INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

Wilson MacDonald

A. Quinlan

Preface.

Sitting in a railroad station is not, one might think the appropriate place to begin an article on one of Canada's greatest poets. But, did not Wilson MacDonald himself, the poet who writes so much of commonplace things and places, on trains and when the time and place inspired him? Not to say, that this modest labour is in any way inspired, but with the help of the poet's own works and a few of my own feeble ideas, I hope to relate some of the poet's characteristics and qualities.

The early part of my High School days gave me the opportunity of meeting Mr. MacDonald. While a student at Gloucester Street convent, the Reverend Sisters of the Congregation de Notre Dame had arranged for Mr. MacDonald to read his poetry for the girls attending school there. He has given much time to the reading of his poems and there are few who have not heard him recite. Although this happened a long time ago and I was not old enough or perhaps not literary minded enough to like poetry in any manner or form, the poem "M'sieu" left its imprint on my mind and I bowed in tribute to the man who could make me like poetry. Years afterward whenever I heard Mr. MacDonald spoken about

or heard other Canadian poets giving their poems to a patient audience, these words

"The Ottawa is a dark stream;
The Ottawa is deep.
Great hills along the Ottawa
Are wrapped in endless sleep."

always came back to me. He was a good speaker, full of vitality and vigour. There was high spirit in his speech and tone and his elocution was the best. The audience vibrated to his rhythms. The girls of the convent were given the opportunity of buying his then latest collection of poems "Out of the Wilderness" and of getting his signature on the book. I was not among those who were thus fortunate but I am fortunate in having been able to chose as the topic of this discussion -- Canada's most promising poet.

Perhaps my reason for having chosen this subject would be better told here. The poetry of Shakespeare has been acknowledged the greatest of the English language; Spenser's Faery Queene toils the brain of many an eager searcher of higher learning. Milton reaches the heights of poetry in his periodic sentences of Paradise Lost; Keats and Shelley raise Beauty and Truth beyond the reach of common man; Browning paints the Andrea del Sarto's and Fra Lippo Lippi's with a brush worthy of a true artist; and

other poets from time immemorial have depicted the beauties of nature and of God's universe. But after reading them all there is none that hold the reader's attention as much as Wilson MacDonald. These men will always be the bugbear of students of English Literature and of the little children at school. Rarely does one take up a book of Milton or Coleridge to read when looking for some entertainment. But often have I seen people pick up "A Flagon of Beauty" and "Out of the Wilderness" by Mr. MacDonald and spend many enjoyable hours recalling old scenes and favoured haunts with the poet.

Theodore Watts-Dunton, a British critic of Swinburne's time in an article on Canadian poetry prophesied "Canada had excellent poets and with the development of a national consciousness, of the history, resources and wealth of the country, would produce great poets." "Great poets would arise in Canada" was what Sir Herbert Warren, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Professor of Poetry at Oxford said in an address on "Overseas Poetry." I believe that Mr. MacDonald fulfils the prophesies of these two literary critics. He is the true interpreter of the essential Canadian spirit. The wild open spaces, the

freedom from the confinement of the cities, the rough vigour of Canada's outdoors all appear in Mr. MacDonald's poems. There is a freshness in his themes and in his way of putting them across. His social ideals are different. Exquisite technique ranks him as an artist.

His Life and Travels.

A man's character is reflected in his life and works. Mr. MacDonald has communicated part of his character to works and in order to better understand him I will give an outline of the poet's story, actions, ambitions and achievements.

He was born at Cheapside, Ontario, the son of Alexander MacDonald, a Scotchman who earned his living as a local merchant and Baptist preacher. His mother, Annie Pugsley who was born in Canada was the daughter of a preacher. She died at Decewsville, Haldimand County when Wilson MacDonald was quite young. He himself writes of her "she was a woman of great beauty of character and much loved and admired by everyone who knew her. In our community she was the centre of culture and her talent in music was known far beyond the border of the village. Although I was but seven years of age when she took leave of me, my grief was that of a person far beyond my years. I had lost not only a mother but a comrade and a friend and the readjustment of life seemed an almost impossible task."

He received his academic training at Cheapside and Port Dover Public Schools, Woodstock College and McMaster University. In his Entrance examination he stood first in

the province.

In his early life he made up his mind to become a poet. The Toronto Globe published his first printed poem in 1898. His parents, the Principal of Port Dover Public School, William Henry Smith, and Theodore Harding Rand receive the credit for encouraging him and starting him on the path to poetic fame. In London he sold his first writings after having reached England by horse-boat in 1902. He has tried the following jobs when the going was bad: advertisement writer, newspaper reporter, columnist, night-school teacher, producer, playwright, actor, inventor, bar-tender, seaman and cabin boy. After his return to Canada from England, he worked in a bank for a time. A while later found him touring the United States for a year. He says: "I made $10,000 out of bread and pie patents, which gave me my start as a writer. The residue was stolen from me shortly after. I gave up a lucrative position in the United States and returned to Canada where I went through many years of poverty." It seems that nearly every great poet is not recognised in his own time but has to live through many years of his life, if not them all, in poverty. But, Mr. MacDonald's poems have found a market now and he shall not be like the other great poets of history.

Every province of Canada except Prince Edward Island can claim him as a resident and twenty States of the Union

can claim him as having been their visitor. The fishing boats of Labrador, the steamers of the Pacific coast from Mexico to Alaska have carried him.

He became a citizen of Toronto about ten years ago, where he has written some very good verse and has received some recompense and acknowledgment for his literary efforts. This winter he was married to a girl from the United States.

I have already stated that at an early age he determined to be a poet. Through many upsets and reverses he has followed this ambition, never giving up the hope that some day he would reach the top.

His travels have inspired many of his works, "The Song of the Undertow" is most gripping and realistic, relating his trip across the ocean. From the first to the last phrase, save for a word here and there and a few words of conversation to make it rhyme, this narrative poem is true. The trip was taken in 1902. The poem tells of his being out of work in Montreal, and of wearing out the pavement of Sherbrooke Street by walking up and down. He answered an advertisement in "The Star" and found work in a bar located on the north side of Notre Dame Street. For a bite to eat, he scrubbed and worked feverishly. "The proprietor of the hotel told me that I had cleaned the saloon floor better

than anyone had ever cleaned it. I used a knife to scrape the grime from places which my predecessors had overlooked" he says. This resulted in his finding a coin which he shined up and found to be worth something. That night he prayed - asking how long he must continue to live in such places. For he had spent the previous summer at Kingsmere in the wonderful hills of the Gatineau and here he was now, waiting on drunken men. Although he understood that just as the white snow and clear raindrops might have come from some muddy pond which has evaporated and that a poet's life might be compared to this - starting low and gradually becoming better - yet he put in a night of despair. Everything seemed so black and dismal without any hope of better things to come.

He then describes Notre Dame Street crowded with the bacchanalian cries of every race, - each man drinking either to forget or to remember. The next morning, at dawn, found him scrubbing the floor again. It seemed to be dirtier than before if that could be possible. He then washed the tankards and was barman for an hour. He might have stayed longer only, through the open door he saw the "fields of fenceless blue" and he fled to them. He walked and ran by way of the Windsor Hotel and around the Allan Estate to the

top of Mount Royal. There he could see the Lachine Rapids and the St. Hilaire mountains. There he was happy - drinking in the silver flash of the Rapids. He says:"Although I was penniless when the noon bells rang I was supremely happy, for I had at least one loaf of which Mahomet speaks - the loaf of beauty. The exaltation of this hour is still, and ever will be a beatification of a face of water - bleeding rock beside one mountain road. And often in my later and more prosperous hours have I come here to worship!" That afternoon he had to get some money, so he peddled, the acid eating into his heart and burning it to the core every time he rang a doorbell. He recalls how he was glad his last year's "girl friend" was not there to see him and reminds himself that a poet must work his way up.

He signed up on a horse and cattle boat with eighteen tramps in line ahead of him. He was doomed to groom horses for twelve days at sea, but anything looked good to him after his plight in Montreal. They had to ride from Point St.Charles to St.John by horse train. At Sherbrooke they were ordered to ride on the roof of the train by the ruthless company in charge. The night was stormy and cold on the top of what one might call a mechanical bronco. The horses below were well fed but those above were cold and hungry. Young MacDonald had pawned most of his clothes

and had been without food for many days. The sturdy arm of Bill McCord - a vagabond with a fine soul, kept the frail young boy from falling off the moving train. At Jackman, the train stopped and he got some berries to eat. He encountered a girl and her brother who were on their way to Moosehead Lake on a hunting expedition. They were afraid of this man with his six weeks' growth of beard. He muses to himself how his own girl friend might be too and recalls how coolly she did treat him when he did return from England without gold or fame.

New Brunswick is described as they pass through on the train. They finally arrived at the sea-shore and the poet ponders the poems of Rand and prays to the God of Love that "creeds have cast away." They remained at St.John for three days and "thrice a day we ate." Here Mr. MacDonald draws attention to the fact that only he alone who has been hungry will thoroughly understand this line." To him these words will etch the pathos of humanity's unfortunates. It had been a long time since I and my comrades had eaten thrice a day." There is exultation in that line.

His comrades locked the town over and he went another way, followed all the time by "one great bully" who sneered at his love of the sea and nature." He slept on chairs in the

Carleton Hotel since he did not like sleeping in the hostelry in the same bunk as the rest of the men. Every night at the hotel, an old seaman brought him food. A riot was about to break out among the men due to lack of food. Finally, the Company became alarmed and provided meals. "My faith in men grows less and less every year, but my faith in man grows stronger. Men are destroyers; man is a redeemer." This is what he says in referring to the brutality of the Company and to the kindness of the sailor. A lengthy description of St.John then follows.

The day arrived when they were to sail, and he was loathe to leave, but he had to have food. Scarcely had they left port when a sharp command called them down to their cabins which were dirty and full of odours. (Later the government officials said it was worse than the boats used in the days of piracy.) He describes in detail the filth of the boat. They would be awakened in their damp beds by rats crawling over them. Centipedes, dead lice, spiders and vile smells were there.

On board were four college boys who had money. They had joined the crew for the fun of it. But their snobbery was beyond standing and as a result of it they did not have any too much fun. Also, on the ship were three "braggarts" who hounded the poet because he was small. Bill McCord - at the sound of whose footsteps even the horses whinnied, was kind to him and stood by him through all their jests. It came to a show-down one day and the young MacDonald showed he was a

better man by knocking out his tormemtor. A hemorrhage of the lung caused MacDonald to be covered with blood,after the ordeal.

He knew very little about horses. A curry-comb is used to brush their teeth, or braid the horses' hair.? "I was no more competent to feed a horse than would our bachelor premiers King or Bennett be competent to feed the quintuplets," he says in a footnote.

An hour's refuge was sought near the boiler room where he recalled Ontario's shore. A stoker tripped over him and used much profane language. He had to crawl back to his filthy work.

The treatment they received might be noted. Bread was thrown to them like to animals in a zoo. In their room flies waded on the table from which they ate. A tank of marmalade lay uncovered throughout the whole voyage with sick men all around. But still amid all this (which is truth not fiction) Mr. MacDonald could find beauty in the sea and in the peace and quiet after the storm.

Two days out from sea, he took a fever and could not work. They threatened him imprisonment but he said he preferred it to the life in the vermin nest. He signed a release from pay and the company allowed him to rest under a life-boat for they feared his death might cause investigation of their boat. And he writes

"I covered my flesh with a shawl of air,
As clean as the dawn is clean;
And pillowed my head on a drift of light.

And feasted on blue and green.
And the sun came up and the sun went down
Like a giant tangerine."

Ireland then came in sight and he writes beautiful descriptive stanzas on her. On approaching England he moods over her as the place where Shakespeare, Shelley, Keats, Dickens and La Belle Dame Sans Merci held sway and lived.

They docked at Southampton on a Saturday night but orders were given that they could not go to shore till Monday. The young MacDonald could not stand this so he climbed to the shore by means of a rope. He crawled back without the watchman seeing him and finally, on Monday, he earned his discharge.

He sold his pass back to Canada, said goodbye to Bill, bought new clothes and got himself cleaned up. Nobody would hire him for any kind of job unless he had references, For days he went hungry, until finally driven to the last resource from weakness he pawned his cuff links to buy a pint of milk and a box of shredded wheat and had two pennies left.

On his way to London he felt again that the beauties of God's nature and the ability to enjoy them was far better than anything gold could buy. A young lady where he called to get something to eat gave him some cakes. As he walked along, two renegades sprang out of the wood upon him. In

order to avoid a fight he gave them each a bun and ran off - the fastest he ever ran. He met up with a Yankee sailor which made him feel much better.

That evening he looked for shelter and work but a kindly gentleman, Reverend James I. Houssemayne, loaned him money. He visited Jane Austen's tomb in the same town. On arriving in London he asked a man what creek that was that was flowing by. The Englishman replied, very much annoyed at his stupidity, that it was the Thames.

He went to a bakeshop to buy two pennies' worth of buns and the owners guessing his sad plight invited him to spend the Sabbath with them. They were surprised at a Canadian being able to play the piano and recognise great paintings as he did. They became fast friends and loaned him three shillings on leaving.

He got a room with Mr. and Mrs. Berryman, and for three months averaged one good meal a week. Nevertheless, he was glad to have a roof over his head.

The tourists travelling through London do not see the poverty of the poorer section. Mr. MacDonald would look into the windows of the bakeshops envying the flies. He would crawl home, half-faint, and Mrs. Berryman, knowing him to be near collapse from hunger, would bring him bread and cheese. She was not so well off herself, or Mr. MacDonald might have fared better.

He was there for the crowning of the King but his

patriotism was not much when his stomach was empty. Finally he sold a story - "The Strange Story of the Black Sea" for "thirty bob." He worked as a cabin boy on a boat back to Canada. The poem continues telling of the joys of seeing Canadian land, Labrador, Gaspé, the St.Lawrence River, Quebec. The night he landed he slept in Montmorency Park. He speaks of the unwillingness of Canada to accept a new poet and in spite of it his love for her. Its greatness is in the continuous stream of rushing energy and in the vivid details which he relates.

Although one cannot say that he has travelled extensively yet there is scarcely a part of his own country with which he is not familiar. In this manner alone he is distinctly Canadian. To be a true Canadian poet one should be familiar with his own country and know enough about the outside world to really appreciate his homeland. This is what Mr. MacDonald does. He writes of the beauty of the eastern coast, the northern wilds, the peace of the Prairies and the grandeur of the Rockies.

Of the "untameable wild Bras d'Or he writes:

"I had not come
Prepared for this glory of wind and foam;
Nor wonder I now that bards are dumb,
For here is beauty come home, come home."

The comfort he finds in nature may be seen in the following lines -

"You can keep from me your gifts of gold;
But the earth is warm when men are cold;
And none shall ever keep from me
The lyric lore of a laughing sea;
For all my heart is an open door
Wherein the tides of beauty pour;
Beauty of blue at amber noon,
Beauty of dark at silver dusk,
Beauty of song in the water's croon
Beauty of brown in the hazel's husk,
Beauty of gloom and fog and rain;
And when I hunger for loveliness
I'll turn toward dawn, in my cold distress
And seek Bras d'Or again."

Who would think of describing the waters of the ocean as he does in these lines -

"And the yellowing cream
Of the surging salt,
And the granite bastoons crying halt
To the legioned waters marching there
With the spice of Trinidad in their hair
And the iceberg's cold within their bones
To chill the heart of the bloodless stones."

In Southern California in 1914 he wrote "Sierra Madre" telling of the music of the Spanish language, the varied adornments and colours of the Sierra mountains and that the world has one sweet haven where she keeps eternal rest.

Chafiey's Locks brings him nearer home in his travels. In 1916 he tells how rich a person is who lives on such a lovely earth with its changing seasons, even though he may be poor as far as money is concerned.

He travels up to Saint Césaire in Quebec which gives the title to a poem describing a quaint village where one finds freedom from remorse. Saint Césaire he says is rich today because love and health are of more value than brick and stone and gold.

New York is Manhattan in his poems. Most Canadians heard of Forty-Second Street in a popular song of a few years ago. Mr. MacDonald writes in "Times Square" of Forty-Second Street, showing the glamour of the night clubs, theatres and dance-halls.

Canada has no poets who can rank among the world's greatest; but she has nevertheless many excellent writers, and cannot at this stage of development hope to produce such great poets as England's Shakespeare or Italy's Dante. It took England many centuries of careful cultivation to acquire a true poetic genius. If Canada is to have truly great poets, Canadians must foster the minor

poets of the present day. For, in Canada, unless a poet has some other way of earning his living besides through writing, he will starve. Canadians are not awake yet to the true value of poetry. And if poets have to work at other work they cannot spend the necessary amount of time on their writing which will tend to make it faulty and not as good as it might be.

There are so many diverse scenes and conditions of Canada that few writers have succeeded in including them all. Wilson MacDonald has painted many views of the country's landscape and life.

Lampman was a poet of Canadian nature. He knew it through and through and interpreted it on paper as one who knew what he was dealing with. He found beauty not only in the Rocky Mountains but in the next field. Many of his poems were like pictures and landscapes. He loved local beauty and he individualized and vitalized it. On reading his poems one can localize the region and time and the season of which they were written.

Bliss Carmen treats the whole universe as being spiritual through and through. There is a living spirit in nature. The spirit is in man and in God. He communes with nature through heart to heart talks - the spirit of man talking with the spirit of nature.

Dr. Duncan Campbell Scott is interested in human beings as well as nature. He uses arresting phrases. Lines

and stanzas in his poems reach a beauty and perfection of form.

Pauline Johnson was positively true to her Canadian origin and home. She had the eye of a true artist in colouring nature etchings.

Wilson MacDonald combines all these qualities of the poets and a few more for good measure. He has a fresh vision of earth, of life and uses original forms. He has a different type of writing from the poets of the preceding ages.

Canada is capable of giving poets and artists, inspiration. Canadians recognise what their country means to them and when they come to read more Canadian literature, they will be beginning to put Canadian Literature on a basis to be compared with the other great poetry of the world.

Mr. MacDonald has tried to make his audience feel his country's inward virtue. Other poets have also tried. Pauline Johnson, daughter of an Indian chieftain, shows us the courage and endurance of the Indians. She paints Canadian life and scenery in the north and west, showing also how natural creatures and objects have moods of their own. Robert Service's "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" and other poems portray the far north of Canada with which few Canadians are familiar. Drummond charms his hearers with tales of the French Habitant. And like Drummond, MacDonald also brings the quaint humor of the Habitant to us in

poems that plesee his audience.

Starting in the west of our great country,British Columbia offers the greatest and most varied of natural grandeur. The sturdy rough landscape seems to be the exact background for many races of people which are to be found there. The province has a different individuality from the other provinces. It inspires awe and reverence and Mr. MacDonald has caught some of it in two or three poems. He himself says that he has found many things to interest him "near the voice of the greatest of oceans." "A Selkirk Summit" describes the glittering glaciers, fissured rocks and death defying crags made by God the relentless, God the austere. Streams spill between granite boulders. Amidst all these hard and cold surroundings, in a shy corner of rock, a frail flower is found as if "woven" by a strong God in an after mood - a God of forgiveness and mercy.

But not only of the mountains does he sing. The poet himself expresses what he sings -

"My song is a roseate rug, yet not of the Orient,
Here is the weave of it, seaweed,curled black with salt,
Under the cold, high cliffs of Gaspé;
Pine-shadowed snow,at the dome of the Selkirks,
Burning with suns and flaming with moons and remaining forever;
Sands from the restless and changeable dunes of Wasaga;
Slim,hardy reeds in the broad lonely marshes
Where James Bay falters between her allegiance
To land and the gray, green water;

Gold suns that slip from the world at Alberni;
Warming the seas with their fires;
Threads of blue mist from the indolent valleys
Of the low, lovely lounging Laurentians.
Sighs of the hemlock and snow-loving tamarack,
Where the trees march to the South in Saskatchewan;
Firs that leap up from dark Capilano
Where music glides down a long stair to the sea;
Orange and purple and crimson and bronze
From the gay palette of gorgeous October
In the lake-lyric land of Algonquin;
Shadows from deep, frosty fissures whose waters
Slip from their turbulent life to the hill cradled Shuswap;
Leaves of the red-limbed arbutus and roses of yellow and red,
Leaning low to the sea in Victoria,
The all-lovely lyric of cities,
And, through all these colorful threads of my song,
Tolerance, truth and the kiss of full brotherhood."

Again in his "Adventurer's Song" he tells us again what he sings -

"I have tried the strength of the salt surf where the lost sun leaves the world;
I have walked Ontario's lilac lands, in the late May's vistful weather,
I have breasted winds off Labrador where the whole sea-strength is hurled;
I have found, nigh up in the Selkirks, blue and gold flowers together.

I have roamed in lands where blue lakes gleam like the
fallen tears of gods;
I have trailed the cold Saskatchewan to the undiscovered
places
I have heard the gorse on Beacon Hill breaking their golden
pods;
I have watched the blue St.Lawrence lave the grim Laurentian bases,
I come sun-tanned from a great marauding of wind and wave
and tree;
And the copper hue of a savage face peers upward through
my singing.
And all that I love is in my song: the tang of the great
west sea
And the loon's laugh and the gull's shriek and the pale
star's swinging.
From the west we will travel eastward. The vastness of

the Prairies calls us. It has also called Wilson MacDonald. They give us a feeling of our smallness. When travelling from Winnipeg day after day, one begins to ask oneself if this seemingly unlimited tract of plain will ever pass. The finest expression of these plains within a single poem is in the "Song of the Prairie Land." He brings out the essential contrast between the complicated life of cities where superficiality covers the truth and the inevitable meeting of truth which everyone must meet if he submits himself to the prairie's power. The vast procession of the winds and stars and dawn take on great importance and the poem praises the pageant with its dignity and rhythm. The keynote of Canadian history has always been set by the pioneer. The pioneers came from the Old World and settled our country. They had great opportunities for their adventures in the prairies. The poems of prairie life give us

authentic picture. Meanwhile the plains are one of the "most vital economic factors" of Canada and their literature too has a vitality which seems to give promise of being a dominating factor in Canadian literature. The swinging swaying of the winds and the mighty vastness of land and sky stir up emotions and appreciation of nature similiar to those stirred in men by the sea.

"I heard a Woodman Grieve" tells of the sympathy felt by a woodman for all those condemned to live on level lands where there are no trees. But the poet knows that Our Lord has crowned the plain with sunlight instead of trees. The sunset and dawn can be seen on the prairies with an unobstructed view.

"February the First on the Prairies" anoints with song this "little laurelled land, weaving the west winds wildly in their rune." To show how clearly the poet catches the feeling of the time and place I will quote from it. He "sees the cattle stand with moveless tails
And heads together, to outwit the gales
That blow the bronze of summer from the moon.

He sees, beside a ridge where poplars grow
A bronco coldly nosing in the snow,
And fains the prairie vastness from his form.
No lordly tree this land shall ever dare;
And yet, unfearful of their valiant lore,

Soon, in this vast, shall frailest flowers appear."

Again, Mr. MacDonald expresses his love of the West in " A Song of Lonesomeness." Out in the mesa one seems to come closer to God than in the crushing roar of the choking cities. When tired in the West, one has the wind for a couch and the stars for cover and as the poet himself says -

"When you are out in the westland and grow lonesome for the East
You can drown your care in the champagne air and the sky's eternal feast.
But when you are back in the eastland and are hungry for the west
You cannot find in the peopled towns, a cruel for your deep unrest."

Coming closer to home, we find the poet writing of Muskoka, Niagara, the Ottawa, and its illimitable forests, the transitions of the year, winter with its glittering snow, the magical rebirth of life and tenderness in the spring, Summer's heat and the gaudy pageantry of autumn.

He grieves with the wind in another poem. The wind, used to embracing the trees of the forests, accustomed to hearing the soft answer of the pines and cedars, yearns for their solace and comfort on reaching the prairies. So too, the poet is not answered by a "deeply-loved maiden" and the cry of his soul travels through the long empty prairies without being answered.

There are fine touches in his description and he is full of native Canadian love and the enjoyment of the wild

nature of forests, air, sunshine and the freedom of the open spaces. His Canadian scenery poems have a fine kind of pathos in them. In Wilson MacDonald we find a sensuous feeling. He loves the freedom of nature in the woods and he would like to live there forever, it seems, with an unburdened spirit.

He gathers impressions from all of Canada, but principally from Ontario. Quite a number of his poems are memories of pleasant days spent in the wilderness. He gives us an arresting and memorable picture of pure beauty in nature. Some of his poems disclose the gift to paint in words a picture from nature with impressionistic mastery of colour, not the flashing colours one might expect but a pretty pastel with spare use of more tints.

"No hue is on the canvas here outrolled
Save one frail touch of amber on the sky,
Spilled by the yellow moon in her slow flight."

He goes on to express shadowy sensations -

"The high dark shore, where pine and hemlock sigh
Seems like a drift of shadows, deep and cold,
Washed hither from the gloom
Of countless nights in ages past."

His autumnal scenes and the poems called "Oaks" and "Birches" picture the landscape in dark colours - not the flaming colours which most poets credit to autumn and its trees. And although he mentions nature in spring

and summer, autumn and nature painted in dark colours seem to be the way he likes to picture her. But it is undisputably Canadian autumn and Canadian trees that he describes. Nature changes her aspect and dress to suit her moods and her seasons. It is only expressed thus in Canada. He humanizes the birches, not sentimentally as Keats and Wordsworth would do, but nobly.

"They are a valiant company to go
So boldly mid a nubian group of pine.
---------- - ----------
Fine rebels of the shadowland are they
Make me their comrade rebel."

Only a Canadian, understanding their inmost mood could speak of them in such a manner.

Often too he introduces momentary pictures of humans against a background of nature and fits them in perfectly.

"The Song of the Ski" wins us by its spirit of motion, of free life in the open of its simple "abandon." Mr. MacDonald has been called "the man's poet." He has roamed the wilderness he loves as woodsman, forest ranger and sportsman on snowshoes and skis. You will find his love of the open in this poem. You will sense the unspoken response of the fir; you will share in the exultation of his cry:

"Lord of the mountains dark with pine
Lord of the fields of shifting snow."

The poet says of beauty: "I hate a foul word at any time, in any place, but by the sea or in a wood a lecherous word or thought is like an eclipse over the face of beauty. In Europe or Asia you seldom encounter any one who sneers at beauty. In America there is a great host with this colour blindness of the soul." And he is right. There are people who never think for one minute of the beauty of their own land and of the exultation they should feel to be breathing the open air and of living in a country where only a few steps is necessary to bring us to the most beautiful scenery in the world.

Now comes that eternal question asked about every nature poet - Is he pantheistic in outlook? First of all, What is pantheism? Let me quote from a standard critic. It may be summed up as follows - "If man is akin to earth as a physical being, why should not earth be akin to man as a spiritual being? There is assumed the existence of an actual world soul, inherent in all life as well as in man. This is the metaphysical interpretation of the idea which we have just considered in the material side. It is indeed pantheism, since this world-soul is more or less identified with God. The Divine creation of the world and of man is thus reconciled with evolution - the demiurge functioning through physical processes, but not blindly and accidentally as Darwinism suggested. Man and

is an incarnated fragment of the Omnipresent Spirit. This belief, despite superficial variations in symbolism, has always been the essential creed of mystics - only the slightest changes in interpretation were necessary for adapting it to the circumstances of nineteenth century science. Modern psychology terms the idea "cosmic consciousness" and it is significant that the authoritative investigation of the subject was by a Canadian, Richard Maurice Bucke," Manitou is the name that Lampman gives to his being, in the woods. Charles G. D. Roberts believed the soul of man was united with the soul of nature. Bliss Carmen's poems tell of his belief of nature's relationships with man both spiritually and physically.

For MacDonald now - Was he pantheistic? We will look over a few of his poems. "The Cosmic Librarian" points out the grass as a holder of wisdom - willing to dispense it, but lore-hunters pass it by and therefore miss attaining the knowledge they might have obtained. In "Birches" he speaks of God and nature.

"Brave is the laughter of their limpid leaves
In presence of that primal oligarch;
And strange that daring spirit that conceives
Their moony misalliance with the dark.

Some spirit kindred to their own is near."

In "Oaks" we find the poet interpreting the beauty and moods of nature. It shows the burning maples in their autumnal garb, very gay, and the sombre pine, the elm bared of its leaves with only the russet and gold oak leaves remaining. When the oak leaves finally succumb to the autumn the rose-pod will be left to mourn their departure to the Master of Colours in russet and bronze and gold.

In the "Song of the Winding Road" the poet says he finds two souls in the barren tree.

He loves nature for the joy, comfort and peace they give to the "inward soul." He and nature commune with each other by reciprocal sympathy.

"There is a road that doth wind and wind
For love of the hills about it lying,
And there I go with my cares and bind
Their burden up with a pine-trees' sighing."

His spirit meets with the spirit of nature and there, unburdens its grief. He lets the trees and elements interpret his mood to the world. Mr. MacDonald's poetry of nature is nature herself, united with the poet calling to the civilized world to rise and go out to meet her.

"I - - - -
Come to you who are arrogant, proud and fevered with civilization
Come with a tonic of sunlight, bottled in wild, careless acres,

To cure you with secrets as old as the breathing of men;
Come with the clean north wind in my nostrils,
To blow out the dust and the smoke of your lives in a great -- of beauty;
Come with a chaos of wild flowers, grouped in a lovely dis-order,
To share all your gardens of maddening, cloying perfection."

His poems recall us from the vulgar distractions of life to secluded retreats in the Canadian wildwood, there to contemplate existence with a subdued joy and tender peace.

"I would away from the town today and out where the clear stars shine -
The wind in my ear like a sweetheart's voice, the air on my tongue like wine.
And when I lie at the sky line's rim, where I end this life must part
You will find the sage-brush in my hair and the cactus through my heart."

I will now let the poet tell his own story of his feeling for nature. After his mother died "readjustment of life seemed an almost impossible task. My father did all he could to make me forget my grief and finally sent me to Toronto, where I was received by relatives. On one historic day I was introduced to Howard (High) Park, and the beauty of these wooded acres fairly set my youthful soul on fire. Here was the place I had dreamed about in all my rambling through books. On that hill which slopes down to Grenadier Pond I found I could see dryads and fairies, and the old Howard homestead, with its tint of the forgotten past, filled me with glamorous fancies.

When I was sixteen I came back to my "Sweetheart of the Wood" and wooed her for one memorable summer, always singing to her a delightful rime that eternity shall not make me forget,

A few years later I visited this shrine under the weight of another grief - a grief to which the heart is never quite reconciled.

For many years I lived in the great West country and, although I had found many new loves near the voice of the greatest of oceans, yet the yearning for my beloved Howard Park was always awake in me.

In the autumn of 1920, I went into the sacred sanctuary and began the poem ("In Howard Park"). As I wrote "the hooded acorns were tapping at my feet." The poem here born was finished in May of the year 1924 under the shadows of the great mountains that guard the lovely village of Revelstoke, British Columbia.

I seldom go to Howard Park now, for the blasphemy of the motor-car has driven away all its fawns and dryads and gnomes; and only on stormy days do they dare come back to their own haunts."

Here, we have the poet's own words for it, that he took consolation from nature. He says:

"through all my childhood days
My hungry soul was pauper for a kiss.
And so I took as comrades the warm flowers

And wooed the soul of their eternal bliss."
He and the spirit of the woodland would sit in the park all day and dream of the perfect understanding in nature which has been denied to mortals. The tall oaks at High Park had their day of grief also, for all around men were chopping down trees to build up the city but now they know their fate is not to die by the axe for this home of theirs is to be kept as a park.

In one of his later poems he says:

"My Lord does not hide
In the face of a cloud
He walks by my side
With all wisdom endowed;
Not spectral or hoary,
With precept and ban
But lovely in glory
Of nature and man."

Thus we see that nature and the poet can commune with each other as one and God is a Divine Hand guiding the movements of nature. And God is guiding the poet too for he says: "For God hath set my song apart
To praise His worlds unsung."

He has a mission to fulfil and he has done it to the best of his ability. Let us hope he continues to do so.

H I S H U M O R.

Is Wilson MacDonald humorous? To a certain extent, he is. Not in the same way as we would regard Joe Penner or Joe E. Brown humorous, but in his own inimitable way.

Topping the list of his humorous poems I would place "Quintrains of Callendar" starting off with

"No doubt you've heard of Callendar
Not on the wall, no, no!"

This was distributed to the boys of an Ottawa College shortly after that memorable event which astounded the world two years ago.

To one who likes his hockey fast and played by professionals I am sure the poem entitled "Monsieur Joliat" will appeal. And who could not appreciate the humor in this verse when he speaks about Joliat - that stalwart of the Canadiens hockey team.

"I know heem well: he ees mo frien' :
I doan know heem himself';
But I know man dat know a man
Who know heem very well."

Another verse from the same poem will further prove the fun that can be obtained from his writings:

"He weigh one hundred feefty pound.
If he were seex feet tall
He'd score one hundred goal so queek
Dere'd be no game at all."

I don't know what Conny Smythe or Jack Adams would think of this. But likely if prospects were so good Conny Smythe would be scratching his head and picking up some valuable material for his new year's would-be Stanley Cup team.

"De Stop - Heem - Short" describes a baseball game as seen by a habitant - evidently his first game. I like this verse.

"De peetcher den he trow de ball;
De man who hole the steeck
Don' mak' no try; he let ball go
By gosh! he mak' me seeck."

"Dat Little Box" tells of a thirty year old bachelor who doesnt wish to marry unless his wife weighs two hundred pounds. One day he meets at Saint Césaire a girl who answers his request and they were married. They live happily for a while until one day he finds she is taking pills from a little box to aid reducing. She goes down to a hundred and five pounds. The husband, in his plight goes to his pastor who suggests that he tell a joke a day and she will gain three pounds a day from laughing. He tried this suggestion and now is very happy because his wife weighs two hundred and ten.

The dialect used in these poems make them even more humorous than if they were in the King's English. But we can also find some humor in his poems of every day English. In "The Students," it seems the poet had asked a question of four students, high up among the "Rah-Rah's in the modest university of the immaculate Toronto, the impeccable Toronto, the meticulous Toronto." These students who had only travelled as far as Sarnia and North Bay answered his questions with finality and thus solved the riddle of the ages. An old professor who had been ten times around the world and who had read volumes and volumes answered "I don't know; nobody knows," on being asked the same question. The story may not be meant for humor. It is more likely meant to show that ignorance is bliss but the sarcasm used and the way the story is told makes it humorous.

"Ah've done quit stealin' " is told in negro dialect. A negro resolves to stop stealing chickens and ends up with the prayer "But, O good Lawd, make de chickens roost high." The preacher, hearing the repentance of his parishioner thinks it time to take up the collection and gives a train schedule of the rates to heaven.

Still more peculiar is "The Song of the Jazz Hounds" written at Muskoka, 1924, ridiculing the jazz age and dancing. The poem begins by "Dead leaves dead leaves whirling round and round." I wonder did Mr. MacDonald have a premonition of "The Broken Record" on Red Hodgson's new lyric.

The poem is, however, a break from the more serious nature poetry and presents a different theme from the accustomed tune of the poets.

We hear of chickens again when old Judge Deeks, a powerful figure in all South Georgia gives a sentence of four weeks in jail to Abe for stealing chickens, after having been allowed to go on suspended sentence many times before. Abe pleads that two chickens followed him from Farmer Brown's chicken coop. Abe told them to go home, but one of them being deaf, followed him."So what could ah do?" asks Abe in "the Song of the Deaf Chicken."

Maggie Swartz is another of his characters, perhaps more to be pitied than laughed at. "If God had only made her inside out" she would not be receiving the sympathy of the poet and his audience.

The simplicity of "Grannies" now draws our attention. Grandma Doyle, eighty years old takes care of Grandma Blake who has reached the ripe old age of eighty-one years. "She's eighty-one and losing sight and smell;

And I am only eighty years,so I must guard her well" is what Grandma Doyle says. The poem ends with the trite words:

"It is a pretty sight when two old ladies talk."

Another negro song makes us think of funny negro stories and ghosts. A negro sees Melissa's broom standing in a corner after Melissa has departed from this world.

"Ah might get 'customed
To dis silence in de room
If it wasnt fo' de sight
Of Melissa's broom."

The negro broods to himself how no one could move the broom the way Melissa did. He says that no matter how pure are the skies they will not seem clean to Melissa's eyes, and she is sure to find dust on the pearly stairs. He prays that when he dies he may be able to bring Melissa's broom so she can play with it and he can listen to the music of it for evermore.

"An Unconditional Easter Song" tells good-naturedly of the money people make out of Christmas, selling toys, post cards and flowers. The bakers all thank the Lord on Good Friday for "the buns will bring them shining gold." The haberdashers, milliners and all the business world move the price tags up for the Easter sales. It is another sarcastic poem on the avarice of mankind.

But Mr. MacDonald can show sympathy with human kind. In Paul Moreland he sympathises with Yvette, Henri's wife, who after warning her husband not to cross the ice on the river goes to the townfolk for help. They say "Let heem drown," It serves him right. She finally gets Paul Moreland, "an old amour," to go to her husband's rescue. They both are lost in the icy waters. The poem ends in her praise of Paul Moreland.

To finish with, I think this a good one on the Englishman

"Shut up, Pea Soup," an Englishman
Sarcastic say to me;
So I turn round to heem and yell;
"Shut up you Cup of Tea."

THE COMMONPLACE.

Reading "Convocation" is just like attending the event at any university. We see the Oxford gowns, the scarlet of the clergy, the crimson gowns of the lawyers. But Mr. MacDonald introduces a note of reproach. He says men sit there "who have sent comrade-men to the gallows." The old gray bearded chancellor, the young provost, a professor who is an adroit turner of Greek phrases and whose comrades are Athenians, a Bishop "daily growing fatter" are all given the once-over by the poet's pen. After taking an hour to assemble, the President speaks with nothing to say and says it correctly. The Provost then called out to be honored, three plutocrats. One was a General "who hadn't heard of Marmion but knew of Scott's Emulsion." The whole thing seems a satire on people seeking after honours and money, willing to do anything for a few cents. For, he says "all the seers and scholars rose up in reverent array and bowed the knee to dollars" as the richer students received their degrees. Then the President, Chancellor and scholars rode away "on the chariots of gentlemen of dollars."

Another poem "The Chink" tells of a group of Canadians, none too good in themselves, seeing a Chinaman pass, saying "There goes a damned chink." Here in Canada where there

where there was supposed to be the ultimate in civilization ten men hurled insults at the people who passed by. Here in Canada is "service-station culture and gasoline odored minds" while afar in China is what is supposed to be barbarism. Yet, the Chinaman passed by and forgot the insult as any real cultured gentleman could do.

Do you blame the poet for hurling criticism at our civilization? How often do we see others, if not ourselves, being kind and charitable only when the occasion suits us?

Mr. MacDonald defies the world to say that hempen string was grown in God's own sunny fields in order that it might hang men in its later years. "The Song of the Hemp" tells how God made it strong to swing the sails of boats. But the hemp was manufactured, and the field where it was produced bowed in shame in 1919 because some of its sheaves after being woven by human hands, hung an Italian, Antonio Sprecage. The seeds of the wheat and other grains were used for other purposes, but it is the lament of the hemp that it was born to kill. This poem is another tirade against the savagery of humanity.

Vigour and bravery are not lacking in the "Song of The Rebel." The Rebel is tired of the cowards and weaklings of this world, of "the kingdoms lousy with their lords", the Dukes of Willy-Nilly, and the churches lying idly in their ruts. He is fed up with "civilized disorder" where "Truth and Honor have gone straying" and he wants to get

back to the wilderness to "borrow back the freedom of a child."

The theme of all these poems is summed up in the words

"I tear from all men their false trappings
And they, in their anger revile me."

He is always trying to get away from the drab-hooded town to find refuge at the sea, amid the rocks of the wide open spaces. He cries out in unison with the daring Loon who comes "to mock the trite conventions" and he lets his grief depart by way of his song.

Again, he joins with the Iroquois saying that he has freedom, wisdom, and is not defiled by our ways. The Iroquois is strong and tameless, we people are a spent out force.

The comparison between the poor man and the rich man takes the following form. On visiting the poor man, we find he lives in a log-house, with a single chair. And although there are bare floors "the cup of wisdom is flowing." At the rich man's house we encounter marble steps, carved glass brass candlesticks, soft carpets and rare designing. But, if one is in sorrow and seeks comfort, he can find solace at the poor man's house for the rich man's gifts are in his hand, not his heart.

He recounts the simplicity of the quaint village of Saint Césaire where men are content in their own surroundings, far away from the drone of the aeroplane and from the ocean with its leviathans. People there are far away from the fevered cities and are rich - rich in love and health

which are much more important than gold.

1936 and the League of Nations is still at sea when it comes to trying to keep peace. It is no wonder then that ten years ago there should be that same uncertainty. "Nineteen Twenty-six" is a mourning for those men who worked on the battleships, aeroplanes and on the battlefield and for those who died abroad in the last war. But are we any further ahead after all this sacrifice? We are still "hemmed in with steel guns on one side" and all the countries "are full of their old tricks."

"An Elegy written at the Grave of a Materialist" sums up the futility of all worldly wealth when

"The grim irrevocable law
Has brought him, like all mortals here."

The hatred, cruelty, ignorance and savagery of our civilization is again railed at, in forceful terms in "Song for a Dying Civilization." The master calls the people but they are searching for speed, fame and pleasure not caring in the least "to walk in the fields of the King.

In vain is the pleading of the prophet's breath;
For the orchestra is Jazz and the dance is death."

In "The House of Rebels" he raises his voice against gamblers, stock-brokers, professional athletes, the electric chair, materialists, jazz, the pharisee and modern modes of traveling. In short, he wishes to banish everything except that which is good. In this house of rebels, the arch-hater of sham, the man most denounced by the world

is "the shunned, despised, hated, crucified Jesus."

Another poem asks if Jesus is going to be put out of the churches by war with its gangrene, sores and greed, by war which has killed freedom.

"The Song of the New Communities" is a description of the last Reactionary killing. An army of men is heard marching closer to build the new communities. In these new communities the picture-houses will be locked up. Magazines will not be printed. Gramophones will not gnaw noisily. Flags will not separate nations. There will be no gold to cause misery. Men shall walk with God like Enoch did. There will be no rivalry for fashion or jewels. There shall be no prisons, no cause for rebellions. The animals and birds will not be afraid of being killed by the axe. There will be few things imported and so, every community will be a world in itself. Really - a poet's dream of a perfect people in a perfect world!

Another poem deals with the pettiness of modern life, telling how "Old Joe of Bald Mountain" near Revelstoke, a former stroke on the Oxford crew, is living there away from the smirk and lear of people. He is peaceful and contented. He listens to Kreisler in the evening, tuning off the crooners and jazz-hounds.

"Mourners" is a little lighter in tone. If you are sure I'm down in Hell when I die, the poet says, then you have

reason for your mourning. But if you think I'm in Heaven, rejoice that my soul is not dead. Take wa away barbaric rites, the tolling of bells, gloomy tears, marble vaults, slow processions and the weeping of women. Do not mark where I'm laid but take my songs and sing them to the world.

He protests against the way the social and business world tax the individual which cut him off from the beauties of nature. He addresses the Loon.

"Or art thou some old mortal here set free
To mark the trite conventions until doom
With that erosive satire which destroys?

He soothes himself against the foibles and insincerity of man "And when the empty words of men
Leave faith a thing forlorn
I think of Mademoiselle's "M'sieu"
And that fair summer morn."

in remembering the sweetness of a young child met in his travels near Mattawa.

He criticises Canadians for the way they behaved to Bliss Carmen. They did not want him when he was living but when he died they wanted his ashes.

From all these poems one might be led to believe that Mr. MacDonald was fed up with the world and people in general. "These Friends of Mine" cancels any doubt the reader might have in this regard. He confesses that he found the gypsy trail pleasant, but he was glad to get back to his old friends who heal his soul's wounds and

strengthen him in his hours of sadness.

Thus we see that it is only the conventions and the foibles of humanity that are the butt of the poet's sarcasm and abuse.

Mr. MacDonald also writes about common ordinary things. "Christmas Dinner at Child's" is the lay of a bachelor poet who has given his land a hundred songs and in payment for them, he has to eat alone at Child's Restaurant on Christmas Day.

"Trinity College, Toronto" is the subject of another poem. It is"old Trinity College" of honored scar and stain with its ivy-covered walls that he is talking about. The cold corridors yearn for the touch and comradeship of students during the summer. They only have the old warder who goes his rounds. But soon October comes again and brings back laugh and song - Soon now there will be no more classic learning there, no more higher mathematics, no more midnight frolics, for they are erecting a building of tall spires nearer the University proper. There will not be the same traditions in the new walls, nor the proud spirit,nor the sweet memories of those who walked there and especially of Archibald Lampman who loved the ancient trees.

Many will remember Eaton's new department store - a throne for weary beauty - "uncramped amid a city's crowded host." A portal like that of an abbey bids you enter the spacious arcade where the wares are spread out. It seems like an oasis - "a cool retreat where commerce walks with

beauty."

"In Johannesburg" two sisters tell of their trip to Africa, how they missed the merry sleigh-bell's ring, the silver rivers, the lilac's bloom, the apple trees. Both of them died there. But their spirits shall haunt Toronto Bay and sit with old friends and walk the Canadian hills.

Whoever has seen the Humber will appreciate "The Old Mill" with its once proud walls which are utterly undone."

Dry spells which occur so often are well portrayed by pointing out the "thirsting road," burnt oaks, clapping beetles, dying flowers, the churches crowded with folk praying for rain and then with Hope just about to go,a falling raindrop foretells the end of "The Drouth."

Centre Street is drab and dull with foul smells,musty fumes when suddenly from a doorway appears the "loveliest of lasses "Like a lovely butterfly
From a drab cocoon"

The poem describing the poverty of this section of the city, ends "sweet was the music of her feet
On the cobbles of Centre Street."

Another poem describes the lives of sailors and their dependents on the shores of the sea. Women widowed by the water's toll, fishermen pulling at tangled nets, bearing the weeping and wailing and incertitude of those at home, are realistically portrayed. But in spite of all these hardships, these fishermen keep at their work that has been handed down to them from their forefathers just as others keep at their spinning and praying.

His sorrow on hearing of his father's death is interestingly told in "Three O'Clock" written in 1923. The brother of the poet met him at a prairie inn one morning and they went home where they spent some time talking. The conversation turned to the brother's dead wife and their growing son. Then he said "Were you at father's funeral?" The poet had not heard of his father's death. Then the brother told how his father had been called away three weeks before. There was silence for a while, each one knowing the other's thoughts. Memories of his childhood days came back to him - how his father would take him into the woods of Haldimand and there, would tell him stories in a master's way. He says to his brother: "I cannot remember one word unkind our father ever said to any of his children: we were not driven but led."

Looking at his watch then, he noticed that it was time to go to a school. He was supposed to read to the students at three o'clock. His brother pleads with him to cancel the engagement but the poet says:

" Ah no, ah no;
My father would have wished that I should go,
I will take his brave spirit along with me."

"The Last Portage" portrays the last days of the poet as he would have them. He says he will not grow old, for a young soul in an old heart will always keep a man youthful. When he is called, he will go with a song on his lips as bold as the eagle's

" As the stars go out, so let me go
With a quick leap and a clear light
And a joyous understanding

"I'll make the Last Portage with joy -
And I'll find there -
White robed and fair
The Lord of life commanding."

Another favorite topic of the poet is old age and old things. In his "Song to the Valiant " he prays that the Lord may give him powers to near the goal while he is still young. When he reaches his olden days and cannot write any more he wishes his stay on earth to be short and prays that he will be taken away "in the Orients' fine, swift fashion." In the same poem, he says:

"Lord, hear thou the prayer of a poet's soul
In his fire days, when his lyre plays,
And his song is swift and passive;
Give to him prowess to near the goal
While his limbs are firm and his sight is whole."

The poet loves old things, old abbeys, old inns, old trees, old china, old books and old men knowing all the experience they have encountered in their journey through life.

"On His Golden Wedding Day" the husband does not find the beauty of his wife diminished but increasing every year, even though there may be pallor in her cheeks. He would not exchange his love for anything

"Age holds the miracle of adoration
When soul meets soul upon love's emminence."

The poet points a moral in the story of "The Old Crone"

who wished to own only two sons who were straight and tall and to disown his crippled son. But when he was older and had lost all his money and lands, the two upright sons each said "This man is no kindred of mine." But the third one came with food and comfort for his father who would not look at him when he was younger.

Again in the "Berry-Pickers" he describes the blythe and young berry-pickers and finishes by saying that "Old crones should never gather berries in a wood."

He finds pleasure also in telling stories of children. Yvette and Yvonne, twins from British Columbia, were inseparable. Whatever one would do, the other always would do. But God took one of them away and it is true that since "What one will do the other maid will do," the little angel in heaven enjoys the same pleasures as the little one left on earth.

Even New York and Manhattan come in for their share of raillery. The poet points out that the New York "Times" office, where news of the world pours in, is just a short distance away from the soup kitchen and its bread line. But this Broadway with its flare of night clubs has never heard a white birch sing nor the cold balsam croon. He advises a little hungry lad, he meets in Times Square, to go back to Maine, with its "pine-dark hills" bright with snow for the life here is the life that kills.

His Patriotism.

There is really not so much to make the poetry of Canada different from that of the United States, in so far as subject matter is concerned. The United States has the Indians, the prairies, the cattle ranges, the grain, forests and mines, the same as Canada. But Canada's seasonal changes provide material for poetic reproduction.

But I suppose to be a loyal Canadian one must not only be true to Canada but also support the British Empire. Mr. MacDonald had something to say about this when he was in England and saw the late King George's coronation procession -

"And I never will forget the way
An English King rode by,
Nor the wave of cheers that bellowed past
In one great endless cry.

"With empty belly none can keep
His patriotism stray;
And when a well-filled King went by
Between a cheering throng,
I stood as silent as the night
When winds are tired of song."

Thus we see that on this occasion at least he was not bubbling over with drum and trumpet patriotism. Speaking of the present King he says "Many years later (i.e.after 1902) in Montreal I spent several delightful hours with his Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, a man as delightfully without snobbishness as could be found in

all the earth." At least he likes the character of the Royal family.

Mr. MacDonald is a true Canadian. In the greater number of his poems he speaks of Canada and of his love for her.

"I love my land too well to speak
The lie she loves to hear,
I know she has a painted cheek,
And callous is her ear
And the bard who sings of pleasant things
Is the one she holdeth dear."

"A Song to the Valiant" may be the forbear of a genuine Canadian Literature. He feels all the delights of the Canadian outdoors in this poem. We find the man who loves his country and all it gives him. It is a colorful poem, suffused with the qualities of the Canadian spirit and the beauties of the Canadian habitat.

Although Mr. MacDonald is of Scottish descent, we do not find any trace of it in his works. Wilfrid Campbell's patriotic poetry contained a lot of the idea of Anglo-Saxon unity and the imperialistic destiny of the British peoples. We find him singing with equal warmth of England, the United States and Canada. But Mr. MacDonald's is strictly Canadian. Very seldom does he mention England.

Campbell, however, did write a poem "Canada" in which he has a sincere sense of history, of historical background and heroic origins as well as of a people whom the vastness of their homeland should spur on to a great and noble destiny. Other Canadian poets have pleaded for the future greatness

of our people, "The Collect for Dominion Day" by Charles G. D. Roberts is a prayer for unity. The poet, like Wilson MacDonald in his Confederation Ode, pictures a young nation still sleeping but about to arouse itself to confront its destiny. Somewhat different is his "Canada" from Mr. MacDonald's poem. He asks how long it will be before Canada will wake up and stand on her own feet and claim for herself the rank of a nation. He talks about Canada's trade and the heroic parts of Canadian History.

May 1927, saw Canada celebrating her Diamond Jubilee of Confederation and he commemorates this by an Ode. He begins the poem by telling the charms of maturity enumerating such things as dusk, red fruit in an old orchard, old men and old women. Yellow grass, burst milkweed pods, ripe golden-rods, mystic streets of old cities and "the wisdom of the philosophic page" are the other things that hold interest for us. One feels a certain satisfaction in having achieved a goal so, in the same manner "there is a glory in completed life." But, equally there is attraction in youth, and in spring with its showers and opening buds. Then he addresses Britain, eulogizing her for all she has done in the past. He thanks her for leading his ancestors to Canada, She is enshrined with temples, history, sea-victories and bright renown. Over her reigns a king upon whose head rests a shining crown fashioned by golden hammers of bard and seer." He tells Great Britain that she is at the mid-day of her life, while

Canada is just an infant. Her wings are strong but we Canadians are just trying ours. Nevertheless, some of our people can keep abreast of the "big shots" who have reached the heights in England. Canada is likened to the quarries from which castles are built, and, Britain, to the castles already built. But from these quarries no one knows what may spring. Canada is so vast with so many matchless lakes and streams with its "virile seasons." But not one part of this great beauty from the southern extremity to the northern pines is due to anything that we have done. God has given these beauties to us as a heritage. Out of the last sixty years such memorable names as MacDonald, Cartier, Brown and Laurier stand out as a valiant company. These men were the cause of the union of the nine provinces into the Federation of the Dominion of Canada. They could look ahead to the present time and see Canada rising up to be one of the countries of the world. But instead of having a history to record like we have, it would be better to have written down:-

"She was a nation loved and wooed by Pan,
And beauty in her kingdoms was restored.
Her frontiers danced with flowers and singing trees,
Nor any gun was heard along the coast,
Nor on her highways any armed host
Nor rich nor poor were found between her seas.
She was awake to honor's peaceful call;
And she was fair and tolerant to all.

Dreams such as this are not true; but unless we dream and vision new things, no deeds of great repute will ever be born. The poem closes with a final exhortation to his fellow Canadians to cast away all evil ways, to be fine, heroic,

strong and true "sounding the golden age that is to be."

Charles G. D. Robert's poem "Canada" is somewhat different from Mr. MacDonald's poem. He asks how long it will be before Canada will wake up and stand on her own feet and claim for herself the rank of a nation. He talks about Canadian trade and the heroic parts of Canadian history.

J. D. Logan, contrasted with Mr.MacDonald, in his "Ode To Canada" speaks of Europe's countries and how they are governed in comparison with the peaceful Canada. The theme of his "Land blest with Youth" has some of the same ideas as Mr. MacDonald, saying that the Canadian shield should be directing herself to higher things and the eventual brotherhood of man. In "A Song to Canada" he declares his land is given up to the quest of gold, to the exclusion of the "old wounding message of truth and the appeal of beauty. He contrasts man's materialistic interests with the natural magnificence of the country. This is the same theme as Mr. MacDonald follows in most of his patriotic poems.

All the Canadian poets up to this time had been exhorting in their poetry for Canada to stand up against the evil ways. Mr. MacDonald in many of his poems asks Canada to cast away the evil ways also. He is pledged to the cause of universal brotherhood. According to him Canada has not enough national spirit since the characteristics she is showing,are anything but spiritual.

But although Mr. MacDonald may not be pleased with the people of Canada, we can see that he is truly Canadian in his other poems. Canada has been blest with aesthetic beauties of hature - from the praries to eastern Canada - all of considerable beauty. The external character and unchangeability of nature tinted with the personality of the writer shows his affection for his own native soil.

That he is Canadian to the core, there is no doubt. He admires England, yes, "How Eternal is England!" he exclaimed as he walked down her lanes reading Gray's Elegy."

His Religion as obtained from his Poems.

The Song of the Undertow is more than a poem; it is a confessional of faith. While he was in England he says he was guided by the Divine Hand to different places. All of these places brought him to better fortune. And in this age of atheism when everybody is trying to say that there is no God, he cannot help but believe that there is one, even though many skeptics would say otherwise.

Mr. MacDonald himself writes in the Preface to one of his later editions "You may say that it was a coincidence that I met Reverend James I. Houssemayne,du Boulay, Mr. and Mrs. S. R. Button, Mrs. Berryman and J. Philip Collins, who one and all received me in such Christlike spirit. (These people he met on his trip through England.) You may be right. There may be no Divinity Who shapes our ends. But I would be a poor gambler if I doubted the evidence given to my soul in the year 1912. If this confession of faith had been published six year ago, the critics would have received my evidence with contempt. Many will yet do so, for unbelief is still strong in commercial and academic circles. But is is surely and slowly dying. The pendulum moves strangely. To one generation a man is not a true philosopher unless he has found faith, to another he is not a real thinker unless he is a believer. One attitude is as nonsensical as the other. One New York writer advised me in a paternal way to avoid the word "God." If I were agnostic to the heart, I would not avoid this word. I

would use it for the majesty which its utterance brings. I would chant it because the very fibre of its sound is strength to the soul.

The radical of today is often more narrow and bigoted than was ever the worst fundamentalists in their radicalism. If a writer uses the word "God" they immediately force some church's conception of God upon that scribe. I may use the word "God" to describe a glorious vision of my own soul which is utterly at variance with any deity of a church or nation, or of any other individual on earth, and I shall use this majestic word, despite the skeptic's sneer, until my pen lies down beside its finished task."

He also writes that "this is an age of doubt - not the beautiful doubt of Hardy - but the flippant doubt of shallow reasoning. The summit of this peak of agnosticism was reached in 1929. Today they are groping for a new faith - something infinitely lovelier than the blind faith of many of our ancestors. That some great force did direct me in the great moments of distress, as I walked alone through England, I believe with an unshakeable faith. Skepticism is a natural thing in artificial places but who could doubt God as he walked down an English lane."

These are the poet's own words. We see that he really believes that there is a God. And although we cannot fix him

in any particular church or sect we know that he prays to this God and also thanks him for the many favours received, especially for the beauty of Nature with which we are surrounded.

"Not because He was a Jew
And of David's line,
But because He is true,
And because He is fine;
Not because He is God,
In an ordered part
But because He is good
Is the Lord of my heart."

This short stanza sums up the reasons for his having a God and for his loving Him.

He is not a hater of Catholicism, as we see in these lines:-

"If sadness overwhelms you with its power
If in your beads of rosary you find
Peace for the heart and mind
Then will I bless this charm
And pray it keeps you from all earthly harm.
But, maid of those sad eyes
My temples are all domed with shining skies;
My rosary is on the beaded lawn
And in the wood at dawn;
My ritual is a sunlight on a sea,
My cloisters walled by wind

"I will not steal those comforts which you know
But I shall bare my head
While your carved beads of rosary are spoken."

He thinks of God as a kindly God and if he should die he knows He will remember "the voice of a poet who grieved him often and often blasphemed, and yet who had moments of love which an angel, immune to forgiving, could not understand.

In 1931 he writes "I muse by the sea and find,
In ageless water and sand,
The Word of the Master's mind
The grope of the Master's hand."

He finds that God is stern and just; a God of forgiveness and mercy. He made the jagged cold mountain as well as the soft-petalled flower.

"Nor could we go to Death so gallantly
Had we not learned the friendliness of slumber."

lets us know that he has not the strong fortifications of our religion. He refers to God in different places as the Master of Colours.

Love as Treated in his Poems.

Mr. MacDonald's poems generally tell of a maiden disdaining his love and leaving his spirit broken. He generally seeks comfort in the wilderness. In "The Garment," the poet weaves a garment of kisses for a girl who tosses it away in preference for another which is more costly than any bard or seer could ever bring her. She will hunt for his garment some day but will not be able to find it then.

"On the Stair" describes a lady of unusual beauty which he knows for a short while but does not see again. He walks through the woods after he meets her "Knowing, that star will no more light my skies."

"You are a Haven" has a different tone, telling how a woman assuages his sorrow after he is tired writing.

" I wonder if amid this strife,
That stabs my heart with pain
The lover's perfect hour of life
Will e'er be mine again."

is the beginning of a poem where he wonders if another love should appear with all the qualities of his former love, would the sky be as warmly tinted for him, as it was.

The loneliness of a bachelor on a night when all the benedicts are at home with their wives and little children playing around them is told in "Christmas Dinner at Child's."

Another of his musings is "As a White Moon." Maybe the poet's words could sum up the thoughts here

" as a white moon comes to a lonely cloud,
Dark with the grief of many unshed tears,
She came to me; and even as that orb
She flooded me with light and then passed on

Leaving my darkness greater than before."

"A Street Song" seems to sum up all these love poems

"No love have I
Whose heart was made for loving"

but he has found his love since he wrote this poem.

In "The Retinue" he tells his loved one how she is "Light when there is no star." The pavement she walks on is dear to him, and if she should go, all things would be desolate.

August, 1926 finds the poet contemplating where will he go walking with his new love. By the sea, in the wood, on the hill will not drown out the thoughts of his old love, so he choses a city street where the tramping of feet will cause him to forget it.

Love is sought in various places, as we find out in "The Searcher", written April, 1929, but it is sought in vain.

"Love comes to me from unexpected places,
But never by the pathway where I wait."

And then like drops of some diviner rain
Love beat upon my door."

"The Call" portrays perhaps his distrust in women.

"The bitterns cry
At the world's cold edge
But their notes are sweeter far
Than the warmer word
On a false maid's tongue
In the land where fake things are."

Charles G.D. Roberts says of his poem "Exit", that it is the finest in the English language. The theme - the hard ground opens easily to the bodies of the old but bitterly re-

ceives those of the young. Elizabeth was young but, why should she be given to the coldest lover under the sky. Why should she be doomed to rest so long in her bed forlorn in the churchyard where the grasses grieve bitterly for her.

Mr. MacDonald, as we have seen, was a man of strong affections and lavished them warmly on the friends found in his poems. He loves few and he loves deeply. Those he loves are so much a part of him, that when they depart from him, the blow shatters him, almost beyond recovery. All his love poems tell the same tale - the tale of affection and poetry. And well they may, for that is the tale of Mr. MacDonald's life.

To climax this, we might add that Mr. Wilson MacDonald was married this winter to Dorothy Ann Colomy of Vassalboro, Maine.

His Poems of Lament.

Canada mourned for Bliss Carmen, her best-loved poet who died at his home in New Canaan, Conneticut, June 8, 1929. He was a lyrical poet and given to vivid descriptions of nature. Mr. MacDonald wrote a poem at his death "The World of Beauty is in Deep Distress." He expresses the mourning of the world when "one sweet singer has laid down his lyre." Fate was kind to prolong his life till spring had come. She did not make him sing his song again in this world but tuned him to sing his song again in a lonelier land where there is Eternal Spring. It was not strange that he should die at noonday for he had "noonday in his heart." All the flowers of the roadside will wait in vain for him now. No one shall forget "his great gaunt figure crowned with tameless hair," or "his fine, unhampered throat and ageless eyes." The tides of Grand Pré, the elms of Fredericton, the reeds of Minas Basin will all have a new grief to add to their sorrows. The former grief was for Theodore Harding Rand - one of those who did so much to help him in his ambitions to become a poet. He was born in Nova Scotia. His

"Dragonfly" is unmatched in Canadian poetry.

Mr. MacDonald also wrote a poem on the death of an organ-master, Garfield Thomas. It tells how another person is now playing his organ but he cannot play with the same feeling as the former organ-master. If one were to tear up old organs, one would find many a broken heart lying therein. Today the organ master plays in heaven - immortal chords and bars which we can hear if we would pass through the stars. The stops he uses are the winds of heaven.

Again he mourns for Sir George Parkin. He compares life to a fugue built on chords and when Parkin went he left a gap in the rhythm of the song. He was fine-mannered and chivalrous,

> "He took your way of thinking with a warmth
> Or differed with you as a gentleman."

This old man of eighty years has " a flavour of great richness." He was a fine aristocrat of this youthful country and deserves all the praise which he has caused himself to merit.

Pauline Johnson also merits a poem by Mr. MacDonald.

This may be the right time to talk of his feeling towards man. The idea of human brotherhood finds itself well portrayed in his "Song of Brotherhood," "Song of Better Understanding" and "Barbary." Why should we be

partial to certain races and beliefs? Why should not we all work for universal development? We should seek the best elements in all human life and thought. That we should help the progress of the whole human race by mutual service and understanding becomes an ideal of supreme importance.

Almost everything he has written is important for this consideration. His militant advocacy of brotherhood and pantheistic faith is displayed in "Barbary." The quality is idealistic, and yet acknowledges the so-called "realities of life." It is forward looking and confident in the future of man. It cannot be fully defined in words but can be sensed.

Influences on the Poet.

As in England, Wordsworth communed with nature, so in Canada, Lampman and Carmen did the same. As in England, Scott described and vivified the life of the Scottish Highlander, so in Canada, Pauline Johnson and William H. Drummond pictorialized the life of the Indian and the Habitant. Also, Robert Service may be compared to the English Byron. Then in England, arose a romantic group of poets in the persons of Keats and Shelley who did not care for picturesque subjects or themes which taught a moral. So, in Canada, arose Marjorie Pickthall and Mr. Wilson MacDonald. In Mr. MacDonald's work we find the luxury of Keats, the ecstasy of Shelley, the seriousness of Wordsworth, the naivete of Blake.

Mr. MacDonald has given us the poems of his choice from English Literature. He says "The elusive loneliness and wistfulness of the Lucy poems of Wordsworth make them more satisfying to me than any other love poems in our language. My favorite poems at this time of my life (1902) were "Intimations on Immortality" by Wordsworth; "Friends in Paradise" by Vaughan; "In the Downhill of Life" by Collins; "Ode to a Nightingale" and "La Belle Dame sans Merci" by Keats; "The Dragonfly" and "Song Waves" by Rand; "Lycidas" by Milton; "The Elegy" by Gray; and the Lucy poems of Wordsworth. In the passing of years, I have added greatly to this treasure house,

nor have I forsaken any of my early loves. I first read "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" as I walked a country roadside just above Harrowsmith, Canada, and my ecstasy was so great I wept. One of the loveliest "ands" in literature is in this poem "and her eyes were wild." And "palely loitering" is a veritable bugle-cry to my soul. Henry Vaughan's Elegy "Friends in Paradise" is, in my opinion, one of the noblest utterances of all time. When I wandered along country roads in the vagabondia days of life, this poem lay often like a sweet morsel on my lips. David Copperfield, Lorna Doone and Wuthering Heights are my three favorite English novels."

English poets have been concerned with human beings and traditions but Canada has not existed long enough to have such traditions and institutions. And thus Canadian poets are for the most part, only concerned with nature.

Archibald Lampman wrote poetry with the eye and spirit of Keats and Wordsworth. Scott writes with the eye of Mathew Arnold for naturalistic and moral beauty and chaste artistry. But Wilson MacDonald writes simply for the love of nature and the solace he gets from her.

Keats is the poet of beauty; of the beauty in nature, in the art of words, in human life and story.

With Keats beauty is everywhere and no matter where we travel with him, we will find it. But Keats had all himself in his poems. He watched nature intently, saw her and felt her. To a certain extent also, Mr.MacDonald watches nature, sees and feels her. "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" which Wilson MacDonald likes so much, seems to express some of the same thoughts which he expressed in his poems, especially in "M'sieu."

"I met a lady in the meads
Full beautiful, - a fairy's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light
And her eyes were wild."

Does not this description from Keats' poem resemble the description given by Mr. MacDonald in "M'sieu?"

The ripeness and maturity for which our poet so often expresses his love is also found in Keats' poem "In Autumn." In it we get the picture of the vines and apple trees and nuts, with their ripened fruit, plump and mellow.

Poetry is the spring that unlocks the hidden life, the essential life and all that is in a poet. Wordsworth thought that Nature and Man were adapted to each other. In his poetry, Man and Nature are one. Man and nature, nature and art, sea and land, beasts and birds come in everywhere. We can see how far Mr. MacDonald is akin to Wordsworth in this quotation:

"Then Beauty ran the coralled wind
And tossed me all her keys;
And I was one with the shouting rock,
Was one with the singing seas,
Was one with that great comradeship
Of tall unconquered trees."

The instinct of Wordsworth was to interpret all the operations of nature by those of his own strenuous soul. We can easily define the difference between Wordsworth and Keats. Keats loved nature for her own sake. It was not obscured in any symbolism or morality as Shelleys was. He has said

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever" and "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

We have seen from the poems already discussed that Keats has perhaps influenced Mr. MacDonald in his works.

Let us demand with Wordsworth "What is a poet?" He will reply for us. "He is a man speaking to men: a man, it is true, endowed with more lovely sensibility, more enthusiasm and tenderness, who has a greater knowledge of human nature and a more comprehensive soul than are supposed to be common among mankind; a man pleased with his own passions and volitions and who rejoices more than other men in the spirit of life that is in him; delighting to contemplate similar volitions and passions as manifested in the goings-on of the Universe, and habitually impelled to create them where he does not find them."

If this is the correct answer to our question we may certainly say that Mr. MacDonald is a born poet.

Like Wordsworth, Mr. MacDonald revisited the scenes familiar in earlier years, falls into this mood and is prompted to great reflection. Wordsworth was filled with a contemplative quietism which dominated his spirit, making it feel the harmony that existed between nature and the human soul. Mr. MacDonald senses this harmony also and has the power to impart this feeling to others. We can feel his joy on arriving home in -

"Home is the Port of all Content,
And joy's eternal leaven;
And six days brought us sight of land;
And we made port in seven;
And every mile was like a rung
On a ladder up to Heaven."

It seems to coincide with the feelings expressed in Wordsworth's lines -

"Bliss was it in that dawn to believe
But to be young was very heaven."

Mr. MacDonald's pen is dedicated to the service of man. He tries to unseal the joys that are so near at hand and to which most of us are blind.

Our poet is very near to Gray also. For he, can add here and there graphic bits of human portraiture

"With pleasant rhythm breaking at her heels
My lady now descends the ample stair;
I cannot see her, but the dark reveals
A lily of pure beauty in her hair."

Perhaps we might spend a little time in contrasting him with Shelley. Shelley was airy; Mr. MacDonald is earthy. Shelley's landscape was winds and clouds and

the stars in their courses. Everything with him was distant and solitary. Mr. MacDonald's landscape is our well-loved trees, seas, mountains and plains. Shelley's world is always moving, never still; Mr. MacDonald pictures nature in her calm moods. Never was there such a poet as Shelley who could make his readers tax their imagination, making us live life among the ideas and the elements, racing over his abundance of ideas and images and leaving his audience in an intellectual fog. He can be very unintelligible. Mr. MacDonald, on the contrary, is never so. One is able to follow his idea from the start to the finish of a poem. Mr. Broch has said of Shelley "There was something insipid in what he admired, even in real people, for he was not aware of their real qualities; and these, when they forced themselves upon his notice, affront his dreams, and therefore, seem to him devilish instead of human." He knew nothing of the real. Mr. MacDonald can understand and appreciate people. Take, for instance, his companion "Bill" of "The Song of The Undertow." To-day, he is offering "Bill" a valuable gift, if he can be found, for his kindness rendered during the trans-atlantic journey.

The Philadelphia Public Ledger says, referring to Wilson MacDonald - "He possesses the imagery and exquisite

choice of words of a Wilde, combined with the virile originality of a Masefield." In spite of this comment, I still think that Mr. MacDonald's "English Bay" owes something to Masefield's "Cargoes." The rhyme scheme does not swing as much as Masefield's, but there is a lilt to it that cannot be mistaken for anything but a copying of "Cargoes." We will quote -

"I want to go to English Bay, to see the old tugs towing;
The black tugs, the strong tugs, the tugs of sturdy soul -
The pigmy craft that draw the large
Obedient loom and the docile barge,
With pride of their important charge in every movement showing."

A few others of Mr. MacDonald's poems remind us of Masefield's "Beauty," both in metre and construction.

"I have seen dawn and sunset on moors and windy hills
Coming in solemn beauty like slow old tunes of Spain
I have seen lady April bringing the daffodils.

"I have heard the song of blossoms and the old chant of the seas"

The above words of Masefield are not at all dissimilar to the following lines from our poet-

"I have tried the strength of the salt turf where the last sun leaves the world,
I have walked Ontario's lilac lands, in the late May's wistful weather.
I have breasted winds off Labrador where the whole sea-strength is hurled;

I have heard the gorse on Deacon Hill breaking their golden pods;
I have watched the blue St. Lawrence lave the grim Laurentian ba[illegible]

Many of Mr. MacDonald's poems can be compared to Carmen's " A Wood Path." Carmen recalls the beauty of nature while he walked through the woods one twilight evening with a companion. Mr. MacDonald's poems are often sorrowing for the one who is not with him now. There is no direct teaching in Mr. MacDonald's poetry, such as we find in Arnold, Browning or Carmen.

Marjorie Pickthall goes a step farther than Wilson MacDonald, in so far as religion is concerned.

"Where it is finished" reminds us of Our Lord's bloody sweat, Gethesemane, and the crown of thorns. Mr. MacDonald never mentions these. He speaks of God, more or less as a name only, never going into such details.

"In the Wilds" by Archibald Lampman has the same rush of melody as the "Song of the Ski" by Mr. MacDonald.

"We run with rushing streams that toss and spume;
We speed or dream upon the open meres;
The pine-woods fold us in their pungent gloom;
The thunder of wild water fills our ears."

Duncan Campbell Scott's poems seem to glow with warmth of words and feeling. They are, for the most part, fuller of action than are Wilson MacDonald's - We shall quote from Dr.Scott:

"The beetles clattered at the blind,
The hawks fell twanging from the sky,
The west unrolled a feathery wind,
And the night fell sullenly."

Mr. MacDonald says in his Preface to "Quintrans of Callendar:" "It is always easy to forecast the criticism of a pseudo-critic. A clever Canadian prose writer recently wrote a story in the French-Canadian dialect and was straightway accused of imitating Dr. Drummond.

I will undoubtedly be accused of imitating the brillant author of the Habitant, although my themes, metre, humor, pathos, &c., are as remote from Dr. Drummond's style and subject as they are from the style and subject matter of Chaucer.

The French-Canadian dialect was used long before it was used by Dr. Drummond and it will be used by writers for generations to come.

I am a great admirer of William Henry Drummond. He loved the French-Canadians and I know he would be the first to welcome another writer's interpretation of this loveable people. Dialects belong to no writer. They are of the universal equipment of all authors."

We do not know ourselves that poets who use the same language cannot avoid sometimes using the same words as other poets, so we will not go into the matter of looking at Mr.MacDonald's vocabulary as compared with former poets.

On account of the proximity of the United States of America we must look in Canadian literature for complications which could be overlooked in the case of the other countries. The Canadian school has not been greatly touched by the writers across the border. Whitman and Emerson give

some of their thought and philosophy to our writers. Whitman is pantheistic. He takes great pleasure in nature and joy in being close to her. He identifies himself with her. "His quality of cosmic consciousness is fundamental in the Canadian poetic outlook," an eminent critic has stated.

"The heroic splendour of his (Mr. MacDonald's) "Out of the Wilderness" caused critics on both sides of the Atlantic to herald the arrival of a new Whitman on the north American continent. It is not hyperbole to proclaim that Wilson MacDonald is a new, elemental force in poetry, perhaps the first since Whitman." (Toronto Saturday Night.)

Whitman's gospel of brotherhood is found in the works of Wilson MacDonald. Whitman is a real vagabond and Mr.MacDonald, like him, glories in vagabondage. There is no question of a return to nature for either of them. They never left it. For Whitman, the teeming life of the town was as wonderful as the big solitude of the earth. Their art is the utterance of both sincerity and beauty, filled with vitality. Whitman often failed because he lacked humor. This cannot be said of Mr. MacDonald.

Whitman is unmoral. In his anxiety to speak out freely, simply and naturally, he seems to have bungled rather badly. We find nothing unusual or immoral in Wilson MacDonald.

Everything is sung in bulk. Whitman's range of vision is cosmic as may be seen in his "Song of the Open Road" and "The Song of the Rolling Earth." Here are no detailed

effects, no difference in the shade of meanings. They are huge panoramic effects. It is a great style and an impressive style. On the other hand Mr. MacDonald gives us details even in his vagabond songs and we find him also very versatile in his style.

Whitman had "a pleasant, uninterested saunter through the world - no hurry, no fever, no strife, hence no bitterness, no depression, no wasted energies - - - in all his tastes and attractions always aiming to live thoroughly in the free nonchalant spirit of the day. "MacDonald has not this outlook of life. He is interested in all that is going on about him and ready to put in poetry anything that is most interesting to us.

Our American poet treats of the vulgar and the ordinary and the commonplace. Mr. MacDonald also treats of topics that are known to all of us and therefore his poetry is very near to the people for whom he is writing. Whitman places first the educative influence of nature in the same manner as does Mr. MacDonald. The general effect of both of their writings exercises a remarkable tonic influence and seems to give to the reader a stronger and more courageous outlook. They both found in nature, a companion, a friend and a lover.But in both,we find an absence of intensity and depth when speaking of religious themes. And well might these two poets be so similar for they both lived somewhat the same lives. Just as Mr.MacDonald tried his hand at so many trades during his youth, so Whitman tried farming, teaching,

printing, editing, travelling, nursing. He was also a mechanic and Government clerk. Both of them had seen much of the daily routine of life and were able to appreciate their fellow-creatures and their surroundings.

HIS STYLE.

Every word he uses is brief and familiar to us. He puts his ideas across so clearly to the reader that we cannot help seeing definitely the mind of the poet. He does not use extra words or superfluous phrases. All is direct and rigorous - the right words used in the right place, conveying the right meaning

"Or crawl like frozen flies at chess" describes the people who would rather stay indoors than enjoy the fresh air of the open.

"I float, I fall;
The world leaps up like a lunging carp.
I land erect and the tired winds drawl
A lazy rune on a broken harp."

tells us vividly his adventures while skiing.

What could be more realistic than this?

"Crash of silver, smash of plate,
And the vision is no more:
Long, white tables, cold, sedate,
And the slowly-swinging door.
Mock accoutrements of state
Of a lonely bachelor."

Or this from Ghost Hornpipes?

"Then they do all things
That in life were sweet;
They dance slow hornpipes
With their fleshless feet
Tap, tap; bone to board,
Their joints creaking loud!
One who died in his bed
Dances in a shroud.

He is truly a gleaming marvel of dexterous craftsmanship in words. One cannot doubt for a moment the reality, whether imaginative or actual of the emotional experiences which they record. Many of his poems, to be sure, are somewhat lighter as we can see from "Star Sandals" -

"The stars have lost their sandals in the sea;
They drift,a silver host,across the bars;
The silver shoe of Venus blown alee,
And that red, flaming moccasin of Mars,
The austere host of heaven that march the night,
With leagues of silent chaos in each stride,
Lament when they behold their fallen light
Drift, ~~xxixx~~ in a chartless joy, across the tide."

But the total effect of all is one of stark sincerity.

The directness of some of his poems are enhanced by swift phrasing, as in the "Song of the Ski"

"I'll ride the air
With a dauntless dare"

and "The slim wood quickens,the air takes fire -

and "Swifter and swifter grows my flight
The dark pines ease the unending white
The lean cold birches, as I go by,
Are like blurred etchings against the sky."

The poet can also give the impression of utter spontaneity.

"The sun was shining, it was noon,
The pretty maiden passed me by
Like a lovely butterfly
From a drab cocoon."

Wilson MacDonald has a control of lovely words and emotional power and gives us passages of exceptional beauty, but few of his poems are free from the poet's distinctive personality. Without that personality bubbling through, it would not be Wilson MacDonald's poetry.

His poems are for the most part, short, full of verve, with swift turn of phrase and a rhythm that carries all the pictures along with it. They have vigour, action, life-likeness, picturesqueness. They are fine and masterful in technical artistry and impressive too. They appeal to the heart and the imagination. When talking with a person we can guage the feeling they express by the tone they use. The feelings of animals and birds can be ascertained by the variations of tone and punctuation. Poetry has its rhythm to express the feelings of the utterer. And the meaning of Mr. MacDonald's poems is obtained not only from the ideas which they convey but also in the manner they are conveyed.

The style never lacks colour. His verve is full of grace and ease of movement. His rhythm is always alive and is changed to suit his theme. We will cite some examples. From "The Song of The Flashing Door" we take this excerpt.

"The Door is flashing to and fro;
The light leaps out in amber streams
I gather up a shaft and go
Back to the sleeping hosts below
And thread the light within their dreams" -

and from "Why not I"

"If the flower can draw blue from the sky
Why not I?
If the leaf can draw green from the sun
Why not I?"

and from the "Song to the Valiant".

"Hilloo the dusk,
And hilloo the dark!
The wind hath a tusk
And I wear its mark.

The day's last spark hath a valiant will
Hilloo the dark on the wind-swept hill! "

In some of his verse we find a singing quality.

"In the winter on the **snow**
I can hear his shoes
Crunching me welcome,
Crunching me adieus:
But wherever he goes
He leaves no clues."

describes the toll-gate man.

and

"No wage she earns
Nor glory gains
As she weaves white ferns
On the window panes."

One cannot say that Mr. MacDonald is in any way dainty either in the use of words or in his rhythm. Even his most delicate poem "I love Old Things" has a certain quality of strength about it.

He discloses absolute mastery in economy of means. He can employ delineative line with swift and sure artistry to make a picture.

"I hear the sound of the breaking of glass,
The crushing of stone, the falling of bridges
The hurrying of people to and fro."

The picture stirs our visual faculty and our imaginations. We can impress on our minds a vivid picture in a single line.

"The dying sunlight falls along the sky"

Or "The wind is heavy-footed as an ox."

Mr. MacDonald's poems are not crowded with the metaphors, symbols and figures of speech that other poets burden us with. He uses generally the iambic foot and most of his

lines are tetrameter lines.

His writing gives us the idea of freedom. The stories are conveyed to us in the finest words and in the simplest sentences he can find.

Repetition of verses often occur at the end of a poem - usually to better impress upon our minds what the poet wishes us to know.

Summing up, we may say that he is a poet and a man full of Canadian vigour and understanding, fusing into his poems a spirit of youthfulness and a worship of beauty and nature, using a full-bodied, muscular masculine style and colloquial and familiar words.

AN ESTIMATE.

And yet, after all, what a little way such investigations carry us! Literary analysis can no more give the secret of genius than chemical analysis can give the secret of living. Wilson MacDonald is unique. From the beginning he watched 'nature's gentle doings' as no one else ever did. Watched - that was his business; not interpreted -- that was Wordsworth's. To see things and to feel them, to dream is his story. From first to last his home is in quiet places.

The test of a poet is not how much he produces, but how much the future generations will read. He is the kind of a poet one would pick up and read after a hard day's work or perhaps enjoy at a lakeshore picnic. He is a great poet in an age when hardly anyone gives himself time to look about him, any more than Malcolm Campbell would, in his Bluebird on Dayton Beach. He has the power to console the afflicted, to bring healing into our lives and therefore is very precious to his readers.

The noblest passages of Dante, Shakespeare and Milton are the simplest ones. So MacDonald must be great. His thoughts can be easily carried to all the world. He writes for the mechanic as well as the cultured classes.

William Arthur Deacon in the New York Times Book Review says "In the present generation of poets, whose name is legion, Wilson MacDonald is the outstanding figure."

William Lyon Phelps, in picking the ten best books of poetry of the year, chose both the "Caw-Caw Ballads" and "A Flagon of Beauty." No other writer on this continent had more than one book chosen. This is enough to show that his poems will live.

S. Morgan-Powell in the Montreal Star says "Wilson MacDonald is beyond question a born poet. There are moments when his verve is lifted by some ecstatic power; moments when a line stands out like a searing flame of gold against the background of his song."

But he is not appreciated yet. "Canadian seers are as profound, Canadian scholars are as learned and Canadian poets are as musical and adventuresome as are the seers, scholars and poets of any country. But the men of genius are suffering from the old cry 'can any good come out of Nazareth?' William Lyon Phelps of Yale University once declared in Scribner's Magazine that the most unfortunate thing that could happen to a poet is to be born in Canada. Mr. MacDonald states his own sentiments regarding Canada in these words:

"And yet, although she hates my song,
Which bites into her ease,
I love her as the dawn loves light,
As motion loves the trees,
As roses love a garden wall,
As music loves the seas."

Reverend Robert Norwood, L.A.,D.C.L.,L.L.D.,has said "Do not stifle his genius by your indifference Honor him and let him feel your pride in him. He is one of

the greatest poets of the Anglo-Saxon race."

Professor Pelham Edgar, M.A.,Ph.D.,F.R.C.S., says : "Wilson MacDonald has reached great heights in some of his later poetry."

Messrs. Frood and French state: "In his Songs of the Prairie Land" and "Miracle Songs of Jesus," he discloses an absorption in mystical psychology and psychoanalysis which by its daring and his method of suffusing the matter with ingenious and subtilized novelty or beauty of diction and imagery adumbrates Goethe of the Faust tradition. It is at once realistic and ultra-spiritualistic. His technique is just as original and individualized as the matter of his poems. If any Canadian has the right to the distinction of possessing sheer creative genius, that right belongs to Wilson MacDonald as a seer and an artist working in a field of spiritual vision which he has pre-empted."

Some of the poet's imaginative and mystic qualities are seen in "TheLace-Maker." "The lace-maker's heart,when she died, was turned to frost, so that her life's art might not be lost. She weaves her rare designs and never repeats them - those designs she wished to weave on earth and could not.

"Van Buren's Coach" is another original poem describing how the coach moved from town to town depositing shadowy people. Van Buren is the coachman, driving horses which are straining as though they were carrying a heavy load instead of corpses. Every night those who have loved are taken

back to visit their former amours. It is a weird night and all nature is in sympathy with the peculiar mission of the coach. "Van Buren's Inn" is the place where all those who have loved and lost in this life, can enter. The inn-keeper keeps guard at the door every evening.

"He is a proud and gallant host
Who'll love for aye in vain."

We see the individuality in his voice and how his poems break through to new poetic horizons.

Most of his works stand themselves as designed for public reading. They are so to speak poems to be acted, little masques. The poems are slightly dramatic in form but prevailingly lyrical in spirit.

"Let us sing in a song together;
Mattawa, Nepanee,
Manitowaning, Ottawa,
Nipissing, Ville Marie.

Missanabie, Manitoulin,
(Whisper them soft and low)
Espinola, Michipicoten,
Iroquois, Orono."

We cannot do better than close this humble work with one of Mr. MacDonald's own poems.

If from my painting one hue,
If from my singing one line,
If from my building one true
Hint of design;

If from my carving one curve,
If from my wisdom one phrase
The master sees fit to preserve -
Joyous my days.

May this be said of me:
"He gave to sound one cry,
To life one memory
That would not die.

"He took from strife her sword;
He gave to peace his breath,"
May this be said, O Lord,
Of me at death.

Happy is he who at last
Hears the immortal choir
Gather one note of his blast
From the destroying fire;

Or who knows that, at night

When the dusk curtains fall,
He has left one guiding light
In the King's hall.