

I turn to thee, Helvetia! wondrous land
Of ice-crown'd summits, torrents, lakes—how grand,
How exquisite thy scenes—I wander o'er,
In pleasant thought, thy hills and vales once more;
And on thro' passes deep in Alpine snow,
Northward to German Fatherland I go.
In fancy sail the wide and winding Rhine,
Between the castled banks that bear the vine,
And watch entranc'd Cologne's Cathedral vast,
Sublimest monument of storied past,
Noblest of fanes—in thought again I see
The pillar'd aisles, their stately majesty,
The dim and lofty roof: I wander near
The great high altar, and in fancy hear
The organ's pealing tones; again I tread,
With solemn mien, where sleep the mighty dead.
With hasty steps I pass and hurried glance
O'er Belgian meads, the Netherlands and France;
Thro' bright and happy scenes—at length I gain
The gay and queenly city by the Seine,
Where mirth abounds, "and youth and pleasure meet,
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet."
Fain a brief space within its walls I'd dwell,
Its charms, attractions, joys, I fain would tell—
But time forbids, and with regretful sigh
I bid these varied scenes a fond good-bye.
Homeward I turn; wherever I may roam,
To me the best and dearest place is home.
When far from kin in lands beyond the sea,
Full oft in thought, my home, I turned to thee!
Waft me kind winds, sweet Zephyrs, waft me o'er
Hill, vale and plain to Rosseau's sunlit shore;
I turn to Rosseau's lake with longing eyes,
Where Maplehurst enthron'd in beauty lies.
Thy scenes, Muskoka! haunt my dreamy gaze,
Where erst I spent a few and happy days,
Where nature clad in brilliant summer dress,
Has simple charms, but pleases none the less.
There stalwart husbandmen by constant toil
Reap a scant livelihood from barren soil;
There laughing wavelets kiss the rocky isles,
And merry sport the fleeting hour beguiles.
Fair Canada! within thy vast domain
Of mountain, river, forest, lake and plain,
Are many beauties passing dear to me,
In rich profusion strewn from sea to sea.
When far away on distant alien shore,
Sweet native land, I loved thee but the more,
Then thou wert dearer far than ere before.

In autumn evenings pond'ring—
As joys of summer die—
My thoughts far backward wand'ring,
On wings of fancy fly,
Where golden strands, in distant lands,
By sunlit waters lie.
Afar to fairest islands,
Girt by the tropic main;
To green and palmy highlands,
The boundless ocean plain:
O'er land and sea, in memory,
I wander once again.

Toronto.

ERNEST C. MACKENZIE.

ADAM LINDSAY GORDON.

CANADA, like Australia, is a young country which aspires to a national literature, and some account of a typical poet of the latter country may be of interest to the people of the former. Gordon was not a born Australian. To quote from Marcus Clarke's preface to his collected poems: "Adam Lindsay Gordon was the son of an officer in the English army, and was educated at Woolwich in order that he might follow the profession of his family. At the time when he was a cadet there was no sign of either of the two great wars which were about to call forth the strength of English arms, and, like many other men of his day, he quitted his prospects of service and emigrated. He went to South Australia and started as a sheep farmer. His efforts were attended with failure; he lost his capital, and, owning nothing but a love for horsemanship and a head full of Browning and Shelley, plunged into the varied life which gold-mining, 'over-landing,' and cattle-driving affords. From this experience he emerged to light in Melbourne as the best amateur steeplechase rider in the colonies. The victory he won for Major Baker in 1868, when he rode 'Babbler' for the cup steeplechase, made him popular, and the almost simultaneous publication of his last volume of poems gave him welcome entrance to the houses of all who had pretensions to literary taste. The reputation of the book spread to England, and Major Whyte Melville did not disdain to place the lines of the dashing Australian author at the head of his own dashing descriptions of sporting scenery. Unhappily, the melancholy which Gordon's friends had with pain observed increased daily, and in the full flood of his success, with congratulations pouring upon him from every side, he was found dead in the heather near his home with a bullet from his own rifle in his brain." Such is in brief the history of Gordon's life and its tragic end. Rumour has it that the reason for which he left England would not bear the light, and he himself would seem to lend colour to this suspicion in his "Early Adieux":—

My mother is a stately dame,
Who oft would chide with me;
She saith my riot bringeth shame,
And stains my pedigree.
And again in "To My Sister":—

I once had talents fit to win
Success in life's career,
And if I chose a path of sin,
My choice has cost me dear.
But those who brand me with disgrace,
Will scarcely dare to say
They spoke the taunt before my face,
And went unscathed away.

Yet these lines may very well be only evidence of boyish folly, rendered more heinous by the writer's evident impatience at rebuke. Indeed in the former poem he says:—

Still, if to error I incline,
Truth whispers comfort strong,
That never reckless act of mine
E'er worked a comrade wrong.

It would seem, however, that his family have been adverse to the perpetuation of his name through the publication of his poems, and he was little known at the present day, till George Augustus Sala brought his work to the light in an article in an English newspaper. Perhaps Gordon's distinguishing characteristics are his dash and the pervading tone of melancholy through all his writings—a melancholy which may have been caused by the recollection of early follies and opportunities thrown away, but is ascribed by Marcus Clarke to the saddening influence of Australian scenery where are to be found "the Grotesque, the Weird, the strange scribblings of nature learning how to write." Dash and melancholy, opposite qualities as they may seem, often unite together in one person, and as an instance of the former characteristic "How We Beat the Favourite" may be quoted, than which a better sporting poem was never written, not even by Whyte Melville himself. I give the verses descriptive of the struggle at the finish:—

A hum of hoarse cheering, a dense crowd careering,
All sights seen obscurely, all shouts vaguely heard;
"The green wins!" "The crimson!" The multitude swims on,
And figures are blended and features are blurr'd.

"The horse is her master!" "The green forges past her!"
"The Clown will outlast her!" "The Clown wins!" "The Clown!"
The white railing races with all the white faces,
The chestnut outpaces, outstretches the brown.

On still past the gateway she strains in the straightway,
Still struggles "The Clown by a short neck at most,"
He swerves, "the green scourges, the stand rocks and surges,
And flashes, and verges, and flits the white post."

Aye! so ends the tussle—I knew the tan muzzle
Was first though the ring-men were yelling "Dead heat!"
A nose I could swear by, but Clarke said "The mare by
A short head." And that's how the favourite was beat.

No man who has ever ridden, or seen, a close finish will deny the wonderful power and "go" of those lines, and we can well understand how they were received in sport-loving Australia. Marcus Clarke holds that the student will find in Gordon's poems "something very like the beginnings of a national school of Australian poetry;" but in this I cannot quite agree with him. Gordon looked too much to the past, and one of the greatest faults I find in his work is the scarcity of local colour. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that the national poet of any of the dependencies of England must be "to the manor born." Nevertheless I would recommend to the student such poems as "Wolf and Hound," "From the Wreck" and "The Sick Stock Rider" as perhaps the best examples of colonial poetry extant. Gordon's most ambitious poem, "Ashtaroth: A Dramatic Lyric," is by no means an unqualified success. In the first place the attempt is too ambitious for a man of his calibre, and in the second place the subject is fatally like that of Goethe's "Faust," yet from this poem I would take one fragment as about the best example of Gordon's style; it is the account of the fight between Harold, the Dane, and Hugo, of Normandy, told by Agatha, the Novice, to Ursula, the Lady Abbess. Agatha had been betrothed in her youth to Hugo, and flees with Harold in the night before Hugo's arrival. She gives an account of the flight with its tragic ending. Harold's horse has fallen to rise no more.

—Our pursuer past us swept
Ere he rein'd his war horse proud,
To his haunches flung, then to earth he leapt,
And my lover's voice rang loud:
"Thrice welcome! Hugo of Normandy,
Thou hast come at our time of need;
This lady will thank thee, and so will I,
For the loan of thy sorrel steed!"

And never a word Lord Hugo said:
They closed 'twixt the wood and the wold,
And the white steel flicker'd over my head
In the moonlight calm and cold;
'Mid the feathery grasses crouching low,
With face bow'd down to the dust,
I heard the clash of each warding blow,
The click of each parried thrust,
And the shuffling feet that bruise'd the lawn,
As they traversed here and there;
And the breath through the clenched teeth heavily drawn
When breath there was none to spare;
Sharp ringing sword-play, dull trampling heel,
Short pause, spent force to regain,
Quick muffled footfall, harsh grating steel,
Sharp ringing rally again;
They seemed long hours those moments fleet,
As I counted them one by one,
Till a dead weight toppled across my feet,
And I knew that the strife was done.

The verse runs smoothly here, and carries the action with it. There is only one slight fault in the bad rhyming of regain and again. For the rest, any poet might have been proud to have written those lines. The magnificent elan of the whole is undoubted, and it is unrivalled as a description of a single combat. The dramatic force of the situa-

tion is heightened by the calm moonlight and the woman with her face hidden in the grass, who hears, but does not see, the combat, and with her we hear it also, and almost see it, too, as we read the ringing lines. I prefer it to Fitz James' encounter with Roderick Dhu. Marcus Clarke has it that "the influence of Browning and Shelley upon the writer's taste is plain," but I can find little of the former, except a forced rhyme or so, which is not to be commended; perhaps, also, his influence may be traced in the "Road to Avernus." Swinburne's influence may, perhaps, be noted in "Rippling Water" and "Sunlight on the Sea," but, on the whole, Gordon's poems are his own. Gordon was not a great poet, and his faults, which might be forgiven in a great poet, are hardly excusable in a minor one. Yet the roughness and unfinished appearance of his verses may be attributable to their having been "written at odd times and leisure moments of a stirring and adventurous life," and time might have remedied these defects. He has, at any rate, earned a place in the regard of his fellow countrymen, and his poems are worth study, both as an instance of faults to avoid and as an example of excellencies to imitate. Gordon had all the melancholy of a poet intensified, perhaps, by the remembrance of past follies and failures, and I cannot close this article more fitly than with the following lines of his, prophetic, perhaps, of his untimely end:—

They say that poison-sprinkled flowers
Are sweeter in perfume
Than when untouched by deadly dew
They glowed in early bloom.

They say that men condemned to die
Have quaffed the sweetened wine
With higher relish than the juice
Of the untampered vine.

They say that in the witch's song,
Though rude and harsh it be,
There blends a wild mysterious strain
Of weirdest melody.

And I believe the devil's voice
Sinks deeper in our ear
Than any whisper sent from Heaven,
However sweet and clear.

However, in spite of his pessimism, he loved a good horse and a good fight, and could describe them both right well, as witness the "Romance of Britomarte."

BASIL TEMPEST.

THE RAMBLER.

THE following transcription of a circular, seemingly addressed to me, speaks for itself, I think. I wish the new magazine every success. Styling itself the *Colonial*, it is to be published simultaneously in Melbourne, Calcutta, London and Toronto by a wealthy and experienced syndicate of gentlemen who are not Imperial Federationists, but who are yet devoted to the future of the Empire. We ought to be congratulated on having been chosen as the Canadian publishing centre. In the meantime we may congratulate ourselves on an honour not perhaps so fully deserved as it might be. The syndicate hopes to have the magazine ready in the spring, and will spend the time between now and then in arranging with the best writers in the Colonies for interesting and suitable matter. In their own words—"the promoters of the *Colonial Magazine* undertake to supply in its pages as good literary material as the leading minds of four great Colonies can offer—India, Canada, Australia and South Africa. The establishment of such a magazine will, it is hoped, tend towards a better knowledge of these remote countries among English people, and also help to create and foster that spirit of national unity among the subjects of Her Majesty which her true friends so greatly desire to see exist in full force and in all quarters of the globe. Wherever the English tongue is spoken the *Colonial* will, or ought to, find readers, but while British connexion will form the starting point of our endeavour we pledge ourselves not to lose sight for one instant of the great want of Colonial writers—namely, a steady and far-reaching market for their wares. It will be our aim to encourage colonial talent to the fullest extent imaginable while furthering Imperial Unity. The magazine will be illustrated, and will appear *positively* without advertisements defacing and impoverishing both inside and outside—an innovation which will cost the Syndicate large sums, but which we have decided on *at any cost*. The contents of the opening number, probably ready about April, 1892, will be as nearly as possible as follows:—"

- I. "To Our Better Acquaintance!" By Lord Lorne.
- II. The Language of Victor Hugo (French). By L. H. Fréchette.
- III. Why I Became a Politician. By Principal Grant, M.P.
- IV. Yachting on the Great Australian Lakes. By A. Busche Whackyer, Mel. University.
- V. Science Among Savages. By Grant Allen.
- VI. In the Potato Field. Sonnet, by A. Lampman.
- VII. Journalism in India. By Edgar Kipling (second cousin on the mother's side to Rudyard).
- VIII. The War Cloud. By a Member of the Embassy at Constantinople.
- IX. At Ste. Brigitte. Villanelle. By Seranus. Illustrated by L. R. O'Brien, Pres. R.C.A.
- X. The Commercial Element in the Colonies. By J. A. Froude.
- XI. Ranching. By Lord Dunraven. Illustrated.
- XII. The Southern Cross. Chapters 1-2-3. Serial by Olive Schreiner.