

CANADIAN IDYLLS.

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

BY W. KIRBY.

"Victoria!—may you rule us long,
And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say :
"She wrought her people lasting good."

TENNYSON.

PRELUDE.

A CALM of days had rested on the broad
Unruffled waters of Ontario,
Which in their bosom all night held the stars
Now vanishing before the morning beams.
Forerunners of the day, like Uhlan spears,
Chasing the night's dark shadows far away.
The sun was rising seaward of the point
Of a low promontory thick with trees,
Which, like the sacred bush by Moses seen
Were all ablaze with unconsuming fire.

A smooth horizon cut with clear divide
The sky above it from the sea below,
Each touching other, save one spot of white
Where stood a glistening sail caught by the sun
And held becalmed upon the distant verge.
Landward the orchards were in bloom, the peach
In red and pink, the apples white and red,
While every bush, after its kind, in flower,
Wrought once again the miracle of spring
And showed God's wisdom, love and power divine

A breezeless night had filled the trees and grass
With heavy dew that sparkled in the sun,
Like summer snow so thick and white it lay—
A barefoot lad brushed through it singing blythe,
Leaving a track behind him as he ran,
And drove the lowing kine full uddered home,
Where stood a rosy maid in shortened gown
That showed a foot elastic as the fawn's—
With dimpled arms across her milking pail—
She called her favourite cows by soft pet names
Which each one knew, and gently breathing came
And round the maiden stood with great calm eyes,
Waiting their turn to fill her snowy pail.

The glorious waters lay serene and blue—
Some white winged gulls flapped lazily the air,
Showing their under pinions as they wheeled
In circuit round and round, keen eyed to see
The luckless fish they seize and bear away—