

" See how the great old forest vies
With all the glory of the skies,
In streaks without a name ;
And leagues on leagues of scarlet spires,
And temples lit with crimson fires,
And palaces of flame.
And dome on dome that gleam afar
Through many a gold and crimson bar,
With azure overhead ;
While forts with towers on towers arise,
As if they meant to scale the skies,
With banner bloody red ! "

* * *

And now we come to the name which is best known in Canadian literary circles, that of Charles G. D. Roberts, poet, canoeist, and Professor of Literature, who was born in January, 1860. His father was the Rev. G. G. Roberts, rector of the Cathedral, Fredericton. He graduated with honor at the University of



WILLIAM KIRBY.

New Brunswick, 1879, and in 1880 married Mary Isabel Fenety, daughter of the ex-Mayor of Fredericton. In 1880, also, he published his first volume of verse, *Orion, and Other Poems*, which, at the age of twenty-one, won for him the recognition of the literary world. In 1885 he was called to the professorship of Modern Literature in King's College, Windsor, N.S., which position he at present retains. In 1887 he published a small volume, *In Divers Tones*, which although not so perfect in finish is, in point of freedom and variety, superior to his first collection. In his poem, *Canada*, which first appeared in the *Century Magazine*, he struck the highest note of patriotism, and in many others of his poems he shows a fire and vigor, a keen sense of rhyme and meter, which secures for him a high place in the ranks of the devotees of poesy, while in *Orion*, *Actaeon*, or *The Pipes of Pan* he exhibits a marked predilection for the forms of classical Greek verse.

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In 1884 a small, blue covered volume of two hundred and twenty-four pages, entitled *Old Spooks's Pass*, appeared. Scarcely any one in Canada noticed it, and in little more than two years from that time the authoress, Miss Isabel Valancey Crawford, died without giving us any further work. After her death people began to realize that they had overlooked a work of merit, and her poems became very popular. They are imbued with all the splendor of Canadian coloring. Malcolm's *Katie*, in particular, is a wonderful idyll of rural life. Every word is instinct with sympathy for the glowing life of our Canadian forests, and the

lines have an almost Tennysonian sweetness and melody. Compare the following passage with any similar description of landscape to be found in the Laureate's works—

" The land had put his ruddy gauntlet on
Of harvest gold, to dash in Famine's face,
And, like a vintage wain deep-dyed with juice,
The great moon faltered up the ripe blue sky,
Drawn by the silver stars, like oxen white,
And horned with rays of light."

Her dialect verses, though somewhat stiff and artificial, have given us some capital pictures of rustic life, and the lyric with which she ends her poem, *Malcolm's Katie*, is one of the most beautiful in the English language. It runs :

O, Love builds on the azure sea,
And Love builds on the golden sand,
And Love builds on the rose-wing'd cloud,
And sometimes, Love builds on the land.

O, if Love builds on sparkling sea,
And if Love builds on golden strand,
And if Love builds on rosy cloud,—
To Love, these are the solid land.

O, Love will build his lily walls,
And Love his pearly roof will rear,
On cloud or land, on mist or sea,—
Love's solid land is everywhere !

* * *

Among our poets of the present day one of the best is Miss Lilian Claxton, of Toronto, although she is but little known in Canada, her name appearing chiefly in English and American magazines. She has not as yet published her poems in book form, but many of them are Canadian in the best sense of the word, and give pictures of our life and scenery which are unequalled. The *Little Leybridge Line*, which we quote below, refers to the railroad which runs by Kingston, where until lately she has lived, but the description holds good of many another Canadian railway.

The shunting and the shaking! the cars were always late,
And all changed at the Junction, and had an hour to wait ;
The train for which we waited, invariably was slow ;
They mostly had a breakdown, as the line was blocked with snow.

It stretches through the distance, aye, through the buried years!
I run my eye along it, the old time reappears.
Here hands have met and parted, here eyes have overflowed,
And passed away forever, down this curve of iron road.

In such poems as *The Old Town Hall*, *Alter Ego*, or *The Land Where Shadows are Not*,



CHARLES D. ROBERTS.

she has a haunting melodiousness of rhyme, and an originality of meter which is very striking. *Alter Ego*, especially, is a very beautiful



BLISS CARMEN.

poem, the sweetness of its cadences lingering in the memory for many a day after its perusal.

" We have often watched each other
In the mirror— you and I,
Looking straight at one another
In the years that have gone by.
Baby eyes with wondering glances,
Childish eyes where sunlight dances,
Girlish eyes replete with fancies.

And to-night we wait the morrow,
A new dawn of hopes and fears,
Looking with a tearless sorrow
O'er the wreckage of the years
O'er the soaps our young feet waded,
O'er the joys that Time has shaded,
O'er the hopes the years have faded.

We await another morning
Which shall make all mysteries plain ;
When the Day-star shall come dawning,
O'er a troubled world again ;
When the hopes that here were slighted,
With fruition be requited,
When the old wrongs shall be righted "

Many of her poems, such as the *Lines to my Typewriter*, *The Unexpected Dime*, or *My Editor*, show a strong sense of humor and a felicitousness in hitting the right epithet which has rarely been found in the work of our women writers, and *The Commonplace Set*, and her appeal for *Sunday Street Cars*, show a deep sympathy with and full appreciation of the difficulties which abound in the lives of our laboring classes. She has written many novels and short sketches of Canadian life, and is undoubtedly one of our most promising authors.

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Another little volume, by J. D. Edgar, M.P., entitled *This Canada of Ours, and Other Poems*, contains some very beautiful verses, nearly all of them Canadian in tone, and many of them sweet with the breath of lake and river, taking the reader whirling down cool rapids, or into the depths of forests, dark and still, with, perhaps, a most realistic taste of life in a summer camp.

" A white tent pitched by a glassy lake,
Well under a shady tree,
Or by rippling rills from the grand old hills,
Is the summer home for me.

I fear no blaze of the noontide rays,
For the woodland glades are mine,
The fragrant air, and that perfume rare,
The odor of forest pine."

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