

THE AMBER VALLEY. POEMS.

Warwick Chipman. Gundy, Toronto, \$1.00, pp. 93.

Mr. Chipman's slender volume will be a disappointment to those who are looking for a distinctly Canadian note in the work of a Canadian singer. It will be more satisfying to those who are looking for evidences of the lyric gift and sincerity in using it. Free from modern faddishness as from localism, the brief pieces—swallow flights of song—reflect both in matter and manner the great English poetical traditions.

The subjects are those on which myriad poets have sung, yet other myriads may well sing them and there need be no repetition: sunsets, and bird voices and trees, and clouds, and the long, long thoughts of youth. It is an ardent lover of nature, impressionable and pensive, who describes for us the valley amber with sunset light, the hawk, the loon and the unnamed bird of Lac Souris. But it is a nature love of the Matthew Arnold rather than the Wordsworth school. The minor note which sounds again and again is less the result of personal disappointment, obscurely hinted at, than of a temperament, naturally reflective, oppressed as Matthew Arnold's was, by the melancholy negativity of the modern thinker's outlook.

There is no very great range in the subject matter of the forty-five poems gathered here. It may be said by the carping that there is no great originality of thought or treatment. Against such adverse remark should be put the positive virtues of restraint, and avoidance of eccentricity. Every lyric and sonnet in the collection gives evidence of facility. Mr. Chipman evidently weaves rhymes with ease. He could, no doubt, issue a much larger volume if he chose, and he could try experiments with metre and achieve more startling effects. He has chosen to respect the example of his masters.

In the measures chosen, the reader catches echoes of Shelley, of Tennyson, of Rossetti, but there is no imitation. The lilting short line verse made familiar through the final song of Callicles in Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles* is one frequently used, and never with more success than in the airy fragment called *Naples*, a morsel of musical philosophy which lingers in the memory more persistently than profounder things. A yachtsman in the Bay of Naples sees a beautiful girl beautifully placed on the picturesque shore. The two exchange greetings, pleasure passes from eye to eye, but there is none of the cruel smiting of love at first sight.

'Twas a look and a laugh,
And a toss of the hand;
And then on the morrow
Away from the land.