

Canadian Children's Literature



One hundred twenty-eight years ago, in 1847, the first issue of the first Canadian children's magazine was published. Its name was *The Snow Drop; or, Juvenile Magazine*; its editors, Mrs. Harriet Cheney and her sister Eliza Cushing. New England-born, the sisters had emigrated to Montreal some years earlier and had aided in the cultural development of their new home: they not only contributed material to the famed *Literary Garland* but also, in that magazine's last years, edited it. Each of the co-edited periodicals survived a few years but eventually--in part due, ironically, to American competition--ceased publication. The loss of the *Literary Garland* was soon remedied by the establishment of similar magazines; *The Snow Drop*--almost melted from memory now--was not so fortunate. However, children's literature continued to be written and the trade and educational markets ensured a small but steady outlet for this material through the following decades.

With the issue you hold in your hands, over a century later, another periodical of Canadian children's literature comes into being--but this time analytical not creative, for the adult not the child. *Canadian Children's Literature* is meant to serve those who guide children's reading in schools, in libraries, at home. Whether the child be an infant or a teenager, in kindergarten or Grade XII, in school or out, *CCL* will have material which teachers, librarians and parents will find valuable in dealing with his reading needs and interests.

CCL will provide both authoritative articles and in-depth reviews of Canadian children's literature: science, drama, poetry, fiction, history, music, art, text-books, activity books, anthologies, picture books, etc. Aids to teaching, analysis of authorial values and biases, essential criticism: these will be a few of *CCL*'s concerns. We will also publish various bibliographies of children's books, among them a complete and annotated annual bibliography of Canadian children's literature. Anything written for Canadian children -- in either French or English -- will be the object of our attention.

In this issue, articles on authors from 1848 to the present are included: R. M. Ballantyne, Morley Callaghan, Gabrielle Roy. In a separate article, another writer presents and evaluates Canadian reference and informational books for children, while a fifth piece explores the possibilities for children's poetry--in a special physical format--in the library. The range of subject areas covered in the reviews is even wider. Fiction and poetry, picture books and history, botany and sports: each area is represented, in either English or French, in this initial issue of *CCL*. In every instance, important questions about Canadian children's literature are raised and relevant comments are made.

Through such extensive and intensive analysis of Canadian children's literature, *CCL* is set up to serve you by providing much-needed resource material in an essential but neglected area. To this end we have enlisted the active support of our advisory Editorial Board.

Canadian children's literature is of deep concern to all of us. *CCL* can be a valuable tool in making this literature more accessible to its intended audience. We intend to participate in the continuing growth of Canadian children's literature while providing an essential commentary on its development as a whole. We welcome your response.

JOHN R. SORFLEET