

CANADIAN VERSE.*

A new volume of poems, by the author of "Lake Lyrics," will be warmly welcomed by lovers of Canadian verse. In this handsome book, which we review from advance sheets, Mr. Campbell more than sustains the reputation which he made by his previous volume. Too often Canadian writers have to procure recognition in the great forum of letters abroad before their merit is acknowledged at home. Several of Mr. Campbell's poems have been published in the leading literary organs on this continent, the *Atlantic*, *Century* and *Harper's*, and have won for him very high commendation from the literary critics.

Like his "Lake Lyrics," many of the poems of this volume find their theme in the scenery of the great "unsalted seas" of Canada. He knows them well. They have entered into the very spirit of his verse, and the long sweep of their summer waves and the strident roar of their winter storms find echo in his lines.

These poems are not all, however, nature studies. Some discuss the deepest problems of mind and spirit, and some find their theme in ancient Pompeii and at Arthur's court in Camelot. The Canadian subjects are those that appeal most strongly to our patriotic feelings. The descriptions of nature are of photographic accuracy and evince intense sympathy with her varied moods.

"The Dread Voyage," and "The Last Ride," while exquisitely perfect in form, strike us as in rather sombre a mood. We suppose they are to be read in a dramatic sense and not as expressing the sentiment of the author. They reflect very strongly the *fin de siècle* pessimism with which we have less sympathy than with the robust optimism of Robert Browning. By the way, one of the finest poems in the book is the monody on the death of Browning. In the fine poem of "Sir Lancelot," Mr. Campbell breathes the very spirit of the knightly days of the Round Table.

The battle scene with which it ends, with its short, crisp, Saxon words, is Homeric in its vigour.

One of the most striking poems in the volume is "Unabsolved"; a dramatic monologue, founded on the confession of a man who went with one of the expeditions to save Sir John Franklin's party, and who, being sent ahead, saw signs of them, but, through cowardice, was afraid to tell. If we mistake not, the Rev. E. R. Young met this very man. The poem strikingly describes his intense and poignant remorse.

The poem of "The Mother," which first appeared in *Harper's Monthly*, is here reprinted. It attracted wide attention at the time, and in the *Inter-Ocean* it is described as the nearest approach to a great poem which has crept out in current literature for many a long day. It is founded on a Danish superstition, that dead mothers cannot lie quiet in their graves while their babes are weeping for their love and care. So this bride-mother leaves her earthy bed:

"My babe was asleep on a stranger arm.
O baby, my baby, the grave is so warm.
"Though dark and so deep, for mother
is there,
O come with me from the pain and care!
"O come with me from the anguish of
earth,
Where the bed is banked with a blossoming girth.
"Where the pillow is soft and the rest is
long.
And mother will croon you a slumber-song.
"A slumber-song that will charm your
eyes
To a sleep that never in earth-song lies!
"The loves of earth your being can spare.
But never the grave, for mother is
there."

"The Cloud Maiden" is a charming rendering of the varied moods of summer mist-wreath and winter storm. One of the most striking poems is "The Were-Wolves," which, according to Scandinavian legend, are the souls of men—

* *The Dread Voyage*. Poems by WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL. Toronto: William Briggs, and Methodist Book Rooms, Montreal and Halifax. Pp. 190. Price \$1.00.