

Edwin Enoch Kinney:

A NEW BRITISH COLUMBIA AUTHOR AND HIS WORK

(By the Editor)

Literary interest, like other noteworthy things, should "begin at home," and we are always glad to be able, directly through these pages or through our contributors, to give a welcome to the work of Western Canadian writers in prose or verse. The fact that in arranging for the publication of his book, the author thought fit to entrust it to the office of this magazine, naturally does not lessen our interest. Nor do we consider it any the less in place for us to introduce to readers of the BRITISH COLUMBIA MONTHLY the biographical note published in the book, with which we trust many of them will become acquainted, for its own sake and also because it is, in the main, a "B. C. Product."

* * * * *

Whatever other of the characteristics of Dr. Kinney may impress the observer or friend, no one is likely to conclude that he is of the self-advertising type of human. But, at the suggestion of the publisher of this book of verse, the author agreed to the incorporation in its pages of at least a biographical outline.

Born near Woodstock, New Brunswick, over half a century ago, Edwin Enoch Kinney came, on both sides of the house, of United Empire Loyalist stock, his great-grandparents entering St. John harbour on the "May Fleet" in 1783.

When he was a lad, the practical personal interest of a school teacher, Mr. Ivory Kilbourne, was a real influence in his career, as "he worked on the farm in summer and went to school during the winter months." He went to Fredericton as soon as he had reached the age for entrance to the Provincial Normal School. While there, he became acquainted with the Roberts family, and of Charles G. D. Roberts he writes: "Well-educated and full of enthusiasm, he was a strong personality for a country boy to come in contact with, even for a brief acquaintance On one or two occasions I remember meeting a very tall young man—Bliss Carman—in company with Roberts, but I did not get well acquainted with him. The latter was a University student at that time."

The man whose influence was strongest over Dr. Kinney, while he was at Fredericton, was George Parkin, Principal of the Collegiate Institute at that time, who afterwards became a distinguished Professor in Oxford University, winning knighthood.

After teaching in a district school in Eastern Canada for some months, Dr. Kinney came to the West, settling first in Glendale, Montana (U.S.A.). He roughed it for a bit, taught in the public schools, and then he entered the Ohio Northern University with the view of preparing himself for the study

of Medicine. He graduated B.Sc. from that institution in the class of 1889—with honors and valedictorian.

Intending to complete a medical course, he returned to teaching, but, owing to an accident, had the misfortune to lose the hearing in one ear. This led to his taking up Dentistry instead of Medicine, and he graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College in the class of 1897. He practiced Dentistry in Lowell, Massachusetts, for fourteen years before he came to Vancouver.

His inclination to write verse dates back to the days in the Normal School at Fredericton. In discussing different kinds of verse-writing, Dr. Kinney remarked: "I prefer to stick to the stanza with its regular rhythms and rhymes. I think there are valid reasons for the use of rhyme. Two of the reasons always given, that it adds to the music and aids in the unity, are indisputable. Another reason is that rhyme is a good cue for the memory I am well aware that verse-writing is a difficult art, but the field is open and it is wide."

It may be of interest to note here that the author of these verses when at College took for his graduation thesis, "The Conflict between Science and Poetry," but that he freely says that he has changed his opinion since then. "While it is true that modern science and philosophy have dispelled the transcendental halo, yet they have found Beauty to be a reality almost commensurate with Truth. It is evident that the cult of the beautiful as expressed in Art, especially in poetry, is an essential factor in the advancement of the human race; and the present renaissance in the writing of verse is a sign of progress."

In referring to his own writings—always a difficult and delicate thing for a writer in prose or verse to do—Dr. Kinney says; "In regard to my own attempts at verse; it is evident that, in addition to other faults, in many cases I have been too direct and didactic, too eager to express an opinion; but I have tried to be honest, and to look at things from a sane and modern viewpoint. 'Westward' tells the story of my father's life, coloured, of course, by the fact that he found in the beauties of the sunset an avenue to the higher life. 'The Conch-Shell Horn,' 'Geordie,' etc., are descriptions of life on a Canadian farm, and may be of some interest on that account."

If "Westward" tells the story of his father's life," perhaps the reader will hold with the editor of this volume that various verses in it reveal the character of the writer of them as that of a man of broad sympathy, of kindly and sometimes playful humour, and altogether a strong-reasoning, yet gentle, genial soul, in harmony with Nature, and in love with his fellow-man.

"THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING"

(You Know the rest) is a small matter when compared with—
THE CHECKING OF THE PROOF

IN PRINTING

The BRITISH COLUMBIA MONTHLY Publishing Office
now undertakes to supervise

Particular Printing for Particular People

1100 Bute Street, Vancouver, B.C.

Seymour 6048