



# In the Editor's Confidence

**A**N ARTICLE in *The Bookman* on *The Working Habits of Authors* causes us to wonder whether the Canadian writers we know are ignorant of the publicity value of mild idiosyncrasy, or whether we, as an occasional chronicler of their habits, are a total loss.

We are told, for instance, that Maud Diver, the English novelist, "writes on her knee in an armchair" and insists that the chair be out of doors regardless of the weather." She also "shares to the full the Indian belief that something living must watch a man at work if he wants to come near perfection.

Then we are reminded of Proust writing in bed in a cork-lined room in Paris; of Amy Lowell writing all night "with only an open fire, a cat and a box of cigars for company"; of Booth Tarkington writing in a bathrobe; of Demetra Vaka thinking out all her plots lying flat on her back on a couch in a shaded room; of somebody writing with a parrot on his shoulder; of another who has a secret studio; of Homer Croy, who always takes off his shoes before he starts to work by way of resisting the temptation to get up and take a stroll.

**T**HINK of the interest we could work up on this page if Grattan O'Leary would only work in a diving suit on the floor of the Rideau Canal, or if Martha Banning Thomas would keep a pet elephant. It is true that we once caught Fred Edwards working in an open-neck shirt, but he spoiled it by announcing that he had lost his collar-stud. Charles G. D. Roberts does walk up and down when he is thinking, but there is nothing extraordinary about that. So does a policeman.

It just seems that most *MacLean* contributors insist on behaving like ordinary business or domesticated people. We must speak to them about it.



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**K**NOWING now how we feel on this matter, you will understand the warmth of our welcome to Bonnycastle Dale, whose vivid story of the seal hunters appears in this issue. Mr. Dale, who lives at Middle Clyde, Nova Scotia, is a veteran writer and an enthusiastic naturalist. Patient vigils with a camera have given him an amazing collection of photographs of wild life. But in view of what is written above we bestow our special blessing upon him for being the only Canadian author to be in the confidence of an infant moose. In case of doubt, consult the picture across the way.

**A**NOTHER interesting point brought out in *The Bookman's* article is that a good many of the authors quoted confess that they find writing very hard work. Fanny Hurst laments: "I'm not happy when I'm writing, but I'm more unhappy when I'm not." It takes her from six to eight weeks to write a short story, and it is always with reluctance that she unhoods her typewriter. Wilbur Daniel Steele declares: "If there is anyone alive who likes to write short stories, either he is a queer one or else they aren't very good stories. There is a time when a tale is a fine and beautiful creature, a masterpiece without flaw—and that is just before you sit down to write it." And then there is Stephen Vincent Benet's answer to the reporter who enquired how it felt to write *John Brown's Body*:—"Just about like giving birth to a grand piano."

In this connection, most Canadian authors who create saleable material have similar feelings. There are not many Edgar Wallaces who can dictate a story while they are shaving.

**H**OWEVER, while this is all very pleasant, it doesn't get us very far. Getting back to business, Reece H. Hague, who outlines the want of a new road to the Pacific Coast (on page three) is a freelance writer of Victoria, B.C. He has travelled widely in northern and interior British Columbia, and is thoroughly familiar with the territories referred to in his article.

"The Room with the Iron Shutters" comes to an end in this issue, and the citizenry can now settle down to its pursuits in a normal manner—until April 1, when fresh excitement will be caused by "The Green Dove," a new and shorter serial by R. V. Gery.

*H. Napier Moore*