

Farewell! most sacred spot to me,
My dear auld mither's grave,
I'll think o' thee when ower the sea,
Ayont Atlantic's wave;
Our graves may yet be far apart,
Our spirits joined shall be,
There's aye a green spot in my heart,
My mither dear, for thee!

A very able introduction to Mr. Imrie's poems, written by G. Mercer Adam, Esq., of Toronto, is prefixed to the volume. Mr. Mercersays:—"Among the diverse interests of this restless, money-grubbing world, there is one which should hold a larger place than it does in the affections of the masses,—namely, the honest unaffected love of home and home pleasures. In those days we are all of us too much disposed to seek enjoyment abroad, and to figure more than is good for us in the eye of the public. The craving for excitement has made us impatient with home, and the fireside and domestic shrines have in large measure lost their attraction. We are no longer satisfied with the novel, with the song or with the play, that used to delight our forefathers; nothing so simple and innocent would now content us. Even our religion has suffered a change. The stern morality and unbending creeds of other days have become pliant and yielding, while compromise and emasculated beliefs have taken their place. The old doctrines familiar to the by-gone pulpit now offend us, though we are not particular if the preacher resorts to irreverence and slang,—on the contrary, we rather encourage him in this propensity. With tastes and cravings so destructive to the spiritual life, what wonder that simple joys and quiet domestic pleasures have in this social world lost much of their charm?"

"Yet the common people,—as the phrase goes—the men and women who are doing the every-day work of this toiling world, stand more than ever in need of rest and quiet, and the kindly solacement of happy fireside intercourse. Innocent delights, restful pleasures, and the blissful contentment of a well-ordered, comfortable home, with such recreation as these Edens afford, must be the necessities, we should think, of those, at least whose lot is a ceaseless round of toil. To such our author comes with his tuneful lyre and sings us the glad some lays of the home and the fireside. Benefactor is he not, to you and to me, if he beguiles us from our distractions and cares, and leads us to realize that, after all, the world's happiness lies in the quiet comforts and refining influences of home? It would indeed be difficult for thoughts, however expressed, on love, friendship, home, and kindred topics to fail of finding response in the human breast; and the average reader who follows the bent of his own unperverted taste, and is as indifferent to the critics as the poets themselves, will find much to please him in the book.

"Of profit he should also find much, if his sympathies are as keen and broad as the author's, and his appreciation equal to his, of the warm-hearted Christian brotherhood, and unaffected moral purpose, which should find expression in all our work. Not its least merit, it must be said, is in the fact that there is not a puzzling or baffling line in the book. This should be counted for something, when there is so much in our modern verse, not ambitious of fame merely, but cold, meaningless, and empty. The volume is chiefly noteworthy, however, not only for unassuming sincerity on the part of the writer, but for its appeal to the universal and easily awakened feelings of our common humanity. The unobtrusive piety and strain of religious sentiment which run, like threads of gold, through the book, will, we are sure, not the less

endear the volume to the reverent reader, and to those whose hearts have felt the influences of the divine. May it be its mission to keep alive the love of home, to minister to minds distraught with toil and care, and among its readers—we trust of all ranks and conditions of men—to impart an eternal sabbath in the heart."

With all this praise, however (and it is certainly not unworthily bestowed), Mr. Imrie is, as Mr. Adam implies, very unassuming in regard to his own merits as a poet. In the preface to the second edition of his poems he says:—"It is with mingled feelings of humility and gratitude to my friends and patrons that I pen this short preface to the second edition of my poems. It is but three years since I ventured to test the purchasing appreciation of the public by publishing my first volume, and now with more confidence is sent forth a larger edition of the same book. My first volume extended to two hundred and ten pages; in this edition containing later poems there are three hundred and fifty pages. Acting on the advice of friends, there will be found a number of songs set to music, the melody of which I have introduced as a relief to the eye, and a solace to the ear, of my musical patrons. Most of these songs have been published from time to time in sheet-music form, and have met with a ready sale.

"The children of the home—as in the first edition—have a liberal share of my thoughts in happiest moods, and I am not ashamed to own that I have as great pleasure in serving them as 'children of a larger growth.' My style is simple, but none the less sincere, and my chief desire is to please and encourage the toiling masses. That these humble heart-thoughts and aspirations for the present and future welfare of my fellow countrymen, and humanity at large may be accepted in the kindly spirit in which they have been composed is the earnest wish of the author.

As may be inferred from the above, included in Mr. Imrie's book are a number of pieces suitable for and interesting to young people. They are decidedly in the author's happiest strain and are popular not only in Canada but elsewhere. Here is one of the simplest:—

SHE PAYS HER DEBTS WITH KISSES.

I know a winsome little pet
With wealth of rosyate blisses,
Who takes what favours she can get
And pays her debts with—kisses!

At night when I come home to tea
She bribes me with her "kisses,"
Then plants herself upon my knee
And tastes of all my dishes.

She comes off best in every "trade,"
And seldom ever misses
To catch me in the trap she's laid,
Then "pays me off" with—kisses!

She says she wants a "dolly" nice,
With long and golden tresses,
And if I ask her for the price,
Gives kisses and carresses!

I dearly love this little maid,
Above all other misses;
I'll take back every word I've said,
And "trade" with her for "tisses!"

The sonnet is also a favourite style of composition with our author, there being no less than forty-four of them in his last volume. They are all of a superior cast and contain many bright and cheerful thoughts on all kinds of subjects. We quote the following specimens.

FREEDOM.

Freedom is obedience to righteous law
Framed for the guidance of a nation great,
Made to be kept—not broken by a flaw
Known only to the rulers of the State!
Justice that treats the rich and poor alike,
Defending each from favor and attack,
Slow to convict—yet ready aye to strike
The fatal blow on all that honour lack!
A nation's strength is measured by her laws,
Her safety is the welfare of her sons,
Industry and loyalty the power that draws
To peace her commerce, and in war her guns!
Freedom—our birthright, sell it not for gold,
Our fathers bought it with their blood of old!

REST!

Rest is the peaceful calm which follows toil;
Sweet to the laboring man who tills the soil;
Likewise most precious to the weary brain,
Tired with the dull routine of loss or gain;
Or to the authors of our learned books,
Who show the trace of study in their looks.
All value rest—all need those quiet hours
As much as doth the plant those welcome
"showers"
Which Heaven sends to cool the fevered earth,
And cause sweet Nature sing aloud with mirth
When God at first created earth and skies,
He "rested" in the shades of Paradise!
Likewise shall we, earth's care and labor o'er,
Find rest the sweeter for the toils we bore!

Nor would we omit in passing* to mention the fact that many of Mr. Imrie's pieces show some excellent descriptive writing. His powers in this respect are very keen. In his poem on "Queenston Heights" he says:

Here two great nations met as if to kiss,
Divided only by a silver line;
Peace, welfare, harmony and mutual bliss,
Link fruitful branches of a parent vine.

And in his ode to "Lake Ontario."

Last of the inland seas—yet nearest home—
Thy waters soon shall swell the mighty deep,
And mingle with the ocean's briny foam,
There shalt thou rest, and there for ever
sleep.

Before taking leave of our author and his works we desire to call special attention to his religious compositions. They are all expressed in beautiful language and contain nothing that is dogmatical or offensive to any one. His Christianity is of the true kind, being broad, and deep and charitable, and we may add that the record of his own life proves him to be a man of great piety and gentleness, simplicity and purity. And in conclusion, we will quote one of the best of these:

THE TOUCH OF THE DIVINE.

Each grain of sand by sounding sea,
Each trembling leaf on quivering tree,
Each blade of grass on dowy lea,
Speaks volumes of God's love to me!

The pearls that deep in ocean lie,
The twinkling stars that gem the sky,
The sunbeam, caught from noontide's eye,
Direct my thoughts, oh God, to Thee!

The flowers that deck the fragrant dell,
And o'er me cast their beauty spell,
I love them—for they seem to tell
The story of God's love to me!

No matter where I wander free,
By river, lake, or boundless sea,
The touch of God's dear hand I see,
And know by these He loveth me!

Oh God! Thou doest all things well,
Earth, sea, and sky Thy wisdom tell,
In heaven what must it be to dwell
For ever, O my God, with Thee!