

patriotic martial verse. The paradox lies in the fact that the most gentle, sensitive, and refined sex, to whom war, above all other social evils, is most saddening, ruthlessly ruinous, and abhorrent, should, as it were, have "sprung" to the occasion, as if it were providentially created for their sole privilege and glory, of singing the martial lyrics which either inspired, inflamed, and sustained the patriotic military spirit of their husbands, sons, and brothers, or commemorated that spirit and heroic deed and event in times of war, and that Canadian poetesses should have excelled extraordinarily in martial verse. This is a *genre* which seldom rises to the dignity of pure poetry, and which, under the craftsmanship of Canadian poetesses did not attain to such dignity, but which, nevertheless, was always popularly received, proved effective of its purpose, and not infrequently was so inspired and well wrought as to win the notice and public appreciation of eminent foreign poets and literary critics.

Further: the phenomenon seems the more paradoxical and unique when we reflect on the nature and culture of the chief Canadian poetesses—Canadian by residence or by birth—who essayed martial verse. Mrs. Susanna Moodie, first and supreme lyricist of the Civil War of 1837-8, was married to a veteran soldier. Besides, she and her husband, Colonel Moodie, had spent several years, preceding this war, in Canada, daily fighting for mere sustenance and against destruction from nature, wild beasts, and mishap by water and fire. Continually thus "roughing it in the bush" (to use her own apt phrase), and ever battling against death, the "fighting spirit" was naturally engendered in her by her intimate companionship with a soldier-husband, and by her constant battle with her environment. And having natural literary gifts, which she had frequently exercised with success, both in prose and verse, inevitably—for

she was left alone in the wilderness during the Papineau-MacKenzie fracas, and, in her abject loneliness, thoughts of the war and its possible dire results to herself and Canada, as well as Great Britain, must have been uppermost in her mind—Mrs. Moodie turned for diverting mental occupation and solace to writing, and, to use Aristotle's famous medical metaphor, purged out her surcharged emotions by expressing her fighting spirit and militant patriotism in ringing, rousing, popular martial verse.

No psychological subtleties are required to explain Mrs. Moodie's essays in patriotic martial verse. The Law of Parsimony compels us to find a sufficient explanation of the fact in Mrs. Moodie's innate literary genius and in the stress of her social and political environment. But when we observe such an innocent, naive, philanthropic, and suffering creature as Harriet Annie Wilkins, or such a rare, tender, delicate spirit as Isabella V. Crawford, or such domestic, cultured, and retiring women as Mrs. Sarah Curzon, Mrs. Annie Rothwell-Christie, and Miss Agnes Maule Machar, celebrating the patriotic militarism of their countrymen or commemorating Canadian valour, heroic deed or event, we are face to face with something which is no mere *jeu de joie* (possibly caused by some accidental pathological conditions of patriotic ecstasy), but which is a literary phenomenon in itself.

Finally: I have been careful to observe that the martial verse of Canadian poetesses is to be regarded strictly as *verse*, but that, though the *genre* seldom attains, even in the most highly cultivated countries, to the dignity of poetry, the chief Canadian poetesses who essayed this species of verse excelled in it. Also I must be understood to be dealing strictly with, first, martial verse as such, and, secondly, Canadian martial verse, that is to say, verse which was inspired by local Canadian conditions, or