

of an English yeoman emigrant and his children to Canada, soon after the rebellion of 1837.

This is an excellent central point, and enables the poet not only to draw a picture of the natural features of the country and the incidents and conditions of travel at that epoch, but also to bring on the actors of an earlier time, almost from the foundation of the Province, who recount at fitting intervals its history.

Thus also is given an opportunity for those fine bursts of loyalty and patriotism alike due to the land of the emigrant's birth and of his adoption, and have for their fountain the very heart of the poet.

In the VIth Canto, stanza 17, is to be found a splendid tribute to Canada, and in the VIIth Canto, stanza 4, another but less warm, to "sea-throned Britain."

Equally attractive are the purely descriptive parts of the poem of which the sketch of Quebec, of the Heights of Abraham, and of

"Glengarry's shore, where every face Strong-lined and grave proclaims her Highland race ;"

(Canto II, stanza 30) may be particularized, or the Niagara shore (Canto III, stanza 11) :

"the hilly ground  
That margins fair Ontario's western bound."

"Where in the lap of mountains gently spread,  
Proud Lake Ontario rests his glorious head,  
Embracing in his arms the winding strand  
And deep recesses of the yielding land."

The domestic virtues in this as in all other of Mr. Kirby's poems, draws out his best ; perhaps as fine an ideal of true marriage as was ever written, is to be found in VIIth Canto, stanzas 15, 16 and 17, beginning,

"O, happy pair ! and love thus richly crowned  
With nuptial garlands and the zone unbound."

Several fine episodes diversify the routine of the poem, of which we may mention the storm in the Atlantic and the heroism of the sailor who saved the ship at the expense of his life, told in such terms and graced by such reflections as lift the whole into the highest regions of poesy (Canto I, stanza 30).

Written in 1846 and published in 1859, in a country office, that of the *Niagara Mail*, though scarcely a fitter birthplace could have been chosen for it, this noble poem has had the fate of Pegasus in harness. Some day surely the angel will come and lift it on sounding wings into regions of a rarer atmosphere where its beautiful harmonies will no longer be lost among sordid surroundings, and a repentant world will listen enrapt.

Leaving the "U. E.," which forms a volume in itself, of which, however, only a small edition, chiefly for distribution among friends, has yet been published, we come to what may be termed a series of poems, contributed by Mr. Kirby to our periodical literature and called by him Canadian Idylls. They are seven in number if we exclude the "Dead Sea Roses," which, being somewhat different in form and texture than the rest, seems to range by itself.

Of these beautiful poems the author lately said, "they cover a period of ten years, and I could go on writing idylls for ten years more but have stopped" (certainly to our great loss). The titles are : Spina Christi, The Bells of Kirby Wiske and the Lord's Supper in the Wilderness, The Harvest Moon, Pontiac, Bushy Run, The Hungry Year, and Stony Creek.

All are marked by that quality of idealism which has been alluded to before as distinguishing Mr. Kirby's muse. They are recited in pure Anglo-Saxon, and are entirely free from those arts and artifices so much employed to-day.

As in the "U. E.," the descriptive passages are as rich in colour as perfect in delineation. A very noteworthy element also is the religious sentiment which pervades these poems, as indeed it does all of Mr. Kirby's verse. Nor is it of the indistinct and non-committal sort : instead, the basis of all, whether it be argument—and there is more than one of these from premiss to conclusion to be found in the Idylls—or statement of a truth, is the inspired Word of God, and an earnest belief in the ultimate ascendancy of the good is everywhere evident. Portions of the Idylls have been quoted again and again, for their patriotic sentiment which, noble as it is, does not exceed in value the elegance of its expression. To most of us is familiar the opening of "The Hungry Year," a revise of which by the poet is here given : two lines, the 5th and 6th, having been added to the original form, and the word 'greatly' substituted for 'at last' in the 7th line :

"The war was over. Seven red years of blood  
Had scourged the land from mountain-top to sea ;

(So long it took to rend the mighty frame  
Of England's empire in the western world).  
With help of foreign arms and foreign gold,  
Rank treason, and the Bourbon's mad revenge,  
Rebellion won, and they who greatly loved  
The cause that had been lost and kept their faith

To England's crown and scorned an alien name  
Passed into exile."

Again from the same poem :

"The world goes rushing by  
The ancient landmarks of a nobler time,  
When men bore deep the imprint of the law  
Of duty, truth and loyalty unstained."

but feared God,  
Nor shamed of their allegiance to the King.  
To keep the empire one in unity  
And brotherhood of its imperial race—  
For that they nobly fought and bravely lost,  
Where losing was to win a higher fame !"

The opening of each idyll strikes the reader at once ; the note of the whole is there sounded, and it is always a splendid note, as for example from Interlude first of "The Queen's Birthday."

"Unhasting, and unresting from his height  
The sun slid down the slope of afternoon,  
An avalanche of glory for an hour.  
One fleecy cloud o'erhead that flecked the blue,  
Lay fringed with silver like an angel's robe  
Afloat upon mid-air, too bright for shade,  
While in the south the gods of summer show-ers

Let down their golden ladders \* \* \*

Again from "Bushy Run :

"'Twas late in autumn, when the kindly sun,  
Ruddy as with new wine, through golden mist  
And incense smoke of Indian summer shone  
Like an illumination and a dream."

And the opening of the second part of "Dead Sea Roses" is equally striking :

"Niagara's stately river, wide and deep,  
Swept into Lake Ontario's inland sea  
That lay upon the earth one summer day,  
Broad in the sunshine—like the shield of God.  
Its waters stretched to horizons away,  
Rimmed with the firmament—as deeply blue.  
Quiet as love's content it lay and slept  
In dreamy happiness, a sea of glass ;

Imagery this which may challenge the old world literatures.

The only ballad that appears among Mr. Kirby's published verse opens interlude second of "The Harvest Moon." It is purely Canadian in manner and sentiment, and repays careful study. It goes :

"The cow-bell tinkled in the grass-grown lane,

Bonny is the brier-bush, bonnier the rose.  
As I went singing the old refrain—  
Bonny is the brier-bush, bonnier the rose,"

twenty lines covering the ballad proper, and forming an idyll in itself.

The Idyll "Spina Christi," is Mr. Kirby's representative in the volume "Songs of the Great Dominion," but should not have been the only one quoted, since it does not stand alone among the rest in any sense—excellent as it is.

Two of the idylls, "Spina Christi," and "The Bells of Kirby Wiske and the Lord's Supper in the Wilderness," are included under a general heading of The Queen's Birthday, the poet availing himself of this British-Colonial holiday to find a fitting opportunity for the idyll recited ; and two more, "Pontiac" and "Bushy Run," are dedicated to the same occasion, though neither has, as in the first two, prelude or interlude to introduce it. The closing lines of "Bushy Run," however, testify :

"And now the games were ended, and the play  
In which both sides had lost and won the day,  
Finished with feasting, music, and a dance  
Upon the lawn of Paradise \* \* \*

"The sunlit town of old St. Mark's still shone

Above the sombre pines, while all its bells  
Broke out in harmony—a charming peal  
That filled the air with music all the way  
To close the revels of the Queen's Birthday."

With very evident intention the poet has availed himself of the form of prelude and interlude to sing the Canada of the time, its rural life, its sports, its social characteristics, and in so doing to sketch individuals, as "Clifford" and "May," a "rosy" maid, the same who waited with her milking-pail,

in style and stuff of fashion's newest mode,  
Was dressed like any lady of the land,  
As is the wont of our Canadian girls,  
Bearing themselves with native ease and grace,

And all the charming ways of ladyhood."

Also to introduce patriotic figures of the past who play an important part among the rest ; for instance the aged Indian chief who had fought in 1776, and the "pale student" poet whose "manuscript"

"Of faded ink and yellow paper.  
An old Canadian Idyll of the past," is "Spina Christi."

—delicate methods no less charming to the student of the poems than characteristic of the poet.

The legend of the carrying of a branch of the "Holy Thorn of the old Celestine" that came from Palestine,

"A plant from that which cruelly the crown  
of thorns supplied,  
Christ wore for me."

and its planting in New France by Count Bois le Grand whose "Regiment de Rousillon is ordered to the war," relates to the thorn trees on the Niagara plain between the ruins of Fort George and Butler's Barracks, and still called "The French Thorn."

Count Bois le Grand has had to leave his "chatelaine in France," but