

daughter. The earl had scornfully refused to permit their marriage, and therefore the Exile comes to Canada to make for himself a name. His rejection by the earl is thus described :

"He heard me silently, nor did he speak
For full two minutes after I had ceased ;
Then, while his eye flashed, and his livid cheek
Betrayed his passion, was his tongue released ;
And, in vituperative tones, he swore
That I should never cross his threshold more."

CANTO I., 12.

He visits the chief cities of Canada, moralizes on each, and finally, while at Vancouver, hears from the lady, who tells him that one of his books has become famous, and that he has been knighted for it.

"—, recognizing your unquestioned right,
The Queen has now created you a knight."

Besides, the earl has given his consent. There the poem ends, save that, as at the end of each canto, a long poetical letter from the Exile to his lady is introduced.

Such a subject—a stranger moralizing on what he sees in a foreign land—has been treated by many poets, the most famous being Goldsmith in the "Traveller" and Byron in "Childe Harold." Mr. Skeats, probably feeling that he might be under a disadvantage if he essayed to rival them, has treated his theme in a totally new vein. On the whole, Byron's way is the better.

Macauley in a famous simile, said that Montgomery's poems had much the relation to true poetry that a Turkey carpet had to a picture. Mr. Skeats' work might not inaptly be likened to a rag-bag, nearly all whose contents have been stolen, and as far as possible not more than one piece from the same person. He seems to think that by using a line with only four or five syllables in it he becomes a Hood, that to describe a little girl of thirteen is to be a Wordsworth, and that he has reproduced "The ride from Ghent to Aix" or "The destruction of Sennacherib," when he has reproduced its metre.

In justice to Mr. Skeats, however, it ought to be observed that he has recognized Browning's genius, and stolen several rags from him. He has a great fondness for words, either of his own composition, or else usually esteemed unpoetical. As examples of the latter class "vituperary" in the passage already quoted, or "fluctuation" will do. "Vindiction" for "vengeance" will illustrate the first.

He also imitates Browning in using faulty rhymes. "Alone" is several times coupled with "communion." So too "peacefully" and "ingenuity." One of the best examples is found in Canto v., 1 :

"The prairie all environs me ; I see
Nought save a stretch of green and treeless land
Conspicuous alone for nudity."

Defective rhythm is, however, the only characteristic common to this extract and to Browning—or any other poet. In fact, notwithstanding all the author has purloined, much of his work bears a stamp of unmistakable originality. There is an extract only he could have written :

"Be Christian first and last, and be not slow
To propagate the cause of arbitration."

Like Sam Weller's knowledge of London, the Exile's knowledge of Canadian politics is extensive and peculiar. He is a burning Equal Righter, and advocates most stringent measures against the Roman Catholics, and especially the French. Here is a description of the House of Commons :

"Thus should they act, but thus do not they all,
But mildly bow to their dictator's bid ;
They fear to disobey him, lest they fall
Quick victims to his anger, or be chid
Severely by the leader, in whose power
It lies to give his slaves official dower."

CANTO III., 41.

"Not Liberal and not Conservative
Alone impels my wrath ; to either party
My feeble but impartial pen would give
A condemnation passionate and hearty ;
Each sees the wreck the Catholic has made
In Canada, and each implores his aid."

CANTO III., 48.

Two of the smaller poems are entirely on this subject. "Our politicians are base trucklers," cries the poet. "Let us have

"Men whose chiefest aim shall be to
Fight for Canada and home—
Men who will not bow before the
Dictates of the Church of Rome."

Most of the smaller pieces are written in anapaests, which, however charming they may be in the hands of Dryden or Scott, with Mr. Skeats degenerate into a sing-song doggerel.

"Blue, boundless and free, the deep-flowing sea
Enviros on every side
The ship, which the gale, well filling each sail,
Impels through the rolling tide."

However, the shorter poems (probably on account of their shortness) are rather better than the "Song." The best is "The higher duty," whose thought is that while sun, moon and stars fulfil their function, man alone is disobedient.

"I saw the sun. He shone in splendour bright,
Casting his radiance over dale and hill,
And all creation joyed to see his light.
He shone, and thus fulfilled his Master's will."

But here too Mr. Skeats' fondness for the wrong word breaks out.

"Oh, man !
Dost thou alone fall short and retrograde?"

The "New resolve," also, is not bad, if its first lines did not bring up recollections of "Bring back."

"Last night as I sat in my study."

But whatever the contents, the book is beautifully gotten up, and reflects the greatest credit on its publishers, Messrs. Hart & Co., of Toronto. It is as pretty and neat a work as could be done by any English or American house.

"G."