

WILLIAM WYE SMITH'S POEMS. (1)

Such is the title, in itself not suggestive of the romantic, of a volume of some 260 odd pages of verse that has launched forth to ride upon the swelling tide of public praise, to lie becalmed on the unruffled lagoon of public indifference, or to sink beneath the buffeting waves of public condemnation. That this last will not be its fate a glance at its trim rigging will assure us. Its sails are snowy white with purity of thought, its planks are sound with maxims trite and Scottish, its ropes are ties that bind the heart to home and kindred, and its anchor is faith and religious feeling. The parts of the book in which the author "talks shop" are "psalms" and "religious poems;" "songs" is the title that best befits the book. There is hardly a piece that is sufficiently sustained, or sufficiently burdened with burning ideas to merit the name of poem. The metre is musical and flowing. Among the pieces suggested by Canadian scenes, a song, "O, the woods," is light and tripping, but with the defects that too many of the combinations suggest the conventional full-dress of pastoral poetry, such as "leafy woods," "sylvan maid," "golden hair," and "beechen shade." There is not enough warmth or individuality in the expressions, rather stock phrases skilfully set to music. Faultless enough in rhythm, it may be, yet the reader longs for something rugged and untrimmed to break the monotony, as the traveller wearies of close-trimmed hedges and square fields. Those convenient adjectives of two syllables that fill up gaps and form a shaky floating bridge on a stream over which the rhymer carefully picks his way where the poet rather leaps forward eager to overtake the ideas that rush faster than his pen can follow, occur too often on the pages before us, "sainted dead," "warbling bird," "early matins," "golden haze," etc. The "Scottish" pieces are mixed with words from the Scotch dialect, a poetical artifice for which as Canadians we have no more use, though there are yet left in Canada those who will read with pleasure songs that will remind them of their childhood's home, for in these the author is seen at his best. The last two lines of "The Bairnie" will find an echo in the Scotchman's heart,

"For he gangs blythest through the world, and leaves
maist guid behind,
Where country, love and childhood are in his heart en-
shrined."

Others of this class worthy of mention are "Habbie Simpson," "The Martyr of Solway Sands," "Our Hamé is Whaur we Mak Our Nest," and "The Ghost that Danced at Jethart."

Our proper names are generally fairly suited to poetical composition; on some of them our author has improved, as in the frequent use of Canada for Canadia. There are a few pieces drawn from local subjects which are hardly worthy of a place with the rest, as "The Girl who Drove the Reaper." One or two quotations will suffice as instances of the many sweet things to be found in the book and the pleasure that will reward its perusal—

"There ne'er was a sail upon life's stormy sea
So lonely, but some were yet watching and waking!
There never came mist where the sunlight should be,
But keep a bold prow, and the mist it is breaking!
Believe me, there never was bark on that river
That widens, and widens, till shore there is none,
But had a fair star for its guidance forever,
Sailing on, sailing on."

From a Canadian winter song:—

"Then out with the sleigh-ropes, and rein up the horses!
And let the snow batter from hoof and from heel!—
Command the toboggan, and vie with the forces
Of Nature, in swiftness—no fear do we feel!
With snow-shoes, and sledges, and skates, and good nature—
A smile in the morning, a welcome at night,
We value our winter, in every loved feature—
The high noon of Friendship, the prime of Delight."

(1) The Poems of William Wye Smith. Toronto: Dudley & Burns, 1888.

COMMUNICATIONS.

The Editors are not responsible for the opinions of correspondents.
No notice will be taken of unsigned contributions.

THE POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSORSHIP.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—It is gratifying to see the announcement made in your columns that the University is to have at last a Professor of Political Science. Your remarks as to the necessity of the wisest discretion in the selection of the Professor are timely, and should carry weight. Possible objections from two classes may be anticipated. The enemies of the University are numerous, and though she is strong enough now to make serious injury at their hands impossible, the appointment of a Professor, identified in any way with Canadian party politics, would cause renewed hostility.

But the second class of objections is more important. Students at the University have, in nearly every case, strong sympathies with one or other of our political parties. Prejudice is often stronger than reason, and it is only wise to estimate the effect prejudice would have in lessening the usefulness of a partisan Professor.

The Canadian qualified to fill this chair, if resident in Canada, would probably have identified himself with one of the great parties in view of the questions on which they have been divided during the last ten years. It seems inevitable, if a wise choice is to be made, that either a Canadian residing out of the country must be selected, or another land must give us the first Professor. If Democracy is, as it ought to be, metropolitan, such a course, under the present peculiar circumstances, would be approved of by the public.

The authorities evidently expect to secure a man of parts, for, in addition to Political Economy, Comparative Politics, History and International Law in the Faculty of Arts, he is to have a share of the work in the new Faculty of Law.

GEO. M. WRONG.

Wycliffe College.

MEDALS AND PRIZES.

To the Editors of THE VARSITY.

SIRS,—The following is a list of the medals and prizes to be awarded in University College for the session 1887-8, which I forward to THE VARSITY at the direction of the President.

Yours truly,

H. H. LANGTON,
Registrar.

DEPARTMENT.	PRIZE.	DONOR.
Classics.	Gold Medal.	W. H. C. Kerr, M.A.
	2nd Year, \$10 (Books).	{ Prof. Hutton, M.A.
	2nd " \$5 "	{ and W. Dale, M.A.
Physics.	Lansdowne Medal.	The Governor-General.
	3rd Year, \$10 (Books).	Prof. Loudon, M.A.
Mathematics.	Silver Medal.	Prof. Baker, M.A.
Modern Languages.	Silver Medal.	The President.
English.	3rd & 4th Years, \$25 (Books).	F. Wyld, Esq.
French Prose.	\$15 (Books). Open to all Years.	Hon. Mr. Justice Falconbridge, M.A.
German.	_____	_____
Italian.	_____	_____
History.	3rd Year, \$10 (Books).	{ The President.
	2nd " \$10 "	
Natural Science.	Silver Medal.	W. B. McMurrich, M.A.
Chemistry.	4th Year, \$15 (Books).	Prof. Pike, M.A.
Biology.	_____	_____
Mineralogy and Geology.	3rd Year, \$10 (Books)	{ Prof. Chapman, Ph.D.
	2nd " \$5 "	
Mental and Moral Science.	Silver Medal.	Graduates and friends.
	3rd Year, \$15 (Books).	" "
	" " \$10 "	" "
Do. with Logic.	2nd Year, \$15 (Books).	" "
	" " \$10 "	" "