

as might awake for a Canadian Tennyson another "Sleeping palace" like that from whence he led his happy princess :

"When far across the hills they went  
In that new world which is the old."

Poetry, however, is not the crop which it can at all be expected, or indeed desired, that Canadian farmers will cultivate at present. And if we can only reproduce exotic thoughts in verse, it is better on the whole that we should take the foreign originals at first hand. Having, however, stated our feeling in regard to the absence of that originality and individuality of character in "The St. Lawrence," which might have made of such a virgin theme a poetic gem of rarest beauty; we may nevertheless, refer with pleasure to some of its stanzas as gracefully commemorating historical features. Here, for example, is a good subject not discreditably dealt with:—

The inconstant moon has passed behind a cloud,  
Cape Diamond shows its sombre-colored brist,  
As if the mournful night had thrown a shroud  
Over this pillar to a hero's dust.  
Well may she weep; hers is no trivial trust;  
His cenotaph may crumble on the plain,  
Here stands a pile that dares the rebel's lust  
For spoliation: one that will remain—  
A granite seal—brave Wolfe! set upon Victory's fane

Quebec! how regally it crowns the height,  
Like a tanned giant on a solid throne!  
Unmindful of the sanguinary fight,  
The roar of cannon mingling with the moon  
Of mutilated soldiers yars ago,  
That gave the place a glory and a name  
Among the nations. France was heard to groan;  
England rejoiced, but checked the proud acclaim—  
A brave young chief had fallen to vindicate her fame.

Wolfe and Montcalm! two nobler names ne'er graced  
The page of history, or the hostile plain;  
No braver souls the storm of battle faced,  
Regardless of the danger or the pain.  
They pass'd unto their rest without a stain  
Upon their nature or their generous hearts.  
One graceful column to the noble twain,  
Speaks of a nation's gratitude and starts  
The tear that valor claims, and feeling's self imparts.

The poem is manifestly designed as a companion, if not a guide-book, for the voyage to the Saguenay; and though it has in it none of those magical passages which stir the heart like the sound of a trumpet, it will nevertheless make an agreeable return to the tourist for the small space it claims in his baggage.

Of the poems issued from the Hamilton Franklin Press, the principal one, entitled "Oscar," is a picture of the Crimean War, written by a young Canadian, who witnessed and bore a part in the scenes he describes. The plan of his poem, however, embraces a sketch of Canadian scenery, as noted by the imaginary hero, on his way to the seat of war, and so furnishes another view of the same picturesque and historic landscape which has been already drawn by the poetic pencil of Mr. Sangster. Here, for example, is Mr. Ryan's sketch of the Thousand Isles:—

Now Fairy Land is gained—the Thousand Isles—  
Amid whose cedar shades sweet Nature smiles  
In all the beauty of a scene unchanged,  
As when the Indian warrior ranged  
From isle to isle, long centuries ago,  
And chased, with swift canoe, the nimble doe.  
Those shady rocks the softest sound prolong,  
As when they echoed to the Squaw's low song,  
Who dipped her paddle in the dancing stream,  
And watched the sun's last lingering beam.  
As he, behind the forests of the west,  
In dazzling glory slowly sank to rest,  
Each isle an emerald, each rock a gem,  
Which forms proud Nature's own bright diadem!  
Those wilds again the Indian ne'er will know,  
Nor will those waters, in their joyous flow  
Bear savage forms unto the depths below.

Niagara is described, or rather soliloquised. Ontario, the St. Lawrence, its Rapids, and the scenes along its banks, all pass in review here, as in the former poem. and Canada itself is apostrophised in terms more loving than original, and with an occasional lameness in the prosody, here as elsewhere somewhat detrimental to the music of the verse:—

Hail! Canada, my own, my native land!  
Land of a thousand floods sublimely grand!

Upon this world, on nation, land, or clime,  
Has nature lavished gifts more wild, sublime;  
Nor blest with brighter hopes her fertile vales,  
Or wafted over hills more healthy gales.  
Thy boundless wilds as yet untrod, unknown,  
Industry soon will rear a joyous home;  
Those fertile tracts where axe was never heard,  
Where securely sings the native forest bird;  
Where swiftly bounds the deer o'er leagues untold,  
Wait but for man to yield their hidden gold.  
Oh! glorious happy West fore'er adieu!  
Where'er I wander I will turn to you,  
And, in mem'ry, thy beauties call to view.

The patriotism is here, certainly preferable to the poetry, even though the latter does recall lines not less patriotic, with which the sixth canto of the "Jay of the last Minister!" is preluded. But, passing onward down the St. Lawrence, here is the younger poet's picturing of the historic associations of the heights of Cape Diamond:—

See now Quebec with mighty grandeur rear  
Its gloomy head—loom sternly in the air!  
And from the awful height look proudly down  
Upon St. Lawrence with a watchful frown;  
Where 'neath guarding shade securely ride  
A thousand vessels on the heaving tide.  
This Oscar saw, and stood to view the height  
Where Fraser's clans had climbed that glorious night  
Up the craggy steep to Abraham's plains,  
And hid the verdant sod with bloody stains.  
The chivalrous Montcalm, though hasty, brave,  
Fought well, his noble post and cause to save;  
To every deadly charge his men led on,  
And nobly fought amid the clashing throng.  
Proudly he died, though not in victory's arms,  
Glorious he fell 'midst battle's wild alarms!  
Nor did Death's terrors his manly bosom mock—  
He died defeated nor survived the shock.

Peace to the warrior hero's shade—  
Bright be his wreath, its glories never fade!  
Wolfe the true, the noble, generous, brave,  
Thou hast all earth can give—a hero's grave.  
For this have kings and monarchs vainly sighed  
The tyrant's tomb by deeper stains was dyed:  
A tear of joy, not grief, bedews his pall,  
A prayer from earth thanks Heaven for his fall.  
A lowly poet a chaplet fain would twine  
Unto a name as bright and pure as thine.

Proud Britain's standard, waving from the height  
O'erlooks the glorious scene with conscious might;  
Flag borne triumphant over sea and land,  
And kiss'd the breeze on every foreign strand;  
Serenely spread out to the sweeping gale,  
Beholds the proud St. Lawrence' mighty vale.  
Its wide-spread folds, high above all unfurl'd  
Bids stern defiance to the coward world.  
Here a true patriot justly would exclaim,  
Let Liberty and Truth wash out the stain  
That yet upon its mighty folds remain.  
Long may true freedom 'neath its shade repose,  
Twined round her brow, the shamrock, thistle, rose.  
As once it was, may it ne'er again be grasp'd  
To mark blood and ruin where'er it passed.  
From off point Diamond's peak a booming gun,  
With loud report, salutes the setting sun;  
Through the ambient air mellow, clear and sweet,  
The bugle's note, re-echoed, sounds retreat.

We would not willingly quarrel with a Canadian poet inspired by loyal and patriotic sentiments such as these; but we venture to think that a prose narrative of the Crimean campaign, from one of ourselves who had borne a share in its sufferings and its triumphs, would have won the suffrages of a thousand Canadian readers for one who will be tempted to the perusal of "Oscar's" poetic experiences. Nor would such a narrative have been the less welcome for his enthusiastic apostrophe to the beauties of our noble St. Lawrence, though uttered only in eloquent prose. We may be permitted to say here once more, in the words of "Aurora Leigh":—

Young men:  
Too often sow their wild oats in tame verse,  
Before they sit down under their own vine  
And live for use. Alas, near all the birds  
Will sing at dawn,—and yet we do not take  
The chaffering swallow for the holy lark.

The poems of Alexander McLachlan are designated in the motto