

CANADA'S NATIONAL SONG.

Mr. John A. Cooper, in a recent number of the 'Canadian Magazine,' gives an interesting account of Alexander Muir, B.A., the author of Canada's national song.

Away back in the 'forties,' he writes, in one of the humble homes of a Canadian village, there might have been seen, one summer day, a kindly Scotch 'meenister,' holding between his knees a curly-headed youth. The minister was catechising him as to his Sunday-school attendance and his knowledge of the Bible, and found him very proficient.

'And he has made a poem, too,' said his Sunday-school teacher, the resident minister, who was also present. 'He has put it to the music of "Scots wha ha!"'

'Let us hear you sing it, Alexander,' said the visiting minister.

And the youthful poet sang it with his boyish simplicity and power, as if touched with Divine inspiration.

The minister put his hands on the boy's curly pate, and spake the prophetic words:

'Ye'll be weel ken'd yet afore ye dee.'

And the mother, after the manner of Scotch folk, treasured the saying in her heart, and encouraged little Alexander in his poetical and musical creations.

That minister was the celebrated Scotch divine, Dr. Norman McLeod, then on a visit to this country, and that youth was afterwards the author of Canada's national song.

In October, 1867, two men were walking in a Toronto garden, a nursery. The dying maple leaves were falling from the trees, to be trodden under foot in spite of all their glory of crimson and gold coloring. A leaf fluttered down to the coat sleeve of one of the men, and was detained by the roughness of the cloth of which the garment was made. He tried to brush it off and thought he had succeeded, but as he was leaving he discovered that it was still hanging there, and its tenacity impressed itself upon his mind.

He remarked the occurrence to his companion, who was bidding him 'good afternoon,' and the latter said: 'You have been writing verses, why not write a song about the maple leaf?'

This was about four o'clock in the day, and in less than two hours afterwards the poem was written that has made the name of Alexander Muir a household word in every part of Canada.

Next day he was playing with his children and repeating the words of the poem aloud. His wife suggested that he set the words to music, so that he might sing them; for he had a pleasant, sonorous voice. He thereupon tried several tunes, but could find nothing to suit him.

'I'll have to compose one myself,' he said, and in a few hours afterwards the beautiful tune that has gladdened the hearts and refreshed the souls of thousands of Canadian patriots, that has reached the ears of thousands of English-speaking people in the United States and Great Britain, was on paper.

The following is the poem as corrected by the author:

THE MAPLE LEAF FOREVER.

In days of yore the hero Wolfe,
Britain's glory did maintain,
And planted firm Britannia's flag
On Canada's fair domain,
Here may it wave, our boast, our pride,
And, joined in love together,
The Thistle, Shamrock, Rose entwined,
The Maple Leaf forever!

Chorus.

The Maple Leaf, our emblem dear,
The Maple Leaf forever!
God save our Queen, and heaven bless
The Maple Leaf forever!

On many hard-fought battle-fields
Our brave fathers, side by side,
For freedom, homes and loved ones dear
Firmly stood, and nobly died:
And those dear rights which they main-
tained,

We swear to yield them never!
We'll rally round the Union Jack,
The Maple Leaf forever!

In autumn time, our emblem dear
Dons its tints of crimson hue;
Our blood would dye a deeper red,
Shed, dear Canada, for you!
Ere sacred rights our fathers won
To foemen we deliver,
We'll fighting die—our battle-cry,
The Maple Leaf forever!

God bless our loved Canadian homes,
Our Dominion's vast domain;
May plenty ever be our lot,
And peace hold endless reign;
Our Union, bound by ties of love,
That discord cannot sever,
And flourish green, o'er Freedom's home,
The Maple Leaf forever!

On Merry England's far-famed land,
May kind heaven sweetly smile;
God Bless old Scotland evermore,
And Ireland's emerald isle!
Then swell the song both loud and long,
Till rocks and forests quiver;
God save our Queen, and heaven bless
The Maple Leaf forever!

Soon after its composition Mr. Muir sang the song for a party of friends, among whom was the late Edward Lawson, a gentleman then prominent in the musical circles of Ontario's capital city. Mr. Lawson recognized its merit, and insisted that it should be published. He accompanied Mr. Muir one day to the 'Guardian' office, where arrangements were made for

calm, Wolfe, McGee, Howe, Macdonald, and many others, who, though they have passed beyond the ken of mortal man, are still loved and revered. To-day Alexander Muir holds an enviable position in the hearts of the Canadian people, and it will be ever so. In Toronto, where he lives, being Principal of one of the Queen City's large public schools, he is a welcome and respected guest at all political and social gatherings, and possesses a host of friends and admirers who are always willing and pleased to do him honor. Perhaps in no place is he more at home or more lionized than in the Sergeant's Mess of that regiment with which he was long connected, and which bears the Maple Leaf as its emblem, the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada.

Although Alexander Muir has lived in this country since the time when his limbs were first learning their strength, Canada has not the honor of containing his birth-place. His father, John Muir, taught school in Lesmahagow, Lanarkshire, Scotland, and there Alexander was born. His early education was received at a school in the township of Scarboro (near Toronto), and at Queen's University, Kingston, from which he

kindly good-humor have made him a universal favorite among those who have been honored with his acquaintance. His high integrity, his love of truth and right, have made him a noble husband, a loving father, and an admirable model for the Canadian youth, among whom he has spent his life.

In 1890 Mr. Muir wrote another beautiful song, 'Canada, Land of the Maple Tree,' of which the first verse and chorus are:

No foreign power shall o'er us rule,
Our liberties enthral;
Fair British play shall hold the sway,
With equal rights for all.
No other race shall e'er displace
The sons from Britain sprung;
Our school shall teach our noble speech,
The Anglo-Saxon tongue.

Chorus.

We're Britons born, are Britons still,
And Britons aye shall be,
The Union Jack, the flag we love,
Shall guard our Maple tree.

A copy of this was sent by the author to the late Sir John A. Macdonald, and he replied that he would adopt the chorus as his life motto. Although he lived only a short time afterwards, it was long enough to make famous his well-known phrase (suggested by the chorus):

'A British subject I was born,
A British subject I will die.'

OH, PLEDGE ME NOT WITH WINE.

Oh, pledge me not with wine, dear love,
I shrink from its ruddy glow
And white and cold a deathly fear
Drops into my heart like snow.

Oh, pledge me not with wine, dear love,
Through its mist of rosy foam,
I count the beats of a broken heart,
I see a desolate home.

Oh, pledge me not with wine, dear love,
I shiver with icy dread,
Each drop to me is a tear of blood,
That sorrowful eyes have shed.

I have a picture laid away
Under the dust of years,
Come look on it, and your heart will
break
Like a summer cloud in tears.

Night, and a storm of autumn sleet,
A heart without fire or light,
A woman—an angry man—a door
That opens into the night.

Hot hands that cling to the crazy latch,
Lips rigid and white with pain,
A curse, a blow, and a wailing babe,
Borne out in the wind and rain.

A woman dead, with her long loose hair,
Soaked wet in the weeping storm,
And her pallid arms are half thrown back
From a baby's waxen form.

A woman dead in the pitiless storm,
And sparkling on the sand,
Dear God—a golden marriage ring,
Dropped loose from her wasted hand.

A white moon striving through broken
clouds,
A horrified man at prayer,
The cry of a passionate heart's remorse,
And a passionate heart's despair.

This is the picture laid away
Under the dust of years,
For thus does the red wine look to me,
The flowing of bloody tears.

Oh, pledge me not, though the wine is
bright,
As the rarest light that flows,
Through the sunset's cloudy gates of
fire,
Or the morning's veil of rose.

Put down the cup, 'tis brimmed with
blood,
Crushed throbbing from hearts like mine,
For hope, for peace, and love's dear sake
Oh, pledge me not with wine.



ALEXANDER MUIR, B.A., Painted from Life by W. A. Sherwood.

publication. The first edition of one thousand copies was struck off and placed on sale.

The cost of this edition was \$30, and this Mr. Muir paid out of his own pocket, although he had not expected to be compelled to do so. The total receipts from the sale of this edition—that found their way to Mr. Muir's pocket—were \$4. Thus his profits were \$26 less than nothing.

Year by year the song grew more popular. Music-dealers found it increasingly in demand, and one enterprising publishing house thought it worth securing—mark the word—and of their own accord copyrighted it, and issued another edition. Since then the sale has been enormous and the profits considerable, but not a penny of the latter has found its way to Mr. Muir. Such has been its financial success for the author. He is still \$26 behind in his publishing venture.

But if 'The Maple Leaf Forever' did not bring him a monetary profit, it has brought him the profound gratitude, sincere respect, and imperishable love of a nation. His name is enrolled in the list of Canada's heroes—with Cartier, Champlain, Mont-

graduated in 1851. His whole life has been spent teaching in and around Toronto.

The portrait upon this page shows Mr. Muir as he is to-day. It is taken from a painting by Mr. W. A. Sherwood, and reproduces, in a remarkably accurate manner, the open and noble countenance of the man whom Canada delights to honor. On his coat lapel is a small silver maple leaf, the gift of a lady who is the leader of Canadian women, a lover of everything which is good and noble and true, and Canadian.

Personally, Mr. Muir does not despise fame, but he has not courted it. He loves Canada, he loves her British freedom, her British-born institutions, and her British connections. Out of the fulness of his intense patriotism, he has given the country that he loves a song as enthusiastic, as patriotic, and as noble as he is himself. By so doing he has done as much as any other of our national heroes to create and mould that national life which is now surging within her veins, and developing her into a queen among the nations.

His simple frankness, his cheerful contentedness, his open nobility and