

CANADIAN AUTHORS

(By WINNIFRED EATON REEVE)

JOHN GARVIN

It is no unusual thing for men of prominence in the business and financial world to be also poets and are closely allied with the various arts. The theater and the opera, literature and art offer ready-made outlets for the man who, though part of the great and practical world of business, nevertheless cherishes a romantic and artistic affinity for the finer things of life.

One could give a score of names of men in the political world who are also associated with the literary and artistic world. In our own country many of the prominent men in the eastern cities are also prominent in the literary, literature and art. Sir Byron Walker, president of the Canadian Bankers' Association and the president of the "Champlain society" which through his agency has published 25 or 30 volumes. He is also chairman of the Canadian Art Club and a member of the "Canadian Authors' Association." Vincent Massey, president of the Massey-Harris company, is also deeply interested in everything connected with literature, and is a prominent patron of the arts.

John Garvin, banker and broker, of Toronto, vice president and managing director of the Federal Finance Corporation, a near relative of Vincent Massey, is also a devotee of literature something more than a mere hobby. In a way, literature is almost a religion to him, and especially literature of his own country. He may be said to be steeped in Canadian literature and history if there is any one in this country who knows the subject of Canadian literature as does John Garvin.

For nearly a quarter of a century Mr. Garvin has protected, gathered and edited the reading of books and manuscripts of Canadian authors, eliminating, selecting, editing and publishing. He has advised and helped hundreds of authors and would-be authors, and has been a constant and helpful guide in their literary and cultural life. He has usefully given of his leisure time to Canadian literature, with results that should prove of far-reaching and lasting value to the rising generation.

Collecting and publishing the poems of Isabelle Valancy Crawford and following this with his anthologies of Canadian poetry, Mr. Garvin has definitely placed himself out of the class of the dilettante and connoisseur. His was not a mere clubbish interest in literature, but a valuable contribution.

All the time he was doing big things for his own name, and he has become a prominent figure in the social and club life of Toronto and Montreal. Yet he has not allowed this to distract him, indeed—to confuse his fascinating explorations into Canadian literature. His anthologies of "Canadian Authors" in 25 volumes, placed him in the front rank of Canadian editors and publishers. He has held a commanding position as an authority and critic. From all parts of Canada, and from the United States and England, poets and authors came to him or wrote to him. His judgment, his criticism and his advice were considered invaluable to any aspiring writer. His ready sympathy was always freely given, and more than one Canadian author, now well-known, owes much to Mr. Garvin's advice and direction. He has become, indeed, somewhat of an oracle to the writers. His opinion is known to be truthful, discriminating and always kind.

Mr. Garvin is of distinguished Irish ancestry, but was born in Canada. His family are notable both in Ireland and Canada for their literary and athletic proclivities. J. B. Garvin, editor of the "London Evening Observer," is a cousin of Mr. John Garvin.

It is possibly due to the brilliancy of his exceedingly clever wife, Katherine Hale, that Mr. Garvin has been somewhat thrust into the background, and that this is very much to his liking. A modest, almost shy scholar, he is far more gratified and enthused over his own popularity and celebrity than any notice that might come to himself. With the advent of his two anthologies of Canadian poetry and the publication of his Masterpieces of Canadian authors, his work was necessarily brought to the distinguished notice of discriminating readers. Yet, singularly enough, the editor, author and compiler of these rare books was scarcely known to the

reading public. The authors and the writers and the editors and critics know what John Garvin is doing in a literary way, but the readers of his books knew little of the man himself. This is the first biographical sketch that has been written of John Garvin personally. There has been columns of reviews of his books, both in this country and abroad, but of John Garvin himself nothing so far has been written.

Katherine Hale (Mrs. John Garvin)
Of Mrs. Garvin, on the other hand, much has been written. She is a personality who is constantly and vividly in the public eye. This is possibly due to the fact that she holds a high social position in Toronto, and is known not only as a poet and author, but for her songs and poetry recitals, which are an annual event in the eastern cities of Canada and the United States for a number of years. Mrs. Garvin was editor of the literary page of the Toronto Globe, but after her marriage she retired from active newspaper work. She was president of the "Woman's Canadian Club" at a time when the membership was comparatively small, and while president of that club it became one of the largest, in a membership way, in Canada. She has produced a dozen volumes of verse and prose and is the author of that exquisite book "Canadian Cities of Romance," which is becoming more and more recognized as a work of art, of almost classic value, "richness as fine and rare as a Whistler's."

A fragile and delicate little woman, one marvels at the amount of writing she is able to accomplish, considering the fact that she is almost constantly "on the wing," like a bird who flies from point to point, pausing only long enough to drop a jeweled song. Some idea of the extent of Mrs. Garvin's pro-

duction may be gathered from the fact that during the past twelve months she has had published less than four books: "Canadian Cities of Romance," "Morning in the West," "Life of General V. A. Veale" and "Legends of the St. Lawrence."

A book a year is considered somewhat of an achievement by the average author, and a book a year is a considerable strain mentally, and indeed physically. Yet Mrs. Garvin has written four books this year. Meanwhile also traveling and giving recitals, and returning to her Russell Hill road home, where she and her husband held almost a salon, to which the literary, artistic and wealthy world of Toronto turn as a magnet. Here the delightful Garvins entertain their hosts of interesting friends. Here the place was thrown open for the entertainment of the Canadian Authors' association last year, when the convention drew to Toronto authors and writers from all over Canada.

Mrs. Garvin's poetry places her very definitely in the limited company of real poets of Canada. There is a charm and fragrance about her verse. It is individual and characteristic of her own personality. Airy wisps of thought flutter through her pages, light as birdswings, a tear, a ripple of laughter, the sparkle of a jewel, a dead-end or a butterfly on the edge of a leaf—these seem to flit through the verses of this poet. Brief and strangely fascinating, her lines flash a swift picture or impression that passes as with the flight of a bird.

The Garvins present a strange contrast to each other in a physical way at least. For John Garvin is a big, athletic man, devoted to outdoor sports, an ardent golf player, and radiating athletic health and strength; while Katherine Hale is as delicate as her poems. She weighs only 90 pounds.

Mr. Garvin is a member of the Toronto Board of Trade, and belongs to several of the clubs of that city. Mrs. Garvin, still an active member of the Canadian Women's club, is also a mem-

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ber of the I.O.D.E., the Press and the Fine Arts Club. Both are members of the Canadian Authors' association.

