

Verses that Appeal to all Ages and Stages of Life.*

Such a designation may be held to make an extravagant claim, or one hard to justify; and yet, if the main basis of attraction in poetry centres in the human interest, we believe the general reader will agree that the sentence "Verses that Appeal to all Ages and Stages of Life," is a not inapt description of the varied poems that fill the little volume just issued by Dr. E. E. Kinney. No doubt the higher critics of verse will find flaws and faults here and there, but to judge a book (no less than a human being) fairly, one must consider the general character and the dominating spirit.

The very variety of the subjects dealt with by Dr. Kinney is a tribute to the many-sidedness of his interests. For instance anti-prohibitionists no less than prohibitionists may find amusement in the verse under "Resignation," written in 1916 when Prohibition was enforced in B. C. But in "John Barleycorn" the same writer leaves no doubt about his estimate of the dangers that lurk in the use of the stimulant usually associated with that name.

The scientific training of the verse writer has affected his interpretation and philosophy of life, and in not a few cases strengthened the reasoning involved in the more serious pieces, such as those under "Science," "Justice," "The Cell," "Truth," "Reason," etc.

Reason is King. Within the realm of Soul
He rules by conquest and by right divine;

* * * * *

Reason is King: but be it also known—
That Love is still the power behind the throne.

Dr. Kinney's poems associated with "Nature" would themselves win the attention of the nature-lover. But perhaps his happy spirit is revealed at its best in his verses to or for young folks, in such numbers as "Fairyland," and "The Night Elves at White Rock;" while his "Good-night Lullaby" may easily become a mothers' crooning song.

What might be called his "Personal Pieces" (written for friends junior or senior) have a charm of their own, which is all the greater because of their possible adaptation to the experiences of others. In this class are "When We Were Boys Together," "To Katie Jensen," "Lines to a High School Graduate," and "To My New Friend."

While there is no suggestion of sectarianism in the book, a winsome practical interpretation of the Christ spirit is suggested in "Of Good Cheer" and in "Lend a Hand:"

Christ said, "Love ye one another."

To each fainting, falling brother,

Lend a hand.

To the blind man at the gate,

To the cripple maimed by fate,

To the sinner lost and late,

Lend a hand.

Nor is what some would call exclusively "Love poetry" lacking—though there is a sense in which a loving spirit permeates all the poems appearing in this not bulky but well-balanced book. Interested readers may turn to "A Song,—Dear Maid So Fair," "Faithful and Beautiful Catherine Maier," etc.

That Dr. Kinney is an optimist is clearly shown in poems like his "Song of Hope," "At Rest," "The Decree," "Seaward," etc. The last verse of "At Rest" reads:

"Oh, why should death be dreaded then,
Whose shadow blends with light Divine,
Whose cup contains the anodyne
For all the ills and pains of men?"

* "Westward and Other Poems," by Edwin Enoch Kinney, \$1.50, British Columbia Monthly office, 1100 Bute Street, Vancouver, B. C.

Many of the poems reveal the writer of them as a keen observer and lover of Nature, and not a few are as notable for their genuine humour as for their healthy philosophy.

In proof of the first part of that statement, we refer the reader to the first portion of the poem which gives its name to the book. The character of the parent, "the central figure of the scene" is portrayed in the second part of "Westward" as that of a type which the hurry and bustle of modern life makes more difficult of attainment in town or country, even if a strong desire for it be inherent in some men:

From boyhood he had led the simple life,
Free from the cares of those who buy and sell,
Free from the clash of thoughts and worldly strife;
And everyone who knew him loved him well.

* * * * *

Long had he felt the charm of sunset's hour:
In childhood there was fairyland to him,
Whence came the tints of rainbow, bird and flower,
But no dread image from the shadows dim.

When youth let glad imagination rove,
It stole the color from the evening sky,
To beautify the dawning of his love

And tinge his precious hope with purest dye.

Such quotations may recall to many readers their own happy memories of evening walks in the twilight hour, and the recurring indefinite, yet very real, suggestions in the afterglow of sunset of Him

"Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns."

There is indeed a similar thought in the verse:

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