

IN REMEMBRANCE LLOYD CARMICHAEL (1894-1971)

by Elizabeth Cruickshank, Regina

Our first conversation with Lloyd Carmichael took place in 1913, in a room at Teachers' College in Fredericton, New Brunswick. Our last conversation took place in a hospital ward two days before he passed away. In each case the topic of discussion was plants. For plants were a lifetime interest of Lloyd's, an interest which had been whetted when, as a boy, he shared with his brother a diploma awarded at the Provincial Exhibition for the best school collection of wild flowers.

At Teachers' College in Fredericton in 1913, prospective teachers had met to choose an editorial board for the monthly magazine. Lloyd Carmichael was given the job of Business Manager. After elections were over, students were sharing information on locations where certain species might be found for their botany folio assignment. Lloyd enthusiastically offered to act as guide to haunts of rarer specimens. He knew the area well as he had taken his secondary education in the capital city. So we accepted his help, and found him a charming guide, pausing frequently as one autumn bloom after another was encountered to point to it and quote a line or poem on the subject written by his cousin, Bliss Carman:

The palish asters along the wood,
A lyric touch of the solitude . . .

He had been steeped in poetry by a sensitive mother, a poet herself.

Lloyd was also familiar with every woodland path near his birthplace at Clifton, on the beautiful Kennebecasis River, and he shared Carman's feeling for "The Joys of the Road", a favourite and oft-quoted selection. Nearly sixty years later, in his hospital room, he wanted to hear about the plants that were in bloom in the recently-dedicated acres of native prairie in Wascana Centre. We described one field completely covered with white

daisies and his lucid mind remembered a field of those same beautiful chamomile blossoms he had photographed near King's Park years ago. He had entered it in a photographic contest promoted by the Regina Natural History Society. The field of flowers, like those in Wordsworth's line, "Ten thousand saw I at a glance", flashed upon his inward eye—and then his eyes closed. Sedation had taken effect, easing his constant pain.

In the years between these two conversations, Lloyd's psalm of life, his simple steadfast faith, had remained intact. His love of beauty and his appreciation of its significance in the visual world about us and in literature, made the choice of Canon Turnbull in the eulogy at his funeral service illustrating Lloyd's quest in life, most fitting. Canon Turnbull chose the children's hymn:

All things bright and beautiful,
All things great and small,
All things wise and wonderful—
The Lord God made them all.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty
Who has made all things well.

Lloyd Carmichael's years were all active and earnest years, even to the last. After receiving his science degree from the University of Manitoba, he spent nearly half a century teaching in Saskatchewan schools at Conquest, Tisdale and Regina. While he was teaching science at Scott Collegiate in Regina, his laboratory long after school hours was a magnet for interested students. While at Scott he co-authored with J. E. Adair a textbook for Grade Twelve, *Science Discovery and Progress*. When deafness brought communication problems to the classroom he moved to serve in the Correspondence School. Later, with an



Saskatchewan Natural History Museum Photo

Lloyd Carmichael in Museum Herbarium

operation restoring his hearing, he returned to teaching, this time in up-grading classes.

His book, *Prairie Wildflowers*, illustrated with the author's photographs, is used as a textbook in Saskatchewan schools. He also prepared popular booklets with line drawings on the plants of special areas. He had hoped to compile a volume on all the plants of his adopted province, but years of illness prevented him from doing this.

For seven years, from 1948 to 1955, Lloyd Carmichael was the dedicated editor of the *Blue Jay* magazine. When he relinquished that office, he ex-

pressed the hope that the *Blue Jay* would remain a magazine covering widest fields of nature and stressing its preservation for naturalists who love wildlife for its own sake, not just as a scientific study.

In editorials, like Burroughs, he named the three most precious resources of life: friends, books and nature, the greatest — nature. He quoted Alan Devoe who declared a naturalist has two worlds, the far and the near, the great and the small. In the one he can be a big man and know lots. In the other he must find himself little and very ignorant. But he can find there, too, adventures for all



Saskatchewan Natural History Museum Photo

A field of chamomile

his days. "Most of us", commented the editor, "belong to the little world. We get satisfaction in the knowledge that we, too, can derive happiness by merely observing the stories that nature unfolds to us in our backyard, in our meadow and by our roadside."

We can recall many instances of his desire to share his own happiness, prompted by love for his fellow men. Let me cite one. A fellow Maritimer, assisting him in planning one of the nature trails, remarked on a plant so missed in the West, the Jack-in-the-pulpit. Later that year Lloyd was visiting his old home. It was past the plant's blooming time, so he brought back corms, kept them for the winter in his unheated garage, and when spring came presented three stalwart "Jacks" to the exile from the East.

Lloyd served as president of the Regina Natural History Society, which honoured him with a life membership. He was a charter member of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. His extensive collection of plant specimens he donated to the Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, and he

became honorary curator of its herbarium.

When illness curtailed his wanderings he took up brush and paints to preserve on canvas scenes that pleased him and to portray favourite plants whose personality could not be captured in photographs. His last years were made especially happy when one of his grandchildren found a similar joy in painting and won awards for her work.

Through the years, Lloyd had built a storehouse of joy which sustained him to his last hour. He had woven with strong threads a web of life with a bright and golden filling. To his widow and family we extend on behalf of all members of the Society, sincere sympathy in the loss of a truly great person who left behind him glorious footprints on the sands of time. Quoting again from Carman's "The Joys of the Road", we take leave of a friend, naturalist, author and artist:

O leaves, O leaves, I am one with
you,

Of the mould and the sun and the
wind and the dew!