

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

The Poems of Graham R. Tomson. The Bird Bride, by Graham R. Tomson. London and New York: Longmans, Green & Co.

Some years ago, when to the casual eye it may have seemed that English poetry was dwindling to a mere melodious jingle of intricate measures, Matthew Arnold declared that "The future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay. There is not a creed which is not shaken, not an accredited dogma which is not shown to be questionable, not a received tradition which does not threaten to dissolve. Our religion has materialized itself in the fact, in the supposed fact; it has attached its emotion to the fact, and now the fact is failing it. But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest is a world of illusion, of divine illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea; the idea is the fact. The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry."

In view of the slightness of so much of our modern verse, its lack of high seriousness, its childish satisfaction in verbal gymnastics and nimble conceits, its repudiation of all claim to lofty functions or sufficing ideals, it is not strange that Arnold's dictum has been rather generally accounted a hard saying. Too many of our poets, when we have gone to them for bread, have languidly tendered us a triolet, or at best some ingenious but irrelevant transcript of a tale three told; whereupon we have begun with shame to betake ourselves to the seat of the Ibsenites. Notwithstanding the deep truth which is more or less concealed in the shibboleth of "Art for Art's sake," there is no other cry that has proved more effective in reducing creative art to mere formalism and alienating from it the sympathies of men.

In the poetry of our immediate contemporaries, however, there is a new and encouraging note,—the note sounded by the leaders of what may be called the Romantic Revival. Of these Mr. William Sharp is the accredited chief. Prominent among the very few who are doing work of a like significance and seriousness, is the lady who writes under the pseudonym of Graham R. Tomson. The work before me is her first collected volume. Though small in bulk, it is large in import, both intrinsically and as a typical expression of the movement to which it belongs. The typical character of the collection is greatly heightened by the fact that in these very pages may be traced the transition from dilettantism to romantic seriousness. At the end of the volume there are a few experiments in French forms,—ballades, villanelles, triolets—most of them slight enough though delicate and charming in their workmanship; but here and there in these airy trifles we catch a hint of the stronger spirit whose impulse dominates the rest of the singer's utterance.

In a brief note like this one cannot attempt to trace out the lines of development on which the Romantic Revival may be expected to proceed. My present object is merely to call the attention of readers to the movement, and incidentally to certain of its characteristics as exemplified in the volume before me. Prominent among these is a sensitiveness to spiritual influences, a consciousness of what we rather loosely call the supernatural. This is evinced in a fondness for handling weird themes built, in a fashion of subtle suggestiveness, from old superstitions and folk-myths. Admirable examples from the present volume are the impressive ballads of "Pentire Town," "The Bird-Bride," (recalling Arnold's "Forsaken Merman," "Deid Folks Ferry," "The Fairies' Cobbler." These poems are fresh with a breath from the Juvenis Mundi, when we were all children, and wonder-eyed.

A second characteristic, of profounder importance than the first, is what I may term the human note—well instanced in the following lines of exquisite and abiding beauty:

A WAYSIDE CALVARY.

The carved Christ hangs gaunt and grim Beneath his blue Picardian skies, And pitons, perchance, to him Seems every man that lives and dies. Here, hid from hate of alien eyes, Two hundred Prussians sleep, they say, Beneath the cross whose shadow lies Athwart the road to Catelet.

'Mid foes they slumber unafraid, Made whole by Death, the cunning leech, Anear the long white roadway laid By his cold arms, beyond all reach Of Helmsch pangs or stranger's speech: Of curse or blessing naught reck they, Of snows that hide or suns that bleach The dusty road to Catelet.

Of garlands laid or blossoms spread The Prussians' sun-scorched mound lies bare; But thin grass creeps above the dead, And pallid poppies flutter fair, And fling their drowsy treasures there Beneath the symbol, stark and grey, That hath the strangers in its care Beside the road to Catelet.

The third characteristic to which I would call attention is a note of pessimism—a note not sounded universally in the new poetry, yet unquestionably present in some of the very best of it. But it is not the cynical, self-satisfied, deadly pessimism of satiety or exhaustion, but the fruitful pessimism which so often marks a long advance in the striving after an adequately based Ideal. It is a pessimism groping on the verge of the highest insight, even when its gloom may seem most void of light. The high endurance without hope, the patience of the Stoics, is in the majestic lines entitled "The Smile of All Wisdom." Yet more

pregnant is the pessimism of the "Hymn of Labour," of which I quote a few lines: Strive for the strife's sake only, smite not foeman nor friend— Strive for the strife's sake only, set no shrine for an end; Set no goal for the winning, no bright bourne for the scope; Ask no guerdon of praise, and hope thou nothing from Hope. If, afar in the sunrise, white wings flash and are fled, Lift not thy hand from the toiling, turn not aside thine head.

The skepticism which, baffled in its quest, turns its passionate sincerity to action and self-sacrificing devotion, is not far from the apprehension of an Ideal. So true is it that Laborare est orare.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

An African Hero.

The announcement is made of a new and popular subscription book, entitled The Explorations and Adventures of Henry M. Stanley, with a brief sketch of other explorers. It contains a full account of all Stanley's latest travels and adventures down to the time he reached the coast, a few weeks ago. The book will contain over 800 pages, 200 engravings, is finely bound in cloth and boards for \$2.50, and in full morocco gilt for \$3.25. It will be sold only by subscription. Where there is no local authorized agent, the book will be sent post paid on receipt of price, by addressing the Earle Publishing House, St. John, N. B.

Notes and Announcements.

The Transatlantic will begin the new year with a Rubinstein number, apropos of the great Russian composer's recent jubilee at St. Petersburg. Besides an account of the jubilee celebration, the number will contain extensive extracts from a recent autobiographical sketch of Rubinstein, giving the most striking and interesting incidents in a life of which little has heretofore been known; also, a remarkably fine portrait of Rubinstein, with a fac-simile of his autograph, written in Russian. Still other features will be a compilation of articles on the causes and effects of the Brazilian revolution; a novelette by Zola, entitled "The Morrow of the Crisis," which caused the suppression of the French journal in which it was originally published; the preface of a new book written by a Paris journalist, to show that Jeanne d'Arc was never burned at the stake; and numerous other shorter articles.

As a memorial of a distinguished administrator and to further the cause of Imperial Federation, Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole has edited the papers of Sir George Bowen and they will be published immediately in London and New York, by Longmans, Green & Co. In one of Sir George's earlier letters there is a pleasant glimpse of Washington society during Grant's administration.

HE WAS OWING MURPHY.

An Incident in the Life of One of the Truly Great Men of Moncton.

Moncton has, or until very recently had, a barber who was almost as celebrated, in his own peculiar way, as the famous "Barber of Seville." In his palmy days he used to drive a pair of high-stepping horses, lavishly decorated with scarlet and yellow plumes, and arrayed in a harness that was electro-plated to such a degree that scarcely any of it would bend. Leather was such a vulgar article that it had to be very sparingly used by people of such high standing.

Now, when this imposing equipage dashed up Main street, the unsophisticated stranger from the village of New York, who chanced to be standing on the veranda of Hotel Brunswick, was apt to screw his eyeglass into his best eye and ejaculate, "Be Jove! there's style; who is it?—the mayor, or the stipendiary magistrate?" And then retire to his chamber and weep bitterly, because they had no barbers like that in New York.

This fortunate tonsorial artist was also the proud possessor of an amethyst ring of such gigantic proportions that, had he not been an unusually large man, he must have sunk beneath its weight. As it was, he always made careful mention of it in his advertisements.

In due course of time this bijou barber went the way of all flesh which tries to do too much in the way of style. That is to say he failed, and as his assets consisted chiefly of a large family of fine looking children, and a varied collection of shaving mugs, the creditors found employment and consolation in "whistling for their money."

Amongst the victims was a Mr. Murphy of the upper provinces, whose christian name was Owen. This gentleman had furnished divers goods to our hero, from time to time, but they had never met, so each one was ignorant of what manner of man the other was.

After writing repeatedly to have his little claim settled, and receiving no response whatever, Mr. Murphy concluded to come to Moncton and look after his own interests.

Immediately on his arrival he called at his debtor's business establishment, and found that elegant gentleman absorbed in professional duties.

"Morning sir," said the barber, with graceful affability, "take a chair." But the visitor only stood still, and fixed upon the artist in soap a glare that might well have withered a brazen image. "In a hurry sir?" said the unmoved barber. "Through in a few moments." The visitor drew himself up to his full height, folded his arms, and in an awful voice he said: "I'm OWEN MURPHY."

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

[FOR ADDITIONAL SOCIETY NEWS SEE FIFTH AND EIGHTH PAGES.]

BATHURST.

[Progress is for sale in Bathurst at A. C. Smith & Co's store.]

JAN. 1.—Rev. T. F. Barry is looking much better after his trip through the Southern States. Mr. Thomas Alier, of Shippagan, has gone to Jersey, where he will spend the winter months. Miss Laura Meahan has gone to Boston for a few weeks' vacation. Miss Ida Kerr will have charge of the intermediate department of the grammar school, after holidays, until Miss Meahan's return. Mr. Edward L. O'Brien is at home for the holidays.

Masters Eddie Meahan, Jim Keary and Morse White have been home from St. Joseph's college, Memramcook, for the Christmas vacation.

Misses Mand Bishop, Lena and Emma Burns and Mollie White are also spending the vacation home.

Mr. Jno. J. Harrington and wife with their children, have been visiting relatives in Chatham. The Bathurst curlers must have been gratified with the large attendance at the recent opening of the curling and skating rink. Mrs. G. Dudley was deservedly recognized as the most graceful skater among the large number on the ice. The skating rink is under the management of Messrs. T. M. Burns and Henry Bishop, who have always been most successful as managers. Owing to the scarcity of amusements the rink will be largely patronized. I understand a band is to be organized this winter, in town, which will be in attendance on skating nights.

Before the closing of the grammar school, the pupils of the different departments presented, the principal, Mr. Fred Cowperthwaite, with an address, accompanied by a valuable scarf pin, and a handsome dressing case. He has severed his connection with the school, on account of the falling health of his wife, whose physician has ordered change of climate. Mr. and Mrs. Cowperthwaite will leave shortly for British Columbia, carrying with them countless good wishes from the many friends which their amiability and kindness have made for them here.

SUSSEX.

[Progress is for sale in Sussex by R. D. Boal and S. H. White & Co.]

JAN. 1.—Miss Keirstead, of Springfield, is visiting at Mr. C. Davis's.

Mrs. Fred Jones, of St. John, is in Sussex, the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Hornbrook.

Miss Mills, of Hampton, is visiting at her home here.

Mrs. Thomas Robinson, of St. John, is at her father's, Mr. John Roach.

Mr. Fred Ryan has returned to his home in Halifax.

Mr. and Mrs. B. A. Trites, of Petitcodiac, spent Christmas in Sussex.

Mr. Fred McPeters, of St. John, was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. H. Dryden last week.

Rev. Mr. Eatough was the recipient of a beautiful pair of fur gloves on Christmas from a few of his friends at Smith Creek.

Rev. Mr. Hubley, of the R. E. Church, was presented with a handsome fur coat by his congregation here.

A social dinner took place in Odd Fellows' hall, on Thursday evening, when about 35 couples tripped the light fantastic. It was unusually pleasant, as many of our young friends were home for Christmas here.

Mrs. Alex. Robertson is spending a few days in St. John.

Mr. Percy, of St. John, is here, the guest of Dr. and Mrs. Ryan.

Miss Gorman, of Campbellton, is at Mrs. DeBoo's. Mr. and Mrs. McLeod have returned from their visit to St. John.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Dean, of Lancaster, have been visiting Mrs. Dean's mother, Mrs. C. W. Stewart, in Moncton.

Miss Ross is at her home in Fredericton.

Miss Wilson is spending her vacation with her mother, at Springfield.

HAMPTON.

[Progress is for sale at Hampton station by T. G. Barnes and Geo. E. Frost, and at Hampton village by Messrs. A. & W. Hicks.]

JAN. 1.—Mr. Herbert M. Fairweather, of Moncton, spent Christmas at his old home in Norton.

Miss Jennie Raymond is quite ill at her home in the village.

Mrs. Bartlett, accompanied by her daughter, Miss Kate Bartlett, left on Monday to spend the week with friends in Moncton.

Dr. Taylor went to the city on Monday.

Mr. T. A. Peters is confined to the house with a severe cold.

Mrs. Travis and Mrs. Pichard spent yesterday in St. John.

Mr. J. V. Ellis gave the second lecture in the sidewalk fund course, at the hall in the village, on Monday evening, to a good house. His subject was Henry Fawcett. Judge Wedderburn occupied the chair.

Mr. William Warwick, of Lawrenceton, N. S., spent Sunday with his brother-in-law, Mr. S. Hayward, at the village.

Mrs. Evanson is visiting her sisters in the city.

Mr. Philip Palmer has been laid up since Monday, and is not expected to be able to go out for some days yet.

The young Misses Nellie and Florie Whitehead, of Fredericton, are visiting their aunt, Mrs. Noah M. Barnes.

Mr. Cecil Travis is confined to his home with a heavy cold.

The influenza has reached this place, and it is said that all those whom I have mentioned above are being ill in town.

The day is being quietly observed here. A very few strangers are in town.

AMHERST, N. S.

[Progress is for sale in Amherst at G. G. Bird's Bookstore.]

JAN. 1.—Mr. John Pugsley returned to his home in Ottawa, on Saturday last.

The large and pleasant family dinner party always held in past years, at Messrs. Dickie's "Grocery Cottage," at Chatham was limited to a very few, owing to the serious illness of Mr. A. R. Dickie, M. P. I am happy to add, at this date, that he is improving.

There was a large company of relatives and friends at the residence of Mr. John Lusby on Thursday, to witness the marriage of his only daughter, Miss George Adams. Rev. D. Steele performed the ceremony.

Mr. and Mrs. Kelsie entertained the engineers at dinner on Christmas day.

Rev. H. H. Pitman with his brother dined at the vicarage, on that day.

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