

## Canadiana.

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### "BURNSIANA."

THE homage and affection that the world has considered due to Robert Burns have found new expression in two volumes,\* recently issued from the press of Alexander Gardner, Paisley, Scotland, under the editorial supervision of Mr. John D. Ross, of Brooklyn, N. Y. The first is a book of verse, the adulatory character of which is finely tempered by predominating strength and sincerity, and the genuine warmth and enthusiasm which pervade the whole. Halleck leads with his incomparable tribute, than which we have seen no finer on this subject; Campbell's ringing praise is there; Longfellow's tender invocation, and the exquisite lines of the appreciative Whittier. Lowell and Holmes are in the van of the volume, and Montgomery, whose muse furnished a neatly elegant characterisation of the Scottish bard, who was—

"At Bannockburn the Bird of Jove,  
With thunder in his train."

The Centenary Memorial Ode, of 184 Craig Knox, is prominently placed. We saw it near the time of its first appearance, and gladly renew our impression of one of the few prize occasional poems having value and permanence as literature. Two of Wordsworth's poems are found, and the sonnet on seeing the field at Mossyiel where the daisy was plowed up. Jamie Hogg is there, with his milk-maid singing of Robin awa'. We find also the names of Robert Buchanan, of Thomas Parsons, author of some fine lines about Dante,—of Prof. Blackie, of Wallace Bruce, of Thomas C. Latt, Hew Ainslie, R. B. Tannahill, T. B. Read, and Gerald Massey, with his tenderness and prettiness. Among Canadians, we find the names of Agnes Maule Machar, Evan McColl, Dr. J. M. Harper, and John Macfarlane. We are sorry to miss the tributary offerings of John Keats, Ebenezer Elliott, Eliza Cook, Joaquin Miller, Dr. Jeremiah Rankin, and others, finding instead the somewhat wearisome succession of anniversary pieces, altogether conventional and repetitious; but for this a reason may exist, as we are impressed, through the agency of these obscure minors, with a deeper sense of the peculiar, ineradicable leaven that Burns has cast into the heart of the race.

The second volume that has excited in us a pleasurable sense of past days, is one of a series. Herein are gathered a variety of literary odds and ends,—anecdote, reminiscence, quotation, verse, criticism, biography, notation, etc. If the editor shall continue the work indefinitely, as he now proposes, it must become the repository of much material, interesting and valuable to all lovers of the national poet of Scotland. For future volumes the editor requests con-

\* Burnsiana: A Collection of Literary Odds and Ends, relating to Robert Burns, Vol. I. Around the Grave of Burns: The Tributes of Many Bards. Second, enlarged edition.

I thought, asleep; but now I doubt if she slept at all those nights.

We left for home next afternoon, and I can easily imagine all her thoughts were on the train that passed us at Amherst, speeding away as fast as it could, bearing with it what was to her as dear as life itself.

At Windsor Junction we parted. She went on to the city, I to the Annapolis Valley.

The next Christmas I was to be married. I had had only short notes, and those seldom, from Fay; but now she sent me a sad, sweet loving letter. She was too ill to travel; so would not be able to see me married; but loved me still, was grateful for all my sympathy, wished me all joy.

One day the next June, my husband came in with a most serious face.

"Kitty," he said, "your friend Fay is very sick, they have sent a telegram asking you to come if you can, will you go?"

Go! Of course I would go, even if she were ten times further away. We had only a few hours together; but she gave me two heartless letters to read, and told me what I did not already know of her story.

"Dear old Tannahill," she said,—"how I love it, for it was there I learned to love. But now, Kitty, it is all over. Heaven will soon be here, and that means peace, love and joy for eternity. Kiss me good-bye, now, dear."

Some would say, "it is only a girl's story." Yes! but will they tell me when a girl finds her woman's heart? Is it not love's portion which works the change.

They dressed her in the same white dress she had worn last year, and filled her hand with her beloved rosebuds. And while we were laying our darling to rest, Fredericton was witnessing "an interesting and beautiful wedding."

Was Lester Dobson guilty of Fay's death? Nay, she was naturally delicate, consumptive, perhaps it would have come anyway; but not so soon; for all ambition had gone with her love; and with her disposition, loving, and craving love, she was like a flower, plucked, then thrown away.

I often wonder when I see Lester Dobson, rich, honoured, influential, stirring the hearts of men by his voice and writings, if ever a pang comes to his heart, if he ever remembers his "Rosebud," if ever he wonders what became of her. Perhaps he does know, for he never mentions her.

"Oh, Auntie, why did you end the story so?"

"My dear, how could I end it otherwise, when that is the true ending?"

BURLINGTON, N. S.

tributions or suggestions from all who have matters of importance to communicate.

Among the world's poets Burns certainly occupies a unique place; and in the individuality of his genius and its enkindling power, he is surpassed by none. He is Song's microcosm; and what we find at greater breadth in others, in him is felt with deeper intensity. He did not dwell with inspiration on the mountain-tops, but brought the hallowed fire down into the vales. His origin, his limitations, the forces that warred upon his life, and in spite of which he distinguished himself, all declare him to have been the triumph of nature in a more signal degree than otherwise modern time has afforded. His relation to the era about to be ushered in confirms his tacit claim to more than temporary eminence; for he is not a bard merely, amusing his time, "in most melodious unconcern"; but a prophet of humanity, insisting most powerfully on the more and more realisable things toward which the human heart is set,—especially the triumph of love in the emancipation of manhood. This appears to be the truest explanation and secret reason of that great tempest of applause that breaks over his grave, as the winds of fame blow from "a' the airts" on the 25th of each January, and by fits and starts all the rest of the year. Praise never palls; the impulse to bestow it never wanes.

That criticism which, in point of authority, is highest, has in these later years altered its base—or, at least, departed from that of the popular mind—respecting the poems of Burns that indicate his genius most effectively. The "Cottar's Saturday Night" has been found somewhat intentional and self-conscious, if not imitative and stilted. "A man's a man for a' that," is insincere, as perhaps the critic would have most preaching appear; for Matthew Arnold says: "The accent of high seriousness born of absolute sincerity" is not there. Even the matchless "Tam O'Shanter" "nods," at length, and should have finished his course less feebly. While, rather, in "Whistle o'er the Tave o' he is sincerest, and in the "Jolly Beggars" Cantata at his loftiest, most unincumbered flight. True it is that the poet never came home quite so triumphantly as from these lyric conquests, in which, indeed, we most feel his "freedom," his "spring" and "bounding swiftness;" true it is of the "Jolly Beggars," bestial and squalid as it is, that "it has a breadth, truth and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's cellar, of Goethe's 'Faust,' seem artificial and tame beside it," being "only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes." Nevertheless, the foregoing poems cannot be critically discredited; it is too late. The heart of humanity has not erred in moving at the Cottar's call, and the critic cannot well prove folly upon mankind in that it has taken this fine, indignant vindication of the claim and value of essential humanity to be one of its chief marching songs; for what "Scot's wha hae" is to Scotland, "A man's a man, for a' that," is to the world. This lay may not be in harmony with the sympathies of a grave intellectual aristocrat; but we cannot but feel the charge of