general heading 'Philosophy' subdivided into 'Logic' and under the general heading 'Works' subdivided into 'A System of Logic.' In the first location approximately one hundred and twenty items are also listed and in the second roughly ninety.

The Mill Editorial Project at the University of Toronto has produced first-rate, scholarly volumes. Laine's checklist, which has partly resulted from that editorial endeavour, is certainly to be welcomed, especially when it is compared to other attempts. In the last two decades, no doubt, much searching and verification have gone into its impressive compilation. It is a shame nonetheless to find that the product of such accumulated labour is hampered by limited subject access.

CARL SPADONI


This long-awaited book reveals quickly why it took fifteen years to compile. The great volume of Carman's correspondence, divided among so many repositories, makes the task of editing any selection tedious and prolonged. Professor Gundy has clearly had a great deal of work and is to be commended for pursuing it so carefully and comprehensively, as is McGill-Queen's for undertaking the project with the prodigality that has obviously financed this handsome and well-illustrated volume.

Gundy informs us in the first paragraph of his sympathetic introduction that this is a limited selection of letters: 'There are, in fact, at least three times as many extant Carman letters as those here presented....' His primary criterion for selection seems to have been 'to let Carman tell his own life story in an edited selection of his letters.' And that is what this book amounts to – pieces of autobiography patched together by the editor. It is autobiography on a very intimate level, the more so for the poet being, at least for most of his life, unaware of the possibility of his letters being valuable or likely to be published. Furthermore, the selection is chronologically comprehensive, from his adolescent letters to his parents to one written three days before his death, thus supplying a record of a developing personality before the beginning of his long and difficult literary career. These letters also prove the maintenance of Carman's connections with Canada as he moved about in the United States.

As autobiography this book is excellent; yet it is only as autobiography that it can be criticized. The editor has been careful to include letters to each significant correspondent and about all important areas of the poet's thought, such as unitrinianism and theosophy. While these letters accumulate to recreate Carman's personality – and a remarkably pleasant and engaging personality is found therein – the wide scope of the editorial concept inhibits the exploration by the reader of these ideas to any useful depth. It seems to me that this is primarily Carman's fault, if one judges by these letters, for many are superficial and do little more than express the poet's positive or negative opinions with negligible rhetorical support. And here one cannot help comparing Gundy's edition with Desmond Pacey's edition of F.P. Grove's letters, with which it has much in common, from the surprising similarities between the letters written by both men while touring Canada to give readings to the destruction by both Catherine Grove and Mary Perry King of their more intimate letters. In
Grove’s letters one finds a willingness — even a necessity — to express and explain his opinions to his correspondents; in Carman’s letters one finds too much taken for granted. Despite Gundy’s well-researched background material, presented variously in one main introduction, fifteen section introductions, appendixes, and many detailed notes, a reader is kept at a distance from Carman’s intellectual process. And one begins to wonder how profound that process was.

Thus, while this book presents a fine overall view of the poet’s life, it does not greatly enrich its readers on specific subjects (with the exception of Carman’s politics), and this is a weakness that is certain to be lamented by academics interested in pinning Carman down on certain themes. This weakness results both from Carman’s shallow, chatty letters and from the autobiographical criterion. Thankful for the 630 letters that are here, I wonder how many of the 1900 others are specific enough to be of academic value. But to identify this as a weakness in a book that indicates its strength to be autobiography might seem to be missing Gundy’s point; it is rather a weakness in Carman criticism and one that survives this selection of letters. It might even survive the publication of all Carman’s letters. However, I hope, and I expect Professor Gundy hopes, that this book will encourage the publication of more, shorter selections on specific literary, philosophical, and aesthetic topics. The very valuable alphabetical and chronological cross references to Carman’s publications and interests that Gundy supplies in the index do as much as could be expected to make these letters useful and accessible in this way. Still, I would have liked to know more about the contents of those other letters — at least enough to know whether I am asking for more than Carman provided, or for more than Gundy and McGill-Queen’s provided. This seems a fair request when the score is 1900 to 630, but I recognize that the expansion of the Appendix to provide these details would have been at the expense of some letters.

With this functional criticism out of the way, I must say that this volume achieves its purpose, not only with pleasing taste, but with considerable scholarship. This is without doubt the best technical presentation of letters yet published in Canada, and it will provide a standard of quality that future editors and publishers will have difficulty surpassing. It brings a poet to life at a time when his poetry too is showing signs of being resuscitated. Finally, the editorial and literary expertise brought to bear on the letters by Professor Gundy confirms that Carman has certainly been well served by his literary executors.

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A Scottish minister’s son who became the popular Governor General of Canada during the Depression, John Buchan pursued a varied career with prodigious energy. Barrister, editor, administrator, and politician, Buchan wrote more than one hundred and twenty books and roughly twelve hundred articles and introductions to books.