

which, if British or Imperial event is involved in it, coloured the cause or circumstance with references to Canadian manhood, valour, civilisation, or ideals, and which was composed by resident or native-born Canadian poetesses. I am forced to call attention to this limitation, because the martial verse of Canadian poetesses, by reason of its social origin, its practical and ephemeral purpose, its required popular appeal to the heart and elementary emotions, rather than to the æsthetic sensibilities and the imagination, the necessity of its matter counting for more than its form and artistry, and the forthright method of its composition, must not be compared with that finer species of patriotic verse which sublimates sentiments of homeland, of national characteristics, virtues, exploits, institutions, and ideals, and which, though composed under patriotic fire of heart and imagination, is written with patient craftsmanship and an eye single to lyrical eloquence and to beauty of diction, imagery, and verbal music.

I am not thus derogating from the excellence of the martial verse by Canadian poetesses. I wish merely to make it plain, at the outset, that other forms of patriotic verse by Canadian poetesses and poets are nearer the standard of pure poetry; that, for instance, Mrs. Moodie's "Address to the Freemen of Canada," while a ringing, rousing, war-lyric, is hardly poetry, or not so superior as poetry as is her "Quebec"; that Isabella Crawford's "The Rose of a Nation's Thanks," while vigorous and rhythmic, is merely good verse as compared with the beauty and dignified eloquence of her fine poem, "Canada to England"; that Miss Machar's "Our Lads to the Front," while inspiring, is neither so winning nor so satisfying as her "Canada's Birthday"; or that the war-lyrics of the Canadian poetesses, save the extraordinarily fine martial verse or poetry of Mrs. Annie Rothwell-Christie, inherently are not as

excellent as the best patriotic verse of the other species by themselves or by George Murray, John Reade, William Wye Smith, or the grandiloquent patriot-singer, Charles G. D. Roberts.

Still, when this distinction in species and artistry is kept in view, my original proposition stands. The fact that the first and readiest and best, that is, most popularly received, singers of martial verse in Canada were Canadian poetesses, is a literary phenomenon in itself. And since so eminent a poet as the late Sir Edwin Arnold and other poets and critics have remarked the phenomenon, without adding any detailed appreciation or explanation of its causes or qualities, it is worth while for us to attempt a critical appreciation of the martial verse of Canadian poetesses. To these pleasant occupations I now turn. I shall begin with matters of literary history and æsthetics.

Patriotic martial verse in Canada began with the Civil War of the Rebellion of 1837-8. At least, I have been unable to find any published samples of martial verse, either by Canadian poets or poetesses, contemporary with the War of 1812-14. There were, of course, before that war poems whose themes were connected with the history of war in Canada, as, for instance, Valentine Neville's "The Reduction of Louisborough," (1759), and Middleton Howard's "The Conquest of Quebec." The latter, which I have in my collection of *Canadiana*, appears in a volume of collected Oxford Prize Poems, the volume bearing the date of 1807, but the poem itself bearing the date 1768. All such verse, however, was wholly British in spirit. On the other hand, the sentiment of a country not long enough dwelt in, though inherited "to have and to hold," could not have developed sufficiently to cause it to burst forth into martial song. The required poetry at the time of the War of 1812-14 was, to use a hackneyed phrase, the poetry of