



"Ireland," says Lady Wilde ("Sjéranza"), "is a land of mists and mystic shadows; of weird silences in the lonely hills, and fitful skies of deepest gloom, alternating with gorgeous sunset splendours. All this fantastic caprice of an ever-varying atmosphere stirs the imagination and makes the Irish people strangely sensitive to spiritual influences. They see visions and dream dreams, and are haunted at all times by an ever present sense of the supernatural. They are made for worshippers, poets, artists, musicians, orators." Lady Wilde is not alone in placing a strong stress on the artistic traits in the mental outfit of the Irish race. The late Matthew Arnold and Professor Henry Morley have been equally emphatic in their appreciation of those characteristics. The latter goes so far as to maintain that but for the Celtic element in England's composite nationality, some of the grandest triumphs of English literature and art would never have been won. In Canada the Celt has certainly contributed his full share to whatever excellence in the domain of letters or in the various provinces of the great realm of art (not to speak of the still more fruitfully cultivated fields of science) we have as yet been able to achieve. What proportion of that sum total of Celtic achievement pertains to Scotland, and how much of it may be justly ascribed to Ireland, two important works, "The Scot in British North America" and "The Irishman in Canada," may help us to decide. From the enumeration of celebrities in the latter of these contributions to our history, one name is absent. We find it, however, on the title-page of the volume, Nicholas Flood Davin, and no more thorough type of the Irish *littérateur* has Canada been favoured with. Mr. Davin has all the versatility of his race—he is a historian, a poet, an orator, a wit, a statesman. Mirth and melancholy chase each other over his expressive features. Brimful of good nature, he can be malicious on occasions, and woe betide the assailant who comes within reach of his ever ready retort. It is not, however, with any passage-of-arms between the member for Regina and some rash Parliamentary foe that we have to deal, but with Mr. Davin the pioneer poet of the Northwest. The handsome little volume, in which his claim to this distinction is made, "Eos: an Epic of the Dawn," was published at Regina, N.W.T., by the *Leader* Company. The poem which gives the book its name is no stranger to us. But we have it here in a revised and enlarged form, preceded by a reply to the critics who discussed it on its first appearance. "Eos" is to us more interesting from its abundance of local touches than from its mythological basis, with which we are not altogether satisfied. We are assured that Mr. Davin dreamed it, and dreams are notoriously given to anomalous situations. With these sentences of the preface, however, we are in the fullest accord: "I am a Northwest man and I think the cultivation of taste and imagination as important as the raising of grain. The raising of grain will bring us wealth, but intellectual progress, on which again the highest development of our material resources depends, will be slow unless all the faculties of the mind are stimulated. The greatest merchants the world ever saw were highly cultivated men, great and discriminating patrons of literature, with not merely a keen eye to the profit of a commercial transaction, but a quick and true sense of literary excellence; and I rejoice to know that we have on many of our farms educated men, and that the Saskatchewan can boast of a successful merchant, who has won a high place in the rank of Canadian poets. (The reference here is to Mr. Charles Mair, F.R.S.C.) We need in Canada, generally, a broader intellectual air; redemption from the domination of sciolists, with hearts as contracted as their culture; the consciousness that we have within ourselves all that can make a great people; and every step toward the creation of a Canadian literature tends to hasten the new and better era, in whose advent I believe." Of Mr. Davin's help in hastening that era we can say that it is earnest and honest, that he has testified of what he has seen and felt, and that his merits, like his faults, are his own and no other's. We have not space for much illustration of Mr. Davin's thought and style, but will give an extract or two from his description of "the broad brown prairie." Here is a picture of sky and land:

* * * "Its beauty must be seen from earth,
Its dazzling, glowing skies all clear of cloud
And fervent with the sun-god's strongest beams,
Or strewn with soft white pillows tier on tier;
Like swans at rest upon a sea of blue,
They rise from rim to top of the sky's great womb,
Fruitful of beauty, gendering all the wealth
Of yellow grain and roots, and all green things,
The flowers that shine as if sun-rays took root,
And shredded stars in balmy dewy nights
Were broadcast sown to be the stars of earth:
Blue-bells, the sun-flower small and great, the rose,
The crocus and anemone, the wild
Convolvulus, and thousands more I love,
And daily scent and see but cannot name.
Again, here is a contrast between the present and the remote past:

* * * See where the iron horse
Pants, puffs out smoke and snorts and cries and bears
Long trains thro' what was wilderness a year
Ago, flinging his smoke aloft he makes
A passing cloud. Upon these plains immense
Where here and there the signs of man at work
Are seen, it is but yesterday the red
Man, the poor savage, chased the buffalo.
I've seen him in his prime and his decay;
But, save the wild ox and his pursuers,

This land has been a solitude since it
Was heaved up from the sea. For centuries?—
Oh! yes, for thousands those bright lakes have shone,
Unmarked; the wild ducks lived upon their breasts
Nor feared the fowler's shot; the roses bloomed;
The gopher dug his hole and stood erect.
And ran and lived his lonely graceful life,
And played among the grasses and the flowers;
The ground-lark sang; the prairie hen and plover
Their broods unharmed reared; the antelope
At times a prize to the Indian's arrow fell;
The wolf, at all hours, prowled in search of prey;
But not a trace of man, save when the chase
Brought savage hunters from their river's marge,
The beautiful wooded vales of the Qu'Appelle,
Saskatchewan and streams subsidiary.

On another page we give one of the finest compositions in the book, under the heading of "The Indian's Song." To us not the slightest virtue of Mr. Davin's verse is the thoroughly Canadian spirit with which it is impregnated throughout.

"The Future of the Empire," by Alexander Gordon, is meant to be "a brief statement of the case against Imperial Federation." There is certainly a good deal in it that deserves careful attention as well from the friends as from the opponents of the Federation movement. There is one point on which the author dwells with considerable force—the plea of some Federationists that, unless their plan is adopted, the disruption of the Empire is sure to follow. Another point is that separation, should it ever come, does not necessarily imply hostility. On the former of these points we agree with the author that mischief has been done by urging federation as the sole alternative to the breaking up of the Imperial fabric. As to the second point, much, of course, would depend on the alliance that the colonies, when free from any allegiance to the mother country might deem it in their interest to form. If Canada, for instance, joined the United States, it would, in time, doubtless, become as American as Florida, Louisiana or Texas. But the question is not one for rash assertion but for thoughtful examination, and Mr. Gordon's little book will help to a fuller understanding of the subject. If there are lions in the path—other than our traditional and beloved protector—it is as well that we should be prepared to meet them. Messrs. Simpkin, Marshall & Co., of London, are the publishers.

"One Mistake: a Manitoban Reminiscence," is written by some person who, though choosing to be designated "Zero" on the title-page, is by no means a cipher in literary invention and style. How far Canadians who have made Manitoba their home deserve "Zero's" strictures and somewhat invidious discrimination from the more cultivated and reticent trans-Atlantic element, we cannot say. It is not the first time, however, that these charges of "bumptiousness" have been made. The representatives of that province and its capital in "Mr. Naydian's Family Circle" come in for more than one rebuke on somewhat similar grounds. If there be really cause for such criticism, we trust that "blustering Matt," that "highflyer" his wife, and the fair but rather vulgar Winnie, will take those children in the proper spirit and try, at least, to mend their manners. We hope that there is no personality in "One Mistake," but, whether there is or not, it is clever and readable. It is published by the Canada Bank Note Company, Montreal.

"A Gate of Flowers" is the suggestive title of a comely little volume with which we have been favoured by the author, Mr. Thomas O'Hagan, M. A., of Walkerton, Ont. It has been published since 1887 (Toronto: Wm. Briggs), and contains most of what the author had composed up to the date of its appearance. Our readers, who have already had some acquaintance with Mr. O'Hagan, both as poet and prose-writer, will find in this little book his characteristic merits.

Maxwell Grey, who made a successful hit in sensational fiction by "The Silence of Dean Maitland," has again come before the public with a novel of English life, "The Reproach of Annesley." The characters are drawn with a skilful and discriminating hand, the plot is ably worked out and there is no lack of dramatic power. Though not so fascinating as its predecessor, the story is more within the range of probability and appeals to a higher faculty of literary enjoyment. It is published by Messrs. D. Appleton & Company, of New York, as one of their Town and Country Library.

PASSENGER PIGEONS.

Fifty years ago the coming of the Passenger Pigeon was accounted one of the principal enchantments of the spring season. Their numbers in their spring flights were amazing and incredible. At Niagara, on the south side of the broad Ontario, they appeared to have been hindered in their northward flight by the interminable waste of waters, and accordingly had turned westward along the Lake Shore. Innumerable flocks migrating northward, being intercepted by the Lake Shore, turned westward at ten thousand points, at every step of the way, along the whole two hundred miles, from Oswego, on the east, to Niagara, on the west, and continually piled up the numbers, until now they mustered into a vast cloudy army of thousands of millions. They seemed a miraculous host; a greater army than ever marched under the banners of Attila the

Hun, when, in the early Christian centuries, he poured down upon Eastern Europe his countless thousands of Barbarian horsemen from the high central plains of Asia; or greater than the swarms of the "blue-eyed myriads of the Baltic coast" that inundated the south of Europe in the old Roman ages, carrying terror and desolation in their train. With pinions glittering in the beams of the morning light, and forming a compact mass a quarter of a mile wide, they would pour along in a continuous cloud for a couple of hours during several successive days. The hiss of their rapid wings, countless as the leaves of a mighty forest, was of the nature of the sublime. Beneath their immense mass the morning sun darkened into twilight, like the terror of an eclipse. They are now where the buffalo, the "myriad roving child" of the American desert and of the measureless Canadian prairies of the Saskatchewan, is, namely, amongst the things that were. Detachments of this great army would sometimes delay awhile to light down on beech forests and feed on the nuts that had lain since autumn under the dry leaves. And later in the spring, when farmers were proceeding with their spring grain sowing, large flocks would hang about the ploughed fields, picking up such grain as the harrow had not covered. And when the woods around the fields had put on full leaf, they filled the shadowy arcades of the forest with the incessant reverberations of their pleasing calls. I think no such enchanting scene in the wilds of nature has remained to our time. In the brilliant light of early summer, these birds were fluttering everywhere amongst the branches of the trees, and ceaselessly calling to each other. The "Coo-oo-oo, coo-oo-oo" of the males, and the "Paip-paip, paip-paip" of the females, re-echoed from morning to night through the leafy domes of the forest. The sportsman procured his string of birds unfailingly and without toil. The woods of those times were the elysium of boys. Any gun answered the amateur bird slayer's purpose—stocked or half-stocked, flint-stocked or cap-stocked, sound of constitution or unsound of constitution, and supplemented with strings or tacks—whatever manner of shooting iron it was, it failed not to procure for its holder a beautiful string of birds. The ubiquitous gun-pop in those sunny woods in spring produced, we may believe, without any very weak credulity, a profounder entrancement of delight upon the senses of the boys of the time than the best of the sports of our later day can produce upon the sporting youth of our time.

O ye birds of earliest flight,
Glad I hail your myriad wings;
Dear as sun that follows night
Is the joy your presence brings.

With a transport wild I hear
Swift your pinions onward sweep,
Beating quick the upper air,
Where your long-drawn march ye keep.

When our vernal skies ye shade
With your countless wave-like flights,
Then in gayest garb arrayed
Rise to mind my youth's delights.

Dear was then a rambler's sport,
And the mountain's steep height;
Dear the ringing gun's report,
Rattling sharp at dawn of light.

O those rocks, beloved ever,
Which, in giant height and pride,
Look on plain and lake and river
O'er this mighty earth, and wide!

From the high and rocky hill
Of my native boyhood home,
Oft I watched, as idlers will,
Flights of birds that northward come.

And among those winged bands
Ye, O birds of "painted breast,"
Were the first to greet our lands
In your far and rapid quest.

Now that winter clouds are riven,
Here again your hosts I see,
Spreading o'er our bright'ning heaven;
Hasting on, where deep woods be.

Would that now, as then, I might
Fling aside all useless care;
Steep my soul in boyhood's light;
Breathe again its mountain air.

Ottawa April 3, 1889.

CROWQUILL.