. He was a scholar of the Renaissance, a soldier, a duellist; in 1619 he marched from London to Edinburgh; he knew the inside of a condemned cell; he had considered death by his own hand; he outlived his friend, the "sweet Swan of Avon", by twenty-one years; he was first Dictator of English Letters. In the drama of the time, he upholds the classic ideal; he is an exponent of the comedy of manners; for years he produces fanciful librettos for the court of "our James"; he is a lyric poet of no mean power; his table-talk is set down without extenuation by his Scottish host, and his common-place book is a legacy to the nation. Of fighting blood, Jonson had many quarrels in life and in print: for he was a determined satirist, sporting—but fiercely—with human follies. In his own life-time he edited with scholarly care his own "Works," wherein he is once more a contrast to Shakespeare, who did not even care to preserve his priceless comedies, histories and tragedies.

A modern edition of Jonson is undoubtedly needed, and is now being issued by the Clarendon Press in ten volumes, under the learned direction of Professor C. H. Herford and Mr. Percy Simpson. The first two volumes contain the usual prolegomena, a Life of the poet and Introductions to his various plays. In addition, very welcome new features are the contemporary notes and records, such of Jonson's letters as are procurable, legal and official documents bearing on his career, and a list of the books in his library actual and conjectural, such as can be traced to various collections or inferred from his use of them. Like the true bookman he was, Ben scribbled in his pet volumes notes and marginalia, as witness the title-pages of Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* and Pigna's *Carmina* reproduced in Volume One. The main source of our information, his "Conversations" with Drummond, is reproduced with meticulous accuracy and illuminated by scholarly notes. The critical Introductions to the various plays are learned without pedantry, and they serve the great end of Introductions, in luring the reader on to the works introduced.

This edition has been a long time preparing, and has required the co-operation of many persons whose assistance is duly acknowledged in the Preface. It is all the more curious that neither the editors nor the *Literary Supplement* reviewer can know anything about the study of Jonson on this side the Atlantic. Scholars of Yale University, in particular, have been bringing out scholarly editions of Jonson's plays for several years. The field of English literature is not the exclusive possession of the English; it is being cultivated by French, German, American and other savants. A Swedish scholar has just produced a study of *Sartor Resartus*.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

OUTLINES OF A PHILOSOPHY OF ART. By R. G. Collingwood.
Oxford University Press. London. 1925.

This work is one of a series of small books on important subjects called *The World's Manuals*. It is not, however, a mere popularization of generally accepted views on the philosophy of art, but is a genuine and a not unimportant contribution to aesthetic theory. It is indeed better suited to students who are already somewhat familiar with this branch of philosophic thought than to those who are approaching it for the first time. Mr. Collingwood admits that his general conception of the nature and function of art is not wholly original, but is to be found in other writers, of whom he mentions Coleridge and Croce; and it is not difficult to trace in it at least the indirect influence of Hegel. His main thesis is that art, as regards both its creation and its appreciation, is wholly the outcome of the imaginative faculty; and he claims that in the present volume he expands and develops, at least in outline, the implications of this doctrine. The small space in which he accomplishes this purpose—the book has only a hundred pages—has led to very close condensation, and the absence of references to views other than his own lends a slightly dogmatic air to his account. Still, there is in it not a little that will prove of real value to those who interest themselves in this special field of philosophic enquiry,—one which as yet has been by no means fully explored.

E. R.

BROWN WATERS, AND OTHER SKETCHES. By W. H. Blake. The
Macmillan Company, Toronto. 1925.

This little volume, which is now republished with somewhat unimportant additions, was first issued in 1915, a few of the essays having previously appeared in *The University Magazine*. The author is perhaps best known in Canada as the very able translator of *Maria Chapdelaine*; but in this collection of light essays it is made clear that he was capable of doing also original literary work of a very high grade. The subjects are all of the "out-of-door" kind,—fishing, shooting and camping, in company with habitant or Indian, in the wilder parts of

Quebec and Ontario; and perhaps no other writer has been able to convey so accurate an impression of the atmosphere, physical and spiritual alike, of the life of the sportsman in the backwoods. Moreover, there is here no touch of the posing of the too self-conscious Nature-worshipper; narratives and descriptions are direct and vivid transcripts of facts found at first hand, or taken from the lips of the unsophisticated dwellers in Northern Ontario or on the shores of the St. Lawrence. While the essays will make their strongest appeal to fishermen and hunters of big game, they have a charm even for those whose knowledge of the denizens of rivers, lakes and forests is gained only at second hand; for this is a book to add to the pleasure of the easy-chair and the fire-side. It seems certain that, by the death of Mr. W. H. Blake, Canadian literature has suffered a very real loss.

E. R.

THE ROMANCE OF THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY. By
R. G. MacBeth. The Ryerson Press. Toronto.

"Romance" is a word that covers a wide field, but to this chronicle of the Canadian Pacific Railway and eulogy on the men who made it the author has hardly succeeded in imparting a romantic atmosphere. It is no doubt well that there should be an effort made to keep in the remembrance of the present generation the names and the deeds of the quite remarkable group of statesmen, capitalists and railway experts to whose foresight, energy and perseverance this great national highway owes its existence. Though Mr. MacBeth is full of enthusiasm for his subject, it can hardly be said that his book is wholly satisfactory. There is much repetition, and at times some confusion in the arrangement of his material, and the style may best be described as a crude "journalese". On the other hand, it is possible to gather from his books a tolerably just conception of the enormous difficulties of the project, and of the force of character and extraordinary business ability of the men who undertook to bring it to a successful issue. Of these the first place must be given to Sir William Van Horne, without whose imaginative vision of the destiny of the North-West, constructive and executive genius, and inexhaustible power of "taking pains", the immense scheme could scarcely have been carried out. The author says of his book that it is "a humble contribution to our history as a British Dominion." As such, it is not without value.

E. R.