

scendently great in the volume, every poem is readable. The makers of these ballads are serious men; and one of their number Mr. William Freeland, as far back as 1881, well describes himself and his fellow bards:

"We are men, and we love the wild weather;
We are makers of ballads and songs;
We are Knights of the Thistle and Heather,
And we sing for the righting of wrongs."

Good fellows all! Strong singers, probing the mysteries of the external world and of their own hearts.

The opening poem, "A Ballad of Borderland," is by Mr. Freeland. It is finely rhythmical, and shows the corypheus of this band to be a man filled with a lofty respect for his art, and possessed of a mind bent on solving his riddle of life and death.

"But I hear
Like murmurs from a happy sphere.
The noble music that they made
As minstrels in their native shade,
When fiery-tongued, they sang to rout
The deity that prompteth doubt,
Not knowing then that doubt is still
The servant of the Heavenly will,
And slays more foes of truth and good
Than ever priesthood understood."

This is vigorous work; something for the mind to chew upon. A poet who can write thus

"Sees
Glints of still grander mysteries"
than are scanned by ordinary mortals.

Another striking writer is Hamish Hendry. His "The Beadle's Lament" is exceptionally strong: he has entered with fine dramatic insight into the old beadle's attitude towards the new-fangled religion introduced by the "Sleek Herd, wi' face o' whey." He has handled the Scotch dialect with a skill that would have done Burns credit, and his rhythm is as austere as the face of the beadle. But there is a lack of sincerity in the poem; he is evidently writing to show how well he can reproduce an extreme type of man. Moreover, his dialect, his rhythm are borrowed; the voice of Burns speaks through every line. Had Burns never lived, "The Beadle's Lament" would be a great poem, but as it is we have merely a good imitation of a great artist's language and manner. We like Mr. Hendry much better in "The Blind Musician."

"She sits, where meet the public ways,
Nor craves the public boon,
But patient-wise she sits and plays
A fitful, wheezy tune.

"Her numb hands fumble on the keys;
Her feet to quick airs beat;
While March wind blows across her knees
Keen gusts of bitter sleet."

This is simple, strong work, intensely sympathetic; the woman lives before us, we leave our Canadian home and stand in the gloom of a Glasgow day, with the smoke

and sleet blackening Argyl Street till the gas lights struggle to dispel the mid-day gloom, and that wheezy tune fitfully grates upon the ear. It is in this simple ballad work that Mr. Hendry is at his best. His "Two Toilers" in the same manner contains one fine stanza, one that shows how well he understands the humble toiler:

"The grace of simple tasks well done,
The regal human grace is his;
Slow steps he home at set of sun,
Nor knows how great he is."

Another writer, who seems, from his subjects, to be a more scholarly poet than Mr. Hendry, is William Canton. His "In Memoriam" is good, but then it is In Memoriam verse, and the poet would have to be great indeed to be either original or impressive on such a hackneyed subject. But in this poem he has shown himself a student of Keats; he has something of Keats' sensuous charm of language, and the rhythm is not unlike the immortal odes. He is, however, at his best in "In Sicily." This is, indeed, an excellent poem, and one worth much study. It is one of the longest poems in the volume, and for us by far the greatest. The central thought is a fine one, and the whole thing is worked out with a spirit caught from the master-artist he extols.

The subject is the same as that so well done by Keats in "The Grecian Urn," the permanency of Art. It is on a poem by Theocritus.

"For one Theocritus, it seems,
Beheld and sketched this urchin so
Twenty-two hundred years ago."

It is best to let a poem such as this speak for itself; any words of the critic would be inadequate to show its artistic excellencies and its teeming thought. One section will suffice:

"A world of change! For while he plaits,
Heedless of foxes and of Fates,
Throned heavens of gods, broad realms of men
Are ruined and built up again.
Like cloudflakes touched with rose and gold,
The radiant goddesses of Greece
Flash through their sunset and surcease;
And Lucian's gods are bought and sold—
Vain, hollow gods, the scorn of man;
The great grave gods of Julian
Sweep from the world with angry frown;
Then from a reeking cross looks down
The Man-God's sad and thorn-crowned face;
Last, from the outer gloom of space,
The horror of a God unknown
Chills the tired human heart to stone."

But the poem we have turned to most in this volume is one by Neil Munro, whose novel "John Splendid" was reviewed a few weeks ago. 'Home' has a sincerity and force that grips the heart. But this is dangerous ground for the critic. This is new, original work, and it may after all be the accident of birth that makes this poem thrill us so; the Celt in us may have smothered the judgment. Perchance we are enchanted by the bag-pipe music that