

POETRY.

ALMA MATER.

ALMA MATER, mother dear!  
Ah! it seems but yesterday—  
Though it's many a weary year,—  
Since I passed from thee away.

Pass'd away with my degree,  
Much elated—very vain;  
What a prize it seemed to me!—  
How, if it were now to gain?

Alma Mater! thou hast seen,  
Since the days of long ago,  
Many a mellow Verdant Green  
To a pungent fellow grow.

Are the *knockers* of the town,  
Fastened firmer to the doors?  
Do the wearers of the gown,  
Ever visit—well—the moors?

Can the rustic leave his sleigh  
Over night on Barrie street?  
Nor be forced to plod his way,  
To the country on his feet?

Does the grand procession go,  
Serenading fav'rite 'Dons'?  
Are there any 'ructions' now!—  
Windows perforate with stones?

Have you lofty-toned police?  
Men of sympathetic souls,  
Open to conviction—'grease'—  
Men averse to cracking *polls*?

Are there any 'suppers' now,  
Where the tongue it waxeth thick?  
Winding up in friendly row,  
Classic, very, *quoad* 'hic'?

Ah! in these degenerate days,  
Of the 'Act' *cui nomen* 'Scott,'  
Is there not a risk of ways,  
Worse than singing round the 'pot'?

Alma Mater! may your sons,  
Sober be, in hall or town,  
From the high Olympic dons  
To the freshest Freshman down!

But, the tyranny of 'Scott,'  
Or the *rabies* 'Prohibition',  
Alma Mater! touch it not,  
Nor Toronto 'Coalition'!

So thy sons, in duty bound,  
Will in duty ever pray,  
Till thy glory flash around,  
Brighter than the orb of day.

—STEPHEN MCSLOGAN.

VARNO THE BRAVE :

A TALE OF THE  
PICTS AND SCOTS.

BY THE LATE D. M., PERTH, N. B.

The arrival of Eric within the castle gates might have awakened momentarily suspicion in the mind of Varno; but the silvery locks of the aged harper, and the halo of sacredness which surrounded his calling, combined with the fact that Eric had with his songs delighted the childhood of his beloved wife, tended somewhat to dispel all doubt as to the purpose of his visit. Yet Eric was unwillingly a tool in the hands of his royal master. His message to Varno was, "Let the words of Eric be peace." But, when he saw the array of armed men stealthily surrounding the castle walls, anguish filled his heart; his harp was silent, and his tongue involuntarily ejaculated a prayer that his trusted friends might not fall into the hands of the traitorous foe.

Varno was too much of a soldier, now that the enemy were visibly preparing to attack his stronghold, to give himself up to despondency or inactivity. He summoned his men and sent them to complete with all haste defensive operations. He himself examined minutely every assailable point in the castle walls; saw that they were secure against attack; armed his soldiers; and having addressed to them, as was his wont, a few words of encouragement, calmly awaited results. Spoldanka was equally prepared for any emergency. She did not add to her husband's troubles by indulging in effeminate forebodings, but actively assisted in the general preparations which were going on to repel the offensive Pictavians, who were even then thirsting for their blood. But other warriors were there than those of Pictavia, and what was some consolation, nearer the intended point of attack. On them the eyes of the garrison were intently fixed; their military costume, unlike the iron cap and brindled-ox-skin covering of the Pict, were helmets and breast-plates of shining brass, and brazen girdles sparkling round gaudy coloured vestments encircled their loins, and supported by massy brass chain swords of unusual length; the white horse portrayed on their banners pointed them out as the ranks of Northumbria.

A noise from the eastern extremity of the fortress now intimated that hostilities had commenced. There a detachment of the besiegers, concealed by trees and brushwood, had unperceived approached the rock, and with an ardour that made danger a mockery, clambered up the rugged precipices at a place where the fortifications were low, and were almost effecting a lodgment when they were observed and treated with a bloody reception. Varno hurried to the place; the few within were instantly butchered, and those who had newly gained the top of the wall were sent hurling back, forcing and dashing in their descent the whole of their scrambling comrades, down over pointed cliff and precipice, till the whole were groaning below, a mangled and almost lifeless mass.