

CANADIAN AND LITERARY NOTES.

"I have been reading Whitman's poems," said a neighbor of mine lately, "and if that is poetry I could write it by the yard. It traverses all my former notions, and why should this man be paraded as one of the first, if not the very first, of American bards? Have not the critics, after sage shakings of the head, awarded laurels elsewhere, and consigned him to some limbo outside the muses' confines? Ah! but what did Alfiery say?—that is the question." His speech or silence is golden. Emerson thought Whitman an Orphic voice, and Rossetti speaks of his works as of "heroic stature." It is vain to advert to popularity, or the reverse, as a test of poetical power. A good poet may be popular, may have a universal audience; and a much greater potentially be nearly unrecognized and unknown. In proportion to his singularity there may be delay in creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed, and in establishing his merit. That bright particular star—the Eye of Eden—shone not, once, through the mist of prejudice, battle-storms, and civil feud, as now it shines. He was not so clearly seen sitting amid the tranquil spaces of his eternal home. The veritable Shakespeare, like the mountains and the sea, was ever the same capacious, various, comprehensive being; but the popular estimate of him today is vastly in advance of the popular estimate of his own age, or even that of Anne. But the few knew then. What did Alfiery say? Trust to the foremost and clearest spirits, if you will admit them, in any time, to judge of their rising compeers, and foremen the judgment of an age to come. So Whitman, in spite of what seems ungainly form, is well pronounced heroic and poetical, a man broad-built, and in many ways remarkable. What though he who runs and reads, accustomed to certain poetic moulds, definite, familiar measures, thinks he sees in these writings an inchoate mass of verbiage—a chaos without order, grace, or informing light of beauty?—let him purge his eyes, wipe his double lenses, doubt himself, and begin again. He may finally, if he looks steadily, find a sincere attention rewarded by the development from cloud and mist and darkness, and the blank unknown, of glorious continents and islands of the mind, with sunsets gold and crimson, and lakes lying pearl-like, and rivers like silver bars. The scale and magnitude of that upon which he looks, as well as its unfamiliarity, may call for time and lengthened consideration. Even supposing the absence of some qualities familiar to us in poetry, that may imply the presence of other, and haply greater. As that Spanish-American author, who writes so nobly of Victor Hugo, has observed, while denouncing the style of his author, there must be deficiency somewhere, but rather regard the distinctive titles to merit. "Genius is as varied as nature."

Attractive as "sheets o' daisies white," or sheets of snow now in order, are the poetic sheets for private circulation put by the authors before us. Whoever comes hereafter to read Bliss Carman's "Windflower," Archibald Lampman's "Meadow," and "Sunset at Les Ebolements" with Duncan Campbell Scott's "Above St. Irene," will admit that these gifted Canadians are not declining in power. We regard our inability to quote from these poems, but their public appearance may soon be expected.

We believe our friend, Mr. Edwin R. Champlin of Fall River, Mass., will not object to the publication of a few passages from his recent letter. After referring to Mr. Matthew R. Knight's intended publication, and expressing a desire to see his remarks on Canadian verse-writers, he proceeds in praise of Mr. Lampman as follows: "He is choice in the matter of poetry. See January Harpers). Harpers has printed no verse which equals his for the last twelve months. I hope he is well paid. Such a sonnet as his in the January issue is worth \$25. However, I question if he is paid more than \$10 or \$15. He should be free to drop all other work and give as much time as he chooses to poetry." Mr. Champlin thinks he excels all other Canadians, and thinks,—"next to him in Canada is Duncan Campbell Scott—Bliss Carman would be next, I should say." Mr. Champlin is himself a poet, as well as critic, and is soon to publish, "On the White-Birch Road," his third volume of verse.

He has a good word to say of a New England poet. "Have you seen Woodberry's 'The North Shore Watch, and Other Poems.'" It is the most important book of verse published in this country during the year. He might well have left out his "Italian Voluntaries," for they are not over common place, except in artistic features; but the rest of the contents, almost without exception, I find strong. The six sonnets are admirable, so is "My Country," and, of course, "The North Shore Watch." I venture to say that his second book will be very strong. This one came unheralded; but it is heralded enough for the second."

The Messrs. Hart & Co., Toronto, publishers of "Pine Rose and Fleur de Lis," by Saranus has lately brought out "The Song of an Exile," by Mr. Wilfrid S. Skeats, pronounced by *The Week* to be "A young Anglo-Canadian poet of excellent promise." The book is, by the same authority, asserted to be "a meritorious volume."

A delicious bit of verse by Ethelwyn Wetherald is "Not Yet," in *Wide Awake*. The little boy, Bert, reverts to the picture in his favorite book, in which the lion is forever in the act of springing on a "shrieking maid."

Long he looks at this attraction, Then remarks with satisfaction, Flipping back his curls of jet; The lion hasn't got her yet!

From which an important bit of philosophy is deduced. PASTOR FELIX

"No, sir, there is one person whom you have only named; Alfiery—what did he say?—Alfiery's name is Castellar."

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

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

DORCHESTER.

[PROGRESS is for sale in Dorchester at George M. Fairweather's store.]

JAN. 7.—A lack-a-day! The holiday time is over and past, and we poor mortals "sailing o'er life's solemn main" must take a firmer grip on the burden that has been slipping down our backs for the past two weeks, and go on our way, cheerfully as may be.

Think one of the most trying phases of the New Year's advent is having to write a new date, and no sooner does one get properly into the swing of it, than it is obsolete, and another course of erasures and had words begins.

New Year day passed rather quietly in Dorchester. There were a few flyers out, but times are changed. In the halcyon days yore, everyone who possessed anything more rapid than a clothes horse, harnessed him up and adjourned to the marsh to "speed him." Of course the masculine portion of humanity had a field day of it, making cakes, and consuming vast quantities of coffee, strawberry syrup, and such harmless beverages. We are essentially a temperate people. At a farewell supper given a departing friend not long since, there were forty toasts, all drunk in cold water! It was slightly chilling to the inner man. I am bound to admit, but think of the moral lesson!

Verily our feet are set in slippery places just now, and many a fancy picture may be seen on the "Corner Hill." Unfortunately they are not always funny, and on Monday Mr. E. C. Godfrey's little daughter had quite a serious fall, bruising the bone of her knee. She is improving, under Dr. Teed's treatment.

His old parishioners were glad to see the Rev. Richard Simonds on New Year's day. He was returning from the marriage of his son, Rev. James Simonds, whose many old friends will wish him and his bride much happiness in their new life. Their home is to be in Shelburne, I believe.

Mr. Walter Buck, of Truro, spent New Year in Dorchester. I hear he is to be deprived of another of our maidens at an early date. It seems too bad, but 'tis the way of the world.

Miss Alice Estabrook also spent the day here, with her sister, Mrs. Gunion. In the evening, about ten young people packed themselves into Mr. Wallace's big sleigh, and had a drive. The perfect roads make it delightful travelling now.

There have been numbers of people in town, but they are growing rare, now that the holidays are over.

Miss Nealie Robinson is staying with Lady Smith at Woodland, and the Misses Cooke, of Moncton, spent a few days with Mrs. Foster, last week. Mr. David Chapman's sisters, Mrs. Fletcher, and Mrs. Pipes are making her a visit.

Mr. J. A. McQueen spent Sunday with friends here.

Mr. J. Roy Campbell returned to St. John on Friday, after more than a week's visit to his old home.

Miss Godfrey has returned to Sackville, to make a visit of indefinite length.

Mrs. Kinder gave a "small and early" on Monday evening when a few young people enjoyed whist and other games—with coffee and light refreshments. There is a quite a series of small parties being given just now. Mrs. Barlowe Palmer gave a party to her married friends on Tuesday evening, and Mr. Robb has returned this week.

Mr. C. S. Hickman has returned to his work at Harvard, much to the regret of his friends, and we shall see him no more till "the robin's nest" again.

Miss Sarah Foster returned from Richibucto on Saturday, looking much better for the change.

Miss Ford and Miss Grierson also returned to resume their duties in school, which will be on Monday. I am so glad I am not "a child again," if it would involve having to attend our particular hall of learning. The building is in a disreputable condition, and as the trustees have decided it would be cheaper to build a new school than to repair this one, it seems likely to remain so. Cooling zephyrs in the plastic holes in the walls, and children's heads, while breezes from the floor rise up to call them anything but blessed, and catarrh comes to be the fashionable ailment.

A quiet little dance took place last evening at the residence of Mrs. Geo. McLeod, Tobin street. The usual number of family dinner parties took place on Christmas day, and the old time custom of New Year's calling was largely in excess of previous years. The weather was all that could be desired, and the gentlemen took advantage of the fine day to make their lists as large as possible. The levees were well attended. Government House has not seen such a gathering for many a day, and everyone spent the highest terms of the hospitality of Mrs. and Miss Daily.

Einche parties have been the rage the last week. A very pleasant evening was spent last Friday night at the residence of Mrs. Morey, Victoria road, and on Monday evening at the residence of Mr. A. G. Hessein.

Mr. A. P. Silver left on Saturday in the Vancouver for a very successful fancy dress dance took place at Cambridge House last Tuesday evening.

Invitation cards have been issued for an "At Home" at Dalhousie College next Tuesday.

Mr. Harry Chipman and Jas. D. Ritchie left in the Halifax on a short visit to Boston.

HALIFAX.

AMHERST.

[PROGRESS is for sale at Amherst, by George Douglas, at the Western Union Telegraph office.]

JAN. 8.—Rev. Richard Simonds, of Sussex, spent New Year's day in town on his return from Halifax, where he had been assisting at his son's marriage. He assisted at morning prayer in Christ church on that day. He was the guest of Mrs. W. M. Fullerton.

Prof. Barnaby, who did such good work when organist of St. Luke's church, Annapolis, played in church and in the hall of the Y. M. C. A. He has been engaged as organist for one year, greatly to the delight of the congregation. For the past few months he has been taking a special musical course in Philadelphia.

Mrs. Sleep entertained a large and pleasant family party at dinner, on New Year's day, in honor of her brother, Mr. Robert Douglas.

Miss McCully went to Parrsboro, last week, to be present at the marriage of her friend, Miss Helen Gilmour, to Mr. Gilmour, of St. John.

Miss Annie Parker expects to leave, on Wednesday night, to accept a position as nurse in the City hospital, Boston. She will be greatly missed here.

The musical given by Mrs. D. W. Douglas, on Tuesday evening, seemed to be greatly appreciated. Mrs. Douglas and Mrs. S. M. S. were contributing in no small degree to the pleasure of the evening.

Mr. Robert Douglas, C. E., returned to his home in Ottawa this week.

Mrs. D. W. Douglas had a pleasant dance on Friday evening.

Mrs. Bandall, of Guysboro, is at present staying with his niece, Mrs. Mackinnon, Havelock street.

The ladies of St. Stephen's church held an At Home on New Year's day at the hall of the Y. M. C. A. for the members of that highly favored institution. About 70 availed themselves of the opportunity to "see and be seen" on the occasion. In the evening an informal reception was held which was open to everyone.

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JAN. 8.—The Minnet and Fan Drill at the Academy of Music proved a big success, and realized all that was expected for the worthy charity for which it was given. A number, however, were disappointed at its non-repetition at a matinee.

The private afternoons at the rink are now in full blast, and the youth and beauty of the city may be seen there on Tuesday and Friday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Preparations are being made for a winter carnival on the 19th.

The Red Cap Snow Shoe club will take place at Masonic hall on Friday evening next. Invitations have been issued to about 300. The champions are Mrs. Geoffrey Morrow, Mrs. W. J. Stewart, Mrs. A. Mackinlay, Mrs. A. E. Curran, Mrs. W. C. Northup, and Mrs. James Mitchell.

A very pleasant afternoon "At Home" took place at the residence of Mrs. D. H. Duncan, on Inglis street. A larger number of gentlemen than usual were present.