

## Among Our Books.

MATINS.



As the gleam of yellow arrests the mind's eye, so such a volume as "Matins," by Frances Sherman, arrests the attention of the literary world; for the glint of pure gold shines in a majority of the fifty little poems given by this young poet as his first work to the public.

The attitude of the writer towards nature and humanity, the easy sweep of measure, the simple yet picturesque style, the free, descriptive touch and fine choice of phrase, and higher still, that nameless something which all true poets must have—the high inner vision that con-

tains, even while it transcends, human passion; these are the presences in "Matins" which give us pause, and make us recognize that Canada has indeed another young poet of large possibilities.

We have neither room nor inclination for extended criticism, but quote a few of the choice bits that have given us pleasure.

Here are lines culled from one of the longer poems, a lovely little thing, entitled "The Rain," descriptive of the effect of spring rain upon the frozen river:

See where the shores even now were firmly bound  
The slowly widening water showeth black,  
As from the fields and meadows all around  
Come rushing over the dark and snowless ground  
The foaming streams!  
Beneath the ice the shoulders of the tide  
Lift, and from shore to shore, a thin blue crack  
Starts, and the dark, long-hidden water gleams;  
Glad to be free.  
And now the uneven rift is growing wide;  
The breaking ice is fast becoming gray.

And this of rain in autumn:

Have ye not lain awake the long night through  
And listened to the falling of the rain  
On fallen leaves, withered and brown and dead?  
Have none of you,  
Hearing its ceaseless sound, been comforted  
And made forgetful of the day's live pain?

Here are stanzas in "The Builder" worthy of Browning:

Here, moreover, thou shalt find  
Strange, delightful, far-brought things:  
Dulcimers, whose tightened strings,  
Once, dead women loved to touch;  
(Deeming they could mimic much  
Of the music of the wind.)

Heavy candlesticks of brass;  
Chess-men carved of ivory;  
Mass-books written perfectly  
By some patient monk of old;  
Flacons wrought of thick, red gold,  
Set with gems and colored glass.

We must content ourselves with one other, "The Foreigner," which we give in full:

He walked by me with open eyes,  
And wondered that I loved it so;  
Above us stretched the gray, gray skies:  
Behind us, foot-prints on the snow.

The branches of each silent tree  
Bent downward for the snow's hard weight  
Was pressing on them heavily;  
They had not known the sun of late.

(Except when it was afternoon,  
And then a sickly sun peered in  
A little while; it vanished soon  
And then they were as they had been.)

There was no sound (I thought I heard  
The axe of some man far away)  
There was no sound of bee, or bird,  
Or chattering squirrel at its play.

And so he wondered I was glad.  
—There was one thing he could not see;  
Beneath the look these dead things had  
I saw Spring eyes agaze at me.

### WOMEN WHO WIN.

Our woman's book of the month is entitled "Women who Win," a companion volume to "Men who Win," and by the same author, William M. Thayer.

"Women who Win" is a group of readable and chatty sketches of the early lives of fifteen well-known and representative women, among whom are our own Queen Victoria, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Louisa Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Florence Nightingale, Frances Power Crabbe, Clara Barton, Elizabeth Fry and Frances Willard.

The sketches are written with the view of showing the formative influences upon each life, the inherited traits, early environments and experiences which combined to make these women winners in their chosen vocations. Without any especial pretension to literary style, the author has made each sketch interesting by his judicious selection of material, and although the life histories of many of these women are as familiar tales in the literary world, yet we find ourselves turning the pages and reading them with renewed interest.

One thing worthy of note is the number whose early years were passed in straitened circumstances. Over and over again do these sketches prove that hardship and self-denial are the great soul-developing factors, and that the inheritance of poverty is better than riches to the intellectually gifted.

Mrs. Stowe wrote to add to her husband's extremely limited income; Dorothea Dix, the philanthropist, taught to assist her brothers and sisters; Louisa Alcott's heroic struggles with privation are sadly fresh in our memories; Jenny Lind's mother was unable to educate her child; Lucy Stone picked berries and chestnuts and sold them to lay up money for an education; Miss Willard taught and became self-supporting at an early age; thus the list continues.

There are a few exceptions—notably Britain's Sovereign—women who have won, not wealth, since that was theirs at first, but blessing and honor, through exalted character and work. But chiefly, these successful women's lives have begun in the self-denial, if not the privation, engendered by poverty.

The book with its readable brief biographies of famous women—some of whom are living presences, while others have passed so recently that we hear still the sweep of their garments—is stimulative for women and girls.

Yet as we close the volume and glance again at the title, a vision arises of the thousands and tens of thousands of "women who have won," whose epitaph, as pronounced by the world, has been "Failure."

Let us not mistake. These women whose names have become as household words are not the only Women who Win. It has been possible to measure something of their achievement, that is all.

The women who have won in the past, the women who are winning to-day, may be found in obscure homes and far away places. Their names may never be known outside the home walls; they may be all unlettered, even unloved; their lives may appear a pitiful waste, yet by heroic self-

denial, by holy sacrifices, by patient endurance and steadfast hope and love, these women also are conquerors; these are, in the grandest sense, women who win.

PHROSO.

A warp of romance woven with the sunshiny threads of the ridiculous, "Phroso" is as beneficial medicinally as a sea voyage or a ride over prairie stretches. There is spring, vigor, valor, sparkle, the activity of a healthy manliness on every page.

The author does not want to describe things; he takes the surroundings, the mental conditions, the whereases and wherefores, for granted, and drops into action with the first page. He does no character sketching either—in deliberate words. Yet the characters are sharply defined; they remain with us as distinct and amusing personalities after we lay down the book.

Then there is the crisp dialogue, the resource and the play of graceful humor; but it were late now to begin to analyze Anthony Hope.

Phroso opens with an amusing situation, one worthy of Hope—or Stockton and Haggard combined.

Lord Wheatley, a typical and enjoyable young Englishman, gratifies a long cherished whim, and buys an island from an impoverished Lord. The island is under control of the Turkish Government, and is situated in the Mediterranean.

'In fact, my dear Lord Wheatley,' said old Mason to me when I called on him in Lincoln's Inn Fields, 'the whole affair is settled. I congratulate you on having got just what was your whim. You are over a hundred miles from the nearest land—Rhodes, you see, (he laid a map before me) 'you are off the steamship track . . . You will have to fetch your letters.'

'I shouldn't think of doing such a thing,' I answered indignantly.

'Then you'll only get them once in three months. Neopalia is extremely rugged and picturesque. It is nine miles long and five broad; it grows cotton, wine, oil, and a little corn. The people are quite unsophisticated but very good hearted.'

'And,' said I, 'there are only three hundred and seventy of them, all told. I really think I shall do very well there.'

A day or two later Lord Wheatley meets the Turkish ambassador, in a London drawing room.

'You are the purchaser of Neopalia, aren't you?' he asked. 'The matter came before me officially.'

'Well, I'm sure I hope you'll settle in it comfortably.'

'Oh, I shall be all right, I know the Greeks very well, you see—been there a lot, and of course I talk the tongue because I spent two years hunting antiquities in the Morea and some of the islands.'

The Pasha stroked his beard, as he observed in a calm tone,

'The last time a Stefanopoulos (old lords of the island) tried to sell Neopalia, the people killed him, and turned the purchaser adrift in an open boat, with nothing on but his shirt.'

'Good heavens! Was that recently?'

'No! Two hundred years ago. But it's a conservative part of the world, you know,' and His Excellency smiled.

A sense of absurdity that gives humorous edge to the complicated situations, arises from the contrast between these two up-to-date young Englishmen with the London society atmosphere still lingering about them, and the two-hundred-years-ago mode of existence into which they are suddenly set down.

Yet another appealing touch is the note of patriotism woven incidentally into the thread of the tale. It is Englishman against Greek; British valor against Turkish craft, and British fair play throughout, until that last stirring, merry scene of the boat race, which it is difficult to read without throwing up our caps in a hearty hurrah. The Lady Phroso was worthy of the race, and of her dear lord, which is perhaps the highest compliment to be paid her. Anthony Hope's heroines are charming.

REVIEWER.

"Matins," by Frances Sherman; Copeland & Day, Boston, William Briggs, Toronto.  
"Women who Win," by William Thayer; T. Nelson & Sons, London, Copp, Clark, Toronto.  
"Phroso," by Anthony Hope. Copp, Clark, Toronto.