

not seem any lack of reality about her literary creations, insight into character being one of her strong points; and the injustice was felt for her, if not also by her. To those who knew the obstacles to her literary work with which she had to contend, the amount of such work she accomplished was really remarkable. Her family history was marked by one heavy trial after another, such as would have crushed the energies of a weaker nature. But her strong love for literature was, no doubt, one helpful possession, which, combined with her interest in great general questions, helped to beguile many a weary hour.

Her later years have been lived in Western Canada, to which she accompanied the brothers and sister to whom she was ardently attached. She resided for a time near Tilsonburg, but her last home was on a beautiful spot near the whirlpool at Niagara Falls. She delighted in the beautiful scenery about her, and contributed the letter-press of the number of "Picturesque Canada" which deals with Niagara. Her life here was deeply saddened, however, by the mysterious disappearance of a beloved brother and the long period of agonizing suspense before the family could settle down to the conviction that he had met with a fatal accident. She had always shrunk from general society, and, towards the close of her life, when infirmities were growing upon her, she clung more than ever to the retirement in which she had lived so long, and could not be persuaded to leave home, even to visit the friends she had most loved and valued. She continued to write, however, as long as her fingers were able to wield the pen, which she seemed able to wield as gracefully as ever. Latterly, however, she could not even use it to write letters, and when she tried to do so, her fine, strong handwriting seemed sadly changed. She did not by any means cling to life, perhaps the less so, that she felt herself to a great extent "forgotten by the world." The world of readers is an ungrateful one after all, and, in the pressure of new favorites, is very apt to forget those who, in the past, have instructed and delighted it. But something might have been done to manifest the appreciation which was her due. Considering the leading part she took in our budding literature, and the character her writing gave to our early periodicals, would it not have been a graceful act, had she received from her brothers of the pen—who should scarcely be monopolists, since art knows no distinction of sex—the well-earned honor of being the first lady-member of the Royal Canadian Institute? If such distinctions are of any value at all, they should, in the first instance, be for those who have borne the burden and heat of the day and won their honors in a fair field with no favor. No doubt such a recognition would have cheered the last lonely years of her life, but she has passed beyond the use of such laurels now.

In her earlier years, Miss Murray wrote some graceful poems, one of which, "The Merlin's Cave," showed great power of imagination and language; but prose, not poetry seemed her natural vehicle of expression; and she will be remembered chiefly as one of the best prose writers Canada has yet possessed. In her case the power seemed the more spontaneous as she had none of the modern educational advantages now so easily secured. She was, indeed, mainly self-educated, and to a strong and highly cultivated intellect was added a noble nature which raised her above

all petty ambitions, and made her a most loving and devoted daughter, a faithful sister and an ever-loyal friend.

FIDELIS.

### SAPPHO.

Give us back the Lesbian measure,  
That lost art of long ago—  
Blinding pathos, burning pleasure,  
Light of laughter and of woe.

Give us back the Lesbian measure,  
Lighter Horace lost the vein,  
And with all his golden treasure  
Caught no note of Sappho's pain.

Give us back the Lesbian measure,  
How could'st thou Catullus sing?  
Thou the bard of Roman leisure,  
Sound the depths of Sappho's spring?

Heart of Hellas still is beating,  
Golden memories linger yet,  
Passion's chords forever fleeting—  
We who love, can we forget?

JOHN A. T. LLOYD.

### THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.

In the list of lyrical writers of America, the first name is easily that of Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Among the lyrists of the nineteenth century, there is no question about his place. Indeed, he belongs more to the world at large than to any particular spot in a hemisphere, and though he has sung sweetly of certain phases and incidents in American life and movement, by far the greater part of his work is cosmopolitan. The influence of Herrick, Keats and Tennyson is plainly discerned in his verse. But the influence is suggestive only, for Mr. Aldrich has borrowed nothing from the English bards, save, perhaps, a little of their form and manner. His art is his own. He mixes his own pigments, and originality of thought is certainly his strongest characteristic. His coloring is exquisite and his melody is perfect. One rarely stumbles on a halting line, and such a thing as a bad metaphor is unknown in the whole range of his poetical writings. Mr. Aldrich is, moreover, a man of superlatively fine taste. He is his own severest critic, and has been known to cut away half and sometimes more than half of a poem, simply because he thought, mayhap wrongfully, that the additional verses weakened the force of the predominant idea. To do this, we may be sure, cost the poet a pang, for he is a slow craftsman, and this work of his which we find so tuneful, and so easy to read, flows not readily from his pen. He is, in the highest sense, an artist, and like Tennyson, is always fearful lest the standard may be lowered by himself. This faithfulness to his art, to himself and to his public, has therefore not been realized without great effort. The reader, in consequence, has lost many acceptable stanzas. But no one will say that art has suffered, for the poet has allowed only his best work to see the light, and really, after all, it is better, perhaps, that it should be so.

It is a fortunate thing for literature in America, that Baby Bell was written. Everyone remembers the touching story of the dainty babe, and how she came "into this world of ours," the gates of heaven being left ajar:

"With folded hands and dreamy eyes,  
Wandering out of Paradise,  
She saw this planet, like a star,  
Hung in the glistening depths of even—

Its bridges running to and fro,  
O'er which the white-winged angels go,  
Bearing the holy Dead to heaven.  
She touched a bridge of flowers—those feet,  
So light they did not bend the bells  
Of the celestial asphodels,  
They fell like dew upon the flowers:  
Then all the air grew strangely sweet!  
And thus came dainty Baby Bell  
Into this world of ours."

The story of the brief life is told with keenest sympathy and delicacy. The heart readily lends itself to the sad beauty of the narrative. And then:

"At last he came, the messenger,  
The messenger from unseen lands:  
And what did dainty Baby Bell?  
She only crossed her little hands,  
She only looked more meek and fair!  
We parted back her silken hair,  
We wove the roses round her brow—  
White buds, the summer's drifted snow,—  
Wrapt her from head to foot in flowers  
And thus went dainty Baby Bell  
Out of this world of ours!"

The tearful ballad, so faultless in conception and in execution, so genuine in human sympathy, and so admirable in its art, proved on the instant a complete and unqualified success. Mr. Aldrich had sent it, with perhaps some misgivings, to Willis or Halleck; I have forgotten whom. He had not to wait long for an answer. The editor wrote enthusiastically to the young poet, and backed his words with an honorarium, in the shape of a crisp bank note. This reception to the literary guild decided the poet. He abandoned commerce for letters, and gave his whole mind to the calling in which, in after years, he achieved such signal success. He was born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the 11th of November, 1836. The quaint old town figures agreeably in several of his books, as "Rivermouth." His early youth was passed in Louisiana, and while preparing himself for college, his father died. This put an end to his plans, and he accepted the invitation of his uncle, a prominent New York merchant, and went north to take a position in the counting-room. He spent three years at the ledger, but business had little charm for him. His spare time was given up to writing and reading, and from time to time he enriched the columns of the local newspapers with contributions in prose and verse. One of these was Baby Bell, the success of which we have already seen. He became a "reader" for a publishing house, and his writings, exhibiting growing strength, appeared at intervals, in *Putnam's Monthly*—famous in its day as one of the best exponents of modern thought in the United States; the *Old Knickerbocker*—then, if I mistake not, under the editorship of Lewis Gaylord Clark; the *New York Mirror*, conducted with conspicuous ability; the *Saturday Press* and the *Home Journal*, Nathaniel Parker Willis's paper. In 1856, Mr. Aldrich joined the staff of the *Journal*. After this, he went to Boston, edited with judgment *Every Saturday*, from the first number to the last, and when Mr. Howells retired from the conduct of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he became its chief editor, resigning the position only a few years ago.

Mr. Aldrich's prose is as captivating as his poetry. He has given us a charming account of a journey from Ponkapog to Pesth, which no one will willingly set down until he has read it through, and four or five volumes of stories which must be praised for their originality and manner of treatment. Of these we will speak later on.