

trivial reasons. It has been said that such a collection of verse as is here spoken of would not repay the cost of publication—would not sell, in fact. This may be doubted, but even if true it is not sufficient justification for the publication of a quasi-literary work if its chief merit were to be like that of the famous Yankee razors that were not made to cut but to sell. It is a degradation of our literature thus to submit it unnecessarily to the mercenary conditions that govern the sale of soap and candles. As we were to have a birthday book, however, it would have been an advantage if the compiler had stated even the names of the poems from which the extracts were taken. This could have been done without loss of space by putting them in small type at the left of the author's name, and in the same line with it.

Objection may be taken to some of the statements made in the critical notices of writers that are appended to the collection. Charles Pelham Mulvany (not "Mulvaney") wrote verses poetic, tender or clever, but he can hardly be said to have been "a brilliant and powerful poet." It is said by the critic also that the writings of Alexander McLachlan "contain some of the finest abstract thought that Canadian literature possesses." This opinion will probably stagger some of Mrs. Harrison's readers. Of a living Toronto writer the critic says that he "has published one or two volumes of verse." Surely if the matter were worth referring to at all it was worth while to be definite when the knowledge could have been so easily obtained. If it is permitted to descend to the trivialities of verbal criticism, the observation may be made that it is a somewhat irregular way of speaking to describe Miss Crawford's verse as "instinct with a breadth . . . surpassed by few living writers." Nor can it properly be said that "Mr. Watson's untimely death should render his powerful and imaginative verse particularly important to us." And by no means could the Birthday Book, or any other book, "achieve the position of a complete anthology of Canadian verse."

Of course no two persons will quite agree as to what poems should be inserted and what omitted in a collection of this kind. Yet there are some omissions which are not easy to account for. Such, for instance, is Mrs. Moodie's "Indian Summer." With the possible exception of James Russell Lowell's poem on the same subject there has never been written any poetical description of this charming season at all equal to Mrs. Moodie's. The admirers of Mr. Charles G. D. Roberts will be disappointed, too, by the absence of his strong, vigorous, patriotic poems "Canada," and the "Collect for Dominion Day." Both of these appeared not long ago in American magazines, and to them Mr. Roberts has given the place of honour in his new volume.

There are some verses in this collection, too, that might well have given way before Mr. W. W. Campbell's "Orpheus" and "A Canadian Folk-Song." The latter poem appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly* two years ago. It was copied in many Canadian journals, and universally admired for its vigour and picturesqueness. Among those who have written occasional poems of high merit, and who are yet not

noticed in this book at all, might be mentioned Mrs. Rothwell, E. G. Garthwaite, and the young university poets Phillips Stewart, F. H. Sykes, and W. J. Healy.

The mechanical work on the cloth edition of the book is good on the whole, and reflects credit on the publishers, though the lettering on the cover is too gross for the style of the volume. But in the interests of honest bookmaking a most emphatic protest is called for against advertising the leather covered edition of the book as "morocco" when in reality it is nothing more than a poor sheepskin imitation.

A. STEVENSON.

Poetry.

FRENCH WITH A MASTER.

TEACH you French? I will, my dear;
Sit, and con your lesson here.
What did Adam say to Eve?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Don't pronounce the last word long;
Make it short to suit the song;
Rhyme it to your flowing sleeve,
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Sleeve, I said—but what's the harm
If I really meant your arm?
Mine shall twine it (by your leave),
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Learning French is full of slips;
Do as I do, with the lips;
Here's the right way, you perceive,
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

French is always spoken best
Breathing deeply from the chest;
Darling, does your bosom heave?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Now, my dainty little sprite,
Have I taught your lesson right?
Then what pay shall I receive?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Will you think me over bold
If I linger to be told
Whether you yourself believe
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre?

Pretty pupil, when you say
All this French to me to-day,
Do you mean it, or deceive?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Tell me, may I understand,
When I press your little hand
That our hearts together cleave?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Have you in your tresses room
For some orange-buds to bloom?
May I such a garland weave?
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Or, if I presume too much,
Teaching French by sense of touch,
Grant me pardon and reprieve!
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.

Sweetheart, nò! you cannot go!
Let me sit and hold you, so—
Adam did the same to Eve!
Aimer, aimer—c'est a vivre.—Theodore Tilton.

ONE of the officials of the public library in Chicago states under his own signature in the *Chicago Tribune* that the books which are circulated from the library are so defiled by all manner of obscene and filthy writings on the margins that he questions whether the library does not do more harm than good. According to his statement, what Chicago needs is the abolition of the public library and the enlargement of the Bridewell.