

THE EARTH'S COMPLAINT.

I plucked a fair flower that grew
In the shadow of summer's green trees—
A rose-petalled flower,
Of all in the bower,
Best beloved of the bee and the breeze
I plucked it and kissed it and called it my own—
This beautiful, beautiful flower,
That alone in the cool tender shadow had grown,
Fairest and first in the bower.

Then a murmur I heard at my feet—
A pensive and sorrowful sound ;
And I stooped me to hear,
While tear after tear
Rained down my eyes to the ground,
As I, listening, heard
This sorrowful word,
So breathing of anguish profound :

" I have gathered 'the fairest and best,
I have gathered the rarest and sweetest ;—
My life-blood I've given
As an offering to Heaven
In this flower of all flowers the completest.
Through the long quiet night
With the pale stars in sight—
Through the sun lighted day
(Of the balm-breathing May
I have toiled on in silence to bring
To perfection this beautiful flower—
The pride of the blossoming bower—
The queenliest blossom of spring.

" But I am forgotten—none heed
Me—the brown soil where it grew ;
That drank in by day
The sun's blessed ray
And gathered at twilight the dew ;—
That fed it by day and by night
With nectar drops slowly distilled
In the secret alembic of earth,
And diffused through each delicate vein,
Till the sun-beams, were charmed to remain,
Entranced in a dream of delight—
Stealing in with their arrows of light,
Through the calyx of delicate green—
The close folded petals between
Down into its warm hidden heart,
Wide opened the beautiful eyes ;
And lo ! with a sudden surprise,
Caught the glance of the glorious sun—
The ardent and worshipful one—
Looking down from his heavenly place :
And the blush of delighted surprise
Remained in its warm glowing dyes,
Evermore on that radiant face.

" Then mortals in worshipful mood
Bent over my wonderful flower,
And called it " the fairest,
The richest, the rarest,
The pride of the blossoming bower."
But I am forgotten. Ah me !
I the brown soil where it grew ;
That cherished and nourished
The stem where it flourished ;
And fed it with sun-shine and dew !

" O man ! will it always be thus,
Will you take the rich gifts which are given
By the tireless workers of earth,
By the bountiful Father in Heaven ;
And intent on the worth of the gift,
Never think of the Maker, the Giver ?—
Of the long patient efforts—the thought
That secretly grew in the brain
Of the Poet to measure and strain,
Till it burst on your ear richly fraught
With the wonderful sweetness of song ?—

" What availeth it, then, that ye toil—
You, thought's patient producers—to be
Unloved and unprized,
Trodden down and despised,
By those whom you toil for like me—
Forgotten and trampled like me ?"

Then my heart made indignant reply,
In spite of my fast falling tears—
In spite of the wearisome years
Of toil unrequited that lay
In the track of the past, and the way
Thorn-girded I'd trod in those years :—

" So be it, if so it *must* be !—
May I know that the thing
I so patiently bring
From the depths of the heart and the brain,
A creature of *beauty* goes forth,
'Midst the hideous phantoms that press
And crowd the lone paths of this work-weary life,
'Mid the labor and care, the temptation and strife,
To gladden and comfort and bless.

" So be it, if so it *must* be !—
May I know that the thing
I so patiently bring
From the depths of the heart and the brain,
Goes forth with a Conqueror's might,
Through the gloom of this turbulent world ;
Potent for truth and for right,
Where truth has so often been hurled
'Neath the feet of the throng,
The hurrying, passionate throng !

" What matter though I be forgot,
Since toil is itself a delight ?
Since the power to do,
To the soul that is true,
Is the uttered command of the Lord
To labour and faint not, but still
Pursue and achieve,
And ever believe
THAT ACHIEVEMENT ALONE IS REWARD !"

" Very fine ! But why did you not give us those grave thoughts in the more stately measure of the former piece ? You do not surely pretend that those longer and shorter lines—that sort of up hill and down dale verse—that gayer, lighter Poetry which is all very well on the floor of a dancing-room, is suitable for a serious subject and calculated to convey an important moral."

You will be pleased to observe, my Lord Fadladeen, (I believe it was your Lordship who spoke) that Miss Vining had no intention of preaching a sermon or delivering a moral essay on the subject of her poem. No doubt, the ingratitude to which it alludes, might very properly be thundered at from the pulpit. But it is not the Poet's Province to wield the thunders of the Church. A very solemn moral essay might be written on the text "*Achievement Alone is Reward.*" But, we have no assurance that our Poetess, is an essayist also. And, if she were, there are none, I am sure, with the exception of that venerable critic, my Lord Fadladeen who would not be sorely disappointed if it came into her mind to substitute grave and ponderous essays for such flowing, musical and graceful lines as you have just heard. No more criticism, I insist upon it. It not only interrupts the lecture and consumes our precious time without profit to any body, and without pleasure too ; except perhaps to its authors, it also tends to alter that cheerful frame of mind which is quite essential when discoursing on Poetry and Poets. Now, but not without regret, I bid adieu to Miss Vining for a season. When her promised volume appears, it will I trust, be the occasion of such a conversation as that which is now brought to a close, and which but for the ungenerous remarks obtruded upon us by that critical old Lord, who, I am happy to observe, has just left the room, would have afforded to us all only unmingled delight.

Canada justly claims Mr. WILLIAM KIRBY of Niagara who has resided in this country since 1832 when he was 15 years of age, and whose principal Poem, U. E. L. in 12 Cantos, is peculiarly Canadian, the design of it being to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of those brave men, the United Empire Loyalists, who may well be looked upon as the founders of the Province of Ontario.

MR. ADAM KIDD of Quebec who died there in 1831, published at Montreal in 1830, a volume of 216 pages 8mo, entitled : "*The Huron Chief and other Poems.*"

MR. GEORGE F. LANIGAN, a native of Canada, is better known among the *litterati*, as a prose writer than as a Poet. He has, however, contributed to the periodical press of the Dominion in verse as well as prose, and his published version of some very curious old Canadian Ballads shows not only that he is well skilled in the art of versification, but also that he possesses a mind capable of producing