

## Talks about Books

It is but natural, in this season of the year, when kindly wishes abound, springing from warm hearts untempered even by Canadian snows, that genial feeling should express itself in verse. Mr. Arthur Weir, B. Ap., Sc., breaks the ice with his *Fleurs de Lys*, which Mr. E. M. Renouf, of Montreal, publishes at the price of one dollar.<sup>1</sup> The publisher has done his work well, for *Fleurs de Lys* is a book of whose external appearance any bookseller might be proud. The author almost disarms criticism in his preface, by telling us that the contents of this book were written between the immature years of twenty and twenty-three. These contents are a Jubilee Ode, *Fleurs de Lys*, Red Roses, and other poems. The spirit of the book is a good one, loyal, reverent and pure. The rhythm, except where the poet strains after effect, is harmonious, and the rhyme, as a rule, is all that can be desired. Red Roses are the best part of the author's work. Whether real or imitated, affection has not only given the poems under that title a loftier ring, but has also stimulated the writer's descriptive powers, especially in "Long Ago," rather an ambitious title for twenty-three years. In *Fleur de Lys* proper, the best poem is "The Captured Flag," which has a flavour of Macaulay. The Jubilee ode is marred by its impossible metre. "Champlain" reminds me unpleasantly of a voice shouting "In the Bay of Biscay O!" The second stanza begins:—

"Thus I murmur as I close  
Parkman, day being long since sped."

Now there is something of what a Frenchman would call *brutal*, in this introduction of my friend Parkman's name. Better add a whole verse to the poem to indicate by poetic circumstances the biographer of Champlain. When I was young, like the author, I wrote a few verses on Salaberry at Chateauguay. I was foolish enough to rhyme the name of the place thus:

"But steady nerves and brave, true hearts  
Beat back the foeman's proud array,  
So well our Frenchmen played their parts  
Upon the banks of Chateauguay."

Our poet adheres to the pronunciation of the *habitant*, and sings:—

"Quickly in the silent dingle  
Raise the *abatis*,  
Near where Outarde waters mingle  
With the Chateauguay."

Would it not be better to spell the word phonetically, Shatigee? There is a place, near Montreal, the name of which is pronounced Salleroh. Suppose a poet made that region his theme, and sang—

<sup>1</sup> *Fleurs de Lys*, by Arthur Weir, B. Ap., Sc. E. M. Renouf, Montreal.