

And so I would that they were here to-day,
To walk with me this winding, mossy way,
Wherein alone my noiseless feet delay ;
Assured that theirs would be the peace that fills,
On this fair day, the voices of these rills,
And all the gentle whispers of these hills.

But some may from the tasks assigned them rest,
While others must be doing His behest,—
Come, sweet Content ! I know His will is best.
Cragshire, Ossipee.

RALPH H. SHAW.

Douglas Brymner, Archivist.

Douglas Brymner, historical archivist of the Dominion, was born in Greenock, Scotland, in the year 1823. He is the fourth son of Alexander Brymner, banker, originally from Stirling, where the family held for many years a prominent position.

The subject of our sketch was educated at the Greenock Grammar school, where, under the skilful tuition of Dr. Brown, he mastered the classics and higher branches of study. After leaving school, Mr. Brymner received a thorough mercantile training. He began business on his own account, and subsequently admitted his brother Graham as partner, on the return of the latter from the West Indies, where he had been living for some years. The brothers were highly successful, the younger filling, in later years, several important offices, such as justice of the peace for the County of Renfrew and chairman of the Sanitary Commission for his native town. He died in 1882 from typhus fever, contracted in the discharge of his duties as chairman, universally regretted by all. In 1853 Mr. Brymner married Jean Thompson (who died in 1884), daughter of William Thomson, of Hill End, by whom he had nine children, five of whom survive. The eldest of these is William, a rising artist of an excellent school, who has studied for several years in the best studios of Paris, and of whose merits our Montreal readers need not be told. The second son, George Douglas, is an accountant in the Bank of Montreal, and James, the third son, is in the North-West. One daughter and a son are at home. In consequence of ill health, induced by close application to business, Mr. Brymner was compelled to retire from the partnership in 1856. Complete withdrawal from mercantile cares for a year having restored him to something like his former self, he removed to Canada in 1857, and settled in Melbourne, in the Eastern Townships. Here he filled the office of mayor for two terms with conspicuous ability. On both occasions he had been elected without a contest, and without having solicited a single vote from any one, his belief being that an office of this sort ought to be conferred by the unasked suffrage of the constituency. He declined to serve for a third term, although earnestly requested to do so. While mayor, he introduced various improvements in the mode of conducting municipal business. Having, like other immigrants possessing capital, found his means vanishing before the financial crisis of 1857, Mr. Brymner drifted into what seemed to be his natural calling—literature, for which his early training and continuous study well qualified him. On the acceptance by Dr. Snodgrass of the office of Principal of Queen's College, the post of editor of the *Presbyterian*, the official journal of the Church of Scotland in Canada, became vacant. It was offered to Mr. Brymner, his fitness for the position having been recognized by the leaders of the church, he having been an active member of the Church Courts as a representative elder, and his numerous contributions to the discussion of important religious topics being esteemed and valuable. Under his guidance, the editorials being written in a straightforward, independent spirit, the paper at once took a high place. Many of Mr. Brymner's articles on ecclesiastical questions in particular were much admired, and leading religious journals often made lengthy quotations from them. About the same time he joined the staff of the *Montreal Herald*, where in a little while he was appointed associate editor with the Hon. Edward Goff Penny. Often, owing to the severe indisposition of Mr. Penny, Mr. Brymner had sole editorial charge of the *Herald*. He was noted as one of the most efficient and hard-working members of the Press Gallery, and in 1871 the presidency of the Press Association devolved upon him. A year later, in 1872, it having been resolved to establish a new branch of the Civil Service, namely, the collection of the historical records of the Dominion and its Provinces, Mr. Brymner, with the approval of men of all political shades, received the appointment. Before leaving Montreal for Ottawa an address, signed by leading men in the professions, in business and of the different nationalities, was presented to Mr. Brymner, accompanied by a munificent testimonial. No better selection could have been made for the office of Archivist than that of Mr. Brymner. He had peculiar fitness for the task imposed on him. His extensive historical knowledge, unwearied industry, patience and love for research, his power of organizing and arranging materials for reference, etc. were all admirable qualifications, and these he possessed to a remarkable degree. His reports are models, and present in clear and terse language the result of his labours. The story of the origin of the office, and the important part played in its construction by Mr. Brymner will be found in the Archivist's report for 1883. In 1881 the Public Record Office (London) authorities republished the whole of Mr. Brymner's report as their own, owing, as the Keeper of Records, Sir William Hardy, said, to the importance of the information it contained. Every year since then copious extracts have been made

from Mr. Brymner's reports. Perhaps it will not be out of place to insert here the following excerpt from the preface to the admirably annotated publication of "Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books," by General Horatio Rogers, who says: "I cannot refrain from referring to the unwearied zeal and unfailing courtesy of Mr. Douglas Brymner, the Archivist of the Dominion of Canada, in affording me the fullest and most satisfactory use of the Haldimand papers and the other manuscripts confided to his charge. Would that all public officials in custody of valuable manuscripts might take a lesson from him!" Mr. Brymner is an adherent of the Church of Scotland, to which he has always belonged, and he has been one of the most formidable opponents of union. His evidence before the Senate Committee, on the 24th and 26th of April, 1882, which is substantially the argument of the non-contents on the union question, was presented with great power and skill. It can be found in a pamphlet of over forty pages, published by Hunter, Rose & Co., Toronto, 1883. The greater part of his literary work is anonymous. He possesses a fund of caustic humour, some of which found vent in his letters in Scotch, under the name of *Tummas Treddles*, an octogenarian Paisley weaver, original contributions on curling to the *Montreal Herald*, but afterwards extended to other subjects in the *Scottish American Journal*. These have ceased for some years, doubtless from the pressure of other and more serious occupations. His translations of the Odes of Horace into Scotch verse were happy *imitations*. A favourable specimen "The Charms of Country Life," is in the *Canadian Monthly* of 1879, the others having appeared in newspapers, and, so far as is known, have never been collected. He is another illustration of the fallacy of Sydney Smith's statement that it requires a surgical operation to get a joke into a Scotchman's head.

John Hunter Duvar.

In this issue we give a portrait of our esteemed contributor, the Master of Hernewood. The following brief critical biography of Mr. Duvar appeared in the *King's College Record* of February, 1889:

The first thought that strikes the reader of Hunter Duvar's poetry, is that, aside from its merits or demerits, here is a true Canadian, a man imbued with the true national instinct and aspirations of a Canadian. Working as a Canadian poet, to attain any eminence, one must always, or at any rate for the present, work on lines distinctively Canadian. Our friends at the south—the American humorists—whenever they have risen to real success, have held severely to the same principle. In accordance with this principle the poet lays the plot of his most important work in Canada.

John Hunter Duvar, the Bard of Hernewood, as he is called, was born on the 29th of August, 1830. He resided for a number of years in Halifax, N.S., whence he removed to Hernewood, his present place of residence, in Alberton County, P.E.I. He received a good education in Scotland, being as a student very fond of the classics and an eager reader of literature, the older English, French, Italian and Spanish being his familiar friends.

As is the experience of so many students, Mr. Duvar found several branches of study which he disliked intensely. Philological study is one of his especial aversions; he prefers "The Wisdom of the Ancients," without Lord Bacon's explanation; he never saw much fun in Euclid's etchings, but prefers Du Maurier's; and the starch of the verse of the era of Queen Anne is so intolerable to him that he says, "I am glad that she is dead."

He served for a good many years in the Canadian militia, from which he retired a short time ago with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Of late years he has been engaged in the Civil Service Fishery Department, which occupies most of his time, but still leaves leisure to keep up acquaintance with literature, a literature chiefly of the fine old crusted and crusty kind. He has for a long time kept up a desultory connection with the literary press, being at one time a contributor to the defunct *Maritime Monthly*, of St. John, N.B., and an occasional writer to the *Montreal Witness*.

Mr. Duvar did not become a writer in *malice prepense*, but drifted into that *métier* almost unconsciously; he has looked upon it more as an amusement than an art. His mind is Gothic—flamboyant Gothic—and his works show a strong tinge of mediævalism in his taste. In some of his works we see his strength, bold and impressive; while in others the simple beauty, outborne by aptness of imagery, is very charming. As a dramatist he is of no little power. He gives to his chief characters many contradictory qualities, which, as Macaulay says, is one of the chief aims of a dramatist. His shorter lyrics possess in an eminent degree those qualities which adapt them for song.

In 1879 "El Enamorado," a closet drama of the Spanish school, was published. There is a certain familiarity of address noticeable in this, which at times seems scarcely appropriate; but what strikes one most forcibly is the evident influence of the Shakespearian drama upon the genius of the author. Throughout the drama we find instances of this in scene, speech or trait of character. It is but natural, for any man who has "soaked" in Shakespeare, cannot fail to show traces of the Great Master in his work.

"See the gates
Are swinging on the hinges of the east,
And out there wells the flush of morning-red
That heralding the coming of the sun,

Encarnadines our lovely ladies' cheeks
Making them living roses."

This reminds one forcibly of a somewhat similar passage in "Hamlet."

"But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill."

In 1888 was published what is of more interest to us, and has gained for Mr. Duvar more notice than the foregoing. This is "De Roberval," a Canadian drama, the time of the scene being the first colonization of Canada by the French. The traces of Shakespeare's influence, though by no means absent, are not so strong in this drama as in "El Enamorado." It contains many passages of beautiful description. Mr. Duvar, while he may loiter somewhat upon a scene which has taken his fancy, yet does not enter too closely into these minute details, which so often make a writer wearisome; for the proverb of old Hesiod that "Half is often greater than the whole," is eminently applicable to description. It would not be easy to find a more powerful piece of description than the passage in which the poet depicts that wonder of ours—Niagara. Here are a few lines from it:

"Above the flume
And all along the stately rocking shore
The aged forests that, like sentinels
With their gaunt shadows dim and tenebrous
Shut in the world's wonder, echo it,
While leagues away, through all the sylvan shades,
Out borne by the vibrating earth and air,
The cause unseen, the deep-toned murmur sounds
Like rolling of the Almighty chariot wheels."

"The sprays,
In spiral smoke-wreaths, rise in shifting forms,
More than the incense of a thousand fanes,
Until they mingle viewless with the clouds,
While, as reminder of the promise made—
Water should not again destroy the world,
Rainbow tiaras span the dreadful fall,
And through them flash the flung up water drops,
Making a rain of rainbows."

Of different style, but none the less striking, is the following, a sweet and captivating little madrigal. It is a true gem:

Question. The rain is dripping from the leads,
Cold, cold and dreary,
And the summer flowers in the garden beds
All hang their heads away,
Winter is coming on again,—
Shall we ever see those days again
When one heart beat between us twain,
Ever?
Answer. Never.

Question. "Ever" is a long, long time,
But not so long as "Never,"
For the vows we made in our summer prime
Were to last for ever and ever,
But they have not worn a year and a day;
Alas their memory! will it stay
How long time? nor pass never away,
Never?
Answer. Ever, for ever.

In "The Emigration of the Fairies," a lively and fanciful poem, which appeared in 1888 along with "De Roberval," is pictured the poet's home, Hernewood, and a detachment of English fairies domiciled there. "Ptolemy on the Nile," which appeared in THE DOMINION ILLUSTRATED, December 15th, is one of the finest poems written by Hunter Duvar. To quote the words of the editor of the paper, "It would be hard to find a more skillful piece of workmanship than this picture of the Bard of Hernewood."

"The Triumph of Constancy" is a poem of some six hundred lines, written in blank verse. It shows most strongly the mediæval taste of the author. The following, apart from its being an excellent piece of description, is an example of the quaint diction of the poem:

"Ere long the dell grew wild and many-coved
Taking the features of a mountain glen,
Down which the brook, no more a mirror, flowed,
But leaped and fretted in the cloven rifts,
Making a sullen murmur 'mong the stones,
Which, as he followed up towards its source,
It led him to a hill of difficulty
All seamed and riven, with landslips and dens
Where stunted pines hung grasping with their roots,
And plats of quaking bog beset the way,
Where the black newts swam wriggling, and the efts
Among the bulrush spears sat up and stared."

Mr. Duvar has just completed a work which is undergoing revision. It is "Bernesque," in Ottawa Rima, unlike anything that has been written in Canadian literature. Its name is Atlantis. A man of that country—namely, that part of Atlantis called Canada, wishes for a familiar spirit. His wish is granted in the shape of an *affrete*, Count Perdu, who proceeds to lead him through the range of the seven deadly sins. This will probably appear in the course of the year, and will no doubt be a valuable contribution to our literature.

Mr. Duvar has had no small share in building up the literature of Canada. He has gone about it in the right manner, for the surest way to raise our literature to the height which every patriot would see it occupy, is to make it thoroughly distinctive.

J. A. PAYZANT.