

tween the concession of responsible government and confederation, Dr. Bourinot says:

The poems (of this period) were imbued with a truly Canadian spirit—with a love for Canada, its scenery, its history, and its traditions. None of the writers were great poets, but all of them were more or less gifted with a measure of true poetic genius.

Among the poets to whom Dr. Bourinot refers was Charles Kingston Sangster, whose poems, "The St. Lawrence Rapid" and "The Plains of Abraham," are well known to our school children. Sangster was born at Kingston, Ontario, on July 16th, 1822. His grandfather was a United Empire Loyalist of Scottish birth, who had served as a soldier for thirty years. His father was a shipwright, but he died when the future poet was only two years old, leaving his family dependent upon their own exertions. Sangster's mother had to work very hard, and the boy left school to support himself when still very young. This he probably did without any great regret, as at that time, long before the system of free schools was even thought of, education in Ontario was at a very low point. Sangster himself tells us that he certainly learned nothing about writing English from his teachers, who could not even speak correctly. After ten years' service in the Ordinance Department at Kingston, Sangster went to Amherstburg, where he began to work as a newspaper reporter; he went on with this kind of work, either as reporter or editor, in different towns in Ontario until 1867, when he entered the civil service at Ottawa. All this time he had been writing verse, as well as prose, for the public journals, and his first volume of collected poems was published in 1856. He seems to have drawn his inspiration from the source that Mr. Roberts suggests in "Canadian Streams:—"

Oh rivers rolling to the sea
From lands that bear the maple tree,
How swell your voices with the strain
Of loyalty and liberty.

O unsung streams—not splendid themes
Ye lack to fire your patriot dreams!
Annals of glory gild your waves,
Hope freights your tides, Canadian streams!

The streams have not been left altogether unsung, however, for Sangster's book was called "The St. Lawrence and the Saguenay, and other Poems." The poem which gives its name to the volume is an account of an imaginary voyage with a dearly-loved companion down the St. Lawrence and up the Saguenay. There is little action in the poem, which consists chiefly of passages of description, and poetic

reflection inspired by the scenes through which the poet passes. Many of these expressions of feeling are patriotic in nature. The verse form is the Spenserian stanza, with occasional lyrics.

In 1860 appeared "Hesperus, and other Poems and Lyrics," a volume which added to the reputation that Sangster had already gained. His poems were favourably noticed in both English and American journals; and among those who recognized the writer as a true poet were Oliver Wendell Holmes and Jean Ingelow. The latter said of his verse, that it was "never careless and never affected."

Among the poet's qualities we notice a strong love of nature, a sturdy patriotism, and, in spite of his praise of peace* in "The Plains of Abraham," a martial spirit. The latter was perhaps nourished by thoughts of his soldier grandfather, and finds expression in lines like those in "The Song of Canada:—"

Sons of the mighty race, whose sires
Aroused the martial flame
That filled with smiles
The triune isles
Through all their heights of fame!
With hearts as brave as theirs,
With hopes as strong and high,
We'll ne'er disgrace
The honoured race,
Whose deeds can never die.
Let but the rash intruder dare
To touch our darling strand,
The martial fires
That thrilled our sires
Would flame throughout the land.

That he could also write in a strain of simple pathos is shown by the following little poem:

A LIGHT IN THE WINDOW PANE.
A joy from my soul has departed,
A bliss from my heart is flown,
As weary, weary hearted
I wander alone, alone.
The night wind sadly sigheth,
A withering, wild refrain
And my heart within me dieth,
For the light in the window pane.
The stars overhead are shining,
As brightly as e'er they shone,
As heartless, sad, repining,
I wander, alone, alone.
A sudden flash comes streaming,
And flickers adown the lane,
But no more for me is gleaming
The light in the window pane.

* The last line of this poem, as printed in N. B. Reader, No. 3, p. 178, should surely read. "Is harsh discord to the music of your undertoned acclaim," instead of "In harsh music, etc."