

WM. KIRBY, F.R.S.C.

William Kirby, F.R.S.C., Canada's oldest litterateur, born in 1817, and almost in his 90th year, died on Saturday, June 23. A native of Yorkshire, England, he has always been known as a strong advocate for British connection. Leaving England in 1832, he received part of his education in Cincinnati from a highly educated Scot Alexander Kinmount. Coming to Canada in 1839, he lived some years in St. Davids, and afterwards married Miss Whitmore, whose mother was a daughter of the noted United Empire Loyalist, Daniel Servos.

He next became editor and proprietor of the Niagara Mail, in 1853, and his first poem, "The U. E.," was printed in the office of that paper, the greater part of the work, it is said, having been done by himself. On his retirement from The Mail he became Collector of Customs, which office he held for many years.

His greatest work, "Le Chien D'Or," perhaps the best Canadian historical romance ever written, has given its author deserved fame. The story of the writing and publishing, the loss of the manuscript for nearly three years, its finding in the Grand Trunk baggage room, Toronto, and its subsequent adventures is a romance in itself. His poems, "Canadian Idylls," "Queen's Birthday," "Dead Sea Roses," "Kirby Wiske," "The Hungry year," etc., give us many stirring incidents of Canadian history, all breathing an intense loyalty, while his translations of French and German poems show his linguistic as well as poetic powers.

His latest work, "Annals of Niagara," gives many almost forgotten stories of early days in the old capital.

He was made a fellow of the Royal Society, and though his reserve and modesty kept him from being as well known as he might have been, still by the highest in this and other lands his merits as a man and a poet have been acknowledged. The Princess Louise, at Ottawa, conveyed to him the pleasure the late Queen Victoria had had in reading "The Golden Dog." Letters from Lord Tennyson, the Duke of Argyll and many noted persons attest the esteem in which he was held.