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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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THE CANADIAN LITERARY CAREER

OF

PROFESSOR PELHAM EDGAR

by

M. Sandra Campbell

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (English Literature)

Ottawa, Canada, 1983



UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA
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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents an analysis of the Canadian literary career of Professor Pelham Edgar (1871-1948) of the Department of English, Victoria College, University of Toronto. Accordingly, the thesis examines Pelham Edgar's background, his literary and critical beliefs, his teaching career at Victoria College and his friendships with Canadian writers, critics, publishers and litterateurs in the period 1890 to 1948.

Edgar, the scion of a literary and socially prominent Toronto family, was a critic devoted above all to Arnoldian critical principles and to an idealistic and romantic notion of poetry. For almost half a century, he was Canada's best-known scholarly critic, one who advocated a Canadian poetry of universal standards of excellence that reflected Canadian life and thought. As befitted a critic whose first love was the poetry of Shelley and Keats, he befriended and encouraged such Canadian poets as Duncan Campbell Scott, Marjorie Pickthall and Audrey Alexandra Brown. For these writers, he provided important encouragement and advice on individual poems and edited many of their books. As a professor at Victoria College from 1897 until his retirement in 1938, he promoted high literary ideals for Canadian letters and fostered the careers of such students as E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister, Douglas Bush, Donald Creighton, Earle Birney and Northrop Frye. To all of these men, Edgar offered both literary insight and practical assistance in the form of scholarships, teaching posts or financial aid.

Through literary organisations such as the Canadian Society of Authors early in the century, the Canadian Authors Association and the Association of

Canadian Bookmen in the Twenties and Thirties, and the Canadian Writers Foundation in the Thirties and Forties, Edgar promoted collegiality among writers and public awareness of Canadian literature. In periodicals like the University Magazine, in which he played an important role, and through reviews and articles in the Toronto Globe, Saturday Night, and elsewhere, Edgar wrote of his vision of a Canadian literature of world repute and of the achievement of writers like Duncan Campbell Scott and E.J. Pratt.

In his activities in the years leading up to the First World War, Edgar epitomised the critical concerns of the era, with its emphasis on a poetry antithetical to materialism and commercialism, a poetry typified by the work of his protégée Marjorie Pickthall. In the Twenties and Thirties, Edgar's critical activities expressed the initial disquiet of his generation toward poetic modernism. Edgar attacked the bizarre forms and hostility to tradition that he believed tainted modernism. By the mid-Thirties, Edgar was seen by A.J.M. Smith and by the writers of the periodical New Frontier as a critic unsympathetic to Canadian poetic modernism; his admiration for the poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown, with its echoes of Keats and other Romantics, exemplified his preference for romantic verse. Only in 1940, through a friendship with A.J.M. Smith, to whom he gave advice on the compilation of the Book of Canadian Poetry, did Edgar mellow somewhat toward modernism and its Canadian adherents.

Throughout his career, Edgar was Canada's best-known scholarly critic and a formidable and influential figure in the Canadian literary world. He embodied the best of the criticism of the Edwardian era in Canada, and was unquestionably a formative influence on several of Canada's most important writers and critics.

Chapter One: Edgar's Early Life, 1871-1908

The name of Pelham Edgar is now only vaguely familiar to students of Canadian literary history, but for over fifty years the name conjured up the image of a formidable and influential figure on the Canadian literary scene. Pelham Edgar came to prominence in the 1890s, the era of Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott and William Wilfred Campbell; his influence grew and endured over the years until his death in 1948. These were crucial years in the literary history of Canada - years that saw the genesis of a more sophisticated literature, the emergence of modernism in the work of the McGill poets, of Dorothy Livesay and W.W.E. Ross, the birth and early history of the Canadian Authors' Association, and the flowering of such writers as Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister and Frederick Philip Grove. With all these literary activities, Pelham Edgar was closely involved. As a consequence, a study of his career adds much to our understanding of the nature of the literary world in Canada between 1890 and 1948.

Pelham Edgar has faded to an eminence grise in the decades since his death in 1948. He was careless of the fate of his personal papers: the collection in the Library of Victoria College is small and tantalisingly incomplete. The present need, and the task of this thesis, is to describe and assess the activities and impact in Canada of this important litterateur. A bibliographic search has unearthed hundreds of his articles and book reviews. A perusal of his papers, and the papers of Duncan Campbell Scott, Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister,

William Arthur Deacon, and others reveals Edgar's impact on the creative and publishing history of several of Canada's most important writers. As Professor of French and then of English at Victoria College from 1897 to 1938, Edgar instructed and brought to the fore several important writers, critics and teachers. He imparted to his students a vision of the moral and aesthetic possibilities of literature in Canada, a vision which, according to students like Northrop Frye, Douglas Bush, Donald Creighton and E.J. Pratt, had much impact on them. As a man of superb social credentials and contacts in a Toronto where such prestige mattered, Edgar sought and obtained assistance and recognition for his protégés. Through the review columns of the Globe and Saturday Night, he was a figure of public note for much of the first half of the twentieth century.

It is the purpose of the thesis to examine the Canadian literary career of Pelham Edgar to determine his place in the literary world of his time to assess his exact impact on several figures of importance to the national literature, notably Duncan Campbell Scott, Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister, Audrey Alexandra Brown and Northrop Frye. Edgar's less extensive, but perhaps not less interesting, contacts with figures like Wilfred Campbell, Earle Birney, Morley Callaghan and Douglas Bush will also be considered. Moreover, an understanding of the period and of Edgar's career would be incomplete without an examination of his substantial role in some significant literary organizations --the Canadian Society of Authors, its successor the Canadian Authors' Association, the Canadian

Writers' Foundation, and the Association of Canadian Bookmen. The thesis will closely peruse Edgar's career in order to provide a better understanding of the man, and, through him, the era.

Carl Berger's A Sense of Power and The Writing of Canadian History¹ and S.E.D. Shortt's The Search For An Ideal convincingly sketch the characteristics of the typical intellectual of Edgar's vintage - conservatism, an Arnoldian moralism in things literary, and a sense of cultural mission linked with a pronounced distaste for the materialism of Canada's boom years between 1900 and the First World War. Edgar typified many of these attitudes, but unlike Sir Andrew Macphail, doctor, social critic and magazine editor, or the political scientist James Mavor (both friends of Edgar's dealt with in the Shortt study), he applied his ideas almost exclusively to literature rather than to history, politics or philosophy. Accordingly, it is in the light of Edgar's lifelong sense of mission in the world of Canadian letters that I will examine his career. It is in his devotion to Canadian literature that his major importance lies.

Pelham Edgar was born in Toronto in 1871. His parents imbued him with many of the qualities which were to mark him as a man - a pride in his social standing, a sense of cultural purpose, and a pronounced interest in belles-lettres in the new country. Accordingly the background and character of his parents, Sir James and Lady Matilda Edgar, must be treated in some detail. His father, James (later Sir James) David Edgar, was a man of high political, literary and legal standing in Canada, as his son reminds us in his memoirs: "I cannot be accused of family bias in saying that my father had great

qualities of mind and character, for the general estimate supports the private bias."²

One "general estimate", made in Sir James D. Edgar's obituary for the Royal Society, referred to qualities of the man inherited by his son: a tall majestic frame, a patrician and imposing manner, and a demeanour of intelligence and high principles. Sir James, like his son Pelham, harboured a genuine love of literature, in particular of the native product. Although engaged in the practice of law, and in the absorbing profession of politics, Sir James found in the cultivation of letters that relaxation which was most congenial to his cultured intellect:

Possessed of a dignified, courtly manner, well-versed in parliamentary lore, he filled the high position of First Commoner of Canada (as Speaker of the House of Commons 1896 to 1899) with general acceptance. His culture was wide, his conversation varied, and his sympathy with struggling Canadian litterateurs generous and comprehensive. Above all, he was a true Canadian, fond of his country and confident of its future among the nations. His patriotism found full expression in verses, which have touched a sympathetic chord in the hearts of his countrymen and countrywomen, proud, like himself, of "This Canada of Ours" the [title of a James Edgar Poem.]

Though a detailed³ examination of the political, legal and entrepreneurial career of James Edgar is outside the scope of this thesis,⁴ a sketch of his character and upbringing, and that of his wife, is essential to an understanding of the career and character of Pelham, their third son. James David Edgar was born on August 10, 1841 near North Hatley, Canada East to Grace Fleming, the daughter of Rev. David Fleming, a Scottish minister, and her husband, James Edgar, who had come out with his young

wife from Scotland in 1840 to buy farm land near the small town in the Eastern Townships. James and his son Pelham were both imbued with pride in an old and distinguished Jacobite surname. Their ancestor, James Edgar, had been for nearly fifty years Secretary to the Stuart prince who aspired to be James III of England, and Pelham's memoirs refer reverently to Jacobite memorabilia held by the Edgar family.

If family pride was in J.D. Edgar's background, his youthful environment in North Hatley and Quebec gave him literary aspirations, a love of nature and a burgeoning sense of national pride perhaps natural to a thoughtful and intelligent youth maturing in the two decades before Confederation. Bereaved by the death of his father in 1850, James David Edgar was educated in Lennoxville and Quebec City. Upon the remarriage of his mother to Reverend John Carey - who, the J.D. Edgar Papers indicate, was harsh to his wife and stepson - the young adolescent left home to attend school in Levis. It was in 1857, while boarding at the Petit Seminaire du Quebec, where he was enrolled in the classical course, that J.D. Edgar met Louis Fréchette. A lifelong friendship began. Both were dreamy and idealistic youths intoxicated with the beauty of the landscape around Quebec. They shared the bond of an uneasy family life, for the sixteen-year-old Louis also disliked a step-parent - his father's second wife. Together James and Louis studied their Seminary assignments but, as each recalled in later years, their books often slipped unheeded in favour of a misty vision of the Muse of poetry. Years later, Fréchette was to describe the boyish friendship in an eulogy to his friend, several stanzas of

which are worth quoting here:

Il avait bien quinze ans, et moi j'en avais seize.
- Oh! les bons souvenirs maintenant si lointains! -
Nous échorchions à deux la grammaire française,
Les exercices grecs et les thèmes latins.

Notre amitié poussa des profondes racines.
Dès l'aube, quand les bois évieillés à demi
Saluaient le soleil, nos fenêtres voisines
S'ouvraient pour saluer le soleil et l'ami.

Oh! oui, les rêves d'or de notre adolescence!
La Muse berçait déjà sur ses genoux;
Et milles émois troublants accusaient la présence
Des poètes futurs qui sommeillaient en nous.

Et quel panorama pour les yeux des poètes:
Quebec et son bassin, ce miroir fabuleux
Dont le cadre, gradins aux frères silhouettes,
S'étage en ondulant jusqu'aux horizons bleus!

All their lives Fréchette and Edgar were to recall these days with sharp nostalgia. Despite his success in political life and his only occasional verse, Edgar still dreamed of the literary life in fuller measure, as a letter to Fréchette in later life suggests. James Edgar certainly encouraged Pelham in his literary ambitions. In 1892, the now famous Fréchette dedicated his Types Quebecois to James Edgar, his childhood companion, and Edgar replied:

That past [at Levis] is more real to me than most of the events of today. Thirty-five years have perhaps mellowed the landscapes, deepened the azure of river and sky, and idealized the boyish dreams that lifted us sometimes a little above our companions. You wandered away from the lovely scenes, but never for long. I have been absent for a full generation yet your eloquent words bring everything back to me as of yesterday.

How widely our careers have differed. You have fanned and fed the sacred flame of poesy, that God had planted in your soul, until it has blazed high with radiant light all over the land, and has outshone in strength, in brilliancy, and in sweetness, the singing of all our other bards.

If you are right in thinking that I ever had within that spark divine, I have allowed it to die out, with only a few faint and fitful glimmers.

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The youthful dreamer soon headed for Canada West. In 1858, young James went to Woodbridge, near Toronto. James Edgar was an ambitious as well as a poetic youth. He entered the law office of the Honourable John Hillyard Cameron, a Toronto lawyer, in 1859; he was called to the bar in 1864, eventually establishing with E.T. Malone, Q.C., the firm of Edgar and Malone, in which he was to remain interested until his death in 1899. In the 1860s, Edgar was a rising young man in the legal, political, entrepreneurial and literary life of Toronto. By 1864, he was legal editor and reporter for the Toronto Globe, one of the province's leading newspapers, and a strong supporter of the Liberal party.

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The world of mammon did not stifle the Muse in the young lawyer. In 1861, Edgar, as first vice president of the Ontario Literary Society, delivered a paper on "Shakespeare as a Philosopher" to that body. In 1862, he was elected president of the Ontario Literary Society, an organisation with enthusiastic visions for the development of literature in Canada. In 1863, he was Secretary of a committee to organise Shakespeare Tercentenary celebrations in Toronto. In a speech that year, he voiced a lament that his son Pelham was to echo about the literary apathy of the mass of Toronto's citizenry. Its sentiments reflected the

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feeling¹¹ current among the thoughtful, notably Thomas D'Arcy McGee, that Canada's literature must match her rich physical endowments. Canada had, James Edgar believed, "ample food for the poets' or the romancers' dream." Like innumerable other commentators of the last half of the nineteenth century such as Sara Jeannette Duncan and John George Bourinot, he blamed materialism for the lack of cultural achievement in Canada and looked to the coming generation for remedy. His presidential address to the Ontario Literary Society echoed this theme:

Ours is a young and busy country where much of our time is given up - necessarily given up - to the advancement of material property....

The stout arms of our forefathers have cleared away the trees of the forest, and have given us a fair land, full of plenty and prosperity, and it remains for us of this generation, to raise the intellectual standard of the people, to aid in the diffusion of knowledge, and to encourage, foster and cultivate, tasks for Art and Literature.

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He vowed to the Society that he had "the higher aim in view of doing his small share towards fostering those precious seeds of Literature, that may, ere long, take root in our congenial soil..."¹³

J.D. Edgar also became involved in politics early in his career, and conducted himself with statesmanship and a concern for the culture of the new Dominion. True to his youthful ideals, he brought to politics, his biographer tells us, "a degree of sympathy for, and understanding of, religious and cultural¹⁴ duality that was rare among the members of his party." From the 1870s, Edgar was a leading organiser for the Ontario wing of the Liberal party, under the leadership of George Brown,

Alexander Mackenzie and finally Wilfrid Laurier. Between 1868 and 1870, he was a member of the Canada First movement; in fact, Edgar, with George Taylor Denison, one of the founders, "coined¹⁵ the motto of a Canadian national spirit." Undoubtedly Edgar's cultural patriotism attracted him to such Canada First visionaries as William A. Foster who cherished as "an article of faith" the certainty of a "splendid" future for the new country in the light of "a careful and altogether appreciative knowledge of the great men and women of Canadian history, and the heroic deeds accomplished within the confines of the nation."¹⁶ Such ideas were obviously congenial to Edgar. Before Edward Blake gave his famous Aurora speech of October 3, 1874, which called for the cultivation of a national spirit, his friend and fellow Liberal J.D. Edgar had already responded to the call. Edgar invoked the slogan of "Canada First" with pride as late as¹⁷ 1891.

In 1872, on his second attempt, Edgar was elected Member of Parliament for the Ontario riding of Monck. He was chief Parliamentary whip for the Liberals during the crisis of 1873, when the Conservative government of Macdonald reeled beneath the Opposition onslaught over the 'Pacific scandal' concerning the financing of the CPR. Edgar's career was interspersed with periods in the political wilderness -- in the 1874 election, the very contest that brought the Liberals to power for the first time since Confederation, Edgar was defeated at the polls. Despite his attempts, he was not elected to the House again until 1884, when he became the member for West Ontario. From 1884 to

1896, he was one of the leading Liberals in the House of Commons; in 1896, when his friend and leader Wilfrid Laurier became Prime Minister, Edgar was appointed Speaker of the House of Commons, a move viewed by the great majority of the members of the House as a tribute to his patriotism, dignity and fairmindedness as well as to his adroit management of the Liberal party machine. ¹⁸

Edgar's political life, devoted as it was to the demands of party, left him few leisure hours, but his use of them shows that Frechette's talk of mutual poetic ambition was not mere rhetoric. In the midst of some party matter, Edgar wrote wistfully to Laurier in 1898: "After all would not you and I be happier if we had time and means to live out the lives of literary men? That is my ideal life, and I think it is yours also, but how few are allowed to live out their ideals!" ¹⁹

He sought to fulfill at least some of his literary ideals. Like other cultivated professional men of his age in Canada - W.D. Lighthall, Frederick George Scott and John George Bourinot, for example - he devoted part of his scant leisure time to the writing of verse brimful of a love of country and its landscape, the whole infused with a high moral tone. He scored some popular success in the 1870s with "This Canada of Ours", a poem which captures his ringing nationalism. Subtitled "A National Song" it asks:

What past can match thy glorious youth,
Fair Canada of Ours?
Fair Canada
Dear Canada
This Canada of Ours?

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The White Stone Canoe (1885), his first volume of verse, incorporates a long poem about a romantic Indian "legend" in the

style of Hiawatha. Edgar's love for the Ontario woods is evident in another poem, "Keswick Bay, Lake Simcoe", near the Edgar summer home where Pelham spent his childhood summers, which Pelham treasured as a memento of his father:

O come from your briefs and your office,
Break loose from those letters to-day,
For sweet as the breath of the Summer,
Are the breezes of Keswick Bay...

Edgar translated some French Canadian songs as well as Frechette poems like "Nuit d'Eté" and "Pele-Mele". His genuine and active interest in literature throughout his life explains the impetus to literature which he gave to his son Pelham, who grew up in the very bosom of Confederation poetry.

During his lengthy sojourns in Ottawa, J.D. Edgar was active in its cultural life; as his letters home reveal, he knew and admired such families as the Lampmans and the Duncan Campbell Scotts. Pelham Edgar's friendship with Duncan Campbell Scott originated in the social and literary contacts between the two families in the Nineties.²¹ J.D. Edgar was elected to the Royal Society of Canada in 1897. Part of Canada and its Capital, the descriptive guide to Ottawa that Edgar published in the Nineties, is devoted to its poets - Lampman, D.C. Scott, and Wilfred Campbell,²² and he displays an impressive grasp of their work. The Royal Society Proceedings record a literary evening of the Society on May 16, 1895 at which poems were read by Pauline Johnson, Charles G.D. Roberts, D.C. Scott, W.W. Campbell, Agnes Maule Machar and that "J.D. Edgar, M.P. rendered his poem 'The White Stone Canoe'".²³

Matilda Ridout, Pelham's mother, had as genuine an interest

as her husband in Canada's culture: "Tillie", as her husband affectionately called her, married James Edgar in 1865, when she was twenty-one. According to family lore, it was a love match, but an ambitious young man could hardly have been unaware that in marrying a Ridout he gained an entree into Toronto's old colonial aristocracy. Miss Matilda Ridout was not wealthy; her father had²⁴ been ruined in the financial depression of 1857. But she was connected by blood, marriage or social intimacy to most of the elite of the Toronto of that day - wealthy business and professional families such as the Oslers, Gooderhams, Boultons, Cawthras, Mulocks, and Jarvises. Matilda's grandfather, Thomas Ridout (1754-1829), had been Surveyor-General of Upper Canada and a Member of its Legislative Council.²⁵ Thomas Gibbs Ridout (1792-1861), her father, was Cashier of the Bank of Upper Canada from 1822 until his death. Matilda, his second daughter, born on 29 September 1844, had a strong sense of family pride which she was to instill in her son.

His mother's social ties and his father's political influence were to aid Pelham in his literary and benevolent endeavours in later years and, as we shall see, were brought into play in obtaining his teaching appointments at Upper Canada College and Victoria College. Pelham Edgar's pride of social place verged on snobbery. If he was never rich, he always conducted himself in the grand manner. As Northrop Frye observes, Edgar's roots were in the world of "the public school and the squirearchy" and, "He was reared in the colonial aristocracy and trained in all the exacting rituals of its self-

conscious grand style." 26

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Like J.D. Edgar, Matilda provided Pelham with an authorial example. In middle life she turned to history, publishing in 1890 Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War, an account of the early history of the province based on Ridout correspondence from the 1812 period. 27

Another of her works, A Colonial Governor in Maryland, 28 also touches on the Ridout role in North American history. She was for a time President of the Women's Canadian Historical Society and was a founder of the Ottawa Historical Society. Actively interested in the role of women, at the time of her death in 1910 she was President of the National Council of Women in Canada. Like her husband, she was a keen patriot who believed in the reality of Canada's heroic past and the need for more great men to realize its full potential. 29 Her son's admiration for her is obvious in his memories of her:

She had nine children of whom eight were still living. It was only then that, turning fifty, she bethought herself of a literary career, and began to produce a series of historical books which are all extraordinarily fresh and well-written...when Duncan Scott and I were editing Morang's Makers of Canada we entrusted her with the writing of the General Brock volume. The result was a clear, reliable, and charmingly written book. My mother had a natural gift of expression, and no books of the series required less intervention from the editor for occasional lapses of style.

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It was, then, in Toronto, to parents of literary ideals and assured social position that Oscar Pelham Edgar was born on March 17, 1871. Pelham Edgar was the third son: the first, James Frederic Edgar, born in 1866, fought under Garnet Wolseley against Louis Riel in the second Riel Rebellion. He became a lawyer and his father's legal alter ego, tending the firm in the

Nineties while his father was in Ottawa. Jamie was Pelham's friendly rival in boyhood, but his literary interests were negligible. The next Edgar son, Harry, born in 1868, died as a baby: this was the great sorrow of the early years of the Edgar household. After Pelham came Maud Caroline, born in 1872, the sibling to whom Edgar was closest in affection and interests. Like Pelham, Maud was intelligent, quick-witted and keenly interested in literature and education. A lively bluestocking, she attended the University of Toronto, where she and Pelham often used to study or read together. She graduated in 1896 with the Governor-General's Medal in Modern Languages. In the early years of the century she co-founded the girls' school since known to generations of upper-class Montreal misses as Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's. The rapport between Maud and Pelham was lifelong: throughout his life, he often stayed with her at her home on Guy Street in Montreal; he visited her cottage at Lac Brule in the Laurentians many times. Other brothers and sisters who provided a lively household in Pelham's childhood and adolescence were William Wilkie (b. 1874), Katherine Beatrice "Bee" (b. 1877), David Keithock (b. 1879), Herbert Wedderlie (b. 1883) and Marjorie Ogilvy (b. 1886).³¹

In his memoirs, Across My Path, Edgar revealed himself as a true Victorian in his dignified reserve and avoidance of self-analysis. In painting a rather colourless portrait of himself as a little boy who liked sledding and cricket (a lifelong passion), he commented that "Self-analysis is a self-conscious process to be where possible avoided."³² But if the memoir gives us only guarded glimpses of the boy he was, the Edgar family papers -

particularly the letters of his father and of Maud - are somewhat more revealing. The memoir does give us some interesting biographical details such as the fact that his parents could not agree upon a name for him. The solution was political: "A compromise was agreed upon in Pelham, the name of the township which had given [J.D. Edgar] his largest majority" in the election of 1871.

Pelham Edgar grew up in a busy and affectionate household. J. D. Edgar and his wife were fond of each other and concerned for their children's welfare and success. J.D. Edgar was often in Ottawa for prolonged periods, away from his family, but he never failed to write to his wife and "chicks" daily. J.D. Edgar's affectionate raillery of 'Tillie', his wife, is typical of their correspondence: "I got up in the night to get a flannel night shirt - and I found none of mine but 2 of yours - one of which I wore, and felt quite ladylike - putting on frills in fact. It is your practice to wear the breaches - and this is my revenge."

For the first few years of Pelham's life the family lived on Clover Hill (now St. Joseph's Street); in 1878 the Edgars moved to an imposing fifteen room residence at 113 Bloor Street West, on the northeast angle of Queen's Park. At the age of six, Pelham was sent to a local private school, where the contacts of an exclusive social circle began:

He was sent first to a 'dame's school' in Toronto, where he and the future Minister of Finance, Sir Henry Drayton were congenial classmates.

Pelham Edgar was apparently an apt, if not always a faultless,

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student. In 1879, at the age of eight, he entered Upper Canada College, graduating in 1887. There, despite the fact that he was, in his words, "a despised day boy" who felt a little the clannishness of the boarders, he adjusted well: "It was a not unpleasant eight years' journey. U.C.C. in those days occupied the space between Adelaide, John, King and Simcoe streets. ... The two mile walk south to school was arduous in winter weather, but there was always a husky brother in case of need." 36 Upper Canada College, founded in 1829 by Lord Colborne on the model of an English public school, was undeniably a school for the sons of Upper Canada's (and Ontario's) elite. 37 Two of Pelham's Ridout ancestors were on the rolls in 1830, the school's first year. Despite the school's role in educating the sons of the aspiring and the well-to-do, it had financial problems to which Pelham, not surprisingly for an eight-year-old schoolboy, was oblivious:

The Principal at the time was G.R.R. Cockburn, who was certainly one of the most efficient heads the College had known or was to know.

Administrative problems were probably simpler for him in those days' than for his successors. His school had a long tradition behind it. Trinity College School was the only privately-endowed rival and kept the competitive spirit in sport alive. ... Financial problems were not teasing, for we had a share in the University endowment, and in order to maintain it G.R.R. was under compulsion to spend the full annual amount. Happy days!

38
Pelham's memory for cricket, which was an important sport at Upper Canada College, was more precise. The school journal, the College Times, records that Pelham was a member of the College Elevens in 1886 and 1887, and Pelham had some warm memories of school matches. UCC had deeper goals as well. In the 1880's its prospectus stated that it sought to inculcate "high moral

principles, coupled with sound scholarship", values certainly reinforced in the Edgar household. Although nominally Anglican, Upper Canada College was not a strongly religious institution: boys might be excused from regular morning prayers if their parents wished it. This, too, mirrored the mores of the Edgars, who were nominally Anglican. Unlike so many of his literary contemporaries (Roberts, Lampman, Campbell and the two Scotts, for example), Pelham Edgar did not grow up in a strongly religious household. He remained a more secular creature than any of his better-known literary contemporaries:

Our religious life [at home] was not exactly neglected, but it was never very strenuously insisted upon. We went to church somewhat mechanically, and I remember an access of religious fervour at fourteen or fifteen; but with confirmation it seemed to evaporate.

39

Stephen Leacock, whose lifelong friendship with Edgar began in the third form of Upper Canada College, has left a sardonic portrait of the Upper Canada College method of inculcating "high moral principles":

We didn't understand for a while just what they were trying to do to us. But gradually we began to catch on to it, and feel that it was no good. There was a kindly oratorical old principal I will not name, but whom the affection of old boys will easily recall, a kindly principal, I say, with a beautiful sonorous voice that used to echo through the 'Prayer Hall' in exaltation of this topic. 'This school I insist,' he would declaim, 'must be a school of gentlemen.. We used to sit... - all thinking 'This is going to be a tight shove. I'll never make it.' But presently we learned to take it more easily. We noticed that the Gentlemen question generally broke out after a theft of school books, or the disappearance of small change foolishly left in reach. Not being yet gentlemen we made a distinction between 'stealing' a thing and hooking it. A gentleman, you see, classes both together. He'd just as soon steal a thing as hook it.

40

An apt boy at UCC could absorb more than the morals of a gentleman. Upper Canada College shared in the interest in Canadian literary possibilities current in the decades after Confederation. In the proclivities of John Buchan, one of Pelham's English masters at UCC, we see at least a hint of Edgar's future interests. As Edgar was to do later, Buchan read poetry to his classes in a "deep rich voice", which thrilled his pupils.⁴¹ As a schoolboy Pelham loved to recite poetry and wrote of his own performance:

---I would spout Byron or Tennyson to a numbly suffering class too much in awe of [Stoney] Jackson [another English master] to register a protest. Reflecting on these distant scenes I have a feeling that I was unduly rhetorical, for my views on the reading of poetry have changed with the years.

42

In his own criticism the young Edgar always tried to give an impression of the writer and his milieu. Such an approach was expounded by Buchan, who wrote:

The essential thing [in the masterpieces of our literature] is, that the mind of the reader should be en rapport with the mind of the writer. There is something in the influence of a great soul upon another soul which defies analysis. No analysis of a poem, however subtle, can produce the same effect on the mind and heart as to read the poem itself.

43

There is little doubt that Pelham Edgar subscribed to the sentiments in the last sentence without reservation. In old age, however, he dismissed his English masters at UCC with the terse adjective "awful".⁴⁴

In November 1886, however, the fifteen-year-old schoolboy participated in a modest literary renaissance at UCC. The school journal, the College Times, was revived. Stephen Leacock was a co-editor of the paper, while "O.P. Edgar" became Secretary of

the Publishing Committee. "Fanfare", the first editorial, had a literary emphasis and, where Leacock and Edgar are concerned, struck a prophetic note:

There are doubtless many advantages which accrue from a College paper, chief among which is, perhaps, the cultivation of a literary taste among the students... We hope that in future there will be many of our present school-mates who, having climbed, rung by rung, the ladder of literary fame will be resting on their well-earned merits.

46

The editorial demanded reform of Canada's copyright laws, a subject upon which J.D. Edgar was expounding in the House of Commons at this period. 47 Another editorial enthusiastically

praised Ethelwyn Wetherald and Mercer Adam's The Algonquin Maiden. 48

Pelham Edgar was part of further literary activity at the College: in October 1886 the Literary and Debating Society advocated by the College Times was formed. Pelham stood for Treasurer - and was defeated. 49 Yet Pelham was by now numbered among those who, as the paper opined, "are among us a few votaries and admirers of the poetic art,... not unacquainted with Canadian poetry." 50 Pelham was not an exceptional student at UCC but his lifelong interests were already fixed.

Pelham's relationship with his parents reinforced his scholarly and literary interests. It is significant that his memoirs record the great literary epiphany of his boyhood occurring in the setting of his home. The lifelong love of Shelley that was to involve a doctoral thesis on the poet began at his father's bookshelves:

A seemingly undirected chance made me take one May morning a volume of Shelley from the library shelves. I had known the music of The Skylark and The Cloud from our school readers, and perhaps wanted to learn what more this infectious writer had to say. - Lying on the grass in the garden shade I discovered it that morning, and nothing in my later life has dulled the rapture of that first contact. "I do remember well the hour which burst my spirit's sleep." It was "a fresh May dawn" for me, and though incalculably less significant in its results, still a species of revelation. I learned what poetry meant, and the golden gates were opened.⁵¹

Pelham's father had a strong interest in the cultivation of his son's mind.⁵² In his letters his attentions were often on Pelham, sometimes with jocular comments for the boy on the superiority of "Grits".⁵³ J.D. Edgar was anxious that his son develop his interests, however inchoate: "I have sent Pelham a copy of the Indian picture. He must take care of it. His letter was very interesting."⁵⁴ He was quick to remark any literary ability in his son: "I have read Pelham's article in the Mail and I think it is excellent of his own. I will point it out to D.D. Dawson et. al."⁵⁵ In the midst of the turmoil of a late sitting of the House, he remembered to write to his wife that "I read Pelham's essay. It was capital."⁵⁶

The father was aware that Pelham in his U.C.C. days was not always a model scholar; he periodically uttered admonishments to his son, such as "early rising makes tall men."⁵⁷ The father followed his son's academic progress closely: "You do not tell me if Pelham is doing as I told him. Staying in after tea always for examination work? He is not to cut grass or anything else after tea."⁵⁸ "Do you know I should have heard, I think, before this of the brilliant literary exploits of my sons at U.C. College. What did they do?"⁵⁹ J.D. Edgar liked young Stephen

Leacock very much and encouraged the friendship between the two²¹ boys, perhaps hoping that young Stephen's success as a scholar would spur Pelham.⁶⁰

J. D. Edgar also saw that his son was exposed to the beauties of the Canadian landscape. Edgar acquired fifteen acres of land overlooking Cook's Bay at Roach's Point, Lake Simcoe. In 1882 a summer home was built there where the family spent the summers. Nature at Lake Simcoe was then relatively unspoiled: the lakeshore had not yet become what Pelham later scorned as a⁶¹ "bee-hive" of cottages. J.D. Edgar ensured that his children appreciated their natural surroundings: in 1885, for example, he told his wife that the family would collect, label and paint samples of all the flora in the area of Lake Simcoe:

This will fill the summer with a new interest - for all of us - and will keep up your painting.

⁶²

During his adolescence, Pelham periodically travelled to Ottawa to visit his father, not only, one suspects, to ease his father's loneliness, but also for the father to gauge the son's taste for the political life. To this political strain in his heritage, Pelham seems to have been largely immune. Although all his life he described himself in Who's Who as Liberal, none of his papers betrays much engagement with politics. Out of filial reverence he did work for his father in elections. One amusing anecdote survives of young Pelham on a bicycle chasing Conservative ballot stuffers from poll to poll on a hot and dusty⁶³ election day in Toronto. Later he would use his grasp of literature to help his father pay a compliment to Laurier:

When I spoke to Pelham of these lines of (Alfred) de Marigny ["Qu'est-ce qu'une grande vie? Une pensée de la jeunesse exécutée par l'âge mur"] as applying so well to you, he, with his remarkable grasp of English literature, turned up for me in his Wordsworth some words which he thought conveyed the same idea - and I entirely agree with him. You must allow me to give you Wordsworth's noble lines:

Who is the happy Warrior?

64

University College, where young Pelham enrolled in October 1887,⁶⁵ was a non-denominational institution of about 350

students in the process of change. The mere fact that Pelham Edgar went to University marked him as part of an elite, for in that era less than .05 percent of high school graduates went on

66

to university in Ontario. At University College in the Eighties and early Nineties (as in many other North American institutions) the classics were losing their old predominance to

such programmes as Modern Languages, the course in which Pelham enrolled to take English, French, German and Spanish. The course

at University College, which featured intensive study of the languages and of selected authors, had been developed, not

without struggle, by some of the professors who were to teach Pelham: John Squair (French), W.J. Alexander (English) and W.H.

Vandermissen (German). The faculty of the early Canadian universities had in the past been largely drawn from abroad.

Under Sir Daniel Wilson, President of University College from 1880 to 1892, a movement to "Canadianize" the college began with

nativist agitation in the 1880s. University of Toronto was to get its first native-born President, James Loudon, in 1892. As

67

Alan Bowker establishes, reform elements in the University Senate, led by Thomas Moss and Edward Blake, family friends of

the Edgars, brought pressure to bear for the university to

reflect Canada's national aspirations and to admit women. Course reform was an important part of this evolution in the university.

Pelham Edgar echoed the need for reform in modest measure during his undergraduate days. In a letter to the school newspaper, the Varsity, during his second year at University College, Edgar called for the English literature courses in the Modern Language programme to be enlarged to include contemporary writers. As justification for the change, he cited the critical acumen of one of his professors, W.J. Alexander, on Browning, a writer then excluded from study. Edgar thereby espoused the expansion of a programme that still did not have great prestige in the eyes of many traditional academics. A few years later, Edgar observed that the modern languages had been "despised" at many universities in Wordsworth's time, as they were in his. In the Varsity letter, Edgar displayed a keen interest in contemporary writing and in the values and ideals of Romantic and Victorian poetry. Following the bent of the reform element, he called for a more scientific and systematic study of literature, and praised the reforms to that end in the Modern Language programme. He added:

Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley are not considered too modern for a denial of admittance to Fourth Year literature. These great names unjustly, though brilliantly, end the chronological list of poets. The names of immortal contemporaries are not as yet, by virtue of their bearers' respective and obliging demises, rendered sufficiently holy for inclusion. No greater mistake of judgement was ever made. The works of Tennyson, Swinburne, Rossetti and Browning demand

instant and intelligent attention. In them we find our passionate strivings, hopes and despairs, not incarnated, but spiritualized for our spiritual guidance....

I have read Professor Alexander's work on Browning, and all who have read it must feel the utmost confidence in his ability to deal adequately with all the intricate phases of contemporary literature. ...Let not his enthusiasm be trammelled with restrictions imposed by those who do not profit in any way by his teaching. And above all let him seek his own way to do the greatest good, which cannot be attained by completely ignoring the poetry of our own particular generation, a period in the world's history whose merits we should surely recognize with as much delight as our descendants of the third and fourth generations of the centuries to be.

69

While at University College, Pelham enhanced his knowledge of contemporary literature by publishing poetry and criticism, including a review of Archibald Lampman's Among the Millet (1889).⁷⁰ Edgar's article on Lampman showed a pride in the developing literature of his country that was characteristic of the period. It is important to point out, however, that even in his first review of Canadian literature, he refused to judge that literature except by universal standards:

A Canadian reviewer of a Canadian book naturally looks upon it with a jealous eye to see if the subject matter is well-chosen, if Canadian sentiment and Canadian vanity are in turn appealed to and flattered. This method is essentially false and pernicious, so according to Victor Hugo we will examine how he has worked, not why and wherefore....

We have endeavoured to disassociate ourselves from the idea of a Canadian parentage for the poems, and to consider them with no more indulgence than if they had issued from the brain scratchings of a Hottentot.

71

In such early criticism Edgar displayed the moralistic standards of judgement so typical of Canadian criticism of the age. In

a college article on Thoreau, Edgar stressed, and endorsed, Thoreau's moral positions. Of his stand on the "evil" of slavery, Edgar concluded:

I have first presented this political aspect of the man that his subsequent actions may be viewed aright. Whenever he retires to solitude we may be assured that it is not hermit-wise or in petulance, but as a man and patriot, intent upon his own purification, and consciously in the service of humanity.

72

Such judgements were much influenced by the critical precepts of Matthew Arnold: "A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life." A kind of Arnoldian idealism infused Edgar's critical verdicts:

Genius most inspires us to aspiration when it banishes the vulgar ideas that attach themselves to all things, and restores to life the glory of its spiritual significance. An intense earnestness we demand, and enough revelation of self in the author to assure us that he knows sorrow and joy, himself having suffered them. The man of broadest and deepest sympathy is the most universal, and his mission is infinitely wide, and of long duration.

74

During his University College years, then, Edgar was already displaying his critical bent.

It is difficult, in writing of his life at this time, to point to any one teacher who dramatically influenced his thinking, as he inspired students like Northrop Frye and Raymond Knister. Edgar later alluded to the absence of mentors:

I must confess that never has one of these inspired and inspiring teachers [of legend] fallen to my lot. A possible exception was Maurice Hutton in Greek at the University. He was witty and penetrating and certainly never dull, but as classics were merely an appendage to my modern language course the value I received was only secondary. George Paxton Young died when I had just begun to follow his courses [in logic, metaphysics and ethics] in my second year. From all reports I missed a

fruitful influence I seem to have encountered from school [Upper Canada College] to post-graduate period mere grammarians.

75

Edgar recalled such venerable University College professors as Young and Sir Daniel Wilson with all the irreverence of an undergraduate:

I have a recollection of some violent class disturbance in the famous number 8 with its tiers of seats that ran from floor to ceiling. There is a corridor picture in my mind of two antique figures, with waving hoary beards, dragging a heavy hose with intent to turn its nozzle on the rioters. This was about the last public appearance of Sir Daniel Wilson and George Paxton Young.

76

Edgar argued in his memoirs that a teacher could only stimulate latent bent and interest in his pupils not conjure up new ones. Certainly by 1888 he himself had already acquired from his parents a taste for literature and a sense of nationalism. If Edgar's bent was obvious, not everyone in the University College circle was invariably impressed. When he gave a paper on Whitman to a group of litterati, one intelligent young lady recorded in her diary:

Last night's salon smaller and duller than usual. Paper on Walt Whitman by Pelham Edgar.

77

Fortunately this response to Pelham's effort was atypical: University College, if it gave him no single great teacher, did, with its thorough programmes in Modern Language devoted to textual criticism and philology, and its ready access to books, offer the budding critic an environment in which to further his knowledge. Edgar's name was on the masthead of the Varsity, the college newspaper, in 1891 and 1892. He was active in the Modern Language Club and delivered papers on Hugo and Clough, as well as the ennui-inducing one on Whitman. The club had a considerable

interest in native literature. W.J. Alexander lectured to the members on Canadian literature and, in another meeting devoted to French Canadian literature, the group awarded the highest honours to Louis Frechette. One suspects that Pelham Edgar may have helped to fan the collegiate zeal for this old family friend. As an editor of the Varsity, Edgar wrote to Frechette in December 1888 to solicit a poem:

The Editors of the "Varsity" the newspaper representing the University of Toronto's undergraduates desire and hope for a contribution in prose or verse from one who is the acknowledged head of Canadian poetry. We are making efforts to have a particularly good issue for our Christmas Number, and I plead my enthusiasm as an excuse for troubling you in such an abrupt manner.

78

At University College Pelham strove to excel - and not simply at cricket. An 1891 letter of his mother's makes this clear:

Pelham just now is in the midst of his examinations. He is trying for a scholarship in modern languages, and has studied lately altogether more than I like. He is looking wan and thin again, and his eyes are like caverns, but he says he is all right and the exams will be over for him on the 23rd. Next year he hopes to go across the Atlantic. I think his ambition is, after he gets through the University here, to take a couple of years at a German or English University to fit himself for a Professorship. He does not seem to like Law.He is a thorough student beside being a handsome young man.

79

According to his sister Maud, Pelham's leisure hours were sometimes devoted to modern languages:

Every Friday evening we have little gatherings of young people for reading, sometimes English, sometimes German, and music.

80

His marks at University College reflected his industriousness.

81

In 1891, his third year and best year academically, he placed first in French, German, Spanish and English, capturing the Governor-General's Medal in Modern Languages and the Julius

Rossin Scholarship. When he won the prize for French prose, he was true to the language of his first love and spent the money on a set of George Meredith.

82

Edgar's scholastic success exacted its toll on his health, however. At the end of his second year, he was apparently suffering from overwork. Doctors advised a year's respite from study. Edgar therefore spent six months - from June to November 1889 - in the interior of British Columbia, thanks to his father's influence, as an assistant to Dr. G.M. Dawson's geological survey party, which was as his mother put it, "inspecting gold mines".

83

Saturday Night greeted his return:

Mr. Pelham Edgar has returned from British Columbia after a six months' absence. Failing health compelled him to take the trip and his many friends are delighted to see him in the enjoyment of renewed vigour.

84

Pelham's sojourn in British Columbia is important because, by his own account, it deepened a commitment to Canada which would be manifest in an abiding interest in her literature:

I have since been able to estimate values of a higher order [in that trip]. Not least I think is the widened consciousness that a youth received of the sheer extent, the variety and the beauty of the country he was to call his own. The sense of Canada's nationhood had been strongly impressed upon me by my father, and his message bore with it no hint of jingo extravagance. I realized now for the first time how magnificent the heritage was that Canadians were privileged to mould into forms equally noble. The struggle might be hard, the success mediocre, but the incentive lay mightily before my eyes.

85

Upon his return to University College, Edgar renewed his contacts with a wide circle of friends from Toronto's wealthy and influential families, many of whom he was to approach in later years to support deserving literary causes. In first year, he

had joined the fraternity Xeta Psi, and he remained an enthusiastic life member - Earle Birney remembers being greeted with a fraternity sign by his august professor in the mid-twenties.⁸⁶ Through the fraternity Edgar became friendly with such Toronto scions as Sammy Blake, who became one of Toronto's leading lawyers, Jack Moss, later Chief Justice Moss, Lewellys Barker, afterwards a famous surgeon, and continued his friendship with Stephen Leacock. He was still devoted to cricket, captaining the Varsity Elevens in 1891-92, his final year at University College.

When Pelham Edgar, by then a tall youth with a thick moustache and thatched brows under a shock of dark hair, graduated from University College in the Spring of 1892 he had an impressive academic record. He had already demonstrated an affinity for literature in general and Canadian letters in particular. Although none of his correspondence of the period survives to provide a vivid picture of his mind and manner, he was clearly part of an intellectual and social elite. He viewed literature as an activity of the refined, one with strong moral overtones. This view was typical in an era that felt the influence of Matthew Arnold so strongly. In an essay on Whitman, possibly the one that set Miss Macdonald yawning, published in the Toronto Mail in his final year at University College, Edgar declared that the purpose of poetry is to "exalt noble emotions".⁸⁷ In an essay on Browning of the same vintage he wrote that the "duty" and "chiefest glory" of the poet is to concern himself with "the shadowy field of ethics":

The poet has another function [than the historian] - the resurrection from the past of whatever may affect, not in so great a measure the mould of national institutions as the conduct of the private life. So by the infusion of his invigorating insight into this shapeless mass the poet relates all its constituents to those ultimate truths which humanity finds so hard to grasp.

88

In keeping with the intellectual temper of the time, Edgar was conscious of the dangers of materialism and an unrelievedly empirical science:

He [Whitman] is a modern, too, by force of a certain prophetic mysticism which can vivify the else inert mass of science agathering. Perhaps only our poets will save us in the end, by this very quality of imagination, from the slough of materialism, that with hideous maw threatens to engulf us.

89

90

Although Edgar reflected the critical concerns of his time, he was no mere dabbler or poetaster. He wanted poetry to be serious and substantial, not sentimental, pat or superficial:

The most apparent danger threatening contemporary verse is that it will perish cloyed by excess of sweetness. Our little flowery shrubs of poesy too often strike but feeble tendrils into the poetic soil, and imagination needs a dwelling of loftier scope than our rondeaus and villanelles afford.

91

It is appropriate to mention briefly Edgar's own poetry. He did not bring much of it before the public, although a volume was printed for private circulation. Ironically, the poetry of the man whose critical sense for poetry was so keen was uninspired. His themes were conventional and his form and diction hackneyed. "Dream Faces", published in Varsity on March 24, 1891, is typical:

92

Slumb'rous airs and sleep-tunes hover
O'er my weary head,
Day's desires and doubts are over
And o'er all the past is shed

The glamour that our dreams recover
From memories of pleasures fled.

93

Edgar's usual themes were the beauties of nature and the omnipresence of death, love, ideality, and the mysteries of life: "Man plants high hopes whose fruits shall no man find".

In one poem there was some attempt to paint Canadian landscape:

Sodden and still they strew the oozy ground.
Those leaves that were so light before the wind,
Bedding all hollows and the spring pools round
Fringed with dissolving snow, and moss enshrined.

94

One poem, about "the ocean of life", is an echo of Arnold's "Dover Beach":

Hither Love! come to me calling,
Nestle in mine arms' embrace
Softly ere to slumber falling
Sweetly dream a waking space.

There is love and there is hating
In the weary world outside.
And there is the bitter waiting
For communion still denied.

95

Later, Edgar advised poets to keep substandard work in seclusion, and his poetry, so typical of any sensitive adolescent and novice poet, was not seen or heard in public after his university days.

Pelham probably was considering a career in literature as one possibility at the time of his graduation in 1892. Certainly by 1891 his mother was convinced that her son wanted a professorship. There may also have been economic pressures on Pelham to excel academically and to choose a profession without delay. Despite his prominence, J.D. Edgar was not wealthy; the degree of his political commitment left little possibility of a lucrative law practice. Moreover, he had a large family to maintain. His letters to his wife refer several times to money worries:

Hope the question of funds is not bothering you. What you told me about the [law] office had depressed me much.

96

Pelham recalled that family money troubles made him relinquish the hope of a career in the Indian Civil Service in favour of a teaching post at Upper Canada College, his old school:

By pure chance I joined [Leacock] there in 1892. I had no intention of entering the teaching profession, but had my eyes fixed on the Indian Civil Service. This would have necessitated some preliminary coaching in London, which disturbed me not a little because my father had been hard hit financially in a real estate crash. I happened to meet Archie Young one day at a street corner. He told me he had accepted an appointment at Trinity College, and asked me to take a post at Upper Canada as modern language master under Stephen Leacock. The die was cast, and I abjured the prospect of retirement at sixty with a fat pension and a liver.

97

In reality the die did not roll quite so smoothly. Family pressure was brought to bear to secure the job for Pelham. His father sent a rather peremptory note to George Ross, Ontario's Minister of Education, to whom the Principal of Upper Canada College reported:

I have called this morning to find out for my son Pelham whether it is definitely settled that he is to have the position at Upper Canada College which he has applied for at Mr. Dickson's [the Principall suggestion.

He seems determined to go in for a scholastic life - and as he has several places in view - if he does not get Upper Canada College - it is of great importance to him to know as soon as he can be told about this.

He is out of town or I would have sent him to see you. You must have all his papers from Mr. Dickson.

98

George Dickson, although he had taught Pelham at Upper Canada, does not appear to have promised the job to Pelham. Dickson's letter to Ross on the matter was stoutly independent:

I have had no communications with Edgar or any of the Edgars for upwards of two months in reference to the vacant mastership in the College. I am not aware that we are under any obligations to Edgar or to any one else in regard to this position. It seems to me, however, that the best thing to do is to advertise at once for a Second Modern Language Master in order to get a good man offer a good salary.

99

If there was an advertisement, Pelham must have seemed the most attractive candidate, for he did secure the position.

Edgar spent the next three years, 1892 to 1895, at Upper Canada College, which had moved to its new quarters on Avenue Road above St. Clair Avenue, a few miles north of its first location. In his memoirs, he describes these years as "cheerful", and so they were for him. As the above exchange makes apparent, there were tensions between the Principal, George Dickson, and his overseer, the Minister of Education, but they did not affect the housemasters on a day-to-day basis. Pelham had pleasant, if small, living quarters at the College, was well-liked by his pupils, and had such agreeable colleagues as Stephen Leacock, who was first modern language master. Language masters, however, introduced French conversation into the classroom at an early stage, and one suspects that young Edgar was not resigned to a lifetime of the fractured French of schoolboys. According to a letter of Dickson's, he was in fact anxious for such academic recognition as the post afforded:

Mr. Leacock was appointed examiner for the departmental leaving examinations, and he will not be able, I understand, to act. Mr. Edgar, our Second Modern Language Master, is anxious to take his place on the board - No member of our staff, except Mr. Leacock, has been appointed to an examinership - and I think it would be but fair, if a master in this department is to be appointed to take Mr. Leacock's place, that Mr. Edgar be selected. He is well up in his department and thoroughly competent to do the work.

Edgar also had wider ambitions: he wanted to see something of the world, a goal not easy to achieve on a housemaster's modest salary of \$1000 a year. In 1893 the Principal himself opined, as he had for some time, that the pay was low and the hours long, and that better conditions were needed. Edgar's own response, probably in 1892 or 1893, was to apply to Johns Hopkins University about graduate work. In November 1892, three months after he started teaching at Upper Canada, his sister Maud told her aunt:

Pelham is teaching Modern Languages at Upper Canada College and likes it very well, he is studying at the same time with the view of getting a position in the University in a year or two.

According to his mother, he also had eager eyes on Europe and tutored in his leisure hours to earn money to travel:

I daresay some time next summer you will have a peep at Pelham [in Brussels] for he is saving up for a grand trip during his holidays. Such an industrious family we have. At the present moment Pelham is hard at work up stairs coaching a youth for his university examinations. For this he gets a dollar an hour. Outside his college work which is over at 3 p.m. he has three private pupils.

The hoped-for European tour was also designed to enhance Edgar's academic credentials. A visit to France would improve his French, for which he had few conversational opportunities in Toronto:

Pelham is working very hard to make enough money to take him to Paris next summer. He is very anxious to see a little of the world and also to improve his French. Of course he gets very little opportunity of speaking it here although he reads it a great deal.

According to the historian of Upper Canada College, Pelham Edgar was an "excellent" master at a time when the great strength of the school was the competence of its "scholarly and

experienced" staff. An article on Pelham Edgar, published after he left UCC, called him easily one of the school's most popular instructors, one who "really cared for his work, and rejoiced when he found a kindred spirit in his classes." Edgar was no milquetoast as a master either: on one occasion he had two boys cashiered for insubordinancy.

Pelham's second year at Upper Canada College encompassed his marriage, a change in his life which would have an enduring effect on his academic career. In May 1893 he began to pressure George Ross, the Minister of Education, for a raise in salary. His father explained the reason to Ross in another letter of entreaty on Pelham's behalf:

On returning to town yesterday I heard from Pelham that he had been thoughtless enough to send into the House for you that he might press you for an increase in salary. I told him that it was a rude thing for him to do, but you must excuse him for he is engaged to Miss Helen Boulton, and he naturally tries to work up his income with zeal. He does tutoring also, but is anxious to get to housekeeping and seems rather low-spirited about not being able to get what they had been building their hopes upon.

109

In a rather ironic tribute to the social exclusivity of upper class Toronto, Pelham's fiancée, Helen Madeline Boulton, was his first cousin through his mother's family. Her father, George D'Arcy Boulton, was well-known in Toronto society. Pelham had known his cousin Helen, who was four years his senior, all his life. Toronto society columns, for example, record that they were both guests at the debut of Mrs. Henry Cawthra's daughter in 1889, and when Mrs. Edgar gave a musicale and dance in 1891, Helen and her sister Adeline were there. The Edgars approved

of the match, as Maud told her aunt in September: "He and Helen are very happy and devoted to one another. Helen spent eight weeks with us this summer and we were all very sorry when she left as we had all grown very fond of her." When Helen and Pelham became engaged early in the summer of 1893, J.D. Edgar wrote to his wife from Ottawa: "I will try and write to Helen if I get a spare few minutes but in any event tell her how glad I will be to see her among the rest of the family."

Influence had to be brought to bear to smooth the path to the altar. J.D. Edgar prevailed upon no less a figure than Sir Oliver Mowat, Premier of Ontario, to get the Department of Education to grant Pelham more spacious living quarters at Upper Canada College. Principal Dickson was amenable and a December wedding followed for the blue-blooded but impecunious pair. The marriage was duly noted in the Toronto press:

A fashionable but very quiet wedding was that of Mr. Pelham Edgar to Miss Helen Boulton, which was celebrated on Wednesday [December 20, 1893] at St. George's Church. The reception at Mrs. D'Arcy Boulton's residence was attended only by the most intimate friends of the happy pair, but many more were represented by beautiful wedding presents. Mr. and Mrs. Pelham Edgar left by an evening train for a honeymoon in the South. On their return to town after the Christmas holidays, Mr. and Mrs. Pelham Edgar will reside at Upper Canada College, where the former is an assistant master.

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Maud has left a description of Helen and Pelham Edgar's first home and return to it on New Year's Day, 1894:

Pelham and his wife arrived home from their wedding-trip today and Adeline Boulton [Helen's sister] and I went up to the College this morning to prepare a lunch for them. We had unpacked the presents on Saturday and the rooms looked very cosy and home-like. A bright fire was burning and the sun shone through the southern window, lighting up their pretty wedding presents -

vases, cushions, silver jardinieres, books etc. They arrived at about two o'clock, looking very well and in the best of spirits. They had a lovely trip, Baltimore, Washington, and then New York, where they thoroughly enjoyed the theatre, opera and picture galleries...

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Helen made the boarding quarters a happier place for Pelham and the boarders alike (especially for two of Pelham's younger brothers, who were boarders). A family letter makes it easy to understand why Pelham described these years with her as "most cheerful":

[Maud] paid Pelham and his wife a visit last Thursday and stayed to dinner with them...They are very comfortable there and so happy...Bertie's [Edgar] room is next to theirs and there are 8 or 9 other little boys on the floor over whom Helen watches with a motherly eye. She visits them every night to see that they are comfortably in bed, usually with a biscuit or some such dainty for them. Keith [Edgar] and Bertie are particularly lucky for they are every now and then invited to dinner in Pelham's room which is a great treat for them. They fully appreciate the benefit of a sister-in-law who is fond of boys!

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Helen was by all accounts a vivacious and intelligent woman, keenly interested in literature. She later wrote Dahabeah Days

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(1923), an entertaining account of the Edgars' cruise down the Nile River in 1909. She was, however, plagued by physical and mental infirmities which worsened in the course of the marriage. By the mid-twenties she was at best a semi-invalid and Pelham devoted much time to her care. It is probable, as Northrop Frye suggests, that Edgar did not publish more because of the attention his wife required until her death in October 1934. Her condition and her care cost him time and money, which he never grudged. Perhaps for us the only positive aspect of this domestic sorrow lies in dozens of book reviews he wrote for Saturday Night in the Twenties, at a penny a line, to supplement

his income. These reviews provide a barometer of his literary opinions on many topics. In Across My Path he paid her loving and loyal tribute, proof of the gentility that was Edgar's hallmark: "We were a thoroughly devoted couple, and few young married men could have had more loyal and effective support than I at the beginning of their careers. My wife was witty and intelligent, and widely popular in a large circle of friends who counted for something in the Toronto of that day." ¹²⁰ Any discussion of Edgar's career must take into account the effect of his wife's illness upon his activities.

The end to the Edgars' sojourn at Upper Canada College was abrupt. On March 29, 1895, the entire staff of the College was fired, in a move apparently designed to rid George Ross and the Upper Canada College Board of George Dickson, allegedly because he had failed to upgrade the school and to increase its enrolment. The letters in the Department of Education Records reveal that in fact there had been constant friction between Ross and Dickson, in which Pelham and the other masters became mere pawns. In his memoirs, Pelham dealt with his dismissal in an off-hand manner: "It suited my book very well, for already in 1893 I had made preliminary arrangements to take graduate work in Johns Hopkins University." ¹²¹ At the time, however, with a wife to support and only modest savings, he was considerably perturbed. When Pelham was not rehired, paternal influence was brought into play in the form of yet another letter to George Ross, pressuring for reinstatement or compensation:

If Pelham is dismissed, and any one else is appointed, it would of course be a great injury in his profession to Pelham - and I can hardly believe it will be done. You know I have not written or spoken about this before and I don't want to try or suggest any sort of political interest or claim - but only if you think a course palpably unfair to Pelham is taken. You may be in a position to suggest a fairer course. 122

Ross' reply is lost, but Pelham Edgar was not rehired and, as it turned out, he did not receive any compensation for the dismissal until 1896. Letters from J.D. Edgar to his wife during the rest of 1895 gave assurances that Father was at work on resolving the "matter." Pelham's life almost took a different turn. Ross appears at first, in June 1895, to have wanted him to obtain a teaching certificate at Brockville. Pelham was apparently unenthusiastic even if his father was enthusiastic:

I have sent to Pelham a copy of a letter from Ross to him and I hope it will suit him. It can do no harm to take lessons in the art of teaching as approved by the lawful authorities of the country. He should try to equip himself with all kinds of certificates - even if he does not value them others may.

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After July nothing more was heard of this proposal: Ross did, however, pay Pelham \$150 to write a report on American universities for the Department of Education - a kind of consolation prize for the firing. When Pelham and Helen left for Baltimore and Johns Hopkins University in the fall of 1895, the efforts of his father and his lawyer-brother Jamie to get compensation for the dismissal were still underway.

Pelham Edgar had been in touch with Johns Hopkins about graduate studies even before the end came at Upper Canada College. The choice of Johns Hopkins may at first seem a curious one: Edgar was an ardent anglophile, and later helped to steer promising students like Northrop Frye and Earle Birney to Oxford

and London. His choice of Johns Hopkins seems to have been a matter of money, family ties, and the University's reputation. As a student at Upper Canada College and University College, Edgar would have been well aware of the merits of this new University, which was founded in 1876. An article in the UCC College Times of 1886, when Edgar was a student there, declared:

"In the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, there are at present seven Canadians, holders of scholarships, five of whom are old Upper Canada College boys." ¹²⁴ An article in the Varsity when

Edgar was at University College struck a similar note. It referred to eight Canadians in post-graduate studies at Johns Hopkins, including three Torontonians, all of whom had great success in winning awards. For someone like Edgar who wished to prepare for an academic career, Johns Hopkins had a formidable reputation for scholarly work and post-graduate studies. W.J. Alexander, who taught Edgar at University College and whose criticism the latter respected, was an alumnus of that institution. As its chroniclers have pointed out, the University was the cradle of the scholarly journal in America, and, under the influence of German scholarship, prided itself on being the training ground for professors who would research and publish in their field as well as teach. ¹²⁵ Professors and graduate

students were in closer contact at Johns Hopkins than was the norm, thanks to its fellowship system. In 1876, the University had instituted twenty annual fellowships of \$500 each, which could be renewed by the holder. The teaching duties involved were occasional. A Fellow could therefore devote himself to

research, in the execution of which he was encouraged to be independent and original. As Hugh Hawkins has observed, the fellowship system attracted many fine students to Baltimore, to a university which had turned away from the traditional classical curriculum to a system based on pure and applied sciences, mathematics and living languages: "... in plain fact there was no such opportunity for free graduate education anywhere else in the country; thus, most young college graduates seriously intending to become professional scholars gravitated toward Hopkins - especially if they could not afford to go to Europe..."¹²⁷

These words apply to Edgar's situation. In his memoirs he recalled his "financially bleak" condition after his dismissal; he did a four year programme at Hopkins in two in order to save money.¹²⁷ It was also, he explained, the reputation of Hopkins that attracted him:

I have never regretted my choice of Johns Hopkins as a centre for graduate work. Harvard was a possible alternative. Child and Kittredge [at Harvard] were compelling names in English, and the University tradition imposed respect. ... The significant difference was that [Daniel Gilman, President of Johns Hopkins] had designed the institute primarily as a centre for advanced studies, whereas Harvard, benefitting by his brilliant experiment, had just begun to attach graduate courses to the existing framework. Johns Hopkins had a body of eminent professors wholly devoted to more highly specialized teaching.

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Baltimore also offered the hope of fellowship income and family ties; Matilda Edgar had Ridout relatives in Baltimore, who gave the Pelham Edgars a welcome taste of Baltimore society.¹²⁹

In October 1895, Pelham Edgar entered Johns Hopkins University with some financial support as a University Scholar: he was not yet a Fellow. He chose to take Modern Languages, with English as his principal subject, German as first subordinate subject and French as second subordinate subject. Edgar's list of courses, still on record at Johns Hopkins, reflects the philological bias so strong at the university. In his first autumn, he took a course on English philology and one on English literature and grammar. The spring term of 1896 encompassed a course of Old French readings, while the next year's work included a course in the history of English sounds and inflections, and a class on French Physiological Phonetics. Edgar therefore ingested a formidable dose of philological and "scientific" criticism for the most part quite alien to his own lifelong critical tastes, especially with regard to poetry. After the Johns Hopkins years, Edgar's interest in philological or linguistic criticism of a poet was virtually nil. One possible legacy of Johns Hopkins was the interest in the evolution of the novel form which he demonstrated in his 1933 work, The Art of the Novel. Certainly Edgar was not absorbing any immediate critical approach at the feet of a professorial mentor at Hopkins.

The two professors from whom Edgar took the most courses in Baltimore (and the referees for his thesis) were James Wilson Bright (1852-1925) and William Hand Browne (1828-1912). Browne, as archivist for Maryland and as librarian of Johns Hopkins (1879-1912), would later help Lady Edgar with her book on the colonial history of the state. Although he had no formal

training in literature, Browne had taught English at Johns Hopkins since 1882. Edgar likely found his approach to literature more congenial than Bright's. Browne's approach had affinities with his own [demonstrated in his University College articles]: "[Browne] varied the general tendency of his department in that he opposed 'swamping literature in philology' and he taught with the belief that 'it is the thoughts of great men and not the laws of Teutonic word-change, that move and mould the world.'" ¹³⁰ By contrast, Bright, who was a professor at Hopkins from 1893 to 1925, was more typical of the Department in his interest in English and comparative philology. Bright, a graduate of Lafayette who had studied in Germany, was Edgar's closest academic advisor. Edgar left his cool assessment of his advisors and their intellectual endowment:

Our seminary head, James W. Bright, could not be described as one of the giants of the staff, but I found him always friendly, and within his limits cooperative. His natural bent was towards philology in its more restrictive linguistic sense. I rather suspect that he could speak Anglo-Saxon but literature at large was for him merely a question of facts and dates. Our seminary [sic] papers were investigations of the writers of a given period, and orderly exactitude of statement was the chief requirement. Our literary lectures we had from William Hand Browne, a charming and aged man who read us highly polished and wholly innocuous essays written I should judge when the century was young. The net intellectual result of this two years' experience I do not rate very high. I must have acquired more than the rudiments of exact philology, since our final written examination was based wholly on this science. We sat down to our task at nine. We adjourned for lunch, and then wrote steadily on until five. A dozen years later, I discovered the paper which I must have answered at the time with some satisfaction, and decided that ten minutes would have sufficed to set down all that I could now understand of it.

This may sound satirical, but it is not so intended.⁴⁴ It is a genuine statement of facts, and reflects more upon my reputation as a learned man than upon the institution whose approval innocently stamped me as such.

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In the course of his first year at Hopkins, Pelham devoted himself to "the continuous grind of work which was my lot". He had the hoped-for reward. In January of 1896, he was told that he had been chosen a University Fellow, and his reputation as a scholar began to grow. J.D. Edgar wrote to his wife: "It is good news about Pelham. I must write him to-day. He will be getting in quite easy circumstances. I lunched with Sir Wilfrid Laurier at the Club today ... He wants Pelham's address to congratulate him." The Toronto World proudly told its readers that "Edgar has received the gratifying distinction of appointment as Scholar and Fellow in Johns Hopkins University within the first year of his residence there." The budding of Edgar's literary reputation was well underway.¹³³

One of Edgar's few surviving letters of the period gives us a picture of his life at the American university. About the time his Fellowship was awarded, he received the happy news that his brother Jamie had succeeded in obtaining for him a compensatory payment of \$170 for his dismissal from Upper Canada College. J.D. Edgar thought that the award might smack of favouritism and wondered whether Pelham should accept it, but Pelham had other ideas.¹³⁴ He and Helen found Baltimore expensive, and rather than return to Toronto, he had eager eyes on professorships at American universities. He wrote confidently to Jamie of his hopes:

We have jointly and severally here been looking after Fairclough who in turn is taking Helen and myself to the Greatest Show on Earth and supper afterwards. He has a great deal of influence at Leland Stanford, and is going to use it all to get me appointed there next year. As they have won their suit for endowment money, they will rapidly equip new chairs in every department, so that is where I am aiming at present. It is as extraordinary as it is delightful that our finances have prospered as they have thanks to your constant efforts on our behalf.

Since coming down I have earned

\$150	Educt. Dept. [of Ontario]
\$200	Scholarship
\$170	[UCC compensation] salary
<u>\$500</u>	Fellowship
\$1020	

The latter announcement won't be made until after the 20th, but I should be disappointed not to get appointed. That is better than teaching school at \$1000 a year - more Kudos and lucre. We could not have dispensed with a cent of it as living is higher than we expected and clothes are not immortal.

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Pelham's hard work at Johns Hopkins caused some strain on his health. His wife's letters speak of his severe headaches, which were caused by eyestrain. Some condescension toward provincial Toronto and its "blue Sundays" became apparent, in Helen's letters at least: "Perhaps now that Sunday Golf has been established [in Toronto], the enlightened Public will condescend to allow Sunday street cars. Toronto is a regular byword for antediluvian notions - Sunday cars are a perfect boon to us here, in this crowded town."

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Pelham Edgar received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins in June 1897. Indisputably Johns Hopkins had given him wider vistas and impeccable credentials for an academic career, but the nature and extent of his intellectual heritage from Johns Hopkins is less

easy to assess. As we have seen, Edgar himself did not rate the influence of Hopkins very highly, and in later career he did not steer promising students toward Baltimore.

In estimating the lasting effect of his Hopkins education, however, Edgar's doctoral thesis deserves mention. He wrote it very quickly, in the course of two years - 1895 to 1897 - in which he took no less than twenty-nine half-courses as well as producing a report on American universities for George Ross. His supervisor was James Bright, and the thesis reflects Bright's interest in "scientific" and philological criticism, an interest typical of the period, as Cleanth Brooks has noted: "American literary study was then much more inclined than the British to borrow rigors from the methods of German philology and in general to undertake a respectful emulation of feats being performed in the laboratories of physical science."¹³⁷ Edgar's thesis was certainly a marvel of classification reminiscent of the laboratory. It dealt with his first love in poetry, Shelley. In 1895, when Duncan Campbell Scott, whose friendship with Pelham was just beginning, learned the subject of the thesis, he wrote to the latter: "You have chosen a fine subject and as your heart is with Shelley, you will make a fine performance of it I have not a doubt."¹³⁸

It was the skeleton of Shelley's poetic, however, and not its heart, that Edgar chose to dissect. The title of the 154 page dissertation is A Study of Shelley With Special Reference to His Nature Poetry. The thesis eschewed thematic analysis in favour of classification. The first section of the work was

simply a precis of the existing criticism of Shelley, particularly as it related to his language and imagery. Edgar specifically declined any attempt at evaluating the bulk of the criticism: "In establishing the existing criticism on the subject, I have refrained from comment except with reference to the question of idealization. An extension of this criticism in any thorough sense would have carried me much beyond the ordinary limits of an investigation of this kind".¹³⁹ Edgar sifted all of Shelley's poetry for similes, and arranged each of them under one of nineteen headings: similes of colour (with subdivisions), of sound, of odour, examples of simile and metaphor combined, double similes, similes of love, similes of dream, etc. He justified this procedure by the assertion that "Shelley's similes [throw] light upon his poetic methods of treating Nature,"¹⁴⁰ but he gave only the data and not a reasoned explication. In one of his few conclusions, he declared, in the critical mode of the period, that while Shelley was an idealist (evident in his similes of light and colour), he was no escapist. In an attempt to refute Arnold's assessment of Shelley as an "ineffectual angel", he employs Arnold's standards of judgement:

In the poet's youth we must admit that his conception of humanity is visionary and false, and that his shadowy portraits are evasively delusive and vague in outline. But with growing years, the concrete elements of his poetry gathered strength, and qualities of firmness and precision began to show themselves in such abundance as to afford the assurance in his future work of a more harmonious and equable relation between the ideal and the real world.

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Inasmuch as Edgar reaches any conclusion in the dissertation, it is that Shelley's poetry, like that of Victor Hugo, another of

"the great idealistic poets", draws its imagery from an unusual source:

--- whereas the majority of poets materialize their ideas by images drawn from the external world, Shelley spiritualizes inanimate nature by a vivid symbolical interpretation of natural phenomena translated into the language of the intellect.

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Edgar, however, never elucidated the analysis of Shelley's ideas to which the results of his classification pointed: the study is inchoate. In the prefatory note to the published version (Briggs, 1899), he wrote that he intended to publish the results of further investigation, but he never did so. In a 1901 article in the University of Toronto Monthly, "Shelley and Keats as Nature Poets," he made only passing references to Shelley's similes and their significance, remarking that they were not "idle fancies or careless improvisations, but ... part of a noble effort to kindle our imagination to the realisation of a beauty that is deeper than the mere revelation of outward form." 143

Edgar's doctoral thesis, by contrast, must be regarded as a mere revelation of the outward form of Shelley's poetry, and a dead end as far as Edgar's own critical interests were concerned. Edgar did not trouble to mention this quaint intellectual period piece in his reminiscences of Johns Hopkins. One wonders if he chose a topic that he could complete in two busy years and which would appeal to the interests of Professor Bright, his supervisor.

Although Pelham Edgar had dreams of a post at Stanford upon his graduation from Johns Hopkins in June 1897, no post materialized. He and Helen returned to the blue Sundays of Toronto and moved into the large Edgar home on Bloor Street.

There is little doubt that Pelham Edgar desired above all a professorship in English literature. Certainly he had already forged a modest critical reputation as an authority on literature. By 1897, he had published three articles in Canada's leading intellectual periodical, The Week. One article dealt with a German study of Keats; the other two, significantly, were about Canadian literature - one on his new friend Duncan Campbell Scott and the other on the poetry of his future detractor William Wilfred Campbell, a poet whom his father knew well. ¹⁴⁴ Claude Bissell has written of the pronounced flavour of "Arnoldian hebraism" found in The Week, and its fondness, even indulgence, for Canadian poets. ¹⁴⁵ When Edgar wrote of Campbell, his prose was tinged with the moralistic demand for stalwart "manliness" so typical of Canadian criticism at this time. Wilfred Campbell, he told his readers, ought not to shrink from "grappling with serious world problems" and any aestheticism was not to be encouraged:

--- the temper of the man is firmer [in The Dread Voyage than in the earlier work], and can cope with Nature's fiercer aspects in poems such as "Midwinter Storm" where the attitude is more commanding, and has no touch of the clinging despondency that diluted the earlier poems. ¹⁴⁶

Edgar's article was remarkable - and atypical of The Week - in the coolness of its judgments on Canadian literature. He underlined, without partiality toward the native product, a lack of sustained inspiration in Campbell's work as well as an unevenness of diction. Edgar's article is, in fact, a document in the record of the increased interest of Canadians in their native literature in the Nineties. Carl Klinck, in his biography

of Wilfred Campbell, describes Edgar's assessment of Campbell's merits and weaknesses as one of the best and balanced response to The Dread Voyage, an assessment which "contrasted most favourably with other printed criticisms in that it treated the author's best effort with appropriate seriousness and respect."

147 Edgar was drawn to Canadian poets, but even early in his career he rarely excused or ignored their weaknesses.

As a promising young scholar, Edgar needed an academy in which to flourish. In 1897 he wanted above all to teach English Literature. University positions in Canada were not plentiful in the Nineties; the universities were few and their staffs small. In October 1897, however, the magazine of Toronto's Victoria College announced that a new professor of French had arrived at that institution:

[Since last academic year] The untimely death of Prof. Petch has left the chair of Romance languages vacant. To fill this the Senate has wisely chosen Dr. Pelham Edgar, a graduate of Toronto University and son of Hon. Mr. Edgar, Speaker of the House of Commons. Dr. Edgar taught for some time in Upper Canada College, and completed his university training by a post-graduate course in Romance languages at Johns Hopkins University, where he obtained the degree of Ph.D. The Senate are to be congratulated upon securing a man so thoroughly qualified for this important position.

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Pelham's appointment to Victoria had been formally made on August 25 of that year. Despite the fact that no unequivocal evidence exists, there is a good possibility that J.D. Edgar brought some pressure to bear to achieve Pelham's appointment. Although the latter was well-qualified for the appointment, a later commentator called the appointment unusual and hinted that there

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had indeed been some controversy. For one thing, Pelham was an

Anglican, albeit a nominal one, and Victoria was a staunchly Methodist institution with a large theological faculty. Compulsory morning prayers were long a feature of life at Victoria at the turn of the century, and Acts abounded with anecdotes of Edgar's absent-minded obliviousness to Victoria's religious mores. As those who remember Edgar the Professor often observe, it is to Victoria's credit that it sheltered such a cuckoo as Pelham Edgar in its nest and allowed him to stimulate spirits as diverse as Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt and Raymond Knister within its walls.

At the period that Pelham joined the French Department, Victoria College had an all-Canadian permanent staff of thirteen¹⁵⁰ and an enrolment of about 300 students. Victoria College had been founded in 1836 by the Conference of the Methodist Church as "Upper Canada Academy". Although it was located in Cobourg, it had formally federated with the University of Toronto in 1887. Due to a dispute over the terms of federation, it did not actually enter federation until three years later; in 1892 it occupied new buildings in Toronto on Queen's Park, a stone's throw from the J.D. Edgar residence. The Chancellor of the time, Nathaniel Burwash, wrote that Victoria stressed "the power of personal influence in education", a potency which Edgar would certainly manifest in his career there. Victoria College was created and conducted in the nineteenth-century belief, then¹⁵¹ prevalent in Canada, in the importance of moral and religious precepts in education, partly in reaction to the "dangers" of materialism. John Watson, Canada's most prominent nineteenth century philosopher and a professor at Queen's, put the thinking

of the time thus in 1888: "The true ideal [of the university] is to lift men to an attitude where they shall be able to contemplate life as an organic whole, ruled by the idea of order and law, and where they shall be moved as by a divine constraint to consecrate their life to a common end." ¹⁵² The Victoria College Act of 1841, for its part, declared that "literature and science should be taught on Christian principles". It was a conservative intellectual environment, yet one whose spirit Pelham Edgar, with his professed concern about materialism, did not find utterly uncongenial. Edgar was polished and urbane and a little disdainful of the naively earnest, homespun and pietistic in plentiful supply at Victoria, but he was also a critic deeply concerned about moral ideals and the dangers of materialism. It was a difference of style, not substance.

While Victoria College was rather straitlaced in the Nineties, it was also a centre of interest in Canadian culture, an interest which Edgar did not fail to perpetuate. In February 1894, for example, a Canadian literary evening had been held at Victoria under the auspices of Professor L.E. Horning of the English Department in an effort "to increase the general acquaintance with our native literature". ¹⁵³ Its immediate purpose was to discuss the state and future of Canadian literature. Such luminaries as William Wilfred Campbell, the poet Agnes Maule Machar, Charles Mair and W.D. Lighthall, as well as a large number of students, were in attendance. Duncan Campbell Scott, another participant, stated his belief that Canadian literature was in "a transition period, with progress

discernable ahead through university influence and a growing cordiality to Canadian writing and periodicals.¹⁵⁴ This instance of interest in Canadian literature at Victoria was not an isolated one. There are numerous articles on Canadian literature in Acta Victoriana, which show that the interest was not mere narcissistic "boosting" of Canadian letters. One article in Acta in 1896, for example, took Bliss Carman to task for his disappointing performance in Behind The Arras.¹⁵⁵ In 1897, L.E. Horning wrote of the need for rigorous critics of Canadian literature, although he maintained that they would get little thanks from the less demanding for their rigor. He opined: "This indiscriminate puffing, which passes currently under the name of reviewing, is a positive injury to our young literature, and it is time for a decided change for the better."¹⁵⁶ A similar pronouncement of Horning's is worth quoting because Edgar's literary career in Canada was in large measure a reflection of the aims that Horning outlined:

--- proper criticism would not only be an educative force for the public, but would exercise a most beneficial influence upon authors themselves. If it would cause half of the would-be interpreters of the Muse to destroy their work, rather than publish it, the boon to our literature would be inestimable, and if the remaining authors could be taught to prune and painfully revise, the benefit to them and to the public would be incalculable. ... [the needs of] the authors are long, continual, careful revision of work undertaken, self-denial as regards public flattery and appreciation, and patriotic, sympathetic study of Canadian history and romance, as a fruitful source of subjects. The schoolmasters to be of use to both, are carefully trained critics, which a national university ought to supply...

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University of Toronto professors around the turn of the century, played an important role in stimulating the appetites of

successive generations of undergraduates and graduates for literature. Munro Beattie has written of the importance of certain Toronto professors in the development of modernism in literature in Canada:

The universities of Canada played a part in the quickening of national culture. The first quarter of the century was a period of prodigious increase for Canadian universities: in enrolment, in building, in curricula... At the University of Toronto, especially the strengthening of English studies under W.J. Alexander and Malcolm W. Wallace must have contributed incalculably to the creation of a fit audience for the new poetry. ... The universities, by providing decent criteria and methods of analysis, did their essential duty by the creation and reception of the new writing.

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Pelham was to share with older colleagues at the University of Toronto, like Maurice Hutton of the Classics Department, James Mavor of Political Economy, and George Wrong of History, an influence on successive waves of undergraduates in the development of humanist values. As Alan Bowker has demonstrated, the latter group exalted spiritual values over material ones, and conceived of higher education as a means to instil character and expertise in leadership in society, as well as a way to establish cultural standards in a society's elite. In an analogous fashion, Pelham Edgar stressed literary excellence and leadership to such students as Frye, Pratt and Knister.

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While Pelham Edgar wrote in later life that he enjoyed his years in Victoria's French Department "greatly", the recollections of some of his pupils suggest that Edgar was impatient to enter the English Department, where his real interests lay. W.A. Deacon, the well-known Toronto reviewer and litterateur, a student at Victoria between 1907 and 1909,

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recalled in Edgar's obituary that he had been appointed to the French Department "to his annoyance."¹⁶² In the French classroom Edgar was a figure of awe to many of his students. C.B. Sissons, another of Edgar's students in French in the early years, has left us an account redolent of Edgar's grand and insouciant manner:

Edgar was aristocratic in appearance, and, if such a thing may be said in Canada, parentage....He was tall, slender and graceful, and his fine features gained further distinction from a mass of dark hair and a heavy moustache. In his first year at College, he would come over from the Edgar home on Bloor Street, afterwards purchased by the College for the Chancellor's residence, with his terrier on leash and tie the dog to a leg of the desk as he taught the Freshman class French. "Pelham," as the select circle of his friends knew him, soon became a foremost literary critic, whose judgement was widely respected by publishers.

¹⁶³

Other sources tell us that one trait marked Pelham Edgar as a teacher, in French as in English classes: he was a professor who appealed to, and responded to, the intelligent, the interested and the informed student. Mrs. E.J. Pratt, who as Viola Whitney was his student in the early years, remembers that he had little time or patience for those "pass" students who were in his courses merely because they had to be.¹⁶⁴ He was not interested in reaching the lowest common denominator. Although he was at heart a kind man, he could be cruel to those he judged ignorant, lazy or unpolished. Northrop Frye has described this trait diplomatically: "As a teacher, however sympathetic he might be to those who were willing to listen, he puzzled and annoyed students who wanted examination cribs instead of poetic experience, who expected their teachers, not to read poetry to them (which Dr. Edgar did well, and frequently), but to roll all

a poet's sweetness in one ball, in the manner of crammers and dung-beetles".
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The Victoria College programme in French understandably required a good deal of teaching of basic grammar and language, particularly in the early years of the undergraduate programme. While good students tended to remember Edgar's pedagogy with gratitude, his grand manner left scars even on the clever. He seems to have found some of the work irksome. W.A. Deacon, then book columnist for Saturday Night, bitterly told novelist Emily Murphy about Edgar's French classes of over a decade earlier:

Edgar lectured to me at Varsity and I know him to be an aper of the English gentleman. He can never forget that his mother was Lady Edgar. He considers enthusiasm vulgar, and [the] kind you and I have [for Canadian literature] positively barbarous. He was so offended at being compelled to lecture to freshmen that he wouldn't look at us - [turned] his chair round and lectured with his back to us. That is a sample of his precious culture!

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Deacon was not the only student with bitter memories of Edgar's French lessons. A Waterloo professor, who had been Edgar's pupil in 1907, was still smarting fifty-three years later:

You might be interested in my memory of Pelham Edgar. Back in 1907 I went to Victoria College as a very green farm boy of 17, having taken my high school work at what would now be considered a one-horse high school.

I enrolled in an honour course in Modern Languages which brought me under Dr. Edgar for French. At that stage I don't think I knew that French was a language to be pronounced and so when I was asked to read in French I can imagine it was pretty awful. The situation wasn't improved when Dr. Edgar said to me in the most sarcastic fashion, "Huh, you want to go out at night and hear the tom cats to get their nasal twang."

Well that remark just cost him \$300.00 15 years later because it came my way to offer a course in third-year English at the Central Y.M.C.A. and he was most anxious to give the course. Remembering this remark which had

cut pretty deeply, - I said "nothing doing I will go to Professor Horning who had always been sympathetic to my fumbling knowledge of languages," and he was only too pleased to take on the assignment.

I have been told that he later mellowed considerably and as you well know transferred into the field of English but in my day he taught only French.

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Pelham was by no means entirely contemptuous of the French Department and its young students. Acta, the college magazine, records that on occasion the Edgars entertained at an "At Home" for first year students, and, in 1902, he established the Pelham Edgar Prize in French Composition. In return Edgar got a thorough grounding in French literature - or at least consolidated one - while teaching in that department, for by the time of Edgar's tenure there, the Victoria programme covered the literary history of France in a logical fashion over the successive years of the programme.

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At the time of Edgar's appointment to the Victoria's French Department, there were only five teachers of French for all the colleges of the University of Toronto. Pelham was the only one with a Ph.D. Only one other department member was located at Victoria. O.P. Edgar is listed in the 1898/99 calendar as "Lecturer in French Language and Literature" and Eugene Masson (1857-1905) is "Instructor in French". Two courses in German, French or Greek were required for a degree in Arts, and the calendar enjoined that in both the General and Honours course "stress will be, in all the years, on grammar, pronunciation, and translation into French." Study of literature did not begin until the second year, and there were also lectures in the history of the French language - not an emphasis Edgar would have

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relished. The senior French professor at University of Toronto was John Squair (1850-1928), an Ontario-born graduate of the University of Toronto (1883), who was interested in the study of French grammar and who published several popular textbooks on the subject.¹⁷¹

Squair was also one of the founders in 1886 of the Modern Language Association of Ontario, later part of the Ontario Education Association. Relations between Edgar and Squair, while cordial, were never particularly close. Squair's memoirs, The

Autobiography of a Teacher of French,¹⁷² reflect the general critical conservatism of the department: he deplored Zola's

"sordid" qualities and the departmental preference was clearly for Romantic writers like Victor Hugo.¹⁷³

Such conservative ideas were certainly not alien to Pelham Edgar. "Emile Zola and the Realistic Movement in France", Edgar's Acta article of 1902, champions the work of the novelist Alphonse Daudet in contrast to the "coarser" realism of Zola. Edgar reproves Flaubert, too, because "he does violence to his own picturesque imagination by the deliberate choice of sordid and commonplace realities." Daudet is "healthy realism", while Zola is "deplorable grossness." Edgar concludes:

If science proclaims that animalism is of the essence of humanity, that our amoral nature is the beast, then the sooner art says goodbye to science the better.

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Even with all Hugo's admitted faults, it was Victor Hugo and his idealism (a favorite subject for departmental French examinations) whom Edgar admired, as a letter from Edgar to Frechette, another Hugo aficionado, shows:

I finished Hugo's '93 a few months ago. It appeals to me in many ways from the powerfulness of its situations more forcibly than any novel of his since "Les

miserables." The relativeness of our human ideas of right and wrong in the light of absolute truth and justice is wonderfully shown.

The chapter "Gauvain pensif" is a masterpiece of intricate analysis. The solution too is a victory for idealism. Gauvain is guillotined, but he goes joyously to his doom, and with a soul victorious over doubt. Cimourdain, like Gavard, realizes that his worship at the world's altar of duty is a mean and paltry service. They both in the hour of human victory catch a glimpse of the higher truth.

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Edgar seems to have done something to promote French Canadian literature during his time in the French Department, for he was apparently involved with the awarding of an honorary degree to Louis Frechette by the university in June 1901. Edgar escorted Frechette during his time in Toronto, and at the end of June Frechette wrote Edgar to urge that the honorary degree be publicized because it could promote bonne entente between the

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races. In a speech on Canadian literature that year, Edgar gave Frechette the highest rank among Canadian poets. Pelham's sojourn in the French Department and his exposure of French Canadian literature was doing no harm to his literary reputation. In 1901 the Globe praised his catholicity:

--- the paper read by Mr. Edgar [on Canadian poetry] should find a place in one of the monthly magazines. ... because it represents the value of a thorough familiarity with another language besides English. Mr. Edgar has in the best sense of the word the delicate appreciation of "le mot juste" which has become with the writers of the French school of today a veritable passion, and this has so influenced the style of the writer on "Nationalism in Poetry and Canadian Poets" that his paper is an object lesson to those who may have their doubts as to the necessity of studying foreign languages to acquire a command of perfect English. 178

A look at Edgar's published work for 1897-1908, the French Department years, 179 confirms that his interests really lay in

English and English Canadian literature. Of forty-four items that Edgar published in this period, only five - three articles and two textbooks -- concern French literature. The above-mentioned "Emile Zola and the Realistic Movement in France" is perhaps his most substantial article on French literature. Edgar writes of Zola with understanding but with distaste for his "absolute and narrow determinism" and tells the reader:-

With all Zola's solicitude for an exact reproduction of life, Daudet possesses the superior artistic vision, and is in more intimate contact with his human material.....

That my preferences incline me towards Daudet, I frankly admit, and I hazard also the further opinion that a hundred years hence Daudet's will be the more living name.

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(While this sort of assessment is certainly typical of the puritanism of the Canadian critic, it is certainly ~~not~~ prophetic. Daudet is remembered now chiefly for his sketches of Provencal life and Zola has the more important reputation as a novelist of naturalism.) In a short article on Sainte-Beuve, published in 1905, Edgar wrote of his admiration for the "insatiable mental curiosity" of the great critic of Romanticism. ¹⁸¹ "Tendencies in French Literature", his first article in the field after his appointment to Victoria, discusses the whole range of French literature - Rabelais, Ronsard, Montaigne, Boileau, Voltaire - in a way that makes it evident that his subsequent lack of concentration on the field was not the result of ignorance. Once again Edgar's judgements were tinged with a moralism, albeit with a more sophisticated veneer, like that found in the criticism of Sir John Bourinot, D.C. Scott, Archibald Lampman and The Week's contributors, to name just a few:

To every branch of letters Voltaire brought the more splendid qualities of mind, and need I add the same defective qualities of conscience and carelessness of the truth when his personal glory or his material advancement were concerned? The sordid pages of his life would weary us in the turning, yet his native generosity and sympathy inclines us to charity...

Edgar, moreover, seemed most interested in what light French literary history can shed on English writers such as Samuel Richardson and Shelley.

Edgar's two French textbooks were an edition of Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon (1908), a light comedy by the popular French playwright Eugene Labiche and a favourite French text of the time, and an edition of The Poetry of Victor Hugo, an impressive anthology of Hugo's poetry with extensive footnotes for school use. The latter work was co-edited with John Squair. Edgar's motive for these books was probably money - for one thing he had to finance two trips to Europe in 1905 and 1909. Other publications, however, best illustrate where Pelham's energies were channelled in these years. The titles are suggestive: "Have We a National Literature?" (1904), "Some Canadian Poets: Bliss Carman" (1905) and "Canadian Literature" (1911). He wrote numerous articles on such English writers as Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and George Meredith. As early as 1903, Torontonians were beginning to defer to Pelham Edgar as a formidable master of English literature, as an item in the University of Toronto Monthly suggests: "The Tennyson Club met in Victoria College on Wednesday, December 3rd, to hear a paper from Professor Edgar on the adverse criticism of the poet. There was a large and appreciative audience; not as large an audience, however, as the paper deserved. ... The only criticism of the paper was that it

was too good, and left the audience nothing to add and few questions to ask".¹⁸⁵

Pelham Edgar made a gradual transition from the French to the English Department at Victoria College. In 1901/2 he was listed for the first time in the University calendar as a professor of French rather than an examiner. In the 1909/10 calendar, however, he is listed in both the English and the French Departments and in the 1912/13 calendar he is for the first time listed only in the English Department as "William Gooderham Professor of the History and Criticism of English Literature."¹⁸⁶ The complete transfer from the French to the English Department took over a decade, (Edgar had set English examinations as early as 1900) but it reflected the direction of Edgar's interests.

Edgar's Canadian literary career was well underway by the time he transferred to the English Department in 1912. In these years (1899-1912), as the next chapter will show, Edgar was deeply involved in the development of Canadian literature and Canadian cultural life through forums like the Canadian Society of Authors, the University Magazine and the Toronto Globe. He was moving to the forefront of Canadian literary and critical life. His birth, education and early career therefore had provided Pelham with many qualities important in his later career: social position and contacts, a measure of the nationalistic feeling of the time, a sense of literary mission heightened by his parents, devotion to literature, and a strong academic education which resulted in a sophisticated critical

sense tinged with a moralism and anti-materialism typical of Canadian intellectuals of the period 1890 to 1910.

Chapter Two: The Emergence of a Leading Critic of Canadian Letters, 1897-1919

From the time of his return to Toronto from Baltimore in 1897, when he was appointed to the staff of Victoria College, Pelham Edgar was deeply involved in the literary life of Toronto and in various attempts to foster Canadian literature in that city and outside it. For the next fifty years, he encouraged students, writers, and poets by means of lectures, articles, personal advice, friendship and the projects of a succession of literary and cultural organisations.

Several traits marked all his efforts: a commitment to the encouragement of a national literature (a commitment without chauvinism and with a keen sense of universal standards and wider excellence), an empathy with young writers, and a conviction of the importance of literary societies and of practical help to writers in the form of financial and publication assistance, and a dislike of what he perceived to be endemic materialism and vulgarity in the society of his time. Edgar brought other traits to his self-appointed cultural task: an urbane eloquence of pen and tongue, a deficiency of business and financial sense which would affect some of the projects with which he was involved, and a certain elitism. Few of his countrymen had a firmer faith in the aristocracy of intellect and privilege blended with a conviction that the two were often synonymous.

In the early years of Pelham Edgar's involvement with Canadian literary life, his father's hopes for the cultural

vitality of the nation seem to have been strongly in the son's mind. His father's memory made potent the ideal of a great Canadian literature.

In July of 1899, Sir James David Edgar died.¹ He was only fifty-eight years old, but the pace of his life had been punishing and he had been ill for several years. Despite the long illness, the shock and sorrow of his bereaved family was nonetheless severe. Sir Wilfrid Laurier, friend as well as colleague of Sir James, spoke to the House of Commons of the "irreplaceable" loss of its Speaker - a statesman of dignity, fairness and strength.² The poet Louis Frechette, mourning his lifelong friend, composed an eulogy to him.³ To Frechette, Pelham confided his own feelings:

The noble poem which you wrote to the memory of my dear father, your tribute both to the poet and the true friend is cherished by us all more deeply than words can express. No man could have been more faithful to his ideals and to his friends, of whom he always held you as the first and the truest. You can imagine what he was to his family -

He lies now on a beautiful hill-side facing the dawn. Oaks and maple trees are spread along the valley beneath him, and the hill-slope is covered with evergreen fir and spruce. And there through spring and summer the birds sing, and the gentle squirrels play.

All that was mortal of him lies there - but he is doing his man's work elsewhere, nobly and unselfishly as of old, never wearying not flinching till the task is done.

³ Pelham's eulogy revealed his rather vague belief in, an extraterrestrial reality, doubtless reinforced by the apparently satisfactory dabblings in automatic writing and spiritualism which he undertook at home with his bereaved mother and sister Maud in the months after the funeral, a common interest of era.⁴

Concrete cultural endeavour, however, not the spirit world, provided Pelham with the surest and fittest antidote to grief. In 1899, he became involved with a new literary organisation, the Canadian Society of Authors, with whose rather fitful existence he was to be involved until 1921, when its remnants were absorbed into the Canadian Author's Association.⁶

The Canadian Society of Authors was conceived to ameliorate the problems of Canadian authors. One of the factors many cultural commentators of the period, such as William Kirby and Sara Jeanette Duncan,⁷ identified as detrimental to the development of a distinctively Canadian cultural identity was Canada's vague and contradictory copyright laws, which neither protected the Canadian writer nor effectively controlled penetration into the Canadian market by foreign authors. Before his death, Sir James Edgar was involved in efforts in Parliament to effect legislation which would better protect the copyright of Canadian authors at home and abroad,⁸ and which would end the depredations of American and British publishers in the vulnerable Canadian market.⁹ The legal and legislative difficulties of passing adequate Canadian copyright legislation were great. For example, Canadian attempts to legislate on the topic were in direct conflict with British legislation on the subject and therefore automatically void in British law.⁹ Because Edgar was never closely involved in the intensive day-to-day lobbying for copyright legislation, either in the period under discussion or later, it is not necessary to treat the subject in detail. The need for literary organisations - for artistic fellowship, for

lobbying on cultural issues, and for more widespread cultural consciousness - had frequently been voiced by Canadian litterateurs. In 1892, for example, Wilfred Campbell had observed in the Globe's literary column, At The Mermaid Inn:

We have many writers, and we have no association to bring them together, or to develop and encourage our literary spirit.... No class of literary workers in the world today needs so much encouragement as do the Canadians. We have an uphill fight against a narrow spirit of local contempt at the hands of the very class that could help us if it desired to. Therefore Canadian writers would do well to band together on a practical basis of common fellow feeling. And such an association, if at all feasible, might be of great benefit as a stimulus to the whole country.

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At the turn of the century, in a country of about eight million, a sale of four thousand copies for a Canadian book was considered good; the average sale of a Canadian title was less

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than two thousand copies. Titles by Ralph Connor and Gilbert Parker, the "bestsellers", could hope to sell about twenty thousand copies. These dismal figures indicate that Campbell's stress on the need for greater bookishness was not misplaced.

Other literary men also believed in the need for a literary association to represent and encourage Canadian authors; the time seemed ripe for the organization of a national literary body.

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After all, as a thesis by George Parker establishes, the 1890s was the decade when creative writing as a profession first became possible in Canada. Despite the economic depression of the period 1891 to 1898, Toronto became a publishing and literary centre for Canada in at least a modest way. With the emergence of young critics like Pelham Edgar, publishers like George Morang of the "Makers of Canada" historical series, and young writers and editors like Charles G.D. Roberts, whose career exemplifies

the practical problems of the literary life in Canada, agitation for change and reform in Canada's literary condition began.

In this cultural ferment, the Canadian Society of Authors was formed in the last year of the old century. In February 1899, the Toronto Globe reported that a meeting had been held on February 6 to organise a dominion-wide association of authors.¹³ The group, which met at the Canadian Institute,¹⁴ was motivated in part by the departure to the United States of such writers as Bliss Carman and Charles G.D. Roberts, to "pipe for them that pay the piper" in Roberts' rueful phrase. At the inaugural meeting of the Society of Authors, one speaker addressed the need for higher critical standards as part of the creation of a more congenial environment for the author: "In closing his introductory remarks Mr. Ross spoke strongly against setting up any other standard for Canadian writers than that of the great masters, and of superior excellence no matter in what country or by whom set up."¹⁵

This was a cause which Pelham Edgar was much inclined to espouse, although the frankness of some of his critical assessments was to prove provocative to some members of the Canadian Society of Authors. And, despite the immediate impetus of the issue of copyright reform, there were unresolvable tensions in the Society from the beginning. As a rather sharp editorial in Saturday Night pointed out a few days after the initial meeting, the founding members included not only authors but also publishers and librarians, and the interests of these

groups were by no means synonymous. Saturday Night also feared that the Society might well turn out to be the old Toronto coteries in "national" dress. Given the pitiful sprinkling of C.S.A members from centres other than Montreal and Toronto, this fear was justified. The Society was not lavishly funded either: the problems were great.

While there is no record as to whether Pelham Edgar attended that first meeting, he was certainly sympathetic to the cause.

A pamphlet in the Mavor Papers reveals that at a March 13 meeting of the Society, he joined the distinguished men of letters in the Society.

Pelham's distinguished colleagues in concern included Goldwin Smith, George Parkin, headmaster of Upper Canada College, and Charles Lindsey, biographer of William Lyon Mackenzie - all members of the Executive Committee. Some other members of the new Society were Professor W.J. Alexander, Canadian Encyclopedia editor J. Castell Hopkins, Ottawa poets Duncan Campbell Scott and Wilfred Campbell, Kingston poet and novelist Agnes Maule Machar and Montreal poets W.D. Lightall and William Henry Drummond.

The Society charter of February 22, 1899 stated that eligible members wrote habitually "for pay" or had written books "of not fewer than 100 pages." Fortunately for Edgar, his just-published Ph.D. thesis numbered 154 pages. The tenets of the Society were ambitious:

1. ...to promote the production of literature in Canada, and the interests of Canadian authors.
2. To discuss and circulate information with regard to public questions affecting literary workers.
3. To obtain and distribute information as to channels of publication open to Canadian authors.

4. To keep a register of Canadian printed books by Canadian authors. 70
5. To hold yearly meetings in various parts of Canada, at which papers shall be read relating to the work and scope of the Society.

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Whereas Edgar's friend Mavor spent much of the summer of 1899 lobbying British politicians on copyright, Edgar's contribution to the Canadian Society of Authors was rather different. One impetus of the Society, which in 1899 boasted a membership of seventy-two, was the need for a more informed literary criticism. John Cooper, founding member of the C.S.A. and editor of the Canadian Magazine, had already made clear the contribution someone of Edgar's abilities could make:

Canada has developed no critics. There has been no tolerance of the man who has dared to point out a defect here and there. And because Canada has produced no persons who have studied standards and are prepared to compare, in an expert way, all productions with such standards, there has been little progress in the art of writing.

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If, as F.R. Scott put it thirty years later, one could hope to hasten the harvest by assembling the harvesters in May, Pelham Edgar, with his literary background and Hopkins doctorate, was well-suited to wield the scythe. He was shortly to learn, however, that keen critical judgements were still very contentious, even within the Society.

Pelham Edgar had another gift, which he also put to use within the ranks of the Society. He was a delightful and witty conversationalist on topics that interested him. A significant part of the task of the Society was to fete successful authors and visiting literary worthies and to maintain fraternal links with the British Society of Authors. Throughout his life, Edgar

was a great joiner and organizer of cultural associations, for example the Ontario Educational Association, the English Association, the Modern Language Club, the Tennyson Club, the Arts and Letters Club, and fraternities such as Zeta Psi, gentleman's clubs (York and Rideau), golf clubs, and poker clubs. There was a famous poker club which included E.J. Pratt and publisher Hugh Eayrs, among others, in the Twenties and Thirties. Edgar was also a great name-dropper and head-hunter, not surprising in a man of his intensely self-aware social background. The great names from this period in his life are recited like a litany in his memoirs, notables with whom he shared an hour, a weekend, a meal, an introduction or a note: Alice Meynell, George Meredith, Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, Mrs. Humphry Ward and others.

Edgar's conviviality proved a pitfall as far as the sober business of financial, organizational and scholarly labour was concerned. Speaking for many, Donald Creighton snapped with mingled affection and impatience more than thirty years after his teacher's death: "Why, the man was lazy for heaven's sakes!"²²

Let us conclude, rather, a man as convivial as he was industrious. And it was an era when the intellectuals craved companionship. In reading the letters of Archibald Lampman or Duncan Campbell Scott, for example, one is often struck by their sense of isolation and loneliness and by their awareness of a cultural overlay in Canada which was as scanty as soil on the Laurentian Shield. Pelham Edgar helped to mitigate this isolation, and that is a contribution worthy of praise. Pelham Edgar always relished life's pleasures, a relish reflected in his

role within the CSA. No dour Methodist he - like his friend Andrew Macphail, that putative Puritan. For all the talk of hard intellectual toil and rigorous moral fibre, Edgar loved crystal-decanted whisky and clubby literary chat. He thus whiled away many a guest-filled evening in Toronto and Montreal, by his own account.²³

In a society generally oblivious to the writer, such conviviality was precious. Twenty years after the effective demise of the CSA, John Cooper declared proudly that "Among his prizes is a menu card of the 'First Dinner' of the 'Canadian Society of Authors' held in Toronto in 1899...."²⁴

But in 1899 even the clink of cutlery could not drown rumblings of division within the CSA, even on the urgent copyright issue. Many members believed that books were not likely to be published in Canada when the same titles could be published in Britain, a publication locale which automatically bestowed Empire rights, including Canadian rights. This was, moreover, still an age of deep attachment to things British. For example, the Society had to quell Charles Lindsey's fears that possible copyright changes would be detrimental to the English-published author's Canadian rights:

There is [he was told] no intention of the part of this Society to interfere with the rights of the author over his work - these should certainly be paramount, and at the meeting last evening [March 13, 1899], Mr. B.E. Walker made this very plain...

The subject is a complex one and I should like the opportunity of talking the matter over with you as it cannot be encompassed in a short note. Meanwhile I must ask you to receive my assurance that no raid on the English author is contemplated.

Lindsey's complaint also illustrated another widespread fear: that publishers within the Society, like the dynamic George Morang of Morang & Co., would lobby to bring about copyright changes more beneficial to the Canadian publisher than to the author. In September 1900, when some reforms in the copyright Act had been effected after C.S.A. lobbying, it was the publishers within the society to whom Canadian Magazine offered congratulations:

Mr. George Morang and the publishers and literary men associated in the movement are to be congratulated upon the result of their labours, for they have taken the first practical step toward making Canadian authorship a renewed occupation by making the business of publishing itself more remunerative.

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The Society was proud of its achievement in copyright law, but for his part, Pelham was to move to greater prominence in another area of Society interest. In July 1901 Pelham Edgar became the second Secretary and subsequently Secretary-Treasurer of the Society, succeeding Bernard McEvoy, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Society who had resigned. By 1901 Edgar was already active in the C.S.A. He had been in close attendance on Louis Frechette at a Society reception for his Father's old friend in Toronto in April 1900. He had also been prominent in other Society functions: on February 15, 1901, a Society reception was held in Toronto to honour the poet Duncan Campbell Scott. To his close friend Edgar, Scott had directed his shy and pleased queries before the event, in which Edgar was evidently the prime mover: "It is very nice of you to think of getting the Authors Society together. I shall be very glad to meet the men very glad particularly if I haven't got to make a speech - You

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don't think I need to do that?" ²⁹ Scott later reported to Pelham that he was recruiting for the Society at his behest: "I got one new name for the C.S.A. - Alfred Descelles - Griffin [?] refused, ³⁰ with scoffing - But I shall get others never fear -"

(As far as Edgar and Duncan Scott are concerned, the Canadian Society of Authors was having significant spinoffs for cultural history; it was at the time of the CSA reception for Scott that George Morang asked the two to edit his important ³¹ "Makers of Canada" historical series. And, as Secretary of the Society, Edgar not only feted writers - including two writers whose work he most admired - but he was, with James Mavor, one of four members of a sub-committee of the Executive set up on Valentine's Day, 1902, "for the purpose of keeping the Society advised from time to time upon all important ³² new developments in the position of copyrights." This committee does not appear to have been very active; at least no record of its further deliberations and publications has come down to us. But Edgar, as Secretary of the Canadian Society of Authors, did begin to analyse Canadian literature publicly, and the results were lively.

By the early years of the century, when Edgar began to speak publicly on the state of Canadian literature, he was well-known in Canadian literary circles. In 1902, just after his election as C.S.A. Secretary, he visited George Parkin, the influential headmaster of Upper Canada College. Parkin confided to his diary: "This evening Pelham Edgar came up to see me about a little literary matter. I am very much struck with the innate refinement and superiority of his whole mind and character.

Alice [Parkin] feels the same way very deeply." Another literary man, William Wilfred Campbell, was more outraged than impressed by the ascendancy of critic Edgar, who gave a paper which he believed belittled his literary standing among the Confederation group of poets to a Society meeting in 1901. Wilfred Campbell's outrage was prompted by Edgar's paper, "Nationalism in Poetry and Canadian Poets", read to the C.S.A. in March 1901. In it, Edgar maintained that, since even the "purest" nation was a "heterogenous agglomeration", the nature of Canada precluded an easy definition of nationality, peopled as it was "with Celt and Saxon, and a smattering of at least a dozen other races which must sooner or later affect the tone and thought of poetry in our country. ... Where all is so helplessly [sic] confused how shall we hope for some fixed and absolute thing that we may call a national note?" This query suggests something of Edgar's unease about the flood of immigration and expansion taking place in the Canada of the day, and his awareness that the literature would not be unaffected. As had been his wont in his student days, Edgar praised French-Canadian literature - was it not after all homogeneous and national? - and the unrivalled achievements of Louis Frechette. Lampman he ranked high in the anglophone pantheon, and he praised the classical poetry of Roberts. Then, Edgar denigrated 'local colour' - then in its American heyday - as dwarfing the true mission of poetry. In a manner a little reminiscent of the French critic Taine, he maintained that every poet is "the product of the 'race, the milieu and the 'moment'".

Lally Bernard, the Globe columnist, responded positively to Edgar's ideas as "worthy of further study and investigation" and observed, very rightly as it happened, that:

...it is interesting to note that Mr. Edgar brackets the Canadian poets in the following order - Roberts, Lampman, Carman, the two Scotts [Frederick and Duncan] and Campbell. Without doubt the order of this list will bring forth a storm of criticism from the poet, but this is perhaps the raison d'être of the Authors' Club [sic], to stir up vivid interest in Canadian literature and to bring to light any schools of thought in prose or poetry which may exist unknown in our country.

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A few days later a letter to the Globe commented that Edgar's high ideals, while necessary, demanded courage to espouse in Canada:

Professor Pelham Edgar pointed out that local colour was invariably accompanied by provincialism, the greatest possible flaw in all true poetry, and he particularly laid stress upon this point. The works of Burns and Wordsworth abound in local colour, but only universal thoughts are expressed by them. The professor set before us a high ideal, alas, far too high for most of us poor scribblers. At the same time his attitude is highly commendable, because, unless we can thoroughly grasp the fact that purely provincial poetry is fatal to the development of the poetical faculty, we can never hope to set any real standard whereby the merits of our future Canadian poetry may be judged... Let nothing be placed in the way of the highest possible standard. Let nothing but enthusiasm on our part be exhibited towards a man like Professor Pelham Edgar, who has the courage and the intelligence to proclaim boldly that unless we follow the highest possible ideals we are doomed to mediocrity.

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Despite the praise, rigorous critical standards were indeed easier for Pelham Edgar to preach than to practise. His analysis of the relative merits of Canadian poets brought upon him the wrath of Wilfred Campbell, just as he later provoked litterateurs like William Arthur Deacon and Hodge Macbeth, who interpreted his

rigor as condescension and belittlement of Canadian literature. Campbell, for his part, was a sensitive poet of the Huronian landscape, but he was also pugnacious, and jealous of his place in Canadian letters. Campbell did not think highly of critics, as he made clear to readers of At the Mermaid Inn in 1892: "Critics ignore all the good work and hunt up all the weak points in a book of poetry for especial damnation."³⁶ Campbell felt the world of publishing and reviewing was rife with "booming", "sabotage" and "favouritism" and he was deeply suspicious of critics and reviewers. He believed that the "strongest genius" was "most uneven in flight and finish" a trait certainly characteristic of his own work. His contemporaries were wary of his displeasure: for example, Edgar pere had handled him gingerly in the literary sections of Canada and Its Capital. In his correspondence of 1895, Sir James Edgar had observed wryly of Campbell's Modred that, while it was full of defects, it had "go": "I don't believe he could have written it if he had not a lot of the devil in him that he is showing in the way he is going for Bliss Carman and his other persecutors."³⁷

Campbell displayed no less zeal in his 1901 attack on the presumptuous Pelham Edgar. The episode is interesting because it delineates Edgar's literary projects at the time, and helps to explain why commentators on culture such as John George Bourinot, Robert Barr, and Archibald MacMechan were generally more content to write of the need for uncompromising critical evaluations of Canadian work than to undertake evaluations as a regular public exercise. Campbell responded to Edgar's assessment of him by ranting to Globe readers about Edgar's pernicious

"discrimination":

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.... the whole object of his coming forward as a judge of our literature is to write me down in the eyes of the public, or, to quote his own words: 'It is my desire for the present merely to point out the intellectual value of Campbell's work is not greater than that of several among his confreres, while, artistically speaking, he is evidently not superior to them in power of expression or beauty of form.' I think it but justice to myself and the public, whom Mr. Edgar, is anxious to prejudice by mere bald statements and sweeping assertions, to show that there is possibly a reason for Mr. Edgar's action which does not appear on the surface.

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Campbell revealed that Edgar had planned an anthology of Canadian poetry, in part to counteract the lamentable quality of earlier ones:

Last November Mr. Edgar wrote me, saying that he had arranged with Mr. Morang, the publisher, to bring out a new anthology, as an offset to the Rand anthology, published by Briggs. He said that the poetry in the Rand anthology was at least "90 per cent trash", and continued: - "The reputation of Canada can hardly be enhanced by a collection of that kind." His, Mr. Edgar's anthology "would contain the work and the best work of six or seven poets only," and he asked that I should allow mine to be included. His anthology he apparently considered was to retrieve Canada from that low literary reputation abroad into which Rand's had degraded it.

Now as I had already refused to give my verse to Dr. Rand for use in his book, it was utterly impossible (aside from my own strong dislike to anthologies) to comply with Dr. Edgar's request, so I had to refuse, and in consequence of my refusal to permit my verse to be contained in the proposed anthology Mr. Morang refused to publish it, and for this Mr. Edgar has not forgiven me.

39

Campbell savagely repudiated "the empty and high-sounding jargon of Edgar, who by an attitude of assumed superiority of insight and culture, attempts to throw dust in the eyes of the public .. he has the superficial ideals of those whose one aim seems to be to enforce false literary standards upon the general public by

[the] unenviable method of snap judgements."

Campbell was obviously intemperate in his response, but one can discern in Edgar's assessments a certain coolness which many litterateurs were apt to resent when it involved an unsparing assessment of their achievement. Edgar's critiques of Campbell have subsequently been repeated by later critics such as Carl Klinck and Desmond Pacey, but that was no help to him then. And Edgar's entire manner could inspire unease and dislike of the sort demonstrated by Campbell. As historian Carl Berger makes clear in A Sense of Power, George Parkin, farm boy turned imperialist and headmaster, admired patrician self-confidence of the type Edgar displayed in these years; more humble folk were usually less charmed. Edgar's icy rejoinder to Campbell was Upper Canada at its flintiest:

Mr. Campbell will surely learn in time that he is doing his cause a great deal of harm by thus fretting and fuming before the public.

I wish merely to refute certain statements and inferences contained in Mr. Campbell's letters. Leaving aside the questionable taste Mr. Campbell has displayed in making public a private communication, I desire to say that the paragraph which I devoted to Mr. Campbell's poetry in my essay was written at least a month before I had conceived the idea of preparing a "rival anthology" to the late Dr. Rand's. The element of personal bias was consequently absent from my criticism. In the second place, and this is a small matter, Mr. Morang never refused to publish the proposed anthology. And, finally, Mr. Campbell should divest himself of the excessively personal point of view which led him to assume that I wrote the paper upon "Nationalism in Poetry" for the express purpose of dethroning him from a self-assumed supremacy. In point of fact, I accorded very little attention to Mr. Campbell's poetry.

40

In terms of Edgar's career, it is regrettable that the planned anthology was never published. Edgar might thereby have become

the most important anthologist of the prewar era, with consequently greater influence as a critic who valued excellence of form and content.

Edgar's dispute with Campbell illuminates Edgar's style and approach as a critic of Canadian literature. Other articles he wrote before 1919 display similar, if more guarded, views on Canadian literature, but the emphasis was henceforth on broad ideas or on close examination of one poet. From the time of the dispute with Campbell, Edgar avoided a "top ten" approach. A Globe editorial about the Campbell controversy echoed Edgar's disdain - which was to be lifelong - for "ranking" poets. The Globe quoted Edgar: "Everyone must be guided by personal preference, and I have an equal right to be guided by my own. But that I should autocratically put forward my own personal preference as a standard of merit would imply a degree of rashness to which I do not aspire." The newspaper also chided Campbell:

... he should leave this complaining tone to lesser men. Some of these gentlemen have a habit of abusing the press. Probably the press has shown some indifference to Canadian literature, but this indifference has often as not taken the form of publishing, in a sort of indolent good-nature, praises of rubbish which is called literature merely because somebody has been found to print it and enclose it between boards. ...

We must put an end to puffing and coddling of all kinds; criticize one another honestly and good-naturedly, but frankly. While one race or one nation may win more of the prizes of literary fame than another, there is no true literary fame which is not won by appealing to the human heart and the human intellect all over the world and in every age.

41

The crisis certainly left Pelham with a reluctance to brave

ugly controversy by ranking or attacking poets, particularly living ones. In his later career, he was disdainful of the controversy-ridden and 'vulgar' world of the book reviewer, who periodically provoked or caused such assaults. He refused to see himself as a part of such ferment, despite his many reviews in the columns of the Globe and the Star before the Great War and in Saturday Night after it. In 1911, a decade after the fracas with Campbell, the hesitancy and humour that the incident evoked in Edgar still remained:

I once delivered a lecture upon the same unwise topic [Canadian literature], and have scarcely yet outlived the enmities which it engendered. ...

Among the English Canadian writers (and now what enemies I am making) there are few indeed of extra-territorial fame, and none whose names have passed beyond the limits of England, unless we are prepared to make an exception of scientific literature.

42

In Edgar's criticism after 1901, almost the only writers he treated in detail were those with whom he shared both taste and comradeship - principally D.C. Scott, E.J. Pratt, Marjorie Pickthall and Audrey Alexandra Brown. Unlike William Arthur Deacon, Saturday Night's book reviewer in the Twenties, who had to deal consistently with the good, the bad and the indifferent, Edgar could usually pick and choose his topics. He did so in favour of the congenial ones, with one or two exceptions.

Not surprisingly, given the exchange with Campbell, Edgar's activities in the Canadian Society of Authors after 1901 became more administrative and social than critical. Unfortunately, he appears to have delivered himself of no more lectures before the assembled Society. As Secretary, he was involved in the production of the Society's 1902 and 1903 annual report and

bibliography. In addition, in June 1904 he wrote a newsletter informing members that the recent annual meeting had resolved that "an effort should be made to induce the journals and periodicals of Canada to give every possible encouragement to Canadian authorship especially in the matter of Canadian short stories."⁴³

The effort to stimulate production and consumption of Canadian belles-lettres must have seemed very necessary: in 1905, for example, the volume of the collected poems of Isabella Valancy Crawford, whose work Edgar admired, had sold less than 500 copies.⁴⁴

In his newspaper and magazine articles on the subject, Edgar was telling Canadians that their literature had still not fulfilled the crucial function of a national literature: to express Canadians to themselves. Writing fifty years after Thomas D'Arcy McGee, he was expressing many of the same hopes for the literature, and still finding them unfulfilled. Edgar pointed to Ireland's Celtic Movement and asked readers of the Globe: "... is it not more significant that a group of able young [Irish] writers be concerned with revealing a nation to itself? ... These duties we consigned to the politicians with results that I prefer to leave unspoken. ... Canada will exist in the eyes of the world only when she can speak in accents that are truly her own."⁴⁵

The Globe, with its large circulation and influence in many an Ontario household at this period - wonderfully evoked by Donald Creighton in his memoir of Harold Innis⁴⁶ - and the Toronto Star were forums in which Edgar became, if not a household word in the pre-war era, at least a literary

commentator with an audience wider than the academic and literary circles in which he moved. In the Toronto press of the time, he wrote descriptive articles about the literary lions of the moment - Ibsen, Shaw, Bennett, Galsworthy, Yeats, Maeterlinck, Morley - but most of all he wrote about Canadian literature, and about particular writers like Duncan Campbell Scott and Bliss Carman.⁴⁷

Through his articles in periodicals such as Acta Victoriana and England's National Review, he became known to Canada's intellectuals, to men like James Cappon, W.D. Lighthall and George Wrong.⁴⁸ Throughout the period, Edgar strove to keep Canadian literature before the public eye. It is to be doubted that outside of a modest circle he had great success but, as we shall see later, two important writers of the period owed much to his stimulus - Marjorie Pickthall and Duncan Scott. For his readers, Edgar correctly gauged the monotony of Carman's Vagabondia poems and the merits of his early work ("Low Tide on Grand Pre") which, Edgar wrote, Carman never bettered.⁴⁹ Indeed, a perusal of the critical history and reputation of writers like Roberts and Carman show that Edgar's assessments were sympathetic and well-balanced; the assessments have weathered the fluctuations of time and taste very well. And, among the cultural commentators of his time, he sought not only to analyse the condition of Canadian writing but also to better it.

Pelham Edgar's articles on Canadian literature in the period 1900 to 1919 voice concern about the state of Canadian literature, yet are positive about its potential. "We require," he wrote in 1911, "only to become vitally interested in ideas to produce them, and I have every confidence, judging from the many

evidences of literary talent which have come even within my individual notice, that Canada will, in the not distant future, have poets, historians, novelists and dramatists, whom the world at large will recognize and value." ⁵⁰ His articles breathe his resolve to help to create a climate sympathetic to first-rate literary activity. Edgar was ever the concerned and humane man of letters. Indeed, it is striking how he saw himself as both involved in the literary scene and as detached from it. Like those gentlemen of leisure in an earlier century who scribbled elegant poetic trifles by the way, Edgar saw himself as the gifted amateur, not some vulgar creature of Grub Street, Upper Canada. In a 1911 article, "Canadian Literature", for example, he demurely observed: "My knowledge of the subject, again, is so inextensive as to interpose another barrier between promise and performance, and I feel like a guilty trespasser upon a theme which Professor Horning and Mr. James have made delightful to so many readers...." ⁵¹ Four years later he wrote "most of us who are not professional workers in the arts seek at least to develop ⁵² our receptivity and powers of enjoyment to the utmost."

Doubtless his ingenuousness about his role was a pleasant attitude for a patrician like Edgar to assume, but in reality he exercised a sustained and professional, critical function in Canadian letters. His knowledge and commitment were anything but amateur. He could be languid but it is certain that languor was not the mood most faithful to his ideals and engagement about Canadian literature. That his commitment to writing should take the form of measured praise of selected Canadian writers was

perhaps inevitable, given the unpleasantness with Campbell and his conviction that intemperance blinkered a critic. The latter danger he discussed in a 1913 article on Carlyle:

Carlyle's strongly-held prejudices and angular opinions vitiated too often the clarity of his judgments...

Partisanship and temper, and I may add, a misplaced confidence in our ability to read the Creator's purpose in the riddle of human affairs, do not contribute to clarity of judgment and are fatal to the attached and dispassionate calm which modern methods of research appear to demand.

53

Edgar also pilloried Carlyle for a narrow and injurious moral dogmatism and for the absence of an innate sense of beauty, which by contrast casts light on his own critical principles. Edgar would certainly not have seen himself as excessively moralistic in his critical judgments; indeed, in contrast to a writer like Andrew Macphail, he is not.

Like numerous other commentators of the era, Edgar believed that the native literature was at best inchoate. His reasons for this are similar to those given by Sara Jeannette Duncan, Robert Barr, Archibald MacMechan and a plethora of other analysts of the period 1890 to 1919. Edgar detailed the familiar list of reasons in 1912:

Literature evidently does not flourish with us in Canada, for which condition a convincing list of obvious reasons might be adduced - our newness as a country, the initial necessity of civilizing ourselves, the dissipation of material energy which this effort engenders, and the lazy opportunity which we as a public enjoy of satisfying all our intellectual needs by recourse to the six-penny and shilling offerings which English publishers place at our disposal. Optimism under the circumstances would be unwise, but unequally unwise it would be to depreciate unduly what our writers have, in vexing conditions, accomplished.

54

The odious omnipresence of commercialism and materialism was,

Edgar believed, injurious to literature, the sine qua non of a civilized nation. He observed witheringly in the same article: "The question naturally arises, has our national character so far shaped itself as to find expression through the medium of skilled interpreters? Here we are, a fussy little people of eight millions, intent upon carving out a destiny for ourselves." 55 He had earlier posed a challenge in the Globe: "In Canada (as in Ireland), we, too, have our aspirations and our national shortcomings in full measure. But who expresses them? What trustworthy guide probes our national conscience and points us on our predestined path? These duties we leave to the politicians with results that I prefer to leave unspoken." 56 This theme is encountered again in his writings: in an important 1909 article, "A Confession of Faith and a Protest" he declared that "in spite of the alleged universality of great ideas no other people and no other age can voice our aspirations and explain us to ourselves." 57 Three years later, in "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," he was even more emphatic about the mission of the literature:

No one, and this is yet the gravest charge our literature has to bear, has yet synthesized for us the meaning of our Canadian life, nor revealed us to ourselves.

58

Throughout this period Edgar elucidated his theory that, while a cosmopolitan knowledge of culture was desirable, it was in a particular, national context that great literature would be realized. The cosmopolitan view of literature that he seemed to embrace in a 1904 article was deceptive. It was not in the spirit of some Edwardian A.J.M. Smith that he wrote: "The conclusion is forced upon us that in this restless age of travel

the tendency of literature is towards an enlightened cosmopolitanism. The man of letters must no longer remain shut up in his own narrow circle of ideas. He must move in a wider atmosphere of thought than his immediate environment affords." 59

Edgar in fact viewed cosmopolitanism as antithetical to provincialism, but not to nationalism, in literature. He was convinced that a great work of literature is at once firmly rooted in a national soil and at the same time transcendent. He cited the work of Ibsen as an example and exhorted the reader:

For if we rise out of our present provincialism of spirit and move at last in the intellectual currents that stream so freely through the world, we shall assuredly grow and produce at last poets, historians, dramatists and novelists who will count for something in the history of our times. ... Our plain and immediate duty it therefore is to draw more freely from the storehouse of European culture. Let us, however, borrow not as the unthrifty do to multiply their heedless obligations but that when the term is reached the debt may be repaid, in kind. Canada will exist in the eyes of the world only when she can speak in accents that are her own.

60

In 1912, Edgar specifically rejected the idea of a cosmopolitan - in the sense of rootless - literature, especially for Canada:

Goethe, it is true, proposed a cosmopolitan ideal for literature, but the facts of six centuries were against him, for, since 1200, all that is of enduring value has been nationally inspired. As to where we actually stand, I think that in the past our uncertain and unsatisfactory political status has adversely affected our literature, but that every year of our growth contributes to our national consciousness. We are only a nation in the making, but that we will emerge from our years of tutelage and trial with rational ambitions is the belief of every true Canadian.

61

In addressing the question of a national literature, Edgar referred to Taine's ideas about race, heredity and environment.

and their determination of a literature. He was no unthinking disciple of Taine, but he did attribute some significance to such factors as race and environment. For him, however, genius transcended them, as the case of Keats demonstrated: "In the heart of cockney London a poet was born whom all the laws of heredity and environment, as we imperfectly apprehend them, condemned to a life of commonplace circumstance. His⁶² swiftly maturing genius impetuously created for itself a world of ideal beauty..."

Two years later he wrote of the poet thus: "On the one hand there is the action upon him of the pre-existing intellectual energies that have gone to the shaping of his immediate environment, on the other-hand the reaction of his personality upon these forces."⁶³ He believed, that "There is one time only in the history of the race when sacred pictures can be painted, as there is one time only in the history of the race when epic poems can be written."⁶⁴

Given his idea that Canada⁶⁵ had forever lost the possibility of a stage when unself-conscious literary production could have been possible - the bleak wilderness had been subdued by cultivated colonisers and it was impossible to turn the clock back to Beowulf - one can see Edgar's anxiety to improve the standards of the cultural milieu. To the more naive of his fellow cultural commentators who always⁶⁶ expected that a Canadian Shakespeare would blossom momentarily, Edgar offered this sardonic insight:

Many absurd opinions are held as to the independence of genius. In a sense, all great talents are isolated and remote, and the flower of genius springs from the seed of difference. But in another, a more practical, and perhaps a higher sense, genius is preeminently social, and is exquisitely responsive to environment. Shakespeare would not have written his plays upon a

desert island, and Shakespeare, transported to the 14th century, would have been merely the peer of the Wakefield genius who gave us the Secunde Pastorum miracle play and passed nameless to his reward. To round off my argument and make my case complete I should have to prove that Shakespeare, vindictively wafted to the Toronto of the twentieth century, would write leaders for the Globe, or indite verses perchance for the University Magazine.

67

Given Edgar's deflating use of the adverb "vindictively", it is easy to see why more optimistic men of letters viewed his judgments as unnecessarily reductive and pessimistic. In an atmosphere of literary self-consciousness, self-deprecation is often seen as treasonable. But one must also sense the frustration that lay behind Edgar's witty shafts; to write of the need for hard thinking and fine writing in the years before World War One and to see "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", whatever the poem's vitality, the best-known of Canadian poems, must have been galling to Edgar. As Pacey has said, this was "the age of brass" in Canadian letters.

Edgar was not slow to blame the conditions then current - materialism, commercialism, political corruption - for the commonplace and even vulgar tastes of Canadians. He identified positive elements in the national makeup, also described by other thinkers and commentators of the time - a vital northern spirit and a sense of confidence born of growing nationhood. If W.D. LeSueur, Edgar's "Makers of Canada" co-editor who attacked political corruption and advocated civil service reform, was the best-known analyst of the political mores of the era, and Andrew Macphail the best-known critic of its social values, Edgar was the critic par excellence of the literary climate of the time.

68

His critiques, and the reasons he assigned for literary

shortcomings in Canada, are allied in some measure to the critiques of LeSueur and Macphail. In 1904, for example, Edgar wrote impatiently that, despite Canada's heritage of English literary tradition, the country had "an imperviousness to ideas." Like Macphail and LeSueur, Edgar was disturbed by the intellectual status quo in Canada. Unlike them, however, he was still optimistic about the future. He was less pessimistic about the present than he was confident of the future, even though he did make clear, in brisk cadence, the appalling mental outfit of the dominion:

Canada, and be it said in no contemptuous spirit, is raw and new. We complacently possess ourselves of the future because we can boast no past. Our good forefathers cut down trees, made roads, (execrable roads). ... They did and made these things, but ideas they never made. A sponge might be wiped over the surface of Canada, and intellectually the world would be hardly the poorer.

69

In 1911, however, he voiced his essential optimism about the future:

I think it may be affirmed that at least the day has dawned for us. The sun of our material prosperity is already high in the morning heavens, while low down on the intellectual horizon a faint flush reddens in the east. That is the dawning of our true day, whatever mock sun may possess the sky.

70

In the present, however, North America, and in particular Canada, was, Edgar wrote, "one grey wash of Philistinism" in need of Arnoldian infusions of culture. Edgar was an elitist in this matter since he rejected the idea that "social equality predisposes to culture."⁷¹ Rather, like Macphail and many of those men who formed Toronto's Arts and Letters Club as a refuge from coarse, commercial Toronto, he saw all about him a naked,

ugly, mediocre materialism, the result of the predilections of the mass of humanity: "At the present time it is certainly the prevailing stress of lower class sentiment which disfigures our streets, cheapens our literature and debases the standard of our public honour."⁷²

Like Macphail, the tendencies of an expanding economy distressed him; in 1917 he again lamented the ugliness of the architecture of the society about him.⁷³

His criticism is full of references, which assume the reader's assent, to qualities of literature automatically alien to the "vulgar" mind.

Art needs a trained and cultivated intellect for true appreciation:

No such untutored enjoyment of art is possible (as is somewhat the case with music), for the untrained instinct naturally responds here only to what is basest, to the appeal namely of crude literature and flabby sentiment.

⁷⁴

He believed that a man careless of or indifferent to the arts "to that extent excludes himself from the circle of civilized human beings."⁷⁵

Edgar shared with many intellectuals of the time - Lighthall, LeSueur, Macphail - a revulsion against the political corruption that the opposition Conservative Party, under its new leader, Robert Borden, claimed was rife in the Laurier administration. In 1904, Canada for Edgar was "politics-ridden",⁷⁶ "with results that I prefer to leave unspoken." Like LeSueur,

he called for civil service reform and for better men to seek political office.⁷⁷ In 1911, he still painted an age out of joint, with the wistful remark: "I am afraid that, in

literature, as in politics, we do not yet know quite what we want."⁷⁸ His friend Duncan Campbell Scott had voiced the same complaint a full decade earlier: "Our time, if not out of joint, is

at least thewless. It is the uncertain aim, the lack of any national solidarity that acts and reacts upon everything thought and done." ⁷⁹

Edgar was in fact a veritable Canadian Arnold: "Only a negligible few of our six millions have a single idea outside of their politics, their businesses, their fireside, and while we thus remain politics-ridden a genuine literature can scarcely be born." ⁸⁰

Edgar's response to the deficient state of the national literature was twofold: first, he exalted an ideal of poetry which transcended materialism and its "realities" and he promoted collegiality in Canadian letters. There is implicit in nearly all his articles of the period a lofty ideal for poetry, the ideal of a well-born critic who admired the poetry of Shelley and Keats, and who read with ardour Fiona Macleod, Alice Meynell and the early Yeats. What Edgar responded to in their work was the sense of a higher vision fraught with beauty. The earthiness of Kipling's verse was not for him; Edgar found other-worldliness more congenial:

... there are poets now living whose ears are stretched to catch a subtler harmony [than that in Kipling of the world's machinery], whose eyes are not dazzled by the glamour of commerce, whose hearts are dead to temporal pomp and shows. They pursue their imperishable dreams, and seek to touch the robe of Beauty as she vanishes from the world.

⁸¹

Edgar was still discriminating in his judgments, however. His assessment of Carman's "monotonously cloying" Vagabondia poems, deficient of "hard thinking", show that Edgar would not praise bad poetry. He did sympathize with its inclinations:

In this commerce-smitten age of ours it is a delightful thing to enter with a simple mind into the ancient, yet ever-young, gladness of the earth. ... As

a protest against the morbidity of modern life, these poems are valuable....

82

In 1917 he wrote of his approach to the arts in a manner which showed that his ideas of an idealistic art opposed to materialism and accessible to the discriminating were essentially unaltered:

Art is not taken captive by any such cheap or nasty means (as a guided gallery tour). Beauty is not clamorous but comes "hurtless as the light parting the peaceful clouds." It is a thing of moods, and essentially I would say of our higher moods, and as such infinitely delicate of transmission and to be apprehended by us only at the cost of a creative effort on our part.

83

Naturally this concept of art made it more difficult for art to be within reach of the common man: if art was by definition removed from the hurly-burly of the mundane, it was less accessible and even at odds with the day-to-day. Edgar acknowledged this when he told students: "We are as a community and as individuals careless of beauty. We endure unlovely things about us and take a perverse delight in our ignoble surroundings".⁸⁴ Edgar's elitism (of a type that presumed those outside the pale could be educated to insight) only partly shielded him from the kind of pessimism that such poets as Archibald Lampman and, much later, A.M. Klein felt at the oblivion to which they were mostly consigned. Edgar felt dejected at widespread indifference to his literary organisations - the Canadian Society of Authors at this period and later the Canadian Authors' Association, the Canadian Writers' Foundation and the Association of Canadian Bookmen.

Despite passive resistance by the money-grubbing masses, as he saw them, the prewar era was the period when Edgar began to busy himself on behalf of his view of literature - not by writing

poetry dedicated to the ideals of beauty (though he did pen some poor verse of that ilk), but by encouraging individuals to write, and trying to persuade the public to be more receptive to literature. One theme of his criticism was the need to create a fellowship of culture in Canada, where there was presently isolation: "little of the fructifying contact of brain with brain."⁸⁵

Because the artist craved comradeship and recognition, something had to be done: "I count it [the Canadian writer's] greater loss that, missing the stimulus of intellectual surroundings, he will be forced to create for himself an artificial atmosphere, and sate his immortal hunger for ideas by a lean diet of books in the seclusion of his literary chamber."⁸⁶

There was need to create in Canada "a sustaining atmosphere of thought", because, despite Edgar's qualified praise of the achievement of Roberts and Carman, he realized that writers who were compelled to emigrate, might never again be able to express the essence of their country: "Roberts and Carman have not yet lost their love of Canada, but can we look to them in the future; however loyal and tenacious their memories, for the adequate expression of Canadian sentiments and ideals?"⁸⁷

Edgar did feel that the Canadian nation had made a promising if modest literary start. He expressed some hope that a distinctive "northernness" would manifest itself in the native product. Carl Berger has written in A Sense of Power of the exaltation of a rugged northern spirit by the poet Charles Mair, and the anthropologist Robert Grant Haliburton. We see this theme in W.D. Lighthall's 1889 introduction to Songs of the Great

Dominion. This element is also present in Edgar's criticism. Indeed a consciousness of "the North" was characteristic of much of the work of the period, perhaps reaching its crude apogee in the poetry of Robert Service and Tom MacInnes. For Edgar's part, he wrote in 1904 that "we speak much of a distinctively Canadian spirit and in some respects we have a right to speak of it..."; he referred to "the sterner temper of the north ... It is in climates where men had to fight and conquer nature step by step that the heroic sagas were born."⁸⁸ In a 1905 review of Duncan Scott's New World Lyrics and Ballads, he described its "spirit, lonely remote romantic and northern ... [this is] poetry which could not have been written but by a Canadian, and would be recognized as northern and characteristic wherever it is rightly understood."⁸⁹ However, Edgar, unlike some of the more naive enthusiasts of northern hardiness, perceived a danger in the tonic northern environment: without sufficient and immediate intellectual stimulus in the environment, it would simply breed escape, not art. The whole question is redolent of Edgar's frustration at the promise rather than achievement of the Canadian situation. The question is treated ironically in his conclusion to his University Magazine article, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature",

... Rousseau would have taken into the [Canadian] wilderness a ferment of ideas which had germinated in the intellectual forcing house of Paris. In Canada we are never constrained to run away from ideas. It is not from ideas, but from routine, that we escape to cultivate a healthy, animal lethargy of mind, and to become so immersed in the mere joy of living that we look upon literature as, what in some measure it is, a disease. Is not this perhaps Canada's mission in the world? - to prove the vanity and folly of piling words upon words, arranging them in curious patterns, weaving

them in subtle harmonies only to add to the curious patterns and harmonies which exist. Let others write our books. Mr. Carnegie will arrange for their storage.

90

If Edgar's contribution to the Canadian Society of Authors was less impressive than it might have been, it was perhaps because these years were busy ones for him. The period 1900 to 1914 encompassed his three long trips to Europe (in the summer of 1905, a sabbatical in 1909-10 and another summer sojourn in 1914), extensive editorial work with D.C. Scott on the "Makers of Canada" historical series and the writing of a number of "potboiler" textbooks on Wordsworth, Tennyson, Longfellow and Victor Hugo for the publisher George Morang, a long trip with Scott into Northern Ontario in the summer of 1906, a busy teaching schedule and much review writing. About 1910, the Edgars bought a house at 286 St. George Street in Toronto, a twenty minute stroll northwest of Victoria College. Pelham owned and occupied this house for most of his life. The purchase was probably made possible by a bequest from his mother, who died in England in 1910 while researching a book on the Edgars' Jacobite ancestors.

As for Pelham Edgar and the Canadian Society of Authors, after the first burst of copyright lobbying about 1900, it seems to have generated more banquets and bibliographies than grand contributions to Canadian literature. For one thing, outside of Toronto and Montreal, the Canadian Society of Authors had only a meagre number of members, a state of affairs ill-suited to cohesiveness, frequent meetings or sustained effort. For example, although Louis Fréchette was first a vice-president and

then an honorary vice-president of the body (at Edgar's initiative), he appears to have been required to do no active work for the Society, in either capacity. Between 1900 and 1910, the Society issued several annual reports (those for 1899, 1902, 1903 and 1906-7 survive) and annual bibliographies, but it appears to have devoted itself to banquets in Toronto for visiting notables like Sara Jeanette Duncan Cotes (December 1903) and Sydney Lee of National Review (February 1903). While these were laudable activities, even Edgar would have agreed that much more was needed. Unfortunately, after the contentious meeting of March 1901 when Edgar delivered the paper that so offended Wilfred Campbell, the Society seems to have abandoned the reading of literary papers. Thus, as a forum for such discussion, it was limited.

Moreover, the Canadian Society of Authors was always poor; its poverty is best illustrated by its pitiful figures for cash on hand in 1901 (\$8.25), and 1903 (\$15.40); by 1908 the total had inched up to \$192.90. Dues were never more than two dollars. Moreover, Edgar, while a man of lofty literary ideals and great gusto for the formation of literary organisations, was also always rather short of practical administrative and business skills, a handicap when one is secretary or president of a body. (In the Thirties, when Pelham was the moving spirit of the philanthropic Canadian Writers' Foundation, jokes were common about his ability to file any business letter under "forgotten" in his breast pocket). Moreover, Edgar, as Secretary of the Canadian Society of Authors, was not immune to the animal lethargy he had once attributed to the effect of the Canadian

wilderness. For example, in September 1905, the President of the Society telegraphed to "The Pines", the Edgar summer home on Lake Simcoe, about an hour by rail north of Toronto, that Sir Gilbert Parker's visit to Toronto made Edgar's presence there imperative. Edgar's unperturbed reply was:

It is not a time of the year when we can tender him the hospitality of the Society, and I am sorry that I am not in town that I might show him some personal courtesy. As he is one of the most prominent members of the Authors' Society am I going out of my way to suggest that as President you might call upon him at his hotel?

91

Such languor and dilatoriness perturbed more systematic members, especially Edmund Byron Walker, to whom the reply from Lake Simcoe had been addressed. Byron Walker had become Society President in 1905. A banker, philanthropist, distinguished and tireless patron of the arts, and friend of Pelham's, Walker was disturbed at the rather ad hoc state of the Society. In 1901, he had remarked to the previous secretary, John Cooper, that "as to the payment of C.S.A. dues, I would suggest that members be notified, I fancy few people can undertake to keep track of dues of this kind."

92

There were attempts at a rally, and at more direct attempts to stimulate literary production. In 1905, John Cooper of the Canadian Magazine informed President Walker that he had "decided to recommend the appointment of a permanent Committee for syndicating Canadian stories and articles for the use of the Canadian press "which would be a great encouragement, and would be a supreme justification of the usefulness of the Society."

93

Walker spoke to Edgar about the project, but the project was

never realized.

In 1909, four years later, there appears to have been another attempt to broaden the activities of the Society through a move to transfer the Executive from Toronto to Montreal, about which Walker and Edgar were enthusiastic. New blood and new vigour were hoped for. Yet there was already an elegiac tone in the letter describing the Society which Walker wrote to stockbroker E.B. Greenshields, proposed as the Montreal president, about the C.S.A.'s history and goals:

The Canadian Society of Authors was established in the first instance for the purpose of maintaining Imperial and International Copyright in Canada. The Society intervened at several critical junctures when the Berne Convention was threatened, at the instance of certain interested parties including some of the printer publishers and practically all the printers. That danger being over, the members were left with a somewhat loosely organized society on their hands. It was felt to be a pity to dissolve it, for it seemed capable of growing into a useful body in proportion as Canadian literature developed. This is the feeling that prompts them to maintain the Society at the present moment. Each year, and certainly decade, should add materially to its usefulness. Already they have some machinery which can be utilized to the advantage of authors. They are, for example, in close affiliation with the British Society of the same name, receive their publications, and benefit by their expert advice when any question arises concerning the relations of publisher and author.

A very pleasant function of the Society I may say in this connection is to entertain in a modest way authors of distinction who may be passing through Canada...

My connection with the Society as President for the past few years has involved no work personally, except that of entertaining such visitors as Mrs. Humphrey Ward.

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The lack of direction and of intensive activity by the Society is very evident in the Walker's letter. The transfer to Montreal did not take place and the Society went into what W.S. Wal...

called in the Twenties "cold storage". Nothing was really heard of it until, with Edgar's consent, its remaining membership was incorporated into the new 'Canadian Authors' Association in 1921-⁹⁵22.

But if the Society died of inanition, it still had been a significant movement. It represented a sustained early attempt at a national literary organisation. It had made useful contributions to copyright and literary fellowship. Moreover the paucity of the present archival record (although the general outline of the Society's history is clear) may make the Society seem less than it was. Most importantly, in 1907 the Canadian Society of Authors had made a significant contribution to Canadian culture through fostering of the University Magazine, Canada's leading intellectual periodical for the next decade and an important medium for the literary career of poet Marjorie Pickthall. Edgar was deeply involved with both the magazine and the poet's career; he thereby contributed appreciably to Canadian cultural and intellectual life.

The history of the University Magazine has been examined in detail in other studies, in particular in the chapter on Andrew Macphail in Shortt's The Search For An Ideal⁹⁶ and in Ian Ross Robertson's doctoral dissertation, Sir Andrew Macphail As A Social Critic.⁹⁷ Nevertheless the magazine's origins in the Canadian Society of Authors has not been sufficiently stressed. I propose to discuss the magazine only as it relates directly to Edgar's career and inasmuch as my research sheds new or different light on the magazine. In his Master's thesis, The Progressive Mind In Academic Canada: The University Magazine 1907-1914,

Shortt has aptly summarized the political and social thought implicit in the Magazine: its affirmation of laissez-faire principles with regard to government and social problems, the dislike of materialism and the alleged concern with the decline in the quality of life as a result, the concern with education as a tool for the growth of an "enlightened and moral" population and its belief in rural and moral verities in the face of a society in rapid industrial and social change because of expansion and immigration.

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Canadian Society of Authors President Walker wrote with pride of the University Magazine in 1909:

...Dr. Macphail (its editor) will bear out the statement that the University in its present form was organized at a dinner of the society two years ago.

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The 1906-07 Society report, undoubtedly written by Pelham Edgar, best describes the Society dinner of January 26, 1907. The dinner was attended by such notables as Principal Peterson of McGill, Professor James Cappon of Queen's and Maurice Hutton of the University of Toronto:

The dinner was in the nature of a complimentary banquet, and was arranged for the purpose of organizing a quarterly magazine of a dignified character...

The President, Mr. B.E. Walker, presided and introduced the chief topic of the evening in forcible speech...The prospects for success of such a magazine as had been proposed were thoroughly discussed. Acting-President Hutton (of Toronto) and Professor Edgar spoke favourably of the project, and it was eventually decided to hold an organization meeting at the earliest opportunity.

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The magazine was intended as successor to the recently-deceased McGill Magazine; it was planned that McGill, Dalhousie, Toronto and Queen's (which withdrew early) should each contribute

to the venture:

It occurred to some few individuals in Toronto, - and the idea was heartily concurred by those interested in Montreal, - that an opportunity existed of associating the larger universities of Canada in a magazine which should be national in character, and which might afford a medium of expression for native literary talent. The result of the conference was that Dalhousie University, McGill University, and the University of Toronto appointed editorial representatives to the Board of the new magazine.

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These were brave words; but literary talent did not, as it happened, dominate the magazine. Rather it became primarily a periodical in which weighty questions of politics, feminism, materialism, Empire and commercialism were weighed. The status quo was invariably found wanting, most often in accord with the views of its editor and guiding deity, Andrew Macphail. Macphail was a dour, stylistically brilliant and deeply-concerned conservative whose analysis of society and its ills, while similar to Pelham's, was far more pessimistic, rigid and all-consuming. In the early years of the magazine, Edgar described the hegemony of Editor Macphail thus:

The University Magazine is now entering on its second year, and the unremitting zeal of its Editor-in-Chief Dr. Andrew Macphail, is being rewarded by a constantly widening constituency of readers and by the steadily increasing influence of the magazine. To conclude this not unimportant matter, the Canadian Society of Authors should congratulate itself on being the unofficial means of organizing a magazine of such national importance, which exists for the pecuniary profit of no one save the contributors to its columns, which has no partisan policy to enforce, and which seeks constantly to combine correctness of information with charm of style.

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Edgar was on the editorial board of the magazine from the beginning. Although Macphail held final and formidable sway, particularly in the early years - 1907 to 1915, - Edgar had some

input as a Toronto source of suitable poems and articles. University Magazine had expressed its raison d'être in the early issues: "to express an educated opinion upon questions immediately concerning Canada, and to treat freely in a literary way all matters which have to do with politics, industry, philosophy, science and art." ¹⁰³ Edgar's chief interest was in the magazine's poetry and literary articles, which was fortunate, as his literary skills were widely considered necessary. D. C. Scott complained to Edgar of Macphail's injudicious taste in verse (moralism often overwhelmed aesthetic discipline or appeal) ¹⁰⁴ the work of Marjorie Pickthall excepted. It is a pity, then, that Edgar was not formally literary editor. A letter from Edgar to Toronto poetess Helena Coleman best illustrates the limits of Edgar's influence with the "Editor-in-chief":

I wish to keep two of the poems you kindly sent, and one of them we will certainly use in the Magazine, "The Trilliums" is a very charming sonnet.

...I shall send them to the Editor in Chief. I hope he will take them both. I know he will take one.

¹⁰⁵

Both Edgar and James Mavor, Professor of Political Economy at Toronto and a member of the editorial board, had been assured by Macphail that their opinions would carry great editorial weight:

Any article approved by your [Mavor] and Edgar will automatically go in the Magazine.

¹⁰⁶

But Macphail's theory was more expansive than his practice and Edgar good-humouredly reminisced in later years about how Andrew Macphail ruled the roost. Macphail's assurances to the two Toronto professors was chiefly a matter of diplomacy, as the

University of Toronto had made substantial financial and subscription pledges to the periodical and an editorial guid pro quo was expected.

Edgar's involvement with the University Magazine did stimulate him to some of his most witty and sustained writing about Canadian culture, such as the articles "A Confession of Faith and A Protest" and "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature" referred to earlier in the chapter. Edgar beat an Arnoldian drum about the need for Canadian literature of sweetness and light, and about his conviction that a fine Canadian literature was taking shape. Moreover, Edgar and Macphail were in wholehearted cooperation on another editorial project of great moment to them: the promotion and publication of the poems of Marjorie Pickthall, and indeed it is in relation to her career that the magazine has the greatest literary interest today.

The bulk of the poetry in the University Magazine is undistinguished in either metre or moral: Pickthall's work is the exception. It was Edgar who had first made contact with Marjorie Pickthall; Macphail quickly came to share and even surpass Edgar's enthusiasm for her verse. When one looks at the characteristics of her poetry, it is easy to understand why Edgar and Macphail were drawn to it. They deplored coarse and crudely robust work, and found the poetic spirit of a Kipling or a Service utterly uncongenial. The poets of the past whom Edgar cherished most were Keats and Shelley, and he had been attracted by the "jewel-like" diction of Mallarme and Baudelaire. Among his contemporaries, Edgar praised the English poetess Alice Meynell, Fional Macleod and the early Yeats. As we shall see,

Edgar was drawn to the early work of Duncan Campbell Scott - to The Magic House with its Nineties air in style and vocabulary.

In a similar fashion, the spirit of Marjorie Pickthall's poetry, - dreamy, gently mystical, with its depiction of nature as a series of exquisite miniatures (what one critic has called the "etherealisation of reality") - must have seemed to Edgar a heady, magic elixir in the age of brute commerce and materialism. The root of Pickthall's appeal to Edgar and the University Magazine circle is captured in Archibald MacMechan's letter to Andrew Macphail in praise of her work:

I am simply delighted that you are doing this [i.e. publishing her work]. She has the gift. There is no one in America that I know writing verse that is comparable to hers. Affectation, violence, vulgarity, cheapness, mechanical effects are the rule. Here is the real song bird singing in the shade.

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In much the same spirit, Edgar in 1903 called, not for realism in poetry, but rather for a type of poetry that hinted at "the burden of the mystery...[which] is very great" in an age of "material triumphs and spiritual doubts." For example, Edgar

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admired the novelist George Meredith in part because his work evoked a cenacle whose satisfactions the low-minded or insensitive could never share, a satisfaction also evident in MacMechan's glee over Pickthall. In this spirit, Edgar too was drawn to Pickthall's work.

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Marjorie Pickthall's background does much to explain the rather genteel, unworldliness of her work. She was born in England in 1883, the dreamy and cherished only child of cultured parents; from early life, as Lorne Pierce tells us when he writes of her "wistful, sweet singing", she was absorbed by "music, art

and books." Like Edgar, she particularly loved the work of Fiona Macleod, Alice Meynell, and Louise Imogen-Guiney, and the other-worldly aspects of the Celtic movement. ¹¹¹

In 1889 the Pickthall family emigrated to Toronto, where Marjorie attended private schools, St. Mildred's and Bishop Strachan School. She sold her first story to the Toronto Globe when she was fifteen, and in 1900 the Mail and Empire published her poem, "O keep the world forever at the dawn", which perfectly embodies the idealism, fantasy, and hermeticism which mark her work. Lorne Pierce wrote of these qualities after her death:

Beauty and truth she loved and pursued with passionate devotion, and exalted them in the cadences of her exquisite song. Everything she touched, through the magic of her colouring, the witchery of her music, and the swift insight of her radiant spirit, she endowed with unforgettable hints of immortality.

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Naturally poems of such delicacy soon drew the attention of the Toronto literati. By 1907 Pickthall had won a \$200 Globe literary prize and was soon a contributor to such periodicals as Harper's and Atlantic Monthly. By then Edgar had been an admirer of her work for at least three years; in 1904 she had won a Board of Trade Contest in the city with a poem, "The Homecomers", for which Edgar was one of the judges. A sample of the winning verse is:

Then welcome them as well befits their worth -
These kindred wanderers come from far and near;
Let the days pass in lengthening words of cheer;
While tranquil skies shine softly on the earth.
Let the deep circling woods, the fruitful plain,
Show all their treasures to the passing hours,
And the rich land put forth her fairest flowers
When the Queen City greets her sons again.

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Edgar's close friend Mavor had earlier helped Marjorie Pickthall

get work published in the Century magazine, so Edgar had undoubtedly known of her merits for some time before he was involved in judging her poetry. Although scant archival record of Edgar's involvement with Pickthall's poetry remains, it is clear that by January 1903 she was regularly sending poetry to him. At that time she wrote:

As you have so kindly taken an interest in my work, I thought perhaps it would not be too much to ask you for your (honest) opinion on the verses I enclose...[Does] "The Ears of Pan" consist of five pretty verses, or is it a piece of poetry?

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As Scott, Pratt, Raymond Knister and Audrey Alexandra Brown were to respond in turn, Pickthall responded to Edgar's fine ear for poetry and his encouragement of technical variety and wider reading. She often solicited his counsel. Another Pickthall letter, dated March 1904, suggests the seriousness with which she regarded his opinions:

I enclose the copy of "Armotel" [poem] for which you asked; and I am afraid you may be alarmed at the number of other things which accompany it. My only excuse for troubling you with them is that they have a direct bearing on some of the subjects we talked of yesterday.

The two little songs, taken from two prize stories of mine; I send, because, though very slight, they are examples of what comes of throwing off "fetters of form" to a certain extent. I have not the least idea whether they are good, bad or indifferent. I felt them intensely when I wrote them, but that has little or nothing to do with the question. Such as they are, I send them to you, hoping that at least they may escape the condemnation of being pronounced "medium".

"The Oriole" I send because, though it is slight enough also, it seems to me to represent in a measure that condition you spoke of, where the words and metre of a poem are as a garment clothing the thought. Am I right in thinking this? Of course, I know the poem is not of great importance as a poem.

By the way, I forgot to tell you today that I tried the experiment of putting "Deborah" into blank verse. The

result was actively, and even aggressively bad. I don't know that I have written anything so bad since I dipped into rhymed hexameter at thirteen, when the results were truly astonishing.

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Edgar was obviously criticizing her poetry in some detail and making various suggestions for innovation and improvement. He sent the best poems to friends and poets such as Duncan Scott, who commented:

If you had not sent it [a Pickthall poem] I should not have seen it for some time. It is essentially different from anything I expected altho' your judgement had prepared me. It is highly remarkable and well in the range of marvels that anyone so youthful could do it. As an effort it recalls the first work of Blake and Poe but it is not as individual as their early lines. ...Everything in the poem points to original power and if development follows, God save us, we'll have a poet here at last. ...If she wants to publish anything I'll be glad to do what I can for her with the Magazines.

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The excitement of a cénacle about her poetry is obvious here, as are the hopes of Scott, Edgar, and Macphail that Pickthall become a first class talent. But Scott sounded the cautionary note "*if development follows...*" (italics mine). There were in fact early signs that although Marjorie Pickthall wrote exquisite verse, her scope for development was limited. She was clearly a genteel and sheltered young lady who moved in a circumscribed world. Much was beyond her ken; for instance, she found George Meredith "dull" and to her friend Helen Coleman wrote with distaste of Ibsen:

I think his view of life is a warped and distorted one, and that he - or rather his works - will one day fall into their proper place for the reason that they are so deadly dull if, for no higher one.

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The range of her poetry did not increase. Edgar, however, retained an interest in her, and she was certainly the most

promising new poet to emerge in the period. Helen Edgar also interested herself in Pickthall; she proposed in 1908, for example, that Pickthall read a paper to the Historical Society, as well as one to the Poetry Society. Pickthall liked Mrs. Edgar's warmth and kindness; she seemed a little in awe of Pelham Edgar, although she could write slyly of his physical and snobbish idiosyncracies. One can hear the girlish giggle in these remarks to her chum Helen Coleman:

Dr. Edgar will return [from sabbatical] in the Fall. He may not be much to talk to, Helen, but think how picturesque he'll look draped about the new building.

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It will be exciting when Pelham Edgar gets back, I believe he and Dr. Horning are at dreadful loggerheads, aren't they? And poor Prof. Lang is the buffer between, I heard. Pelham says Dr. Horning is "a person of no refinement" and Dr. Horning calls Pelham, - being a specialist in Anglo-Saxon - a "damn jackass" -

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With the advent of the University Magazine in late 1907, Edgar quickly brought Marjorie Pickthall's work to Macphail's attention for publication. Her dreamy, well-wrought verse could not have been more to Macphail's taste: indeed he had long admired the fugitive pieces he had come across in the newspapers. He recalled in a later memoir:

The existence of this new poet was first revealed to me in reading a piece of verse in an obscure corner of a Toronto daily newspaper. The little poem on the sordid page gleamed like a precious thing. It was signed "Marjorie Pickthall". The discovery was so exciting that I wrote to Pelham Edgar asking if he had heard of this new wonder. He replied that she was a pupil of his [sic].

Within a few days, possibly at Professor Edgar's suggestion, the manuscript of a poem came to me for publication in the University Magazine. It was entitled "The Bridegroom of Cana" and was published in October 1907. For nearly fifteen years, she continued to send of her best for that Magazine.

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In his obituary of Macphail, Edgar quoted the former's reaction to her work: "This means more to Canada than a new province."¹²³

After the death of Marjorie's mother in 1910, a great blow to her, Edgar and other Victoria professors were instrumental in obtaining a clerical post for her at the College Library.¹²⁴

Certainly the flowering of Marjorie Pickthall's talent is particularly noteworthy because her talent was recognized locally, by Edgar and his circle, rather than by foreign sources.¹²⁵ If her talent was less remarkable than, for example,

Isabella Valancy Crawford's, at least, unlike Crawford, who had gone unremarked in the Toronto newspapers of the early 1880s, she was not forced by indifference to remain in utter obscurity.

Edgar was still advising Pickthall in 1913, as she told a friend:

"...here is "Mons Angelorum." I was up with Shelley's skylark, if you like, when I wrote that! For five days - Dr. Pelham did say at the time that there had been no such angel as my Angel of Darkness since Lucifer -"

According to Marjorie, her mother's death had only confirmed her in "the path of beauty"; she resolved to "sing for sorrow as the little thrushes do."¹²⁶
¹²⁷

About 1912, Macphail and Edgar set out to aid Pickthall in another way. A volume of her poetry was to be published by Macmillans, under the imprint of the University Magazine. Apparently Edgar was to assemble the poems. In October 1912, Macphail told Macmillans that he would personally guarantee the cost of the book and, in a letter of December 14, 1912, he wrote that Edgar, as the person best-qualified, should edit the volume:¹²⁸

...since Pelham Edgar is very interested in Miss Pickthall's verse, and is probably the best man in Canada to choose the wheat from the wheatena, do you think it would be advisable for you or me to make the suggestion to Edgar so that we may have a good selection of Miss Pickthall's verse to send to Mr. Brett [of Macmillans].

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Marjorie Pickthall had by then left Canada to live in England: Macphail asked her to leave the compilation and publication of the MS. to Edgar and himself. Macphail assured her in the letter of request that this procedure would assure speedy publication:

It might even be that you would leave the publication to Prof. Edgar and myself, which would allow the book to be issued whilst the winter is on.

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Pickthall agreed, but the promised swift publication did not materialize. Once the MS. was underway, Pickthall, Macphail, and Edgar did not invariably agree. For example, Edgar and Pickthall balked at the suggested format, and the question of a title proved problematical, as this letter from the poetess to Macphail shows:

I have been discussing the matter with Dr. Edgar, and we have evolved "The Wind Along the Reeds" (from "The Little Fauns") as perhaps a happier title than my first choice. He also suggests that there are probably three or four songs which might be included with advantage. But these details may be settled later.

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Macphail was, however, anything but weak-willed, and the title was to be the one he preferred - The Drift of Pinions. Edgar

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was for a time unhappy about the design of the book and, all in all, things did not go without delay and difficulty.

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Pickthall seems to have become a little rueful about the whole arrangement for in February 1913 she wrote from England to a friend:

There is no fresh news about the book of poems. All the professors [Macphail and Edgar] seem to have got it into a fine mess between 'em. But I hope my last letter to Montreal will finally settle things.

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Edgar seems to have guaranteed Macmillans, who published the book under the imprint of the University Magazine, a sale of 400 copies. When it was finally published, the book was warmly received among Canada's literary aficionados. Professor MacMechan of Dalhousie was jubilant, as was the poet Helena Coleman, who had befriended Marjorie Pickthall in Toronto and had entertained her at her Thousand Islands summer home. Thanks in part to Edgar, Marjorie Pickthall became better-known in Canada, although she never attained the fame of Service or Drummond. In bringing to publication a book of poetry by an author who can be seen as in some measure an inheritor of the native tradition of poetry in Canada, Edgar made a significant contribution to the history and range of poetry in Canada.

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Despite his interest in Pickthall's work, Edgar certainly knew her limitations and readily acknowledged them. In an article for Canadian Forum in the Thirties, E.J. Pratt, Edgar's most famous protege, pointed to the narrow range of Pickthall's work and her complete lack of social awareness, something to which Lorne Pierce also made reference in his critical assessments.

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But Edgar had noted these very limitations soon after her first volume of poetry was published, and his relations with other poets suggest that he probably urged her to overcome them and to broaden her range. Undoubtedly his admiration for her type of poetry made him hope that time would bring development. Unfortunately this was not to be. In his review of

the Drift of Pinions for the University of Toronto Monthly in December 1913, he included his reservations about her work. He first underlined her strengths, characterising her work by such adjectives as "exquisite", "delicate", "beautiful" and "charming". With the phrase "Let others sing the song of steam and mechanical advance", he wrote:

Her ear never plays her false, and if poetry were an affair merely of conjuring up beautiful images and linking mellifluous words together her triumph would be complete.

... Her choice is unerring of the themes that lend themselves most readily to poetic expression, and equally unerring is her choice of verse-form that most appropriately clothes her idea.

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Edgar made clear that her poetry was a beautiful tapestry far removed from the world of experience:

Frankly I may say that her poems do not bespeak contact with life upon many sides. ...Indeed there are many things Miss Pickthall cannot or does not wish to do, for she is singularly clear as to her own intentions. She is not concerned with problems, and mildly dramatic though her method is, she has not shown herself interested in the quick shock and interplay of human actions and emotions. Yet it is not fair to Miss Pickthall to say that her pinions drift aimlessly in a remote and rarified air.

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Edgar discerned in her work "an exceptional tenderness that can have its source only in the deepest human sympathy." But even in saying this, he hinted at a trace of sentimentality, or, as he put it, her "poetry errs less by deficiency than by excess of human feeling." Edgar also acknowledged that the power of her poetry was sapped by the lack of immediacy. She wrote of wraith-like suffering Madonnas, not of suffering Marjories: that is to say, wrote Edgar, "she has never quite taken the reader into her confidence, nor let us pass beyond the threshold of her

mind."

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Edgar, therefore, recognized her limitations and could write matter-of-factly about them: he did not attempt to glorify her as a Canadian Christina Rossetti or Mrs. Browning, as was too often the impulse when Canadian reviewers admired a Canadian poet. He did see in her the greatest hope and talent among the young poets and made of her, with Macphail's cooperation, the University Magazine's leading contributor of verse. With a poetry without "the salt and pepper" of impropriety so dear to a Tom MacInnes, Pickthall represented to the literary men associated with the University Magazine an ideal of poetry that they still cherished in a changing world. Later commentators like Pratt and Pacey would see her as the last significant poet of her type.

After 1913, Pickthall lived in England. Although her poems still appeared in the University Magazine,¹³⁹ her contact with Edgar lapsed. For one thing Edgar was at best a dilatory correspondent and for another she was concentrating on prose, a medium in which Edgar's tastes (for Meredith and James) were certainly not hers. Edgar did not regret his role in establishing her reputation; in 1930 he reminded Andrew Macphail that "our Marjorie went far with a public starved of Beauty."¹⁴⁰ In 1920, Pickthall returned to Canada and settled in Vancouver. She died suddenly in 1922 at the age of thirty-nine. The lines of remembrance Edgar quoted to Macphail perfectly embodied the romantic spirit in which the two men approached her work:

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead.
And yet thy pleasant voices, the nightingales, awake.
For death he taketh all away; but these he cannot take.

Edgar's activities, with the University Magazine and the career of Marjorie Pickthall added to the prominence he was achieving in the literary world, a prominence which had been initiated by his work with the Canadian Society of Authors. In addition, in the years 1900 to 1904, Edgar published a number of unremarkable but competent textbooks of poetry, books on Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Alfred Tennyson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.¹⁴¹ Leading Toronto newspapers, the Globe and the Star, welcomed him to their pages to write for a general audience on such topics as "William Butler Yeats and the Irish Movement" and "Have We a National Literature?"¹⁴²

Edgar numbered among his friends some of the more prominent intellectuals of the day, including Goldwin Smith. He enjoyed as well social contact with a host of prominent and wealthy Torontonians whom he would occasionally proselytise for colleagues like Charles Currelly, who was seeking funds to establish the Royal Ontario Museum.¹⁴³ Edgar also broadened his horizons - and his cosmopolitan gloss - in these years, by three trips to Europe: one in the summer of 1905, a long sabbatical in 1909-10, and a journey in the eventful summer of 1914. The 1909 journey included a romantic cruise by dahabeah down the Nile River with archaeologist Currelly. In these trips, Edgar immersed himself in the culture of the Old World. He had brief, but to him vivid, contacts with such luminaries as George Meredith, Alice Meynell, Edmund Gosse, and Arnold Bennett, all of which are lovingly detailed in Across My Path. He set foot in England in 1904 with all the ardour of a thirsty man who has at last sighted water.

Like many a Canadian of his class and time, he was filled with awe when he landed on English soil:

It was 1905 before an early dream was realized, and we found ourselves on board the Minnetonka bound for England. The long delay, needless to say, was not occasioned by lack of desire, but by lack of funds. However, when one is young enough, deferred delights have their compensation in the keen edge of our sensations.

... For years one has been absorbing impressions in a vacuum, and now at last the tension is released, and vision is translated into reality. I cannot imagine an Englishman emotionally stirred by his first contact with King or Yonge in Toronto. He lacks the background. It is reasonably different when a Canadian first treads the pavement of Fleet Street or Piccadilly. His experience has behind it a long and starved initiation, and his appetite is stimulated by a sharp hunger.

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Edgar wrote to his British-born friend James Mavor with a certain child-like pride about "soaking up" culture in England and on the Continent. His description of his 1909 Italian sojourn is touched with disdain for his "baser" fellow tourists:

We are in the midsummer Florence season which implies droves of hurrying Americans of the baser sort; but by a lucky chance our hotel is immune from these, and we are his sole [guests].

As to what we do you don't require much effort of imagination to divine. We have pictures, statues and buildings - to say nothing of exquisite country as our daily food, and we are getting to see things pretty well in their proper relations. We have grown much enamoured of men whose work is tucked away in odd corners of this amazing land - as Paio della Francesca, whom we work up to appreciate in Arezzo, and Fiorenzo de Lorenzo whose work is the best thing that Perugia can boast of in spite of Perrigemo in his Salon de Cambrio. We had great luck with the Giotto frescoes at Assisi. They had the midsummer light of afternoon - from three to five to bring out their matchless quality. When we saw them three years ago they were almost a meaningless blur.

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Helen Edgar has left us a less resolutely lofty account of that same trip in a letter to one of the Edgars:

We both had awful colds during nearly all our visit [to France] and by Pelham's sneezes I could judge of his emotions - His sneezes in the Louvre were the limit - He could not look at the Venus of Milo in the face without a regular outburst... Rouen Cathedral I remember had the same effect upon him.

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The trips to Europe were undoubtedly financed in part by the poetry textbooks for Morang and the articles for Toronto newspapers. A professor's salary was not lavish and, as his students recall, Edgar liked only the best books, the best whiskey, and the best theatre seats. The financing of the 1909 trip to Europe is indicative of the kindness he could inspire in those who knew him. The warm-hearted Edmund Walker of the Bank of Commerce personally guaranteed his bank overdrafts for the 1909 sabbatical, although he ordered that Edgar not be told.

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Edgar intended to do literary work on this trip but the "culture-culture" hedonist often overcame the academic, as this letter to Walker, written near the end of the sabbatical, suggests:

By exercise of proper caution I do not expect to be far behind [financially] by the time I reach home, and by dint of a few articles I am planning in the London Market my responsibilities to your bank will be still further lessened... We settle in Oxford next week for a quiet few months of work.

The European overlay naturally only added to Pelham's lustre as a man of the literary world: in a 1910 article, "Venice", for University Magazine he shared with the less-travelled his impressions of Venetian splendours. The fact that an acquaintanceship with the English editor Sir Sidney Lee ripened into a position as Canadian contributor to the second edition of the revered Dictionary of National Biography (1911) furthered enhanced his image. Edgar contributed articles on such eminent

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Canadians as Sir Hector Langevin, Sir Oliver Mowat and Lady Matilda Edgar, and coordinated the contributions of other Canadian writers.⁹ Although Lee was somewhat annoyed at Edgar's patrician disregard of deadlines, as the Edgar papers at Victoria show, Edgar proudly listed his D.N.B. role in his Who's Who entry.

Another index of Edgar's standing among Toronto's men of culture is his participation in the early years of the Toronto Arts and Letters Club, which was founded as a conscious refuge from materialistic and commercial Toronto. Artists and intellectuals founded the Club in deliberate reaction to Philistia. Edgar tells us in his memoirs that he was a "charter member" of this "quite amusing" club - a revered rendezvous in the cultural history of Toronto. Edgar undoubtedly felt in need of a retreat from commerce, for he referred to its prevalence:

[William Morris] over-estimated the powers and self-restraint of the uneducated masses, and grievously under-estimated the tenacity of human greed. Upon these two things the modern system of competitive commerce is based.

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The Club's history began in 1908-9, when a convivial group of Toronto artists and literary men held dinners known as "Slunderbunds" because of the banter involved, at various Toronto hotels. Prime movers in these dinners were the artist Augustus Bridle, and Edgar's close friend Henry Osborne. The historian W.A. Langton became the Club's first president and in the fall of 1908 the Arts and Letters Club found a permanent home in a former courtroom opposite the King Edward Hotel. The Club fostered dinners, concerts, evenings of conversation about the arts and a

periodical, The Lamps, which dealt with all the arts. In the words of Bridle, it was "Absolute escape from all that otherwise made Toronto."¹⁵³ The Club is now best remembered as an early meeting place for the artists who constituted the Group of Seven, but the Club's true bent was conservatism in the arts. Bridle's affectionate memoir makes it clear that Edgar must have been among its more venturesome and broad-minded members: "The Club was 'from Missouri' on such things as 'canned music', Cubism, Post-Impressionism, 'free verse', anti-baroque architecture, spasmodic modern drama - and most of the movies. ---most of us were congenital enemies of either cowbell jazz or Cubism."¹⁵⁴

Edgar was not one of the more active members of the club - the painters were most prominent - but he would relax there and discuss the arts with such members as Osborne and James Mavor.

He was also busy with cultural concerns outside the club. For example, in 1909 he was a judge in Collier's contest to choose the best set of lyrics for "O Canada."¹⁵⁵ In 1906 he led the unveiling of a medallion in Trinity College Chapel commemorative of Archibald Lampman.¹⁵⁶ In 1904, Edgar's good friend Duncan Scott presented to the Royal Society of Canada a paper by Edgar on Shelley, and, as we shall see, Scott began shortly thereafter to lobby for Edgar's admission to that prestigious brotherhood, a manoeuvre which bore fruit in 1914.¹⁵⁷

Edgar also was active at this time in the newly-founded Ontario Educational Association, which was lobbying for better attention to study of modern languages by Ontario's educational institutions.¹⁵¹ In 1907 Edgar was also on the Canadian committee which helped the English mother group raise funds for a

Shelley-Keats memorial, such momento mori being a literary fashion of the time.¹⁵⁹ In his numerous articles, Edgar delivered himself of such wry remarks as "serious literature cannot properly be read in a half doze,"¹⁶⁰ and, doubtless with the tenor of the age in mind, he referred to the "whining philosophies and sick determinism of our age"¹⁶¹ with its pervasive "morbidity."¹⁶²

A grim end to the Edwardian age occurred in 1914 with the onset of World War I. Even though he was securely established in his career by the time of the outbreak of war, Edgar suffered some of the malaise and depression which was to affect so many of his contemporaries by the end of the Great War. If the war was not his de facto intellectual sunset, as it was in substantial measure for his friends Archibald MacMechan and Andrew Macphail, for whom the war changed the world beyond hope of redemption, as S.E.D. Shortt tells us,¹⁶³ it was perhaps because Edgar's was the broader and less flagrantly dogmatic intellect. Moreover, some features of contemporary literature genuinely interested him - especially its forms, particularly the change in form in the novel. He was to read Aldous Huxley and D.H. Lawrence with interest and sympathy, if not always with pleasure. Macphail was simply repelled by such authors. And the shock of the great war was less all-encompassing for Edgar than for many of his fellows; unlike Macphail and Charles Roberts, Edgar never experienced at first hand the horrors of the Western Front. For him the change in the world was to be more abstract and perhaps hence more assimilable.

If by 1920 Edgar had lost something of his zest for life,¹²¹ the loss of exuberance began in 1910, when the University Magazine began to experience difficulties. There were inherent weaknesses in its organizational structure. For one thing, tension existed between Toronto and McGill over the supposedly joint venture. At the outset, Toronto had promised annual funds to the venture, but the Montreal-based dominance of the autocratic and rather unbusinesslike Macphail caused rumblings of dissent in Toronto. The dissent caught Edgar squarely in the middle.

Sir Edmund Walker, a member of the Board, had at the magazine's inception in 1907 told Edgar of a feeling of disquiet on the part of some eminent Torontonians, notably the Lieutenant-Governor, that the periodical was to be edited in Montreal.¹⁶⁴ After the first issue, which, Pelham assured Walker, "promised well" except for the typography, trouble still brewed.¹⁶⁵ By April 1908, Macphail was having to press for the promised thousand dollars of support from the University of Toronto, as a letter of Walker's to Macphail makes clear:

Regarding the University Magazine, the proper course to pursue is to write the Bursar formally, asking to have the amount due paid to you. This should doubtless be accompanied by a report from Professor Edgar as to the results of the plan for the first year.

By March 1909, President Falconer of Toronto sought and received¹⁶⁶ assurances that the magazine would be shortly self-supporting,¹⁶⁷ although Macphail had admitted as early as April 1907 that the magazine was in need of a business manager. Macphail was to plough his own money into the venture to cover losses.¹⁶⁸ Sir Edmund Walker, who made his very successful living as a banker,

wrote Edgar in 1908 of his incredulity and disgust at Macphail's lack of business sense:

I should like to help Macphail [through University of Toronto grants], but I really do not know what to do with so unbusinesslike a man.

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An arrangement with publisher George Morang to act as business manager ended unhappily, with squabbling and acrimony between Macphail and Morang over Morang's allegedly sharp managerial practises.¹⁷⁰ Finally, by 1910, the University of Toronto halted financial support entirely. When Edgar lobbied Walker to the contrary, he was told firmly:

...I am, I fear, more responsible than anyone else for the fact that the grant to the University Magazine was not renewed this year. It cannot be called 'a withdrawal of the grant' because assistance was only give from year to year, and the subject was always the cause of considerable discussion by the Board of Governors.

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Macphail could not have been happy about this decision; it was certainly embarrassing to Edgar, who had always been the most enthusiastic Toronto supporter. In a curious way, the business ethic was the cause of periodical's slow demise. By 1912, despite repeated infusions of Andrew Macphail's own funds, the magazine, with a circulation of 5300, was still in the red.¹⁷²

Edgar's troubles with the magazine were not over. His dilatoriness - perhaps caused by other commitments - was to bring editorial reproach upon his head. In October 1915, with Principal Sir William Peterson of McGill acting as editor while Macphail was at the Front, Edgar missed a deadline for submission of an article to the December issue. His star dimmed in Montreal as a result.¹⁷³ In February 1916, Peterson refused an article

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Edgar submitted on Antigone. Peterson did not give Edgar any real reason for the refusal, which Edgar must have found galling. In January 1917, Edgar's choice of a certain article for publication was over-ruled, and in February Peterson was again dubious about one of his suggestions. Edgar, perhaps resentful, did not deliver an article on schedule for the March 1918 issue.

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Robertson tells us that in 1919 the University Magazine's

circulation had dwindled to 1400, as its leading lights annoyed one another.

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Yet Peterson was making grand plans for a magazine that was obviously in very delicate health. Bravely, and possibly somewhat obtusely considering how he had estranged Edgar, he wrote Edgar of his lofty plans:

The time has come to put the University Magazine on a sound basis. It has had a surplus for each of the last three years [but Peterson had ceased to pay contributors, to Edgar's displeasure] and can spend some money on a campaign for additional subscribers and more advertising.

To accomplish all this it may be advisable to get a small company organised with a capital say of \$15,000, \$4,000 of this assigned to Macphail to represent the indebtedness of the Magazine to him. Do you think that you could get some financial support for this scheme in Toronto?

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The University Magazine was being to look like a spiritual kin of the Toronto Stock Exchange. Macphail, undoubtedly jealous of his hegemony over the magazine, would naturally have none of these schemes and told Peterson so from the first. Peterson responded bitterly to Macphail's scorn for the plan. Any recent profits had been earned, he wrote, by "the sweat of my brow, not yours" and he admonished Macphail:

There is no danger of "vulgarizing" the Magazine, but there is the greatest need for increasing its circulation....

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In May 1919, Macphail, now back from the Front, having attacked enemies on two sides, wrote to Principal Falconer of Toronto about the possibility of renewed financial help for the Magazine, adding:

I am only anxious for a continuance of the Magazine and I would gladly see the editing go to Toronto, if anyone there could take it up. ...My reason tells me I should abandon it entirely but my feeling is that this periodical should be kept alive.

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Support was not forthcoming. The University Magazine soon died, partly from commercial causes, an irony which Macphail probably relished in his dour fashion. In October 1920, Macphail's bitterness toward the University of Toronto over the demise was hinted at in a letter to Mavor:

It is my intention to give up the University Magazine, of which this may be regarded as notice to your University in so far as they may consider they have an interest in it. I had hoped to pass it over to [B.K.] Sandwell, but the costs are 65 per cent in excess of last year. ...I am sorry to see it perish after these 20 years [sic]; but the detail of management has become too tiresome.

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The note of fatigue and spiritual ennui sounded by Macphail doubtless struck a chord in Edgar. It had been a cruel war, especially for idealists: the little circle of the University Magazine had been mentally under siege, like soldiers in some trench on the Somme. The world had moved far from their concerns; the threat of materialism as a prime issue was swallowed in the horrors of war. The importance of their leisurely armchair social and literary analysis inevitably seemed diminished. And could the likes of a Marjorie Pickthall really

provide enduring consolation in the front lines? Pelham Edgar and Andrew Macphail might have replied in the affirmative, but that front spawned Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves who were not consoled by draughts of such beauty.

Edgar's war was busy, yet tinged with melancholy. August 1914 had in fact found him in England. Proud to be at "the heart of the Empire" at that historic moment, Edgar told readers of the Toronto News from London:

The issue is clearly of Germany's choosing and making and now she must abide the result. ...I suppose loyalty to the Empire is the supreme thing with us all nowadays, but it is gratifying to be able to record how closely associated that larger loyalty is with loyalty to the King and the Royal Family.

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Pelham thus greeted the war with the pluck and optimism of so many of his contemporaries. On the part of intellectuals like himself and Macphail, there seems to have been a hope that the war would purge the country of materialism, hedonism, and lack of purpose. Rather chillingly, Macphail wrote of this to Kavor several months into the war - before he himself had experienced the front:

I am beginning to fear that the war will end too soon: that is, before we derive the full benefit of it in suffering.

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By December 1914 Edgar was lecturing in Toronto in aid of "plucky Belgium" ¹⁸⁵ and had become an officer in Victoria's C.O.T.C. unit ¹⁸⁶ which drilled daily on campus. (At age 43, he was too old for overseas service, had been seriously ill and was plagued by chronic back trouble.) His wife Helen too did volunteer war work.

In 1916, in the midst of war, the prestigious Cambridge History of English Literature appeared, bestowing on Pelham Edgar his most considerable reputation to date, as the contributor of the chapter on "English-Canadian Literature." It was a somewhat grave image, well-suited to wartime, for Pelham Edgar was incisive rather than effusive about the native product. The history, a massive undertaking which bespoke the trend to systematic literary history in the England of the time, was an impressive set of volumes. Pelham Edgar, as a prior contributor to such prestigious periodicals as the National Review and the University Magazine (the latter circulated among at least a few Empire-minded Englishmen), and as the cultivator of such impressive literary contacts as Leo Maxse, editor of the National Review and Sir Sidney Lee of the Dictionary of National Biography must have seemed to the English editors the logical choice to write the chapter.

To Canadians, Edgar's assessment of Canadian literature seemed rather cold and reductive, but in the chapter itself he rightly pointed out that his discussion was perforce restricted to the dead and "whereas a moderately favourable case may be made out for our current literature, our dead are neither numerous enough nor sufficiently illustrious to stimulate more than local enthusiasm." ¹⁸⁷ Edgar supplied his readers with all the necessary biographical data about the better-known Canadian writers, and accorded Haliburton, Lampman and Isabella Valancy Crawford extended treatment. What irritated some Canadian readers, but not his friend D.C. Scott, who thought the assessment just, was his unsparing confrontation of the limitations even of

Lampman, whose early death usually earned him more reverential treatment. He compared the latter's work to the philosophical responses to nature found in Wordsworth and Shelley, commenting: "one is compelled to recognise the insipidity and monotony of Lampman's reactions".¹⁸⁸ He softened this critique by praise of Lampman's pure descriptive power.

Edgar's motivation in this analysis was not condescension: rather, his deep interest in Canadian literature did not obliterate his conviction that honesty is the best critical policy. In the same spirit of rigor, he refused to include writers who did not have intellectual roots in Canada, even though their inclusion might have swelled the ranks of the prominent - Goldwin Smith is one example. His entry, seventeen pages in length, is restrained and judicious, with measured praise for the few and hyperbole for none. Of the novel in Canada, he flatly declared: "There are some novels that have honestly died, and some that have never lived. Canada's fiction may, with few exceptions, be classed in one or other of these categories."¹⁸⁹

Edgar's explanation for Canada's lack of literature was succinct: "Our literary past is the literary past of England; we have not yet had time to strike roots for ourselves" in a new and developing land.¹⁹⁰ Essentially he summarised what he had said about Canadian literature in many of his earlier articles. Canadians, he told the reader, had too-easy access to British and American literature, and too little leisure and literary professionalism to feel the urgent need of a literature. "The raw material of literature," he opined, "we

Have here in abundance; but this material does not seem to
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 germinate." And unlike his Canadian articles, this chapter
 did not end with a trumpet call for too a rosy future for
 Canadian literature. While this annoyed some of his fellow
 countrymen, Edgar obviously felt compelled to assess only the
 legacy of the literary dead and not the promise of the living.
 As a result, the contribution has stood the test of time and
 earned Edgar increased respect as an authority on Canadian
 literature.

Despite Edgar's new degree of critical eminence, literature
 for Edgar moved a little into the background of life by mid-war.
 His mood was sombre and restless. Life in a college classroom
 must have made one look at the seats of the absent and ponder the
 casualty lists. Edgar longed for more duty more active than
 drilling students on a college quadrangle. When General Otter,
 an old family friend (Edgar's brother Jamie had served under
 Otter in 1885 against Riel), became Director of Internment
 Operations, Edgar resurrected his college German and applied to
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 be of use.

Edgar spent the academic breaks of 1916 and 1917 in drudgery
 and squalor and flies at Kapuskasing internment camp, which the
 official records portray as a tense and remote place,
 undersupplied and overcrowded. He first reported for duty in
 April 1916, at a camp where over 200 internees ("enemy aliens")
 were engaged in logging and sawmilling. Conditions were poor and
 discipline was shaky. He stayed until October 18 and returned
 the next spring for another tour of duty as the war dragged on.

The mosquitoes were as voracious as the Hun; there was a riot in 1916, which historian Desmond Morton describes:

By the summer (of 1916) a substantial camp had been built, six hundred acres of farmland had been cleared and roads had been slashed and stumped around a block of land six miles long and two miles wide. It had not been accomplished with enthusiasm or without pain. Hospital wards listed a toll of hands and feet chopped and frozen. "Ignorant, sullen, inert, the mass of these interns were the very incarnation of passive resistance," reported a scornful young Watson Kirkconnell...

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Edgar himself described his service at Christmas 1916 without zest:

Not asking for sympathy [the soldiers] enforced isolation. [at Kapuskasing] demands it, and not seeking for charity they deserve to be assured that the outside world has not entirely forgotten them. Those who are physically fit and of fighting age have gone to the front; those who remain are doing work which is no less necessary because it has in it no spice of exhilaration or danger. 194

Even in Toronto the general mood was bleak. Through letters, Edgar was made aware in a graphic fashion of the horror of trench warfare, with its stench, disease and death: a young relative of Mavor's wrote him of the nightmare conditions. 195

Edgar's old friend Stephen Leacock confided his malaise to a momentarily bed-ridden Edgar:

I suppose that you and Mrs. Edgar feel as distressed and preoccupied over the war as we do here. I never felt it so much before, I mean the aspect of interminable length. I am also getting old. Are you? I had expected to stay young for ever and always felt as if I had not begun yet and was still planning what I would do when I grew up. Now I find almost suddenly, that it is nearly over.

"I feel like the nigger at the ballot box, who said, - 'Is that all? boss, is that all you do?' - - And so with life: one asks, 'Is that all, boss?'"

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There were, of course happier interludes: Edgar must have enjoyed reading "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris" by his friend Duncan Campbell Scott to a gathering of the Arts and Letters Club in June 1915, but the predominant colours of these years are black, dun and grey. The end of the war brought uncertainty about the future, although Edgar remained very active. He wrote and lectured about Canadian literature and became involved in a fund-raising project in aid of the ailing Bliss Carman. If Edgar's outlook had been somewhat darkened by war, he did not lose his interest in literature. Yet a tinge of malaise had crept into his critical writing. In a 1917 article, "Thoughts on Poetry and the Sister Arts" Edgar lamented the "ugliness" of one's surroundings in a world "drifting toward tragedy." In a 1916 article on Shakespeare and Moliere, Edgar was wistful over "a modern world that has lost the child-like faculty to wonder and admire."¹⁹⁸

Yet the post-war Edgar was by no means willing to resign himself to a world of unblinking and unrelieved realism, as he made clear in a 1919 review of Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism for The Rebel, that saucy forerunner of Canadian Forum. Edgar briskly belittled Babbitt's conclusions:

It is late in the day to tell us that enthusiasm is sometimes ridiculous, nor are we so benighted that a learned professor from Harvard must unseal our eyes to the harmless exaggerations and the delicious absurdities of a movement [the Romantic] which despite all the follies it engendered saved poetry to the world....What requires to be counteracted now among youthful students of poetry is rather the tendency to offer everything to the measure of common-sense experience. It is a mere flogging of dead horses for an author to lose his temper about defects that "every schoolboy knows."

When Edgar was sent as a delegate by the University of Toronto to the United States for the Lowell Centenary, another feather of repute in his cap, his account of such notables as Galsworthy, Noyes and Edgar Lee Masters was couched in a perception that the gathering evinced "a common desire to make this world a place in which clean and clear ideals may flourish."²⁰⁰

If in 1919 Edgar sounded wistful for the idealism of the prewar era, he was at the same time encouraging poets of more contemporary leanings, E.J. Pratt and Raymond Knister chief among them. He remained willing to involve himself with emerging writers and not simply to muse over Shelley or Pickthall in a shrouded study. Edgar was poised on the brink of the Twenties as a literary figure of formidable power and influence. The first two decades of the century had seen his rise to prominence. Edgar was to carry the measured hopes for Canadian literature and the enthusiasm for young writers and literary organisations which he had articulated in the period 1900 - 1919 into the era of modernism in Canada, with significant results for our literary history.

CHAPTER THREE

A Fortunate Friendship: Edgar and Duncan

Campbell Scott, 1895-1947

By the early years of the century, Pelham Edgar was forging a prominent place in the Canadian literary world. He had formed friendships - with James Mavor, Andrew Macphail, and Sir Edmund Walker, to name only three - that were important to his career. The most enduring of Edgar's friendships, and the one of most interest to literary historians, was with the poet Duncan Campbell Scott. Scott and Edgar became friendly in the mid-Nineties, and, until Scott's death in 1947, Edgar played an important role in his literary and personal life. Edgar read and criticised in manuscript Scott's poems, short stories and novel.. In turn, Scott advised Edgar about his own writing and collaborated with him in such organisations as the Canadian Society of Authors, the Royal Society, the Canadian Authors' Association and the Canadian Writers' Foundation. The two were intellectually congenial, hence each played an important role in shaping the other's opinions throughout their long and successful literary careers. Both were men of intelligence and integrity, with high standards and strong opinions about literature and its role in Canadian life.

The friendship between Edgar and Scott was nourished by Scott's need as a writer for collegiality and encouragement. Throughout his life, Scott was acutely aware of the isolation of the Canadian writer. Concern about the narrowness and tenuousness of the literary life in Canada, with its paucity of kindred spirits, is a theme in his correspondence with Edgar. The narrowness

of Canadian literary life frustrated and saddened Scott, in part because he felt the need for literary stimulation and friendship in his own writing career. His friendship with Lampman, with his attendant knowledge of Lampman's feelings of frustration and isolation as a poet, probably reinforced this feeling in Scott. In 1898, he wrote to a despondent Lampman: "It is very good, very necessary, to be close to some warm human heart even when one is quite well in body."¹ The yearning for literary colleagues² was still in Scott's mind a quarter of a century later, when he reminded the Royal Society of Canada of "the difficulties of the Canadian literary life":

... we may lay claim to the possession of something unique in the Canadian literary life, - that may be distinguishable to even casual perception by a peculiar blend of courage and discouragement. In truth there is such a lack of the concentration that makes for the drama of literary life that it is almost non-existent.²

In the Nineties and in the early years of the new century, Edgar began to give Scott a measure of the encouragement and stimulation that Scott found so valuable to the Canadian writer. While no one man constitutes a literary milieu, it is arguable that, after Lampman's death in 1899, Edgar, more than anyone else, gave Scott essential literary companionship. Without Edgar, Scott would have felt considerably more isolated as poet and thinker. About 1906, Scott gratefully wrote to Edgar "The sort of welcome and companionship you give me is rare in any man's life."³ The importance of a literary friendship such as that of Scott and Edgar has been suggested by the critic Thomas MacLulich when he wrote of Lampman, Roberts and Scott:

These writers had little support, at least in public, which they could truly trust or respect. ... In such a context, the relationship of the poets to each other, and the private comments of a few discerning critics must have

assumed a large importance in enabling these poets to carry on their self-appointed tasks.⁴

Edgar and Scott were initially brought into contact by an acquaintanceship between the Edgar and Scott families. As we have seen, Sir James Edgar and his wife spent a good deal of time in Ottawa in the Nineties, particularly after Sir James became Speaker of the Commons in 1896. Sir James, himself a poet, made flattering references to the poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott in his 1898 book about Ottawa, Canada and Its Capital.⁵ Edgar père also knew young Scott as a civil servant; there is a reference in Sir James' letters to his family about a visit to the Scott household⁶ and Belle Scott's social scrapbooks for the period establish that Belle and Duncan Scott were several times invited to social functions given by the Edgars.⁷ What could be more natural than that the budding critic and the poet of promise should meet and become friendly?

In the first extant letter from Duncan Campbell Scott to Pelham Edgar, dated February 16, 1895, when Edgar was still a master at Upper Canada College, we can discern the beginning of a lifelong friendship:

My dear Pelham -

You did not need my permission to expand your note with personalia. You know how interested I am to learn of your welfare & success. Before you wrote I had good news of your work. I wish you every advance and reward wh. your powers will bring you. I hope you will send me a copy of your

Ph.D. thesis; unlike some I have received from Johns Hopkins men I will be able to read and enjoy it. You have chosen a fine subject and as your heart is with Shelley you will make a fine performance of it I have not a doubt.⁸

The impetus for Scott's warm letter to Edgar was a review of The Magic House which Edgar was planning to publish in The Week on March 15, 1895. Scott was delighted at the prospect, and it is clear from his letter that a literary rapport between two men devoted to letters was emerging:

I am looking forward to your review or article or whatever you choose to call it. I could not choose anyone I would care more to write it - I wish you could see some of my late things. I have not done very much for a year but I think something worthy. I have always had a dread of provincialism in poetry, of a mere matching of lines in a humdrum way and that feeling keeps me from writing a good deal of verse - I had almost rather wait a year for a good opp., and then make the best of it than to do many things my spirit did not approve.⁹

"Duncan Campbell Scott", Edgar's article for The Week, was the first of several admiring and analytical pieces about Scott he was to write over the next half-century. Like Scott, Edgar confessed in The Week that he had a dread of "narrow provincialism". He insisted on judging The Magic House in the context of the "the world's great harvest field [of poetry]", while defending Scott's right to express in his poems something of nature in Canada. He placed Scott in the context of their common conviction that a particular locale could occupy a legitimate place in poetry of universal meaning and excellence. Edgar wrote:

... a poet worthy of the name would never divest himself, even if he had the power, of the associations that have woven themselves into his nature from the hour of his childhood. Hence the legends of our own young country even are dear to us, and dearer to us are our forests, fields, and streams, because they are not young-but retain in their perennial freshness something of primeval awe, infused with the delightful sense that they have subsisted in their strength and beauty untarnished since the birth of time. ... they bear for us another perhaps more sacred charm [than the "old romance" of Europe], the inalienable majesty of nature undefiled.¹⁰

Edgar characterised Scott as a poet "imbued with a fervent devotion to Nature", as were Lampman, Campbell, Roberts and Carman, and he praised Scott as the most "subtle" and "delicately imaginative" of the lot.¹¹ In a fashion characteristic of contributors to The Week, Edgar commended Scott's "strong and earnest feeling" in "In the Country Churchyard" and his "earnestness and a like fulness of

thought" in the Magic House sonnet "I thought of death..." Even at this early date, Edgar took pains to stress that Scott was a promising poet, of wider powers than the expression of devotion to Nature, thanks to a "Keen perceptive faculty" and "an exquisite and original sense of rhythm." The review praised Scott:

The above quotations from The Magic House by no means represent all the phases of Mr. Scott's work. But their excellence indicates the excellence of all. We make no extravagant plea for this poet. Recognizing his limitations we also appreciate his growth. ...

The few but delightful songs of this volume create the desire for more pure lyrics, and Mr. Scott's fine appreciation of verbal melody, and his power to apprehend the subtle visitations of thought and fine emotion which are the soul and substance of that form of poetry will surely lead him more and more to work of a lyrical nature.¹²

Edgar's article was thoughtful and perceptive, and Scott was grateful for Edgar's interest. For his part, Scott took an interest in Edgar's own short-lived attempts at verse; in Scott's first letter to Edgar he mentioned that he and Lampman had discussed one of Edgar's sonnets.¹³

The friendship between Scott and Edgar flourished, and one suspects that, after the death of Scott's friend Archibald Lampman in 1899, Edgar's letters became increasingly important to Scott as a stimulus to poetry. Because Edgar's scores of letters to Scott have vanished, we cannot know Edgar's precise comments to Scott about his poems. But Scott's warm, frequent missives - up to a score a year before World War I - enable us to infer many of Edgar's comments and critiques of Scott's work. That the correspondence with Edgar was invaluable to Scott the writer is unquestionable. Scott himself told Edgar this on several occasions over the years. He wrote in March 1899:

Your two letters were very good to read, truly inspiring me and setting me at my work with renewed vigor.¹⁵

By that year, Edgar was already attempting to arrange publication for some of Scott's work. According to Scott, Edgar was to approach Toronto publisher George Morang on his behalf. Scott was frustrated at the lack of impact made by Labour and the Angel, which had been published by the Boston firm of Copeland and Day, and he hoped for a Canadian edition of the work:

I tried to get my Boston publishers Messrs. Copeland and Day to offer Morang an edition of my new book for Canada. They are very unbusinesslike and I don't believe they did so. Would you find out for me if you can without trouble. Morang might perhaps have declined to take it up but I would like to know whether the offer was made - The book Labour and the Angel has hardly penetrated this wilderness. I send you a copy by this post.¹⁶

No Canadian edition of the work appeared, but Edgar's active role in Scott's career was already underway. In March 1899, Edgar offered to introduce Scott to James Mavor, his friend, fellow professor and colleague in the newly-formed Canadian Society of Authors.¹⁷ When Scott visited Toronto in early 1901, Edgar convened the C.S.A. members in Toronto to meet him.¹⁸

By the turn of the century, Edgar was an informal arbiter and protector of Scott's growing literary reputation. When Scott was writing his article, "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry," for Canadian Magazine,¹⁹ Edgar offered to write a supplementary article in order to ensure that Scott's modesty did not cause him to minimise his own achievement. With characteristic scrupulosity, Scott refused Edgar's offer, but he was touched by Edgar's solicitude:

It was very thoughtful of you to recognize my position as regards the article and to generously offer to take your time which I know is awfully occupied to write some words about my two books. ... Now, when I think it over it appears to me that it would be inadvisable for anything to appear in

the same number of the magazine dealing part. with my work. I have purposely, and also from conviction, taken a very moderate tone in the little article and from this reason whatever you might be kind enough to say might possibly sound too praiseful. I am perhaps expressing myself badly but I trust you to understand. I am sufficiently pleased to know privately that you admire what I have done, that it appeals to you and that you are willing to say so to the public. If you ever want to "deal" with me again when you have further work & better, I hope, to treat of do so by all means.²⁰

Edgar advised Scott about his memoir of Archibald Lampman, which was included in Scott's memorial volume of Lampman's poetry.²¹ Also, Edgar gave Scott counsel about the editing of the volume, in particular whether to include some of Lampman's prose.²² Scott's own decisions were final, however, as this 1899 letter to Edgar demonstrates:

The essay on "Happiness" which Sir James Edgar mentioned is quite worthy of Lampman but I doubt whether it wd. be well to include it in the volume of poems - We have a very great deal of matter and most of it should without any doubt go in, and we cannot make the book too big so that the ten pages of prose would be easily outweighed by ten pages of verse - but I will think well upon it before deciding.²³

During the next few years, Scott and Edgar devoted their energies to historical rather than literary ends. In 1901, Toronto publisher George Morang asked the two men to assume the editorship of his "great enterprise", the twenty-volume "Makers of Canada" series of historical biographies. Constrained, as historian Carl Berger has said, by the Victorian mania for "good taste, respectability and decorum",²⁴ the series was largely dedicated to commemorating "the spirit of the men who, in heroic days gone by, attempted and achieved great things for God and their country."²⁵ John Graves Simcoe, Scott's biography for the series, which Edgar edited extensively, echoed the dominant didactic idealism of the project:

... it is well that some character, some utterance of an ideal position may exist which we may uplift for guidance, to which we may turn when wearied by the sordidness of the time and the garishness of ~~disparaty~~ aims and mean local ambitions. ... It is by his purity of purpose and his lofty rectitude that Simcoe may be of use to us.²⁶

Whatever the whiggish biasses and inadequacies of the series, neither Edgar nor Scott was mainly responsible for the strong historical direction of the series. From the perspective of the present, with its assumption that trained historians are apt to oversee the production of the best history, they seem a curious choice for the editorship. Neither man was a historian by training or interest. History was not even Edgar's first love - or Scott's. Yet one must remember that the two men embodied the type of "men of culture" - the gifted amateurs who were the pioneering historians of that period of Canadian historiography.

As well, in 1901 Edgar edited a selection from the writings of the historian Francis Parkman, The Romance of Canadian History, for publication by Morang. However, only the romantic "picturesqueness" of Parkman's New France interested Edgar: he made no real attempt to assess Parkman's preoccupations as a historian. Edgar wrote in his "Editor's Note" that his goal had been merely

... to present a succinct and continuous narrative of early Canadian history based upon the masterly volumes of Francis Parkman. The editor has sought to preserve the picturesqueness of the incidents which Parkman has so graphically described. ... The chief difficulty of the work was to select the material [such] that it should be alike intrinsically interesting and tell a consecutive story.²⁷

Edgar's contemporaries regretted that in the Parkman volume he had not assumed the full scope of the historian's task. A reviewer for the Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada commented:

To the critic, Dr. Edgar's book is valuable chiefly as a concrete example of what may be expected when the Canadian Parkman shall arrive. It is perhaps a matter for regret that Dr. Edgar did not himself essay the greater task.²⁸

While the reviewer at least praised the literary qualities of Edgar's edition of Parkman, the Canadian Magazine reviewer mordantly belittled the stylistic merits of the volume:

To have his choicest paragraphs and sections cut out and pasted on MS. paper in order to provide copy for a new volume, must be galling to Mr. Parkman, even in the spirit-world. But to have such poor literary style shown by his latest tailor, must have been enough to stir even his dry bones.²⁹

Scott's credentials for the "Makers of Canada" series were even less obvious than Edgar's, since he had written no history. He had articulated a rationale for the historian in a 'Mermaid Inn' column of January 1893 that anticipated the didactic and heroic mould of the future Makers of Canada biographies. Scott had written:

Nothing can be of greater importance as a factor in the education of our youth than a good Canadian history for the use of the schools, in their education as future citizens particularly...

... history must be a record of the Canadian people and have a constant reference to their social condition, their aspirations and how those were gradually transformed, and the deep waters through which they passed.³⁰

It is probable, however, that Scott and Edgar were chosen, not on the grounds of any aptitude for history, but rather as literary editors and supervisors of errant or dilatory biographers. Morang seems to have reserved to himself much of the real editorial power - veto over the choice of subjects and biographers. In fact, many of the subjects were already chosen when Edgar and Scott assumed the editorship in early 1901.

Whatever their qualifications, Edgar and Scott took on the project with firm resolve. Scott, ever the more businesslike of the pair, told his co-editor on February 19, 1901:

We can decide later as to the division and the details of the work. I think you will agree with me that there should be one spirit and aim in the Editorship. We will before long gain one point of view and be able to work upon the same general lines. ... I fear that some of the books may need a good deal of whipping to get them into shape, perhaps they will be few. ... now that I am in the midst of the affair I am anxious for G.M. Morang's sake and ours to do what I can to make the publication a success.³¹

The "general lines" of the editorship turned out to be a preoccupation with the need for good English prose and a desire to avoid excesses of bias and style. Edgar and Scott spent part of the next five years fretting over indexes, deadlines and semi-literate manuscripts. Scott repeatedly stressed to Edgar the need for good prose:

We must get men who can write for the balance of the books. I am reading James Longley's Mackenzie [ultimately rejected] and am shocked at the wretchedness of it. I don't see how we can possibly accept it. It bristles with every known fault and many heretofore unknown.³²

Edgar and Scott did express concern about extreme ideological bias. In the case of Papineau by Alfred DeCelles, Scott complained to Edgar in January 1902:

It's all very well to talk of editing but when you practically have to write a book as I'll have to do with DeCelles it's no joke. His first chapter seemed spirited and after I had worked it over looked all right but the 2nd! bad and violent - scratch a F[rench] Canadian and the rebel comes out. We couldn't possibly publish such a chapter.³³

For the most part, however, Edgar and Scott schemed to compact as many "makers" into as few good prose volumes as possible.³⁴ Scott's own volume on Simcoe

seems to have been written quickly in early 1901 and extensively edited by Edgar at Scott's urging in April of that year:

I [Scott wrote Edgar] am very glad indeed that you find anything to like in "Simcoe" and particularly satisfied that Lady Edgar was so enthusiastic about it. Indeed you must look after my sentences. I have not read some parts of it twice and many things must be mended before the book is ready for the public. ... Give me any suggestions that may strike you and don't fancy I want you to be careful in what you say, be quite free.³⁵

Scott informed Edgar on May 6 that his "emendations and corrections have been of great benefit" and that he was revising the Simcoe draft manuscript in light of them.³⁶ Edgar himself did not write any of the biographies in the Series, although the life of Sir Isaac Brock was allocated to his mother, Lady Matilda Edgar, a notable amateur historian of Upper Canada.

Scott and Edgar had difficulties other than poor prose to face. Their relationship with George Morang was lukewarm at best, and he seems to have treated his editors rather high-handedly. By the time Scott and Edgar set off on an Indian treaty expedition in Northern Ontario in the summer of 1906, leaving editorial tasks behind, Morang had appointed a third editor, one who for the moment he found more like-minded. His choice was the journalist and civil servant William D. LeSueur, who was writing the biography of William Lyon Mackenzie for the Series. To Scott and Edgar, another editor was not unwelcome a newcomer could share problems and vexations. Scott commented to Edgar in October of 1905:

[LeSueur] comes too late in the game to help much, but he will be a help and I intend to make use of his brain if I can - and he may fairly take some responsibility and influence G.M. Morang - you know it is apt to be the new man. But L[eSueur] has more critical power and is most careful with plenty of time just now to be studious. We must be careful, however, not to have misunderstandings.³⁷

The new editor soon had a baptism of fire, in which Edgar was involved.

At the time of LeSueur's appointment, Edgar was involved in difficulties with Stephen Leacock, his friend from Upper Canada College Days. Leacock had written a compendium biography of Baldwin, Hincks and LaFontaine, which contained intemperate passages. LeSueur ultimately revised the MS. to Leacock's fury. Scott wrote Edgar to intervene, in a letter which showed just how much the editors "homogenised" the series:

I think you will have to use some diplomacy with him [Leacock] to soften a few expressions which, it appears to me, might awaken adverse comment. You know we have done this with every other book and in the case of Decelles' "Papineau" in many places I softened it so that the author would hardly recognise it.³⁸

When the Makers of Canada Series was struck by controversy, and then a lawsuit by heirs to halt publication of LeSueur's biography of William Lyon Mackenzie, Scott and Edgar experienced further worries. Scott, like LeSueur, had favoured a "thorough and fair sifting" of Mackenzie's stormy career: he told Edgar this in 1901, long before LeSueur was commissioned to write the biography. When LeSueur became involved in difficulties with Mackenzie King and another descendant over his interpretation of the famous ancestor's career, Edgar, as editor and as scion of a Liberal family, tried to placate King.³⁹ Ironically, it was now LeSueur who angered Morang by refusing to moderate his views in the biography.

Scott and Edgar resolved to remain in the background of the dispute, despite an earlier resolve to "stand by" LeSueur. Neither man had actually read the biography: they were not anxious to do so, and be drawn deeper into the dispute.⁴⁰ By 1908, the dispute was front-page news in the Toronto papers. So successful were Edgar and Scott at disassociating themselves from the matter that, despite a five-year court battle, which ultimately suppressed the

biography, the subject is not even mentioned in Scott's correspondence with Edgar after 1908.

Scott and Edgar's editorship of the Makers of Canada series, while it cemented their friendship, was less successful in other ways. E.K. Brown, in his memoir of D.C. Scott, paints a positive picture of the editorship:

They were devoted editors, pruning and enlivening the prose of their associates, softening expressions of prejudice, and trying to escape with honour from mistaken commitments by the publisher [Morang] to authors who had lapsed into senility or laziness.⁴¹

Certainly Edgar and Scott performed much commendable editorial work, but they were by no means uniformly scrupulous in their task, particularly with certain volumes. They were not historians: how much could they be expected to deal with, or even identify, problems of interpretation? Indeed, at times their attitude smacked of dilettantism. In 1902, for example, Scott remarked to Edgar of the prospectus for the series:

Change the Descriptions of [the] Dorion and Macdonald [volumes] and any others that you wish - the whole thing is fictitious, written about books I had never seen and in a frothy and cocky manner, but we have something to sell and people must be made to think well of it.⁴²

Both the publisher and the reviewers of the time were critical at times of the editing of the series. Several of the volumes were criticized in the press for sloppy proof reading and indexing and even on one occasion for "poor English".⁴³ One reviewer referred to the widespread awareness of "the friendly fashion in which substantial merit and crude mediocrity have rubbed shoulders in this series."⁴⁴ In 1905, LeSueur, by then a co-editor of the series, had confided to Morang his astonishment at Edgar's "very lax" editing in approving James Hughes' biography of Mackenzie, a "perfunctory school compendium" without

historical merit.⁴⁵ Morang himself blamed Scott and Edgar for repetition and "wretched indexing" in some of the series, and had insisted that LeSueur negotiate with Leacock over the anomalies in Leacock's Baldwin Hincks LaFontaine because "Edgar would have made a mess of it." To LeSueur, who is now credited with much of the substantive historical editing of the series, Morang confided in 1907 that "the editing in the first half of the series was not what it should have been."⁴⁶ The editorship was Edgar and Scott's last joint venture into history, but the collaboration had happier literary results in the bond forged between the two by the assignment.

Edgar's interest in Scott's poetic gifts naturally stimulated Scott. His ballad, "Dominique de Gourgues", was begun in early September 1901, as the result of a suggestion by Edgar, who had come across the theme in Parkman. The poem was extensively revised over the next year in consultation with Edgar.⁴⁷ It was the first of many times that Edgar would ruminate with Scott over the latter's work-in-progress. After revising the poem at least twice in response to Edgar's critiques - although he did not always heed Edgar's suggestions - Scott urged Edgar to make broader and more explicit critiques of his poetry:

By all means let me have any criticisms upon lines but
 accompany them with suggestions so that I may see your point
 of view. It is only puzzling to hear "such & such a line is
 off colour" because when one has worried over a thing many
 times nothing new comes to the mind-⁴⁸

Edgar's enthusiasm for his role in the composition of Scott's poetry found its way into his published articles on Scott, and occasionally affected their verdicts. In 1905, in a review of the recently-published New World Lyrics and Ballads for the Toronto Globe, Edgar praised "Dominique de Gourgues" and ignored such fine poems as "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon", one of the few occasions when his criticism of Scott's work is less than acute. Doubtless his pride at his

role in the genesis of "Dominique de Gourgues" caused his myopia. The theme of the ballad is lurid and, unlike the Indian poems, the subject-matter - revenge in colonial America - is remote from Scott's experience. Twenty years later, a more judicious Edgar acknowledged that, in "Dominique de Gourgues", there probably was some "instinctive defect of sympathy" between the hero and the recorder of his savagery.⁵⁰

Scott was ever-eager for Edgar to play the muse. He told his friend in 1905:

I have been so long away from creative work that it eludes me - can't you set another ballad for me to write - I need a taskmaster.⁵¹

Scott was also inspired by the much-needed critical attention he received from Edgar, who in 1905 published two reviews of his work in the Toronto press. The reviews recognised Scott's intellectual substance and his unique treatment of Indian themes.⁵² In assessing Scott, Edgar wrote that Scott's best work could be found in his narrative poems. He treated Scott as a major Canadian poet at a time when Scott was the least prominent of the Confederation poets:

The poem "Adagio" I never reread without finding some new significance in its meaning. An intellectual motive underlies it ... - a yearning so strong for the permanence of beauty that all desire is quenched for the fuller perfection which forbodes decay. When we read "The Lesson" we can no longer complain that Mr. Scott's poems move in an austere region remote from human sympathies. Emotion and thought flow in the same deep channel: ... Such poems are not for criticism. It is enough to know that the world is the better for their being written.⁵³

Scott, often disaffected by the literary apathy of Canadians, was heartened by Edgar's interest:

I am glad you liked that Adagio movement; I don't think any mortal ever before thought of reading much less seeing

anything in it. I too think The Lesson is one of my best things.
 ... Well, thank you again, dear boy, the notice will do me good
 and makes me feel that I must write some good stuff at once.
 That's the right effect of praise isn't it?⁵⁴

When in his November 1905 review of New World Lyrics and Ballads, Edgar gently denigrated the ballad "Catnip Jack", Scott protested mildly but promised Edgar that "my next book will be quite different."⁵⁵

Scott's next work, the chapbook Via Borealis (1906), which included the poems "Spring on Mattagami" and "The Half-Breed Girl", was different. Most of the poems were written on a 1906 treaty trip for Indian Affairs, on which Edgar, appointed Secretary to the expedition at Scott's instigation,⁵⁶ played an unique and important role in the composition of Scott's resulting poems. The expedition, led by Scott and Edgar, left Ottawa on May 22 for Northern Ontario to promulgate Treaty Number Nine; it did not return until mid-August.

Scott had spent the previous summer in the wilderness, on the first phase of the treaty expedition, but no group of poems emerged from that journey. Instead, his accounts of the 1905 trip for Scribner's Magazine accentuate his distaste at the dirt and squalor of Indian life.⁵⁷ In 1905, far from his wife and daughter, without a congenial fellow-traveler, Scott was alienated as much as inspired by the wilderness. He wrote to Edgar after his return:

I spent day after day without seeing a living thing - except
 the Indians and our own party - the landscape for the most
 part desolate beyond compare, loneliness seven times dis-
 tilled- a country never to be the glad home of any happy
 people.⁵⁰

By contrast, Edgar's account of the 1906 journey for Canada Magazine reveals that Scott's two sympathetic companions, Edgar and for a time the artist Edmund Morris, intensified the poet's perceptions of the wilderness:

D.C.S and I sit side by side in the big bark canoe, and we gloat over things - cloud effects, peeps of vistas through the islands as they shift past us, and lights and shadows on the water.⁵⁹

[Edmund Morris'] artist eye served to sharpen our own perception of significant aspects of things we might never have noted. The now familiar appearance of an Indian encampment took on quite a novel aspect for us when seen in the company of an artist whose eye was alert to seize every nuance of new suggestion.⁶⁰

Edgar's wilderness reading of George Meredith's poem "Love in the Valley" set its rhythms humming in Scott's brain as he composed "Spring on Mattagami", a poem later revised with Edgar's advice.⁶¹ Important later poems, like "The Height of Land" (1916) and "Fragment of a Letter" (1919), also had their genesis in the wilderness journey shared by Scott and Edgar. Edgar's account of the journey describes one of the shared experiences that was to flower into poetry:

In the evening we had a lazy drift in a canoe. The colours were superb. There had been a brisk wind all day which died with sunset, and, as we floated, the swells were lapping melodiously on all the island shores. Beautiful it was, too, as we turned our reluctant prow campward, to see the red-fires glowing on the shore. The velvet black water flung back their reflection, and in their warm rays the birches gleamed a spectral white amid the glow of the surrounding fires.⁶²

D.C. Scott crystallised the magic of this particular experience in the poem "The Fragment of a Letter", which he originally dubbed "A Note to Pelham Edgar". There Scott revealed how precious the shared insight and beauty of the northern journey had been for the two men:

Nothing of all remains but pure romance,
A magic space wherein the mind can dwell,
Above the touch of tedium or of chance
Where fragile thoughts are irrefrangible
Still the young Time is guardian of that space,
Trembling with unstained beauty through and through.

Where shoots of memory radiate and enlace
 Bright as the sun-point in a globe of dew;
 Until old Time sables the crystal door,
 We may re-enter there, - once more, once more.⁶³

For Edgar, too, the 1906 treaty trip, despite heat, rain, flies and poor fishing, was one of the highlights of his long life. The journey held for him the magic of the wilderness, of poetry and of friendship. He wrote at journey's end:

Yes, it is all beautiful, and it is a tonic rest to the mind to have been so long at one with the simple, uncomplaining men of the wilderness, whom no harsh problems vex, and whose very vices seem a portion of the innocent order of nature. It is very beautiful, but perhaps at the end of three months it has lasted long enough. I am only glad that all this sequence of beauty has not blurred into a composite picture, and that I can still segregate moments of special delight which are sunny pasture lands for memory to wander in now that I am walking the dingy streets, and the whirl of the passing motor chokes my throat with dust.⁶⁴

Edgar thus had a remarkable effect on Scott's poetic response to the wilderness on the treaty expedition, and thereby gained a unique insight into Scott the poet and Indian administrator. Even immediately after Scott's return from the bush in August 1906, he was conscious that the journey with Edgar had been a period of intense creativity for him. "I felt very flat after you left," he confided to Edgar on August 21, 1906, "as if the bottom had fallen out."⁶⁵ In the dark days of 1907, after the death of his only child,

Elizabeth, Scott clung to the memory of his journey with Edgar as a kind of zenith of peace and serenity, now forever lost. Shortly after Elizabeth's death, he wrote to Edgar: "How happy we were and how thoughtless - I have thought much about it and have said to myself, 'If I might be there now by one of those still deep lakes with my friend I might get some rest!'"⁶⁶

The death of Elizabeth deepened Edgar's friendship with Scott. Edgar shared the pain of Elizabeth's death through anguished letters from the bereaved Scott. He also shared in the making of the noble poetry that the bereavement was to engender. Scott, to most people reserved, controlled and rather formidable, expressed his anguish to Edgar:

We have both suffered too much. I think every fibre of our souls was ingrown and tangled with hers. In no merely rhetorical way I say it seems impossible for us to go on. How can we? My poor dear wife has been prostrated. Do you remember Pelham how I used to say when we were so happy together last summer I wonder where we will be this time next year? Well here am I - and there is still a next year and a next year - how happy we were and how thoughtless - 67

I should like to see you very much because there is no one I think so much of as I do you & I have much to say to you. Perhaps you may be down this way or come & see me before long - 68

Edgar did visit the Scotts that autumn, a visit which meant much to both of them. 69

1906 and the first half of 1907 had been years of intense poetic activity for Scott, which also intensified the correspondence with Edgar. After the treaty trip, Edgar had a role in the composition, revision and publication of many of Scott's major poems. In the winter of 1906-07, Edgar shepherded through the press Via Borealis, which consisted of northern poems, under Scott's direction. Scott's revisions were made in light of Edgar's comments, as this letter about "Spring on Mattagami" shows:

I am sending my proofs to you so that you may see what I have done. I struck out "the" before brightening as I don't like it [-] what about eliding the "e". You mentioned that once I think? I let "thick" stand altho' the line so is not anything to brag - about but I don't like 'busk' wh. very few people myself included! don't know the meaning of - [sic]

It means dark doesn't it - Let them observe my punctuation -
 [i.e. Tyrrell's, the printer]⁷⁰

Later that same month, Scott commended Edgar's efforts with Via Borealis when he wrote:

As I said in my last I like the book. Why did the printer change vails into veils in Dream Voyageurs? It was right in the proof. The thing otherwise seems perfect.
 ... Don't work too hard over Via B- ! I am glad to know you are untiring!⁷¹

For his part, Scott reported to Edgar that he had spent some time in recruiting members for the Canadian Society Authors, to aid Pelham in C.S.A. work; he also paid CSA dues himself.⁷²

When Scott resumed original composition after the death of his daughter, he continued to consult Edgar frequently. In July 1908, for example, Scott revised the ending of the poem "The Wood Spring to the Poet" after consulting with Edgar.⁷³ Of course, he did not always heed Edgar's advice. In 1911, for example, Scott rejected Edgar's advice about "Fragment of an Ode to Canada":

I note your feeling on the mixed blank verse & rime [sic] in the opening. I don't believe I can take that out now. I have difficulty with it as I wrote most of it last. (you know my method of work) - perhaps your objection is to the presence of blank verse or rhyme associated in the poem as a whole. But there is no standard for an ode is there?⁷⁴

The influence of the "Master-critic", "Censor",⁷⁵ or "my critic" as Scott variously dubbed Edgar, was greatest on two important poems, "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris" (which Edgar read to Toronto's Arts and Letters Club before its publication⁷⁶) and "Ode for the Keats Centenary". Edgar went over the Morris poem in at least three versions during 1915 and convinced Scott, among other things, to expand the opening section of the poem "to make the

trend of the poem clearer".⁷⁷ Because of Edgar's comments, Scott dropped lines, deleted and changed words and even re-arranged the much-praised section of the poem on the death of Akoose.⁷⁸ "Ode for the Keats Centenary" was commissioned from Scott by Edgar for the 1921 Keats Centenary celebrations at the University of Toronto, at which Scott read the poem.⁷⁹ After Edgar's initial comments on the ode during its composition, Scott asked that he approve a rhyme scheme for the second section:

The only point to be considered was the passage beginning "But he whose soul..." Your advice about this was to make it good blank verse, which would of course exclude the rhymes. Will you let me know which you prefer. I have become accustomed to the rhymes and miss them, but a new reader would not notice that.

... You might let me know what you think of these suggestions and then I will have a fair copy made.⁸⁰

Edgar must have known the importance to Scott and to Canadian literature generally of such discussions of his poetics with Scott. We have seen Edgar's concern about the neglect of poets like Pickthall in contrast to the popularity of writers like Service and Connor. In a letter about "Ode for the Keats Centenary", Scott perfectly captured the relevance of Edgar's concern. In a reference to the reputation of his own work, he remarked:

If the University don't publish it I would feel like doing so myself [.] But I suppose there would be no encouragement in that. I am sorry you could not come here on your way home but I understand [.] I wanted to discuss with you the future of the poems whether I should try to [do] another book ... My two-headed beast of a publisher [McClelland & Stewart] shd be whipped for his indifference now if I was Service or Ralph Connor how fawning & compliant they would be -⁸¹

Scott's remarks to Edgar about his publisher must have come as no surprise to Edgar. It was Edgar who with Scott had overseen the arrangement and

publication by McClelland and Stewart of a volume of Scott's poetry in 1916. In January 1916, Scott had solicited his help with the volume:

If I made a selection it would be a small one and you would have to help me do it. They want it early in February as Mr. McClelland of the firm is going to England. That is the pinch - how can we get time to do it? ⁸²

As a result, Scott and Edgar jointly selected and arranged the material for Lundy's Lane And Other Poems.⁸³ Discussions about various aspects of the book between Scott and Edgar continued into mid-February, when Scott told Edgar:

I would have no objection to calling the book "The Battle of Lundy's Lane and Other Poems". I really think the commercial standpoint should be considered. This would involve rearranging the poems, would it not? I do not think I would name any special section "The Closed Door", but just let the poems stand in any order we decide upon. I will keep the general dedication, but I want your name to be associated with Via Borealis. I will certainly adopt your suggestions. Surely you are not going to let me off so easily? I thought you would throw out some of the lyrics. I will try to get better lines for those that you have designated. ⁸⁴

Edgar had a significant input into many of Scott's individual poems as well as volumes. Scott's letters to Edgar indicate that Edgar offered comments and critiques of other crucial Scott poems than the ones already mentioned: "Ode on the Death of Claude Debussy" (October 1918), "The November Pansy" (January 1919), "Variations on a Seventeenth Century Theme" (July 1919), and "An Impromptu" (July 1919), to name some of the major ones.⁸⁵ In the Teens and Twenties at least, Scott regularly sent Edgar all of his poems for perusal. He would remark as a matter of course:

I am not writing anything but I succeeded in getting all the stuff together I had written for the last few months, so that it can be read and criticized if necessary. Do let me have a note from you. (1918) ⁸⁶

I was rather proud of that poem I sent, when I sent it, but when you said nothing about it I fell out of conceit with it and have not tried to publish it as was my first intention. (January 1917) ⁸⁷

Edgar had an impact on Scott's prose as well. In 1907, when Scott was working on a novel, he discussed it with Edgar as well as with E.W. Thomson. ⁸⁸
In 1911, when he returned to the novel, he had both Pelham and Helen Edgar read it:

Thanks many thanks for your generous praise of the novel. I have great diffidence in asking you to bother with it but it would be most helpful if anything can be done to improve it. Let us see what Helen says. I set much store by her judgment and she may turn down her thumb. I know Firmian's [a protagonist] disappearance & reappearance is questionable but I cannot follow his doings in the underworld it would take another book. However, probably, I have not done as well as I could with the present plan of his movements. ... ⁸⁹

There is less evidence of Edgar's impact on Scott's short stories, although, according to a doctoral dissertation on McClelland and Stewart, Edgar read The Witching of Elspie (1923) carefully before its submission for publication. ⁹⁰

For his part, Edgar owed a considerable debt to Scott for encouragement and advice about his career and writing. Scott was a loyal friend; when Edgar was seriously ill in early 1913, Scott repaid in kind the warmth that Edgar had bestowed on the Scotts in the difficult days of their bereavement. On New Year's Day, 1913, Scott wrote to Edgar, who was convalescing:

My first note in 1913 must be to you, my dear old boy, the years stretch forth their arrogant and all-powerful hands but they leave untouched our long and precious friendship. ⁹¹

Edgar also received the occasional salutary stick from Scott as well as such carrots. In the early years of the century, until Edgar's election in 1915,

Scott lobbied vigorously for Edgar's admission to the Royal Society and goaded the rather dilatory Edgar to present such papers to the Society as would promote his admission. A 1908 note to Edgar was succinct about Scott's desire to get Edgar into the Society and their common dislike of Wilfred Campbell, which is mentioned several times in the correspondence:

My purpose in asking for a paper [from you] for the R.S. was to put your name before that dull Society as soon as possible or later you must have the 4 letters after your name and become one of the set of brilliants - when that will be I don't know - Campbell dominates the section with his vulgar pushing ways - & generally sordid view of all things literary & otherwise - He tried to get them to put me on the retired list because I had been away 3 years in succession altho the mean hound knew that I had been on important government business [i.e. the treaty trips] the first two years, but he found I had too many friends - I want you & a few more in the society to counteract him & put him in his place. Well God grant the time be soon. But you send me a paper you don't like & that is not now worthy of you and you cannot prevail on me to present it I think altho I may be too hard on it - you have cut so much out of it that it don't [sic] read well. I will not demand another of you now as you are lazy & the matter not of much importance.⁹³

Scott read several of Edgar's articles in manuscript and was forthright in offering advice. In 1904, when Edgar was planning an article on Yeats, Scott told him flatly that he thought Yeats not a particularly important poet:

I think you take them [Celtic poets] much too seriously and I hope upon reflection you will agree with me that there is no trend in their work toward anything of importance ... they have produced nothing now in effect or even in design.⁹⁴

Edgar's tendency to adulate English literary life also brought a crisp word of advice from Scott on writing for English periodicals: "Make these writers sit up and think to be told just where they are in the hierarchy of letters by a colonial."⁹⁵

Edgar also had the benefit of Scott's comments when he wrote one of his

most important articles of the pre-1920 period, the chapter on English-Canadian literature for the Cambridge History of English Literature (1916). When Scott read a draft of the chapter, he told his friend:

... you are not judging Lampman or the other poets in the light of newer standards, but by the invariable standard of good taste and poetic judgment. You tell us that poetic methods have altered and this writer may seem to be old-fashioned and that his technique by newer standards seems cramped and unduly studied. None of us can tell anything about these newer standards, to my mind they appear to be ephemeral, they are not standards at all. I should advise you to alter these paragraphs, the last sentence is all right, and I think it quite proper to say that he has nothing either of the characteristic modern realism or mysticism.⁹⁶

Edgar was also strong-minded, however, and he seems to have kept to his instincts in this case. The paragraph under discussion read upon publication much the way Edgar had originally wrote it:

So greatly have poetic methods altered since Lampman's death that already his poetry may seem to be old-fashioned. He has nothing either of the characteristic modern realism or mysticism, and his technique, by newer standards, seems cramped and unduly studied. He lacks subtlety and lyric fire, but he has merits that will survive many fluctuations of taste, and, without being distinctively Canadian, he is still our representative Canadian poet.⁹⁷

If Edgar reassured Scott about his worth as a writer in the rather apathetic Canadian environment, Scott also urged Edgar to believe in his critical abilities. In the early years of the century, when Edgar was fretting over the rather daunting prospect of writing for England's prestigious National Review and its editor Leo Maxse, Scott reassured him:

I am not surprised that Maxse wanted more of your stuff [.] the Meredith articles [by Edgar for National Review] brought his full review some renown & certainly other papers of yours will.⁹⁸

This encouragement was made the more satisfying to Edgar because Scott and Edgar always believed in the sincerity and candour of the other's remarks. Scott referred to their mutual credibility in a 1919 letter:

It is good of you, to express your opinion, and I enjoy it because I know that it is sincere and is not influenced by our old friendship.⁹⁹

Scott also took an interest in Edgar's poetic protégés and offered his advice and support to them. Edgar's early enthusiasm for the work of Marjorie Pickthall was shared by Scott, who in 1903 replied to a letter and poem from Edgar:

If you had not sent it [the poem by Pickthall] I should not have seen it for some time. It is essentially different from anything I expected and even much better than I had expected altho' your judgment had prepared me. It is highly remarkable and well in the range of marvels that anyone so youthful could do it. As an effort it recalls the first work of Blake and Poe but it is not as individual as their early lines. ... Everything in the poem points to original power and if development follows, God save us, we'll have a poet here at last! ... If she wants to publish anything I'll be glad to do what I can for her with the Magazines.¹⁰⁰

Similarly, in the Thirties and Forties, Scott took an interest in the work of Audrey Alexandra Brown, for whom Edgar had such high hopes. Scott sought financial aid for her, corresponded with her on occasion, and even, in one memorable missive from Europe, sent her some violet leaves from the grave of Keats, one of her favourite poets.¹⁰¹

Scott was also present at the inaugural meeting of the Canadian Authors' Foundation in Toronto in April 1931,¹⁰² and until his death in 1947 he worked unselfishly to further the causes of the Canadian Authors Foundation and then the Canadian Writers Foundation, causes dear to his friend's heart.¹⁰³ In a more personal way, he consoled Edgar as well. Upon the death of Edgar's mother,

Lady Matilda Edgar, he comforted Edgar in two thoughtful letters:

... my wife sends her deepest sympathy - she remembers how kind your dear mother was to our dear Elizabeth and now they are both far away. 104

This morning Belle and I went down to Beechwood Cemetery & planted crocuses about Elizabeth's stone - whose eyes will see them flower? And no one can answer that simple question. I wish we could meet for a good talk: our tone will have deepened since we last met but we will always be in essence the same to one another. 105

When Helen Edgar died in 1933 after a long and difficult illness, Scott was a pallbearer at her funeral and travelled with Edgar in Britain in the summer of 1934. When Edgar became affianced to Dona Waller, Scott could not restrain his delight:

I know you have told her of the very special friendship that is ours and I hope she will realize that she will share it in fullest measure. Elise joins in dearest love to you both and we can ask the Fates for no greater boon for you than this, - that you may be always as happy as we are.

... our special love to Dona - dear boy, how happy it makes me to write her name... 106

In the Twenties, Thirties and Forties, the friendship was also sustained by Edgar's continuing concern with Scott's literary reputation and his continuing efforts to foster it. Naturally, as the years went by and Scott wrote less poetry, he submitted less poetry to Edgar. But he was sending him poems as late as 1938¹⁰⁷ and in 1942 he told E.K. Brown that Edgar, who to Scott's delight spent some of the war years in Ottawa (1942-47), had suggested the title of the poem "Amanda." 108

Edgar's friendship with Scott and his championing of his poetry were well-known in the world of Canadian letters and were occasionally resented in

the Twenties. In 1927, when Duncan Campbell Scott was given the Lorne Pierce Medal of the Royal Society of Canada, because Edgar was on the Committee, there were complaints -- notably by John Garvin and William Arthur Deacon -- that the medal ought to have gone to the elderly Charles Mair. Garvin believed that Edgar's partiality for Scott and his literary contacts were the reason it had not.¹⁰⁹ Deacon told Scott:

There is no doubt about the distinction. As you may know, I was very anxious for Dr. Mair to get it this year, for fear he should drop off before this honor can be conferred upon him. You being the most youthful of the seniors, might, I thought, have waited to give the old man pleasure. However, I want you to know that I am very glad it fell to you, ... Please, therefore be sure that in spite of my plea for Mair, I am perfectly satisfied to be over-ruled.¹¹⁰

Scott and Edgar always maintained, however, that Edgar judged Scott's critical work on its own merits, a state of affairs that Edgar referred to directly in a 1920 address on "Recent Canadian Poets" with the disclaimer: "I should like to make special reference to ... Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott, whom personally I consider to be the greatest of our Canadian poets. I am not at all concerned by the fact that I am a personal friend of his, because I do not see why that should prevent one from telling the truth as one sees it."¹¹¹

The occasion of the awarding of the Lorne Pierce Medal to Scott, and the appearance of D.C. Scott's Collected Poems, prompted Edgar to publish a long article on Scott's work in Dalhousie Review.¹¹² Edgar sensitively illuminated the tension in Scott's verse between the world of the primitive and that of the civilised, long before E.K. Brown or Northrop Frye addressed the subject. Edgar also elucidated the rarefied musical technique of "Variations on a Seventeenth Century Theme" with a thoroughness unequalled by any later commentator. Ironically, the article mentions that the award of the Pierce Medal to Scott was "inevitable."¹¹³

It is not widely known that this article was the fruit of Edgar's work at this period on a critical edition of Scott's poems, which was to have had a long introduction by Edgar. Begun about 1924, the volume was first scheduled to appear in John Garvin's short-lived literary series "Master Works of Canadian Authors".¹¹⁴ After that series collapsed, the Scott volume was slated for Lorne Pierce's Ryerson Series, "Makers of Canadian Literature." Pierce was enthusiastic,¹¹⁵ but the volume never appeared, possibly because of copyright difficulties.¹¹⁶ Edgar did write a draft of the introduction, now among his papers at Victoria College Library. Scott supplied Edgar with biographical information, some of it on his career in Indian Affairs where, wrote Scott, "a sincere interest in the work & in the welfare of the Indians" had eventually enabled him "to assist in formulating policy & in carrying out innovations & improve/ments/."¹¹⁷ To Edgar, Scott had sometimes been blunt about his job. In one 1907 letter he wrote: "office work very heavy and futile. - our Dept. should be filled with idealists and philanthropists - instead - well you know what we have, having had some experience of it [on the 1906 Treaty Trip]."¹¹⁸

With such access to Scott's views and to the progress of his career, it is disappointing that Edgar did not, in his draft introduction, or in any of his other critical articles, tackle the question of Scott's perceptions of the Indian as writer or as administrator. The very friendship that so equipped Edgar to deal with the question seems to have precluded its discussion. Unfortunately, he never published an edition of Scott's poems. However, Edgar went on to publish three valuable articles on Scott's work, and to give public lectures and supervise a thesis on Scott's poetry.¹¹⁹ Edgar's proximity to Scott during the years he spent in Ottawa - 1942-1947 - was precious to Scott,

who valued his company and who had often longed to see Edgar when the two were living in different cities. Not surprisingly, the Ottawa sojourn was a very productive period for Edgar's work on Scott. Wilfrid Eggleston recalls in his memoirs one occasion in December 1943 when Edgar's appreciation of Scott's poetry found public expression:

... I attended a Scott Commemoration Night in December 1943. ... The evening was crowned by an unforgettable appreciation of Scott and his work, given by his oldest and closest living friend, Pelham Edgar. Scott had of course been invited but he was too shy to attend.

It was the first time I had heard Pelham Edgar in action as lecturer and interpreter and it made a profound impression. ... I wished I could have heard it at Queen's twenty years earlier. Edgar was one of the finest readers of poetry I ever encountered. As Scott's closest friend he knew how to make us better acquainted with Scott's background, personality, and genius. In one evening I found myself being converted to a tardy awareness of Scott's power and eminence. Why had I been so blind?

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Three articles, no less eloquent, were produced by Edgar in this period.

"Duncan Campbell Scott" written in 1942 for the Educational Record and revised in 1948 for Leading Canadian Poets; "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott" first published in the Ottawa Journal in 1946 and included in Across My Path, and a memorial piece, "Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation," printed in the Journal in 1947.¹²¹ In all three articles, Edgar convincingly portrays the range of Scott's achievement with "its characteristic blend of brooding thought and descriptive beauty" and his ability as poet "to reflect our wild scenery more faithfully and profoundly than any other."¹²²

Edgar himself was deeply conscious that to Scott he was a kindred spirit as well as a keen and appreciative critic. In the Forties, located near Scott, Edgar saw more of Scott: twilight and zenith of friendship were one. Scott wrote some poetry for Edgar's young daughter, Jane, whose visits must have

stirred bittersweet memories of the young Elizabeth. When Scott died in December 1947, Edgar himself was less than a year from the grave. In a letter to E.K. Brown, he expressed his sense of loss:

We have lost our dearly loved and dearly prized Duncan. There is no one who can appreciate what that means more than you...

I value the opportunity I have had in the past five years of seeing so much of my oldest friend. He was visibly failing towards the end of the summer, and a violent stomach flu in October accentuated his weakness. I last saw him towards the end of that month. My wife and I were staying for a few days in Ottawa, and we had half an hour at his bedside. It is a poignant memory. ¹²³

Edgar's nécrologe for Scott, published in the Ottawa Journal on December 27, summarised Edgar's conception of Scott's achievement and demonstrated the respect for Scott that had sustained their friendship. Edgar expressed, perhaps better than any critic except E.K. Brown, the nature of Scott's genius and its parameters:

What will these custodians of his fame return to with the liveliest delight? They will particularly value, I think, Scott's native poems for their superlative blending of the setting and the theme. Never has aboriginal character been more faithfully portrayed. In a score of poems the cult of the primitive finds its culmination. The "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris" provides a striking example, additional to those named above. It is a permitted incongruity that the magnificent passages of nature description transcend the limitations of the Indian mind. Although the fruit of sophisticated vision they are in their essence aboriginal, and reflect our wild scenery more faithfully and profoundly than any other descriptions in the range of our literature. ¹²⁴

Edgar crystallised the essential qualities of the art of Duncan Campbell Scott. Wistfulness for the qualities of the man himself brought Edgar's article to a close:

He, too, has gone beyond the Closed Door, and all his questions [in "The Closed Door"] are answered with what confirmation we cannot divine. All that we can affirm is that he faced the future with serenity, and with all the confidence that his spiritual intelligence could command. He loved life, and death he did not greatly fear.¹²⁵

In many ways, Pelham Edgar stands at the centre of our critical appreciation of Duncan Campbell Scott. Gary Geddes has pointed out that Edgar's approach to Scott as poet of the wilderness has become almost ossified in much of the later criticism.¹²⁶ Edgar interested colleagues and students like Raymond Knister, E.K. Brown and A.J.M. Smith in Scott's work. One of Knister's letters reveals that his 1927 article on Scott,¹²⁷ which links the narrative poems to the stories of the North, was based on a paper delivered to the Poetry Society of Canada in March 1927 at the request of its President, Pelham Edgar.¹²⁸ E.K. Brown, who used Edgar's work on Scott in his own writing and who urged Edgar to become Scott's biographer, wrote that "for me, as for so many others, Edgar opened the way to an appreciation of Scott's poetry."¹²⁹ Edgar in fact introduced the two. A.J.M. Smith was also indebted to Edgar, for Edgar brought him to visit Scott in the Forties.¹³⁰ From this beginning, Smith and Scott corresponded about Scott's work; Smith later published two articles in praise of Scott's poetry. Edgar thus facilitated an entente between two eras in Canadian poetry and played a seminal role in giving Scott some of the critical attention his work deserved.

Pelham Edgar had a long and important friendship with Duncan Campbell Scott. From the mid-Nineties until Scott's death in 1947, Edgar had a significant role in the composition, editing and publication of many of Scott's most important poems, including "Spring on Mattagami", "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris", "Variations on a Seventeenth Century Theme", "Fragment of A Letter" and "Ode for the Keats Centenary". Through his letters, articles and

reviews, Edgar gave Scott a genuine sense of his literary merit, and the recognition that Scott craved in a country so often indifferent to the life of the mind. In his criticism, Edgar pointed to Scott's importance as a poet of the wilderness and the Indian, and as a poet of the human spirit, emphases which have become common in the canon of Scott criticism. On the 1906 treaty expedition and throughout his long friendship with Scott, Edgar gained a sustained and unique insight into the man and the poet, which resulted in valuable articles. Scott himself encouraged Edgar's work as critic and littérateur. For Scott, Edgar, and for Canadian literature, it was indeed a fortunate friendship.



CHAPTER FOUR

A Teacher with an eye for talent: Pelham Edgar and
 E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister and Other Pupils
 at Victoria College, 1910-1948

In 1892, Wilfred Campbell had written scornfully in the columns of the Globe that "Our universities are being stocked with old country professors and tutors who have no real interest in or knowledge of our nationality and literature."¹ No such complaint could have been made of Pelham Edgar: he brought to his teaching post at Victoria a keen interest in Canadian culture and a knowledge of her literature. During the years he spent in the Department of English at Victoria College, he tried to instil in his pupils a genuine feeling for literature and to encourage the most gifted of them to excel in its creation or analysis. After his death, his widow mused that teaching and poetry were the ruling passions of his life,² and his obituary in Saturday Night emphasized his ability as a teacher.³

Edgar was indeed an inspired teacher, but he was not a folksy or unassuming one. His figure was tall and magisterial, and his demeanour grand. His hauteur and his nervous mannerism of twisting his long legs about the lectern as he lectured gave rise to a bit of freshman doggerel:

P. E.-----

Who, to Freshmen
 Rarely unbends,
 but
 Never unwinds.⁴

Throughout his long teaching career, he had scant patience with the inattentive, ill-prepared or slow-witted pupil. Acta Victoriana, the college magazine, delighted in quoting his scathing remarks to the unfortunate:

Dr. Edgar - "Miss Gr-nger, can you enlighten us in any way as regards the meaning of this passage?"

A pause - during which the class notice Miss G. frantically turning over the pages - hunting the place.

Dr. Edgar - "Well, Miss G., if you are just puzzling it out now, please don't try it on me." ⁵

The disdainful elitism that crept into his lectures was repeated in the columns of Acta:

Prof Edgar - "Jane Welsh was a little higher in the social scale than Carlyle, but she was no great shucks either." ⁶

Victoria, with its Methodist and rigourously righteous theological faculty, was devout and prim; one suspects that Edgar was deliberately oblivious to its mores. In a lecture he often let slip a few remarks mildly disrespectful to the clergy:

Dr. Edgar (to Fourth Year English): Coleridge inherited pedantic qualities from his father. I might just say, in passing, that his father was a clergyman. ⁷

Daily prayers were a hallowed feature of Victoria's life, yet twenty years after his arrival at the college, this anecdote was told of Edgar:

Dr. Edgar, at English class in Library, bell having rung at 9.50 - "We will go on a bit longer; they don't have any sort of prayers here, do they?" ⁸

In short, Professor Edgar was very much his own man and it was not the ordinary student who usually remembered him with love. Yet, although his high-handed ways could hurt, there was real concern for his students beneath his

remote exterior. William Arthur Deacon, who remembered him at his haughtiest, turning his back to lecture a freshman class, also remembered how, at a public reading of the poem "For the Fallen,"⁹ he wept for students who had perished in the Great War. Pupils as diverse as Raymond Knister, Earle Birney and Douglas Bush recalled Edgar's kindness and concern. It was, however, chiefly such exceptional students who elicited a positive response from Edgar. Such students had the capacity to respond to his subtle and passionate feeling for literature, especially for Romantic poetry, and to be fired by such remarks to the class as

Prof. Edgar (waxing eloquent) - "Now, Cowper is flat and unexciting, but Burns is all fire." ¹⁰ (Italics in original)

Pupils of the calibre of Kathleen Coburn, Douglas Bush, and Northrop Frye were naturally stimulated by Edgar's enthusiasm.

As a lecturer, Pelham Edgar was neither eloquent nor well-organized. His manner was somewhat nervous; his speech could be rambling and verged on a mumble at times. Two qualities gave him power as a teacher: an unrivalled ability to read poetry and a strong desire to inculcate culture in his students. Edgar had a truly remarkable gift of reading poetry well. It is one of the first things about him that commentators like Northrop Frye and Wilfred Eggleston remember. Indeed it was Edgar's reading of some D.C. Scott poems at a public reading in Ottawa in the Forties that brought Eggleston to an appreciation of Scott's achievement.¹¹ In 1945 a student wrote of the spell of Edgar's reading voice at a public lecture:

[Edgar] closed with a little poem by [Duncan] Scott ...
Based on a walk that he and his wife had taken by a canal,
"Come lovely hour, with the rushing leaves ..."
It was a memorable hour for the audience. Whether the

magic was in Prof. Edgar's voice or in the poems themselves. I do not know, but after it was all over one felt a compelling desire to read attentively and appreciately [sic] the work of our Canadian poets.¹²

C.B. Sissons, the Historian of Victoria and a former pupil of Edgar, stated flatly that "as a reader of lyric poetry he was unrivalled."¹³

Edgar brought to his classes a conviction that literature was something potent, important and actual. He brought Canadian literature alive by telling anecdotes of Roberts, Carman and others, and on one occasion in 1924 he read some of Marjorie Pickthall's letters and unpublished poems to the class.¹⁴ Edgar's genuine interest in the work of young poets led many a student to submit his own verses to him, probably with much trepidation. Edgar mentioned to his friend Andrew Macphail in 1913:

I am still a repository for poems, being deemed by younger people perhaps an authority. I send you down some nicely-turned verses with no further commentary than that in quite a tuneful way they express the usual hopelessness of youth.¹⁵

Edgar's deep desire to give his students genuine feeling for literature emerges in several of his public lectures, for example in 1902:

At school we learn our alphabet, at college we learn perhaps to spell, and when we graduate (I speak in figure, it is understood) we may perhaps have learned to read. At least a liberal education has failed of its result unless among our attainments is included a knowledge of what to read, and how to read it.

Our reading is the measure not alone of our purely intellectual advance, but of our progress also in the knowledge of life and the world of men.¹⁶

In keeping with his belief in the moral relevance of literature to life, Edgar assured his students that the insights into human nature found in literature would aid them in their after-college lives. A great book, he declared, is

"the imperishable record of the noble deeds and aspirations of humanity."¹⁷ In learning how to read and judge literature, the student gained a great deal for living:

When you have left the university you will begin to realize the advantages you have received. Some knowledge you will at least have gained of the great and enduring masters of thought. ... If you fix your mind upon the best, what is inferior will cease to attract you, and your lives will lose nothing in dignity.¹⁸

In 1917, Edgar advanced similar ideas about the study of poetry:

Our evident duty [in studying poetry], and may it be our pleasure, will be to immerse ourselves in a stress of great ideas, and to come into contact with certain outstanding and fascinating personalities.¹⁹

Edgar stressed that without the arts, the individual was a barbarian:

He who confesses himself careless of all [art] to that extent excludes himself from the circle of civilised human beings.²⁰

Edgar had a sense of mission to remedy the philistinism he saw about him. He exhorted his students about "the consolatory and strengthening virtues" of poetry:

We endure unlovely things about us, and take a perverse delight in our ignoble surroundings. We seem to think that there is something effeminate and effete in the appeal of beauty, and that a practical age like ours must concern itself with far other things than considerations of this kind. This is indeed a grave mistake.²¹

If Edgar's air was lofty, it matched his belief that, as a teacher, he dealt with higher matters:

Yet we cannot doubt that their [the arts'] chief value resides in their capacity to free us from the benumbing

influence of the commonplace, to shock us out of the region of ignoble emotions and low-pitched desires.²²

Edgar stressed that effort was required of the student, and displayed a little sardonic doubt about the level of achievement possible, an attitude which could not have endeared him to freshmen:

I will not deny that there is a certain effort involved in all intellectual pleasure. We have to give freely of ourselves and of the best that is in us to make a poem or a picture really live, and no great poem that I know is mastered at a reading. ... As your knowledge of poetical technique increases and with it your familiarity with the poetry that is great by universal consent, you will be able to test your private judgments by reference to standards which may or may not confirm them; and you will ultimately reach a stage where private taste and intellectual opinion march together. (However, let us not anticipate the millenium).²³

Edgar was also convinced of the importance of the teacher in the stimulation of Canadian literary activity. In 1929 he wrote:

What is to be said for the incentive [to creating literature] that comes from another source, the impetus that might conceivably flow from teacher to pupil in our schools? ... Writing cannot be taught, but here and there appreciation is quickened and a sound enthusiasm for literature engendered. ... I am constantly receiving work from the students of today that cries out for continuance.²⁴

He made it clear that the mind had to be trained intensively in the art of reading to receive the "total impression of a well-wrought book."²⁵ A 1928 review makes it clear that after three decades of teaching Edgar was still "eager" to analyse and recommend good poetry. Edgar commented in a review of a poem:

The initial service may however fittingly be rendered of indicating the importance and the beauty of [the poet's] work, and that service I now eagerly perform for any

line of poetry who cares one whit for my opinion.²⁶

Edgar's perception of the need to develop a receptive audience for poetry clearly animated his lectures.

In his lectures, Edgar also stressed another aspect of poetry which must have been of great value to the would-be poets and writers, like Knister and Birney, who listened to him. He emphasised the importance to the poet of craft and refinement of the work. In the classroom, as in his dealings with individual writers, he urged discipline in writing:

There must be images, there must be emotion, and there must be intellectual control that fashions these into the perfect utterance which alone deserves the name of poetry. A certain fastidiousness whether of instinct or reflection is inseparable from the creative act. The true poet is never satisfied with a mere approximation.²⁷

Edgar's power as teacher was therefore rooted in a deep sense of purpose. He particularly tried to reach the gifted student. He made no bones that the routine and the pedestrian in his duties bored him. He would on occasion read student essays aloud to his class, deploring their mediocrity, and was heard to snort in disgust "Essays! The bane of my life!"²⁸ Victoria's historian, once his student, wryly noted that he usually left the burden of corrections to his subordinates.²⁹

Edgar's manner and message in the classroom did not alter appreciably with the years. The character of Victoria changed somewhat as enrolment grew - for example, in 1892 the student population was 300 and in 1933, five years before Edgar's retirement, it was 1,059. Edgar's approach, however, was constant.

Of the two best descriptions of him as teacher, one was written of him

near the start of his tenure in the English Department, and the other of him

in the Spring of 1948, when he returned to Victoria to give some lectures in the last year of his life. E.G. Pratt, although he was never formally Edgar's student,³⁰ attended some of his lectures about 1910 as an undergraduate. Years later he described Edgar's teaching at that time:

... it was as the classroom authority pronouncing judgment from a lecture stand that he figures in our memory.

Those of us who knew him intimately learned to love the man and to respect the teacher. It took some time to cultivate that relationship. To us in our first year, listening to his lectures, he was the professor, tall, austere and aloof, running, as we imagined, true to type where dignity and erudition were supposed to co-exist. ...

He had a method of interpretation peculiar to himself. He assumed, without affectation, the idiosyncracies of the writer he was expounding, passing from Wordsworth through Shelley and Keats to Tennyson and Browning. His reading of the Ode to the West Wind and the Adonais threw a spell never cast by the printed page. We wondered sometimes what had happened. When he read the Ode he could make those hectic autumn leaves drive before the wind in April just as dramatically as in October. Those lectures on the Romantics were gracious and stimulating experiences. Next to Shelley, I should say, it was Arnold who taught him his basic cadences. In fact, in that transposition of mood referred to, it was very easy for Pelham Edgar to don the Victorian apparel and speak in the grand manner with its higher seriousness and subdued melancholy. He taught literature as much in the fashion of a score as a libretto which is a genuine reason why his classroom work has been so well remembered.³¹

Elsewhere Pratt described a particular lecture:

But what remains most vividly in my memory was Dr. Edgar's first lecture on Wordsworth. He started off with an immense generalisation -- "The world is divided into three classes, the Wordsworthians, the anti-Wordsworthians, and those who never heard of him, this last classification applying to about two-thirds of the class." This lecture had high-lights and low lights. ...

... He dismissed the poor stuff [in Wordsworth] and read the Simplan Pass to show the heights to which W. could climb occasionally

The immense height

Of woods decaying, never to be decayed ...

Dr. Edgar showed his good sense by refraining from too

much analysis. He preferred to allow the fine lines to sink into our minds, adding just the single comment - Wonderfully sublime. That was one of the highlights for me. We got into the habit of feeling authority in a single comment or a short critical phrase after the reading. And he had a way of looking at us over his spectacles and pausing to see how we took the poem before his comment. One morning he read a sonnet of Rossetti which I thought was unusually slushy. I said to myself - "Surely he is not going to say -- "That's fine." He read it with considerable fervor, stopped for a few seconds and remarked -- "There was a time years ago when I thought that was good." The class laughed heartily because they had passed that transitional stage. 32

Edgar was equally impressive in 1948 before a class of Fourth Year Honours students. One of them wrote that the class could not help but respond to him, despite their initial torpor. "We couldn't help being impressed by Dr. Edgar," the student observed,

Despite his age he seemed to possess a greater awareness and acuteness than most lecturers we had run into. And he displayed that faculty to bring alive his subject ... he told us, for example that when Bliss Carman went driving with Dr. Edgar, it was the latter who observed the beauties of nature, while the chlorophyll-veined Bliss occupied himself in conversation with a young female.

... It is difficult to explain exactly the quality that made Dr. Edgar's lectures so distinctive, so memorable. It wasn't the material alone, although the material was there, and was fine. I think it was the personality through which the material was filtered - an urbanity, a sophistication, but without the brittle connotations of the post-1918 era. It belonged distinctly to an earlier, more vigorous time. ... he was the Edwardian gentleman, worldly-wise and tolerant, but lacking the ennui that characterises a younger generation.

... he made us feel dull by the quality of perceptiveness that he exhibited. 33

Edgar's influence on several of his students between 1910 and 1920 was remarkable. E.J. Pratt was deeply impressed by his lectures and Raymond Knister came to seek his literary advice. In the early Twenties and early Thirties Earle Birney, Kathleen Coburn and Northrop Frye were the objects of

his aid, encouragement and advice.

E.J. Pratt and Pelham Edgar's remarkable friendship lasted more than three decades. After Pratt joined the English Department of Victoria College at Edgar's behest in 1920, their offices were situated side by side and they were close friends. At one point in their association Pratt sent Edgar a tribute to their entente:

The warmth, cordiality, affection, love of it [a recent Edgar article on Pratt] all just about brought tears to my eyes. Were ever two such University colleagues two such friends? In our twenty years of partnership not one recriminating word between us. Day and night you have encouraged me, and I have coveted success and accomplishment for you as you have for me. Your success has been mine and mine yours. When I think of so many of the stinking rivalries and animosities in other Departments, French, Physics, Psychology etc, how fortunate our relationship and our Department and I know that my love for you is deeper now even than it has ever been.....³⁴

The association was certainly of importance to Pratt's writing but, located as they were in the same Department, the two men seldom exchanged letters. Therefore little archival record of their consultations upon Pratt's works remains, and Edgar's influence on the making of individual Pratt works is, for the most part, difficult to re-create. Many of the letters that the two did exchange have vanished, Edgar's in particular. Pratt told Pearson Gundy, librarian at Queen's, that he did not save any letters, and Edgar saved Pratt letters only haphazardly: these surviving letters are at Victoria.³⁵ What remains, however, is the outline of an important literary friendship which underlines Edgar's influence as colleague and professor at Victoria.

Pratt came from Newfoundland to Victoria College as a student in 1907; Victoria was to be his home until his retirement from the Department of English in 1953. From that institution he received several degrees - Bachelor of Arts

1911, Master of Arts 1912, Bachelor of Divinity 1913 and Doctor of Philosophy 1917. Pratt was first involved in the study of divinity and psychology rather than literature, and Edgar himself commented: "If he attended any of my classes I was unaware of it, and it would be fatuous to suppose that any advantage might accrue to him from such chance occasions."³⁶ As we know, Pratt felt differently about the value of these encounters. Viola Whitney, another student at Victoria College in Pratt's undergraduate days, who became Pratt's wife, remembers that the friendship between the two men flowered about 1912 when Edgar began to lecture about modern poetry to a little literary group at Victoria, to which Pratt belonged.³⁷ According to Mrs. Pratt, the two men became close friends, but she recalls that the Pratts were always a little in awe of Edgar's patrician qualities. She believes that through his friendship with the Pratts, Edgar got a sense of "ordinary people". Pratt and Edgar must have discussed poetry, since by 1912 Pratt was writing verse, and publishing it in university magazines. It must have taken all of Edgar's skill to discern Pratt's poetic promise in such juvenilia as "A Poem on the May Examinations" published in Acta in 1909:

The year was just about to close, the Arts' Exams were on
The faces of the students had become so pale and wan,
The ordeal was upon them; how they wished it was past!
For strength was quickly sinking, and the nerves were breaking fast.³⁸

By 1918, Pratt was publishing verse which hints at the ponderous tone of Clay, his first long poetic effort. "Invocation" appeared in the University of Toronto Monthly:

Infinite Sea! encompassing all lands
That mark the bounds of earth's sore stricken ones;
Commit we now into thine outstretched hands,
This night, our husbands, lovers and our sons.³⁹

According to Pratt, he showed Edgar the MS. of Clay about this time. The latter convinced Pratt that it was not first rate work:

One [of my early works was a] long poem ... entitled Clay - a tragedy in five acts which I thought was Elizabethan. It was that indeed - But only in the carnage which gave the characters their bloody exits! I did not offer it to a publisher but read it to a group of my critical friends who said "No" in unambiguous terms. The savor of blood and the dagger thrusts reminded me later of Webster at his worst. It never saw the full glare of day. There were other shorter poems marked by too much facility of language. These I sorted out myself-aided by critics like Pelham Edgar who remarked only too often, "This will never do." 40

Mrs. Pratt remembers that Edgar's criticisms of Clay were severe, but that his obvious regard for Pratt softened the sting.⁴¹ In the Forties, Pratt also told his biographer, Carl Klinck, that his 1917 poem Rachel had been written under the influence of Edgar's lectures:

"I was thrilled by Edgar's lectures generally," [Pratt] said, "especially on the Romantics - Shelley and Wordsworth." Rachel, a thin volume privately printed in 1917, had been produced under this spell. ... Wordsworth and Tennyson account for most of this poem, as "Michael" and "Enoch Arden" resound to the seas of Newfoundland. Dr. Edgar has been heard to deplore the lack of a sea-side odour in the laureate's pretty tale about fisherfolk. "Rachel" should be credited with at least an advance toward realism. ... But Pratt [was] not yet ready to write "The Ice Floes", patiently he must absorb the background of literature.⁴²

While Edgar himself tended to downplay his role in the evolution of Pratt's early poetry, he did admit that he wanted Pratt to absorb the "background of literature" through a teaching post in the English Department:

I remember the diffidence with which [Pratt] showed me his first essays in verse - the solemn Rachel and the equally earnest Clay. I suppose I made the appropriate remarks, yet I cannot affirm that I saw in these serious verses the promise of his future achievement. But at least I did not effectively discourage him, and I had such confidence in his possibilities that I requested Chancellor Bowles to appoint him to my English staff. If I have any claims to immortality

the justification lies there. I would not admit that I was taking a gambler's chance. I freely granted that Pratt's training had been in philosophy and not in English. He might be lacking in some of the elements of exact scholarship, but his mind was brilliant and his humanity abounding. I assigned courses to him where his qualities would have free play, and let him rove at large with Shakespeare and the Elizabethans.⁴³

The appointment was made in 1920, and, according to Mrs. Pratt, there was controversy about so unconventional a choice. It was typical both of the grand seigneur manner in which Edgar behaved as Chairman and of the lengths to which Edgar would go to aid a gifted protégé. Thanks to Edgar, Pratt was now in a milieu conducive to literary work. The critic E.K. Brown rightly believed that Edgar's decisions about Pratt's teaching areas had a "profound" impact upon his writing.⁴⁴

By frequently praising Pratt's potential in his Canadian literary criticism at this time, Edgar also tried to build an audience for Pratt. In a major address on Canadian literature to the Ontario Library Association in 1920, Edgar told the audience:

... I want to commend to your attention a poem that is not yet widely published - "The Ode to December" by Dr. E.J. Pratt of this town. Mr. Pratt has been writing a good deal of poetry lately, and it is poetry of a rather significant kind. I think probably there will be a volume next year, and if your memory holds good you will turn to this poem for justification of my praise.⁴⁵

Lorne Pierce once remarked that at Victoria, the old tradition of Canadian poetry was embodied in Marjorie Pickthall, while the new one was represented there by E.J. Pratt.⁴⁶ Pelham Edgar encouraged both poets. Yet, in encouraging Pratt, Edgar seems to have had no thought of new directions for Canadian poetry. He simply wished Pratt to do his best and his most original work, although the rollicking, irreverent Pratt that emerged with the 1925 poem "The Witches" Brew

owed something to the kind of relaxations Pratt and Edgar shared. The two men were at the heart of a clubby male circle whose members were fond of golf, poker, scotch whisky and long evenings of good cigars and good anecdotes. Other members of this convivial circle included Hugh Eayrs, who in 1921, at the age of twenty-seven, became President of Macmillan of Canada, and Malcolm Wallace, who was in the English Department of University College and was subsequently its Principal (1928). Pratt has left us a description of golfing with Edgar or Wallace:

Like Pelham Edgar and myself, Malcolm and I were constantly quoting Shakespeare on the course to the accompaniment of dubbed drives, slices, hooks, and fans, and I may say to the accompaniment also of shaking heads of golfers who were calling out FORE, and wondering why the membership should include a couple of lunatics. When we got back from the 18th hole with a score of about 150, not reckoning the fans, we drowned our sorrows in S/cotch/.⁴⁷

Perhaps the legend of the intensely convivial Pratt was born at these poker and golf parties in the Twenties. The camaraderie of these gatherings was important to Pratt, and in later life both he and Edgar recalled them with nostalgia. Pratt dedicated Titans (1926) to "The Boys of the Stag Parties." In the spirit of these occasions, Pratt would often present Edgar with a bottle of whisky for reading and commenting on a new Pratt work.⁴⁸ About 1925, Pratt wrote doggerel about this for Edgar:

Now This is Strictly Entre-Nous
Pelham old dear if I only knew
Some kind of drink which in your view
Possessed the kick of a kangaroo
A fiery draught that might outdo
The strength and taste of the Witches' Brew
And raised one hell of a hullabaloo
How gladly I'd pass it on to you.⁴⁹

The stag parties provided Pratt with more than the expertise to depict

a realistic poker game in The Titanic. Pratt regularly read poems to the group, and, through Edgar and the poker parties, Pratt gained a publisher in the person of Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan, who by the early Twenties was a good friend of Edgar's and then of Pratt's. After his assumption of the presidency of Macmillan in 1921, Eayrs took a great interest in the publication of Canadian writing. During his tenure, for example, the firm published Louis Hémon's Maria Chapdelaine and Mazo de la Roche's Possession. Edgar often brought promising young writers to Eayrs' attention, and Pratt was no exception. According to Eayrs, Pratt and Audrey Alexandra Brown, whom Edgar also introduced to him, were the only two poets Macmillan published without massive subsidy in these years.⁵⁰ Macmillan published all of Pratt's work from Titans in 1926 to Towards the Last Spike in 1952. Thanks in part to Edgar, Pratt found a congenial publisher. No wonder Pratt wrote that he believed in "the healthy influence of clubs and taverns upon productivity."⁵¹

In the classroom, as on the links, Pratt and Edgar were compatible. With J.D. Robins, whom Edgar had recruited to the English Department from the German Department, Pratt and Edgar formed a very successful triumvirate. The three were so well-known a triumvirate that a 1928 Acta cartoon, published just before the May examination, portrayed them as "The Three Fates - English Variety", with a merry Pratt unwinding thread and a grim and mustachio'd Edgar, looming over the other two, snipping it.⁵² As Chairman, Edgar sponsored literary gatherings at which Pratt met other writers. In 1925, for example, when Edgar gave a reception for visiting poet Vachel Lindsay, Pratt was there.⁵³ In the summer of 1926, when Edgar drove to the University of Chicago to teach summer school, Pratt accompanied him to Chicago. Edgar introduced Pratt widely there and told Saturday Night columnist W.A. Deacon that "Ned Pratt was a great success here while he stayed."⁵⁴ Through Edgar, Pratt broadened his contacts

in the literary and academic world.

In his criticism in the Twenties, Edgar was already treating Pratt as a major poet who could "bear up bravely against all the subtler tests of excellence that only the initiated can apply."⁵⁵ He went further in his praise:

It is not such an exaggeration as it appears to say that a new poem by Dr. Pratt is a national event ... that which has been wrought in the quiet intensity of thought gathers richness and volume with the years.⁵⁶

In 1929, in a half-page article for the Toronto Star Weekly with the banner headline "New Stars in Our Literary Firmament" and a photograph of, among others, E.J. Pratt, Edgar told his readers that Pratt's work was of international standard:

E.J. Pratt is of another temper [than the delicately lyrical], and Europe and America will soon awake to the knowledge that Canada is producing narrative poetry as virile and distinguished as is being written to-day.⁵⁷

Edgar also promoted Pratt's poetry to the Toronto literary set. In January 1927, Edgar chaired a public reading by Pratt of "The Cachalot" and "The Great Feud". Saturday Night reported:

Pratt ... gave a full dress (or more properly Tuxedo) recital before the Poetry Society here last week, for which there was a large, enthusiastic crowd which was quite swept away by the hectic vigor of his lusty lines. ... Pelham Edgar presided, and said Ned felt hurt that the reviewers had not grasped the sublimity and deep spiritual meanings underlying his spirited lines.⁵⁸

In 1928, when Pratt was contemplating the theme of The Roosevelt and The Antinoe, Edgar made the poem financially possible by soliciting donations from Sir Joseph Flavelle and others for Pratt to travel to New York harbour to tour the Roosevelt.⁵⁹ In August 1929, Pratt wrote to Edgar about his difficulties

with the poem, anxious to have Edgar go over it:

First of all I haven't completed it yet ... But Hughie .
 [Eayrs] had mentioned ... Harper's and ... Macmillan of the
 U.S. and they were anxious to take a look at the poem. I
 took a chance with the unfinished job though it was much
 against my grain to let a thing out prematurely as you know.
 The introduction and the conclusion weren't done and the
 main part was unrevised. However, I sent it to Harper's
 and another copy to Macmillan's. Harper's read it and made
 an immediate offer for spring publication ... Next week
 comes an offer from Macmillan's ... I am awfully anxious to
 go over it with you. I would much prefer to read it to you
 personally as a whole than send a fragment by mail. 60

In February 1930, Hugh Eayrs and Macmillan gave a dinner in honour of the
 publication of The Roosevelt and The Antioe. Pratt was the focus of an admiring
 circle and Edgar, who proposed a toast, was chief among the revellers.

Not everyone, however, viewed Edgar's association with Pratt warmly or
 believed that his influence was beneficial to Pratt's poetry. In a 1927 letter,
 W.A. Deacon remarked-

Ned [has] action - physical drama - in his poetry as no
 Canadian has ever had it; he has humour, fibre - all sorts
 of things. It is great stuff, but not the highest sort of
 poetry. He has not philosophy and he knows nothing of
 melody, never gets beyond a metallic regular, heavy beat,
 this is to Wilson's [MacDonald] music what a Tom tom is to
 Beethoven. Well, Pelham Edgar, his superior, and Barker
 Fairley and the "[Canadian] Forum" and university crowd
 generally, have got around Ned and persuaded him he is the
 cat's eyebrow. They hold - at least they tell him - that
 he is already much greater than Masfield, and the equal
 of any living poet today. My dear, it is nonsense, not so.
 But Ned, poor wistful fish, drinks it all in gratefully and
 the more fool he. He is very easily influenced by associates. 61

This serious criticism of Edgar's influence deserves consideration. First
 of all, it should be remembered that Deacon, who had as a freshman experienced
 Edgar's arrogance, disliked him at this time, although the two later became
 friendly. He felt Edgar stood for an effete, snobbish and Anglophile view of

literature.⁶² But it is difficult to see Edgar's association with Pratt as anything but beneficial. In his published criticism, Edgar, although he expressed high hopes for Pratt's achievement as a narrative poet, never pronounced him "greater than Masefield". There was certainly no insincerity in Edgar's encouragement of Pratt, as Deacon implies. Moreover, Pratt was a very individual poet; if he always valued Edgar's advice, he was never a slave to it. Pratt also sought the views of others, chief among them Deacon himself. Pratt several times told Deacon his feelings with regard to influences, for example in 1935 and 1940:

You have been a grand critical stimulus to me over the years, only one other person having a like influence and that's naturally my colleague and chief, P.E.⁶³

The two men in Canada who have meant most to me in literary stimulation are (academically) Pelham Edgar and (in the broad public field) your esteemed self ... I have consistently preached the debt Canadian writers owe to you and I feel sure the debt will be honoured in due time.⁶⁴

It is true that Edgar did some lobbying on Pratt's behalf in the literary world. In 1930, Pratt was admitted as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, at a time when Pelham Edgar was President of the Section concerned. In 1937, Pratt's volume, The Fable of the Goats, won a Governor General's award, an award which Edgar had been largely instrumental in founding a short time before. Pratt later wrote Edgar of his certainty that both honours were a result of Edgar's efforts.⁶⁵ Edgar used his contacts on Pratt's behalf on other occasions. In November 1935, Charles G.D. Roberts, in response to an appeal of Edgar's, wrote to Lawrence Burpee, a member of the Lorne Pierce Medal Committee of the Royal Society of Canada, urging the Committee to award the medal to Pratt for The Titanic.⁶⁶ Such lobbying seems, however, to have been

a common feature of Canadian literary life. For example, Pratt and Edgar lobbied on Deacon's behalf in 1933 when Deacon, as Mail and Empire literary editor, was under censure from his superiors for the forthrightness of his literary column.⁶⁷

Given the opportunities for teaching and writing which the appointment to Victoria made possible for Pratt, the general critical assessment of Edgar's influence on Pratt has been positive, not negative. Carl Klinck spoke warmly of Edgar's influence⁶⁸ and E.K. Brown wrote: "In Pelham Edgar's small department, dominated by his fine and liberal taste, Pratt expanded at astonishing speed."⁶⁹ Deacon himself, in later life, seems to have viewed the Pratt-Edgar association more positively. He reviewed Edgar's memoirs with the comment: "Most to be regretted ... is the fact that the chapter on E.J. Pratt - Edgar's student and successor - is impersonal. ... The close association between the two men deserves more than the reader is given."⁷⁰

Edgar and Pratt certainly had a "close association" in the Thirties. In fact, because Pratt was more affable and approachable than Edgar, poets seeking advice sometimes tried to get MSS. to Edgar via Pratt. One such suppliant told Helena Coleman:

[I] have concluded to have you send [the MS.] to Pratt without comment. I will write him when you send it. If he wishes to keep it for Edgar's return [from leave], why all right. He is on the spot - his office is next to Edgar's and [he] can advise me if it is worth while to show it to him. Almost everybody literarily inclined in Canada stands somewhat in awe of him.⁷¹

Pratt found the proximity to Edgar rewarding. He recalled, for example, that his poem "The Depression Ends" had its genesis in a casual challenge of Edgar's at the office one day to use the word "prognathic" in a poem.⁷² Pratt did not always follow Edgar's advice. In 1935, against Edgar's counsel, he

published the satiric poem "A Prayer-Medley" in the low-circulation Canadian Forum rather than given it wider exposure, and was mildly scolded for it by Deacon and Edgar.⁷³

The question of circulation often concerned Pratt and Edgar. Both dreamed of a "Jalna Breakthrough" (i.e. a 'bestseller'), which would give Pratt a financial windfall. The pair also hoped that Edgar's Art of the Novel, published in 1933, would be a lucrative college textbook. One reason they pined for this will-o'-the-wisp was that both were perennially short of money. Pratt's daughter Claire suffered from costly medical problems, and until Helen Edgar's death in November 1933, Edgar had expenses for her care. Edgar's subsequent remarriage in June 1935 to Dona Waller resulted in the birth of a daughter, Jane, in March 1936, and he had the expenses of a young family to meet late in life. Pratt, ever-generous, assured Edgar that if he ever had the hoped-for financial bonanza, he would pay for Jane Edgar's education:

If I should get a windfall on the Brébeuf, Jane is going to get her education out of it. It is one big if because while all my former editors have taken care of themselves under the Macmillan sponsorship there has been no Jalna-break.⁷⁴

Shortage of funds did not prevent Edgar from hosting literary gatherings in the Thirties for Pratt and others: at one such gathering in 1933, E.J. Pratt, Charles Roberts and W.A. Deacon were in attendance.⁷⁵ Pratt in his turn held gatherings attended by Edgar and such younger literary aspirants as E.K. Brown, Roy Daniells and Earle Birney — if Pratt had recently sold a poem, steak was on the menu.⁷⁶

Edgar's social and academic contacts with Pratt in the Thirties undoubtedly involved him with Pratt's poetic work-in-progress; unfortunately no record has survived of Edgar's comments on The Titanic, published in 1935. But we can be

sure he saw it before publication and probably made suggestions about revision. Edgar published no review of the poem, but in 1935 he told a lecture audience that Pratt was "one of the greatest living masters of human narrative verse," words which suggest a high opinion of the poem.⁷⁷

Edgar also gave Pratt public praise and support during the latter's editorship of the Canadian Poetry Magazine, which began with the magazine's founding in January 1936. The Canadian Poetry Magazine had the support of the Canadian Authors' Association. Although Edgar had been one of the prime movers for the Association's founding banquet in 1921, had led the remnants of the Canadian Society of Authors into the new body, and was on the Executive of the Toronto Branch of the CAA in the Twenties, his role within the CAA in the Twenties was low-key. By contrast, in June 1935, Edgar became President of the CAA, an office he held for two years. One of the first projects with which Edgar became involved was the founding of a poetry magazine. W.A. Deacon recalled the founding circle in 1952:

It does not seem that long ago that Pelham Edgar, Sir Charles Roberts, Murray Gibbon, Ned Pratt, Albert Robson, and one or two others sat around the lunch table in a Toronto hotel, drinking coffee and smoking. I happened to be present and was astonished, even then, at the casual and heart-free manner in which this important quarterly was launched between sips of coffee and puffs of smoke. Not more than a dozen brief remarks were made before the decision had been taken. Surely no business enterprise was ever begun with less thought for the morrow or scantier consideration of the serious financial risks.⁷⁸

As first editor, Pratt had Edgar's complete support: the latter was a member of the magazine's "Advisory Council on Awards."⁷⁹ When Canadian Poetry Magazine encountered the inevitable financial difficulties, Edgar, with H.A. Kennedy, CAA Secretary, gave it renewed support.⁸⁰ Edgar also backed Pratt's editorial policies. In an article in the Canadian Author before the first issue of the new periodical, Pratt declared that one of the aims of the magazine would be

to find and publish the work of new poets.⁸¹ In April 1936, in Canadian Poetry Magazine's second issue, Pratt struck a tolerant note that made it clear he wished to publish a range of new poets: "The accepted policy of the magazine is towards the tolerant consideration of genuine poetic effort and against identity with any form of aesthetic whether old or new."⁸² The awards announced in the item were fittingly diverse - the very traditional poet Audrey Alexandra Brown received first prize for a poem, while Dorothy Livesay, more modernist in technique and theme, was awarded second prize. Many CAA members did not agree with a catholicism that would allow for the publication of a poem of social consciousness like Dorothy Livesay's "Night and Day", which appeared in Canadian Poetry Magazine. Yet Edgar squarely supported Pratt. In a signed statement in the second issue Edgar told readers:

We have in Dr. Pratt an editor whose judgment is as sound as his creative genius. He will spare nothing of his energy and influence to make this enterprise a success. The Canadian Authors who sponsored it are supporting it with pride in the result.⁸³

The next spring, at a fundraising meeting for the periodical at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall, Edgar again spoke out in support of the magazine, whose coffers were depleted and whose subscribers numbered only about 600.⁸⁴ In 1937, in his last presidential address to the CAA, Edgar paid tribute to Pratt's role in the magazine's survival:

Without E.J. Pratt, our editor-in-chief, we [the CPM] could not have emerged. He has not only the admiration, but the complete confidence of the makers of poetry in Canada.⁸⁵

Without such support from Edgar, the financial and editorial problems of the magazine might have meant the end of Pratt's editorship or of the magazine

itself. Edgar seemed to act out of respect for Pratt's own concept of what the magazine ought to be, rather than from his own personal vision of it: the magazine's wide-ranging editorial policy appealed more to Pratt than to Edgar. Pratt was more tolerant of modernist poets than Edgar; the latter published a rather cranky article in Queen's Quarterly in 1937, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", which attacked Eliot and Pound and the type of poetry they stood for.⁸⁶ Pratt, on the other hand, contributed to the 1936 Canadian anthology New Provinces, several of whose contributors, for example F.R. Scott and Leo Kennedy, showed a clear debt to Eliot's technique. For all his enthusiasm for Canadian poetry, the names of these young poets were never on Edgar's lips. But he was willing to give Pratt, as Canadian Poetry Magazine editor, carte blanche to publish the work of poets like Dorothy Livesay and Leo Kennedy, and to help make possible an interesting aspect of Pratt's career.

Pratt had by no means abandoned poetry for editorial work. In November 1939, Edgar took part in a reading of Pratt's new poem "Brébeuf and His Brethren" (published by Macmillan in 1940) before more than 200 friends and admirers at Victoria College. A university magazine reported that "Edgar said as he began 'I need not tell you that this is the finest narrative poem written in this country - I mean, on this continent'. The judgment was not carelessly spoken, and it suggests the value we may attach to this poem".⁸⁷ Pratt used historical sources extensively in writing the poem, and Edgar would not have failed to remind him of Francis Parkman's writings on the subject, which he himself had edited early in the century.⁸⁸ Pratt certainly used Parkman's work. One critic, Milton Wilson, goes so far as to state that Edgar may have suggested the theme to Pratt.⁸⁹ Edgar obviously read and made suggestions about the MS. throughout its development, for in July 1940, Pratt wrote to him:

Pelham you have been a pearl right through the whole operation and I love you for it. I hope the final set-up [of the poem] appeals to you.⁹⁰

Edgar ranked Brébeuf higher than any other Pratt poem. He wrote enthusiastically about it to D.C. Scott, pressing him to find out how copies were selling in Ottawa. Scott replied:

Of course I admire Neds poem, and was the first to buy a copy here. ... [James] Hope [bookseller] says not [many have sold], but Hope is not the only hope. ... I was aware from your writing about 'Bréboeuf' [sic] what a treasure such a friendship [as yours] is to E.J.P. it should no doubt stimulate him.⁹¹

Edgar elicited an equally warm response to Brébeuf from Sir Charles G.D.

Roberts.⁹²

Edgar himself published two long and laudatory reviews of the poem in two important periodicals - Saturday Night and Poetry (Chicago). "A Great Canadian Poem", Edgar's review in Saturday Night, praised Brébeuf as "Pratt's greatest achievement for many reasons ... [it is] a moving human story which he presents with all the resources of his poetry and power. In the conduct of his narrative his hand never falters; and considered from its artistic merits alone the poem is an unquestioned masterpiece. For the first time he has bitten deep into the rind of history and human endeavour."⁹³ Interestingly, Edgar, who had been involved in the making of the poem, gave no credence to the idea, widespread in recent critical analysis of the poem, that Pratt treated Brébeuf or his faith with irony and ambivalence.⁹⁴ In both the Saturday Night and Poetry reviews, Edgar praises the "range of imagination which alone made it possible for a Protestant by instinct, tradition and connection to write the greatest Catholic poem of the ay." "We are", he told Poetry readers, "left in no doubt as to his thrilling sympathy with his martyr heroes."⁹⁵ In the Saturday Night review

Edgar seems to have been carried away by the current events of the day; he writes of Pratt's "like generosity" to martyr and Indian alike, yet he makes the remark:

"The identification of Nazi and Iroquois is a parallelism that the present crisis imposes upon us." A year later in the Poetry review, Edgar's jingoism had cooled. The American review was calculated to make the U.S. reader aware that there dwelt in the North a poet of technical and intellectual prowess:

"[Pratt's] latest production stamps him as a poet who would not suffer by comparison with any narrative poet of our age ... [this is] the noblest Catholic poem of modern times."⁹⁶

Not surprisingly, given the warmth of Edgar's Saturday Night review and other favourable reviews, the poem went into a second edition and won the Governor-General's Award for 1940. Edgar and Pratt soon undertook a project related to the poem; with the musician Herman Voaden, a fellow member of the Arts and Letters Club, they proposed to create a musical and dramatic pageant of Brébeuf to be performed at the Midland site.⁹⁷ Edgar actually contributed supplementary verse narrative to the pageant script. He wrote several such workmanlike transitional passages in the narrative as this:

The fortunes of New France were at low ebb.
Quebec was near its doom, and the mighty aid
Of Champlain was withdrawn through stress of war.
Heart-saddened but with unconquered hope
Brébeuf forsakes his half-accomplished task
And leaves his Indian friends ...⁹⁸

Edgar added some lines at the beginning of the scene of martyrdom which gave the work a much more specifically religious meaning, probably to make it more acceptable for presentation at the Martyrs' Shrine:

Lord Jesus! You redeemed us with your Blood
Their blood they gave as willingly
They did not fail you in the grace

Of martyrdom, when in your infinite mercy
You offered it to them ...99

These additions seemingly met with Pratt's approval, because the desire to see the pageant produced is often mentioned in his war letters to Edgar. In August 1941, Pratt wrote:

I saw Fermell [unidentified] the other day and he said that the Pageant is sure to be a success but as a peace-time project. No one is committing himself just now. William wrote [Sir Joseph] Flavelle but got no response. Fermell was sure that a completed job on script and music would compel the music patrons to back it. There it stands. 100

Three years later, Pratt was still hoping for a performance:

I am told by Frank MacDowell [novelist] that interest in the pageant is growing in the northern towns and that [Premier George] Drew is sympathetic. I trust the thing will be resumed after the War. The excavations [of the site at Midland] have helped the idea substantially, Currelly [Director of the Royal Ontario Museum] says. 101

According to Edgar, a group of Pratt's musical and literary friends had worked hard for a year on the project, and Healey Willan, the eminent Canadian composer, had made a score. As late as 1948 Edgar wrote that "... Canada will probably have an annual or biennial festival that will make old Huronia a place of pilgrimage." 102 But the most the grand plans ever achieved was a broadcast on CBC radio in September 1943. 103

Other Pratt MS. were discussed in Pratt and Edgar's wartime letters. In August 1941, Pratt told Edgar of his progress on Dunkirk:

This last month I have worked furiously at Dunkirk which is just about finished. ... It's shaping out into four or five hundred lines mainly descriptive of the Regatta - composition of ships and crews and the great lifting

operation. ... I am using a "free" line like that of "Radio in the Ivory Tower". I am having some fun out of it.¹⁰⁴

When Dunkirk appeared, Edgar presented a copy to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, apparently in the hope King might quote the poem in a speech or have it distributed as a patriotic work. King's response was polite, but noncommittal.¹⁰⁵

Edgar played a more potent role with other Pratt MS. When Pratt was preparing Still Life and Other Verse for publication in 1943, Edgar saw the MS., probably in March.¹⁰⁶ After it went to the publishers, Pratt told Macmillan to make certain that a particular sonnet on Dunkirk was in the collection because Edgar wanted it included.¹⁰⁷

In August 1944, Pratt proudly wrote Edgar that he was getting his biggest sum yet from a publisher - two hundred dollars for They Are Returning.¹⁰⁸ Edgar read and made various suggestions when Behind the Log (1947) was in preparation. Pratt told Edgar in August 1945 that, as usual, he had begun with copious research:

I haven't written a line yet, have nothing but data, data, data. The task of selection and elimination is tremendous. I may get at it in early fall.¹⁰⁹

Pratt later reminisced about one of Edgar's rather comical contributions to the poem:

I might say for off the record that my first choice /for a name in the poem/ was Sir Francis Trelawney-Clutterbuck which Pelham Edgar liked very much until he woke up to the fact that this was the real name of the British High Trade Commissioner at Ottawa. There was some consternation at this, so the name was changed to Camperdown. ...¹¹⁰

From 1942 to 1947, Pratt and Edgar lived in different cities for the first time in their friendship. Because Edgar was a postal censor in Ottawa in these

years, he did not have the opportunity to follow Pratt's work-in-progress as closely as before. There is no doubt that Pratt missed Edgar and their literary rapport, as well as the "good old days" of the poker and golf gatherings. The old camaraderie was recaptured at every opportunity. In June 1945, Pratt went to Ottawa for a visit with Edgar, and in October he was jubilant that he managed to organise a poker weekend for Edgar in Toronto.¹¹¹ In January 1947, Pratt organised an evening-long poetry reading by Edgar at the York Club, to be attended by all of Victoria's English staff.¹²² A wistful note crept into Pratt's correspondence when he told Edgar he probably would not be at the 1946 Royal Society meetings:

The old days of golf and carousing at the Sessions or rather outside of the Sessions are gone I fear. What days those were!¹¹³

By contrast to such past revelry, Pratt and Edgar's activity at this time was lobbying Victoria authorities for an increase in the inadequate pension scheme, on which Edgar was trying to raise a daughter.¹¹⁴ The two continued their literary friendship, however. As a result, in the Forties, in a letter to the young poet Ralph Gustafson, Pratt warmly recommended Edgar as a literary mentor:

There are two men in this country who ought to be able to put you into the best prose. One is professor Pelham Edgar. ... he is excited over a novel on Halifax called Barometer Rising by a friend of mine, Hugh McLennan ... The other man is E.K. Brown.¹¹⁵

Edgar in his turn continued to praise Pratt in the Forties. In that decade, he published two long articles on Pratt's work which, if they said little that was new about his work, affirmed Pratt's status as a leading Canadian poet. One article was published in the French language Gants de Ciel,

thereby exposing Pratt's merits to a francophone audience, as Edgar had done to an American audience with the review in Poetry (Chicago).¹¹⁶ A reader unfamiliar with Pratt's poetry was immediately made aware by the Gants du Ciel article that Pratt was a major Canadian poet:

... the inspiration which flows from a complete mastery of his theme is not lacking. The result is poetic realism of the highest order, a poetry tense with passion yet factual....

The impressiveness of his poetic statement is not a matter of mere metrical expertness. It is the expression rather of a genuinely noble nature which had the good fortune to be endowed not only with a riotously rich vocabulary but with the rare ability to find the discriminating phrase.¹¹⁷

Edgar directed the attention of his audience to the value of Pratt's shorter poems like "Silences" and "Come Away Death" with the remark that "there is a meditative depth in Pratt that does not find its full release in epic narrative."¹¹⁸ Edgar thus emphasised an aspect of Pratt's verse that has received further attention only recently with the work of Germaine Warkentin.¹¹⁹

Edgar wrote an article on Pratt for the Quebec Educational Record which Edgar revised near the end of his life for re-publication. Published in Leading Canadian Poets, it is a final testament of Edgar's belief in Pratt's greatness.¹²⁰ The last lines Edgar wrote about Pratt, were, as ever since 1920, full of confidence about Pratt's stature as a poet. As a friend would, he wrote of Pratt's human qualities - his zest for living and good fellowship and his passion for the sea - and how they were manifest in the work of this "genuinely important poet." To bring the association full circle, he quoted Pratt on Clay, his first poem and his own daunting opinions so long ago of that gloomy piece. Fittingly, at the end of the article, he let Pratt's talent speak for itself. By devoting the last pages to quoting in full the poem "Silences".

Shortly before his death, on October 7, 1948, Edgar, incapacitated by severe circulatory problems, was looking forward to a visit by Pratt and a few old friends to Canton, where he spent the last few months of his life. Latterly, Pratt had periodically comforted Edgar as they were each beset by old age. Yet, he mused to Edgar, despite the twinges of his own rheumatism:

There is much to be thankful for. There is still the
odd lecture to be given and the odd line to be scrawled.¹²¹

By disparaging the early poem Clay, Edgar prompted Pratt to work toward his unique poetic voice. His published praise of Pratt stimulated Pratt to write. By making possible the appointment to the English Department at Victoria, he enabled Pratt to immerse himself in the range of English poetry. For The Roosevelt and The Antinoe, he garnered the financial help for the research trip that gave the poem its realism. And, as we have seen, Edgar played a major role in the revision of much of Pratt's work.

Pratt was the first important writer Edgar nurtured at Victoria, but he was not the last. The years immediately after World War I brought Edgar another pupil of literary gifts - Raymond Knister. In the fall of 1919, the twenty year old youth from a farm in Essex County enrolled at Victoria College. Although he was there only a few months before he was forced to withdraw because of illness,¹²² he was there long enough to be deeply impressed both by Edgar's lectures on poetry and his literary sensibilities. Knister evidently spoke to Edgar about his own literary ambitions and received an encouraging response. In April 1920, he wrote to Edgar about the influence of his classes:

... I well remember your talks on certain modern writers, and in particular one on present day poets, to a group of us in the Senior Common Room. The discussion engaged in there removed an idea which almost had possession of me that literature was one of those topics about which

(like scenery according to one writer) people never converse for five minutes at a time.

It was readings, however (in lectures two of which I recall particularly, one of Francis Thompson's "The Mistress of Vision" and one of Yeats' poems) which did most for me. Through them I owe you debt as pleasant, I think, as any can be to both debtor and creditor, the discovery of poetry. In continuation [in your class, with] reading Shelley's "To A Skylark" and Tennyson's "Mort d'Arthur" and "Lotus Eaters", I began to suspect that there was such a thing as poetry, but the suspicion had pretty well almost vanished by that time, until I learned from you that poetry meant beauty of sound as well as thought. After one of these readings I went and wrote my second piece of free verse. Perhaps you will not see how you may be held responsible but the fact remains ...123

Knister sent Edgar a group of his poems, saying that they had been rejected by several magazines. He wondered, he wrote Edgar

whether there could be any hope for me if I continued in that course. So I was reminded of you, not more because there is no one in Canada to whose judgment in such matters I think I could more safely trust than [yours] because of like assistance which you had given me before.124

Edgar's reply has not survived. It must have been encouraging, for Knister continued to seek his advice and send him material for more than a decade. Once again, as in the case of Pratt, Edgar's sensitivity to poetry stimulated a talented student. In March 1925, after Knister's return the previous fall from a year-long stint in Iowa City on the editorial staff of The Midland, he again wrote to Edgar. He told him about his writing and his feelings about it. He lamented that he often thought a piece was finished before it was, since "I am making a ninth attempt at one of the pieces I sent you two years ago." Some new poetry accompanied the letter:

Somehow I don't get hold of such poetry-[to read].
Then most of it seems of futility - futile.
Speaking of which, I am enclosing a copy of "March

Wind" which, seeming my best at the moment I consider will interest you. But why does the latest effort so usually seem the best?¹²⁵ (Italics Knister's)

Over the next few years, Edgar took considerable interest in Knister. He invited him to his home on several occasions.¹²⁶ He introduced Knister to Earle Birney, another promising young student, about 1926, although because of Knister's shyness the two did not meet again.¹²⁷ Edgar persuaded Knister to join the Poetry Society of Canada, which sponsored talks about poetry and of which Edgar was President,¹²⁸ and when the two met at Society meetings, he always inquired about the progress of Knister's work.¹²⁹ In March 1927, Knister proudly told his friend Elizabeth Frankfurth that the Poetry Society had commissioned from him a paper on Duncan Campbell Scott which Edgar had read to the Society "with praisy remarks thereon."¹³⁰

Edgar's praise could have practical results, as Knister discovered when he submitted the MS. of his novel White Narcissus to Edgar in September 1927.

Edgar's response was enthusiastic:

I have read over 100 pages of your novel, & I wish I could finish it before leaving to-day for Canton. So far as I have gone it is extremely well-written. The Macmillan people like my advice on these things, and it looks very much as if I should advise them to publish this.¹³¹

Later, Knister wrote to a friend:

Pelham Edgar, author of Henry James, whom I have doubtless referred to as the best Canadian critic as far as I know - says it is extremely well-written, and talks in the same breath of Hardy's first novel. Took it to Eayrs, pres. Macmillan's, his publisher and Eayrs says he will publish it here ...¹³²

Once more Edgar's help was invaluable to a young writer: White Narcissus

was published in 1929.

When Knister began work on his next novel, about Keats, the Depression had begun. Pelham Edgar was anxious that Knister not abandon the novel in favour of the 'hack work' necessary to earn money. Knister now had financial responsibilities: he had married Myrtle Gamble in 1927 and the couple had a daughter in June 1930. In January 1930, Edgar unsuccessfully tried to obtain money from Vincent Massey and other sources to help Knister.¹³³ A grateful if still penniless Knister shared with Edgar the problems of a MS. "running to a quarter million words":

I think my method in tackling the book is right but did not go far enough. The good journalistic biographer might have taken up the beginning, delved in research, and written his Chapter I und so weiter. The best way for a novel would have been to spend ten years on Keats and his contemporaries, and then write out of a full mind, and heart, if possible, and check up bits of inaccuracy afterward. My method was (though I had read Keats through a couple of time/s/ fifteen years ago) to try to saturate myself in the whole thing in seven months and then start to write.¹³⁴

Knister hoped Edgar would help him revise the manuscript and he wanted to dedicate it to him:

It is unlikely that you will find yourself in perfect agreement with my view of Keats: but you see, I hope, that I have enough reverence for the merest flotsam of humanity to want to treat it with truth; much more a flower of the human race like Keats. So perhaps in view of this tie and the interest you have taken in my writing you will permit me to dedicate the book to you. It will in fact be no more than due, if you interest yourself with setting me right on certain matters.¹³⁵

Edgar replied that he would be proud of such a dedication, and commented:

We shall have to get together and shorten you [the MS.] a bit ... You are doing bravely - I want to see how you

manage the Garrod vs. Middleton Murry view [of Keats].
Your criticism must of course be a pregnant and dramatic
distillation.¹³⁶

In reply Knister set out his view of Keats for Edgar and sent part of the MS. for his comments:

Keats was amazingly conscious, and far ahead of his own capabilities in expression - at least in dramatic expression - but not that conscious, I fear like most [of] us he was a poor groping creature, swirled hither and thither by currents, and he was wise after the event. He had loved and been nurtured in his mother tongue, in fact language had an amazing florescence in him from the time he read Spenser. But even the luxury of poetry was chosen for him by his temperament, once he had learned his alphabet ... When it came to love, moreover, he was completely defenseless.¹³⁷

Knister thanked Edgar for his attempts to secure money for him to continue to write, with the rueful comment: "It is fortunate for writers that business men do not realize their value to the country, or they would corrupt them with salaries to stay in Canada and make more of it to the Canadian than his own personal experience, so solving the emigration problem."¹³⁸ Several weeks later, Knister arranged to visit Edgar in Toronto, and the novel was subjected to Edgar's comments and his "careful reading".¹³⁹

In November 1931, Edgar received a letter from Knister about the wording for the dedication of the novel to be titled My Star Predominant:

I have put it thus. -
"To Pelham Edgar, my old teacher, in the hope
that he may find reflected in these pages something
of his genuine passion for poetry."
If this wording does not suit you - I am not accustomed
to literary punctillio of this sort - please let me
know. The adjective "old" will sound invidious if not
absurd to those who know you.¹⁴⁰

Ominously, Knister also told Edgar that he had only promissory notes for the prize money which Graphic Press of Ottawa had awarded him in March 1931 for the Keats novel.¹⁴¹ Edgar replied that the dedication pleased him and urged Knister: "Come back soon to Toronto where your friends are."¹⁴² Knister's next letter to Edgar was a pathetic request for help. The notes Graphic had given Knister, which he had used to pay his rent, had not been honoured:

Well, the blow has fallen: Graphic Publishers have gone into assignment, but what I am writing about is that they might take me with 'em! ...

So here we are, with six months' rent [due] and a couple of months of bills. The first time in my life I ran store bills, coal bills and so forth, would have to be this time, reposing as I was in the supposed security of a regular income! Some of these people are starting to press.

In this dilemma I am turning to you in the hope that your Authors' Foundation may be in a position to make me a loan of \$400.¹⁴³

Although he was ill and confined to bed, Edgar's response to Knister's desperation was immediate. His frustration that he and the Foundation had no money was evident, as was his affection for Knister:

I am deeply concerned at what has happened to you, and all the more because I cannot promise any relief from the Foundation for the present at least. We have not yet made an appeal for funds ... As for myself I am deep in debts which I shall not be able to pay until my book The Art of the Novel is published and begins to sell. ...

Dear Raymond - I have the greatest confidence in your talent, and whatever influence I have I will put behind you.. This sounds like cold comfort when you need cash. I am calling a meeting of the local committee of the Foundation as soon as I am well and we have a Governors' meeting in May. You may count on my emphasising your case, but that is not enough to satisfy your banker or your creditors.¹⁴⁴

Edgar did not confine his efforts to help Knister to appeals to members of the Foundation. Through his friend Charles Currelly, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum, who had property at Canton, near Port Hope, he secured a cottage for

the Knisters beginning in September, which they could have rent free for at least several months:

This is a great chance for you I think. Please write me if you can arrange [it].¹⁴⁵

The Knisters did accept the cottage, and Knister planned to commute to Toronto to an editorial job which Lorne Pierce had offered him at Ryerson Press.¹⁴⁶ But Knister was never to occupy the cottage: he was drowned while swimming off Stoney Point, Lake St. Clair, on August 20, 1932. Edgar was shaken by the death of this young writer, so full of promise. According to Edgar's friends, it strengthened his resolve to build the Canadian Writers' Foundation so that writers like Knister would not go unaided in time of need.¹⁴⁷ In a letter of sympathy to Knister's widow, Edgar wrote of his confidence in Raymond Knister's talent:

My wife and I were heart-broken at the news of dear Raymond's death, and all our sympathy goes out to you. His friendship was very precious. His personal qualities endeared him to us, and I need not tell you the very high opinion I had of his talents. I always told him he was the man to write the great novel for Canada. The Canton arrangement might have given him the requisite peace of mind.¹⁴⁸

Ironically, when My Star Predominant was published by Ryerson in 1934, it did not bear Knister's planned dedication to Edgar, because Knister had not lived to prepare the final MS. Even without it, there is no doubt that his old teacher's advice and aid had meant much to him, as his widow remembers.¹⁴⁹

Edgar inspired critical as well as creative writers. Two men, both former pupils, remembered him with gratitude throughout their lives - the Milton scholar Douglas Bush and the Canadian historian Donald Creighton. Douglas Bush entered Victoria College in 1914 and, with a two year leave for

war service, remained there until 1921, when he was awarded an M.A. in English.

Over fifty years later, Bush, by now retired from Harvard, recalled

[Edgar's] encouragement [of young writers] included much practical help, as I among many can bear witness ... As a person and as a teacher, moreover, he gave so much that my wife (Hazel Cleaver) and myself cherished his memory with both respect and affection....

Pelham Edgar must have been the handsomest man in the profession; he was an arresting figure on the platform or in private. ... I won't try to picture him, but I will record the really burning light in his dark brown eyes. These remarks might suggest that he was a spell-binding orator; he did cast a spell, but not at all in that way. In the classroom he never gave formal lectures; his manner, to use my wife's word, was conversational, almost casual, though he had his moments of spontaneous, forceful elegance. In general, he being what he was, his unorganized, civilized talk must be called "inspirational" in the best sense. He made us feel the greatness of great literature and the joys of getting inside it, a feeling that endured and fired our own reading.¹⁵⁰

Edgar was jubilant when his young protégé heard him recite Keats' "Ode On A Grecian Urn" and could tell him the two words he had omitted from the recitation.¹⁵¹ He did not hesitate, however, to rebuke the young Bush for bumptiousness, as Bush told Victoria students in 1931:

We had been directed to write an essay on some exhibit in the Royal Ontario Museum, and, I, having perambulated the Museum, felt growing within me a piece on a very different theme. Accordingly I approached Professor Edgar with the incredibly brash candour of a freshman and said, "Professor Edgar, I wonder if I might write a piece for Acta? I find I can't get interested in the Museum ...". And that day I said no more.¹⁵²

Edgar rewarded Bush's merits despite the brashness. In June 1920, through Edgar's intervention, Bush was granted a fellowship in English, the first of its kind:

The moment I arrived in college I knew I wanted to be a college teacher, and, since I was in the Classics course, I expected for some time to pursue the subject toward a Ph.D., but I finally decided on English ... Here P.E. came to my rescue. He managed to have a fellowship created for me at Victoria, so that I could achieve a transition by way of Old and Middle English and get an M.A. This was not an easy matter, since the Principal, Rev. Dr. Bowles, did not look upon me with favour ... in the course of the year he summoned me to his office to warn me against assuming that my fellowship gave me any claim on the college for a post later. However, P.E.'s efforts surmounted this obstacle and this transitional year was a great help for me. I recite these details only to show how P.E. could put his shoulder to the wheel on behalf of the penniless young.¹⁵³

Edgar fostered interest in Canadian literature in many of his students, and Bush was no exception. Some of his ideas on the topic are similar to Edgar's: like his teacher, he stressed the need for universal critical standards in the evaluation of Canadian literature. In a 1925 article Bush declared:

There is, of course, no reason why there may not be a Canadian Shelley or Keats, but the best way to prepare for their arrival is to create a community of intelligent taste and knowledge and critical standards. Otherwise the authentic voice may be unheard in the babble of mutual adulation. And the only standards are universal standards.¹⁵⁴

Bush went on to praise the teacher who expounded these ideas:

It is pleasant for students and graduates of Victoria to remember that nothing has done more to foster Canadian literature, and to make its value known, than the unique knowledge, sympathy and discrimination of Dr. Edgar.¹⁵⁵

Bush's general critical principles also owed something to his contact in his formative scholarly years with Edgar. Like Edgar, Bush came to believe strongly that criticism is ethical in character and that "literature has

fortified and enriched the human spirit."¹⁵⁶ This passage in Bush might have been written by Edgar:

Most of the great critics of the past have been more or less ethical in their judgments, and the need of such criticism was never greater than it is now, when the confusion and loss of values is the most familiar and paralysing of clichés. ...¹⁵⁷

Like Edgar, Bush became a great admirer of Arnold's critical principles.

When Bush left Victoria for Harvard in the early Twenties, he kept in touch with his mentor, and sought his approval and advice. In 1922, he wrote from Harvard to request from Edgar ideas for a thesis topic:

Do you know my fantastic mind and its enormous gaps well enough to suggest anything?

Now that I'm a thousand miles away I might perhaps say what I never had quite enough nerve to say when I was on the ground - that if you had a photograph to spare for a grateful pupil, an autographed photo, the said pupil would strike the stars with his estimable head. In default of that, I carry a Rebel cartoon about with me.¹⁵⁸

Edgar planned a chapter on Bush in his memoirs, but he did not live to write it.

Donald Creighton was a near-contemporary of Douglas Bush at Victoria (B.A. 1925). Although the two often jousted in the pages of Acta Victoriana, they agreed about their regard for Edgar. Donald Creighton was a historian with a strong sense of literary style and polish. As Carl Berger has observed,¹⁵⁹ he developed this literary sense under Edgar, and Edgar gave him opportunities to further his literary knowledge. Creighton found Edgar's dislike for the crude, the vulgar and the impudent congenial, and he benefited from Edgar's kindness. In old age, Creighton had vivid memories of Edgar's Fourth Year seminar on nineteenth century writers, held in Victoria's Annesley Hall.¹⁶⁰ At these classes, Edgar, who suffered from rheumatic joints, would

lower himself, groaning, onto a long leather couch and then begin to lecture in his rambling way. Edgar would on occasion bring poets - Roberts or Wilson MacDonald - to talk to the class, or would loan Creighton a copy of the latest literary periodicals from England. Creighton believed that Edgar, for all his seeming langour, assessed and categorised his seminar students very closely, a belief shared by other students, notably Pratt and Birney.

Edgar encouraged Creighton in his literary interests, and wrote him a generous letter of recommendation for a Rhodes Scholarship. Creighton failed to win it, one of the few instances of an unsuccessful Edgar recommendation. Through Edgar, however, Creighton was given an opportunity to lecture on modern American verse to the local branch of the Canadian Authors' Association, and to give a lecture course on literature, including his favorite Hardy novels, at the Workers' Educational Association.¹⁶¹ Edgar gave Creighton a chance to show his abilities, perhaps with the hope of interesting him in a career as professor of literature. Creighton, however, found history just as interesting, and the comradeship of young history teachers like Hume Wrong and George Smith led him toward that field. Throughout his distinguished career, however, he remained grateful to Edgar for refining his literary tastes and for being one of the "liberating" spirits of Victoria College.¹⁶²

Pelham Edgar was more fortunate in fanning the literary fires of Earle Birney, another promising young writer to come under his tutelage. Birney arrived in Toronto from the University of British Columbia in the fall of 1926 to take a Master's Degree in English literature. At the University of British Columbia, Birney had favourably impressed Professor Garnet Sedgwick, a friend of Edgar's, and it was not long after he enrolled in Edgar's seminar on "Recent English Fiction" that the latter took notice of him. The course introduced Birney to the range of modern fiction, knowledge important to him

when he wrote Turvey and Down the Long Table¹⁶³ in the Forties. Birney had never before encountered the stream-of-consciousness approach of Dorothy Richardson and was fascinated by Aldous Huxley's fiction, also new to him. Like Creighton, Birney found Edgar rigorous: in a seminar of twenty to twenty-five people, those who did not give quick-witted replies were never again asked a question. Birney discerned beneath Edgar's reserve a man, as he put it, "wise about the heart and head."¹⁶⁴ The young student was invited to the Edgar home several times, and because of the quality of his essays, Edgar urged Birney to write poetry, something Birney was not doing at the time.

Birney wrote a paper on Huxley for the course, and Edgar liked it so well he incorporated it wholesale into the Art of the Novel, his study of novel form. Birney recalls that he wrote him to inform, not ask, him about this. Birney was surprised but honoured, and grateful to his teacher for making him feel a part of Toronto, where he had initially felt himself an outsider.

Later Edgar bestowed on Birney the practical help for which he was becoming well-known. In 1934, Birney held a precarious teaching post at the University of Utah. He had written appeals for alternate occupation to Edgar, Sedgewick and others. Suddenly, in June 1934, Birney received a telegram from Edgar saying that, unknown to Birney, his teacher had secured for him a \$1500 Royal Society Fellowship. Edgar was on the Fellowship Committee of the Royal Society. He told Birney in October 1934:

In the first place I want to congratulate you most warmly on your success. I may have had a trifle to do with it for my recommendations went in to the operating committee. ...

You are ripe for England and I shall be interested to hear of your adventures. So please sometimes on a separate sheet [in reports to the Society] the personal touch.¹⁶⁵

The fellowship enabled Birney to go to the University of London for doctoral work on Chaucer.

Once in London, Birney sent regular progress reports to Edgar for the Royal Society, and shared with him the problems of a young academic in the Thirties. Birney hoped to have his fellowship renewed, because he was otherwise without prospects:

... I am now without work and rapidly approaching the time when I shall also be without funds ... I am not seeking to blame either the University or the Royal Society for my present plight; my criticisms are reserved for a stupid economic system which can produce such situations ... Nevertheless there is no work for me, here, there, or anywhere, either in university, school or kindergarten. Even if I go once more out of my chosen profession into unskilled labour, where I began my working life and through which I saved my cents to go to college, there is still no work. I am faced with returning, on what remains of my fellowship money, to my home in Vancouver, there to sit and wait until I can establish residence 'privileges'. Then I may have the privilege of working in a relief camp at twenty cents a day. 166

Edgar's response to Birney's plight was sympathetic. Earlier, Edgar had hinted to Birney of the possibility of a vacancy at University College:

I am sorry life is looking bleak and barren ahead. I suppose you heard that E.K. Brown is going to Manitoba as head of department. That should leave a U.C. vacancy. 167

The Royal Society fellowship was not renewed, but Birney did get the University College position, a piece of good fortune with which Edgar was no doubt involved.

Over the next few years, Birney saw little of Edgar, who retired from Victoria in 1938, but Edgar was still Birney's champion. When Birney's poem "David" was published in Canadian Forum in December 1941, Edgar recommended author and

poem to his old friend Lorne Pierce, President of Ryerson Press.¹⁶⁸ In 1942, Ryerson published David and Other Poems, Birney's first book, and Pierce told Edgar:

I am sending you a copy of E.K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry ... At any rate I owe you this and a good deal more for having introduced Birney to me and for having made possible one of our happiest ventures in the publishing of Canadian verse.¹⁶⁹

Edgar followed Birney's career with interest and pride. In 1946, he wrote to congratulate him on his appointment to the University of British Columbia and praised his poetry:

Keep up the work for you have a public - of the type I fear called discriminating. Which does not make for royalties.¹⁷⁰

With the exception of Earle Birney, Edgar's best-known students between the late Twenties and his retirement in 1938 were critical rather than creative writers. He aided, among others, Kathleen Coburn, a Coleridge scholar, E.K. Brown and Desmond Pacey, both critics of Canadian literature, and Northrop Frye, a critic of Blake and of criticism itself. Kathleen Coburn, who enrolled at Victoria in 1928, credits Edgar's lectures with stirring her interest in Coleridge, and tells in her memoirs how Edgar offered her a small teaching scholarship which enabled her to continue her studies there at the M.A. level. She remarked of Edgar: "If the English department in Victoria College has an enviable reputation for freedom, variousness, and harmony, it is largely owing to this man."¹⁷¹

Desmond Pacey studied at Victoria College from 1934 to 1938, as his widow recalls,¹⁷² and had a high regard for Edgar's teaching. - Edgar doubtless stimulated Pacey's interest in Canadian literature, but unfortunately no record

of their contact appears to survive. There is only one reference, in a 1952 letter of Pacey's in support of a fund for Edgar's memory:

... my desk is almost as untidy as Pelham's used to be:
I remember spending a whole lecture hour once hunting on
his desk for an article on Burns!¹⁷³

Roy Daniells and Alfred Bailey, both critics and poets in later life, were students of Edgar in the Thirties and both received Royal Society Fellowships for 1934, an honour not unfamiliar to prize students of Pelham Edgar. Daniells, who was hired as an English instructor at Victoria (1934-37), had vivid memories of Edgar's helpfulness.¹⁷⁴ When Edgar taught summer school at Columbia in the Thirties, his "timely suggestions" helped shape the biography of Wilfred Campbell by another promising young scholar, Carl Klinck.¹⁷⁵ E.K. Brown, when he was an undergraduate at University College, chose to audit Edgar's lectures at Victoria because of their excellence; it was Edgar who introduced him to D.C. Scott, on whom he was to do important critical work.¹⁷⁶

Pelham Edgar is probably best remembered today as the teacher and mentor of Northrop Frye, a fact which might have caused Edgar some bemusement, despite his pride in Frye's accomplishments. Frye entered Victoria College in 1929. Edgar recorded how the studious, bespectacled young man first came to his notice:

The most remarkable thing about Norrie Frye when I first noticed him in 1930 in a second year class at Victoria College was a flaming mass of tawny gold hair, which I had no reason to suspect covered a brain of exceptional power. I was in charge that year of the Lincoln Hutton Essay prize which was open to the whole college. I had included among the several choices of theme one of a general nature on "Eccentricity." I observed that only one candidate had chosen this as his subject, and I began to read the essay with some languor of attention. But the wit, the wisdom and the invention of this essay were irresistible,

and from that moment I marked its author as my own, or rather as Victoria's own.¹⁷⁷

For his part; Frye has credited Edgar with seeing in him the interest in Blake which was to result in Fearful Symmetry:

Frye suggests that his professor, Pelham Edgar, must have seen the subconscious similarities between the two of them when he assigned Frye an undergraduate essay on Blake. "It was a stroke of genius" he says now.¹⁷⁸

According to Frye, Edgar's example, along with that of E.J. Pratt and J.D. Robins (who was also a student of Edgar's, later hired by him from Victoria's German Department in 1925), encouraged him to enter teaching:

I have often been asked why I went into English teaching with the second half of the question "when there were better things you might have done" sometimes being obviously suppressed. But no one who knew the teachers I had at Victoria: Pelham Edgar, Pratt himself and J.D. Robins would be in the least surprised at any student's wanting to pursue the careers they were so brilliant an advertisement for. This extraordinary trio had two qualities in common. One was an unusually fresh and detached interest in the contemporary literary scene. ... What they also had in common was a keen and generous (often very practically generous, as many could testify) interest in younger Canadian writers, and a desire to do what they could to foster the creative talent around them.

... Pratt's knowledge of modern poetry [was] rounded out by Edgar's knowledge of modern fiction.¹⁷⁹

Edgar was certainly generous to Frye: from 1934, the year he received his B.A., to 1936, Frye enjoyed a stipend as a department reader, and in the fall of 1936 Frye was awarded the \$1500 Royal Society Fellowship. As Edgar recalled:

Before he finished his fourth year I told our Chancellor what I hoped to do with Frye ... In 1936 I secured for him a Royal Society of Canada Fellowship which took him to Oxford for a year where his Blake studies began to shape themselves into book form. In 1937 I had him

appointed a teaching Fellow in the English department, which permitted him to receive a Trick-Currelly Fellowship granted to younger members of the staff for study abroad. This gave him another year at Oxford, and on his return to Toronto in 1939 he was appointed to the permanent English staff of his old college.¹⁸⁰

When Frye was in England on the Royal Society Fellowship, he dutifully reported to Edgar the progress of his Blake research,¹⁸¹ but the direction of Frye's thought on Blake owes little, if anything, to Edgar. In his memoirs, Edgar shows a polite bemusement at many of Blake's ideas and Frye's elucidation of them.¹⁸² If Frye owes anything of his interest in myth and symbol to any of his teachers, it is to J.D. Robins. An interest in myth and symbol, which has affinities to Frye's own, is discernable in some of Robins' articles. In a 1915 article in Acta Victoriana,¹⁸³ Robins discussed the need for "mythological and historical" background in poetry. He asserted that, over time, mythic material had gained "a simplicity" which the poet could use to advantage. Observing that "all true poetry is symbolic", he mentioned the use of myth in a writer such as Yeats and remarked:

There are ... symbols that have come to be universally known and accepted, and there are others that from their inherent fitness may at any time become so. They are part of the equipment of any writer, and he who uses them does not thereby limit his circle of possible readers.¹⁸⁴

Frye's interest in myth and symbol and individual poets, so evident in the articles in The Bush Garden reflect the drift of Robins' thinking rather than Edgar's. The idea of a self-contained literary universe, not alien to Frye, would have been anathema to Edgar. Edgar, it is true, made scattered references in his criticism to the role of myth in Canadian literature and to the mental geography of the Canadian writer. These references, however, are made in passing; they are not central to Edgar's thought. On examination, it seems implausible that Edgar bestowed on Frye any strong orientation toward myth and

symbol. Edgar's references to myth are illustrated in his 1912 University Magazine article, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature":

We [in Canada] are also in the anomalous position of being a young nation born in the old age of the world. All the countries of Europe have passed through the ballad and epic stage of unself-conscious literary production, and we are only vicariously the heirs of all this antecedent activity. They have a mythical as well as an historic past to inspire them. ... Our Anglo-Canadian poets have the teeming present as a potential theme, but they have chiefly gone by preference to our fields and lakes and forest for their inspiration, with a result that is in the last analysis not peculiarly Canadian, unless we can distinguish an apple-blossom of Ontario from an apple-blossom of New York State. 185

Frye's conclusion to the Literary History of Canada has faint echoes of this article by Edgar, for example in the passages where Frye writes:

English Canada was first a part of the wilderness, then a part of North America and the British Empire, then a part of the world. But it has gone through these revolutions too quickly for a tradition of writing to be found on any one of them. Canadian writers are, even now, still trying to assimilate a Canadian environment at a time when new techniques of communication, many of which, like television, constitute a verbal market, are annihilating the boundaries of that environment. ...

In Canada the mythical was simply the "prehistoric" (this word is, we are told, a Canadian coinage) and the writer had to attach himself to his literary tradition deliberately and voluntarily. 186

There are other mild echoes of Edgar in Frye's writing, but Frye places such ideas in an entirely different framework, one alien to Edgar's modes of thought, and one more congenial to the work of Robins, Innis and McLuhan, among others. For example, the idea of 'garrison mentality' and myth and metaphor as organising principles are simply not found in Edgar's criticism, even in inchoate form. As we have seen in earlier chapters, there is an Arnoldian moralism in Edgar, one that he did not pass on to Frye in any verifiable form. Northrop Frye owes

a great deal to Edgar, but that debt does not include the major elements of his world view.

Any early affinities between Frye and Edgar existed chiefly in style and not in substance. Some of Frye's book reviews for Canadian Bookman in the late Thirties have something of Edgar's urbane and magisterial tone:

People who have a literary standard, formed from the classics will not find this a great book, but among the mass of new novels it stands out as readable and competent, with no fustian or turgid writing, no absurdity in the handling of character or situation. It comes home too, in a town like Toronto, full of reproductions of Garvel society [i.e. smug and hypocritical].¹⁸⁷

Frye himself credited Edgar with doing much to improve his prose style through his detailed perusals of his essays.¹⁸⁸ Frye's gratitude for Edgar's help led him to write to Edgar in 1937, when a MS. version of Fearful Symmetry was at the publishers, that he was sending him part of the MS. because "I shall want to make sure of your approval before I publish anything."¹⁸⁹ In the same letter he said:

Should it be published, I should of course want to dedicate it to you; and as soon as a publisher accepts it I shall write you again asking for your permission to do so.¹⁹⁰

When Fearful Symmetry was finally published in 1947,¹⁹¹ the book was dedicated to Pelham Edgar.

Edgar in turn was proud of his former pupil, and upon Edgar's death in 1948, Frye became his literary executor. Frye prepared for publication the MS. of Across My Path, the volume of Edgar's memoirs; the book includes fond references to Northrop Frye and his abilities.

Any estimate of Edgar's contribution to Canadian literature must encompass

Edgar's nurturing of such students as Pratt, Knister and Frye. "His greatest achievement", Roy Danells remarked,

was to make of Victoria College - an apparently conservative and theologically tinged institution - into a home for a wide variety of temperaments and abilities. To have housed under one roof Ned Pratt and Norrie Frye, so different in provenance and temperament and so alike in each being supreme in his department, that was a stroke of genius.¹⁹²

Edgar not only made Victoria a home for such talent: his writings helped to create the conditions for their work to be known far beyond its walls.

A detailed examination of Edgar's teaching career makes it clear that at Victoria College, Pelham Edgar, as teacher, colleague and mentor, had an important influence on the life and work of leading Canadian writers, chief among them E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister, Earle Birney, Douglas Bush, Donald Creighton, and Northrop Frye. The nature of Edgar's help to these writers was twofold: intellectual and practical. In the intellectual realm, he fueled the literary proclivities of such young men as Knister and Frye in his lectures, which ranged over the whole of English literature. His broad appreciation of the field, and his ability to speak of it, inspired such students to an unusual degree. As a consequence, Raymond Knister, E.J. Pratt, Northrop Frye and others believed throughout their careers that Edgar was a leading influence in their lives. Pratt and Knister credited Edgar with enriching their appreciation of the Romantic poets; Frye credited Edgar with bringing him to William Blake; Earle Birney credited Edgar with making him appreciate the hitherto-unfamiliar novels of Aldous Huxley. As a teacher, Edgar did not merely stress one aspect or one writer in English literature: he conveyed the glories of its many facets, so as to stimulate each student's literary abilities and interests, whatever the student's focus.

Edgar also had an exceptional grasp of the need of his star students for practical and financial assistance to further their careers. As a result, he hired E.J. Pratt to teach in Victoria's English Department, and gave teaching fellowships to Frye, Coburn and Bush. He helped Frye, Birney and Daniells to receive fellowships which enabled them to study abroad. He tried to make Raymond Knister more financially secure in the early Thirties, when Knister was desperately short of funds.

In his contact with students of promise, Pelham Edgar brought into play his innate rapport with writers, and his ability to gain their confidence as the scrutineer and critic of work-in-progress. He played an invaluable role in Pratt's Clay and Knister's My Star Predominant, to name only two examples.

Each one of the students mentioned in this chapter remembered with gratitude the sincerity and zeal of Edgar's search for literary excellence, and his warmth when he found it. In offering to his students the benefit of his insight and advice, Edgar made a considerable contribution to Canadian literature. Edgar gave these literary figures something very precious - the opportunity for research and contemplation and the warmth of a sympathetic spirit. He was not afraid of brilliance in his pupils; indeed, he was ever on the watch for it. As Saturday Night remarked, in an editorial which eulogised his career and enumerated the distinguished list of his students, "Through such men and women we are all in his debt."¹⁹³

CHAPTER FIVE

Pelham Edgar, Modernism and the Canadian ..

Literary Scene 1920-1948

During the period 1920 to 1948, Pelham Edgar was well-known to those Canadians with literary interests, as an eminent professor and critic of literature and as a friend and mentor to writers. He was esteemed by two Canadian publishing houses - Macmillan of Canada and Ryerson Press - for his recommendations and referrals.

In the last thirty years of his career, Edgar was increasingly concerned about the effects of modernism on Canadian poetry. While he had some sympathy for selected modernist critics, D.H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley to name two, he deplored the influence in Canada of aspects of modernism he believed were extremist, bizarre in form or theme, and hostile to poetic tradition. Although Edgar was more tolerant of changes in poetry than were many of his Canadian contemporaries, he attempted for several years to encourage and publicize the poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown, attributing to her work a romantic idealism and promise worthy of the late Marjorie Pickthall in contrast to the temper of the times. Although Edgar came to see the limitations of Brown's talent, he largely ignored the work of such modernist poets as Dorothy Livesay, W.W.E. Ross, F.R. Scott and A.M. Klein. Not until 1940, when he became friendly with A.J.M. Smith, did Edgar belatedly assume a more tolerant view of poetic modernism in Canada.

Despite his awareness that changes in literary taste were underway in the

Thirties and Forties, Edgar did not retreat into obscurity. He continued to be active in the world of Canadian letters. In the Thirties, he was involved in the Association of Canadian Bookmen, which he visualized as an organisation of literary-minded people who would thereby make Canadians more book-minded. In his desire to raise the cultural level of Canadians, Edgar's Arnoldian sense of cultural mission was as strong as ever. In the Forties, he strove to improve the lot of Canadian writers through the Canadian Writers' Foundation, which he had founded in 1931 to aid old and indigent writers, while engaged in war work in Ottawa. Edgar began writing his memoirs, which speak of the importance to Canada of Canadian writers. Months before his death in the fall of 1948, Edgar, again a teacher at Victoria College, continued to instill in his students a sense of the importance and vitality of Canadian literature.

The publication in these decades of Edgar's two books of criticism, Henry James: Man and Author (1925) and The Art of the Novel (1933)¹ further enhanced his reputation in Canada and abroad. While the subject-matter of these two works does not bear directly upon Edgar's Canadian career, which is the subject of this thesis, the impact of the books upon Edgar's Canadian reputation bears mention. The publication of these two books in England gave him immense cachet in Canada's rather colonial-minded literary world. When Henry James: Man and Author garnered a favourable front page review in the Times Literary Supplement, Canadian reaction focussed on the prominent placing of the review in the periodical, not the substance of the review.² Willison's Monthly observed that James was generally considered a writer "too abstruse and profound for common consumption" and devoted much of its item about Edgar's book to quoting the favourable reaction of two leading English periodicals, Times Literary Supplement and Punch:

It is warmly praised by the best English reviews and will increase the reputation which Mr. Edgar achieved long ago as a scholarly, interesting and sometimes provocative writer of English.²

The notice ended with the gleeful observation that "The Times review fills five columns."³ The University of Toronto Monthly struck a similar note: "Many well-known writers have desired to see themselves on the front page of the Times Literary Supplement, and died without the sight. Professor Edgar has arrived there"⁴ Ontario Library Review proudly informed readers:

Not only is this the definitive work on Henry James the author, and James the man, but more than that, it is a study in the art of the novel by a Canadian critic whose repute is not confined to his own country.⁵

Edgar's Canadian eminence in the 1920s and 1930s was unquestionable; he was also a member of Canadian literature's 'Old Guard,' rooted in the value of the past. As we have seen in Chapter Two, Edgar's outlook had assumed a sombre note after the Great War; though he still had high hopes for Canadian literature, he had lost some of his earlier optimism about its direction. For example, in an article written in the middle of World War I, he observed that "the modern world ... has lost the child-like faculty to wonder and admire."⁶ To a critic like Edgar, who revered the poetry and poetic ideals of Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth, the years 1920 to 1948 often seemed uncongenial with regard to life and letters. Edgar's periodic discomfort is suggested in a 1919 review of Irving Babbitt's Rousseau and Romanticism, a work much admired by the likes of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The review was, in fact, a spirited defense of Romanticism, which dismissed Babbitt's critique as generally wrong-headed and perverse:

It is late in the day /for Babbitt/ to tell us that enthusiasm is sometimes ridiculous, nor are we so benighted that a learned professor from Harvard must seal our eyes to the harmless exaggerations of the delicious absurdities of a movement /the Romantic/ which despite all the follies it engendered saved poetry to the world ... What requires to be counteracted now among youthful students of poetry is rather the tendency to refer every thing to the measure of common-sense experience ... it is a mere flogging of dead horses for an author to lose his temper about defects /in Romanticism/ that "every schoolboy knows."⁷

By 1920 Edgar could not assume that the mention of Keats or Shelley would elicit the same respect from the young that he had tendered to the Romantic poets as a young man. Edgar's own continuing regard for the Romantic poets was symbolised by his organisation in 1921 of a Keats Centenary Celebration at the University of Toronto.⁸ For the occasion, he persuaded Duncan Campbell Scott to write "Ode for the Keats Centenary"; he himself read Keats' great Odes to a capacity audience at Hart House Theatre. Saturday Night reported:

In conclusion Professor Pelham Edgar of Victoria College, who was largely responsible for organising the celebration, gave a short address on the Odes of Keats, and recited several of them, including the immortal apostrophes "To A Nightingale" and "To A Grecian Urn". The beauty of Professor Edgar's diction, the nobility of his voice, and the fine shades of expression he developed, made these recitations a rare delight ... Taken as a whole the celebration was a most stimulating commemoration of a literary genius, and held the sympathy and interest of the listeners throughout.⁹

Edgar not only actively affirmed the importance of Keats: a year earlier he had exalted James Russell Lowell during his centenary. The centenary celebration, a leading North American literary event of 1919, was an occasion for Edgar and his peers to lament the loss of Romantic idealism in the post-war world, an idealism which they attributed to Lowell. Edgar was a delegate to the Lowell centenary celebrations in New York City. He later reported in Acta Victoriana on the event's significance. He wrote that John Galsworthy

had addressed the assembled luminaries about "the dangers of our modern civilization" with its "quick hurry" and its "divided aims":

It was a dignified plea for beauty, poise and calm in a utilitarian world; if they [the organisers] wished us to carry away the impression that the mind and heart of thinking America are linked with ours in a common desire to make this world a place in which clear and clean ideals may flourish, their hospitality was not lavished in vain.¹⁰

In keeping with a mentality devoted to "clear and clean ideals", Edgar in the Twenties affirmed that poetry was meant to be not a reflection of "common sense experience", but rather "a manifestation of the deepest truth and beauty that the mind of man can entertain or the art of man can express."¹¹

Edgar's dislike of poetic modernism, which he believed antithetical to many of his ideals, infused much of his writing in the period 1920 to 1948. Modernism in fiction (that is to say, radical experiments in technique, subordination of plot to character, and frankness of exposition) did not disturb him as much as poetic modernism, in part because he had always conceived of the function of the novel as more "down to earth" than that of poetry. In addition, Edgar placed much more emphasis on Canadian poetry than Canadian fiction, because, as he informed those who consulted the Cambridge History of English Literature of 1916, he considered Canadian fiction largely lifeless or nonexistent.¹²

The effect of modernism on Canadian literature is a theme in Edgar's articles and reviews of the Twenties and Thirties, articles which appeared in such well-known periodicals as Saturday Night (over seventy book reviews in the period 1920-1940), Willison's Monthly and Toronto Star Weekly. It is worth recalling here that the Twenties were in some measure a period of curiosity and optimism about Canadian literature and culture: Edgar himself was directly

involved to varying degrees in such literary phenomena of the era as the founding of the Canadian Authors' Association (1921) and the planned publication in the mid-Twenties of the voluminous Makers of Canadian Literature Series, for which Ryerson Press had asked him to edit a collected volume of the works of Marjorie Pickthall.¹³ Although the volume never appeared, because of the financial impracticality of the project, the project suggests the positive mood of the times. The success of Mazo de la Roche's novel Jalna in the late Twenties and the much-touted literary tours by Bliss Carman and Charles G.D. Roberts in the mid-Twenties also helped to generate interest in Canadian letters. Edgar was involved in attempts to aid Carman, who, around 1920, was ill and poor, just as he was later to spearhead a fund to aid Roberts.¹⁴

Yet new literary currents were being felt in the Canada of the Twenties, a fact of some concern to Edgar and his contemporaries. A case in point: Bliss Carman was a poet whom Edgar admired, even though he criticized Carman's frequent shortcomings in poetic discipline and his tendency to publish too much facile verse.¹⁵ In the Twenties, however, young readers of Carman were by no means always admiring. One has only to compare the responses to Carman of the young Wilfrid Eggleston in the Twenties to those of the young Earle Birney to see that a change in sensibility was underway that naturally concerned Edgar.

Eggleston was favorably impressed by Carman's public reading in Calgary in 1921. His memoirs recapture the spell of Carman's "verbal melody":

[Carman's] recital, when it came to pass, lived up to my highest hopes, except, perhaps, that I found his vocal interpretation of his own poetry bland and a bit monotonous. The highlight of the evening was his reading of a poem which was new to me, "Vestigia". The memory of that stayed with me for years. ... what drew me to Carman's dominant ideas ... was a sense of the presence of God, symbolized by the external glories of Nature.¹⁶

By contrast Birney's autobiography recalls a less positive reaction to Carman's 1925 national tour:

I was still prepared to enjoy [Carman's] reading - at least there was a good timbre to his voice - but I found his accent artificial, with a New England overlay, and his platform manner pompous and condescending. I remember telling myself he was at least better than [the poet Wilson] MacDonald and that I should concentrate on the poems. But even "Low Tide on Grand Pre" sounded slick and verbose, the way he read it, and "Hack and Hew" a humourless sermon. Worse, I now knew enough Victorian poetry to detect a steady echoing of Arnold, Morris and Tennyson in nearly all his verse. At least he didn't block the exits. ... [Roberts] was a good craftsman, and yet as dependent as Carman on outmoded rhythms and, even for details of Canadian nature, on nineteenth-century British phrasings.¹⁷

The contrasting reactions suggest changes in attitude and taste. These changes concerned Edgar, and his own response to them tells us much about the poetic and literary history of the period.

As his published writings suggest, Edgar was not always hostile to changes in literary form and direction in Canada and elsewhere. He was, for example, fascinated by the "intelligent revolt" of Virginia Woolf and Aldous Huxley against traditional concepts of the novel.¹⁸ In the Twenties, he acknowledged rather condescendingly in an article on D.C. Scott that new directions in poetry could also be salutary:

... we may amuse ourselves to-day with the spectacle of a multitude of earnest young men and women, mainly in the vicinity of Chicago, seeking their escape from Victorian conventions that had become the borrowed tradition of Boston by the substitution of other conventions quite as absolute, but less authoritative and persuasive. Imagism, Impressionism, Dadaism, Futurism, Vorticism, Cerebralism, Expressionism, are some of the labels that are most confidently affixed, and there is no innovation however imprudent that cannot command its following for a day. It is difficult to say how far poetry suffers from all this eccentric experimentation, for while much of it is ludicrous in the extreme or insufferably dull we cannot blind ourselves to the

beauty of some of the results, nor can we refuse some virtue to so earnest a preoccupation with the art of expression. But relating the manifestos of these strange cults to the accomplished result we realise that these people are doing ineffectually what the less violently insurgent are accomplishing without parade or fuss. Sincerity and directness are the prevailing words in poetry to-day, and these can be achieved within the ample margins of the inherited forms. Stereotyped rhythms and consecrated phrases, the cliché, the otiose epithet, the banal thought are the refuge of bad poets in the age of Homer as in the age of Carl Sandburg, and it needs no heaven-sent critic to assure us of this fact. We [in Canada] suffer to-day for lack of a common-sense aesthetic which shall have little to say of the mysteries of inspiration and shall concern itself more adequately with achieved results.¹⁹

The above quotation crystallises Edgar's attitude toward modernism in general and Canada in particular. He had "a measured charity for innovations."²⁰ He was willing to admit that "traditions lose their vitality, and the new age must painfully rediscover the [poetic] formula by which it may live."²¹

Edgar always disliked extreme or violent literary change, however, whether in form or content. He repeatedly criticised the literature of the two decades after the Great War for extremity of viewpoint and method and lack of restraint and moderation in theory and expression, strictures echoed by his friend Charles G.D. Roberts in a 1933 essay, "A Note on Modernism."²² "Let us," Edgar told readers of the Toronto Star in a 1929 article about Canadian writers, "steer our course in the current of new ideas, but refuse to be modern to the point of abnormality. Let us avoid provincialism while remaining frankly Canadian when the subject demands it."²³ Edgar made clear where "abnormality" was to be found. In various articles, he labelled Gertrude Stein "crazy" (1928),²⁴ wrote of the "disease" of free association (1938),²⁵ characterised Joyce's later prose as a "confused fusion"²⁶ of styles which had produced "nothing" (1928),²⁷ and reviled E.E. Cummings' "typographical monstrosities" (1928).²⁸

Edgar believed that poetry was being betrayed by what was to him lack of communication, unnecessary obscurity, Bizarre form, overweening Freudianism, and excessive wordplay, the latter especially manifest in the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins, whose influence "bedevilled" poetry (1937).²⁹ Given Edgar's conviction that poetry ought to address lofty ideals and great thoughts, as did Keats' Odes and Shelley's poems,³⁰ the aforementioned poets seemed deplorably debased.

While Edgar believed that human sexuality was by no means a topic outside the provenance of poetry, he was convinced that psychoanalytic methods had resulted in an exaggerated emphasis on this aspect of human existence, in art as in life. In 1929, for example, he mused on the subject in a review of D.H. Lawrence's Collected Poems:

Sex, it may be contended, is a broad foundation to build on, and to rest your philosophy on the procreative urges of universal life is surely to secure a vantage ground of sufficient scope. I concede the validity of the contention up to a point. I grant also that the timorousness of the older generation compromised their report of reality, and that a relaxation of this timidity was not only in the interest of art but of truth. But the relaxation of Mr. Lawrence has gone to such excess that the very balance of life is disturbed, so that one is permitted to doubt whether what he has left out of his picture has not more validity, more universal significance even than what he has put in.³¹

While Edgar recognised the need for greater sexual candour in literature, he was resentful of the mockery of Victorian morality:

The Victorians were certainly a domesticated lot, and father and son were finished patterns of a type of domesticity that has now become a subject of humorous contemplation. To be a good father, a good husband, and a good brother was then no barrier to esteem. But all these characteristic Victorian virtues we impute to Matthew Arnold now as priggishness, and a son's loyalty to his father's standards of thought and conduct as a hypocritical evasion of the real issues of life. This is all too lightly considered.³²

Edgar was only a little less indignant about the impact of psychology and the cinema on poetic language, and by the hermetic and self-conscious environment of such poets as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and W.H. Auden. He told a Canadian Authors' Association gathering in 1936:

The modernists are doing splendid things - it is fine to experiment - but I /wish/ the advanced wing would not get so exasperated. When I understand their work I generally like it; but they use a kind of jargon unintelligible even to the inside coterie.³³

Edgar's irritation at the "jargon" of an "inside coterie" is ironic when one recalls his own belief, discussed earlier in the thesis, that full appreciation of literature was possible only to an educated and select elite.

Edgar's response to those Canadian poets who might be termed modernist was by and large to ignore them with a few exceptions like Birney and Knister. The exempt poets tended to be his colleagues or students. Edgar's opinions of several other modernist poets - A.J.M. Smith, F.R. Scott, A.M. Klein, Leo Kennedy, Dorothy Livesay, and W.W.E. Ross - were discernable only by his lack of attention to them in his articles.

That a critic so interested in poetry, whose contacts were so extensive, and who produced so many articles on literature in Canada, wrote scarcely a page on these poets in the Twenties and Thirties suggests his distaste for the direction of their work. After all, he often remarked that, as an academic, he was fortunate to be able to avoid writing about poets and novelists whose work he disliked. "I am," he blithely observed, "cowardly enough to avoid reviewing the books I cannot praise."³⁴ Perhaps Wilfred Campbell's underbred truculence of so long ago still rankled.

Edgar certainly could not have pleaded ignorance of the work of the so-called "McGill poets" or their confrères; the poetry of Edgar's close friend

E. J. Pratt was included with that of Smith, Scott, Kennedy, Klein and Finch in the 1936 anthology New Provinces. Pratt's involvement in the making of this anthology make it impossible to believe that Edgar was ignorant of the work of Pratt's fellow poets. Despite the fact that Edgar published an article in an early issue of Canadian Forum, a forum for Canadian poetic modernism, his first and last for that publication, about intellectual values in poetry, and liberally sprinkled with references to Keats and other 'unfashionable' bards, he largely ignored new movements in Canadian poetry. Pelham Edgar chose to emphasise the work of certain Canadian poets; for example, Audrey Alexandra Brown, E.J. Pratt, Duncan Campbell Scott, Raymond Knister rather than others: Smith, Scott, Kennedy, Klein, Ross. When one considers Edgar's influence (with book and magazine publishers in particular) in the established literary world of Canada, his espousal of certain poets at the expense of others becomes important to an understanding of the Canadian literary history of the time. For example, what if Edgar had devoted himself in the late Twenties to encouraging the work of Dorothy Livesay rather than that of Audrey Brown?

Dorothy Livesay still recalls vividly her frustration one evening in the late Twenties in her parents' (friends of Edgar) Toronto home not long after the publication of her thematically conventional first volume of verse, Green Pitcher (1928). To her disappointment Edgar spent the evening praising the work of Audrey Alexandra Brown, when Livesay herself had hoped for his interest on her own behalf. It is a small incident, but one suggestive of Edgar's literary orientations on the threshold of the Thirties.³⁶

What if Edgar's Montreal colleague Andrew Macphail had smiled upon A.M. Klein rather than upon Audrey Brown during the same period? Edgar's career simultaneously reflects changes and tensions in this period and was in part the cause of these tensions. That is to say, the ideas, activities and literary

allegiances of a Pelham Edgar, or a Lorne Pierce or an Andrew Macphail or an A.J.M. Smith or a F.R. Scott, for that matter, are, in retrospect, crucial to the manner in which Canadian writing evolved in the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties. The small Canadian literary world also made the impact of such men as Edgar greater.

More than the majority of his contemporaries, Edgar was at least willing to read the work of 'avant-garde' writers. In this respect, his treatment in reviews of the work of D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot is instructive. As mentioned earlier, he felt Lawrence over-emphasised sexuality, but he found an interesting and sincere writer. For example, he could not label Lawrence a shallow or meretricious artist:

He has wilfully contracted his public by being so resolutely himself, but an abnormality so genuine, so passionate and so intellectual demands a hearing. It is a cheap thing to say, because our squeamishness is often offended by the frankness of his exposition, that he is seeking a meretricious notoriety.³⁷

In another review, Edgar observed drily that Lawrence's poetry was "more phallic than we might wish but always entertaining."³⁸

As far as Eliot's work was concerned, Edgar disliked the direction of his poetry, but in some respects he admired the man. He found Eliot's criticism in The Sacred Wood incisive; he found his poetry rather arid, sterile and uncongenial.³⁹ Yet he felt compelled to recognise Eliot's singular talent and his influence on other poets. In short, to use a phrase that Edgar coined of Yeats, Edgar had for T.S. Eliot "a forced admiration amounting almost to dislike."⁴⁰ The aphorism of an earlier analyst of Canadian literature comes to mind when Edgar's attitude to modernism in Canada and abroad is considered: Edgar was one of those critics who have "always fought the new good thing

on behalf of the old good thing."⁴¹

Edgar did not always maintain that the "old thing" was consistently good or even preferable to the new. In a 1928 review of Bliss Carman's Oxford Book of American Verse, he chaffed Carman, albeit rather humorously, for permitting his personal prejudices to under-represent T.S. Eliot in the anthology. Edgar wrote:

It is obvious enough that Mr. Carman is ill-disposed towards the productions of the modern experimentalists. ... but as an anthologist he was not well-advised to generalize his antipathies. Mr. T.S. Eliot for example is a perplexing and often an irritating poet, yet readers of his critical volume, The Magic Wood [sic], must admit that he is a man of fine intelligence, and they will be desperately prepared to find values in his verse. But there is no opportunity for testing these values in this anthology. H.D. and John Gould Fletcher and Ezra Pound are other American members of the Imagist groups. Ezra Pound has eight lines accorded him. H.D. and Fletcher have written more than eight good lines, and I feel that Mr. Carman might have waived his prejudices here, and have given them at least two stanzas each.⁴²

If Edgar's tolerance of modernism seems rather modest, one only need remember the opinions of W.J. Alexander, Andrew Macphail or James Cappon, to name only three of Edgar's contemporaries, friends, and fellow academics, and to recall their cranky and simplistic repudiation of the changes in literature after the Great War.⁴³ Edgar was unquestionably most en rapport with the literature of a new era. Mary Vipond, in her doctoral dissertation on national consciousness in English Canada in the Twenties, states that many of the forces in Canadian cultural life at this time which embodied a desire for greater cultural achievement were also conservative, romantic and idealistic in nature in reaction to the rapid moral, material and social change precipitated by World War I.⁴⁴ In keeping with this atmosphere of conservatism, Edgar's

literary colleagues were often not simply conservative but reactionary. As late as 1917, The Rebel amusedly told student readers that Cappon was still giving lectures attacking "the taint of symbolism" in Swinburne, Valéry and Mallarmé; S.E.D. Shortt in The Search for An Ideal makes clear that, like Macphail, and Archibald MacMechan of the English Department at Dalhousie, Cappon "felt increasingly isolated in the nineteen-twenties."⁴⁵ According to a 1933 Saturday Night columnist, Edgar's fellow professor at Toronto, Maurice Hutton, had a view of literature such that "for such extreme modernists as Gertrude Stein or Edith Sitwell, Professor Hutton would flee from them in horror."⁴⁶ Malcolm Wallace and A.S.P. Woodhouse, W.J. Alexander's students and later his colleagues, wrote that the latter had a qualified admiration for D.H. Lawrence but "By T.S. Eliot and his followers he was in the main repelled. ... As for the new writers of the Left (for example, Auden, Spender, Day-Lewis) Alexander would perhaps have felt some sympathy with their politics, but none with their poetry."⁴⁷ Archibald MacMechan, Shortt tells us, mused in his diary in 1929: "Leafing over January Harper's, I am repelled or saddened by most I read. Behind the times. Old. But they do not seem very happy times."⁴⁸ Charles Roberts was vehement about the undesirability of the times:

But in our [Canadian] verse, as in our painting and sculpture, the pervading sanity and balance of the Canadian temperament, its obstinate antagonism to extremes, saved us from the grotesque excesses indulged in by some of our English and American contemporaries. Modernism, so-called, came without violence to Canada. It was with us not revolution but evolution. The slender but exquisite genius of Marjorie Pickthall seemed to flourish apart, hardly affected by latter day changes.⁴⁹

Given the opinions prevalent in Edgar's circle, one must conclude that he was among the most open-minded of his circle in literary opinions in these decades.

While in the Twenties many of Edgar's contemporaries withdrew from active

involvement in Canadian literary life, Edgar attempted both to promote the continued publication of a more traditional type of poetry than could be found in, say, the pages of Canadian Forum and to encourage those writers whose work he deemed most consonant with his concept of what literature, especially poetry, ought to be. Edgar also set out to come to terms, in mind if not in heart, with literary modernism in all its facets - changes in technique, concepts of the poetic and the theme of social concern - and to discriminate among the attributes of modernism as to the degree of desirability. He admired the work of poets like Pratt, Raymond Knister or Earle Birney, poets with some modernist elements in their work, because he also discerned congenial elements in their work. In turn, as we have discussed earlier, Edgar introduced all three poets to literature hitherto unfamiliar to them: Pratt to Elizabethan literature, Knister to the beauties of Romantic poetry and Birney to the novels of Aldous Huxley, introductions with significant effects on the work of each. Consciously or unconsciously, Edgar was seeking to winnow and process a new generation of talent, rather than to withdraw to the splendid isolation of his study. Neither Edgar's attitude to literary change nor his place in the world of Canadian letters went unremarked in the Canadian literary world of the Twenties and Thirties. The biographers of W.A. Deacon, who was then Canada's foremost book reviewer, relate that about this time Deacon regarded Edgar as a member of the "Old Guard", a rather effete, easternized and anglophile lot,⁵⁰ In a Thirties letter Deacon's fellow writer and correspondent, Nathaniel Benson, disparagingly referred to Edgar as a "mental mastadon."⁵¹ Dorothy Livesay recalls viewing Edgar's ideas as largely antithetical to the kind of poetry adulated by the 'leftish' New Frontier:

New Frontier editorials etc. all stressed the need for modern techniques and social content - so in both these directions

Pelham E. was lacking: Yet he did give Pratt his job at Victoria College and he did encourage Raymond Knister. His tastes in poetry though really lay with Audrey Alexandra Brown.⁵²

By contrast, B.K. Sandwell, editor of Saturday Night from 1932 to 1951, and a former pupil of Edgar's at Upper Canada College (himself a junior member of the 'Old Guard') described Edgar as "tolerant" and "open to new ideas":

It can be said that Canadian literature in English was ruled by a triumvirate during the period between the return of Sir Charles G.D. Roberts to Canada in 1925, and the death of Sir Andrew Macphail in 1938, and Pelham Edgar was certainly the third member of the triumvirate. Most of the discovering and developing and disciplining of new talent in those years was done by one or the other of them, and the number of creative writers who came forward owing nothing to them must have been small. Fortunately all of them were men of large tolerance for new ideas and new methods, with no urge to mould younger writers after their own fashion.⁵³

Sandwell was undoubtedly thinking of Edgar's generous editorial, critical and financial assistance to writers as disparate as Pratt, Knister, Birney and Audrey Alexandra Brown, but it is misleading to suggest that Edgar therefore had a catholic tolerance. Edgar did not tyrannise over poets, but he brought certain ideas to his assessments of their work whether he advised them in private or in print. On the basis of what he knew of Pound's poetry, he was not tempted to offer employment to the young poet, Ezra Pound, when the latter requested it during Edgar's 1907 sabbatical in England.⁵⁴

At this time, two Canadian poets in particular scorned the "power" of Edgar. Later, F.R. Scott recalled of Edgar:

I don't think [Edgar] had any relations with the McGill Group. I never met him. He represented to me the Toronto Establishment, C.A.A. etc.⁵⁵

Poet and anthologist Ralph Gustafson had a similar impression of Edgar in *

the Thirties and later, though he now believes the impression was more assumption than fact:

I heard Ned Pratt speak highly of Edgar to me when we visited together but I never met Pelham Edgar and did not consult him for suggestions when I was trying to present Canadian writing through my various anthologies - which were attempting to break down the ignorance abroad amongst editors, critics and writers of Canadian creative work. I suppose I did not consult him since either my reading and work on the anthologies were too far in hand to have them ruffled; that — or I have a suspicion that I did not feel such a consultation was sufficiently 'au courant' with the advance work of my own generation. It worried me since the stance of the Canadian Authors' Association was, to me, equivalent to arty tea parties among the palms and rubber plants.⁵⁶

Scott and Gustafson were undoubtedly correct in their suspicions that they would not have found Edgar sympathetic. (One must not forget, however, a Scott poem like "The Canadian Authors Meet" could rival any words of the old Guard for dogmatism.)

Edgar's disquiet about contemporary Canadian poetry was reflected in the frequency with which he paid tribute to the poetry of Marjorie Pickthall, who had died in 1922. Her work became for Edgar, as for Andrew Macphail and Lorne Pierce, a kind of talisman against the new poetry. Edgar kept Pickthall's name before his students and the public. In 1924, for example, he read excerpts from her unpublished poems and from her letters to him to a class at Victoria.⁵⁷ Two years later, he assisted the poet's father in assembling poems for a collected volume. Arthur Pickthall told a friend in 1927:

I had a busy summer getting together a Volume of Complete Poems - I had to have the MSS. in by Sept. - I phoned you more than once for your aid & approval - but without success - so had to content myself, with Dr. Lorne Pierce & Dr. Edgar who both gave me their assistance. The arrangement of the poems is my own, and it met with their approval.⁵⁸

That year, Lorne Pierce, Edgar's collaborator in this project, stressed Pickthall's literary significance at the expense of other poets:

Her brilliant workmanship, sensitiveness to color and cadence, exquisite feeling for structure, as well as for emotions and thoughts of man's heart and mind, stand in strange contrast to the vulgar tyrannies, the stupid errors, the sordid sentimental pot-boiling of many of her contemporaries.⁵⁹

Edgar too was still extolling Pickthall: in March 1930 he addressed a Canadian literature club at McMaster on "A Study of Marjorie L.C. Pickthall in Lyrical Verse, Fiction and Drama."⁶⁰ While Edgar admitted that Pickthall's writing was limited in scope and achievement, he evidently continued to cherish her poetry. By contrast, in a 1933 issue of Canadian Forum, Pratt emphasized Pickthall's remoteness from the concerns of a new generation of poets:

Her expressed dislike of Ibsen and his school, the absence of any analysis of life on the side of its civilised contradictions, her complete immunity to cynical and satirical moods, reveal a temperament which, common enough twenty-five years ago, seems as far removed from contemporary psychology as the mental horizon of Galen would be from the thought of experimentation on the ductless glands.⁶¹

His partiality for Pickthall notwithstanding, Edgar was still by and large a discriminating critic. He had little patience with mediocre work, even in the Pickthall mold, as he demonstrated in a 1925 review of Laura Goodman Salverson's Wayside Gleams. He quoted from her poem "To One Departed", which begins

I sense a quiet in the upland glades,
A voice of sweetness hear, along the brook;
Find fellowship of hands within the breeze
As tenderly it rocks the wood-bird's nest.

Edgar remarked "/the/ subtle significance wholly escapes me. I should like to be good-natured about this poetry, but my conscience forbids me."⁶² To

Wilson MacDonald, a better poet than Salverson, who composed on similar themes, Edgar was more encouraging. For instance, in the academic year 1924-25, Edgar invited MacDonald to lecture to a class on Canadian poetry;⁶³ on another occasion Edgar read three of MacDonald's new poems to a class at Victoria.⁶⁴ Earle Birney recalls that Edgar and MacDonald were personally close about this time⁶⁵ and Lorne Pierce, MacDonald's sometime publisher, declared in 1927 that Edgar "fostered" MacDonald.⁶⁶

If Edgar's devotion to Pickthall showed his nostalgia for a certain type of poetry and his friendship with MacDonald his fostering of its incarnations, his encouragement of the poetry of the young Nanaimo poet Audrey Alexandra Brown epitomises Edgar's influence and sympathies in the Canadian literary world between the wars. From 1928 until his death in 1948, Edgar was closely involved with Brown's publications and work-in-progress.

In the late Twenties, Edgar, in company with such distinguished literary elders as Macphail, Pierce, Sandwell, and Parliamentary Librarian Martin Burrell hoped that Audrey Brown would be another Marjorie Pickthall. But, by the late Thirties, Edgar, at least, had realised that this was impossible. Pickthall had embraced a narrow range; Brown's range, for a variety of reasons - poor health, poor finances, social upheaval - proved claustrophobic even to Edgar, though he was reluctant to tell her this directly.

The poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown was first brought to Pelham Edgar's attention in 1928. Because Edgar was well-known as a friend to young poets of promise, a Nanaimo dentist sent Edgar a poem by Miss Brown, who was a twenty-four year old patient. The dentist was convinced that the young poet showed "genius."⁶⁷ Edgar described his response to the poetry to Sir Andrew Macphail:

Two years or more ago I received a manuscript bundle accompanied by a letter, from Dr. Clemens of Vancouver.

The letter said that a young girl of Nanaimo was writing a lot of poetry, and he wanted to know if it was as good as he thought it was. The first poem I read was Diana, and it did not take me many minutes, perhaps ten seconds, to make up my mind. I wrote at once, and received from Miss Brown a cheery, modest and witty response. Then Dr. Brown, a dentist of Nanaimo, wrote giving me a great deal of information, - that Miss Brown was twenty-three, that for two years she had been in bed with acute rheumatism, that she was a very independent young lady indeed, but was thrilled by my appreciation, and was very willing to hear, if not to follow, all the advice I might wish to give her. Well, the interchange of letters and transmission of poems has been fairly constant since then. I arranged for a small first volume, hoping for this autumn, but publishers, though they think themselves bold fellows, are a timid race. I think that a severely selected volume for the spring will interest the right people. Of course the modernists will have nothing to do with her. Shall I tell you what I think of her poetry first, or of the young woman herself? Perhaps the latter is the more human way to begin. My wife and I being this summer in British Columbia took the delightful Malahat Drive from Victoria to Nanaimo to see her. Her father and brother drove us from the hotel to Kennedy Street, and while my wife talked for an hour with the mother I interviewed the daughter. She still lives in the one room that has hemmed her in for three years, but since her young brother has constructed for her a kitchen chair on wheels, she often now indulges in wild races up and down the passage. And after all her window gives her a strip of the sea and mountains, and her happy imagination makes her free of the corridors of time. If she were well, she told me, she would be too excited by living to write. She is delightfully modest in a witty way about herself. She insists that she is not at all clever, has seen nothing, knows nothing - is not nearly clever enough, for example, to write in the modern way, but worries very little about that. Nature and humanity seem to spin themselves in some mysterious fashion out of her mind. She reads some old classical or Arthurian myth, imagines herself in the situation, and her fluent sense of beauty does the rest. The result is a very sincere kind of artifice, and her ideal world does surprisingly enough possess some kind of actuality. I suppose people will find she has rather a narrow range. Probably she has, and when her imagination is not working well she flops (as all poets do). Her best piece is "The Reed" but that will be surpassed by the yet unfinished Laodamia, her longest poem. ... She has not many short lyrics. She has not that kind of intensity.

I hope you will like her book in the spring. It

will be kept as perfect as possible, and therefore small.

I shall send a poem.⁶⁸ (*Italics mine*)

Poetry of the type that Audrey Brown wrote - romantic, fragile, steeped in beauty and an idealised landscape - naturally attracted Edgar. Unfortunately, only Miss Brown's half of the correspondence between the two is available,⁶⁹ but her letters make it possible to trace the history of the association over the next twenty years. One of Brown's earliest letters, dated October 31, 1928, establishes that Edgar had already given a reading of her poems and that he had discussed possible publication of them with Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan. Brown replied to Edgar's queries about possible publication with the vow that she would always be guided solely by his advice on such matters because she was "too ignorant" to decide alone.⁷⁰ Edgar thus became her mentor and adviser. He was high-handed with the young poet: soon he gave three of her poems ("Diana", "The Reed" and "Spring") to Nathaniel Benson for publication in an anthology, a fact Audrey Brown learned of only in a letter from Benson.⁷¹

Edgar also began to discuss Brown's poetry publicly. His November 1929 article for Toronto Star Weekly, "New Stars in Our Literary Firmament", told the public about the work of Pratt, Grove, Callaghan, Kenneth Leslie, and Mazo de la Roche and spoke of Audrey Alexandra Brown as a potential successor to Marjorie Pickthall:

A young Nanaimo girl, Miss Brown, has passionate devotion to her craft, and when her verse is published next spring it will remain for us to decide whether or not Marjorie Pickthall has found a worthy successor.⁷²

His characterisation of Brown as both a new Pickthall and a poetic alternative to modernism (in his letter to Macphail) was a theme of Edgar and his circle for the next decade. For example, in November 1930, Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press, in writing to Andrew Macphail about possible publication of Brown's

work, immediately made a connection with Pickthall, however casually:

Your reference to Audrey Brown was very beautiful. I wonder whether she is "attached" and, if not, would she entertain a proposition for a selection of her poems? I had better drop Edgar a line. Both you and he have done some fine team-work. It so happened that I was reading your article on the /steat/car, and when I ran into Mr. Pickthall /father of Marjorie/, gave him one of my copies. We talked of you and Edgar, and what you both meant to Marjorie Pickthall.⁷³

Pierce was, however, too late to publish Audrey Brown: Edgar was selecting the poems for her first volume for Macmillan of Canada, a task for which he and Macphail had carte blanche. In early June 1930, Brown had written Edgar about her awareness of the "great gulf" between them, which existed partly because of the "reverential way in which /Hugh Eayrs/ the President of Macmillan's speaks of you." She explained that she had told Eayrs, "I had placed my work entirely in your hands and that no step would be taken without you."⁷⁴

The volume was underway by the summer of the 1930, when Edgar visited Brown in Nanaimo. Also, Edgar began to advise the poet on the revision and direction of her poems. In the poem "Diana",⁷⁵ he advised her to change "bad lines." The progress of Brown's long poem "Laodamia" filled Edgar with excitement.⁷⁶ With regard to her poems' disposition, Edgar had discretionary power: Brown wrote to him: "Yes please take it /my work/ and do whatever you and Sir Andrew think best with it."⁷⁷

Edgar's concept of Brown's work at this period has survived in the letter to Andrew Macphail of October 1930 quoted earlier, in which he went onto link Brown with Marjorie Pickthall:

I always like to have my judgment confirmed by yours, and I have an idea that when we agree there is probably merit in our common preference. I score over you by at least two years in the matter of Miss Audrey Alexandra Brown, an

unwieldy name, but she will sacrifice no part of it. When I sent her poem "Diana" to Stewart for his Dalhousie Review I had you in mind as a prospective reader. I thought of the old days of Marjorie Pickthall and the University Magazine and your generous share in revealing her to a public starved of Beauty. Our Marjorie went far, and she has told me what an incentive your encouragement was to her. Perhaps I should tell something of this newcomer in the field, who has something of Marjorie's faculty, and, all things considered, few of her advantages.⁷⁸

As Edgar and Macphail compiled a selection of Brown's MSS. for publication, Brown experienced something of Pickthall's bemusement of twenty years earlier as the book's editing and publication dragged on, thanks in part to Edgar's fussiness and dilatoriness. In June 1931, Hugh Bayrs told W.A. Deacon that "the book has been held up again and again for various reasons. ... Edgar insisted on a preface; whether this will help the book remains to be seen."⁷⁹

Meanwhile the literary world waited for the volume with impatience, an impatience displayed in a letter from the poet Annie Charlotte Dalton to Deacon that spring:

The last I heard from Audrey [wrote Dalton] about her book was that Macmillan's was sending it to Cambridge, for better printing and she did not know when it would be out. If you hear anything definite from Dr. Edgar please let me know. ...⁸⁰

According to Brown herself, Edgar had been hard at work "selecting and rejecting" poems since at least December 1930, and Charles G.D. Roberts, by way of Edgar, had read and commented on some of her poems including "Laodamia".⁸¹

In the spring of 1931, E.J. Pratt, at Edgar's instigation, commented on some of Brown's poems. Then Edgar and Brown conferred about the title. Edgar wished to call the volume The Reed; Brown insisted on the title A Dryad in Nanaimo, which Edgar disliked. Brown's title prevailed, perhaps her greatest show of independence in the whole process.

When the volume finally was published in late 1931, she was aware that she was something of a poetic anachronism in the Canada of the Thirties:

I ^{owe} everything to you. But for your praise of my first work I might never have embarked on "Laodamia".⁸²

Ten years ago, if I had known what I know now about contemporary poetry (I speak of Canadian poetry alone!) - and had seen my own work as clearly as I see it now, there would never have been any "Dryad in Nanaimo"! (Oh, why don't they like that name - I love it!).⁸³

In fact, Brown began to find it difficult to write poetry, a phenomenon that she told Edgar was the result of her new awareness of her "mediocrity".⁸⁴ Meanwhile Edgar told a CAA convention that "Laodamia" was a product of "sheer genius":

Professor Pelham Edgar spoke on two subjects, dealing first with "Laodamia", a poem by Miss Audrey Alexandra Brown of Nanaimo, presently to be published ...

By extract and commentary [from "Laodamia"], he illustrated the beauty and dramatic power of Miss Brown's poem. It seemed to him a product of sheer genius, for nothing in the circumstances of her life or training could obviously account for its high quality.⁸⁵

While the critical response to the publication of A Dryad in Nanaimo in late 1931 was generally favourable, the limitations of Brown's talent and the difference in attitude toward her poetry between Edgar and critics more attuned to modernism was emerging. In the Thirties Brown published poems in some of the same magazines - Canadian Forum, Canadian Poetry Magazine - as poets like Leo Kennedy, Smith and F.R. Scott, but a sort of literary "two solitudes" in fact existed. Anne Cowan, in her master's dissertation on the Canadian Forum, has suggested that although the Forum published Brown's poems, it really embraced a different view of what Canadian poetry should be:

The thrust of the criticism ^{in the Forum of the early Thirties} was directed towards a completely innovative mode of expression for Canadian letters, but there was still a place for a poet like Audrey Alexandra Brown.⁸⁶

Miss Brown's - and by implication Pelham Edgar's - place in the literary history of the Thirties was circumscribed indeed. While many reviewers liked Brown's work, the modernists tended to view it as gifted but derivative. Pelham Edgar, Hugh Eayrs and even Brown herself gradually began to have doubts about her ability to develop further as an artist.⁸⁷ Edgar MacInnis' review of the book for Saturday Night hinted that her work was a curiosity:

She is not primarily concerned in singing the beauties of the West Coast, and any such element in her verse is incidental. But about the old legends which she uses as themes she has woven verse whose singing quality and pictorial vividness are deserving of attention. Professor Edgar, in his introduction successfully disarms the critic who would dismiss such verse as Keatsian; though I am not sure that even his persuasiveness would content the reader who might feel that the verses represent old tales once more re-told. But they are well told, and they hold qualities which, if they lack the surprise of novelty, are well worth the repetition.⁸⁷

Edgar's preface to A Dryad in Nanaimo attempted to confront both the unevenness of Brown's work and its uncongeniality to the modernist:

Two earlier pieces, 'The Reed' and 'Diana', revealed her competence to make new and pleasant music out of a time-worn theme. They charmed in the reading, but we felt that the anti-traditionalists could make out a plausible case against them if they stated only one side of the argument. But even the ultra-modernist must refrain from laying violent hands on Laodamia. If they think to disparage it by calling it Keatsian they are using a proud epithet that vindicates itself by its vitality. It is however only remotely Keatsian, and it is nearer the truth to call it one of the most beautiful decorative narrative poems that has come out of America.⁸⁸

Despite Edgar's stout defence of Brown against 'ultra-modernists,' both he and Hugh Eayrs were aware that she needed, if not to change direction, at least to broaden and develop her poetic range and technique.

When the first edition of A Dryad in Nanaimo appeared, Hugh Eayrs asked Deacon for a frank and confidential account of her potential and talent. Deacon's reply was shrewd and incisive, yet it betrays something of the feeling prevalent in Edgar's circle that Brown had to be shielded from the modernist foe:

You asked me [Deacon wrote] what I honestly thought of Miss Brown's poems, and I found I couldn't tell you by phone, but I want to tell you. I am carrying quite a long review [in the Mail] of them next Saturday, the 14th; but this is one of the cases in which I don't want to take the work [sic - the reader] into my confidence fully. I do not want to hurt Edgar or Miss Brown. Nothing I could say could in any way help the woman to improve in her art. But I think you, as the publisher, may possibly get my point of view.

Two things are very obvious to me. First, her technical excellence; second, her utter lack of experience as a human being. Her art is entirely derivative in inspiration - nothing to do with plagiarism; but it is book-induced.

Now, you know as well as I do that such work can be engaging, but that it will not live. Yes, I know that there is probably no poet who does not owe something to tradition; but there is no great one who owes everything to it, as this girl does ...⁸⁹

Deacon concluded pessimistically about Brown's capacity for development as a poet:

Further my guess is that she will never get beyond this point, even if later, she goes out into the world. The channel is open from the library to her; that door will never close. ♦ She will always see life through some earlier writer's eyes. Consequently, while I admire her work, it cannot move one; and the reason it won't live is that it won't really move anybody.⁹⁰

Deacon tempered his forthrightness with compassion: he reminded Eayrs that Brown's limitations were largely the result of "physical circumstances beyond her control" - that is to say, her rheumatoid arthritis with its resulting invalidism, her family's limited means, and her cultural isolation. Eayrs replied that he agreed "in substance" with Deacon's "very fair-minded" attitude. But that, even in light of Deacon's comments, he would publish Brown's work because at least it was Canadian and not second-rate.⁹¹

Edgar's attitude was similar to Eayrs': by early 1932 he saw clearly Brown's limitations as a poet. As a result, he resolved to encourage her to expand her range and her reading; he continued to see her work as a counter-balance to "ultra-modernism". In seeing it as a counter-balance, he was perhaps not mistaken; the first edition of Dryad sold 1605 copies, a respectable sales figure for a book of Canadian poetry - by contrast New Provinces in 1936 sold less than 100 copies. Deacon believed, however, that Pelham Edgar was oblivious to Brown's limitations:

You see you have in Edgar a professor, dowsed in that tradition [bookish]. He is consequently tickled to death to see this British Columbia echo of it. Being academic, he can't distinguish subject from shadow. Art from the pseudo-art of imitation. His whole training is against his capacity to judge any non-classical art.⁹²

Deacon was certainly right in his statement that Edgar delighted in a poet in the tradition of Keats and Pickthall. But, at least in private, Edgar was, by 1932, prescribing remedies for the narrow, hothouse-romantic atmosphere of Brown's poetry, remedies in the form of reading contemporary poetry, T.S. Eliot included. That he gave such advice is indicated in a letter from Brown to Edgar:

In answer to your question about modern poetry - I have read a very little of T.S. Eliot in some English anthologies. I suppose his work is fascinating, even though one doesn't understand it. I like it better, at all events, than Edith Sitwell's - her outpourings may be sheer genius, but I think they're hateful. I would rather be an antediluvian than some of these moderns. And they wouldn't be me at any price; so everybody's happy, aren't they?⁹³

Brown's response to the moderns is not surprising, but, in terms of her future development, her attitude probably did not bode well. Yet, in a letter to Edgar a few weeks earlier, Brown had named Marjorie Pickthall as one of her poetic ideals, while expressing worry over her own tendency to sentimentalism and melodrama.⁹⁴ Despite her fears for the direction of her own work, Brown believed that she must continue to write in her usual vein; Edgar's advice to her was going unheeded. Years later she recalled Edgar as "the only critic I ever completely trusted":

Trying to correct my weakness for the over-ornate, he [Edgar] wrote, "Be stark. Load every rift with ore." And as a counterbalance he advised me to read Hardy's poetry. I well knew he was right, but at that stage of my development I couldn't practise what he preached. I had then so little to say that my main concern was how I said it. And reading Hardy's poetry only put me off it for life. I like to think, though, that his advice did eventually bear fruit and that he would have seen the results of it in the last twenty years of my work.⁹⁶

By October 1933, Edgar was gently but firmly urging her not to publish another volume of poetry until she had further matured as an artist. Brown admitted that her social isolation, intensified by her medical problems, and her age were sapping her dramatic power.⁹⁷ In response to Edgar's critiques, she wrote to him:

One source of monotony [in my poems] is that I use the same vocabulary over and over, so that my poems may be made in different patterns but are all built

of the same pieces. I realise that, and will try to change it. And I will strive after directness, as well as I can.

You are quite right about [not publishing] the second book; I am very grateful that you should care enough not to let me spoil my reputation [by premature publication.] I trust your judgment implicitly ...98

Despite her avowed trust in Edgar's judgment, there were pressures on Audrey Brown to continue to publish. Influential admirers of her work, such as Lady Barnard, wife of British Columbia's former Lieutenant-Governor and Martin Burrell, Librarian of Parliament from 1920 to 1938, had a less rigorous view of her talent than did Edgar. Isolated, craving attention, often in pain, and usually in need of even the small sums of money that the publication of her poems brought her, Brown also needed the boost to her morale which publication provided. Moreover, her admirers such as Saturday Night clamoured for more:

The first thing which strikes the reader of these poems [of Brown's] is the writer's kinship with Marjorie Pickthall - that daughter of the gods who fell asleep [i.e. died] in Vancouver eleven years ago. There is the same vivid imagination, the same power of projecting herself into other lands and ages. Miss Brown shows a curious familiarity with classical themes - Marjorie Pickthall was at home in the Orient. Miss Brown's greatest achievement is the poem, "Laodamia" which is, indeed, a thrilling performance.99

The article ranked Brown's "jewelled volume" of "sheer loveliness" with the work of Walter de la Mare,¹⁰⁰ then described Edgar's aid to Audrey Brown:

There is a Toronto critic who has proved a fairy god-father to more than one young poet. Professor Pelham Edgar of Victoria University is a keen and friendly critic, discerning and helpful. Marjorie Pickthall found in him a true friend, as well as a discriminating critic. To him in 1928, several of Miss Brown's western friends sent some of her poems, which met a warm and comprehending reception. Since then there has been a constant correspondence between Nanaimo and Toronto.

In a letter [to Edgar] from Audrey Brown, written on her birthday, October 29th, 1932, I am allowed to quote:-

'I do get so tired sometimes I would almost crawl into a coffin; if I could find one knocking about that suited me - it would have to be old rose, though, with silver handles, and I haven't yet found such a one.'

Yet she also declares: 'I don't believe there is a happier woman than I am.' That she may recover health and live long to gladden the land with her genius is the wish of all who have read the poems of Audrey Brown. 101

The article suggests how difficult it must have been for Edgar to doff the mantle of fairy godfather for that of rigorous and unflinching arbitrator of her poems - difficult for Brown, for Edgar and for the poet's admirers.

In June 1934 Brown told Hugh Eayrs that she had recently published the poem "The Mermaid" in Dalhousie Review, the first time she had published a poem without Edgar's imprimatur. Brown explained in her letter:

... last August I sent Professor Edgar the bulk of my MSS. and he wrote that they contained some good work but lacked variety of tone. There was, he indicated, the nucleus of a satisfactory collection, but he thought it better to wait until I had a wider range to select from. 102

In response, Eayrs urged that she allow Macmillan to publish another volume, but, in two letters to Eayrs, Brown pleaded that Edgar be given "first refusal" to edit the MS.:

You know, if you really are glad to have published my work, it is to Professor Edgar that you owe it; it was all in his hands, and he took it to you instead of to M/[cClelland] and S/[tewart]'s or Ryerson's. 103

Eayrs replied that Brown's request was "unusual" but because of her "alliance" with Edgar and his own friendship with him, Edgar, not Martin Burrell, would have first chance at editing a new volume. This reply prompted Brown to

reiterate her position:

Yes, I repeat that whatever Dr. Edgar agrees to I will agree to. If it should prove that he is too tired or too busy or for any other reason doesn't wish to be bothered in the matter, then I warmly favour Mr. Burrell's assistance. 104

Audrey Brown was legitimately concerned about the possibility of Edgar being "too tired or too busy" for editorial work at this period in his career. The years 1933 and 1934 were years of emotional and mental exhaustion for Edgar: his wife, Helen Boulton Edgar, died on November 27, 1933, after a long, difficult and expensive illness. Also, Edgar had been working very hard on The Art of the Novel, which he hoped would sell well, particularly in the college text edition, and help him pay the debts accumulated for his wife's care. In May 1934, Edgar sailed to England, partly to oversee the publication of his book in England but also to seek relief from bereavement, worry and overwork.

Upon his return to Canada in September, Eayrs discovered a letter from Martin Burrell for him urging him to continue his involvement with Brown's career. Edgar's genuine reservations about the wisdom of a new book were smothered by Burrell's eloquent appeal. Burrell made it clear to Edgar that Brown, a young poet in the old mold, embodied the hopes for poetry of men like himself and Edgar:

She [wrote Burrell] has a profound gratitude for what you did for her, and the interest you have taken in her. She says, "Before he left Canada he told me he did not then have the mental energy to criticize my work, but would write later. That is why I haven't written him myself about the matter; I knew he was very tired when he went away [to England], and I felt that it would be inexcusable in me to intrude myself and my affairs into his holiday, but could I have foreseen events I would have been forced to act differently." She evidently feels very strongly that though Eayrs came direct [sic] to her she would be most reluctant

to proceed with the book without your advice and without your knowledge - and I am in entire accord with such a position, but even though Eayrs sent me some of her recent poems (which I had already seen) for my opinion, I still think your opinion and advice is far better than my own. ... I have a great admiration for her work and for her character as disclosed in [her] many letters. After all, I am close to my seventy-sixth year, and inevitably shall drift over the horizon before very long. But this young girl, under remarkably difficult circumstances, has done something very fine and will, I think, do much more, and should be helped wisely by all who are keen about literature, and I know you feel this. However far she may have gone with Eayrs, and however far he may have gone, I am sure that she would greatly long for your advice and assistance and I hope Eayrs will recognise this fully and that you can help her out. 105

Edgar agreed, of course, to "help her out." The new book was a second and considerably enlarged edition of A Dryad in Nanaimo.

In late October 1934, Eayrs wrote a progress report to Brown:

Typesetting of Dryad is proceeding rapidly alike of the old material in the first book and of the new. In regard to this second matter we have consulted with Pelham Edgar, and are using a very substantial amount [of his selections] ...

Edgar has also written an Introduction which will appear under the word "Introduction" at his suggestion. 106

By early November, Edgar had corrected the proofs of the second edition. 107

His doubts about the poetic progress of Audrey Brown are evident in his "Preface", an interesting document in the history of modernism in Canada. In it, Edgar acknowledges Brown's weaknesses as a poet, but praises her poetry as exemplar of work which happily forsakes the "obscure" and does not savour of the "coterie." The preface is in fact a thinly-veiled attack on "extreme" poetic modernism. 108 Brown's very isolation was interpreted by Edgar as isolation from ultra-modernism:

I had the honour to usher in the earlier volume, and I am indeed proud to have the same privilege for the present work in which a reputation that was already secure is sustained and fortified. Nothing of course can surpass 'Laodamia', but a new subtlety with even a more varied enchantment of music will be found in the poem "Nadya Cyrilnovna in Paradise." It is at least wine from the same vineyard.

Poetical historians of the future will puzzled to account for the unusual qualities of Miss Brown's imagination. They will perhaps see in her a reincarnation of our delightful Marjorie Pickthall and they will not be far astray. In both poets is the same precocity and the same masterly but dangerous ease of utterance, a kindred music, and a feeling for beauty that is deepened and made significant by a shared sense of humanity's capacity to suffer and enjoy.

It might be said that Miss Brown in her remote and unpeopled corner of the world is compelled to write from a too limited range of experience, and merely to imagine where she does not know. There is an element of truth in this but it only goes to make her many imaginative successes the more remarkable and exciting. It may be that the modern poet is too much in the grip of circumstance. He tries to get too many things into his poetry, and is obsessed by the desire for singularity at any price. To be obscure is not enough. He must be unintelligible. Miss Audrey Alexandra Brown in her seclusion has escaped the doom of the coterie. Her work for all its seeming dependence is individual and sincere, and goes far to convince us that there is still vitality in the old traditions. 109.

The preface embodies Edgar's dilemma: while recognising the limitations of poetry of the type of Brown and Pickthall for the contemporary world, he felt that even limited thematic development was preferable to the products of coteries of unintelligible (to him) ultra-modernists. Edgar's belief in his brand of poetry was reinforced by his continuing involvement with the work of E.J. Pratt and D.C. Scott, whose poetry was at once thematically and technically sophisticated, yet by no means "ultra-modernist."

Brown's admirers continued to applaud Edgar's role in her career. Just before the second edition of Dryad appeared, Duncan Campbell Scott wrote to former Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden:

It is a few years ago that Pelham Edgar showed me her poems in MS. We must look upon him as her first champion; he put her First book through the press ... Let us be thankful for such genius as Brown's.¹¹⁰

For their part, the poets of the McGill group had before 1935 ignored the work of Brown. Other poets had not been so fortunate: Leo Kennedy had earlier belittled Lampman in an article for Canadian Forum,¹¹¹ and A.J.M. Smith had bemoaned the limitations of the Confederation poets.¹¹² This forbearance to Brown altered in 1936, as we shall see.

1936 was in fact a crucial year in Edgar's career, one that saw the first stirrings of his movement from active littérateur to distinguished elder statesman of letters more concerned with literary organisations and philanthropy, which he largely became by the mid-Forties. In this period, Brown's poetry, and Edgar's slackening zest for it, played a catalytic role in his shift of interest from the individual poet to literary organisations. After 1936, Edgar continued to be involved in Brown's poetic career, but with more and more reluctance.

Brown received advice from Edgar about her work, advice that was not always soothing. After Edgar made a stringent critique of her poetic vocabulary, Brown replied:

I'm afraid I shall never feel the creative thrill again. I can still write verses because I know the recipe; but verses are not poetry.¹¹³

In 1936, the by-now familiar pattern recurred: Edgar advised her not to publish again so soon but Brown pressed her case, in part because of financial need:

About the book she wrote to him - is it so hopeless as all that? Really I'd have thought there was almost enough not-discreditable stuff even though not a very fat one.

If you could tell me what sort of a poem you most
 [me to write] I would at least concentrate on it,
 whether with results or otherwise. 114 (Italics Brown's)

Edgar at last agreed to select material for yet another book; The Tree of Resurrection was published in the fall of 1937 - But without an introduction by Edgar. It did not prosper, nor did it enhance Brown's or Edgar's reputation. It sold 884 copies; her next effort, Log of A Lame Duck (1939), a prose account of her long hospital stay, sold 679 copies; her 1944 book of poetry, Challenge to Time and Death, which Edgar also was convinced to edit after several appeals, sold only 473 copies, figures which indicate a diminishing market for Brown's poetry. Macmillan refused to publish any subsequent volumes but Ryerson brought out All Fool's Day in 1948.

Edgar published a review of A Tree of Resurrection in Saturday Night. Despite his avowed perception of "lyrical development" in this volume, he publicly referred to reservations about her work:

The danger that threatened, and the poet I feel sure realized the snare more consciously than her readers, was involved in the very nature of her talent. Her abounding facility and beautiful phrasing could carry an essentially strong theme though to a satisfying and even to a triumphant result. But such themes are of difficult discovery, and no fluency, however alluring, can be anything but a pitfall where the action and the idea are absent.

... I do not think and I do not hope that Miss Brown will ever be modern in the eccentric sense. She will have subtlety but she will avoid extravagance. She will sometimes think of Keats' advice to Shelley and will curb her magnanimity and load every rift of her subject with ore.

... Miss Brown is simply not satirically inclined or nor worldly minded. 116 (Italics mine)

Edgar singled out "Smoke over Spain" for praise; the poem was carefully neutral and non-ideological in contrast to the Spanish Civil War poems of

Leo Kennedy or Norman Bethune. Earle Birney also reviewed Tree; he shared Edgar's reservations but not his enthusiasm:

- So far as there is any development beyond the 1934 volume, it consists in some pressing of this scented lushness - but not enough, not enough - and a deepening of religious feeling.

The one other incursion into the world of the flesh is a warning ["Smoke over Spain"] to the Spanish that if they go on killing each other they won't be able to "build the fair creation their wiser fathers willed" - whatever that means. Elsewhere Miss Brown speaks of war only in terms of silver trumpets and gold adornings, ... the bookish veil between the author and her ragged classical environment is never quite parted. None of the new poems succeeds as well as the earlier, frankly Romantic, Laodamia. 117

The contrast between Brown and her contemporaries was emphasized with the first issue of Canadian Poetry Magazine in January 1936. The issue included poems by Brown as well as Livesay's Day and Night. Edgar was on the jury which ranked the poems of the first issue; Brown's work received first prize for excellence; Livesay's second. Some younger readers disagreed about the relative merits of the two poems. A student article in Acta Victoriana was forthright:

... the most striking [poem] of the lot, Dorothy Livesay's Day and Night, is written from the entirely cosmopolitan point of view of the proletarian poet and owes something remotely, at the same time, and in curious contrast, to the technique of T.S. Eliot and that of Kenneth Fearing. ... The better of the two poems by Audrey Alexandra Brown reflects the pseudo-classical timelessness of the rest of her poetry, as well as its essential dependence on technical virtuosity rather than on a precise content for its effects. 118

A.J.M. Smith's view of Brown's poetry was equally cool. He clearly had Edgar in mind when he wrote:

Our academic critics have been so bookishly revelling in the joys of Canadian lyricism with the "Group of 61"

or noting their raptures anent the trills of such indigenous throbbles as Wilson MacDonald or Audrey Brown, that they have no idea where in the world today significant modern poets as Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Louis MacNiece, Laura Riding, John Crowe Ransom, or one might almost dare to add - Gerard Manley Hopkins and Ezra Pound.¹¹⁹

While Smith's assumptions seem arrogant and simplistic as far as Edgar was concerned, Edgar's own judgements about "significant modern poets" were at this time equally intemperate. In his criticism, Edgar now demonstrated that, despite Smith's assumption that to read the moderns was to admire them, a perusal of such poets as Pound, Eliot, and Auden left Edgar mostly disturbed and disapproving. For her part, Brown continued to write poetry of an atmosphere reminiscent of Marjorie Pickthall's pre-war resolve that poetry, in the face of her mother's death, ought "to sing for sorrow, as the little thrushes do."¹²⁰

An editorial in Saturday Night quoted Brown's version of this attitude:

I have served beauty all my life, I will serve it till I die, firm in the belief that by so doing I honor God. And beauty will never fail me. The flesh becomes the weariest of prisons when it ceases to be the medium through which the spirit expresses itself. But however life may build us up a doorless tower we have still one window, Beauty; we are still free. I have lived in the light of my magic casement, its colored panes shall let out my soul when I die.¹²¹

Brown was conscious of Edgar's strictures about the lack of substantial technical and thematic development in her poetry. She later recalled in a letter:

He was the only critic I ever completely trusted. With others, however well-qualified, I felt that they would not help but be influenced by their own personal preferences, especially if it was for the traditional. This was not so with him; his intellect was hard and clear as a diamond, his judgment and taste were unerring; I might not always want to agree with him, but I always knew he was right.

It has always grieved me a little - not for my own sake, but his - that he must have come to realise towards the end that he had made one mistake; that the modernists, not I, belonged to "the wave of the future." 122

Edgar made an effort in the Thirties to stop the modernist "wave", an effort which embroiled him in some of the hottest controversy he had known since his public wrangle with Wilfred Campbell in the early years of the century. At the 1936 convention of the Canadian Authors' Association in Vancouver, Edgar chaired a debate between poets Mary Elizabeth Coleman and Dorothy Livesay about "proletarian poetry." The two had a heated exchange, and Edgar, as chairman, attempted to cut short the debate. Edgar's action enraged some modernists and bemused some traditionalists. Lyn Haxrington's 1981 history of the CAA refers to the debate in terms which make it clear the impassioned debate seemed merely puzzling to some CAA members past and present:

The elan of the 1936 convention ... was further diminished by an acrimonious debate over new styles of poetry, between Dorothy Livesay and Mary Elizabeth Colman /sic/ (Vancouver). Stimulating - but unsettling to the non-poets who couldn't see what the fuss was all about, and who wouldn't recognize an iambic pentameter outside a dictionary. A.M. Stephen, author of much traditional poetry, spread oil on the troubled waters. 123

Young poets, declared Coleman:

think they cannot find [spiritual security] in religion, so they embrace the only alternative which offers an object for their devotion, and [sic] adequate outlet for their altruistic energies.

There is only one justification for the writing of poetry: an irresistible compulsion. The cause of that compulsion is an emotional burden too great to be borne; by forcibly expelling it in the form of verse the poet escapes for the time from an intolerable situation. ... Whatever the future of Communism, actual or ideal, politically, the vogue for Communist poetry cannot but be short lived, for though social change is

an indirect result of art it cannot be its direct aim. Art and propaganda may occasionally mate, but the marriage speedily ends in divorce, and a chastened art sits in solitary state again watching successive propagandas rise and fall.

Moreover, Communism is profoundly and fundamentally antipathetic to poetry. ... The trend must be towards some core of intense feeling and passion, some religious compulsion. .24

Coleman criticised F.R. Scott's poem "Summer Camp" for oversimplified indignation and described Livesay's "Day and Night" as a superficial, "clever piece of rhetorical propaganda". The Canadian Author furnished its readers with a much briefer account of Livesay's rebuttal:

Art [said Livesay] must embody ideas, or it would be utterly spineless; and if it embodied sound ideas it could not help being propaganda. ...

For herself and other present-day writers classed with her, Miss Livesay said: We do not write because we want to be smart, but because we are forced to write. We feel that war may come, or fascism. That is why writers have turned away from all the superficial claptraps of other poetry and allied ourselves with the progressive movement. 125

Undoubtedly Edgar found Coleman's ideas more congenial than Livesay's: his chairing of the session tended to favour Coleman. Duncan MacNair, Livesay's friend and later her husband, himself a passionate lover of poetry, wrote an editorial account of the incident for New Frontier. He attacked Pelham Edgar for "suavely suppressing" the debate:

The sacrosanct proceedings were almost broken during the initial sessions by Mary Coleman, who presented a paper on "Proletarian Poetry", which was answered spiritedly by Dorothy Livesay, but the debate which threatened to break out was instantly and unostentatiously choked to death by Dr. Pelham Edgar, President of the Council and chief hangman of debaters; on the plea of lack of time. Miss Coleman belongs to the school of poets who believe that "Mother knows Best" is "a spiritually satisfying answer"; that "intimate psychological revelation" is out of place in modern poetry and that Fascism

and Communism are the same thing, so far as the production of anything of value [to] literature is concerned. Dorothy Livesay insisted that young poets should take their spiritual sustenance from participation in the daily life going on around them in the factories, mines and farms of the Dominion, and especially that they should become politically conscious. These two papers were as an oasis in the desert, and the nomads would fain have lingered, but Dr. Edgar, muttering loudly so that his voice was heard almost half way down the room, suavely suppressed debate prospective and again led the caravan into the waste land. 126

About 1936, Edgar was widely received as a silly old anti-modernist despite his literary friendship with Pratt and, early in the decade, with Raymond Knister. 127 In 1979, Livesay wrote of Edgar and Canadian literary tensions at this period:

New Frontier editorials etc. all stressed the need for modern techniques and social content - so in both these directions Pelham Edgar was lacking: he was conservative and academic. Yet he did give Pratt his job at Victoria College and he did encourage Raymond Knister. His tastes in poetry though really lay with Audrey Alexandra Brown (perhaps I told you how he spent an evening praising her work to me when I was expecting encouragement for my work!) A.A. Brown was the symbol of all the C.A.A. stood for. They had a convention in Vancouver soon after I went out there [to live], and Duncan [MacNair] was present when I read a paper on New Directions in Poetry (especially in England). It received good publicity in the Vancouver Province (and Sun, I think) but was attacked by the old guard in the C.A.A. and the Vancouver Poetry Society ... amongst whom, Pelham Edgar. He was definitely a figure, "unsympathetic to social concerns." He was interested in helping young writers in the building of Canadian Literature but his view was definitely of the Bliss Carman "maple-leaf school." 128

Audrey Alexandra Brown herself was contemptuous of the mass of CAA members. She confided this to Edgar in a 1938 letter:

Do you think [she asked Edgar] anybody's a more Canadian Canadian by chanting machine-made poems about the land of the beaver and the maple and the prairie and the mountain? But all these members of the literary

associations - they don't know the difference ... they
don't know poetry from verse ... But they don't know and
 they never even suggest they don't know: so there's no
 hope of ever converting them. Where they do anything at
 all, they do harm by legitimising and fostering mediocrity.
 You know I am not and never could be a modernist - but if
 the modernists can only destroy this masquerade of the
 commonplace as "poetry", for that at least they shall have
 my heartfelt gratitude. 129

As far as other contemporary Canadian poets were concerned, Edgar
 evidently experienced little pull toward modernism. Edgar's role on the
 committee for the Governor-General's Award of 1936 confirms that: in 1936, no
 Governor-General's Award for poetry was given, allegedly because nothing of
 sufficient merit had been published. New Provinces, published that year, received
 no commendation from the award committee. When one remembers that Pratt is well-
 represented in the anthology, and that Edgar was usually eager to call attention
 to young poets, the omission seems significant. After all, New Provinces had
 even merited favourable attention in the pages of Acta Victoriana. A student
 wrote of the anthology's

imaginative and moral force, its intellectual force, and
 its high quality in expression. It is one of the signs
 of activity and quality that mark/s/ Canadian poets of
 the present decade. 130

Edgar was in distinguished company in his disdain. Some of his younger
 colleagues were equally unenthusiastic about New Provinces.

E.K. Brown, one of Edgar's protégés, wrote a sharp review of the new work.
 Brown particularly disliked F.R. Scott's poem "Efficiency", an attack on the
 capitalist system:

... here in New Frontier, which has so kindly invited
 me to comment on this anthology, I should like to utter
 a vehement warning against the supposition that such

verses are really excellent. How can so true a poet as Mr. Scott sink to so low a level? He has himself given us the answer [in the poem "Overture"]. Here he records his reaction to a Mozart sonata, saying:

But how shall I hear old music? this is an hour
Of new beginnings, concepts warring for power,
Decay of systems - the tissue of art is torn
With overtures of an era being born.

The urgency of social issues has so captured Mr. Scott's mind that he is unable to respond to great art - or to create it. That is a pity.¹³¹

While Edgar, like Brown, disapproved of proletarian poetry and anticapitalist verse, he spoke out against attempts to ban such contemporary work as Morley Callaghan's novels, They Shall Inherit The Earth and Such Is My Beloved from the Toronto Public Library system:

Professor Pelham Edgar, author and critic, reaffirmed his previously-published opinion as published in Saturday Night that the book They Shall Inherit the Earth was based along too much of the same pattern or mold of Callaghan's other books, yet was "a very, penetrating and powerful novel."

"I read both books," stated Professor Edgar, "and I cannot see why they would be banned. I can understand that they would want them kept off the children's shelves but, after all, aren't adults supposed to read? They are not representative of Canada in the broadest sense of the word, yet they should not be closed to the adult public in general."

"I suppose, on the other hand, public libraries must play safe," continued Prof. Edgar. "There is no question about the book as a sound and sincere study of a certain section of life which some people do not care to acknowledge."¹³²

There is no doubt that he disliked censorship and the book-burning mentality.

Edgar's distaste for modernism in poetry and its effect on Canadian poetry reached an apogee with an essay published in 1937.¹³³ The tide of literary change was not moving as he had hoped; he was understandably frustrated by that. Moreover, he was shortly to retire from the Department of English at

Victoria, and he likely felt that his influence as man of letters might ebb somewhat. Whatever his motivation, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry" is a frontal assault on the values and directions of poetic modernism, which concludes with a direct reference to Edgar's hope that "It is quite possible that some day our Canadian poets will teach these young Englishmen [Auden, Day Lewis, Pound, Spender] how to write."¹³⁴ Northrop Frye commented of this "unfortunate" article:

[Edgar] was baffled by Joyce, bored by Eliot, never became reconciled to the later Yeats, and an unfortunate article entitled "The Changing Aspects of Poetry" on Auden, Spender and their contemporaries, contains the only crotchety passages I have found in his writing.¹³⁵

In reality, the article is not "crotchety" but a cri de coeur which elicited a favourable response from some of Edgar's friends and fellow litterateurs. The article is no more "crotchety" than, for example, MacNair's article in New Frontier or F.R. Scott's poem "The Canadian Authors Meet." F.R. Scott had referred derisively to "aging critics" in his articles "New Poems for Old" for Canadian Forum.¹³⁶ It is understandable that aging critic Edgar might in turn have expressed acidulous ideas.

In this article, Edgar belittled the value of eighteenth-century poetry held in some regard by A.J.M. Smith and T.S. Eliot, to name two modernist critics, because "the most vehement partisan would hesitate to proclaim its total value comparable with that of the age of Wordsworth."¹³⁷ Edgar denounced Gerard Manley Hopkins' "sprung rhythms" and "fierce unintelligibility", which were "bedevilling modern poetry." While Edgar conceded that Georgian poetry (that of de la Mare, Gibson, Graves, for example) was in decline and that its adherents "truly have gone whither death, or the passing of fashion, or their own inertia has taken them,"¹³⁸ he lamented its passing:

They were on the right track, for a purged romanticism with its enthusiasm preserved, but its attitudes shorn away, is an attainable and desirable end of poetic effort. 139

The extremism of poet-critics like Eliot and Pound most upset Edgar:

Their prevailing vice is a maddening obscurity which is partly the result of a contempt for grammar, but which derives principally from a theory of imagination begotten in psycho-analytic laboratories. It is semi-scientifically correct, but wholly valueless for poetry, for it emphasizes the process at the expense of the result. [In the moment of inspiration] he [the poet] is not concerned with carefully articulated argument, but he gives you instead the fine precipitation and exquisite distillation of the hard thinking that has gone before. 140

Edgar compared The Waste Land unfavourably with the best of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats. He made clear the gravity of his concern. Poetry, he declared, was less and less an "act of communication" with an audience:

My exasperation has not been assumed. I want poetry to fight a winning and not a losing battle, and here come these young people obscuring the issue with their monkey tricks. The pity of it is that a number of them [e.g. Pound and Eliot] might be converted, but for their wilfulness and conceit, into reasonably good poets. 141

Edgar was obviously hoping that Canadian poets would not model themselves on the poetry of those like Pound whom he so disliked.

Some of Edgar's contemporaries agreed with his views. When the article appeared, Duncan Campbell Scott congratulated Edgar in a letter:

The Queen's Quarterly has just come to hand. Your article is very good and you whack 'em with a strong cudgel as they well deserve. 142

D.C. Scott shared Edgar's disquiet at what was happening in poetry. A kindred sense of distaste about the meretriciousness of modernism runs through Scott's

letters of the late Thirties - in a reference to Audrey Alexandra Brown, Scott remarked to Edgar of the hard 'sophistication' of the modern:

I think the [financial] effort [by the B.C. government] on behalf of our Poetess had a contemptible result - that monthly allowance would not keep one of the 'up to date' poetesses in cigarettes. ¹⁴³

Pratt, for his part, was more conciliatory to modernism and in the editorial pages of the Canadian Poetry Magazine referred to the need for a "sane balance between tradition and experiment." ¹⁴⁴

In "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Edgar had made the strongest possible case in defense of old ideals against new trends. ¹⁴⁵ After that essay, he tended to concentrate on activities which related to his hopes for Canadian poetry - chiefly through involvement with the Canadian Authors' Foundation, which he founded in 1931 but in which he was most active in the Forties, and his leading role in the Association of Canadian Bookmen, a venture which absorbed him from its revival in November 1935 until it foundered in early 1939.

In his personal life, Edgar found new, absorbing and happy concerns. On June 20, 1935, Edgar married for the second time. His bride was Dona Gertrude Cameron Waller, the daughter of the Reverend C.C. Waller, Principal of Huron College in London, Ontario and a member of the Canadian Authors' Association. Dona Waller had been an employee and family friend of Charles Currelly, Director of the Royal Ontario Museum, himself a close friend of Edgar's. Dona Edgar was a good deal younger than her husband; their daughter, Alice Katherine Jane Edgar, was born on March 20, 1936. ¹⁴⁶ Edgar delighted in his wife and young daughter; after 1935 he was increasingly absorbed in the pleasures and preoccupations of a close-knit family life. The change in Edgar's marital status led Deacon, ever-aware of Edgar's quirks of character, to observe to a

correspondent:

Edgar is working hard and effectively. He has somewhat improved with time and his new wife is good for him. 147

Perhaps as a result of such literary and personal events, Edgar mellowed somewhat about changes underway in Canadian poetic life. By the early Forties, he became friendly with A.J.M. Smith, an accord which moderated the views of both men, serving to make more palatable to Edgar the poetry of Smith and his confrères.

Edgar's involvement with the Association of Canadian Bookmen in the late Thirties can be seen as his last attempt to bring culture to the masses. That is to say, he conceived of the Association of Canadian Bookmen as a vehicle to make the Canadian public more book-conscious through the combined effort of readers, authors, publishers, critics, booksellers and librarians. In June 1935, Pelham Edgar was elected President of the Canadian Authors Association for a two year term, but his career as President of that organisation was largely devoted to furthering the aims of the Association of Canadian Bookmen, whose interests he saw as identical with those of the C.A.A. In this regard Deacon, who had been active in both bodies, told a fellow C.A.A. member:

When Pelham was [CAA] President 10 years ago, he consulted none [sic] neither locally or nationally. I felt he was disloyal to the CAA in committing it to the ACB without authority and doubly disloyal in not withdrawing our Association [from the ACB] when the publishers double-crossed us. We exhibited neither dignity or good sense - apart from the ACB he cared little about the CAA. 148

Pelham Edgar was in fact quite uninterested in many projects dear to the hearts of C.A.A. rank and file. For example, in 1922, he had publicly censured C.A.A. "Book Week" as too commercial. 149 As he had been a founding member of

the Canadian Authors! Association in the Spring of 1921, his criticism of Book Week raised some eyebrows. Edgar admitted in a 1935 newspaper article:

The present writer confesses that he was a late convert to the idea of a Canadian Book Week. It seemed to him some years ago a vain-glorious parade of a product the excellence of which should be its own sufficient commendation or conversely whose insufficiency could not merit the consideration concentration of high-pressure display.¹⁵⁰

Elsewhere, Edgar explained the reason for the new A.C.B. and his role in it:

[As] The President of the Canadian Authors Association [1] was anxious to get the fullest co-operation of all the interests that lie behind the creation, production and distribution of books. For that purpose he [Edgar employed the third person] requested the President of the Publishers Association to call a meeting where representatives of all these interests might discuss the possibilities of a large cooperative plan. The discovery was made that all the groups desired precisely the same thing, which was to provide the public with reliable and disinterested information on literary conditions in Canada and the English-speaking world. ... our native literature is strong enough to stand the international test.¹⁵¹

The principal motivation for Edgar's involvement in the A.C.B. was an idealistic Arnoldian desire to use the association as a vehicle to raise the level of literary awareness in Canada, a desire which had also prompted his involvement in the Canadian Society of Authors in the first decade of the century. He articulated his vision of the A.C.B. in the second issue of the Association of Canadian Bookman Literary Bulletin:

The Association needs the support of the best minds in the country, but we shall never be able to do so much for them as for the people who are starved for intelligent guidance in reading. We don't want to tell Mazo de la Roche, or Stephen Leacock, or Morley Callaghan what to read. But we definitely want them to help us in our efforts to make Canada a country of intelligent readers. That is our main mission and if we can raise the

cultural level of Canada by one inch in ten years we shall have accomplished our task. 152

An idealistic vision of the Association, but, from the beginning, financial difficulties and the conflicting interests of constituent groups handicapped the Association. The Canadian Society of Authors had experienced internal tensions early in the century because of differences in viewpoint between authors and publishers. Because the Association of Canadian Bookmen was composed not only of publishers, who contributed a large part of the funding, and authors, but also of booksellers, critics, librarians, printers and readers, it, too, was vulnerable to internal division. Also, there was disagreement about the degree to which the Association should promote Canadian literature. All of these factors were addressed in Edgar's inaugural speech to the A.C.B. In a speech that was relentlessly optimistic, as was his wont, Edgar maintained that the Association would serve both Canadian and world literature in a dynamic fashion:

Our national desire is to promote excellence everywhere, but we shall make a most special effort to discover and promote excellence in our midst. 153

Like Edgar, Charles Sanderson, chief librarian of the Toronto Public Library and a vice-president of the A.C.B., felt compelled to stress the high-mindedness of the Association in order to refute the suggestion of commercialism:

[There are] some people who wonder if the ACB is not a camouflaged commercial undertaking. The answer is definitely no. If it were, many of us - critics and librarians - would not be here ... 154

Publisher Sydney Watson struck the loftiest note at that inaugural meeting:

The Association is not a conspiracy to dragoon the public into reading dull, even though improving literature. Public taste like private taste must grow out of the honest conviction of an open mind. We have no ready-made canon or standard to impose. All we can do is to multiply the opportunities of good reading; and to trust in the ultimate prevalence of truth and Beauty.¹⁵⁵

The Association's efforts to "multiply the opportunities of good reading" took varied and ambitious forms. In the December 1935 issue of the Canadian Bookman, the A.C.B. outlined for its members a twelve-point benefit plan which included regular bulletins for members, radio and public lectures, lobbying for improved reviewing in the press, establishment of A.C.B. branches across Canada, A.C.B. exhibits, book tokens, book fairs and bonus books to members.¹⁵⁶

Edgar became the first president of the newly-constituted A.C.B. The honorary treasurer was publisher Hugh Eayrs; the honorary secretary was his erstwhile student, William Arthur Deacon of the Globe and Mail. Other association officers included prominent Toronto bookseller Harry Burton (a vice-president); some executive members were John Murray Gibbon, founder of the C.A.A. and poet, B.K. Sandwell, former pupil of Edgar's at Upper Canada College and editor of Saturday Night, and Edgar's dear friend, poet Duncan Campbell Scott. John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir, Canada's Governor-General, lent his support to the endeavour, thereby attracting status-seekers as well as book-lovers to the A.C.B. During the eighteen months following its founding in November 1935, the Association of Canadian Bookmen signed up hundreds of members, sponsored two large book fairs in Toronto in the fall of 1936 and 1937 and a large book fair in Montreal in autumn, 1937.

The A.C.B. Reading Guide furnishes the literary historian with the rather incongruous experience of reading Edgar's assessments, not of Henry James, Virginia Woolf or Duncan Campbell Scott, but of bestselling novels such as

Pearl S. Buck's This Proud Heart, Daphne Du Maurier's Rebecca and Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind. In 1936, in addition to making speeches and reviewing popular fiction for the cause, Edgar made a trip to Western Canada on behalf of the Association of Canadian Bookmen to organize A.C.B. branches in several centres. No branches ever materialised west of Winnipeg, however, because Edgar picked people to organise them whose social credentials matched or exceeded his, for example the Lieutenant-Governor of Alberta, but whose sustained zeal for the cause did not. Moreover, the very scope of the A.C.B.'s ambitions in the midst of the financial constraints of the Depression tended to undermine it. It was a noble project, but the \$2.00 annual fee to rank and file members, who numbered a respectable 2,785 by the end of 1937, was simply inadequate to sustain its ambitious schemes in the midst of a depression. For example, despite attracting large crowds, the 1937 Book Fairs in Toronto and Montreal sustained a loss of \$4,783.21.¹⁵⁷ Like the Canadian Society of Authors of two decades before, chronic underfunding was complicated by inadequate business management, internal squabbling and conflicts of interest among the constituent groups of the A.C.B. In 1938, for instance, Edgar was called upon to mediate between William Arthur Deacon, on one hand, and Lorne Pierce and C.H. Dickinson of Ryerson Press, on the other, over allegedly derogatory remarks made by Deacon about Ryerson Press's treatment of Robert Service's books at an A.C.B. function.¹⁵⁸

In another incident the potential disparity between the interests of publishers and those of readers and other litterateurs became evident. The A.C.B. became involved in a project to make books available to the rural population, particularly in the drought-stricken Prairies, a project which must have appealed to Edgar's desire to reach what he saw as "a vast semi-unlettered community eager for light."¹⁵⁹ In 1937-38, the A.C.B. undertook to donate

20,000 books to the drought-stricken areas of the Prairies by setting up ad hoc lending libraries at local grain elevators. This project was dear to Susan, Lady Tweedsmuir.¹⁶⁰ The publishers were understandably somewhat perturbed about the precedent of the A.C.B. making available free books.

Struggles for attention and prestige also occurred among the officers of the A.C.B., struggles exacerbated by a clash of personalities, and interest groups. For instance, the Montreal group resented what they saw as the hegemony of Toronto, who in turn denounced Montreal's alleged indolence and financial mismanagement.¹⁶¹

As President of the Association, Edgar was no more business-minded than he had been as Secretary of the Canadian Society of Authors. One of Eayrs' employees made this clear to Eayrs:

... Miss Stevenson is waiting to make out the cheques. Professor Edgar said that he would come down to-day to sign up [sic] some for her, but so far has not turned up. If he does not come into the office before five o'clock, I am afraid we cannot get them to you by this afternoon's mail.¹⁶²

The publishers, who had funded the A.C.B. most heavily, chose to blame Edgar when the Montreal and Toronto Book Fairs incurred large losses, although there is evidence that Eayrs, overworked and beset by personal problems which affected his health, bears at least some measure of responsibility. In any case, Eayrs, as Honorary Treasurer of the Association of Canadian Bookmen, penned a stiff note to President Edgar on behalf of the publisher-members:

I think you know that I should be the last one to want the ACB to go out of existence ... I simply point out to you once more the feeling of the publishers which I think is perfectly fair: if they are going to write off deficits of this size, - they can't - because they haven't got the money - [they cannot] offer subscriptions as sustaining members to anything like the extent of previous years.¹⁶³

Two weeks earlier, Edgar had made clear that the A.C.B. was in a perilous financial state. He wrote to John Murray Gibbon in Montreal: "The ACB at the moment is entirely without funds, and we have approximately 3,000 members to serve."¹⁶⁴ The A.C.B. was clearly foundering. A further indication of this was a circular letter to ACB membership mailed by Deacon just before the annual general meeting of January 1938:

Initiated spontaneously [the letter read], organised casually, the ACB is pitifully under-financed in proportion to its responsibilities.

The monetary results [of the book fairs] have been heavy losses.... \$2 subscription money annually [does not] permit indulgence on the lavish scale [which was] offered [at the]. To date, all sustaining members have been publishers or booksellers, who have their obvious interests to serve.... If it [the ACB] is to go on to achieve all we hope, the burdens must be shared more widely, and counsels drawn from an ever-widening circle of personality and experience.¹⁶⁵

Despite the conflicting high-mindedness of Edgar and Deacon, and their efforts to salvage the association, the A.C.B. found it impossible to survive as a coalition of publishers, critics, readers, booksellers and writers. Deacon pronounced the Association in extremis in an October 1938 letter to Leslie Gordon Barnard, writer and Montreal member of the A.C.B.'s Montreal Book Fair Committee. Deacon assigned some blame for the collapse to the ruinously expensive Montreal Book Fair and to weaknesses within the A.C.B. that that financial crisis exposed. Deacon was indignant:

... of course the whole Book Fair was a sample of a lack of mutual understanding. Montreal wrecked the ACB with its "success" and left us [i.e. the executive] to clean up the mess. Our advice was brushed aside, and prominent members of your committee were so openly insulting to several Toronto men present that they will never forget the experience. Finally you enquired why Montreal's efforts were not appreciated. The answer is that it is hard to

forget that a promising organisation (to which I, for one, had given 1-1/2 years of my life) lay in ruins simply because men like [John Murray] Gibbon and [Harry] Burton ignored our written instructions about budget - pledged our credit, and then leered at us. This has never come out because publishers still want to sell Burton [a book-seller] books. And the ACB is dead, despite Edgar's optimism, and the ghost that is still feebly moving is a publishers' puppet. 166

Whatever the accuracy of Deacon's attribution of guilt - and on the basis of the documentary record there is certainly no reason to doubt him - the A.C.B. Minutes of January 26, 1938, state that the accumulated deficit was estimated at \$10,722.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, the publishers, without hegemony, refused to underwrite the large deficit. By December 1938 it proved impossible to carry on, even with Edgar's optimism and bonhomie to encourage key members to carry on. That very month Deacon wrote to Eayrs:

... you will likely be going on with the ACB, whereas I am going to drop out - politely this time. My only reason for returning was Edgar's hurt feelings; and now, I think, he is smoothed down and I may depart in peace. I am doing nothing on the [ACB] Board anyway and [writer Nathaniel] Benson can do that equally well. 168

By April 1939, the A.C.B. had fallen apart. It survived only as a publishers' organisation, thereby reverting to what it had been in the Twenties, before Edgar and others had undertaken to transform it. On April 24, 1939, Edgar made a motion, which was seconded by Deacon, that the C.A.A. officially withdraw from the A.C.B.¹⁶⁹ Deacon penned a trenchant eulogy for the A.C.B.: he wrote to a friend that "[the ACB is] being handed over to the publishers next Friday May 12th, when it will be wholly commercial - and die as they fight among themselves. Some believe that the wrecking was quite deliberate."¹⁷⁰

Pelham Edgar was extremely depressed by the A.C.B.'s failure to survive as a vehicle for his dreams. By the spring of 1939, he confided to Deacon that he

ought to have heeded the latter's warnings about the weaknesses and incipient commercial domination of the Association of Canadian Bookmen.¹⁷¹ Edgar came to realise that his lack of administrative expertise had been one factor in the collapse of the A.C.B. as a coalition of Bookmen; this did not lessen his melancholy. With a candour and high-handedness characteristic of him, Edgar wrote to the June 1939 C.A.A. Convention "Past President's Forum" of his feelings of disappointment:

The venture that failed was the Association of Canadian Bookmen, and here I record one of the major disappointments of my career. It seemed to me possible to achieve a fusion, with commercialism duly subordinated, of all the interests that lie behind the book. I suppose I was a fatuous idealist, for I discovered that commercialism still dominates the field. I do not regret for a moment my own association with the enterprise, which I assure you was far from being commercial, nor have I any retrospective desire that our Association should have held aloof from the movement.¹⁷²

Edgar resolved publicly, that, despite the collapse of the A.C.B. and his recent retirement (1938) as Chairman of the Department of English at Victoria, he would not cease to work and hope for Canadian literary culture:

I have confessed to you, ladies and gentlemen, my disappointment. I would ask you in conclusion not to imagine that I shall spend the days of my retirement in a pessimistic or cynical mood. While life is in me I intend to take the forward-looking view, and in a country with Canada's possibilities the forward looking view is to be the hopeful one.¹⁷³

Over the remaining nine years of his life, Pelham Edgar kept his vow to remain active. As was fitting at the end of a long and distinguished career in Canadian letters, Edgar's writings of the Forties have a retrospective, reflective and even elegiac tone. Yet, in financial and physical terms, the Forties was a difficult decade for Edgar.¹⁷⁴ Edgar was by no means in seclusion,

in despair or inactive: quite the contrary. In Dona, his wife, and Jane, his daughter, he had a young family who gave him joy and succour, and from 1942 to 1946 he was involved in censorship work for the Post Office in Ottawa. He was also absorbed in intensive efforts to place the Canadian Writers' Foundation on a sound financial and organisational basis and to direct Foundation aid to writers like Frederick Philip Grove and Sir Charles G.D. Roberts. At the urging of Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press, Edgar began to work on his memoirs. He also continued to be involved in the literary careers of Pratt, Duncan Scott, and Audrey Alexandra Brown. He periodically gave guest lectures at Victoria College and elsewhere. Most important of all, in the early Forties, Edgar became friendly with A.J.M. Smith, who was to be the leading critic of his literary generation as Edgar had been of his, a somewhat unlikely friendship which throws interesting light on that era in Canadian literary history.

By the late Thirties, Smith was becoming well-known in Canadian literary circles, as an "avant-garde" critic of Canadian poetry, and colleague of Leo Kennedy, F.R. Scott, and A.M. Klein. Smith knew Edgar's friend E.J. Pratt, by letter at least, because of Pratt's involvement in the 1936 anthology New Provinces. But in the late Thirties, Edgar was not a critic of Canadian literature whom Smith much admired - nor did Edgar admire Smith. The latter's 1939 article in the University of Toronto Quarterly "Canadian Poetry - A Minority Report", contained a disparaging reference to critics such as Edgar, who had written in praise of the poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown and Wilson MacDonald, and of the so-called Confederation poets:-

Our academic critics have been so bookishly revelling in the joys of Canadian lyricism with the "Group of 61" or noting their raptures anent the trills of such indigenous throistles as Wilson MacDonald or Audrey Brown, that they have no idea where in the world today

significant poetry can be found. I wonder whether any Canadian critic over forty has ever heard of - much less read - such significant modern poets as Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, Louis MacNiece, Laura Riding, John Crowe Ransom or - one might almost dare to add - Gerard Manley Hopkins and Ezra Pound.¹⁷⁵

Such a reference by Smith would not have pleased Edgar, who would certainly have judged it impertinent and jejune. Edgar was kinder to Smith and to modernist critics in general. Edgar's article, published in the University of Toronto Quarterly the same year, assessed W.E. Collin's The White Savannahs and made some general remarks on modernism, which were not wholly negative. Collin, after all, had some appreciation of Lampman, Pratt, and Pickthall, a point of view which would have pleased Edgar. Edgar wrote magisterially: "The book is then a partizan utterance, but we must freely admit that the author supports his thesis with great intelligence. He has very promising material to deal with, and the plan of his book necessitated that his enthusiasm for young writers [including Smith] should be balanced by a hostility equally enthusiastic to the old. ... The Montreal Group have found in Collin their ideal interpreter."¹⁷⁷ Edgar then evaluated A.J.M. Smith:

The younger generation has produced in A.J.M. Smith a poet of fine quality with an equally fine critical equipment. His output to date is small and his pronouncements here and there of doubtful validity; but they are honestly delivered, and he writes so winningly as always to claim our attention even when he cannot command our assent. He and his fellow professor, [W.E.] Collin, are the accredited voices of the new poetic movement in Canada.¹⁷⁸

When Edgar, the accredited voice of the old, met the voice of the new, not long after this piece of critical magnanimity, the result was a qualified intellectual rapprochement. It came about in this way: in the Forties, Smith was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to edit an anthology of Canadian poetry,

which in 1943 was published as The Book of Canadian Poetry.¹⁷⁹ Smith's research for the anthology brought him to the library of Victoria College and the riches of the James Collection of Canadiana. Through Pratt, he met and became friendly with Edgar. A few years ago A.J.M. Smith recalled:

... it was an extended visit to Toronto that proved most fruitful of all [for anthology research]. I met E.J. Pratt for the first time, and at once any misunderstandings or disagreement we may have had over New Provinces.... vanished. His unstinting kindly help was given with enthusiastic generosity, and we soon became good friends. Pelham Edgar and Northrop Frye also helped me, and I worked for long hours in the James Collection of Canadiana in the library of Victoria College where Edgar, Pratt and Frye were all [sic] teaching.¹⁸⁰

Edgar helped to shape Smith's conception of the Book of Canadian Poetry. In his acknowledgements to the first edition of the anthology, Smith fulsomely thanked Edgar, bestowing upon him the title of "dean of critics". Earlier, Smith gave evidence, in a letter to Eayrs about the possibility of the anthology's publication by Macmillan, that Edgar had helped to broaden his concept of what the anthology should be. Smith wrote:

In scope and bulk it [the anthology] will be able to take the place as a standard reference work that Garvin now holds, but it will be more scholarly and discriminating. The material will have to stand the exacting scrutiny of such exacting scholars as Professor E.K. Brown and Dr. [A.S.P.] Woodhouse and the English Department at the University of Toronto as well as of poets and critics like Ned Pratt and Pelham Edgar.¹⁸¹

According to Smith's letter, the anthology was to emphasise the "superior" virtues of "quieter" poets like Lampman, D.C. Scott and "in his philosophical and religious poems Canon Scott" and to "present Pratt as our one major poet of the modern poet of the modern movement."¹⁸² Given that Eayrs was Pratt's publisher, and that Smith was in search of a publisher, it is likely that

Smith's letter was calculated to elicit a favourable response from Eayrs. He may have slanted his literary scenario accordingly. But Smith had certainly never before so exalted the work of Pratt, Duncan Scott or Lampman.

Not long after meeting Smith, Edgar introduced him to Duncan Campbell Scott. Smith visited Scott at his Ottawa home in the fall of 1941, on the basis of a letter of introduction from Edgar. The two discussed Scott's poetry and the proposed anthology. Scott subsequently reported to Edgar:

Mr. Smith arrived and he spent an hour with me one afternoon. I liked him. He will, I fancy, have more difficulty with my publisher over other selections than mine if he [the publisher] learns that the plot of the new Anthology is to supplement Garvin's wh/ich/, as you know, is published by McClelland & Stewart.¹⁸³

As a result of Edgar's introduction, Scott gave Smith advice about his introductory essay to the anthology as well as about the selection of his poems for it.¹⁸⁴ Smith made at least one more visit to Scott in Edgar's company in October 1945.¹⁸⁵

Edgar also gave Smith's anthology favourable advance publicity. In a review of Ralph Gustafson's Anthology of Canadian Poetry for the October 1942 issue of Canadian Poetry Magazine, he mentioned that Smith "has an important anthology in the making."¹⁸⁶ The contrasts between these words and Edgar's attitude to modernism to the 1937 Queen's Quarterly article is remarkable. One suspects that convivial chats with A.J.M. Smith had helped to moderate Edgar's views:

Mr. Smith, like Mr. Gustafson, is what with convenient looseness of definition we describe as a modernist. The term does not, as is mistakenly assumed, imply that the bearer of the designation makes a clean sweep of tradition, asserting that the poetry of the past is not only

valueless in itself, but is also pernicious in the influence it exerts. These younger men, and I count many of them my friends, are altogether too intelligent to propagate such nonsense. 187

Edgar was evidently trying to deal with his dissatisfaction with modernism in a much more considered fashion and to understand the point of view of a critic like Smith. He continued:

I think we can understand their [i.e. Gustafson and Smith's] position better if we make a distinction between manner and tradition. Tradition represents the aggregate of power in the history of a nation's poetry, and as such is sacred and unimpeachable. When it slackens it freezes into convention and manner is born. Then is ushered in the reign of rhetoric and the stereotyped phrase, and it is against this falsification of tradition that our younger writers revolt. We can have no reasonable quarrel with this dissention, yet we may entertain a just fear that in their eagerness to renovate they have not always nourished themselves at the sources of power, but have merely substituted one manner for another. They have adopted an idiom that is tortured at times beyond the limits of intelligibility, and they speak too often from a highly specialized experience which they make small effort to share with the reading world. 188

It is evident that Edgar and Smith had a mutually beneficial and moderating exchange of views. Edgar remained interested in Smith's progress: in August 1942 he told his friend Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, who had praised Smith's article on anthologies:

Yes, I thought Smith's article on Anthologies quite sound. I like the young man well enough. His chief failing in my eyes is that he does not value your work as he should. 189

In a small way, the mantle was being passed from one eminence grise to another.

Edgar, moreover, gave useful advice to another young critic, Carl Klinck, when the latter was writing his biography of Wilfred Campbell in the early Forties, advice which prompted Klinck to write in his 1947 study of Pratt that

Edgar had "directed his country's sanest criticism from ultra-romantic to modern channels."¹⁹⁰

By the Forties, Edgar was reflecting on Canadian literary life more than directing it. The rigours of his solitary life in Ottawa in 1942, when his family was unable to join him until late 1943 because of the housing shortage, were somewhat eased by the presence of three good friends - the poet Duncan Campbell Scott, Colonel Henry Osborne, a founder of the Dominion Drama Festival, and P.D. Ross, publisher of the Ottawa Journal, for whom Edgar wrote the occasional literary column. The work as censor was taxing for Edgar, who was seventy-two years old in 1943, and long hours of close reading caused eye-trouble. He was also periodically troubled with a back ailment. He confided these difficulties to Sir Charles Roberts in a letter dated June 12, 1943:

Every spare moment after work that my eyes allow me will be given to its reading [of Roberts' latest book] ... My main lack is my family and my old friends. I am doing my level best to find a place for Dona and Jane to join me in late September. No luck yet.¹⁹¹

Much of Edgar's energy in the Forties was devoted to his work for the Canadian Writers' Foundation.¹⁹² In the Forties, Edgar raised funds for impoverished writers, and the sums he extracted from the rich and influential were occasionally not a great deal more than he had garnered in the Eighties. One can only admire his energy and his sense of commitment, which nothing could cause to flag for long. In 1919, for example, he had been involved in efforts to aid an ill and poor Bliss Carman.¹⁹³ Then, about 1930, Edgar was among the leaders in the formation of the "Charles G.D. Roberts Jubilee Fund" for which a prospectus was issued, signed by Edgar and journalists J.F.B. Livesay and Melvin Hammond, among others. The prospectus explained that the fund was a "Writer's Benefit Fund established permanently, and with Dr. Charles G.D.

Roberts as the first beneficiary.¹⁹⁴ The fund, Edgar explained, would also aid other deserving authors and would be "administered scrupulously in the higher interest of Canadian letters. ... It has seemed desirable that committees should be established in every important centre of Canada. The idea of this fund should appeal to the practical imagination of every community."¹⁹⁵

In 1931, a Deed of Trust formalised the creation of the Canadian Authors' Foundation, a "perpetual fund for the benefit of any men or women of distinction in Canadian letters or any dependent or dependents thereof."¹⁹⁶ While many saw the importance of such a fund, contributions were scanty, given the economic conditions of the times and the subsequent war. When Raymond Knister wrote to Pelham Edgar in May 1932 hoping for aid from the Foundation, Edgar had to confess that it was virtually penniless. Knister's death in May 1933 was interpreted by Edgar as confirmation of the need to make the foundation a sound financial as well as legal entity.¹⁹⁷ With the encouragement of such prominent men as Sir Andrew Macphail, Duncan Scott, Sir Robert Falconer (first president), and with a rail pass from the C.P.R., courtesy of John Murray Gibbon, Edgar made a cross-country tour to publicise and raise funds for the C.A.F. After intensive lobbying of the King and subsequently the Bennett government, the Conservative administration of R.B. Bennett, who had a warm personal regard for Edgar,¹⁹⁸ gave the C.A.F. a \$2500 annual grant for the support of Charles G.D. Roberts. With fine irony, the grant was concealed in the House estimates as a cost towards "a report on cultural conditions in Canada."¹⁹⁹ The grant was maintained until Roberts' death in November 1943.²⁰⁰ With the scanty additional funds it was able to raise in the Thirties (mostly through the generosity of Foundation members such as P.D. Ross, Wilson Southam, and Lorne Pierce) the Foundation by heroic effort (if not always by business-like procedure: Edgar's favorite file for work-in-progress was an obscure vest pocket²⁰¹) managed to aid

Grove from 1938 until his death in 1948, and other writers.²⁰²

By the mid-Forties, however, it was obvious to many people, including D.C. Scott, Lorne Pierce and Edgar, that the Foundation needed consolidation, reorganisation and, most of all, more funds, preferably in the form of an endowment, if it was to endure and to increase beneficiaries. By the time Andrew Macphail and Sir Robert Falconer died - Macphail in 1938 and Falconer in 1943 - Edgar and Scott were themselves elderly. Moreover, the collapse of the Association of Canadian Bookmen made Edgar aware that to cherish an ideal was not necessarily to guarantee its survival. Accordingly, during Edgar's sojourn in Ottawa, Edgar and others made a genuine effort to consolidate the Foundation. In 1943, Edgar became the CWF's President. With journalist Wilfrid Eggleston and litterateur Teresa Thomson, new blood was introduced into the Foundation. D.C. Scott, always business-like, was the prime mover in convincing Edgar that a new deed of trust and a change of name from the CAF to the Canadian Writers Foundation - to avoid confusion with the Canadian Authors Association - would be beneficial. On March 8, 1945, the Canadian Writers Foundation received new letters patent and charter. Wilfrid Eggleston recalled in a memoir:

[About 1943] Pelham Edgar was in the thick of his campaign to set up and consolidate a charitable foundation in the aid of distinguished Canadian writers who had fallen on hard times in their post-productive years. Perhaps I should say renew, because he had been campaigning for such a foundation for many years.²⁰³

The government contribution, which had ceased with Roberts' death, was reinstated in the fiscal year 1946-47. The Board managed to offer some assistance to Marshall Saunders, author of Beautiful Joe, to Frederick Philip Grove, to poets Wilson MacDonald and Tom MacInnes and to a young West Coast poet who must remain anonymous.

In the spring of 1946, Teresa Thomson was appointed the Foundation's Executive Secretary-Treasurer, after devoting several years to selfless work for the Foundation, with the help of her husband, Don W. Thomson. She brought to the post a tireless fundraising ability, qualities invaluable to the infant organisation. As a result the CWF became more secure after 1948 through the establishment of a fund in memory of Pelham Edgar.

Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press, who encouraged Edgar's Foundation activities, in some ways took the place in Edgar's life of publisher Hugh Eayrs, Edgar's close friend of two decades, who had died in 1940. Like Eayrs, Pierce valued Edgar's literary instincts and admired his high ideals for Canadian literature. Pierce periodically benefitted from Edgar's acumen in these matters, as a letter from Pierce to Edgar in late 1943 suggests:

I am sending you a copy of E.K. Brown's On Canadian Poetry. and I hope you will review it for the Quarterly. At any rate I owe you this and a good deal more for having introduced Earle Birney to me and for having made possible one of our happiest ventures in the publishing of Canadian verse David and Other Poems. It attracted to our House A.J.M. Smith and unless I am greatly mistaken he will receive the Governor-General's Medal this year. 204

Pierce's shrewder financial sense was of help to Edgar in his Foundation activities. D.C. Scott remarked in a letter to E.K. Brown that "without Pierce, Pelham and his schemes would be lost in Toronto." 205 In November 1943 Pierce undertook another project related to Pelham. He began to urge Edgar to write his memoirs for Ryerson:

... I wish you would put down your recollections of Canadian letters or of the arts and letters, significant happenings and associations with comments and appraisals. I should like to have this given first of all in the form of public lecture/s/ and then published in book form. Suppose you were subsidized, would you undertake it? 206

Edgar's reply is not on record, but he did begin to write "the blessed memoir", as he once called it. Scott helped him by obtaining a room in the Library Archives so he could work without distraction. Edgar had many demands upon his time, however. He was dilatory by nature where the pen was concerned, and progress was slow. Pierce was determined that Edgar should finish the memoir, and not be deterred by other commitments. After Edgar published an article on Leacock in the 1946 Queen's Quarterly, which was both nostalgic about Leacock the man and judicious on Leacock the writer, Pierce spurred Edgar:

Again, I am thrilled over the prospect of your book. I tortured [James] Cappon's Carman and Roberts out of him and made him famous. This time I shall confer immortality upon you. Think of that. You old bag of sin, you shall never die! 207

The Leacock sketch is excellent. It is full of the old ping and makes wonderful reading. I think we have hit on an excellent technique for your book - this happy combination of recollection and comment. Here you are at your ripest and best. It will be a book to keep and it will be a book that will last. You have witnessed the renaissance of the arts and letters in Canada, you have grown up with it, you have known all the principal actors and observed them shrewdly, and what you are putting down will belong, I think to the permanent record of the time. 208

But time, tranquility and physical well-being to work on the memoir seldom coalesced for Edgar in these last years. Only months before his death in October 1948 did he really begin intensive work on it. Yet tantalising fragments such as the Leacock piece remain and an account of the poetic and personal richness of Edgar's 1906 treaty expedition with Duncan Scott into Northern Ontario was also published. 209

Edgar's other literary articles of the Forties, chiefly his articles for the Quebec periodical Educational Record, were retrospective and even-handed in

tone.²¹⁰ Gone was the sharp denunciation of modernism that had culminated in the 1937 article, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry." Time, age, war, and contact with Smith, Birney and other modernists mellowed Edgar. Naturally he did not relinquish his earlier views entirely. In 1946 he observed of Pratt's work that "His conviction that depth need not disassociate itself from clarity divides him from the cult of ultra-modernity" His 1944 obituary of Sir Charles Roberts for the Royal Society reminded fellow members that Roberts had been "latterly even friendly to controlled innovations in the technical treatment of verse," a phrase which, with its qualification "controlled", indicated where Edgar's own sympathies lay. His article on Bliss Carman, incorporated into Percival's Leading Canadian Poets, captured the tone of his Forties criticism: a blend of acute insight, wistful acceptance and faint regret at the passing of a certain view of poetry. Edgar wrote:

"He [Carman] had little dramatic or narrative force, and is out of tune with the contemporary tendencies in thought and action. Our age has chosen to voice itself through a literature that is predominantly realistic and pessimistic. ... [Carman's] love [of beauty] was almost a childlike surrender to the message of sea and earth and sky, for to most of us it seems that the revelations of beauty they yield are not an effective makeweight to the problems that life presents."²¹¹

Edgar was not convinced that he could expect younger readers to share his view of literature, yet he still declared stoutly that they would eventually come to share his literary principles: "'younger readers may not subscribe to my enthusiasm, but there is much still in store for their pleasure."²¹² In 1944, in a review of a book of essays which embodied classical ideals, Edgar advised his audience that "even the changed conditions of the world we live in, cannot impair their validity."²¹³

Edgar did not abandon his lifelong conviction that the general level of

literary culture in Canada needed elevation. In 1947, as in 1895, he was an impassioned Arnoldian on the Canadian scene. In an article for the Ottawa Journal about Duncan Campbell Scott - whose death in December 1947 grieved him deeply - Edgar did not flinch from acknowledging that the ruling desire of his career was still unsatisfied, that cultural standards in Canada were still too low. He wrote:

... until the general aesthetic appreciation of this country is raised to a higher level we must be content that Scott shall remain the permanent treasure of perceptive minds.²¹⁴

All of Edgar's mind and heart were in that phrase of regret, a sad phrase for Edgar to pen after more than five decades of attempts to raise the level of Canadian literary consciousness. As we learned in an earlier chapter, elitism held a certain attractiveness for him in the early years of the century, with its idea of the cénacle or the elect. Now after years of writing, teaching, organising and advising writers, academics and the public, Edgar must have equated the lack of "general aesthetic appreciation" with a goal not yet met. But, after all, his heart was fed on the Romantics in poetry; he knew all about the spiritual meanings of lost dreams, frozen urns, and the need to find strength in what remained behind.

Although his mind was acute and his goals intact in the mid-Forties, Edgar had less and less strength to sustain them. His work as censor ended in September 1945. A period of indecision followed about where the Edgar family should retire, indecision caused in part by financial constraints. Edgar considered Ottawa, Victoria and Toronto in turn, but Canton near Port Hope, where a good friend, C.T. Currelly of the Royal Ontario Museum, owned property, was his ultimate choice. In July 1947, the Edgar family left Ottawa permanently,²¹⁵ to move in January 1948 to a home near Port Hope owned by the

Currellys, where the Edgars planned to live until work on their own house on the property was completed.²¹⁶ Edgar made periodic visits to Ottawa and Toronto, particularly for Canadian Writers Foundation and memoir matters, and to see friends. In early 1948, he was asked to lecture at Victoria once more, to fill in for a sick colleague during the Easter term:

I shall go [to Toronto] on Thursdays, spend the night at Burwash Hall, and meet the 4th year honours lot from 9 to 11 the next day. I am glad to be of some use, and to give the lie to Shakespeare's "unregarded age in corners thrown." Also glad to see old friends, and have libraries at hand, for I don't want to write my book [of memoirs] entirely on my knee.²¹⁷

Edgar's term of teaching was a great success, and he captivated students with his enthusiasm and learning, at the close of his teaching career as at the beginning. In the late spring and early summer of 1948, however, Edgar's health deteriorated as the result of severe circulatory problems. On April 18, 1948, he attended what was to be his last Foundation Board meeting. By August 12, he was writing to a friend that he had been unable to walk for three months. Despite the pain, his wit, his love for his wife and daughter, and his desire to complete his memoirs did not forsake him. In September and early October, he asked Margaret Ray, librarian of Victoria, to send him material on Douglas Bush and E.K. Brown to aid him in his work.

But the complete memoir was not to be. On October 7, 1948, Pelham Edgar died at Canton. He was in his seventy-eighth year. On October 9, his funeral took place in Toronto at the Chapel of St. James Cemetery, where he was buried beside other Edgars, including his father, Sir James Edgar, whose example of culture and gentility had never left his mind.

The eulogies and editorials for "the late Pelham Edgar" were both numerous

and fulsome. Lorne Pierce perhaps best captured the significance of Edgar's passing to a whole generation of Canadian literateur:

I have found his going harder to bear than I had thought. He reached an ripe age, and there could be no sorrow at his parting, but I have known him for thirty-four years. All my closest friends have been much older than I, and Pelham is about the last of the inner circle. I was a pall-bearer at his funeral ...218

Pierce was a prime mover in the most tangible memorials to Edgar; he arranged for the editing, by Northrop Frye, and publication of Across My Path, which represented most of what Edgar had actually written in the way of memoirs as well as a smattering of his best criticism. Maud Edgar, the sister who had been intellectually close to Pelham, aided the book's publication.²¹⁹ Pierce oversaw the deposition of the Edgar papers in the Library of Victoria College and took a leading role in a fund to purchase for Victoria College a portrait of Edgar by Canadian artist Alan Barr.

Other tributes were no less heartfelt. The minutes of the Canadian Writers Foundation meeting for October 12, 1948, justly recorded that Edgar's

kindly presence and wise counsel will be sadly missed at all our meetings and his devoted effort on behalf of this cause, which lay so close to his heart; is an irreparable loss to the directors and beneficiaries of the Foundation. Furthermore, each one of us has sustained a personal bereavement in the loss of a friend.²²⁰

Edgar's achievement was no less valued four years later; B.K. Sandwell characterized Edgar's career:

In that career [centred at Victoria] he had very intimate contact with nearly all the best literary minds in Canada, and was a stimulating and guiding force in the development of many of them; ..

[in the Twenties] Edgar's influence was so great that people thought that the initials [of the P.E.N. Club of Toronto] meant "Pelham Edgar's Nominees."²²¹

But the best summary of the meaning of Edgar's literary career to Canadian literature came in an editorial in the Montreal Star printed the day after his death:

But far more than his books and essays, Dr. Edgar's long years as professor of English literature at Victoria College made the debt which Canadian letters, critical and creative, owes to his memory a very great one. From 1902 [sic] until his retirement not long ago, he worked untiringly to encourage and inspire among many successive University "generations" a knowledge and appreciation of what is best in our written language throughout the centuries. Such service is unspectacular and its rewards are not to be measured in material terms. Pelham Edgar's influence on a generation and more of Canadian students of literature and history has been, like that of so many outstanding teachers in many fields, intangible but very real indeed. 222

The newspaper might have added that he strove to teach constantly, whether as a friend, lecturer or man of letters, that he always cared about Canadian literature, and that he always sought to make Canadian writers and the public aware of the dignity and importance of their task. With his curious blend of hauteur and sympathy, he was for over fifty years a vital figure in Canadian cultural life, one who never knowingly embraced the mediocre or the facile. In a country so often indifferent to the life of the mind, he was a figure of much importance to literary men and women and to literature.

CONCLUSION

As critic, teacher and champion of Canadian literature, Pelham Edgar was an eminent figure in the Canadian literary world for over fifty years. His importance was twofold: first, he espoused rigorous critical principles which had an enduring and significant influence on Canadian critical thought; secondly, he had important and fertile literary friendships with important Canadian poets, critics and publishers. Edgar was arguably Canada's best-known scholarly critic of the first half of the twentieth century. In the face of much public apathy, he stressed the necessity for Canadian literature both to satisfy universal standards of excellence and to reflect Canadian life. As the leading member of a generation of Canadian critics whose importance has not yet been fully studied by literary historians, Edgar was strongly influenced by the critical precepts of Matthew Arnold. As a result, Edgar denounced materialism, commercialism and philistinism in Canadian intellectual life; he espoused a poetry of idealism and high artistic standards which owed much to his early love of Romantic poetry. Edgar's literary career in Canada exemplifies the maxim of René Wellek that the critic can be an important middleman between writer and public in the creation of literature.

Edgar's devotion to the creation of a congenial environment for Canadian literature was expressed throughout his career by his involvement in organisations designed to stimulate and support litterateurs: the Canadian Society of Authors in the early years of the century, the Canadian Authors' Association in the Twenties, and the Canadian Writers Foundation and the

Association of Canadian Bookmen in the Thirties and Forties. Edgar was deeply conscious of the difficult and lonely lot of the Canadian writer: he therefore sought to better it by increasing the financial and intellectual resources available to Canadian writers.

Edgar had long and important friendships with several major Canadian writers, friendships which, through his influence on the work of these writers, affected the complexion of our literary history. Edgar provided encouragement, and editorial and publication assistance to those writers whom he befriended. He had an impact on the careers of D.C. Scott, Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt, Raymond Knister, Earle Birney, and Audrey Alexandra Brown, aiding each of these writers in revising and evaluating individual works and, through his friendships with publishers like Hugh Eayrs of Macmillan and Lorne Pierce of Ryerson Press, helping them to publish their works. As a critic of influence, he wrote reviews and articles which praised and publicised these writers, thereby encouraging them in public as generously and frankly as he did in private. As teacher and critic, Edgar provided an example of commitment to literature which inspired such young scholars as Douglas Bush and Northrop Frye, whom Edgar singled out for assistance in their careers.

Pelham Edgar was the major Canadian critic of his generation, as A.J.M. Smith was of his. As such, Edgar personified the high hopes of his generation for Canadian literature, hopes fulfilled, at least in part, by the work of his friends D.C. Scott and E.J. Pratt. Edgar also embodied the limitations of his critical generation in Canada, with its elitism, imperiousness and coolness toward poetic modernism, especially pronounced in the decades after World War I. It is regrettable that, given Edgar's critical gifts and his broad knowledge of the Canadian literary scene, that he did not at any stage of his career edit an anthology of Canadian poetry (as he planned to do for Morang in 1904) or write

a book-length study of it. Had Edgar lived to complete it, Across My Path might have been a major assessment of Canadian literature by one of its finest critics.

A study of Edgar's career illuminates some aspects of modernism in Canada: Edgar's growing disillusionment with the poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown in the Thirties, his belated friendship with A.J.M. Smith in the early Forties, and his subsequent acceptance of the importance of the poetry of the McGill group tell us much about the changing literary values of the period. Edgar, like other Canadian critics of his generation, disliked poetic modernism because he saw it as hostile to literary tradition and tending to the bizarre and extreme in theme and style. In the Thirties, he encouraged the poetry of Audrey Alexandra Brown, rather than the work of a more modernist poet like Dorothy Livesay, a stance that exemplifies the initial reaction of older critics to a new generation of Canadian poets. Edgar's advice to Smith about the Book of Canadian Poetry constitutes a heretofore-unexamined contact between two of Canada's most important critics, a contact which adds to our understanding of the evolution of poetic modernism in Canada.

Northrop Frye has rightly observed that, as critic and teacher, Edgar helped to mould literary standards and values in Canadian life, and to enhance awareness of Canadian literature in Canadian universities. Whatever his limitations, Edgar was unquestionably a Canadian critic without peer in his time - tireless, exigent, committed, idealistic and zealous to discover and nurture Canadian writing of promise.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE

- 1 Carl Berger, The Sense of Power (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970) The Writing of Canadian History; (Toronto: Oxford, 1976) S.E.D. Shortt, The Search for an Ideal: Six Canadian Intellectuals and their convictions in an age of transition (Toronto: University of Toronto Presss, 1976).
- 2 Pelham Edgar [hereafter abbreviated as PE], Across My Path [hereafter abbreviated as Path] (Toronto: Ryerson, 1952), p. 12.
- 3 Anon., "Sir James David Edgar, Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, VI (1900), XXII, XXIII.
- 4 For information on J. D. Edgar, see the above obituary and the sources listed below.
- 5 PE, Path, p. 12.
- 6 According to J. D. Edgar [hereafter abbreviated as JDE], Letter to Louis Fréchette, 24 Sept. 1892, Louis Fréchette Papers, Public Archives of Canada [hereafter abbreviated as PAC].
- 7 Louis Fréchette, "A Lady Edgar - En mémoire de son mari, Sir James Edgar, membre décédé de la Société Royale," Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, I (1901), p. 3. Written in 1900, the year after JDE's death.
- 8 JDE, Letter to Louis Fréchette, 24 Sept. 1892, Louis Fréchette Papers, PAC.
- 9 For an account of JDE's early career, see R. Brian Hamilton Reid, "Sir James Edgar: The Early Years", Diss. Queen's University 1977, and R.M. Stamp, "J.D. Edgar and the Liberal Party: 1867-96", Canadian Historical Review, (June 1964).
- 10 The paper was delivered on April 30, 1861. See the Edgar Family Papers, Public Archives of Ontario [hereafter abbreviated as EFP, PAO].

11

McGee's ideas of the period are exemplified by McGee, "The Mental Outfit of the New Dominion (1867)", rpt. The Evolution of Canadian Literature: Beginnings to 1867, I, ed. M. J. Edwards et. al. (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Wilson, 1973), pp. 254-264, and D'Arcy McGee : A Collection of His Speeches and Address, (Toronto: 1937).

12, 13

JDE, Presidential Address to the Ontario Literary Society, quoted in Reid, pp. 65, 67.

14

Reid, p. 11. In a speech of August 1895, for example, J. D. Edgar spoke of his sympathy for French Canadians. See folder 1, Pelham Edgar Papers, Victoria College [hereafter abbreviated as PEP, VC].

15

Carl Klinck, Wilfred Campbell : A Study in Late Provincial Victorianism (Toronto: Ryerson, 1942, rpt. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1977), p. 73. See also John Matthews, Tradition in Exile (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1962), p. 89.

16

Alfred Bailey, Culture and Nationality (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972), p. 147.

17

JDE, "An Open Letter to Andrew Carnegie", (n.p.: 2 Dec. 1891), PEP, VC.

18

This view is borne out by the Royal Society obituary for J. D. Edgar.

19

JDE, Letter to Wilfrid Laurier, 14 October 1898, EFP, PAO.

20

The poem eventually became the title piece of a volume of verse. See JDE, This Canada of Ours, (Toronto: Briggs, 1893).

21

Evidence of this is in Mrs. D. C. Scott's social scrapbook, in the Arthur Bourinot Collection, National Library of Canada.

22

JDE, Canada and Its Capital : With Sketches of Political and Social Life At Ottawa, (Toronto: Morang, 1898).

23

See JDE, The White Stone Canoe : A Legend of the Ottawas, (Toronto: Toronto News Co., 1885).

24

Reid, p. 47.

25

For information on the Ridouts, see The Macmillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography and Matilda Ridout Edgar [hereafter abbreviated as MRE], Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War, (Toronto: Briggs, 1890).

26

Northrop Frye, "Editor's Introduction", Path, p. ix.

27

MRE, Ten Years of Upper Canada in Peace and War.

28

MRE, A Colonial Governor in Maryland : Horatio Sharpe and His Times 1753-1773, (New York: Longmans, Green 1912).

29

For instance, in MRE, General Brock, (Toronto: Morang's Makers of Canada, 1910).

30

PE, Path, p. 16. Edgar's view of the Brock volume was not shared by one of its reviewers, who criticised the obvious lack of editorial scrutiny. See E. Cruikshank, rev. of General Brock by Lady Edgar, Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada, X (1905), pp. 63-66.

31

I am indebted to Maud Hicks McLean, who is writing a biography of her great-aunt, Maud Edgar, for generously sharing with me geneological and other information about the Edgar Family.

32

PE, Path, p. 16.

33

PE, TS. page of Path, p. 1, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.

34

JDE, Letter to MRE, 20 Aug. 1890, EFP, PAO.

35

Jean Graham, "A Man of Letters", Saturday Night, 21 October 1933, p. 8. Path states the dame school was kept by Miss Henrietta Saunders and her sister Julia, contradicting Graham who states it was a Miss Thornley.

36

PE, Path, p. 15.

37

See Caroline Gossage, A Question of Privilege, (Toronto: 1977), p. 41.

38

PE, Path, p. 15. John M. Buchan succeeded Cockburn as principal, 1881-1885. George Dickson was principal from 1885 to 1895. For an account of Upper Canada College, consult Richard B. Howard, Colborne's Legacy : Upper Canada College 1829-1979, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979).

39

PE, Path, p. 16.

40

Stephen Leacock, quoted in Gossage, p. 45. This piece also appeared in the UCC College Times.

41

George Dickson and Mercer Adam, A History of Upper Canada College 1829-1892, (Toronto: Rowell and Hutchinson, 1893), p. 149.

42

PE, Path, TS. p. 9, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.

43

John Buchan, quoted in Dickson and Adam, p. 149.

44

PE, Path, TS., p. 8, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.

45

See Masthead, College Times, 4 Nov. 1886.

46

Editorial, College Times, 4 Nov. 1886, p. 2.

47

Reid, p. ii.

48

Editorial, College Times, 10 Feb. 1887, pp. 41-2.

49

Editorial, College Times, 2 Dec. 1886, p. 20.

50

Editorial, College Times, 2 Dec. 1886, p. 35.

51

PE, Path, pp. 16-17.

52

JDE, Letter to MRE, 3 May 1885, EFP, PAO.

53

JDE, Letter to MRE, 4 June 1885, EFP, PAO.

54

JDE, Letter to MRE, 2 June 1885, EFP, PAO.

- 55 JDE, Letter to MRE, undated, EFP, PAO.
- 56 JDE, Letter to MRE, 1 May 1885, EFP, PAO.
- 57 JDE, Letter to MRE, 4 June 1885, EFP, PAO.
- 58 JDE, Letter to MRE, 14 June 1885, EFP, PAO.
- 59 JDE, Letter to MRE, 8 July 1885, EFP, PAO.
- 60 PE, "Stephen Leacock", Path, p. 90.
- 61 PE, Path, TS, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.
- 62 JDE, Letter to MRE, 10 July 1885, EFP, PAO.
- 63 This happened in the 1896 election. See Hector Charlesworth, More Candid Chronicles : Further Leaves From the Note Book of A Canadian Journalist, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 127-128
- 64 JDE, Letter to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 14 Oct. 1898, EFP, PAO.
- 65 See the UCC Calendar, 1887-1888. He was on the First Elevens Cricket Team.
- 66, 67 Alan Bowker, "Truly Useful Men : Maurice Hutton, George Wrong, James Mavor and the University of Toronto 1880-1921" Diss. University of Toronto 1975, p. 18.
- 68 PE, ed., Wordsworth and Longfellow : Select Poems, (Toronto: Morang's Modern Textbooks, 1904), p. 115.
- 69 PE, "Modern Authors in the English Course [Letter]", Varsity, 23 March 1889, p. 149.
- 70 PE, "Among the Millet", Varsity, 2 March 1889, p. 149.
- 71 PE, "Among the Millet", Varsity, 2 March 1889, p. 149.

72

PE, "Extracts From An Essay on Thoreau", Varsity, 9 Feb. 1889, p. 9.

73

Matthew Arnold, Essays in Criticism, 2nd series, (London: 1888), p. 144.

74

PE, "Extracts From An Essay on Thoreau", Varsity, 16 Feb. 1889, p. 98.

75

PE, Path TS., Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.

76

PE, Path, pp. 20-1.

77

Helen Sarah Grant Macdonald, Diary, April 1 [1892], Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Central Library. Miss Macdonald attended literary gatherings often, was seldom bored, and later taught at Bishop Strachan School.

78

PE, Letter to Louis Fréchette, 6 Dec. 1888, Louis Fréchette Papers, PAC. He did send a poem, "L'hiver canadien", which appeared in Varsity, 22 Dec. 1888.

79

MRE, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 14 May 1891, EFP, PAO.

80

Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 11 Dec. 1890, EFP, PAO.

81

His marks in his graduating year were: Class I (75% plus) - French, German, Italian; Class II (65-75%), Spanish; Class III (50-66%) English. See University of Toronto Class and Prize Lists 1892, (Toronto: Rowsell and Hutchinson, 1892, p. 28.

82

PE, Path, p. 22.

83

MRE, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 10 July 1889, EFP, PAO. Pelham pitched tents and helped the team move camp.

84

'Nemo', "Varsity Chat", Toronto Saturday Night, 2 (23 Nov. 1889), p. 3.

85

PE, Path, p. 22.

- 86 Personal Interview with Earle Birney, Toronto, 13 Dec. 1978.
- 87, 89, 91
PE, "Walt Whitman", Toronto Mail, 9 April 1892, p. 12.
- 88
247. PE, "Browning's Ring and the Book", Varsity, 24 March 1891, p. 247.
- 89
see 87
- 90
JDE, Letter to MRE, 11 April 1892, EFP, PAO. The father told his wife that several Royal Society Fellows heartily approved of Pelham's recent articles.
- 91
see 87
- 92
Untitled volume, (n.p., n.d.), 32 pp., National Library of Canada
- 93
PE, "Dream Faces", Varsity, 24 March 1891.
- 94
Untitled Sonnet in the untitled volume, p. 3.
- 95
Untitled poem in the untitled volume, p. 14.
- 96
JDE, Letter to MRE, 8 Jan. 1896; see also a letter of 2 July 1891, EFP, PAO.
- 97
PE, Path, p. 90.
- 98
JDE, Letter to Hon. George Ross [Minister of Education for Ontario], 19 July 1892, Dept. of Education Records, Series D-7, PAO.
- 99
George Dickson, Letter to George Ross, 20 July 1892, Dept. of Education Records, Box 3, PAO.
- 100
Dickson, Letter to Ross, 2 June 1893, Dept. of Education Records, Box 3, PAO.
- 101
Dickson, Letter to Ross, 31 Jan. 1893, Dept. of Education Records, Box 3, PAO.

102

Evidence for this is found in a letter PE wrote to Johns Hopkins in 1895: "Professor (James Wilson) Bright will inform you that more than a year and a half ago I interviewed him with reference to my course, and that I have been studying in part under his supervision since that time". Edgar, Letter to Registrar, August 1895, Archives of Johns Hopkins. Edgar visited Baltimore on his honeymoon in Dec. 1893.

103

Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 20 Nov. 1892, EFP, PAO.

104

MRE, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 12 Dec. 1892, EFP, PAO.

105

Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 19 March 1893, EFP, PAO.

106

Howard, p. 121.

107

Jean Graham, "Among Those Present..." Saturday Night, 20 Oct. 1933, p. 8. Graham's editor, B.K. Sandwell, had been a pupil of PE at UCC.

108

See Dickson, Letter to Ross, 3 April 1895, Dept. of Education Records, Box 3, Pao.

109

JDE, Letter to Ross, 27 May 1893, Dept. of Education Records, Box 4, PAO.

110

"Social and Personal" Saturday Night, 17 Jan. 1891, p. 2.

111

"Social and Personal" Saturday Night, 31 Jan. 1891, p. 2.

112

Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 27 Sept. 1893, EFP, PAO.

113

JDE, Letter to MRE, 17 July [1893], EFP, PAO.

114

See JDE, Letter to Ross, 13 Oct. 1893, Dept. of Education Records, Box 4, PAO.

115

"Social and Personal", Saturday Night, 23 Dec. 1893, p. 4.

116

Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 1 Jan. 1894, EFP, PAO.

- 117 PE, Path, p. 91.
- 118 Maud Edgar, Letter to Caroline Edgar, 1 Jan. 1894, EFP, PAO.
- 119 Helen Edgar, Dahabeah Days, (Toronto: Ryerson, 1923).
- 120 PE, Path, p. 23.
- 121 PE, Path, p. 91.
- 122 JDE, Letter to Ross, 14 June 1895, Dept. of Education Records, Box 4, PAO.
- 123 JDE, Letter to MRE, 29 June 1895, EFP, PAO.
- 124 "Local and Personal," College Times, 2 Dec. 1886, p. 37.
- 125 For a discussion of Hopkins, see John C. French, A History of the University Founded by Johns Hopkins (Boston: 1946) and Hugh Hawkins, Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960).
- 126 Hawkins, p. 87.
- 127, 128 PE, Path TS. p. 2, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.
- 129 MRE's A Colonial Governor in Maryland dealt with Ridout ancestors.
- 130 Hawkins, p. 167.
- 131 PE, Path TS, pp. 3-4, Jane Conway material, PEP, VC.
- 132 JDE, Letter to MRE, 10 Jan. 1896, EFP, PAO.
- 133 "University Honours" Toronto World, clipping, n.d., Dept. of Graduate Records, Pelham Edgar file, University of Toronto Archives.

- 134 JDE, Letter to MRE, 21 April 1896, op. cit.
- 135 PE, Letter to Jamie Edgar, 13 May 1896, EFP, PAO.
- 136 Helen Edgar, Letter to Jamie Edgar, 28 Nov. 1895, EFP, PAO.
- 137 Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History, Ed. William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1957), p. 542.
- 138 Duncan Campbell Scott, Letter to PE, 16 Feb. 1895, folder 36, D.C. Scott papers, Victoria College Library.]
- 139, 140 PE, "Prefatory Note," A Study of Shelley With Special Reference To His Nature Poetry, (Toronto: Briggs, 1899), [p. 1].
- 141 PE, "Extant Criticism," "A Study of Shelley, p. 9.
- 142 PE, A Study of Shelley, p. 29.
- 143 PE, "Shelley and Keats as Nature Poets," University of Toronto Monthly, II, 2 (Nov. 1901), 36-41.
- 144 See PE, "A German View of Keats," The Week, 31 Jan. 1896, 228-231; "Duncan Campbell Scott," The Week, 15 March 1895, 370-1; "William Wilfred Campbell's Earlier and Later Poems," Rev. of The Dread Voyage, The Week, 29 Sept. 1893, 1043-44.
- 145 Claude Bissell; "Literary Taste in Central Canada During the Late Nineteenth Century" 1950; rpt. Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature, ed. Lorraine McMullen, (Ottawa: Tecumseh Press, 1960), pp. 24-40.
- 146 PE, "William Wilfred Campbell's Earlier and Later Poems," The Week, 29 Sept. 1893, 1043-44.
- 147 Carl Klinck, Wilfred Campbell: A Study in Late Provincial Victorianism (1948; rpt. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1977), p. 92.
- 148 "Faculty Change," Acta Victoriana, [hereafter abbreviated as Acta] XXXI, No. 1 (Oct. 1897), 3.

149

Jean Graham, "A Man of Letters," Saturday Night, 20 Oct. 1933, p. 8.

150

See Nathaniel Burwash, "Development of The University of Toronto 1887-1904," The University of Toronto and Its Colleges 1827-1904 (Toronto: The Librarian, 1906).

151

See A.B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence: Critical Inquiry and Canadian Thought in the Victorian Era (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1979), pp. ixff. pp. 13-14ff.

152

John Watson, quoted in A.B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence, p. 199.

153

L.E. Horning, Letter to Louis Fréchette, 25 Jan. 1894, Vol. 3, Fréchette Papers, PAC.

154

An account of the event is found in Carl Y. Connor, Archibald Lampman: Canadian Poet of Nature (1929, rpt. Ottawa: Borealis, 1974).

155

L.E. Horning, "Some Notes on Canadian Authors," Acta, XIX, No. 7 (April 1896), 312-313.

156

L.E. Horning, "Canadian History," Acta, XX, No. 5 (Feb. 1897), 225-6.

157

L.E. Horning, "Canadian Literature," Acta, XXI, No. 3, (Dec. 1897), 97-112.

158

Munro Beattie, "The Advent of Modernism in Canadian Poetry in English 1912-1940", Diss. Columbia, 1957, p. 42.

159

Bowker, p. 265.

160

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161

I am indebted to Professors Clara Thomas and John Kennox, and to Michèle Lacombe, all of the W.A. Deacon Project, for this and much other information generously shared.

162

W.A. Deacon, "A Leader Passes," Canadian Author and Bookman, XXIV, No. 4 (Dec. 1948).

163

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164

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165

Northrop Frye, "Editors Introduction" Path, p. ix.

166

W.A. Deacon, Letter to Emily Murphy ("Janey Canuck"), 30 Nov. 1921, W.A. Deacon Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

167

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168

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169

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170

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171, 172

John Squair, The Autobiography of a Teacher of French (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1928).

173

Squair, p. 101.

174

Edgar "Emile Zola and the Realistic Movement in France," Acta, XXVI, 2 (Nov. 1902) 76.

175

PE, Letter to Louis Fréchette, 18 Jan. 1901, MS. 1490-1502, Fréchette Papers, PAC.

176

Louis Fréchette, Letter to PE, 6 March 1901, PEP, VC.

177, 178

Driftwood", Toronto Globe, (6 April 1901).

179

Professor Reynar, head of the English Dept. had retired as Emeritus: Edgar made the transfer to English complete in 1908.

180

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181

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183

Eugène, Labiche, and Edouard, Martin, Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon, ed. PE, (Toronto Morang's Educational Series, 1908), 105 pp; PE and John Squair eds., The Poetry of Victor Hugo (Boston: Ginn, 1911), 330 pp.

184

PE, "Have We A National Literature?", Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904, p. 6, mag. section; "Some Canadian Poets: Bliss Carman," Toronto Globe, 4 Feb. 1905, pp. 6-7, mag. section; "Canadian Literature," Acta Vic, XXXV, No. 3 Dec. 1911, 99-103.

185

"Tennyson Club," University of Toronto Monthly, III, No. 4 (Jan. 1903), 118.

Chapter Two

1 J.D. Edgar died in Toronto on July 31, 1899. The grief was nation-wide: an obituary is to be found in the 1900 edition of the Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada.

2 Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Debates of the House of Commons, 1 August 1899, pp. 9060-1. The House was adjourned for the day on tribute to the late Speaker.

3 See "A Lady Edgar-En mémoire de son mari, Sir James Edgar membre décédé de la société Royale, Royal Society of Canada Transactions and Proceedings (1901), p. 3.

4 PE, Letter to Louis Fréchette, 19 Jan. 1901, Fréchette Papers, PAC.

5 The record book of their séances is in the Edgar Family Papers, PAO.

6 See Lyn Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1981), p. 47.

7 See The Search for English-Canadian Literature, ed. Carl Ballstadt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

8 For a cogent discussion of the problem, refer to Desmond Pacey, "The Canadian Writer and His Public 1882-1952," Studia Varia: Royal Society of Canada, ed. G.E.D. Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1957), 10-20.

9 For a discussion of the problem, see James Mavor "Canadian Copyright" University of Toronto Monthly, I, No. 5 (Jan. 1901), 139-145; and Harold G. Fox The Canadian Law of Copyright (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1944).

10 Wilfred Campbell, At The Mermaid Inn, Toronto Globe, 4 June 1892, p. 87.

11/12 This portrait of turn of the century Canadian publishing is gleamed from a valuable thesis by George Laurence Parker, "A History of A Canadian Publishing House, A Study of the Relation Between Publishing and the Profession of Writing 1890-1940", Diss., University of Toronto 1969, 2 vols. For a discussion of the pre-World War I era, see Vol. I, pp. 39ff.

- 13/14/15 "For Copyright," Toronto Globe, 7 Feb. 1899. The speaker was George Ross, Ontario's Minister of Education.
- 16 "The Alleged Society of Authors," Saturday Night, 11 Feb. 1899, p. 1.
- 17 Mavor, Edgar's good friend probably recruited him. He lobbied English parliamentarians on the copyright issue for the Society. James Mavor "Canadian Copyright," University of Toronto Monthly, I, No. 5 (Jan. 1901), 139-145.
- 18 Scrapbook, Box 34, Mavor Papers, Fisher Rare Book Room, University of Toronto.
- 19 For early details on the Society, see "Books and Authors" Canadian Magazine, 13 (July 1899), 292 and the C.S.A. material in the James Mavor papers, Fisher Rare Book Room, University of Toronto.
- 20 See brochure, Scrapbook, Mavor Papers, Box 34, Fisher Rare Book Room, University of Toronto.
- 21 J.A. Cooper, "Another Amateur Production," Canadian Mag., 10 (March 1898), 461.
- 22 Personal Interview with Donald Creighton, Brooklin, Ontario, October 20, 1978.
- 23 See his article on Macphail, "Sir Andrew Macphail," Queen's Quarterly, 54 (Spring 1947), 8-22.
- 24 Untitled [Article], Canadian Authors Association circular, 18 March 1930, Box 2, Canadian Authors Association Papers, Toronto Branch, Victoria College.
- 25 Bernard McEvoy, Secretary of the CSA, Letter to Charles Lindsey, 14 March 1899, Lindsey Papers, PAO.
- 26 "The Copyright Law" Canadian Magazine, 15 (Sept. 1900), p. 47. For a discussion of copyright and publishing law at this period, see Parker, A History Of A Canadian Publishing House, pp. 21ff.

27/28

The Society spoke of its "proper and significant" influence in copyright matters in its 1902 report. [Pelham Edgar, Secretary], The Canadian Society of Authors [Bibliography and General Report], (Toronto: Hunter Rose [1902]).

29

DCS, Letter to PE, 6 Feb. 1901, D.C. Scott Papers, Victoria College Library.

30

DCS, Letter to PE, 19 Feb. 1901, D.C. Scott Papers, Victoria College Library.

31

See DCS, Letter to PE, 6 Feb. 1901, D.C. Scott Papers, Victoria College Library and Chapter Three of this thesis.

32

The members of the Committee were James Bain Jr. and Professors Lefroy, Mavor, and Edgar.

33

George Parkin, Diary, Parkin Papers, PAC.

34

Lally Barnard, "Driftwood," Toronto Globe, 6 April 1901, p. 12. Barnard appealed for the CSA to set up an editorial group to solicit and select poetry for publication in Canadian newspapers "in the hopes of finding some new Canadian poet". This group did not materialize but some of Marjorie Pickthall's verse did appear in the Toronto papers, where it was remarked by Edgar, Macphail and Archibald MacMechan. As a judge in a newspaper contest, Edgar was able to award Pickthall a prize for one poem, bringing her to prominence.

35

A.E. Ragg, Letter to the Editor, Toronto Globe, 8 April [1901], p. 5.

36

Wilfrid Campbell, "At The Mermaid Inn," Toronto Globe, 12 Nov. 1892.

37

J.D. Edgar, Letter to MRE, 30 June 1895, EFP, PAO. Edgar is probably referring to some of Campbell's more splenetic contributions to the Mermaid Inn column.

38/39

W. Campbell, Letter to the Editor, Toronto Globe, 11 April 1901. It will be remembered that Campbell heroically conquered his "dislike" of anthologies sufficiently to edit an edition of The Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, a volume whose contents caused Edgar and D.C. Scott much scornful amusement.

40

PE, Letter to the Editor, Toronto Globe, 15 April 1901.

- 41 "Canadian Authors and Critics [editorial]" Toronto Globe, 13 April 1901.
- 42 PE, "Canadian Literature," Acta Victoriana (Dec. 1911), pp. 99, 100.
- 43 C.S.A. printed circular, 14 June 1904, CSA scrapbook Mavor papers, Fisher Rare Book Room, Univ. of Toronto.
- 44 This figure is from Parker, A History of a Canadian Publishing House, p. 75. Scott had praised Crawford's work in "The Past Decade in Canadian Poetry", The Canadian Magazine, 17 (1901), 153-159, and PE in "English-Canadian Literature", Cambridge History of English Literature XIV (1916), 343-360. The dismal sale of the book must have depressed Edgar and some of the Society members; in 1901 his friend, Mavor had written confidentially that the effect of the copyright reforms already "upon literature and upon publishing in Canada will justify the efforts which were made to pass it". See Mavor, "Canadian Copyright", University of Toronto Monthly, I, No. 5 (Jan. 1901), 139-145.
- 45 "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904, p. 9 (mag. sect.).
- 46 Donald Creighton, Harold Adams Innis: Portrait of A Scholar (Toronto: Ryerson, 1957).
- 47 See chronological bibliography of Edgar's writings in the bibliography.
- 48 James Cappon (1855-1939), professor of English at Queen's University 1888-1919, Author of monographs on Bliss Carman Roberts; W.D. Lighthall (1857-1954) poet, philosopher, and compiler of Songs of the Great Dominion (1889); George Wrong (1860-1948), professor of history at Toronto, 1892-1927.
- 49 See Edgar, "Some Canadian Poets: Bliss Carman," Toronto Globe 4 Feb. 1905, pp. 6-7 (mag. sect.).
- 50/51 PE, "Canadian Literature" Acta, 35, No. 3 (Dec. 1911), pp. 103, 99.
- 52 PE, "A Confession of Faith and A Protest," University Magazine, 8 (Apr. 1909) p. 314.

- 53 PE, "The Judgements of Carlyle," University Magazine 12 (Dec. 1913), 634, 631. Edgar commented elsewhere of Carlyle and his "scant sympathy in aesthetic delights". "And the world is now slipping past Carlyle because he refused to make terms with the modern spirit, because he failed to recognise the titles of physical science, and resolutely set his face against democracy." "A Confession of Faith...", p. 307.
- 54/55 PE, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," University Mag., 11 (Oct. 1912), 479-89.
- 56 PE, "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe 31 Dec. 1904, p. 9 (magazine section.)
- 57 PE, "A Confession of Faith and A Protest", p. 314.
- 58 PE, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," University Magazine, 11 (Oct. 1912) p.484-5.
- 59 PE, "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904, p. 9 (mag. sect.).
- 60 PE, "Have We A National Literature?" p. 9 (mag. sect.).
- 61 PE, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," p. 48.
- 62 PE, "The Shelley-Keats Memorial," Acta, 33 (1906) p. 131.
- 63 PE, "English Poetry Since Tennyson..." University Magazine, 8 (Apr. 1908) p. 259. In this article he specifically wrote of "progress" in literature.
- 64 PE, "Venice," University Magazine, 9 (1910), 654-666.
- 66 A full range of critical optimism of the time is found in Ballstadt.
- 65/67 PE, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature" University Magazine, 11 (Oct. 1912), p. 481. This idea was central to Edgar's thinking on the subject: a variant of the Shakespeare anecdote is found in his "Canadian Literature" Acta. (Dec. 1911), p. 102.

68

For a discussion of W.D. LeSueur's career, see A.B. McKillop, A Critical Spirit (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977).

69

PE, "Canadian Literature," Acta, 35 (Dec. 1911), p. 100.

70

PE, "English Poetry Since Tennyson," University Magazine, 7 (April 1908), p. 267. This was in unfavourable contrast to the Irish, whom Edgar painted "feeding their pigs and pursuing their imperishable dreams."

71, 72

See PE, "A Confession of Faith and A Protest," University Magazine 8 (April 1909), 305-315.

73

PE, "Thoughts on Poetry and the Sister Arts," Acta, 41 (Jan. 1917), 133-141; 41 (Feb. 1917), 195-199.

74

PE, "Random Thoughts on Poetry and Art," Canadian Bookman (May 1915), pp. 5-6.

75

PE, "Thoughts in Poetry...", p. 137.

76

PE, "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904. Borden had succeeded Sir Charles Tupper in opposition in 1901, and the Conservatives indulged in some vigorous muck-raking over the next few years.

77

PE, "A Confession of Faith..." University Magazine, 8 (April 1909) 314-5.

78

PE, "Canadian Literature" Acta, 35 (Dec. 1911) p. 103.

79

D.C. Scott, "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," Canadian Magazine, 17 (June 1902), p. 158.

80

PE, "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec. 1904, p. 9.

81

PE, "English Poetry Since Tennyson," p. 262. Edgar believed that in European poetry "a philosophy of subtle mysticism" was forming, to free poetry from "any servile dependence upon concrete fact". His greatest hope in this regard was Yeats. It is remarkable how Edgar's reference to elusive beauty in the last sentence is echoed by D.C. Scott in his later "Ode for the Keats Centenary":

For Beauty has taken refuge from our life
That grows too loud and wounding;
Beauty with draws beyond the bitter strife,
Beauty is gone (Oh where?).....

82

PE, ["Bliss Carman"] [1905], A.S. Bourinot scrapbook, National Library of Canada, Edgar went on to say that as antidotes to modern life, the Carman poems were only "momentarily effective" because they unfortunately glorify Nature to the exclusion of all else, like much of Canadian poetry.

83, 84

PE, "Thoughts On Poetry and the Sister Arts," Acta, pp. 139, 144.

85

PE, "Canadian Literature," Acta 35 (Dec. 1911), p. 108.

86

PE, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature", p. 482.

87, 88

PE, "Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe (31 Dec. 1904) p. 9 (mag. sect.)

89

"New World Lyrics" Toronto News, 18 Nov. 1905. Unsigned, but the style is Edgar's.

90

"A Fresh View of Canadian Literature," University Magazine, 11 (Oct. 1912), 486.

91

Edgar, Letter to Byron Walker, 13 Sept. 1905, Walker Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

92

Walker, Letter to John Cooper, 29 April 1901, Walker Papers.

93

Cooper, Letter to Byron Walker, 30 March 1905, Walker Papers. Edgar received a letter from Walker asking that he organize a meeting on the subject, but if anything was done, no evidence of it is discoverable.

94

Walker, Letter to E.B. Greenshields, 8 April 1909, Walker Papers.

95

See Lyn Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time, p. 47.

96

S.E.D. Shortt, The Search For An Ideal, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 17-19.

97

Ian Ross Robertson, "Sir Andrew Macphail As A Social Critic", Diss. University of Toronto 1974.

98

S.E.D Shortt, The Progressive Mind in Academic Canada. The University Magazine 1907-1914 Diss. Carleton University 1969, p. 2-3ff.

99

Walker, Letter to E.B. Greenshields, April 8, 1909, Walker Papers

100, 101, 102

Canadian Society of Authors Annual Report For 1906 and 1907 [n.p. n.d.], University of Toronto Robarts Research Library. While the University Magazine was not partisan in the political sense, Edgar's very use of the phrase "correctness of information" about a journal of broad social commentary implies the presence of a certain proselytising perspective. Macphail undeniably wished readers to share his concerns and structures about contemporary issues-his anti-feminism articles were hortatory in the extreme.

103

This appeared in the masthead, for example, in the issue of University Magazine, 25 (Feb. 1910) p. 1. The editorial board also included James Mavor of Toronto and Archibald MacMechan of Dalhousie, another early admirer of Marjorie Pickthail's verse.

104

Scott, Letter to Edgar, 16 Jan. 1920, Scott Papers, Victoria College Library. "I feel like criticising very adversely most of the verse that they publish. It seem that Macphail shows an enormous lack of taste."

105

Edgar, Letter to Helena Coleman, 11 July 1907, Coleman papers, Victoria College Library.

106

Macphail, Letter to Mavor, 23 Jan 1914, Mavor Papers, Fisher Rare Book Room.

107

"Sir Andrew Macphail," Queen's Quarterly, 54 (Spring 1947), 8-22.

- 108 MacMechan, Letter to Macphail, 27 Oct. 1912, Macphail papers, PAC.
- 109 Edgar, in the introduction to Tennyson: Select Poems, Ed. P. Edgar (Toronto: Morang's Modern Text Books, 1903) p. iii.
- 110 See Edgar, "George Meredith", National Review 50 (Sept. 1907), pp. 61-81.
- 111 "See Lorne Pierce, Marjorie Pickthall: A Book of Remembrance (Toronto: Macmillan, 1925).
- 112 Lorne Pierce "Marjorie Pickthall," Canadian Who Was Who, Standard Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. II.
- 113 M. Pickthall "The Home Comers," quoted in Albert R. Hassard, The Dawn of Marjorie Pickthall's Genius, Canadian Bookman, IV, No. 6 (May 1922), 159-161.
- 114 Alan Bowker, Truly Useful Men, p. 146.
- 115 Marjorie Pickthall, Letter to Pelham Edgar, 25 Jan. 1903, Pickthall Papers, Victoria College Library.
- 116 Pickthall, Letter to Edgar, 18 March 1904, Pickthall Papers.
- 117 Scott, Letter to Edgar, 9 March 1903, Scott Papers, Victoria College.
- 118 Pickthall, Letter to Helen Coleman (niece of Helena Coleman), 21 Aug. 1908 (Meredith) and 19 July 1908 (Ibsen).
- 119 Pickthall, Letter to Helen Coleman, 25 December 1908.
- 120 Pickthall, Letter to Helen Coleman, 22 July 1910.
- 121 Pickthall, Letter to Helen Coleman, 25 Aug. 1910.
- 122 Andrew Macphail, MS. "Marjorie Pickthall", Macphail Papers, PAC. Macphail is wrong: Pickthall was never a pupil of Edgar's, unless perhaps she audited some of his lectures.

123

Pelham Edgar, "Andrew Macphail," Queen's Quarterly, 54 (Spring 1947), 8-22.

124

In a letter she gives most of the credit to Helena Coleman, sister of Professor Coleman of Victoria, but this was a bread-and-butter letter.

125

Scott touched on this matter of the importance of Pickthall's local recognition. D.C. Scott, "Poetry and Progress (1922)" repr. Duncan Campbell Scott A Book of Criticism ed. S.L. Dragland (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1974), p. 13.

126, 127

Pickthall, Letter to Helena Coleman (undated, c. 1911).

128

Macphail, Letter to Frank Wise of Macmillan, 19 Oct. 1912, Macphail Papers, PAC.

129

Macphail, Letter to Frank Wise of Macmillan, 14 Dec. 1912, Macphail Papers. That Edgar was closely involved at every stage is evident in another letter between Macphail and Wise of 19 Dec. 1912.

130

Macphail, Letter to Pickthall, 2 Dec. 1912. Any swiftness was illusory - the two professors were by no means invariably of one mind, and they were in two different cities.

131

Pickthall, Letter to Macphail, 1 Nov. 1912, Macphail Papers, PAC.

132

Macphail, Letter to Pickthall 12 Nov. 1912, Macphail Papers, PAC.

133

Edgar, Letter to Macphail, 1 Nov. 1912, Macphail Papers, PAC.

134

Pickthall, Letter to Helena Coleman, 26 Feb. 1913, Pickthall Papers, Victoria College Library.

135

Edgar, Letter to Macphail, [?] December 1912, Macphail Papers.

136

See Lorne Pierce, Marjorie Pickthall, A Book of Remembrance.

137, 138

P. Edgar, review of The Drift of Pinions, University of Toronto Monthly (Dec. 1913), 128-132.

139

In Scott, Letter to Edgar, 16 Jan. 1920, Scott Papers, Vic. Scott told Edgar that the "tincture" of Pickthall's poetry was becoming "thin".

140

Edgar, Letter to Macphail, 2 Oct. [1930], Macphail Papers, PAC. Edgar remembered Macphail's "generous share in revealing her to a public starved of beauty."

141

See chronological bibliography of Edgar's work.

142

See chronological bibliography of Edgar's work.

143

For Pelham's account of his role in Currelly's career, see PE "The Royal Ontario Museum," Across My Path, pp. 129-141.

144

Edgar, Across My Path, p. 24.

145

Edgar, Letter to Mavor, 28 July [1909], Mavor Papers.

146

Helen Edgar, Letter to Beatrice Edgar [Pelham's sister], 7 July 1909, EFP, PAO.

147

Walker, Letter to the Manager, Toronto Bank of Commerce, 4 May 1909, Walker Papers.

148

Edgar, Letter to Walker, 25 April 1910, Walker Papers.

149

PE, "Venice" University Magazine, 9 (Dec. 1910), 654-666.

150

Edgar, Path, Conway MS., p. 25.

151

PE, MS. "Famous Men and Famous Books: William Morris-Poet-Socialist-Artist [1905]," p. 41, PEP.

152

Col. Henry Osborne (1875-1949) was appointed Honorary Director of the Dominion Drama Festival 1932, and was a prominent Ottawa civil servant after 1920. His wife Marion was a poet.

153

Augustus Bridle, The Story of the Club (Toronto: Ryerson, 1945), p. 10.

- 154 Bridle, pp. 20-1.
- 155 "Honours of the Contest," Toronto Star, 5 Sept. 1909.
- 156 This took place in October, according to Saturday Night.
- 157 Scott, Letter to Edgar, 19 April 1908, Scott Papers, Vic.
- 158 See Ontario Educational Association Centennial YearBook
1860-1960 [1960, n.p.], Public Archives of Ontario.
- 159 "Memorial to Keats and Shelley", Toronto Globe, 8 Jan. 1907.
- 160, 161
PE "The Poetry of George Meredith". National Review, 50 (Nov. 1907), 457.
162.
PE "Some Canadian Poets: Bliss Carman", Toronto Globe, 4 Feb. 1905, 6-7.
- 163
S.E.D. Shortt, The Search for An Ideal.
- 164 Walker, Letter to Edgar, 10 Jan. 1907, Walker Papers.
- 165 Edgar, Letter to Walker, 21 Jan. 1907, Walker Papers.
- 166 Walker, Letter to Macphail, 29 April 1908, Walker papers. In 1909, Macphail got \$750, not the \$1000 originally pledged.
- 167 Falconer, Letter to Principal Peterson of McGill, 12 March 1909, Peterson Papers, McGill Archives.
- 168 Andrew Macphail, Letter to Peterson, 9 April 1907.
- 169 Walker, Letter to Edgar, 3 June 1908, Walker Papers.
- 170 Edgar, Letter to Walker, 4 Nov. 1910, Walker Papers.
- 171 Walker, Letter to Edgar, 8 Nov. 1910, Walker Papers.

- 172 Macphail, Letter to Walker, 6 Feb. 1912. By 1910, for example, Macphail had contributed \$1200 of his own money.
- 173 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 9 October 1915, Peterson Papers.
- 174 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 28 Feb. 1916, Peterson Papers.
- 175 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 9 Jan. 1917, Peterson Papers.
- 176 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 26 Feb. 1917, Peterson Papers.
- 177 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 4 March 1918, Peterson Papers.
- 178 J.R. Robertson, "Sir Andrew Macphail As A Social Critic," Diss. University of Toronto 1974, p. 272.
- 179 Peterson, Letter to Edgar, 9 March 1918, Peterson Papers.
- 180 Peterson, Letter to Macphail, 29 April 1918, Peterson Papers.
- 181 Macphail, Letter to Falconer, 6 May 1919, Falconer Papers, Univ. of Toronto Archives.
- 182 Macphail, Letter to Mavor, 3 Oct. 1920, Mavor Papers.
- 183 PE, "Wait For Hours To See Lord Kitchener," Toronto News, 25 Aug. 1914.
- 184 Macphail, Letter to Mavor, 22 March 1915, Mavor Papers.
- 185 "Pelham Edgar on the War," Toronto World, 12 December 1914. Interestingly enough, his topic was the effect of the war on literature. There would, he felt, be an era of graphic realism after the war, a prediction certainly borne out by the work of such writers as Sassoon and Hemingway.
- 186 See University of Toronto Roll of Service 1914-1918 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1921), pp. xxxviii, 259.
- 187 PE, "English-Canadian Literature", Cambridge History of English Literature xiv (1916), 343.

- 188 Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", p. 352-3.
- 189 Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", p. 359.
- 190 Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", p. 344.
- 191 Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", p. 344.
- 192 For an account of Kapuskasing, see Watson Kirkconnell, "Kapuskasing-An Historical Sketch," Queen's Quarterly 28 (1920-21), 264-278.
- 193 Desmond Morton, The Canadian General Sir William Otter (Toronto: Hakkert, 1976), p. 389.
- 194 Edgar, "On Internment Camps" Varsity, 6 Dec. 1916, p. 1.
- 195 J.J. Mavor, Letter to PE, 18 April [1917?], Edgar Papers.
- 196 Leacock, Letter to Edgar, undated [probably Feb. 1916], PEP.
- 197 PE "Thoughts on Poetry & the Sister Arts," Acta, 41 (Jan. 1917), 133-141.
- 198, 199 PE, "The Comedy of Shakespeare and Molière," University Magazine, 15 (April 1916), p. 192.
- 200 Edgar, "The Lowell Centenary," Acta 43 (Mar. 1919), 270-1.

NOTES: Chapter Three

¹ Scott, letter to Lampman, 30 August 1898, repr. Some Letters of Duncan Campbell Scott and Others, ed. A.S. Bourinot (Ottawa: Author, 1959), p. 8.

² D.C. Scott, "Poetry and Progress [1922]," repr. Duncan Campbell Scott: A Book of Criticism, ed. S.J. Dragland (Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1974), pp. 10, 11.

³ Scott, letter to Edgar, undated [c. 1906], Scott Papers, Vic.

⁴ Thomas D. MacLulich, Literary Attitudes in English Canada 1880-1900, Diss. Simon Fraser 1971, p. 174.

⁵ J.D. Edgar, Canada and Its Capital (Toronto: Morang, 1898), p. 173. Such poems as "The Magic House" or "The Reed Player," wrote J.D. Edgar, "show the author keenly alive to the subtle vanishings & mystical visitations that baffle or beset our mortality."

⁶ J.D. Edgar, letter to Matilda Edgar, undated [the Nineties], PEP, Vic.

⁷ The social scrapbooks of Belle Warner Botsford Scott are found in the A.S. Bourinot Collection, Rare Book Library, National Library of Canada. References to social invitations from the Edgars are found on p. 40 and elsewhere.

⁸ Scott, letter to Edgar, 16 Feb 1895, Scott Papers, Vic. It is dubious whether Edgar's rather dry thesis gave D.C. Scott much pleasure!

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Edgar, "Duncan Campbell Scott", The Week, 15 March 1895, pp. 370-371.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See 8, 9.

¹⁴ Scott's correspondence suggests that he kept Edgar's letters, but they could not be located by E.K. Brown, Lorne Pierce or Arthur Bourinot after Scott's death in 1947. Elise Aylen Scott may have burned most of the letters before her departure for India. See Elise Aylen, Letter to Bourinot, 17 Jan. 1958, A.S. Bourinot Collection, National Library of Canada, and Lorne Pierce to E.K. Brown, 21 Nov. 1949, E.K. Brown Papers, PAC.

- ¹⁵ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 4 March 1899, Scott Papers, Vic.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 6 Feb. 1901, Scott Papers, Vic.
- ¹⁹ Duncan C. Scott, "A Decade of Canadian Poetry," Canadian Magazine, 27(1901), 158.
- ²⁰ Scott, Letter to Pelham Edgar, 25 April 1901.
- ²¹ Archibald Lampman, The Poems of Archibald Lampman, ed. D.C. Scott (Toronto: Morang, 1900).
- ²² Scott, Letter to Pelham Edgar, 4 March 1899.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History (Toronto: Oxford, 1976), p. 218.
- ²⁵ Nathaniel Burwash, Egerton Ryerson (Toronto: Makers of Canada Series, 1905), p. 232.
- ²⁶ Scott, John Graves Simcoe (Toronto: Morgang's Makers of Canada Series, 1905), p. 232.
- ²⁷ Pelham Edgar, The Romance of Canadian History: Edited from the Writings of Francis Parkman (Toronto: Morang, 1902).
- ²⁸ Anon., Review of The Romance of Canadian History, ed. P. Edgar, Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada, ed. G.H. Wrong and H.H. Langton, Vol. 7(1902), (University of Toronto: The Librarian, 1903), 18.
- ²⁹ Anon., "Parkman On Toast," review of The Romance of Canadian History, Canadian Magazine, 20 (1902-03), 297.
- ³⁰ Scott, "At the Mermaid Inn", Toronto Globe, 28 Jan. 1893, repr. At the Mermaid Inn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 249.
- ³¹ D.C. Scott, Letter to P. Edgar, 6 Feb. 1901.
- ³² D.C. Scott, Letter to P. Edgar, 6 May 1901.
- ³³ D.C. Scott, Letter to P. Edgar, 28 Jan. 1902.
- ³⁴ e.g. D.C. Scott, Letter to P. Edgar, 4 April 1901.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 4 April 1901.

- ³⁶ Ibid., 6 May 1901.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 9 Oct. 1905.
- ³⁸ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 26 Oct. 1906.
- ³⁹ Edgar spoke with King on 28 Dec. 1905 at the home of Sir Edmund Walker - to no avail. Walker, letter to Edgar, 29 Dec. 1905, Walker Papers, Fisher Rowe Book Library, University of Toronto.
- ⁴⁰ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 8 June 1908.
- ⁴¹ E.K. Brown, "Memoir", Selected Poems of Duncan Campbell Scott, ed. E.K. Brown (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951), pp. xx-xxi.
- ⁴² Scott, Letter to Edgar, 28 Jan. 1902.
- ⁴³ Anon., Review of Champlain by N.E. Dionne, RHPRC, 10 (1905) 30-32; E. Cruikshank, review of General Brock by Lady Edgar, RHPRC, 10 (1905), 63-66, review of Sir John A. Macdonald by George Parkin, RHPRC, 13 (1908), 49-54.
- ⁴⁴ W.B. Munro, review of Baldwin Hincks LaFontaine by Stephen Leacock, RHPRC, XII (1907), 68.
- ⁴⁵ LeSueur, Letter to Morang, 1 Oct. 1905, Box 137, Geo. Lindsey Papers, PAO.
- ⁴⁶ Morang, Letter to LeSueur, 20 Oct. and 20 Sept. 1905, 29 April 1907, Lindsey Papers, PAO.
- ⁴⁷ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 27 Sept, 17 Oct. and 4 Nov. 1901.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., 11 Feb. 1902.
- ⁴⁹ Edgar, "A New Volume of Verse by Duncan Campbell Scott", review of New World Lyrics and Ballads, Toronto Globe, 25 Nov. 1905, p. 4 magazine section.
- ⁵⁰ Edgar, MS. "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott", file 19, PEP, Vic.
- ⁵¹ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 26 Nov. 1905.
- ⁵² The second piece was Edgar's "Some Canadian Poets: Duncan Campbell Scott", Toronto Globe, 4 March 1905, p. 3.
- ⁵³ Ibid.
- ⁵⁴ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 5 March 1905.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., 20 Nov. 1905.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., 17 March 1906: "You've been apptd. Ain't it bully! All the flies and mosquitoes en embryo throughout the interior tremble with anticipation."

⁵⁷ Scott, "The Last of the Indian Treaties," Scribner's, 40 (Nov. 1906), 580; diary of 1905 and 1906 treaty trips, Vol. 1028, Indian Affairs Papers, PAC.

⁵⁸ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 9 Oct. 1905.

⁵⁹ Edgar, "Twelve Hundred Miles By Canoe", Canada, 4 (5 Jan. 1907), 516.

⁶⁰ Edgar, "Travelling With a Poet", ACP, pp. 65-66.

⁶¹ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 3 Nov. 1906.

⁶² "Twelve Hundred Miles By Canoe", Canada, 4 (5 Jan. 1907), 516.

⁶³ Scott, "The Fragment of a Letter", The Poems of Duncan Campbell Scott (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1929), pp. 122-123.

⁶⁴ "Twelve Hundred Miles By Canoe", Canada, 4 (16 March 1907), 413.

⁶⁵ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 21 Aug. 1906.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 17 July 1907.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 11 [Sept.] 1907 [Scott put August instead of Sept.].

⁶⁹ Belle Scott, Letter to Helen Edgar, [undated, fall 1907], DCS, Vol.

⁷⁰ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 3 Nov. 1906.

⁷¹ Ibid., 19 Nov. 1906.

⁷² Ibid., 12 Jan. 1907.

⁷³ Ibid., 19 July 1908.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23 Sept., 1911.

⁷⁵ Nicknames found in Scott, Letter to Edgar, 8 Nov. 1916, Scott, Letter to Helen Edgar, 13 April 1914, Scott, Letter to Edgar, 16 Feb. 1913. Scott could even chafe Edgar about his imperious air; he told Helen Edgar: "Tell 'The Critic' that he will have to drop that haughty & detached air he assumes with me sometimes for I joined the Rideau Club last week - !" Scott, Letter to Edgar, 13 April 1914.

⁷⁶ See Scott, Letter to Edgar, 29 June 1915.

⁷⁷ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 29 June 1915.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 10 July 1915.

⁷⁹ See "Keats Centenary in Toronto", Saturday Night, 5 March 1921, p. 9.

⁸⁰Scott, Letter to Edgar, 5 March 1921.

⁸¹Ibid., 16 March 1921.

⁸²Ibid., 24 Jan. 1916.

⁸³Ibid., 24 Jan and 11 Feb. 1916.

⁸⁴Ibid., 11 Feb. 1916.

⁸⁵See Scott, Letter to Edgar, 20 Oct. 1919, 15 Jan. 1919, and 3 [July] 1919.

⁸⁶Scott, Letter to Edgar, 29 July 1918.

⁸⁷Ibid., 2 Jan. 1917.

⁸⁸Ibid., 3 Nov. 1906.

⁸⁹Ibid., 5 Oct. 1911.

⁹⁰G.L. Parker, The History of A Canadian Publishing House: A Study of the Relation Between Publishing and the Profession of Writing 1890-1940, Diss. University of Toronto 1969, p. 259.

⁹¹Scott, Letter to Edgar, 8 Jan 1913.

⁹²Ibid., 19 April 1908.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., 18 June 1904.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., 15 Jan. 1916.

⁹⁷Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", Cambridge History of English Literature, 14(1916), p. 354.

⁹⁸Scott, Letter to Edgar, 19 July 1908.

⁹⁹Ibid., 15 Jan. 1919.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 9 March 1903.

¹⁰¹See, for example, A.A. Brown, Letter to Edgar [2] Oct. 1934, which mentions that Scott had written her about "Laodamia". Brown told Edgar of the leaves in Brown Letter to Edgar, 23 May 1932, PEP, Vic.

¹⁰²Scott's presence was noted in "\$100,000 Foundation Planned ..." Toronto Mail, 2 April 1931.

¹⁰³ Scott's role is mentioned in Eggleston, Literary Friends and D.W. Thomson's Walter Dawson, The Foundation and the Man. Scott, Letter to Edgar, 6 Oct. 1910.

¹⁰⁴ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 6 Oct. 1910.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 31 Oct. 1910.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 13 April 1934.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 11 Dec. 1938. Scott wrote: "Many thanks for reading the poems".

¹⁰⁸ Scott, Letter to E.K. Brown, 2 Sept. 1947, E.K. Brown Papers, PAC.

¹⁰⁹ This is discussed in Norman Shrive, Charles Mair Literary Nationalist (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 279.

¹¹⁰ W.A. Deacon, Letter to D.C. Scott, 16 May 1927, Deacon Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

¹¹¹ Edgar, "Recent Canadian Poets", Ontario Library Review, 5 (August 1920), 5.

¹¹² Edgar, "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott", Dalhousie Review, 7 (1927-28), 38.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ A prospectus issued by John Garvin described Volume 23 in the series: "Poems (Complete Edition) by D.C. Scott with a critical and biographical introduction by Pelham Edgar." The overambitious scheme collapsed long before volume 23. A copy of the prospectus can be found in Volume 3, Sir Andrew Macphail Papers, PAC.

¹¹⁵ So said Scott, Letter to Edgar, 27 Nov. 1924.

¹¹⁶ That idea is mentioned in E.K. Brown, Letter to Edgar, 31 March 1946, PEP, Vic.

¹¹⁷ See Scott's autobiographical notes, file 47, PEP, Vic.

¹¹⁸ Scott, Letter to Edgar, 13 Dec 1907.

¹¹⁹ The articles by Edgar are: "Duncan Campbell Scott [1942]", Leading Canadian Poets, ed. W.P. Percival (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948), pp. 213-219; "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott", Across My Path, pp. 67-74; "Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation," Ottawa Journal, 27 Dec. 1947. Edgar also wrote two short reviews: "Recent Verse", review of The Green Cloister by Scott, Lilies and Leopards by A.C. Dalton, Saturday Night, 21 Dec. 1935, p. 8 and "Short Story Object Lesson", review of In the Village of Viger by Scott, Canadian Author and Bookmen, 21 (Dec. 1945), 18. Percy Wright, apparently a student of Edgar's, began a thesis on Scott in the Thirties; a draft is in the Pelham Edgar Papers at Victoria.

- ¹²⁰ Wilfrid Eggleston, Literary Friends (Ottawa: Borealis, 1980), p. 109.
- ¹²¹ E.K. Brown, Letter to Edgar, 31 March 1946, PEP, Vic.
- ¹²² Edgar, "Duncan Campbell Scott", Leading Canadian Poets, p. 216;
"Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation", Ottawa Journal, 27 Dec. 1947.
- ¹²³ Edgar, Letter to E.K. Brown, 5 Jan. 1948, Brown Papers, PAC.
- ¹²⁴ Edgar, "Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation", Ottawa Journal, 27 December 1947.
- ¹²⁵ Ibid.
- ¹²⁶ Gary Geddes, "Piper of Many Tunes: Duncan Campbell Scott", Canadian Literature 37(Summer, 1968), 15.
- ¹²⁷ Knister, "Duncan Campbell Scott", Willison's Monthly, 2(1927), pp. 295-296.
- ¹²⁸ Raymond Knister, Letter to Elizabeth Frankfurth, 27 March 1927, Givens Collection.
- ¹²⁹ E.K. Brown, Selected Poems of Duncan Campbell Scott (Toronto: Ryerson, 1951), p. iv. See also Brown, "Duncan Campbell Scott: An Individual Poet", Manitoba Arts Review, 2(Spring 1941), 51f., 54 and Brown, Letter to Edgar, 31 March 1946, PEP, Vic.
- ¹³⁰ Edgar, anxious that Smith appreciate Scott, sent him an inscribed copy of his 1946 article on D.C. Scott. See Box 5, A.J.M. Smith Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

NOTES: Chapter Four

- ¹W.W. Campbell, "At the Mermaid Inn," Toronto Globe, 12 March 1892.
- ²Dona Edgar, CBC radio documentary tape, PEP.
- ³Pelham Edgar [Editorial], " Saturday Night, 16 Oct 1948, p. 5.
- ⁴"Portraits", Acta Victoriana, 48 (Oct. 1923), 9.
- ⁵"Locals," Acta, 39 (1914-15), 391.
- ⁶Ibid., 43 (Oct. 1919), 247.
- ⁷Ibid., 34 (Jan. 1911), 236.
- ⁸Ibid., 41 (March 1917), 290.
- ⁹W.A. Deacon, "A Leader Passes," Canadian Author and Bookman, 24 (Dec. 1948), 10-11.
- ¹⁰"Locals," Acta, 42 (Dec. 1917), 111.
- ¹¹Wilfrid Eggleston, Literary Friends (Ottawa: Borealis, 1980), p. 109.
"In one evening I found myself converted to a tardy awareness of Scott's power and eminence."
- ¹²Dorothy Sigmund, "Prof. Edgar Opens the Can. Literature Series," Acta, (Nov. 1945), 10-11.
- ¹³C.B. Sissons, A History of Victoria University (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), p. 220.
- ¹⁴TS. "Log of English Literature Class 1924-25", PEP.
- ¹⁵Edgar, Letter to Macphail, 1 Feb. 1913, Macphail Papers, PAC.
- ¹⁶Ibid., "Some Thoughts on Reading," Acta, 25 (Feb. 1902), 262.
- ¹⁷Ibid., 263.
- ¹⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁹Ibid., Thoughts on Poetry and the Sister Arts," Acta, 41 (Jan 1917), 133 and 137.

²⁰ Edgar, "Thoughts on Poetry and the Sister Arts", Acta, 41 (Jan. 1917), 133 and 137.

²¹ Ibid., p. 141.

²² Ibid., [Part Two], Acta, 41, No. 4, (Feb. 1917), 195 and 198. Edgar's mention of using "poetry that is great by universal consent" to measure other verse is reminiscent of Arnold's "touchstone" method.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Edgar, "New Stars on our Literary Firmament", Toronto Star Weekly, 2 Nov. 1929, p. 12.

²⁵ "Three Novels of Henry James", Dalhousie Review, 4 (Jan. 1925), 470.

²⁶ "Delightful Poetry", Review of Prometheus in Piccadilly by Wallace B. Nichols, Saturday Night, 30 June 1928, p. 11.

²⁷ "Thoughts on Poetry ...", Acta, 41 (Feb. 1917), 198.

²⁸ "Locals", Acta, 41 (Feb. 1917), 229.

²⁹ C.B. Sissons, Nil Aluminum: The Memoirs of C.B. Sissons, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 112.

³⁰ In various sources, both Edgar and Mrs. Pratt state that Pratt was not a student of Edgar's as an undergraduate at Victoria. But Pratt makes it clear in his own writings that he at least audited several of Edgar's lectures.

³¹ E.J. Pratt, resolution No. 440(1948) of the Victoria University Senate, seconded by Professor Irving, Member of the Senate of Victoria, University of Toronto Archives.

³² E.J. Pratt. TS. "Highlights and Lowlights: reminiscences of university /after 1948/", file 69, Pratt Papers, Vic.

³³ Robert Patchell, "Dr. Edgar: An Impression", Acta, 73 (Dec. 1948), 26-27.

³⁴ E.J. Pratt, Letter to Pelham Edgar, 15 August 1940, PEP. The review was of Brébeuf, Saturday Night, 17 Aug 1940, p. 15.

³⁵ In a letter to Pearson Gundy, 24 Oct. 1961, now at the Queen's University Archives, Pratt told Gundy he had not kept any correspondence.

³⁶ Edgar, "The Poetry of E.J. Pratt [1946]", Across My Path, p. 117.

³⁷ Telephone interview with Mrs. Viola Pratt, 20 October 1978.

³⁸ E.J. Pratt, "A poem on the May Examinations", Acta, 32 (April 1909), 561. Although amateurish, the poem was an ambitious 25 stanzas long.

³⁹E.J. Pratt, "Invocation", University of Toronto Monthly, 18 (1917-18), 219-220.

⁴⁰Ibid., "My First Book", Canadian Author and Bookman, 28 (Winter 1952-1953), 5-7.

⁴¹Telephone interview with Mrs. Viola Pratt, 20 Oct. 1978.

⁴²Carl Klinck, Klinck and Wells, Edwin J. Pratt: The Man and His Poetry (Toronto: Ryerson, 1947), pp. 17-18.

⁴³Edgar, "The Poetry of E.J. Pratt [1946]", Across My Path, p. 117.

⁴⁴E.K. Brown, On Canadian Poetry (Toronto: Ryerson, 1943), 146-147.

⁴⁵Ibid., "Recent Canadian Poets", Ontario Library Review, 5 (August 1920), p. 8. The address was given April 5, 1920.

⁴⁶Lorne Pierce, "Marjorie Pickthall", Acta, 68 (Graduation issue), 22.

⁴⁷E.J. Pratt, TS. "Highlights and lowlights: Reminiscences of university" file 69, Pratt Papers, Vic.

⁴⁸See Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 22 Nov. [no year, but probably earlier than 1929], Pratt Papers, Vic.

⁴⁹E.J. Pratt, "Now This is Strictly ... [unpublished poem]", Pratt Papers.

⁵⁰Hugh Bayrs, Letter to Watson Kirkconnell, quoted in Edward St. John, The Graphic Publishers Ltd. 1925-1932 (Diss. Carleton University, 1974).

⁵¹See Pratt, "Canadian Poetry - past and present", University of Toronto Quarterly, 8 (October 1938), 1-10.

⁵²J.F. Scott, "The Three Fates - English Variety [cartoon]", Acta, 53 (Nov. 1928, 19).

⁵³"Society", Saturday Night, 18 Dec. 1925, p. 31.

⁵⁴Edgar, Letter to Deacon, repr. "Saved From the Waste-Basket", Saturday Night, 31 July 1926, p. 9.

⁵⁵Ibid., "See Recent Verse", review of The Witches Brew by E.J. Pratt and Flight Commander Stork and Other Verses by Marion Osborne, Willison's Monthly, 1 (March 1926), 314.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Edgar, "New Stars in Our Literary Firmament", Toronto Star Weekly, 2 Nov. 1929, p. 12.

⁵⁸W.A. Deacon, "Saved From the Waste-Basket", Saturday Night, 22 Jan. 1927, p. 12.

⁵⁹ See Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 2 Aug. 1945, Pratt Papers.

⁶⁰ Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 6 Aug. 1929, Pratt Papers.

⁶¹ W.A. Deacon, Letter to Eve Tufts, 31 Jan 1927, Deacon Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library. Barker Fairley, author of A Study of Goethe, taught at University College. The idea that Pratt's critical friends were too indulgent is also found in David Pitt, "Introduction", Critical Views on Canadian Writers: E.J. Pratt (Toronto: Ryerson, 1969), pp. xviii, xix.

⁶² For a discussion of this point: Clara Thomas and John Lennox, William Arthur Deacon: A Canadian Literary Life (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), p. 266 and elsewhere.

⁶³ Pratt, Letter to Deacon, 8 April 1935, Deacon Papers.

⁶⁴ Ibid., n.d. [probably July 1946], Deacon Papers.

⁶⁵ Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 15 August 1940, Pratt Papers.

⁶⁶ See Roberts, Letter to Edgar, 15 Nov. 1935, PEP.

⁶⁷ See Pratt, Letter to Deacon, n.d. [Nov. 1933], Deacon Papers.

⁶⁸ Carl Klinck, "Thoughts on E.J. Pratt", The E.J. Pratt Symposium, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1977), p. 11.

⁶⁹ E.K. Brown, On Canadian Poetry, pp. 146-147.

⁷⁰ W.A. Deacon, "Edgar's Literary Friends", Review of Across my Path, Toronto Globe & Mail, 8 Nov. 1952, p. 8.

⁷¹ C.L. Betts to Helena Coleman, 21 August 1934, Coleman Papers, Victoria College.

⁷² Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 26 August 1932, Pratt Papers.

⁷³ Deacon, Letter to Pratt, 8 April 1935, Deacon Papers.

⁷⁴ Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 15 August 1940, Pratt Papers.

⁷⁵ See Deacon, Letter to Roberts, 27 Nov. 1933, Deacon Papers.

⁷⁶ Personal interview with Earle Birney, Toronto, 13 Dec. 1978.

⁷⁷ Edgar, quoted in "Western Ontario Branch [News]", Canadian Author (Dec. 1935), 20.

⁷⁸ W.A. Deacon, "C.P.M. Birth Pangs", Canadian Author & Bookman, 28 (Winter 1953-1953), 7.

⁷⁹ P. Edgar was also on the editorial board. See "The Canadian Poetry Magazine", Canadian Author, 13 (Dec. 1935), 2.

- ⁸⁰ H.A. Kennedy, Letter to Edgar, 23 Sept. 1935, Deacon Papers.
- ⁸¹ Pratt, "The Canadian Poetry Magazine", Canadian Author, 13 (Dec. 1935), 13.
- ⁸² E.J. Pratt, "Announcement of Awards", Canadian Poetry Magazine, 1 (April 1936), 7.
- ⁸³ Edgar, "Here is the second issue ...", Canadian Poetry Magazine, 1 (April 1936), 7.
- ⁸⁴ See Lyn Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time (Toronto: Simon and Pierce, 1981), p. 253.
- ⁸⁵ "Authors In Convention", Canadian Author, 15 (Sept. 1937), 4.
- ⁸⁶ "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 335-343.
- ⁸⁷ "Brébeuf and His Brethren", (Alumni News), University of Toronto Monthly, 40-41 (1939-1941), 74.
- ⁸⁸ Edgar, The Romance of Canadian History (Toronto: Morang, 1902).
- ⁸⁹ Milton Wilson, E.J. Pratt (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969) p. 55.
- ⁹⁰ Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 19 July 1940, Pratt Papers. Pratt was teaching summer school at Queen's University.
- ⁹¹ D.C. Scott, Letter to Edgar, 16 Dec. 1940, Scott Papers, Vic.
- ⁹² Roberts, Letter to Edgar, 1 Aug. 1940, Edgar Papers, Vic. According to Roberts, it was "very great stuff."
- ⁹³ P. Edgar, "A Great Canadian Poem", review of Brébeuf and His Brethren by E.J. Pratt, Saturday Night, 17 August 1940, p. 15; P. Edgar, "An Epic of the Jesuit Martyrs", review of Brébeuf ..., Poetry, Chicago, 58 (April 1941), 43-50. In Poetry, Edgar also rejects any portrayal of the Jesuits as agents of French imperialism.
- ⁹⁴ See Peter Hunt, "E.J. Pratt's Brébeuf and His Brethren, Critics and the Sources", The E.J. Pratt Symposium, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1977), pp. 69-88.
- ⁹⁵ See Note 93, above.
- ⁹⁶ Edgar, "An Epic of the Jesuit Martyrs", p. 48.
- ⁹⁷ Brébeuf and His Brethren: A Musical and Dramatic Pageant, adapted by Herman Voaden, supplementary narrative in verse by Pelham Edgar, Metropolitan

Toronto Central Library [Librarian's note: no date, unproduced].

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 8 August 1941, Pratt Papers.

¹⁰¹Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 7 Aug. 1944, Pratt Papers. Pratt obviously hoped for a tour of the towns around Midland with provincial support.

¹⁰²Edgar, "E.J. Pratt", Leading Canadian Poets, ed. W.P. Percival, (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948), p. 181.

¹⁰³The actual date of broadcast was Sept. 26, 1943. See Susan Beckman, Pratt on Pratt: The Prose Commentaries of E.J. Pratt. Diss. University of Toronto, 1977.

¹⁰⁴Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 8 Aug. 1941, Pratt Papers.

¹⁰⁵Prime Minister King, Letter to Edgar, 11 Sept. 1942, Edgar Papers.

¹⁰⁶Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 19 March 1943, Conway Collection, Edgar Papers. Pratt told Edgar he was sending him a MS.

¹⁰⁷E.J. Pratt, Letter to Ellen Elliott, n.d. [Sept. 1943], Box 40, Macmillan of Canada Papers.

¹⁰⁸Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 7 Aug. 1944, Pratt Papers.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 2 Aug. 1945.

¹¹⁰E.J. Pratt, Behind the Log, notes, Pratt Papers.

¹¹¹Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 7 June 1945 and 10 Oct. 1945, Pratt Papers.

¹¹²Ibid., 11 Jan. 1946.

¹¹³Ibid., 2 April 1946.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 13 Jan. 1947.

¹¹⁵Pratt, Letter to Gustafson, 1942, quoted in Gustafson, "Some Personal Apropos of Ned", The E.J. Pratt Symposium, ed. Glenn Clever (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1977), p. 4.

¹¹⁶"Edwin John Pratt", Gants du Ciel (Printemps 1946), 31-45; "The Poetry of E.J. Pratt", Across My Path, pp. 109-117.

¹¹⁷"The Poetry of E.J. Pratt", pp. 109-110, 112, 116.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹ See Germain Warkentin, "The Aesthetics of E.J. Pratt's Shorter Poems", The E.J. Pratt Symposium, pp. 15-32.

¹²⁰ "E.J. Pratt", Educational Record (Quebec), 59 (July-Sept. 1943), 178-180, repr. with revisions, Leading Canadian Poets, ed. W.P. Percival (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948), 177-183.

¹²¹ Pratt, Letter to Edgar, 13 July 1948, Pratt Papers.

¹²² See Marcus Waddington, "Raymond Knister: a biographical note", Journal of Canadian Fiction, 14 (1975), 176.

¹²³ Raymond Knister, Draft of letter to Pelham Edgar, 11 April 1920. Property of Mrs. Imogene Knister Givens.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Knister, Letter to Edgar, 25 March 1925, Knister Papers, Victoria College.

¹²⁶ Myrtle Knister Grace, Raymond's widow, recalls three visits there and "how very English" the Edgar home with its row of family pictures and "the usual small English tables", was. Transcript of interview by Imogene Givens, letter to Sandy Campbell, 5 Feb. 1979.

¹²⁷ Personal interview with Earle Birney, Toronto, 13 Dec. 1978.

¹²⁸ Unfortunately, I have been able to discover very little about this interesting body, which Edgar apparently founded in the Twenties and which seems to have vanished by the Thirties.

¹²⁹ Knister, Letter to Marion Font, 11 Nov. 1926, Givens Collection, property of Imogen Knister Givens.

¹³⁰ Knister, Letter to Elizabeth Frankfurth, 27 March 1927, Givens Collection.

¹³¹ Edgar, Letter to Knister, 3 Sept. 1927, Givens Collection.

¹³² Knister, Letter to Frankfurth, n.d. [fall 1927], Knister Papers, Vic.

¹³³ Edgar, Letter to Knister, 12 Jan. 1930 and Massey, Letter to Edgar, 19 Dec 1929, Givens Collection.

¹³⁴ Knister, Letter to Edgar, 14 Jan 1930, Knister Papers, Vic.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Edgar, Letter to Knister, 27 Jan. 1930, Givens Collection.

¹³⁷ Knister, Letter to Edgar, 10 Feb. 1930, Knister Papers, Vic.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

- 139 See Edgar, Letter to Knister, 28 Feb. 1930, Givens Collection.
- 140 Knister, Letter to Edgar, 8 Nov. 1931, Knister Papers, Vic.
- 141 The prize is discussed in Marcus Waddington, "Raymond Knister: a Biographical Note", Journal of Canadian Fiction, 14 (1975), 187-189.
- 142 Edgar, Letter to Knister, 19 Nov. [1931], Givens Collection.
- 143 Knister, Letter to Edgar, 2 May 1932, Vol. 4, Canadian Writers' Foundation Papers, Public Archives of Canada.
- 144 Edgar, Letter to Knister, undated [early May 1932], Givens Collection.
- 145 Ibid., undated [summer 1932], Givens Collection.
- 146 Marcus Waddington, "Raymond Knister: a biographical note," Journal of Canadian Fiction, 14 (1975), p. 189.
- 147 "When Dr. Pelham Edgar read of Raymond Knister's death, he vowed that never again would such a situation occur", Dr. Gustave Lanctot, CWF circular letter, n.d. [c. 1943], Canadian Writers' Foundation Papers PAC. Lanctot mistakenly dates the CWF's founding from the death of Knister, but it had come into being before that.
- 148 Edgar, Letter to Myrtle Knister, 30 August 1932, Givens Collection.
- 149 Transcript of remarks by Myrtle Knister Grace, Imogen Givens, Letter to Sandy Campbell, 5 Feb. 1979.
- 150 Douglas Bush, Letter to S. Campbell, 28 Aug. 1978.
- 151 Ibid.
- 152 Bush, "A Glance at Universities," Acta, 56 (Nov.-Dec. 1931), 18.
- 153 Bush, Letter to S. Campbell, 28 August 1978.
- 154 Bush, "The Lean and Slipper'd Pantaloon," Acta, 50 (Dec. 1925), 43, 44.
- 155 Ibid.
- 156 Bush, "The Humanistic Critic," Kenyon Review, 13 (1951), 92-110.
- 157 Ibid.
- 158 Bush, Letter to Edgar, n.d. [Fall 1922], PEP.
- 159 Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 210.

- 160 Personal interview with Donald Creighton, Brooklin, Ont., 20 Oct. 1978.
- 161 Ibid.
- 162 Ibid.
- 163 Much of the account of Edgar's contact with Birney is based on a personal interview with Earle Birney, Toronto, 13 Dec. 1978.
- 164 Ibid.
- 165 Edgar, Letter to Birney, 31 Oct. [1934], Birney Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. Edgar was in fact Chairman of the Selection Committee, although he had handed over the chairmanship in April, in order to go abroad.
- 166 Birney, Letter to Edgar, 5 July 1935, PEP.
- 167 Edgar, Letter to Birney, 16 March 1935, Birney Papers.
- 168 See Earle Birney, Spreading Time: Remarks on Canadian Writing and Writers, I (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1980), p. 54.
- 169 Pierce, Letter to Edgar, 10 Nov. 1943, Canadian Writers' Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 170 Edgar to Birney, 21 April 1946, Birney Papers.
- 171 Kathleen Coburn, In Pursuit of Coleridge (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1977), 17-18.
- 172 Mary Pacey, Letter to S. Campbell, 12 March 1978.
- 173 Desmond Pacey, Letter to Margaret Ray, 22 Dec. 1953, PEP.
- 174 Roy Daniells, Letter to Sandy Campbell, 26 Sept. 1978. "His tall figure, his dignity, his slightly abstracted manner - as though descending momentarily from his heights of contemplation to attend to mundane matters - and his very real though formally masked concern for us all as individuals: these left a lasting impression."
- 175 See the preface in Carl Klinck, Wilfrid Campbell: A Study in Late Provincial Victorianism (Toronto: Ryerson, 1942).
- 176 See C.B. Sissons, A History of Victoria University (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1952), 219-221.
- 177 Edgar, Across My Path, p. 84.
- 178 Frye, quoted in Judith Finlayson, "The Fearful Shyness of Northrop Frye," Quest (Sept. 1978), p. 29
- 179 N. Frye, "Silence in the Sea [1968]", The Bush Garden (Toronto: Anansi, 1971), pp. 182-183.

180 Edgar, Across My Path MS., p. 3, Jane Conway material, PEP.

181 See Frye, Letter to Edgar, 28 Dec. 1936, PEP.

182 See Edgar, "Creative Criticism in Canada", Across My Path, pp. 88-89.

183 J.D. Robins, "Backgrounds of Future Canadian Poetry", Acta, 39 (March 1915), 309-317. While Robins felt Canadian writers should employ Indian myths, he also felt they should use the Western mythic inheritance which was theirs. "The poet, like the bard or scop or skald of old, must celebrate to the new generation the glories of its fathers." (p. 313). J.D. Robins (1884-1952) had been a graduate of Victoria's class of 1913. He received an M.A. in 1922 and taught in the German Department before moving to English at Edgar's instigation in 1925. He succeeded Edgar as Head of Department.

184 Ibid.

185 Edgar, "A Fresh View of Canadian Literature", University Magazine, XI (Oct. 1912), 484.

186 Northrop Frye, "Conclusion" to Literary History of Canada, ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), pp. 826, 836.

187 Ibid., "Scotch Galsworthy," review of Late Harvest by George Blake, Canadian Bookman, 20 (Aug.-Sept. 1938), p. 65. See also Frye, "Poetic Aspirations", Canadian Bookman, 20 (April-May 1938), 49 for a review in a similar vein.

188 Ibid., Radio documentary on Edgar, PEP.

189 Ibid., Letter to Edgar, 10 June 1937, PEP.

190 Ibid.

191 Ibid., Fearful Symmetry (New Jersey: Princeton University Press), 1947.

192 Roy Daniells, Letter to S. Campbell, 26 Sept. 1978.

193 "Pelham Edgar, Editorial , Saturday Night, 16 Dec. 1948, p. 5.

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¹Edgar, Henry James: Man and Author (Toronto: Macmillan, 1927); The Art of the Novel from 1700 to the Present Time (New York and London: Macmillan, 1933).

²Anon., "Books More Praised Than Read", Willison's Monthly, 2 (Feb. 1927), 325-326.

³Ibid.

⁴G.S. Brett, "Henry James - Man and Author", review of Henry James: Man and Author, University of Toronto Monthly, 27 (March 1927), 270.

⁵For example, Anon., review of Henry James Man and Author, by Pelham Edgar, Ontario Library Review, 10 (Nov. 1925), 42-43.

⁶Edgar, "The Comedy of Shakespeare and Molière", University Monthly, 25 (April 1916), p. 192. The same note about a "world drifting toward tragedy" is struck by Edgar in "Thoughts on Poetry and The Sister Arts", Acta., 41 (Jan. 1917), 133-141.

⁷Ibid., review of Rousseau and Romanticism by Irving Babbitt, The Rebel, 4 (Nov. 1919), 85.

⁸Anon., "Keats Centenary in Toronto", Saturday Night, 5 March 1921, p. 9. Professor W.J. Alexander of University College gave the opening address, D.C. Scott recited his "Ode for the Keats Centenary", and Campbell McInnes sang settings of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and "To Sleep", the latter setting by Healey Willan. Sir Robert Falconer closed the proceedings.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Edgar, "The Lowell Centenary", Acta Vic., 43 (March 1919), 270-271. The American Academy of Arts and Letters held a celebration to honour the centenary of James Russell Lowell, which was attended by such notables as Alfred Noyes, John Galsworthy, and Edgar Lee Masters, as well as Edgar and Stephen Leacock, who were Canadian delegates.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Edgar, "English-Canadian Literature", Cambridge History of English Literature (1916), XIV, 359.

¹³See prospectus, Andrew Macphail Papers, PAC.

¹⁴ See Edgar, Letter to Sir Robert Falconer, 12 Feb. 1920, Box 58, Sir Robert Falconer Papers, University of Toronto Archives.

¹⁵ For example, Edgar "Some Canadian Poets: Bliss Carman," Toronto Globe Magazine, 4 Feb. 1905, pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ Wilfrid Eggleston, Literary Friends (Ottawa: Borealis, 1980), pp. 9-10. In a report on the reading for the newspaper of the Calgary Normal School, Eggleston hailed the CAA and the tour by Carman as emblematic of an end to "our literary indifference."

¹⁷ Earle Birney, Spreading Time: Remarks on Canadian Writing and Writers (Montreal: Véhicule, 1980), I, pp. 19-20.

¹⁸ Edgar, TS. "Fashions in Books", n.d. [c. 1935], p. 1., folder 24, PEP; see also Edgar, "Elusive Virginia Woolf", Toronto Star Weekly, 22 Dec. 1928, p. 25.

¹⁹ Edgar, MS. "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott", n.d. [c. 1924-27], p. 34, file 19, PEP. This long essay was, on the basis of internal evidence, planned as the introduction to a D.C. Scott Collected poems.

²⁰ Edgar, "Poetry and Keats - Keats and Poetry", undated MS. [c. 1928], Literary Notebook, folder 17, PEP.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Charles G.D. Roberts, "A Note on Modernism", Open House, ed. W.A. Deacon and Wilfred Reeves (Ottawa: Graphic 1931), pp. 19-25.

²³ Edgar, "New Stars in Our Literary Firmament", Toronto Star Weekly, 2 Nov. 1929.

²⁴ Ibid., "In Many Keys", review of The Hogarth Essays, Saturday Night, 10 Nov. 1923, pp. 10-11.

²⁵ Edgar quoted in "Young Writers Killing Poetry Due to Disdain of Principles of Communication/Dr. Pelham Edgar's View", London Free Press, 13 April 1938.

²⁶ Edgar, "How the Novel has Grown", Toronto Star Weekly, 10 Nov. 1928

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., "Poetry By All Kinds of People", rev. of Five More Famous Living People, by Coulson Keenahan ... , Saturday Night (Literary Supplement), 6 Oct. 1928, p. 6.

²⁹ Ibid., "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44(Autumn 1937), p. 335.

³⁰ An example of Edgar's view of poetry is found in his remarks apropos of Tennyson; "Our supreme concern in poetry is to know whether the poet has

confronted the intellectual problems of his race and age, and has wrested from them some message for our guidance. Too confident an answer is to not desire, for the burden of the mystery of life is very great, and the poet, whose serene verse is never overcast with doubt cannot convince us that he has ever faced the eternal issues". Edgar, introduction to Tennyson: Select Poems, ed. Edgar (Toronto: Morang's Modern Text Books, 1903), p. x. Edgar repeated this sentiment in 1936: "Dr. Edgar said that the great things had always been uttered in poetry, which exhibited language at a high power than prose - though a good deal of prose almost rose into poetry.

... The great poets have thought deeply and intensely about the problems of the world". Edgar, quoted in "A Poetical Breakfast", Canadian Author, 14 (Sept. 1936), 22.

³¹ Edgar, "Poet Laurence", rev. of The Collected Poems of D.H. Lawrence, Saturday Night, 19 Oct. 1929, p. 8.

³² Ibid., "Still Baiting the Victorians", rev. of Matthew Arnold by Hugh Kingsmill, Saturday Night, 17 November 1920, p. 12.

³³ Ibid., quoted in "Poetical Breakfast", Canadian Author, 14 (Sept. 1936), 22.

³⁴ See Edgar, "The Candid Critic and Others", Canadian Author, 14 (Sept. 1936), 9-10.

³⁵ Edgar, "On Intellectual Values in Poetry", Canadian Forum, 1 (July 1921), 307-309.

³⁶ Dorothy Livesay, letter to Sandy Campbell, 23 May 1979.

³⁷ Edgar, "The Same Lawrence", rev. of The Women Who Rode Away by D.H. Lawrence, Saturday Night, 23 June 1928, p. 8.

³⁸ Edgar, "Poet Lawrence", rev. of The Collected Poems of D.H. Lawrence, Saturday Night, 19 Oct. 1929, p. 8.

³⁹ For example, Edgar, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 335-343.

⁴⁰ Edgar, "The Enigma of Yeats [1939]", Path, p. 152.

⁴¹ I.C. Doull, "Literary Criticism: Its Scope and Effect [1892]", Canadian Magazine, repr. The Search for English-Canadian Literature, ed. Carl Ballstadt, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), p. 51.

⁴² Edgar, "American Verse", rev. of The Oxford Book of American Verse, ed. Bliss Carman ... , Saturday Night, 9 June 1928, p. 12.

⁴³ S.E.D. Shortt, The Search for an Ideal, p. 19.

⁴⁴ Mary Vipond, "National Consciousness in English Speaking Canada in the 1920s: Seven Studies", Diss. University of Toronto 1977, p. 5. Writes Vipond: "The majority [of Canadian nationalists] remained conservative,

romantic and idealist in their national and cultural assumptions, although some of the younger generation were more oriented toward North America, were liberal and more realist."

⁴⁵"Professor Cappon at the English Association", The Rebel, 2(December 1917), 103 and Shortt, p. 63.

⁴⁶Jean Graham, "The Old Man Eloquent ...", Saturday Night, 29 April 1933, p. 8.

⁴⁷Malcolm Wallace and A.S.P. Woodhouse, "In Memoriam: William John Alexander", University of Toronto Quarterly, 14(1944), p. 31.

⁴⁸MacMechan, quoted in Shortt, p. 47.

⁴⁹C.G.D. Roberts, "Canadian Poetry in its Relation to the Poetry of England and America," (1933) repr., introduced by D.M.R. Bentley), Canadian Poetry, 3(Fall/Winter 1978), pp.76-86.

⁵⁰For a discussion of Deacon's attitude to Edgar, see Thomas and Lennox, pp. 73ff.

⁵¹Nathaniel Benson, letter to W.A. Deacon, 29 Sept. 1935, Box 1, Deacon Papers, Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

⁵²Livesay, letter to S. Campbell, 23 May 1979.

⁵³B.K. Sandwell, "Oscar Pelham Edgar (1871-1948)", Proceedings of the Royal Society of Canada, Appendix C (1949), p. 108.

⁵⁴See Edgar, Path, p. 34.

⁵⁵F.R. Scott, letter to S. Campbell, 28 Sept. 1978.

⁵⁶Ralph Gustafson, letter to S. Campbell, 22 Sept. 1978.

⁵⁷In a class on 11 Dec. 1924. See TS. "Log of English Literature Class 1924-25", PEP, Vic.

⁵⁸Arthur Pickthall, Letter to Helen Coleman, 25 January 1927, Marjorie Pickthall papers, Vic. A 2nd edition of the Complete Poems of Marjorie Pickthall (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1925), appeared in 1927.

⁵⁹Lorne Pierce, An Outline of Canadian Literature (French and English) (Toronto: Ryerson, 1927), p. 44.

⁶⁰A reference in passing to this lecture is found in "Canadian Literature Club", Canadian Bookman, 12(1930), 63.

⁶¹E.J. Pratt, "Marjorie Pickthall", Canadian Forum, 13(June 1933), 334-335.

⁶² Edgar, "Four Books of Verse", rev. of Wayside Gleams by Laura Salverson (and 3 other books); Saturday Night, Literary Suppl., 28 Nov. 1925, p. 3.

⁶³ See the logbook cited above. The events took place on 27 Nov. 1924 (the visit) and 22 Jan. 1935.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Personal interview with Earle Birney, Toronto, 13 Dec. 1978.

⁶⁶ Pierce, An Outline of Canadian Literature (French and English), p. 134. Wilson MacDonald (1880-1967) attended McMaster University and lived in the Canadian West for several years before 1918. His publications include The Song of the Prairie Land (1918), The Miracle Songs of Jesus (1921), Out of the Wilderness (1926) and A Flagon of Beauty (1931). As these titles suggest, he was a romantic poet - albeit one with a rather contentious streak of social criticism ("A Song to Canada") - inspired by nature, and Lampman; obviously heavily influenced by Keats ("The Whip-poor-Will") and Carman ("The World of Beauty is a Deep Distress,"). A representative sampling of his verse is his "Song for a Dying Civilization" from A Flagon of Beauty:

It's novelty, speed, what else should count
Who gives a damn for the Sermon on the Mount?
In vain is the call of the wild woodrose
In vain is the pleading of the prophet's breath
For the orchestra is Jazz and the dance is Death.

⁶⁷ The intermediary for Dr. Clemens and Edgar was Dr. George Brown. See Brown, letter to Edgar, 26 June 1928, PEP, Vic.

⁶⁸ Edgar, Letter to Sir Andrew Macphail, 2 Oct. [1930], Vol. 3, Macphail Papers, PAC.

⁶⁹ Audrey Brown states that she destroyed Edgar's half of the correspondence in Brown, letter to S. Campbell, 21 Jan. 1978.

⁷⁰ Brown, Letter to Edgar, 31 Oct. 1928, PEP, Vic.

⁷¹ See Brown to Edgar, 2 Jan. 1929, PEP, Vic. Brown wrote to Edgar in November 1928 and received no reply. She was quickly to learn how dilatory a correspondent Edgar was.

⁷² Edgar, "New Stars in Our Literary Firmament", Toronto Star Weekly, 2 Nov. 1929, p. 12.

⁷³ Pierce, Letter to Macphail, 5 Nov. 1930, Vol. 3, Macphail Papers, PAC.

⁷⁴ Brown, Letter to Edgar, 3 Jan. 1930, PEP, Vic.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 17 Oct. 1930.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

- ⁷⁸ Edgar, Letter to Macphail, 2 Oct. [1930], Vol. 3, Macphail Papers, PAC.
- ⁷⁹ Hugh Eayrs, Letter to W.A. Deacon, 17 June 1931, Deacon Papers, Fisher.
- ⁸⁰ Annie C. Dalton, Letter to Deacon, 16 May 1931, Deacon Papers, Fisher.
- ⁸¹ See Brown, Letter to Edgar, 7 Jan. 1931, PEP, Vic.
- ⁸² Brown, Letter to Edgar, 11 March 1931, PEP.
- ⁸³ Ibid., 25 June 1931, PEP.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid.
- ⁸⁵ Edgar, "The Authors' Foundation", Authors' Bulletin, 20 (Sept. 1931), 19.
- ⁸⁶ Anne Cowan, "The Canadian Forum 1920-1950: An Historical Study in Canadian Literary Theory and Practice", Diss. Carleton 1974, p. 53.
- ⁸⁷ Edgar McInnis, "Beauty and Strength", rev. of A Dryad in Nanaimo, by A.A. Brown, Saturday Night, 27 Feb. 1932, p. 8.
- ⁸⁸ Edgar, Preface to A Dryad in Nanaimo (Toronto: Macmillan, 1931), p. v.
- ⁸⁹ Deacon, letter to Eayrs, 9 Nov. 1931, Deacon Papers. Deacon marked the letter "Personal and Private".
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Eayrs, Letter to Deacon, 13 Nov. 1931, Deacon Papers.
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Brown, Letter to Edgar, 23 May 1932, PEP.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid., 6 April 1932, PEP.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., 29 Oct. 1932, PEP.
- ⁹⁶ Brown, Letter to S. Campbell, 31 Jan. 1978.
- ^{97, 98} Brown, Letter to Edgar, 23 Oct. 1933, PEP.
- ⁹⁹ Jean Graham, "Among Those Present, A Sweet Singer LXXIV - Audrey Alexandra Brown", Saturday Night, 23 July 1933, p. 8.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid.

102 Brown, Letter to Eayrs, 13 June and 5 Sept. 1934, Macmillan of Canada Papers.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid., 15 Sept. 1934, Macmillan of Canada Papers.

105 Burrell, Letter to Edgar, 15 Sept. 1934, W.A. Deacon Papers.

106 Eayrs, Letter to A.A. Brown, 30 Oct. 1932, Macmillan of Canada Papers. Edgar also proof-read the galley.

107 Eayrs, Letter to Edgar, 2 Nov. 1934, Box 2, Macmillan.

108 Edgar, Preface to Dryad in Nanaimo (Toronto: Macmillan, 1934), pp. vii-viii. The preface is dated October 1934.

109 Ibid.

110 Scott, Letter to Sir Robert Borden, 10 Sept. 1934, copy A.S. Bourinot Papers, National Library of Canada.

111 Leo Kennedy, "Archibald Lampman", Canadian Forum, 13(May 1933), 301, 303.

112 A.J.M. Smith, "A Rejected Preface 1936", repr. Canadian Literature, 24(Spring 1965), pp. 6-9.

113 Brown, Letter to Edgar, 8 May 1935, PEP. See also Brown, Letter to Edgar, 2 Sept. 1935.

114 Ibid., 4 Nov. 1936, PEP.

115 These figures are in a letter from Daniel MacMillan, English head of the firm, to Macmillan Canadian editor John Gray, 21 Feb. 1947. Macmillan wrote Daniel, ought not to publish Brown again because of the steady decline in her sales. See Box 2 Macmillan Papers.

116 Edgar, "Lyrical Development", rev. of The Tree of Resurrection and Other Poems, by A.A. Brown, Saturday Night, 12 June 1937, p. 11.

117 Birney, "Moon-Wist in Canadian Poesie", Canadian Forum (August 1937), repr. Spreading Time, pp. 31-32.

118 J.C. Taylor, "'Enter the Canadian Poetry Magazine': Editorial", Acta Victoriana, 60(Jan. 1936), 20.

119 A.J.M. Smith, "Canadian Poetry - A Minority Report 1939", repr. Towards A View of Canadian Letters (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1973), pp. 179-180.

120 Marjorie Pickthall, Letter to Helena Coleman, undated [c. 1911], Pickthall Papers, Victoria College.

121 Brown, "Audrey Alexandra Brown", Editorial, Saturday Night, 15 Feb. 1936, p. 1.

122 Brown, Letter to S. Cambell, 31 Jan. 1978.

123 Lyn Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time: The Story of the Canadian Authors Association 1921-1981 (Toronto: Simon and Pierre, 1981), p. 166.

124 Mary Elizabeth Coleman, "Our Proletarian Verse", Canadian Author, 14 (Sept. 1936), 11-13.

125 Livesay, "Live-sayings in Reply", Canadian Author, 14 (Sept. 1936), 12-13.

126 Duncan McNair, "C.A.A. Annual Hibernation", New Frontier, 1 (Sept. 1936), p. 23.

127 The friendships are discussed in Chapter Four.

128 Livesay, Letter to S. Campbell, 23 May 1979.

129 Brown, Letter to Edgar, 3 Jan. 1938, folder 55, PEP.

130 J. Fisher, "Recent Canadian Poetry in English", Aota., 43 (March 1939), 11.

131 E.K. Brown, "Canadian Poetry Repudiated", rev. of New Provinces, New Frontier, 1 (July 1936), 31-32.

132 "Local Literary Leaders See No Reason For Disapproval", Toronto Mail and Empire, 25 Sept. 1925, pp. 1-2. Edgar had reviewed Callaghan's novels.

133 Edgar, "Callaghan's Best", rev. of Such Is My Beloved, Saturday Night, 24 Feb. 1934, p. 6 and "The Seeing Eye", review of They Shall Inherit the Earth, Saturday Night, 21 Sept. 1935, p. 7.

134 Edgar, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 335-343.

135 Frye, Editor's Introduction, Across My Path, p. X.

136 F.R. Scott, "New Poems for Old", Canadian Forum (1931), 296-298, 337-339.

137 Edgar, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 335.

138 Ibid., 336.

139 Ibid., 337

140 Ibid., 339.

141 Edgar, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 342-343.

142 D.C. Scott, Letter to Edgar, 22 Sept. 1937, Scott Papers; Vic.

143 Ibid., 15 April 1938.

144 E.J. Pratt, Canadian Poetry Magazine [CPM], Editorial, 1 (April 1936), 7.

145 Edgar, "The Changing Aspects of Poetry", Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), 335-343.

146 An account of the wedding of Dona and Pelham Edgar appeared in "Marriages", Saturday Night, 29 June 1935, p. 15.

147 Deacon, Letter to Howard Angus Kennedy (copy), 24 Nov. 1935, Deacon Papers.

148 Deacon, Letter to Roderick Kennedy, 13 Jan. 1946, Deacon Papers.

149 An account of Edgar's objections appears in "Another Book Week", Editorial, Canadian Bookman, 4 (May 1922), 155.

150 Edgar, "Canadian Book Week - Past and Present", Toronto Globe, 9 Nov. 1935.

151 Ibid., 9 Nov. 1935.

152 Edgar, "The A.C.B. in the West", ACB Literary Bulletin, 1 (Autumn 1936), 3.

153 Edgar, "Highlights from the Inaugural Addresses", Association of Canadian Bookmen Literary Bulletin, I (Spring 1936), 5.

154 Charles Sanderson, "Highlights from the Inaugural Addresses", Association of Canadian Bookmen Literary Bulletin, I (Spring 1936), 6.

155 Sydney B. Watson, "Highlights from the Inaugural Addresses", Association of Canadian Bookmen Literary Bulletin, I (Spring 1936), 7.

156 These optimistic plans are discussed in Harrington, Syllables of Recorded Time, pp. 180-189.

157 Minutes of the Association Canadian Bookmen, 26 January 1938, Deacon Papers.

158 See Deacon, Letter to Edgar (copy), 19 Feb. 1939, Deacon Papers. An open rift within the ACB was averted.

159 Edgar, "Association of Canadian Bookmen", Canadian Author, 14 (June 1937), 2.

¹⁶⁰ See H.G.L. Strange, "What the A.C.B. Is Doing For the Drought Areas", A.C.B. Reading Guide (Spring 1938), 9-10.

¹⁶¹ Deacon, Letter to L.G. Barnard, 30 Oct. 1938, Deacon Papers, Fisher.

¹⁶² Ellen Elliott, Letter to Hugh Eayrs, 24 Nov. 1936, Box 24, Macmillan of Canada Papers.

¹⁶³ Eayrs, Letter to Edgar, 30 Dec. 1937, Box 24, Macmillan of Canada Papers.

¹⁶⁴ Edgar, Letter to Gibbon, 16 Dec. 1937, box 24, Macmillan of Canada Papers

¹⁶⁵ Deacon, "Morning-After Reflections: An Open Letter to A.C.B. Members", (printed circular, n.p., n.d. [late 1937] Ap. [3pp.], Fisher Library, Pamphlet H6D.

¹⁶⁶ Deacon, Letter to Leslie Barnard, 30 Oct. 1938, Deacon Papers, Fisher.

¹⁶⁷ A.C.B. Minute Book, 26 Jan 1938, Deacon Papers, Fisher.

¹⁶⁸ Deacon, Letter to Hugh Eayrs, 4 Dec 1938, Deacon Papers, Fisher.

¹⁶⁹ Deacon, Letter to Barnard, 24 April 1939, Deacon Papers, Fisher. Edgar telephoned the request, which Deacon seconded by letter.

¹⁷⁰ W.A. Deacon, Letter to William Cutts, 4 May 1939, (copy), Deacon Papers.

¹⁷¹ According to Deacon to Barnard, 24 April 1939, Box 29, Deacon Papers.

¹⁷² Edgar, "Past President's Forum", Canadian Author, 16(Oct. 1939), 13-14.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ In a radio documentary on Edgar.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, "Canadian Poetry - A Minority Report [1939]", repr. Towards a View of Canadian Letters (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1973), pp. 179-180.

¹⁷⁶ Edgar, "Literary Criticism in Canada", University of Toronto Quarterly (July 1939), repr. Path, p. 127.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ A.J.M. Smith, "Confessions of A Compulsive Anthologist", Journal of Canadian Studies, 11(May 1976), pp. 4-14. Edgar was of course retired from Victoria at this time.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

- 181 Smith, Letter to Eayrs, undated [1942], Box 12, Macmillan of Canada Papers.
- 182 Ibid.
- 183 Scott, Letter to Edgar, 14 Oct. 1941, TS. original, Conway Collection, PEP.
- 184 See Scott, Letter to Smith, 21 Oct. 1941 and 19 Aug. 1942, Smith Papers, Fisher.
- 185 Scott, Letter to E.K. Brown, 30 Oct. 1945, E.K. Brown Papers, PAC.
- 186 Edgar, "Canadian Poetry Reviews", rev. of Anthology of Canadian Poetry, ed. Ralph Gustafson, Canadian Poetry Magazine, 6, No.3 (Oct. 1942), 31-32.
- 187 Ibid.
- 188 Ibid.
- 189 Edgar, Letter to Roberts, 23 August 1942, Roberts Papers, University of New Brunswick. Roberts had mentioned Smith in Roberts, Letter to Edgar, 18 August 1942, folder 5, Conway Papers.
- 190 Carl Klinck in Klinck and Wells, Edwin J. Pratt, The Man and His Poetry (Toronto: Ryerson, 1947), pp. 17-18.
- 191 Edgar, Letter to Roberts, 18 June [1943], Roberts Papers, University of New Brunswick.
- 192 Edgar's devotion to literary philanthropy emerged with his childish love of Shelley. See Path, p. 17.
- 193 See Edgar, Letter to Robert Falconer, 12 Feb. 1920, Box 58, Falconer Papers, University of Toronto Archives.
- 194 Pamphlet "The Charles G.D. Roberts Jubilee Fund", (n.p., n.d.), pp. 1-3, PEP.
- 195 Ibid.
- 196 CAF "Declaration of Trust [1931]", Volume 1, CWF Papers, PAC.
- 197 See Gustave Lanctot, C.W.F. circular letter [c. 1943], Vol. 4, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC. "When Dr. Pelham Edgar read of Raymond Knister's death, he vowed that never again would such a situation occur; and so the Canadian Writers Foundation came into being." See also Eggleston, Literary Friends, p. 112. The circular implies that Knister's death was the genesis of the Foundation, but in fact by 1935 it had been Edgar's project for at least two years.
- 198 Bennett, Letter to Edgar, 14 Oct [1941], PEP.

- 199 Wilfrid Eggleston, Literary Friends (Ottawa: Borealis, 1980), pp. 114, 110.
- 200 Ibid.
- 201 See Vol. 1, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 202 See Grove, The Letters of Frederick Philip Grove, ed. Desmond Pacey (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), for the letters tracing this aid.
- 203 Eggleston, Literary Friends, p. 110.
- 204 Pierce, Letter to Edgar, 10 Nov. 1943, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 205 Scott, Letter to Brown, 23 Feb. 1946, Brown Papers, PAC.
- 206 Pierce, Letter to Edgar, 29 Nov. 1943, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 207 Ibid., 29 Nov. 1943 and 27 March 1946, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers.
- 208 Ibid.
- 209 In Across My Path, ed. N. Frye (Toronto: Ryerson, 1952).
- 210 Essays by Edgar on E.J. Pratt, D.C. Scott and Bliss Carman are included in W.P. Percival, ed., Leading Canadian Poets (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948).
- 211 Edgar, "Bliss Carman", Educational Record (Quebec), 57 (May 1941), revised and repr. Leading Canadian Poets, ed. W.P. Percival (Toronto: Ryerson, 1948), pp. 45-50.
- 212 Ibid.
- 213 Edgar, "Classical Essays", Saturday Night, 3 Feb. 1940, p. 9.
- 214 Edgar, "Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation", Ottawa Journal, 27 Dec. 1947.
- 215 Edgar, Letter to Pierce, 12 June 1947, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 216 The first indication of a Port Hope address for Edgar is January 1948.
- 217 Edgar, Letter to E.K. Brown, 5 Jan. 1948, E.K. Brown Papers, PAC.
- 218 Pierce, Letter to Teresa Thomson, 21 Oct. 1948, Canadian Writers Foundation Papers, PAC.
- 219 Ibid., 22 Dec. 1948.

220 Canadian Writers Foundation Minutes, 12 Oct. 1948, Canadian Writers Foundation material in possession of Dr. D.W. Thomson, Ottawa.

221 B.K. Sandwell, "Pelham Edgar's Literary Path", rev. of Across My Path, Saturday Night, 22 Nov. 1952, p. 7.

222 "Pelham Edgar", Editorial, Montreal Daily Star, 8 Oct. 1948.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

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I. CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WORKS BY PELHAM EDGAR

- 1871 Pelham Edgar is born on March 17 in Toronto to Matilda Ridout and James David (later Sir James) Edgar.
- 1887 After attending Upper Canada College, Edgar enrolls in the modern languages course at University College of the University of Toronto.
- 1888 "Hope is Fled [Poem]." Varsity, 24 March 1888, p. 215.
- 1889 Because of delicate health, Edgar is absent from the University from the summer of 1889 until the fall of 1890 for a year's rest. The summer of 1889 is spent working in British Columbia as an assistant to Dr. Dawson's geological survey party.
- "Extracts From An Essay on Thoreau." Varsity, 9 February 1889 pp. 90-91; 16 Feb. 1889, p. 98. This paper was delivered to the College Literary Society on February 8, 1889.
- "Among the Millet." Review of Among the Millet by Archibald Lampman. Varsity, 2 March 1889, p. 119.
- "Modern Authors In The English Course [Letter to the Editor]." Varsity, 23 March 1889, p. 149.
- 1890
- 1891 "Browning's Ring And The Book." Varsity, 24 March 1891, pp. 246-247.
- "Dream Faces [Poem]." Varsity, 24 March 1891, pp. 246-247.
- 1892 Upon graduation from University College, Edgar accepts a position as an assistant master at Upper Canada College, a position he holds until 1895.
- "Walt Whitman. An Essay on His Personality and Genius." Toronto Mail, 9 April 1892.
- 1893 Edgar marries Helen Madeline Boulton on December 20.
- "William Wilfred Campbell's Earlier and Later Poems." Review of the Dread Voyage by W. W. Campbell. The Week, 29 September 1893, pp. 1043-1044.

- 1894
- 1895 Edgar begins a Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins.
 "Duncan Campbell Scott." The Week, 15 March 1895,
 pp. 370-1.
- 1896 "A German View of Keats." The Week, 31 January 1896,
 pp. 228-231.
- 1897 Edgar is appointed to the French department of Victoria
 College as a lecturer, after completing his Ph.D. in
 that year.
- 1898 "Robert Herrick." Acta Victoriana, 21, No. 4, (January
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- 1899 A Study of Shelley, With Special Reference to His Nature
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 Edgar's doctoral thesis.) 154 pp.
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 22, No. 4, (January 1899), pp. 271-275.
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- 1900 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. The Ancient Mariner and Other
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- 1901 Pelham Edgar and Duncan Campbell Scott became editors of
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- 1902 Coleridge, Samuel Taylor and Wordsworth, William.
Coleridge and Wordsworth Select Poems. Ed. Pelham Edgar.
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 by
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 (February 1902), pp. 262-3.
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 "Emile Zola and The Realistic Movement in France." Acta
 Victoriana, 26, No. 2, (Nov. 1902), pp. 71-76.

1903

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Toronto: Morang, 1903. 188 pp.

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J. S. Willison. Acta Victoriana, 26, No. 7,
(April 1903), pp. 468-469.

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3, No. 9, (June 1903), pp. 287-288.

1904

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Wordsworth and Longfellow Select Poems. Ed.
Pelham Edgar. Toronto: Morang's Educational Series,
1902, 244 pp.

"Mr. Stephen Phillips." Review of The Sin of David by
Stephen Phillips. Toronto Globe, 10 Dec. 1904,
pp. 9-10 (magazine section).

"William Butler Yeats and the Irish Movement." Toronto
Globe, 17 December 1904, p. 7 (magazine section).

"Have We A National Literature?" Toronto Globe, 31 Dec.
1904, p. 9 (magazine section).

"William Morris, Poet, Artist, and Socialist." Acta
Victoriana, 28, No. 3, (December 1904), pp. 160-166.

"Living Writers: The Development of Maurice
Maeterlinck." Toronto Globe, 3 Dec. 1904, p. 6,
(magazine section).

"Shelley's Debt to Eighteenth Century Thought."
Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of
Canada, Series III, section 2 (1904), pp. 187-199.

1905

"Living Writers: Ibsen's 'Brand'." Toronto Globe, 4
January 1905, pp. 6-7; (magazine section).

"A Great French Critic, The Centenary of Sainte-Beuve."
Toronto Globe, 18 March 1905, p. 4 (magazine
section).

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Globe, 25 March 1905, pp. 12-13 (magazine section).

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(magazine section).

"A New Volume of Verse by Duncan Campbell Scott." Review
of New World Lyrics and Ballads. Toronto Globe,
25 November 1905, p. 4 (magazine section).

1906

Edgar spends the summer in Northern Ontario as Secretary
of an Indian treaty expedition headed by D. C. Scott.

- / "The Late M. Masson." Acta Victoriana, 29, No. 4, 349
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- "Mr. John Morley as Man of Letters." Canadian Magazine,
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- "The Shelley-Keats Memorial." Acta Victoriana, 30,
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- "Twelve Hundred Miles by Canoe." Canada, 24 Nov. 1906,
 p. 255; 19 Jan. 1907, p. 61.
- 1907 "Ferdinand Brunetière." University Magazine, 6
 (February 1907), pp. 107-116.
- "A Notable Volume." Review of the Songs and Sonnets by
 Helena Coleman. University of Toronto Monthly, 7,
 No. 5 (March 1907), pp. 107-110.
- "George Meredith." National Review, 50 (Sept. 1907),
 pp. 61-81; Living Age, 255, (21 Dec. 1907),
 pp. 744-751.
- "The Poetry of George Meredith." National Review, 50
 (Nov. 1907), pp. 457-467; Living Age, 255 (21 Dec.
 1907), pp. 744-751.
- "The Realism of Poetry and the Poetry of Prose." Acta
 Victoriana, 31, No. 3 (December 1907), pp. 106-110.
- 1908 Labiche, Eugene Marin and Martin, Edouard. Le Voyage
 de Monsieur Perrichon, comédie en quatre actes. Ed.
 Pelham Edgar. Toronto: Morang's Educational Series,
 1908. 105 pp.
- "Some Recent Notable Books." Toronto Globe, 22 Feb.
 1908, p. 9 (magazine section).
- "English Poetry Since Tennyson." University Magazine, 8
 (April 1908), pp. 258-273.
- 1909 The Edgars travel to Europe and Egypt. Edgar is now
 associated with the English Department at Victoria; he
 teaches no French courses after 1912.
- "A Confession of Faith and a Protest." University
 Magazine, 8 (April 1909), pp. 305-315.
- "In the Wake of the Poets." Acta Victoriana, 33, No. 3
 (Dec. 1909), pp. 114-120.
- 1910 "Shall Egypt Have a Constitution?" Fortnightly Review,
 94 (Sept. 1910), pp. 404-411.
- "Venice." University Magazine, 9 (Dec. 1910),
 pp. 654-666.

1911

Hugo, Victor. The Poetry of Victor Hugo. Ed. Pelham Edgar and John Squair. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1911. 330 pp.

"Canadian Literature." Acta Victoriana, 25, No. 3 (Dec. 1911), pp. 99-103.

"Twenty Years in Federation." University Monthly, 12 (December 1911), pp. 71-74.

1912

Edgar becomes Head of the English Dept., Victoria College, a position he was to hold until his retirement in 1938.

"George Monro Grant." Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement Jan. 1901 - December 1911. Ed. Sir Sidney Lee. London: Smith, Elder and Co: 1912, pp. 147-148.

"Sir Hector Louis Langevin." Dictionary of National Biography, pp. 415-416.

"John Douglas Armour." Dictionary of National Biography, pp. 54.

"Louis Honoré Frechette." Dictionary of National Biography, pp. 55-56.

"Sir Oliver Mowat." Dictionary of National Biography, pp. 657-659.

"Chancellor Burwash." University Monthly, 12 (June 1912), pp. 372-377.

"A Fresh View of Canadian Literature." University Magazine, 11 (October 1912), pp. 479-489; abridged in The Search for English Canadian Literature. Ed. Carl Ballstadt Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975, pp. 110-114.

1913

Edgar helps Marjorie Pickthall to publish her first book of verse, A Drift of Pinions.

"The Judgments of Carlyle." University Magazine, 12 (December, 1913), pp. 622-638.

Review of The Drift of Pinions by Marjorie Pickthall. University of Toronto Monthly, 14 (December 1913), pp. 128-132.

1914

"Wait For Hours to See Lord Kitchener." Toronto News, 25 Aug. 1914.

"Matthew Arnold As Poet." Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series III, section 2 (1914), pp. 309-320.

- 1915 Edgar is elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.
- "Random Thoughts of Literature and Art". Canadian Bookman, 1, (May 1915), pp. 5-6.
- 1916 Edgar serves for two stints of four months each as a Lieutenant in the Royal Grenadiers at Kapuskasing internment camp during 1916-1917
- "English Canadian Literature." Cambridge History of English Literature. Vol. 14. Ed. A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1916, pp. 343-360.
- "The Comedy of Shakespeare and Moliere." University Magazine, 15, (April 1916), pp. 181-205.
- "On Internment Camps." Varsity, 6 Dec. 1916, p. 1.
- 1917 "Thoughts on Poetry and the Sister Arts." Acta Victoriana, 41, No. 3 (January 1917), pp. 133-141; Acta Victoriana, 41, No. 4 (Feb. 1917), pp. 195-199.
- 1918 "Henry James and his Method." Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series 3, section 2, (1918), pp. 225-240.
- "[On Examinations]." Acta Victoriana, 43, No. 5 (Feb. 1918), pp. 270.
- 1919 Edgar appoints E. J. Pratt to the English Department at Victoria College; Pelham Edgar befriends Raymond Knister, who briefly attends Victoria that fall.
- "The Lowell Centenary." Acta Victoriana, 43, No. 5, (March 1919), pp. 270-271.
- "Canadian Poetry." The Bookman, 49, No. 5 (July 1919), pp. 623-628; repr. Twentieth Century Essays on Confederation Literature. Ed. Lorraine McMullen. Ottawa: Tecumseh, 1976, pp. 120-127.
- Review of Rousseau and Romanticism by Irving Babbitt. The Rebel, 4, No. 2 (Nov. 1919), pp. 83-85.
- 1920 "Contest Results." Acta Victoriana, 44, No. 5 (January 1920), pp. 266-267.
- Review of The London Mercury. The Rebel, 4, No. 4 (Jan. 1920), pp. 169-171.
- "Recent Canadian Poets." Ontario Library Review, 5 (August, 1920), 3-9. An address to the Canadian Library Association, April 5, 1920.

- 1921 Edgar helps to found the Canadian Authors' Association at a banquet in Montreal in March. He spends the summer in Italy.
- "Vignettes of Travel." Acta Victoriana, 45, No. 6 (April 1921), pp. 255-257.
- "The Letters of Henry James." Review of The Letters of Henry James. Queen's Quarterly, 28 (1920-1921), pp. 283-287.
- "On Intellectual Values in Poetry." Canadian Forum, 1, No. 10 (July 1921), pp. 307-309.
- "Matthew Arnold As a Writer of Prose." Dalhousie Review, 1 (October 1921), pp. 248-262.
- "Canadian Literature." New York Evening Post, 19 Nov. 1921, pp. 181-182.
- 1922 "Canadian Poetry." Acta Victoriana, 46, No. 5 (Feb. 1922), pp. 198-200.
- "Maria Chapdelaine." Review of Maria Chapdelaine by Louis Hemon. Acta Victoriana, 46, No. 5, (Feb. 1922), pp. 219-225.
- 1923
- 1924 "The Centenary of Byron 1788-1824." Dalhousie Review, 4 (April 1924), pp. 98-101.
- "The Art of Henry James." National Review, 4 (July 1924), pp. 730-739.
- (With E. J. Pratt) "Editorial [Results of literary contest]." Acta Victoriana, 49, No. 3 (December 1924), pp. 21.
- 1925 "Three Novels of Henry James." Dalhousie Review, 4 (January 1925), pp. 467-75.
- "Four Books of Verse." Saturday Night [Literary Section], 28 November 1925, p. 3.
- 1926 Edgar teaches in the University of Chicago's summer school; Earle Birney is a student of his at Victoria in the fall of 1926.
- "Some Recent Verse." Willison's Monthly, 1 (March 1926), p. 394.
- "One Scot Who is Immune." Saturday Night, 12 June 1926, p. 3.

1927

Edgar is elected President of the Royal Society and publishes his study of Henry James, which is well-received in the literary world.

Henry James Man and Author. Toronto: Macmillan, 1927; repr. New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1964. 351 pp.

"Presidential Address: Are Our Writers In The Modern Stream?" Proceedings and Transaction of the Royal Society of Canada, Series III, section 2, (1927), pp. 1-6.

"Duncan Campbell Scott." Dalhousie Review, 7 (April 1927), pp. 38-46.

1928

"Charles G. D. Roberts." Review of The Vagrant of Time by Charles G. D. Roberts. Acta Victoriana, 52 No. 4 (Jan. 1928), pp. 33-34.

"The Savour of Life." Review of Essays in Gusto by Arnold Bennett. Saturday Night, 19 May 1928, pp. 9-10.

"An Untempered Critic." Review of Movements in Modern English Poetry and Prose by Sherard Vines. Saturday Night, 2 June 1928, p. 12.

"American Verse." Review of The Oxford Book of American Verse, ed. Bliss Carman and The Gobbler of God by Percy MacKaye. Saturday Night, 9 June 1928, pp. 9, 12.

"The Same Lawrence." Review of The Women Who Rode Away by D. H. Lawrence. Saturday Night, 23 June 1928, p. 8.

"Delightful Poetry." Review of Prometheus in Piccadilly by Wallace B. Nichols. Saturday Night, 30 June 1928, p. 11.

"Modern Fun." Review of Eva's Apples by William Gerhardt. Saturday Night, 30 June 1928, p. 9.

"The Saga Ends." Review of Swan Song by John Galsworthy. Saturday Night, 4 August 1928, p. 8.

"Truth by Revelation." Review of Things to Come by John Middleton Murry. Saturday Night, 1 September 1928, pp. 9-10.

"For Travellers and Others." Review of A Dawdle in Lombardy and Venice by Inglis Sheldon-Williams. Saturday Night, 15 September 1928, pp. 9-10.

"People in Love." Review of Farewell to Youth by Storm Jamieson. Saturday Night, 15 September 1928, pp. 8-9.

"Poetry by All Kinds of People." Review of Five More Famous Living People by Coulson Kernahan. Saturday Night, Literary Supplement, 6 Oct. 1928, p. 6.

"How Novels Happened." Toronto Star Weekly, 3 Nov. 1928, p. 29.

"How the Novel Has Grown." Toronto Star Weekly, 10 Nov. 1928, p. 33.

"In Many Keys." - Review of The Hogarth Essays. Saturday Night, 10 Nov. 1928, pp. 10-11.

"Arnold Bennett Close-Up." Toronto Star Weekly, 17 Nov. 1928, p. 27.

"Still Baiting the Victorians." Review of Matthew Arnold by Hugh Kingsmill. Saturday Night, 17 Nov. 1928, p. 12.

"The Wizard of Wessex." Review of The Early Life of Thomas Hardy by Florence E. Hardy and Winter Words by Thomas Hardy. Saturday Night, 1 December 1928, pp. 2-3.

"Women Novelists." Toronto Star Weekly, 1 Dec. 1928, p. 35.

"A Criticism of the Novels of Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith." Toronto Star Weekly, 15 Dec. 1928, pp. 16, 18.

"Elusive Virginia Woolf." Toronto Star Weekly, 22 Dec. 1928, p. 25.

"Aldous Huxley and the Moderns." Toronto Star Weekly, 29 Dec. 1928, p. 11.

1929

"The Literary Profession." Review of The Profession of Letters by A. S. Collins. Saturday Night, 19 January 1929, p. 12.

"A Clever Critic." Review of The Strange Necessity by Rebecca West. Saturday Night, 26 January 1929, pp. 8-9.

"Literary Trends in Europe." Review of Contemporary Movements in European Literature, ed. William Rose and J. Isaacs. Saturday Night, 9 February 1929, p. 12.

"Brilliant Studies." Review of Adepts in Self-Portraiture by Stefan Zweig. Saturday Night, 23 February 1929, p. 9.

"Verse in Bulk." Review of An Anthology of World Poetry by Mark Van Doren and The Oxford Book of Regency Verse, 1798-1937, ed. H. S. Milford. Saturday Night, 9 March 1929, p. 9.

"Verse in Bulk." Review of The Collected Poems of W. H. Davies. Saturday Night, 16 March 1929, p. 10.

"Architecture of Poetry." Review of Form and Style in Poetry by W. H. Ker. Saturday Night, 4 May 1929, p. 9.

"Poet Lawrence." Review of The Collected Poems of D. H. Lawrence. Saturday Night, 19 Oct. 1929, p. 8.

"New Stars In Our Literary Firmament." Toronto Star Weekly, 2 November 1929, p. 12.

"Modern Authors." Review of The Lamp and The Lute by Bonamy Dobrée. Saturday Night, 9 Nov. 1929, p. 8.

"Cabell Grows Tired." Review of The Way of Ecben by James Branch Cabell. Saturday Night, 30 November 1929, pp. 5, 21.

"The Cult of Primitivism." Yearbook of the Arts in Canada 1928/9. Ed. Bertram Brooker. Toronto: Macmillan, 1929, pp. 39-42.

1930

Northrop Frye, a second year student at Victoria, falls under the tutelage of Pelham Edgar.

Introduction to Maurice Constantin-Weyer, A Martyr's Folly. Toronto: Macmillan, 1930, pp. v-vii.

"Fictional Biography." Review of Diana by Emil Ludwig and Atmosphere of Love by Andre Maurois. Saturday Night, 8 February 1930, p. 8.

"Moderns." Review of Four Contemporary Novelists by W. L. Cross. Saturday Night, Literary Section, 6 Dec. 1930, pp. 6, 8.

"Verse." Review of Roses of Shadow by Elise Aylen. Saturday Night, 20 December 1930, p. 16.

1931

With the help and advice of Pelham Edgar, Audrey Alexandra Brown published her first book, A Dryad in Nanaimo.

"Preface." to Audrey Alexandra Brown, A Dryad in Nanaimo, Toronto: Macmillan 1931, pp. v-vi.

"Short Stories." Review of Certain People by Edith Wharton. Saturday Night, 17 January 1931, p. 9.

"Victorian Peep Show." Review of As We Were by E. F. Benson. Saturday Night, 31 January 1931, p. 9.

"Shakespeare's Tragedies." Review of The Wheel of Fire by G. Wilson Knight. Saturday Night, 14 March 1931, p. 8.

"Wordsworth." Review of Wordsworth by C. H. Hertord and Wordsworth by Herbert Read. Saturday Night, 11 April 1931, pp. 10-11.

"Continuing Saga." Review of Finch's Fortune by Mazo de la Roche. Saturday Night, 26 September 1931, p. 8.

1932

"A Flagon of Beauty'." Review of A Flagon of Beauty by Wilson MacDonald. Saturday Night, 13 February 1932, p. 8.

"Shakespeare." Review of The Imperial Theme by Wilson Knight. Saturday Night, 5 March 1932, p. 7.

"Utopia." Review of Brave New World by Aldous Huxley. Saturday Night, 19 March 1932, p. 8.

"Virginia Woolf's New Book." Review of The Waves. Acta Victoriana, 56, No. 6 (April 1932), pp. 25-26.

"Judgements on Appeal - I. Henry James, The Essential Novelist." Queen's Quarterly, 39, No. 2 (May 1932), pp. 183-192.

"Judgements on Appeal - II. The Brontes." Queen's Quarterly, 39, No. 5 (August 1932), pp. 414-422.

"Goethe." Review of A Study of Goethe by Barker Fairley. Saturday Night, 27 August 1932, p. 6.

"Song and Its Foundations." Review of Song and Its Fountains by AE. Saturday Night, 3 September 1932, p. 6.

"Gypsy Life." Review of The Broom Squires by Eden Phillipotts. Saturday Night, 8 October 1932, p. 13.

"Browning." Review of Browning: Background and Conflict by F. R. G. Duckworth. Saturday Night, 5 November 1932, p. 9.

"French View of Carlyle." Review of Carlyle by Louis Cazamien, tr. E. K. Brown. Saturday Night, 3 December 1932, pp. 4, 14.

"Thackeray." Review of Thackeray: A Personality by Malcolm Elwin. Saturday Night, 10 December 1932, pp. 10-11.

1933

Helen Edgar dies on 29 November.

The Art of the Novel from 1700 to the Present Time. New York and London: Macmillan, 1933; repr. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966. 493 pp. One article on Henry James, "The Essential Novelist?" was reprinted in Henry James: A Collection of Critical Essays (ed. Leon Edel (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Twentieth Century Views Series, 1963)), pp. 92-101.

"A Varied Sheaf." Review of Paul Valéry by Theodora Bosanquet, Recent Prose by John Masefield, A Philosophy of Solitude by John Cowper Powys and The Shakespearian Tempest by G. Wilson Knight. Saturday Night, 8 April 1933, pp. 9-10.

"Poetry as Revelation." Review of The Christian Renaissance by Wilson Knight. Saturday Night, 5 August 1933, p. 7.

"Lawrence in Chaos." Review of Lawrence and Brett: A Friendship by Dorothy Brett. Saturday Night, 14 October 1933, p. 15.

"Saga's End." Review of Vanessa by Hugh Walpole and The Master of Jalna by Mazo de la Roche. Saturday Night, 21 October 1933, p. 7.

"Letters Home." Review of No. 4 Canadian Hospital by Kathleen M. Mackenzie. Saturday Night, 4 Nov. 1933, p. 8.

"Wares of Parnassus." Review of Souvenirs of France by Rudyard Kipling, End and Beginning by John Masefield, Give Your Heart to the Hawks by Robinson Jeffers, Talifer by Edward Arlington Robinson, Strange Victory by Sara Teasdale, Selected Poems of Frederick George Scott, Blossoming Antlers by Winnifred Welles, Rhymes for Everyman by Ernest Rhys and Discover Poetry by Elizabeth Drew. Saturday Night, 2 Dec. 1933, pp. 3, 14.

1934

In May, Pelham Edgar goes to England and the Continent for a summer's travelling.

"Hotel Keeper." Review of Work of Art by Sinclair Lewis. Saturday Night, 17 February 1934, p. 7.

"Callaghan's Best." Review of Such Is My Beloved by Morley Callaghan. Saturday Night, 24 February 1934, p. 6.

"Hitting and Haggises". Letter. Saturday Night, 4 August 1934, p. 3.

"Mr. Wells On Mr. Wells." Review of Experiment in Autobiography by H. G. Wells. Saturday Night, 1 December 1934, p. 6.

"Jeu D'Esprit." Review of Amaranth by E. A. Robinson, Wine From These Grapes by Edna St. Vincent Millay and American Song by Paul Engle. Saturday Night, 8 Dec. 1934, pp. 3, 11.

"Preface" to Audrey Alexander Brown, A Dryad in Nanaimo. Toronto: Macmillan, 1934, pp. vii-viii.

1935

Pelham Edgar marries Dona Waller on June 20, 1935. He is President of the Association of Canadian Bookmen, 1935-36 and of the CAA, 1935-6.

"Literary Event." Review of The Iceberg and Other Poems by Charles G. D. Roberts. Saturday Night, 19 January 1935, p. 8.

"Lawrence Again." Review of Not I, But the Wind by Frieda Lawrence. Saturday Night, 9 February 1935, p. 8.

"Dickens Re-Examined." Review of The Sentimental Journey by Hugh Kingsmill and Dickens by Andre Maurois. Saturday Night, 20 April 1935, pp. 2, 10-11.

"Our Literary Tendencies." Canadian Author, 12, No. 4, (June 1935), pp. 2, 19.

"From the President." The Canadian Author, 13, No. 1, (Sept. 1935), p. 2.

"The Seeing Eye." Review of They Shall Inherit The Earth by Morley Callaghan. Saturday Night, 21 September 1935, p. 7.

"Canadian Poet." Review of The Complete Poems of Francis Sherman. Ed. Lorne Pierce. Saturday Night, 26 October 1935, p. 5.

"The President Makes Report." Canadian Author, 13, No. 2 (December 1935), 2.

"Ugly Duckling." Review of Oliver Goldsmith by Stephen Gwynn. Saturday Night, 7 December 1935, pp. 1, 10.

"Recent Verse." Review of The Green Cloister by Duncan Campbell Scott and Lilies and Leopards by Annie C. Dalton. Saturday Night, 21 December 1935, p. 8.

1936 Edgar receives the Lorne Pierce medal of the Royal Society of Canada. His daughter, Jane, is born on March 24, 1936.

"Bliss Carman." Review of Bliss Carman: A Portrait by Muriel Miller. Saturday Night, 11 January 1936, p. 7.

"The President's Address." Canadian Author, 14, No. 1 (September 1936), pp. 5-6.

"The Candid Critic, and Others." Canadian Author, 14, No. 1 (Sept. 1936), pp. 9-10.

"The Best of Roberts." Review of Selected Poems of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts. Saturday Night, 5 December 1936, pp. 3, 15.

1937 "More Books for Canadian Readers." Publishers' Weekly, 30 January 1937, p. 490.

"Lyrical Development." Review of The Tree of Resurrection by Audrey Alexandra Brown. Saturday Night, 12 June 1937, p. 11.

"The Changing Aspects of Poetry." Queen's Quarterly, 44 (Autumn 1937), pp. 335-343.

"Authors In Convention [Presidential Address]." Canadian Author, 15, No. 1 (September 1937), pp. 3-5.

"The Old School." Saturday Night, 9 October 1937, p. 3.

"Introduction." Canadian Poetry Magazine, 2, No. 3, (December 1937), p. 8.

1938 "The Enigma of Yeats." Queen's Quarterly, 46 (Winter 1939), pp. 411-422.

"Adventures Among Masterpieces." Review of Enjoyment of Literature by John Cowper Powys. Saturday Night, 7 January 1939, p. 16.

"Competent Critics." Review of Trio by Osbert, Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell. Saturday Night, 21 January 1939, p. 16.

"William Tyrrell." Canadian Bookman, 20, No. 6
(February-March 1939), pp. 16-18.

Review of New Harvesting : Contemporary Canadian Poetry, 1918-1938. Ed. Ethel Hume Bennet Canadian Poetry Magazine, 3, No. 4 (April 1939), p. 43.

"Literary Criticism in Canada." University of Toronto Quarterly, 8 (July 1939), pp. 420-430; repr. Across My Path, pp. 118-128. See 1952.

"George Moore and George Russell." Canadian Poetry Magazine, 4, No. 1 (July 1939), pp. 5-10; repr. Ottawa Journal, 29 April 1939.

"Young Writers." Review of New Writing Ed. John Lehmann. Saturday Night, 22 July 1939, p. 9.

"Past President's Forum." Canadian Author, 16, No. 3 (October 1939), pp. 13-14.

"Life of Stendhal." Review of Stendhal (1783-1842) by F. C. Green.. Saturday Night, 18 November 1939, p. 20.

Review of Hero in Ermine and Other Poems by E. M. Perry. Canadian Poetry Magazine, 4, No. 3 (Dec. 1939) pp. 43-44.

"An Enlightened View of Thoreau." Review of Thoreau by Henry Seidel Canby. Saturday Night, 9 December 1939, p. 13.

"R.L.S." Review of Robert Louis Stevenson by Stephen Gwynn. Saturday Night, 30 December 1939, p. 15.

"Sir Andrew Macphail 1864-1938." Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series III (1939), pp. 147-149. See also 1938.

1940

Preface to Thomas Patteson Moss, Canadian and English Letters 1924-1936. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940 pp. XV-XX.

"Classical Essays." Review of Mixed Company by J. C. Robertson. Saturday Night, 3 Feb. 1940, p. 8.

"A Great Canadian Poem." Review of Brébeuf and His Brethren by E. J. Pratt. Saturday Night, 17 August 1940, p. 15.

"Hardy Centenary." Queen's Quarterly, 47 (Autumn 1940), pp. 277-287; repr. Across My Path (1952), pp. 154-162.

- 1941 Review of Brébuf and His Brethren by E. J. Pratt.
Poetry (Chicago), 58 (April 1941), pp. 48-50.
- "Bliss Carman." Educational Record (Quebec), 57
(May 1941), pp. 140-143; repr. Leading Canadian Poets. Ed. W. P. Percival. Toronto: Ryerson, 1948, pp. 45-50.
- Review of Canada Speaks of Britain by Charles G. D. Roberts. Canadian Poetry Magazine, 5, No. 4
(August 1941), pp. 41-43.
- 1942 Edgar comes to Ottawa to work as a German censor for the Directorate of Censorship.
- "The Poetry of Duncan Campbell Scott." Educational Record (Quebec), 58 (Jan.-March 1942), pp. 8-11; repr. Leading Canadian Poets, pp. 213-219, with slight revisions.
- Review of Anthology of Canadian Poetry. Ed. Ralph Gustafson. Canadian Poetry Magazine, 6, No. 3
(Oct. 1942), pp. 31-32.
- 1943 "Life Story of a Canadian Classic." Review of Sir Charles G. D. Roberts: A Biography by Elsie Pomeroy. Canadian Author and Bookman, 19, No. 2 (June 1943), p. 4.
- "E. J. Pratt." Educational Record (Quebec), 59 (July-Sept. 1943), pp. 178-180; repr. Leading Canadian Poets, pp. 177-183, with slight revisions.
- "Sir Charles G. D. Roberts and His Time." University of Toronto Quarterly (October 1943), pp. 117-126; repr. Across My Path, pp. 99-108.
- 1944 "Literature and Life: A Booklover's Corner." Review of The Cannon's Mouth by Wilfrid Heighington. Ottawa Journal, 11 March 1944, p. 15.
- "Sir Charles G. D. Roberts 1860-1943." Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third series, Vol. 38, (1944), pp. 111-114.
- 1945 "E. J. Pratt: 'Occasional Poet'." Canadian Author and Bookman, 21, No. 3 (Sept. 1945), p. 18.
- "Short Story Object Lesson." Review of The Village of Viger by Duncan Campbell Scott. Canadian Author and Bookman, 21, No. 4 (Dec. 1945), p. 18.

1946

"Edwin John Pratt." Gants Du Ciel (Printemps 1946), pp. 31-45; trans. Across My Path (1952) as "The Poetry of E. J. Pratt," pp. 109-117.

"Stephen Leacock." Queen's Quarterly, 53 (Summer 1946), pp. 173-184; repr. Across My Path, pp. 90-98.

"Life of Frederick Grove: A Triumph of Courage Over Obstacles." Review of In Search of Myself by Frederick Grove. Ottawa Journal, 26 October 1946, p. 17. This series also included an article on Duncan Campbell Scott, date unknown.

1947

The Edgars leave Ottawa in July to live near Port Hope.

"Edwin Pratt and His Poetry The Subject of Keen and Friendly Study." Review of Edwin Pratt: The Man and His Poetry by H. W. Wells and Carl F. Klinck. Ottawa Journal, 23 May 1947.

"Sir Andrew Macphail." Queen's Quarterly, 54 (Spring 1947), pp. 8-22.

"Duncan Campbell Scott: An Appreciation." Ottawa Journal, 27 Dec. 1947.

"Lawrence J. Burpee 1873-1946." Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Third Series, Vol. 51, (1947), pp. 115-117.

1948

Pelham Edgar dies at Canton, near Port Hope, Ontario on October 7, 1948.

"Royal Ontario Museum." University of Toronto Quarterly, 17 (January 1948), pp. 168-178; repr. Across My Path, pp. 129-141.

1951

Northrop Frye edits and publishes a memoir that Edgar was working on before his death; the volume included two previously unpublished articles, listed here.

Across My Path. Ed. Northrop Frye. Toronto: Ryerson, 1952, 167 pp. Includes "Creative Criticism in Canada," pp. 77-89 and "Travelling With a Poet: D. C. Scott," pp. 58-74.

Undated

Edgar also published privately an untitled pamphlet of 32 pages which contained his own poetry. The booklet, without publication information of any sort, can be found in the National Library of Canada. The volume probably dates from the early years of Edgar's career, for it contains the 1891 poem "Dream Faces".

II. PRIMARY SOURCES

Macmillan of Canada Papers

McGill University Archives, Redpath Library

- Sir William Peterson Papers

National Library of Canada

- A. S. Bourinot Collection

Public Archives of Canada

- E. K. Brown Papers
- Canadian Writers Foundation Papers
- Maud Edgar Papers
- Louis Fréchette Papers
- Sir Andrew Macphail Papers
- George Parkin Papers
- D. C. Scott Papers
- Sir John Willison Papers

Public Archives of Ontario

- Arts and Letters Club Scrapbooks
- Dept. of Education Records, Ontario, Series D-7
- J. D. Edgar Family Papers
- M. O. Hammond Papers
- W. L. Mackenzie - George Lindsey Papers

Queen's University, Douglas Archives

- John Buchan Papers
- Bliss Carman Papers
- G. H. Clarke Papers
- Edith and Lorne Pierce Collection of Canadiana
- B. K. Sandwell Papers

University of Toronto

Fisher Rare Book Library

- Earle Birney Papers
- Canadian Authors Association Papers
- W. A. Deacon Papers
- James Mavor Papers
- D. C. Scott Papers
- A. J. M. Smith Papers
- Sir Edmund Walker Papers

University Archives

- Dept. of Graduate Records Files
- Sir Robert Falconer Papers

Victoria College Archives, E. J. Pratt Library

- Audrey Alexandra Brown Papers
- Canadian Authors Association Papers
- Helena Coleman Papers
- Pelham Edgar Papers
- Raymond Knister Papers
- E. J. Pratt Papers
- Sir Charles G. D. Roberts Papers
- Duncan Campbell Scott Papers

III. SECONDARY SOURCES

1. Books and Periodicals

Acta Victoriana, 1895-1950.

Altick, Robert. Lives and Letters: A History of Literary Biography in England and America. New York: Knopf, 1966.

Association of Canadian Bookmen Reading Guide, 1936-1938.

Bailey, A. G. Culture and Nationality. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

Ballstadt, Carl, ed. The Search for English-Canadian Literature. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975.

Beattie, A. M. "The Advent of Modernism in Canadian Poetry in English 1912-1940." Diss, Columbia 1957.

Jessie L. Beattie, A Walk Through Yesterday. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.

Beckmann, Susan. "Pratt on Pratt: The Prose Commentaries of E. J. Pratt." Diss. Toronto 1977.

Berger, Carl. The Writing of Canadian History. Toronto: Oxford, 1976.

Birney, Earle. Spreading Time: Remarks on Canadian Writing and Writers. Book I: 1904-1949. Montréal: Véhicule, 1980.

Bissell, Claude. Halfway up Parnassus: A Personal Account of the University of Toronto 1932-1971. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974.

Bourinot, A. S., ed. More Letters of Duncan Campbell Scott. Ottawa: The Author, 1960.

Bourinot, A. S., ed. Some Letters of Duncan Campbell Scott, Archibald Lampman and Others. Ottawa: The Author, 1959.

Bowker, Alan F., ed. The Social Criticism of Stephen Leacock. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

Bowker, Alan F. "Truly Useful Men: Maurice Hutton, George Wrong, James Mayor and The University of Toronto 1880-1921." Diss. Toronto 1975.

- Bridle, Augustus. The Story of the Club. Toronto: Ryerson, 1945.
- Brooke, Rupert. Rupert Brooke In Canada, Ed. Sandra Martin and Roger Hall. Toronto: Peter Martin, 1978.
- Brown, Audrey Alexandra. Log of A Lame Duck. Toronto: Macmillan, 1936.
- Brown, Audrey Alexandra. The Tree of Resurrection. Toronto: Macmillan, 1937.
- Brown, E. K. On Canadian Poetry. Toronto: Ryerson, 1943.
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