

verse. Other poems, in Latin, Italian and English by this writer are much admired by students of Elizabethan literature.

Still another Thomas Watson among Mr. Kirby's progenitors, was a sturdy opponent of Andrew Marvel, the Puritan poet and member for Hull in the Long Parliament.

Always a loyal family, it is not to be wondered at that the Watson estates were confiscated by the Parliamentary Commission sent down to try Sir John Hotham, the loyalist governor of Hull, and his supporters, for their adherence to the cause of the king, Charles I.

Several among the ancient and valuable charities of Hull owe their foundation to the Watson family.

Referring to the literary gifts for which this ancient family has always been remarkable, Mr. Le Moine says in a note on "Le Chien d'Or," "Mr. Kirby takes pleasure in recalling for me these memories of the past in support of a favorite theory of his, that literary tastes in families are transmitted from one generation to another."

He also further remarks, writing in 1886, "William Kirby, F.R.S.C., is no longer young: a mere lad in 1832, when he left his native town, he is to-day a tall, handsome man, of courteous bearing, somewhat reserved, and one would call him fifty years of age, but he is more."

"A poet in his leisure moments, he inclines to idealism, but he is strongly imbued with very positive opinions on certain subjects; to him patriotism, duty, work, are almost a religion."

"A friend of present progress, he does not overlook the past; he is proud of all that relates to the Loyalists of 1783, to whom Canada West owes so much of her progress and civilization."

To this may be added that Mr. Kirby is a man of the tenderest sensibilities and benevolence. His home is the centre of his affections, and until two years ago was blessed by the presence of a wife in every way worthy of him. Since his wife's death, he has also been called upon to bear the loss of his eldest son, of whom he says, "He was a good man and a true loyal Canadian—my beau-ideal of one—and as such is a loss to his country as well as to me."

A life-long member of the Church of England, her liturgy is dear to Mr. Kirby, and its suitable and touching prayers his continual consolation in company with his Bible. It is impossible to read Mr. Kirby's works without feeling that his piety is of the highest order, a matter of daily life and work and his admiration and love for the Established church is almost a passion.

Mr. Kirby, though the best known figure in the old town of Niagara and its affairs, has always shrunk from public life.

As chairman of the Mechanics' Institute, he has filled its shelves with the best works, many of them such as are not to be found except in the most select libraries. As Justice of the Peace, his decisions have always been marked by an even-handed, cool judgment characteristic of the man.

For some years Mr. Kirby has been Collector of Customs at the port of Niagara. Previously he was for twenty years editor and publisher of "The Niagara Mail," the leading and for some time the only newspaper except the "Niagara Chronicle," in the district, embracing the counties of Lincoln, Welland, and Haldimand.

Subsequently Mr. Kirby engaged more fully in purely literary work, dealing not

only with present questions, but also with archaeological and historical subjects. His famous novel "Le Chien d'Or" "has been complimented by several American pirates," says a writer in the Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography, "extending the reputation of the author but profiting him nothing."

"It is much read in the United States," says Mr. Le Moine in the note previously quoted, "and yearly draws tourists to Quebec, who are curious to examine in detail the remains of the old city." He further remarks: "This romance among other advantages, commended itself to the taste of Our Gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria; I happened to be present in 1883, at Rideau Hall when Her Royal Highness the Princess Louise took occasion to tell Mr. Kirby of the pleasure that her royal mother had enjoyed in reading this romance of Canadian manners and customs, and of thanking him in her name."

In recognition of his services to Canadian history and literature, and his valuable contributions thereto, Mr. Kirby was selected by the Marquis of Lorne one of the original twenty members of the English Literature Section of the Royal Society of Canada, an honour that Mr. Kirby's loyal spirit highly appreciated.

It is on his literary work that Mr. Kirby's fame stands, and it will always stand high. The romance of "Le Chien d'Or" must ever impress the reader with the genius that produced it, and give rise to the most profound regret that it is the only work of its kind that opportunity has permitted its author to write. Whether it falls short of, or rises superior to the canons of ordinary criticism, its power and beauty are beyond question. As a delineation of early French-Canadian life and character it is warmly accepted by the descendants of the personages therein depicted, and French readers generally ascribe it to a countryman of their own, and will scarcely be persuaded that "William Kirby" is not a *nom-de-plume*.

The romance of the story is its great charm, but the work has strong claims to a reputation in the wonderful truthfulness to nature that marks the numerous characters. From the amusing and wily notary to the Mephistophelean Bigot, from the "charming Josephine de Beauport" to the beautiful but wicked Angélique des Meloises, from the wretched De Pean to the noble Bourgeois Phillibert and his son Pierre, there is not a character in the book that is not a type of its class in human nature.

Nevertheless the story is sketched with a free hand, and abounds with graphic touches of much strength and beauty. The death of Caroline de St. Castin is a wonderful piece of tragedy, and scarcely less wonderful is the refusal of Le Gardeur de Repentigny by Angélique des Meloises, and her remorse afterwards.

Beauty and pathos touch the heart to very tender notes at many points. The lovely love of Amélie Repentigny and Pierre Phillibert, the sad story of Heloise de Lotbinière, the parting scene between Pierre and Amélie in the convent as she dies in Pierre's arms, are full of purity and grace.

But it would be indexing the whole book to mention its claims upon the cultivated reader. Throughout, the demands of duty, of piety and of domestic life are brought out with a power that shows how deeply their finest motives are embedded in

the heart of the author, rendering the book at once a delight to the intellect and a tonic to the moral sense. From an historical point of view "Le Chien d'Or" is also valuable; the causes that led to the loss of New France to the mother land, the condition and daily life of the promising colony ruined by the rascality of Bigot, despite the good government of La Gallisonnière, even the very appearance of Quebec, are all so graphically given as to impress themselves insensibly but indelibly on the intellect, and as seals to the whole is the historic use of noble names to which we are not strangers to-day—La Corne St. Luc, de Lotbinière, Abbé Piquet, Beauharnois, De Léry, De Boucherville, and Mother Mary of the Incarnation. The hand that could manage all these and a score more of equally important characters has been no weak hand, and should have been better known in romance.

Leaving unnoticed innumerable monographs, speeches and other notable additions to Canadian literature by Mr. Kirby, his poems claim our chief regard. A list of them covers various ground, but the United Empire Loyalists and the Province of Upper Canada shine conspicuous throughout them all.

The first and in some senses the greatest, and probably the least known, bears the modest title "The U. E.: A Tale of Upper Canada," and is dedicated "to the Hon. Sir John Beverley Robinson, Baronet; Chief Justice of Upper Canada," in recognition of that gentleman's services to the Province with sword and gown.

Of the intent of the poem the author says in his preface, dated Niagara, 1859: "Its design was mainly to preserve a few peculiar traits of a generation of men now, alas! nearly passed away, the United Empire Loyalists of Canada: those brave and devoted defenders of the British Crown"; and he calls it his "humble tribute to the noble patriarchs of Upper Canada, who, with this goodly land, the fruit of their early toils and almost incredible hardships, have left us the still nobler inheritance of their patriotic and loyal example."

But the poem is much more than a tribute, however noble; it is an epic, and reminds the reader continually of that other epic of a small and struggling people, the Odyssey of Homer.

Moreover, Mr. Kirby's style is essentially classic; throughout all his poems there moves a rhythmic cadence, a contained and regulated manner, itself evidence of a refined and cultivated intellect.

The poet himself in an eloquent tribute introduces us to his master, the "glowing Maro" of Courtenay:

"But glorious Maro! unto thee belong
The might and majesty of epic song;
And thine with power and grandeur to rehearse,

In all the pomp of pan-harmonic verse,
Gods and their works, and on the lyre unbar
The mighty symphonies of love and war.
Thee, chief of song! Let circling haloes blaze
Around thy head, and crown immortal bays!"

For himself, with the modesty of true genius, the poet only asks

"For me a wreath of modest cedar still
May haply bloom on some Canadian hill,"
and he cries ardently:

"Then come, my Muse, and fire my tongue,
And let my lips the moving strain prolong
Till warm with life, and radiant from above,
My lay be worthy of my country's love."

The "U. E." is in twelve cantos of varying length and is laid out as the story