

**As Others See Us:**  
**Being the Diary of a Canadian**  
**Debutante**



“Oh! the glory of it—to rescue the man I loved.” (See page 298)

To

MY MOST PATIENT CRITIC

# PREFACE

The purpose of this story is to form some impression of salient facts and tendencies in Canadian life, and to show its strength, and through its strength, its weakness. So I planned before the gods ruled for war, and the soldiers began to write history with the sword which, despite Lytton, is proved infinitely mightier than the pen.

However, here is the book, and I hope the reader will not be sorry to meet again old friends. Elsie has—though she does not intend it—a serious purpose.

The English have never truly understood the Colonial.

In May of last year (1914) a writer in the *Times* said that he had lived in Canada for a number of years, and was satisfied that Canada was becoming Americanized, because the Canadian talked with an American accent. It was possible that what he saw and regarded with alarm is what I have here drawn in gentle satire. Society is our bane; and a new society is certain to be, in many respects, intolerable. The craze for, and hunt after, society is not limited to any country; it is a world-wide weakness. The Snob is—as Thackeray showed us—ubiquitous.

As to my references to the Spread-Eagle citizens of the United States, I have had access to two books, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*, by John H. Stark, Boston, published by himself, and *The True History of the American Revolution*, by Sydney George Fisher, (Lippincott). These are remarkable books; and a

knowledge of the contents of either would go far to enable an Englishman to measure the Canadian's attitude towards the United States. The story these books tell parallels that set forth in the press, as shown by the onslaught of German hordes into Belgium. The outstanding difference is that whereas the Germans cry "Kultur" the Yankees yelled "Liberty." The Archives of the United States tell of 30,000 cases of outrage against the Loyalists which, I fancy, is a greater number than can be laid at the door of the Huns.

The books mentioned are significant of a popular move. That this move should have originated in the "Land of the Free" is remarkable. That popular appreciation should have been held from the Canadian so long is deplorable. That recognition has been withheld from Canadians is shown by the after-dinner speech made a few years ago at New York, by a noble Lord. The gentleman I refer to is reported to have said in effect: "The Revolutionists would have been unworthy of their ancestors had they not taken up arms." The implied inference is that the Loyalists were unworthy of their ancestors.

I do not claim the right to speak for any one but myself, but as all my ancestors were in America before the Revolution, few have a better claim. Canada is peopled by a sound stock, somewhat lacking in philosophy. It is an important asset to civilization and, as has been proved in Flanders, an heroic constituent of the British Empire. But our people need a truer appreciation of proper values; when they have this, they will be second to none among the peoples of the world. But at present we do not lack that virtue which finds reward within itself.

The reader is asked to believe that this book was designed and largely written before August, 1914.

GOOSEQUILL.

Toronto, November 1st, 1915.

# AS OTHERS SEE US

BEING THE DIARY OF A CANADIAN DEBUTANTE

DECEMBER 15TH.

Mumsie is a dear, and I am going to put all about her in this diary. Mumsie says I am an old-fashioned girl (how little she knows me!), but I'll be old-fashioned enough anyhow to keep a diary. It will be useful to read about the people, and parties, and things I'm going to enjoy. Yes, enjoy is the word. Dances and afternoon teas, and those things the rich people do, I'm going to have my share of. I'm glad I'm a girl, especially when one has such a good aunt as Mumsie. She was nothing more than a friend of my mother—the mother I never knew. And, I am sure, the best of friends!

Just to think I am really to spend a winter in this great Canadian City! I shall call it the City of Mammon. After my village home that seems the only name for it, and there is evidence of wealth everywhere. I almost gasp when I think of what some things I see must have cost, the silk dresses, the great hats with ostrich plumes, the motors. And I must confess to being dazed when I came out of the station. The bells clanged so loudly and the engines puffed as if they wished to specially frighten me; but they didn't, that is, not much. Perhaps it is that the station held the noises in under its great, glass roof; but the noise and the buffeting, and the many people in a hurry made a strange confusion. At home the station roof is the vault of Heaven, so that we score sometimes in our

village. And when we got into the street the cars, the motors, and the lights flashing here and there—it was all so fairy-like and heavenly that—Oh! it is good to be alive.

Mumsie has given me such a big room with an outlook over the street. I feel almost as Cinderella must have felt when at the Prince's Ball before the midnight bell. I wonder if I shall be asked to any balls! But of course I shall. If Uncle should try to be an old fogey—but he won't.

That is enough to write about for the first day. No, I must put down more about Mumsie. When she met me at the station and took me in her arms and kissed me, it seemed as if her heart opened and I fell right in; and when she spoke I felt as if I had known her voice all my life. She had a hundred things to ask about myself: how she thought of them all I can't imagine. She is full of fun, with lots of amusing stories, or at least she seems to make fun out of almost anything. She has reddish hair—a poet would no doubt call it golden—which she does like the Queen, and her voice when she gets talking is generally loud, though the louder it gets the nicer it sounds, it is so cheery. My uncle, her husband, Mr. George Somers, is a largish man with roast-beef cheeks and gray hair, though he is not the least bit old looking. He has a straight nose, a full and polished forehead, and a cropped, white moustache. He is a lawyer, and has a voice for humbugging with. I like him, and there is a twinkle in his eye.

P.S. I am so happy!

DECEMBER 16TH.



I looked out of my window this morning and the trees glistened prettily in the sunlight. I could not help thinking of the Fairy Godmother. But I mustn't think these thoughts. I am a grown-up person of eighteen. Though it doesn't matter what I write here, as I am never going to show this diary to anybody, not even to the beloved Mumsie.

After breakfast we, that is, Mumsie and I, set out on a shopping expedition. I knew them all by name: Horace's, Lewis's, and Carlisle's; I had at home pored over their advertisements so often. And just to think I was really going to visit them and buy lots of things! Dad had given me one hundred dollars, saying I must dress myself properly. One hundred dollars! I have never before had so much money to spend. Poor Dad! he must find it so dull living in the country, and his patients are such poor pay.

We went to Lewis's first and bought an evening dress and the duckiest little hat that ever was, and after that we went to Horace's. This I knew was really the fashionable shop. Mumsie said we were to buy a suit; she said I would need one. Indeed, I already felt I was shabby, and was sorry I had not put on my new hat at Lewis's and had my old one sent home.

I gasped as we entered Horace's, the dresses were all so grand, and there were so many ladies present. No person paid any attention to us at first; but when they did they looked at Mumsie first and then at me, and their eyes (I think) lingered on me.

After we had made our purchases, Mumsie took me to a ribbon counter, not far away from a most beautifully dressed woman. Her ermine stole did not hide a diamond and sapphire brooch

at her throat. Her blue velvet suit was in the latest fashion. She was large and dark. Her face was rounded, and lofty eyebrows made her eyes appear prominent. A cold, deliberate manner gave the impression of absolute control. She bowed to Mumsie and my heart went into my mouth. I am silly to be so fluttered and shy. The strange lady advanced and held her hand out to Mumsie.

“How do you do Mrs. Somers? How is Mr. Somers? I hope you are all well.”

“Quite well, thank you,” replied Mumsie, not too genially I thought.

“You will take a hand in our Ragamuffins’ Feast, won’t you?”

“Certainly, I would not miss for the world,” answered Auntie.

Mumsie’s manner was more formal than I had yet known her use, and it struck me the lady had something on her mind.

“I suppose you are doing your Christmas shopping early out of consideration for the help.”

“No, not exactly,” replied Mumsie, “I am helping my friend here. Elsie, let me introduce you to Mrs. Lien. This is my niece, Elsie Travers, who is to spend the winter with me. She is a debutante.”

Mrs. Lien flashed me a critical glance, and said rather grandly: “I have no doubt Miss Travers will enjoy herself. It must be very interesting getting her outfit.”

When she had gone I wondered whether her manner had wounded or gladdened me. I had received something of a shock.

At dinner I said to Uncle: "Who is Mrs. Lien?"

Uncle repeated the question with a smile growing on his lips and the merriest twinkle in his eyes.

"My dear, one would think you were Mrs. Grundy herself," laughed Mumsie, "by the severe way in which you asked the question."

"Mrs. Lien is a Yankee; so we know nothing of her antecedents. She is the wife of Stephen Lien, who on his part," said Uncle slowly "is the son of his father."

I suppose I showed I was puzzled.

"Mr. Lien, senior," continued Uncle, "was an English attorney who came to this country in the forties and accommodated the farmers by lending them money."

"How very considerate of him," I claimed, while Auntie looked oddly at Uncle.

"Yes, he used consideration and discrimination also, for he was a master hand at selecting those farmers whose lands were good, and who were themselves less capable."

There was now a curious smile, cynical I think it should be called, on Uncle's lips. I did not know what to say, so I said nothing, which I have decided is sometimes the wisest thing to say.

“He soon owned the farm,” continued Uncle.

“That is a very clever way of making money—” I began.

“Elsie!” cried Mumsie in horror.

What had I said to startle her?

“There was a period of bad crops,” said Uncle, reflectively. “A humane man who would lend money to farmers, a man with a heart and a conscience would be a godsend in a new country, but unfortunately Lien pere was not a humane man, and his son, and his son’s wife, and their bright boy, Charlie——”

“Hush!” said Auntie.

I wonder why!

“Elsie,” said Uncle gravely, “we owe a debt of gratitude to our forefathers. This land is to-day drunk with prosperity, yet every foot of our broad acres, these miles and miles of fertile fields, have been won by the sweat of toiling manhood, supported by the tears of trusting, oftentimes gentle, womanhood. I am afraid the fruit of all these sacrifices are not falling into the hands of those who are worthiest of them.”

“That might be said of any land,” objected Mumsie. “I suppose all land was wild once upon a time.”

“In Europe the land was cleared two or three thousand years ago; our land has been cleared within the last few generations,” retorted Uncle. “I don’t suppose our ancestors in the British Isles or in Normandy found it much hardship to live in log huts, to do their own washing, or to forego their morning paper.”

“That is where the Lien money came from—from grinding these poor farmers’?” I asked.

“Yes.”

I was not sorry for the reply, because it showed I was not wrong in my instinctive dislike of the good lady.

“And what does the present Mr. Lien do?”

“He’s a stockbroker. When a rich man dies and leaves a son of no particular abilities they make a broker of him. The stock market covers a multitude of sins.” Uncle was smiling again.

“Does it?” I asked innocently.

“Oh, yes, a multitude of sins. Now one may not keep a tavern and sell booze——”

“George!” exclaimed Mumsie with mock horror.

“I wanted to be frank, my dear.”

“You always do,” she complained cheerily.

“One may not keep a tavern or even be a brewer and keep respectability, but it is quite in order to hold stock in a brewery company or hotel.”

“What a cynic you are,” I cried.

“And what we have come to now! Old man Lien was kept in his place in the old days. He was a plain man with a hard fist. They are gentry. The son and his son’s wife lord it to-day. But the foundation of their fortune and proud estate was the life-blood

of men and women whose veins ran with better blood, who had truer gentility than they can ever claim with all their social rudeness.”

“But Uncle,” I pleaded, “because the old man was a skin-flint, you would not visit his sins on the son and the son’s wife, would you?”

“ ‘The sins of the father,’ my young lady. I am no more charitable than my Maker. Without his money old Lien would never have had any notice taken of him; and, if you pay obeisance at his shrine, and drink his claret cup, you may, if your imagination be strong enough, taste the salt of tears shed long ago.”

“George! What a Tory!”

“Thank God!” replied Uncle, and shaking his finger at me: “Remember, Elsie, if Belle takes you to call on Mrs. Lien, you call on her money, on her father’s guilty money, remember that!”

“George, you dear old ass. Why do you put such ideas into the child’s head?” (Child indeed!) Then turning to me: “Don’t pay any attention to what he says, Elsie. Old man Lien—as your Uncle calls him—may have made his start that way, but the great fortune they now have has grown from wise investment.”

“Exactly, if I sow a kernel of wheat and it produces twenty, it is the same wheat,” retorted Uncle.

“Nonsense!”

That was the end of it for a time, as we rose from the table. Mumsie put her arm about me and said: "Pay no attention to George, to what he says, when in a teasing mood. He's incorrigible!" and she made a grimace at him which seemed to please him, for he seized her hand and squeezed it.

"I like him," I said, when she and I were alone, and I think my tribute pleased her.

## DECEMBER 17TH.

Last night after I went to bed I thought and thought. At last I am really "in the world." I had read so often of Mrs. Lien in the society news in the city papers, that to be actually living in the house with one who would dare to attack her is cheering. And Mumsie is so glorious and dignified. Hers is a native dignity. I still feel as if her kindness were all about me like a glorious cloak. I wish I could put my present, overflowing happiness into cold storage, so that I could enjoy it bit by bit in after years.

Immediately after breakfast this morning Mumsie told me she was giving the day to the work of preparing for the Ragamuffins' Feast. Mumsie is a woman of capacity and makes no false moves.

The first thing she did was to go to the telephone.

"Mrs. Mount, this is Belle Somers speaking. I wish you to give me some lettuce from your conservatories for the poor boys' feast."

\* \* \* \* \*

“Six heads.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“Oh! I’m sorry. I’ll tell Mrs. Lien,” and she banged on the receiver, and sat on the seat beside me, her face twitching with annoyance.

“What is it?” I asked impulsively.

“Wait a minute.”

The telephone rang again.

“Yes.” Mumsie answered.

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“Yes, Mrs. Lien is managing it this year.”

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“All right, you’ll send them to the hall to my care.”

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And again the receiver was put back on the hook and Mumsie, trembling with agitation, sat again beside me.

“I know how to fix that woman,” she declared. “I told her I would report to Mrs. Lien, and then, my dear, she promised not only to send the six heads of lettuce I asked for, but a turkey and a dozen Charlotte russes as well.” In delivering the last sentence Mumsie’s chin protruded in a manner I judged to be an unconscious imitation of Mrs. Mount.



We went to the hall where a great many ladies were working among hampers of food. They all seemed nice and genially kind as Mumsie introduced me. We all got to work, laid tables, and arranged the food. One of the women who seemed to take a special interest in me was Mrs. Bassett. She has a large nose with prominent eyebrows, her chin is pointed, and her mouth drawn into a perpetual smile. I suppose she is daily described as aristocratic looking. But I know what she will look like at eighty with her teeth gone—a witch. In the old days she'd have hardly escaped burning. She told me she had two daughters; one my age, Ethel, and hoped we would be friends.

I found the good ladies very uninteresting, though Mrs. Bassett, with her sharp eyes, is capable of humour at times. Nothing was said about society—which is growing my chief interest—and they dressed dowdily.

Mrs. Lien in all her grandeur, came in while we worked, asked a few questions and departed. She did not even nod to me, though she must have seen me. I am inclined to believe that to be kind means to be commonplace. Mrs. Lien seems to be *neither*.

I was waiting with impatience to talk to Uncle on the subject of Mrs. Mount, but succeeded in restraining myself until Uncle had finished his first helping of meat. My idea was that, his hunger appeased, I could get him off to a better start. I asked innocently enough: "Uncle, do you know Mrs. Mount?"

His eyes met mine and then settled on his wife.

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