

living rendered it a serious trial to him to see a new face, and so great a shock did it inflict upon him to be taken unawares that his most intimate friend was liable to incur his aversion by paying him an unexpected visit. One might suspect that the morbid character of his genius was the outcome of his peculiar habits, were it not that his earlier poems are marked by the same idiosyncrasies as his later works. He was a strange compound of weaknesses and fine qualities. The romantic history of the book which contained his first volume of poems in manuscript throws much light on his nature. Strange to say, his wife, long before he succumbed to chloral, fell into the habit of using laudanum. An overdose killed her, and as she had inspired much of his verse, he made up his mind in the excess of his grief to abjure poetry and bury what he had written in her grave. His determination was carried into effect. But after a time, when the reputation which his friends, Swinburne and Morris, had acquired, re-awakened in him the desire to make his own powers known, he regretted what he had done. For a long time he wavered, the prey of conflicting desires; but, at last, "after an infinity of self-communions," he decided to have the book exhumed. While this was being done, he sat alone at the house of a friend, anxious, and full of self-reproaches both for burying and recovering his poems. They were published and brought him fame. Seven editions were sold in rapid succession; but it was long before their resolute author ceased to torment himself with the thought that he had been guilty of an act of sacrilege.

J. M. B.

THE NEW SONG AND OTHER POEMS. By Mrs. W. N. Clarke. Toronto: Standard Publishing Co.

The above comes to us as a dainty little volume in heavy paper covers, tied with red silk, with red-lined pages of liberal margin. We have not space for an extended notice, such as the quality of this verse would warrant, but we must express our unqualified opinion that the work is a genuine addition to Canadian song, an opinion which will be well supported by our quotations, both here and under another department. We presume this is a first volume. There is a marked absence of crudity and slipshod writing. The poems, as a rule, are technically correct and artistic in execution; and a fine rhythmic faculty is evidenced. But, what is of still greater importance, the inspiration of these poems is unmistakable, the feeling strong and delicate, the interpretive power at times subtle and always sympathetic. We quote

DANDELIONS.

In meadows deep, till summer's fullest flush,
With burnished buttercups and clover sweet,
Where coy wild strawberries into ripeness blush,
And eager children stray with restless feet.

The dandelions all at leisure grow,
Their silvery stems reach upward day by day,
Awhile a glad some golden light they show,
Then change to filmy moons and pass away.

What need of haste? The summer days are long,
And, ere the mower thinks upon his scythe,
Mid sunshine, hum of bees and warbled song,
The dandelion has lived its life, full blithe.

THE WARNING.

Oh, maiden, mind thy spinning,
And swiftly whirl the wheel,
Nor let that wistful glance, so shy,
Adown the pathway steal.

Thou hast the charm of spring-time,
Thy heart an opening flower;
He doth but seek its sweet to win,
Doth woo thee for an hour.

To please a fancy flitting
Through all the wide world's room,
Doth lightly stay his footsteps near
Thy cottage close abloom.

And reaching o'er the paling,
A careless hand anon
Will pluck sweet love, as 'twere a rose,
Then saunter idly on.

So, maiden, mind thy spinning.
And faster whirl the wheel,
Nor let that wistful glance so shy,
Adown the pathway steal.

The thread is all uneven,
And low the wheel doth hum;
A rustling in the alder shade—
The little wheel is dumb.

From Mrs. Clarke's "The New Song and other Poems."

We have received Mrs. Southworth's latest, and probably best, novel, which she has re-christened "Ishmael, or In the Depths" (Philadelphia: T. B. Peterson & Bros.) Its former title, that under which it was printed as a serial, was "Self-made, or Out of the Depths;" the change strikes as a bold departure, somewhat. The story is pre-eminently Mrs. Southworth throughout, sensational to the last degree, often stilted, and turgid, and inconsistent, but certainly not dull. The type is good and readable.

The work of a genuine enthusiast is this study of Walt Whitman, by Dr. R. M. Bucke, which comes to us from Mr. David McKay, of Philadelphia. Dr. Bucke is a Canadian, and we understand that this work was written during a visit of the "Good Gray Poet" to Canada, when Dr. Bucke had the honour of receiving him as a guest. The volume is a valuable one in spite of its unblushing hero-worship. Whitman's personality is one which seems to justify either hatred or adoration, but which makes mere contemptuous indifference ridiculous. Dr. Bucke courageously undertakes the defence of the poet against the charges of obscenity which it is fashionable to hurl upon him. We think the defence is adequate and satisfactory, while at the same time we consider all the sexual poems most unpleasant, and most hopelessly unpoetical and inartistic. The poems of Whitman to which exception is so generally taken, are the very reverse of prurient; unfortunately, their characteristic is, at the same time, the reverse of modesty.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

THE THOMAS ORCHESTRA CONCERT.

The music-appreciating people of Toronto who attended the concert presented by the above orchestra on Monday evening, 7th January, in the Pavilion of the Horticultural Gardens, owe the very great treat which was afforded them to the enterprise of the firm of Messrs. Suckling & Sons, upon whose individual responsibility the risk, which was no small one solely rested.

We are glad to hear that financially they have not suffered, although the margin on the right side was a very small one. The programme was admirably prepared, and embraced choice selections from several of the greatest composers. The first number, "Beethoven's Fourth Symphony," in B flat op. 60, Allegro Adagio, Allegro Vivace and Allegro non troppo, was performed with exquisite grace, power and pathos. The simple but grandly severe subjects upon which this master work is constructed and so wonderfully and beautifully worked out in logical sequence by the great composer, the delicate decrescendos and grand crescendos, the intricate cross phrasing of polyphonic writing, in fact all the demands which a great work makes upon the individual members of an orchestra, were fully met, and successfully overcome. Here was a subject given by strings, replied to by wood, taken up by horns, continued perhaps by lower brass, and in one movement concluding most effectively upon the kettledrums. Throughout the whole orchestra all was complete, no blurring of tones, no missing of beats, nothing to mar the effects of a perfect whole. The second number on the programme was the Scene and Aria—"Ocean, thou mighty monster," from Weber's last and, Der Freischütz excepted, perhaps finest Opera. This grandly dramatic number was sung by Madame Gabriella Boema, who has a soprano voice of large compass and dramatic power, and a faultless method; she was accompanied by the orchestra, and, it is safe to say, she did full justice to the author and gave entire satisfaction to the audience, who twice recalled her. To these recalls, however, she responded only by an acknowledgment.

Number three was the "Ride of the Valkyries," by Richard Wagner. Of this strange, wierd, wild, uncanny, yet withal beautiful composition, what shall we say? That it is of the very opposite school to the old classical masters, of polished monumental grace and beauty, is strikingly apparent; those who heard Wagner presented by a competent orchestra for the first time, must not suppose that this number is wholly a representative piece of that great master. On the contrary, it is a thoroughly unique specimen of the realistic school. In the "Ride of the Valkyries" one perceives in a tone picture the steady, onward, irresistible stride of the steeds of Valhalla. This is represented by the under subject sustained by string and brass instruments, while in the startling play of fifes, flutes and reeds one recognizes the pressing, urging, dashing onward Valkyries in their furious haste. The whirl and swirl and whistling of the rapidly cleft air, the very snap of the whips, all are suggested—nay, presented—in this curious and wonderful tone picture. The second part of the programme opened with a Scotch Rhapsody in three movements—1, *Masoso risoluto*; 2, *Andante dolente*; and 3, *Vivace*. The composer, A. C. MacKenzie, a young Scotchman of promise, has shown much skill and mastery