

## Canadiana.

Edited by REV. A. J. LOCKHART, ("Pastor Felix"), Cherryfield, Maine.

### VI.

#### ACADIAN MINSTRELSY.

Runmaging the book-case, I one morning discovered what to me was a treasure. It was in the home of a friend; and not being at Halifax or Truro, but in a town on the western Maine sea-board, I was momentarily surprised to read on the title-page: "The Æolian Harp, or Miscellaneous Poems. By Sarah and Mary E. Herbert." This precious bit of flotsam had somehow drifted in here, where it was little regarded and indifferently known, and had become stranded. I claimed it by right of original discovery, and had no difficulty in arranging to bear it away.

These sisters, of whom I had heard little and should delight to know more, were residents of Halifax some half a century ago, and were lovers and patrons of literature in their time. They were of Irish parentage. They were of most amiable spirit, if we may draw conclusions from such traditions as have floated down to us. They were both lovers of the home soil, and their adopted city. Sarah writes in the lines "To an Absent Friend:"

"The fragrance of Acadia's flowers  
The hues that summer sunset gave,  
The ramble through the forest bowers,  
The rest beside Chebucto's wave;  
The flowery field our cot before,  
Its many-blossomed hawthorn trees,  
The willow, waving at our door,  
O say, hast thou forgotten these."

I should imagine their home to have been a kind of literary centre at that time, where anyone of like taste with themselves, was more than welcome. We read in the memoir of John McPherson, prefixed to his poems: "During a visit to Halifax in 1843, his demeanor was marked by the quiet retiring characteristics previously alluded to. . . He could well enjoy the society of persons having literary tastes akin to his own. . . About this time he became acquainted with Sarah Herbert, whose published verses have had a wide provincial circulation. Miss Herbert like McPherson, was warmly attached to poetry, and fond of giving literary exercises a moral and religious tendency. She evinced a hearty admiration for the sweetness of McPherson's lyre, appreciating his unsophisticated character, and could repeat from memory with much feeling, several of his best lines. One pleasant evening, a small social party, including the two writers, was assembled. The conversation as might be expected, turned on poetry, and Miss Herbert recited with clearness, taste, and due emphasis, his stanzas, entitled "Longings for Spring." The company were much pleased with the plaintively picturesque lines; but the bard himself, on hearing his verse so fluently repeated by a sister melodist, was gratified and delighted beyond measure, and forgot for a happy moment,

present cares and gloomy prospects. Both writers, then young in years and hope. . . went early beyond the 'dark river.'"

After McPherson's death, Sarah lamented him in a strain made fashionable by Miss Landon and Mrs. Hemens:

"The grave hath quiet sleep;  
And blissful treasures high in Heaven, remain  
For those who, struggling through their lot of pain,  
Their faith and hope in God unwavering keep.

"And he, we trust was such,  
O'er whose untimely fate Acadia sighs;  
He, from whose lyre, such sweet, sad tones  
would rise,  
When woke the strings beneath his gentle touch.

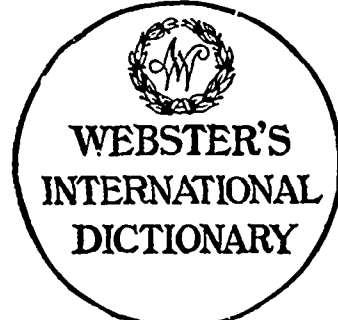
"Life's flowers but thinly grew  
Around his pathway, and the sunbeams bright,  
Too seldom cheered him with their clear,  
warm light,  
But rather, cloud-obscured, faint radiance  
threw.

"The lyre we hear no more,  
He, doubtless, tuneth to a loftier strain;  
And its soft music swells, unmixed with pain,  
In hymns triumphal, on the heavenly shore."

"So Friendship smiles to see  
That his loved land his name in memory  
bears."

She returns again to the theme in some lines on "Returning Spring," which do not

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