

Wilson Macdonald

By

Winnifred Reeve (Onoto Watanna)

One of the greatest of Canadian poets is in our city. He came here at the invitation of the Tan-nis-uk chapter of the I.O.D.E. For a couple of weeks he has been rehearsing his opera, "In Sunny France," which was produced last night at the Grand theater. Wherever this opera has appeared and incidentally it has been produced in Toronto, Vancouver, Victoria and numerous other well known cities, praise has been bestowed upon it. - Hector Charlesworth, musical critic of the Toronto Saturday night, and generally conceded to be one of the foremost critics in Canada, in a review of the opera wrote as follows:

"The solid merits of Mr. MacDonald as a writer of tuneful and amusing lyrics need little advertisement for his fellow-Canadians. It is these lyrics which are superior in quality to those of most recent musical comedies emanating from Broadway that give "In Sunny France" its claim to critical attention and public support. The framework of the play seems to have been devised to give it a most effective background. The tale is fantastic and the fresh, melodious music and the facile and felicitous verses carry the show.

"Mr. MacDonald shows excellent gifts as a light comedian in the role of a London Johnny and his three songs "Johnny from London Town," "The Taxi Girl" and "Legerdemain" are capital, especially the latter which enables him to show his unique gifts in parlor magic."

It is at best a nerve wracking and thankless task to rehearse amateurs, for the reason that only the most talented among them are punctilious in keeping their engagements and coming regularly to rehearsals. There are always some who flout rules and regulations that in a professional show are stiffly enforced. In the case of amateurs a girl comes one day to rehearsal; she is not there the next. At the eleventh hour she throws down a role in which she has been trained and drilled for days. It is folly to expect an amateur production to be of the finished quality of the professional. Far be it from me to criticize the actors in a play of this sort; on the other hand, I would not condemn the play—which, after all represents the sincere and arduous labor of the author—while unctuously flattering those who will be here after the poet is gone.

And concerning poets, I will quote from what Dr. Robert Norwood, M.A., Litt. D., wrote about Wilson MacDonald in the Philadelphia Record:

"It is not easy to measure the

After Nearly Twenty Years of Suffering

Quebec Lady Finds Relief in Dodd's Kidney Pills.

Miss A. Blanchette suffered from rheumatism and bad headaches.

St. Edouard, Que., April 4.—(Special)—The sterling value of Dodd's Kidney Pills as a household remedy is shown by the following statement from Miss A. Blanchette, a well-known resident here.

"I am sixty-two years old and have suffered for nearly twenty years from rheumatism. I also used to have headaches and was often tired and irritable. After taking four boxes of Dodd's Kidney Pills I got relief. I

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genius of Wilson MacDonald. As an artist he is beyond reproach.

"For one week MacDonald has been our guest. Philadelphia gave him instant welcome. Before an audience that crowded the auditorium of the Parish House, he read his unforgettable poems. It was a distinguished audience, too."

"MacDonald has a profile not unlike Dante's, and like Dante, he has known hell. It would be impossible for such a finely strung instrument as MacDonald's personality to escape the throb of pain. His delicate perceptions have set him forever aside for the height of joy and the deep of sorrow. Out of these agitations spring the poet's music and message. The mark of destiny is on him.

"His audiences were brilliant and representative of the best thought in this city, of widespread love of the arts.

"We return him to Canada and say to our neighbors across the border:

"Be kind to MacDonald. He is one of the greatest poets of the Anglo-Saxon race. In technique, in style, in creative magic, he is the equal of any of your poets.

"Do not stifle his genius by indifference. Honor him. Let him feel your pride in him. A poet is of greater value to you, Canada, than a Wilfred Laurier, a John A. MacDonald. A poet more represents your glory of soul and mind than a notable banker, a successful stock broker, a rich farmer.

"A poet is your greatest asset—greater than your mines, your farms, your fisheries, your markets.

"The lad with the coat of many colors—the dreamer of many dreams—is the portent of your destiny, O Canada! and to him shall your song one day come at his enthronement above the seats of the money changers and of those who buy and sell.

"We give you back Wilson MacDonald in gratitude for a week of inspiration from the holiness of beauty."