

CANADIAN POETICAL LITERATURE.

It has been said that a nation's patent of nobility is her poets' list. Viewing Canada's destiny in this light it is apparent that any evidence of extraordinary talent, any promise of genius, should be looked upon as the possible germ of that intellectual greatness to which she is desirous of attaining. Indeed we are sufficiently justified in saying that the success of each individual writer is a matter of national importance.

The first important national poet was nature-loving Chas. Sangster, who has been called a born son of the muses, a kind of Wordsworth, with rather more fire, but, of course, a great deal less metaphysical and technical skill. Like Wordsworth, he held sweet and direct communion with nature, who seemed to reveal to him her most intimate secrets. He is distinctly Canadian, in dealing almost entirely with Canadian themes and in drawing inspiration from Canadian scenery. His "St. Lawrence and the Saguenay" has won him distinction as a descriptive poet. Take, for instance, a passage from the "Night in the Thousand Isles:"

And now 'tis night. A myriad stars have
come

To cheer the earth and sentinel the skies;
The full-orbed moon irradiates the gloom
And fills the air with light. Each islet lies
Immersed in shadow, soft as thy dark eyes.
Swift through the sinuous path our vessel
glides,

Now hidden by the massive promontories
Anon the bubbling silver from its sides
Spurning like a wild bird whose home is on
the tides.

Prominent among our poets, his genius recognized and appreciated by all Canadians, stands William Wilfred Campbell. His genuine poetic power, his traits of imaginative thoughtfulness and freshness of fancy have rendered his poems worthy of the high commendation which they have received. They have everywhere elicited the most enthusiastic praise.

Campbell presents to the reader a profusion of pictures drawn largely from visual nature. His descriptions are melodious and lucid. The most poetic interpretation of Canadian lakes and winters ever given to the public may be found in his "Lake Lyrics and other Poems." Of this volume the poems which have commanded the highest admiration are undoubtedly "The Winter Lakes" and "Lazarus." How true sighted are the poet's eyes in the former, and how masterly his imagination in the latter. Not an unintelligible phrase mars the volume. Everywhere we find boldness of conception treated in a picturesque and vigorous manner. Surroundings, apparently the most lifeless in nature, merely monotonous winter scenes, are rendered effective by the transfiguring touch of his high poetic power. Let us take a few lines from "The Winter Lakes:"

Out in a world of death, far to the north-
ward lying

Under the sun and the moon, under the
dusk and the day,

Under the glimmer of stars and the purple
of sunsets dying,