

THISTLEDOWN

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Thistledown by Alex. Rae Garvie

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ALEX. RAE GARVIE

THISTLEDOWN

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BY
ALEX. RAE GARVIE.



TORONTO:
HUNTER, ROSE & COMPANY.

1875.

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INTRODUCTORY.

THE sketches and poems in this volume were written by the late Mr. Garvie at different intervals of his life. Some few of them have adorned the pages of magazines and enriched the columns of newspapers; but by far the greater portion, up to this time, have never appeared in print. They were prepared in the leisure moments of the author, and are published now at the earnest solicitations of many friends who desired to see the papers and poems collected and issued in a permanent form. Mr. Garvie's writings have ever been distinguished for vigour of composition, elegance of diction and the freshness and originality of the thoughts which they contain. As sensitive as Hazlitt, he has infused into his pages a nervous vitality as delicious as it is rare. His style is as charming as Keats', and as crisp and tender as

Collectors' Book Exchange 7 Oct. 1942

Lamb's. Mr. Garvie's place in literature is unquestionably with the poets of the lake-side School. His temperament was in accordance with that of the author of the "Excursion," and his heart ever beat to the responsive throbbings of princely Tom Hood's. Unobtrusive and modest as a woman, he forever kept far away into the background. He shrank timidly from notoriety, and sought the congenial companionship of the few who loved him and shared his love. With those chosen ones he ever delighted to walk and talk about letters, and art, and science. His diction, always glowing and elegant, flowed on as musically and as easily as the numbers of Tennyson. His conversations were as instructive and delightful as the Table Talks of Coleridge, or the Round Table Essays of William Hazlitt. A rare fund of anecdote and exhaustless humour, a vast knowledge of the men and women of all literatures, allied to his own splendid intellectual attainments and extended erudition, made him the most agreeable among men. So extensive was his information that, at will, he could discourse intelligently upon almost every topic in science or theme in literature and art. He moved among his fellows superlatively great, and while he wrote with an unyield-

ing pen, his heart was as tender and womanly as Goldsmith's or Kirke White's.

Out of the immediate realms of literature his kindly disposition was true and gentle, always helping those in affliction, and, with a generous word, soothing the cares and sorrows of all who sought his counsel and advice. He was happiest when doing good and making those around him happy and contented. His life has been an example to the youth of our young land, and by his death Canadian literature has lost its brightest jewel and most enduring gem. Truly might the epitaph, which the king of English literature, Dr. Johnson, wrote for his dead friend, poor, dear, old Goldy, be applied to the memory of Alexander Rae Garvie :

"Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit."

GEORGE STEWART, JUN.

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