



Life, Literature and Education.



Duncan Campbell Scott.

Duncan Campbell Scott, son of the late Rev. Wm. Scott, born in Ottawa, Ont., Aug. 2, 1862; educated at Stanstead Wesleyan College; entered the Canadian Civil Service as third-class clerk in the Department of Indian Affairs, and was afterwards made accountant of the Department and promoted to the chief clerkship. Such is the life-story up to the present time of one who, like William Wilfrid Campbell, has found time, amidst his duties at the Parliament Buildings, to render a valuable contribution to our Canadian literature.

Mr. Scott has not written much—two small volumes of poems being as yet the sum total of his literary work which has appeared in book form—but everything which has left his pen bears the stamp of the literary artist and true poet. His first volume, "The Magic House," published in London in 1893, immediately won for itself a distinction gratifying to all Canadians interested in our native literature, and was declared by "The Speaker" to be, "for what it fulfils and for what it promises, one of the most remarkable books of verse of the decade." The second volume, "Labor and the Angel," published in 1898, has redeemed the promise of the first in giving us still fuller testimony of the unique ability possessed by this quiet Canadian poet.

Unique we have said, and unique we shall repeat; for not only in conception, but also in expression and arrangement, does Mr. Scott's verse stand forth with a distinctiveness that marks him out as a writer of unusual originality. Like Walt Whitman, he has taken language and the conventional standards of rhyme and rhythm into his own hands, hacked them, pared them to his liking, manufacturing short lines or long regular rhythms, or irregular, as suited his mood and added to the strength of his presentation. But here the similarity ceases. Unlike Whitman, Scott never descends to vulgarity or coarseness; his taste

is ever irreproachable, or whether he describes or philosophizes, his poems are like dainty pastels, full of soft tones and touches laid on in few and effective strokes, with but here and there the high light necessary to the complete picture. Moreover, he is never abrupt; his measures are unfailingly melodious, a quality to some extent helped, perhaps, by the fact that until he had reached the age of twenty-five years he devoted his attention to music rather than to poetry.

As an example of unusual verse and fine description, read the following, taken from "The Harvest":

Sun on the mountain,
Shade in the valley,
Ripple and lightness
Leaping along the world;
Sun, like a gold sword
Plucked from the scabbard,
Striking the wheat-fields,
Splendid and lusty,
Close-standing, full headed,
Toppling with plenty;
Shade, like a buckler,
Kindly and ample,
Sweeping the wheat-fields
Darkening and tossing;
There on the world-rim
Winds break and gather
Heaping the mist
For the pyre of sunset;
And still as a shadow
In the dim westward,
A cloud sloop of amethyst
Moored to the world
With cables of rain.

Mr. Scott has written fine descriptive passages, but he cannot be placed, as Lampman, among the more exclusively descriptive poets. His heart has been touched too strongly by the human problems of the old earth to permit his forgetting its sterner realities in simple adoration of the beautiful or the good. He cannot forget the burden of toil and poverty which rests upon so vast a number of the world's multitudes—that

Hunger and poverty,
Heaped like the ocean,

Millions of children,
Born to their terrible
Ancestral hunger,
Starved in their mother's womb,
Starved at the nipple, cry
"Ours is the harvest."

Yet, his tone is usually courageous. Again, listen to his "Angel":

"Effort and effort," she cries,
"This is the heart-beat of life,
Up with the lark and the dew,
Still with the dew and the stars,
Feel it a throb in the earth."

And when he watches the poor stone-breaker, he is glad that the weary "German" can still find heart to sing of home and Fatherland:

Syenite hard,
Weary lot,
Callous hand,
All forgot.

Toil is long,
But dear God
Gives us song;
At the end,
Gives us rest;
Toil is best.

Only once does he seem to grow

hopeless over things, and his mood breaks out in a sort of stoical fierceness, the stronger, perhaps, because of the hopelessness—"The Cup":

Here is pleasure; drink it down.
Here is sorrow; drain it dry.
Tilt the goblet, don't ask why.
Here is madness; down it goes.
Here's a dagger and a kiss,
Don't ask what the reason is.
Drink your liquor, no one knows;
Drink it bravely like a lord.
Do not roll a coward eye.
Pain and pleasure is one sword
Hacking out your destiny;
Do not say, "It is not just."
That word won't apply to life;
You must drink because you must;
Tilt the goblet, cease the strife.
Here at last is something good,
Just to warm your flagging blood.
Don't take breath—
At the bottom of the cup
Here is death:
Drink it up.

There is a fascination about this, but perhaps one turns from it gladly to a little ballad, fresh and breezy, and full of Canada, with which, as it is, at this season of the year, especially suitable, we will conclude:

Sing me a song of the summer-time,
Of the sorrel red and the ruby clover,
Where the garrulous bobolinks lilt and chime,
Over and over.

Sing me a song of the strawberry bent,
Of the black-cap hiding the heap of stones,
Of the milkweed drowsy with sultry scent,
Where the bee drones.

Sing me a song of the spring head still,
Of the dewy fern in the solitude,
Of the hermit thrush and the whip-poor-will
Haunting the wood.

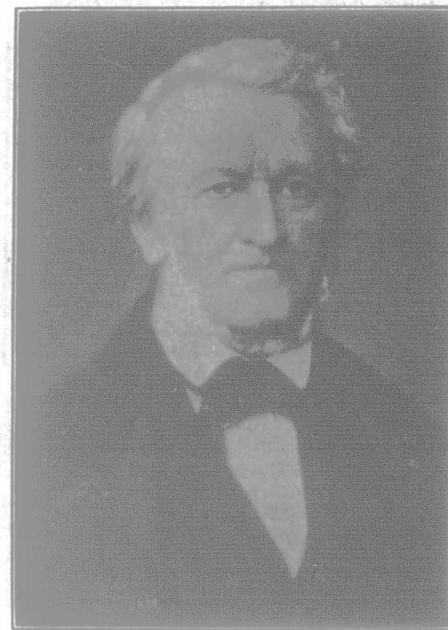
Sing me a song of the gleaming scythe,
Of the scented hay and the buried wain,
Of the mowers whistling, bright and blithe
In the sunny rain.

Sing me a song of the quince and the gage,
Of the apricot by the orchard wall,
Where bends my love, Armitage,
Gathering the fruit of the windfall.

Sing me a song of the rustling, slow
Sway of the wheat as the winds croon,
Of the golden disc and the dreaming glow
Of the harvest moon.

The Largest Sunday School.

The largest Sunday School in the world is in Stockport, England, and it has been housed in its present building for 100 years. The great event in the school year is the Whit-suntide procession, and this year no less than 4,503 persons took part in it. A special feature was the presence of several hundred old scholars, who came from all parts of England and a few from America, on purpose to join in the procession. The actual processionists numbered 2,396 girls and women, and 2,107 boys and men. After the procession the whole of the past and present scholars massed together in the market-place, where a centenary hymn, composed by Mr. T. B. Leigh, one of the general inspectors of the school, was sung. The mayor and a number of borough magistrates and aldermen also took part.



**Wilhelm Richard Wagner
(Vagner).**

Born May 22, 1813; Died Feb. 13, 1883.

The subject of our sketch was born at Leipzig, where his father, a superintendent of police, died at an early age, leaving his widow a very small government pension which was quite insufficient for the support of her seven children. Her second husband was Ludwig Geyer, a celebrated actor, high in favor at Court. He proved a kind and affectionate stepfather, greatly interested in the education of the children. Like many other boys, Richard hated his piano lessons, and would not play scales, insisting upon grand operatic music at once. The boy was, however, very brilliant in many other ways, translating twelve books of the "Odyssey" when he was thirteen, entirely of his own accord. He became deeply interested in Shakespeare's plays, especially in the tragedies of Hamlet and King Lear. Later he attended the university at Leipzig, and at the age of 21 became Music-Director of the opera at Magdeburg. His first wife was a pretty but rather stupid young actress, Minna Planer, who never understood her husband, and after many years of trouble they separated. After her death Wagner married Liszt's daughter, and the union proved a very happy one.

Wagner gave all that was best in himself to his work; to his friends he gave his sympathy always, and his worldly goods, whenever he had any. "Wagner can never be happy," said one who knew him, "because he will always have someone about him whose sorrows he must share." Wagner's most famous compositions are: Faust Overture; Kaiser Marsch, composed for a military band; Operas—Rienzi, Tannhauser, Lohengrin; Music Dramas—Tristan and Isolde, Die Meistersinger, and Parsifal. The last named has been the greatest musical success of the present day, having taken New York by storm during the past winter, Toronto was honored by its performance there recently. The story is founded on the ancient Buddhism, which so greatly interested Wagner. It demonstrates the purest law, the highest standard, and the oldest, wisest philosophy that the ages