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JAMES MCINTYRE JAMES GAY JAMES MACRAE
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The Four Jameses

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My Vision of Canada, etc.

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THE RYERSON PRESS - TORONTO

OXFORD COUNTY LIBRARY CO-OPERATIVE

James McIntyre: The Cheese Poet

THE FOUR JAMESSES

TO JAS. MCINTYRE

By his daughter, Kate McIntyre Ruttan

A man of mighty mark,
Who crossed the ocean dark
To win some glory;
Resolved to carve his name
High in Canadian fame,
And live in story.

And this methinks will be,
For friend and foe agree
Rare is his talent;
And as much diversified
As our old world is wide,
Hail Scotia's gallant!

He racy is, and witty,
As shown by many a ditty
In humorous vein;
And some say wit's his forte!
His muse all turns to sport,
He eschews pain.

But we who know him best
'Gainst this view must protest,
He's oft pathetic;
And with his pen so wise,
Can bring tears to the eyes
Of each ascetic.

James McIntyre : The Cheese Poet

I.—COWS AND COFFINS

Scotsmen have wandered far and wide
From Moray Frith to Frith of Clyde,
McDonald from his sea girt isle,
And Campbell from his broad Argyle.

Here to-night in this array
Is Murray, McKenzie and McKay,
And there doth around us stand
The Munroe, Ross and Sutherland.

IN THE LITTLE VILLAGE OF FORRES, MORAYSHIRE, Scotland, made forever famous by Macbeth's slaying of King Duncan, which Shakespeare was later to immortalize in the most popular of his tragedies, two men were born in houses exactly opposite each other, in the early part of the nineteenth century. Both of them were to play significant parts in the upbuilding of the Dominion of Canada, that was not to come into federated existence for another forty years. The elder, born in 1820, was Donald Alexander Smith, who, at the time of his death in 1914 was Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, having been Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, President of the Bank of Montreal, a

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Privy Councillor, Canadian High Commissioner in London, and one of the small group of Canadian financiers to whom we owe the Canadian Pacific Railway. The younger, the subject of this study, was James McIntyre, born in 1827, whose contribution to the land of his adoption was in the realm of poetry; and at his death in 1906, he wore proudly the title, casually but affectionately and irrevocably bestowed on him, of the Cheese Poet.

The connection between these men went further than the mere accident of birth. We must believe that the two boys, being neighbors, were also friends; and that the younger would be greatly influenced by the elder. We can imagine Smith, as a lad of eighteen, before his departure for North America in 1838 in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, firing the lively imagination of his eleven-year-old chum with tales of anticipated adventure and advancement in the semi-mythical British American Colonies, where under the Constitutional Act of 1791 the names Upper Canada and Lower Canada (now Ontario and Quebec) were already in use. So it was the most natural thing that in 1841, when young McIntyre was fourteen—a time boys often left home in those days—he should have followed Smith's example and migrated to a land of opportunity that had already absorbed his friend three years earlier. It is not only possible, but likely, that

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young Smith's letters home directly encouraged McIntyre to migrate; for Smith was successful from the first, and would have picturesque tales to tell of his life at a Labrador "post"; and as he was always a man to see opportunity well in advance of others, he must have felt then the same optimism that led him later to risk his all in the Canadian Pacific Railway venture, after English engineers had failed, and when English financiers declared the scheme the height of folly as a business undertaking.

It is interesting, too, to learn that in the later period of their lives, when Lord Strathcona was a millionaire and James McIntyre a much-admired poet, the latter composed a poem upon the Strathcona Horse regiment, that the financier had equipped for service in South Africa; and Strathcona was so pleased with it that he sent its author \$100. That does not seem a great sum now; but to a Canadian poet in the lean year 1899 it represented munificence, and McIntyre was deeply touched and very grateful for the much needed assistance.

Unfortunately, insufficient records have been kept of the poet's early life; and so we cannot say whether McIntyre came to Canada on Smith's specific invitation, or whether the older boy met the younger, or arranged an opening for him. What is known definitely is that, like other early citizens we admire, he had to

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struggle for his foothold in a land that still was rough and largely unsettled. When past sixty he wrote:

Our first Canadian job when boy,
In the big woods we did enjoy,
Large maple bush we then did tap
And to camp carried maple sap.

We stored it in great wooden trough,
Then in big kettles sugared off,
Though often it did try our mettle
To keep up fire beneath each kettle.

Of old we thought our neck was broke
By having on it a neckyoke,
And on each side a heavy pail
Suspended from the yoke by bail.

We waded through the snow and slush
And stumbled o'er the logs in bush,
But no doubt the maple's sweeter
Than any other thing in meter.

Let none at sugar making scoff
Webster was rocked in a sap trough;
When boiling sap it is quite handy
To pour some in snow to make candy.

It was hard work but it had its compensations. The carrying of two full buckets of sap through the treacherous melting snow of the spring woods was no joke, especially for a boy of fourteen, and young McIntyre must have had good stuff in him. The next glimpse we get of him is about a month later, when the farmer set him to work to burn down the trees, as the custom then was. The poem describing this is not quoted in

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full. The point of the narrative is that the "withered pine" nearly burned down the house and barn also, and the lad, who was alone, had a strenuous, but victorious, battle with the flames. The incident is so typical of the wanton destruction of the valuable forests of Southern Ontario at that time, that I quote rather more than enough to fix the nature of its author's then occupation:

LAND CLEARING

The first winter which I did spend
In Canada was with a friend,
And when the snow had passed away
Quite early in the month of May,

Friend started off for a barn raising,
And told me to get stumps ablazing,
Around each stump I heaped a pile
Of roots and junks of wood so vile.

For he wished the field to clear
So it a crop of roots would rear,
And there was one high withered pine
Which was full of turpentine.

Fire started and with it a breeze
Carried the sparks 'mong leaves of trees,
I did work hard but for recompense
All was saved but a few rails of fence.

Man in spring logging oft awakes
From winter slumbers nests of snakes,
And listens to the music grand
Of bull frogs, our Canadian band.

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It is remarkable that at the same time this was written, Archibald Lampman was writing one of his distinctively Canadian masterpieces, *The Frogs*, and that both poets were moved to admiration of our so-friendly, cheerful and ubiquitous native reptile. As to the waste of timber, Peter McArthur lived to regret this bitterly. McIntyre, who died twenty years earlier, and whose great passion was for the produce of the farm—dairy products in chief—worked in wood, and soon realized the primitive folly of destroying walnut, oak and cherry trees.

We must assume that during the summer he remained on that unidentified farm, doing the chores, making hay, and serving his apprenticeship as many another young immigrant from the Old Country has done before and since. From this period also came the poem on *The Old Snake Fence*, a picturesque institution that has fallen before the efficiency of wire, for which one can work up no enthusiasm whatever. This poem begins:

In early times the pioneer
When a few acres he did clear,
He found an ample recompense
For splitting rails and making fence.

Though it was crooked as a snake,
And zigzag style did not awake,
He thought it was a thing of beauty,
Yet in its day it did its duty.

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Well, I am proud to say I am sufficiently of the soil to think it "a thing of beauty", too, and to mourn its departure.

Now for some years we lose track of McIntyre altogether. At some period, which we have no means of fixing, he married Euphemia Fraser, by whom he had two children—a boy who died in 1876, and Kate McIntyre Ruttan, now a widow living at Lavallee, Ontario. There is, of course, a possibility that there is some grain of autobiographical truth in his long poem, *Canadian Romance*:

An English youth to Canada came,
A labourer, John Roe by name.

* * * *

He added to his wealth each year
For independence he loved dear,
He knew a labourer he would be
Forever in the old country,
His forefathers had tilled the ground
And never one had saved a pound.
Their one luxury around their door
A few choice flowers their garden bore,
But never hoped to own the soil
But serve as hinds to sweat and toil,
To work and toil for him had charm
He hoped some day to own a farm,
So he hired with Reuben Tripp
The wealthiest man in the township.
Tripp's only child, his daughter Jane,—

The story goes on that the suit prospered, and John and Jane were married, and ultimately inherited

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father Tripp's farm. But what is more interesting in this narrative is the wonderfully faithful picture of pioneer life in old Ontario, quite Chaucerian in its care for details. From McIntyre's descriptions, these scenes could be painted as easily as could the portraits of the Canterbury pilgrims. There is something also in the terseness of the lines that reminds one of the famous *Prologue*, with which McIntyre may well have been familiar, since there is no doubt that he was widely read in the English poets. The young wife, Jane, is represented as helping her husband as actively as those pioneer women did help their men:

She helped him in the fields to reap,
And spun the wool from off the sheep,
All they required they had for both,
Of her own weaving of good cloth,
And she was a good tailoress,
Did make his coat and her own dress;

(If those last two couplets are not the very rhythm and rhyme of Chaucer, I do not know how else to define them.)

The golden butter that she made
Was of the very finest grade,
She filled large pot with well knead dough
And baked fine bread 'mong embers glow;

The poem then gives an equally full account of his labors, which included the felling of trees. The largest he could only weaken at the base by cutting rings

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around them, and waiting for natural forces to complete the work:

For many a time the furious breeze
Would quick o'erthrow the girdled trees,
And sometimes they would kill the cows
When they did feed on grass or browse.

Whether McIntyre himself married the daughter of a well-to-do family, as this poem might suggest, or whether he earned the necessary capital, we soon find him doing business as a furniture dealer in St. Catharines, whose merits he has extolled:

St. Catharines famed for mineral waters
And for the beauty of her daughters,

* * * *

St. Catharines your greatness you inherit
From the genius of a Merritt,
You still would be a village dreary
But for this canal from Lake Erie.

Among its many great rewards
It gives you dry docks and ship yards

* * * *

I have been unable to learn the date of McIntyre's removal to Ingersoll, which had such a profound effect on his art. He there established a furniture factory on the banks of the Thames, and in connection therewith ran a furniture store, where he sold card tables, pianos, beds, chairs, coffins, and caskets. As is still the case in many of the smaller places in the Dominion, the

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local furniture dealer was also the professional undertaker, or "mortician" as he would be called now. In this calling he prospered reasonably—as one who knew him puts it, "he was always able to pay his debts"—and was more than locally known through his connection with the Oxford County organization of the Liberal Party.

That the move had been made by 1859 we know from an anecdote McIntyre has related of Thomas D'Arcy McGee's visit to Ingersoll in that year. When McGee rose to speak, "the chair being new stuck to him", and the orator said he hoped the people of Montreal would be as anxious as the people of Ingersoll evidently were for him to retain his seat. McIntyre would perhaps be present in a dual capacity: McGee was then allied to the "Reformers", or Liberals, and the chair with the adhesive varnish was likely one of McIntyre's—rented for the evening.

The error in the date that is found in the prose note to the Gourlay poem seems to be only a slip of memory. Gourlay, "the first to agitate for popular rights in Canada" (1817-20), was impeached by the Family Compact, and banished. He returned to Canada only in 1856; and contested the Oxford seat in 1860, not in 1858 as McIntyre asserts. The poem is quoted here to show McIntyre's interest in politics, and because

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Gourlay has been almost lost sight of as a Canadian political figure, and because of the striking simile, "like noble ruined castle wall."

ROBERT FLEMING GOURLAY

There came to Oxford Robert Gourlay,
In his old age his health was poorly;
He was a relic of the past,
In his dotage sinking fast;
Yet he was erect and tall
Like noble ruined castle wall.
In early times they did him impeach
For demanding right of speech,
Now Oxford he wished to represent
In Canadian parliament,
But him the riding did not honour,
But elected Doctor Connor.

At home, McIntyre's acquaintance was wide, since he was a zealous Mason, and a member of the Masonic Order for forty years, and for fifty years was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In the lodges of both these societies he filled the highest positions with honor. Since funerals were often arranged by these orders, doubtless a good deal of business came to him through them. During the last twenty years of his life he enjoyed a wide reputation as a poet, the late Sir John S. Willison, who was prominent in the Liberal Party at the time, printing some of McIntyre's verses in the *Toronto Globe*, of which Sir John was then the distinguished editor.

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But misfortune came to McIntyre when he took into partnership William Watterworth and Sam Crotty. The firm soon became bankrupt. This disaster was felt very keenly by McIntyre, who was reduced to such financial straits that, to use the language of his daughter, Mrs. Kate Ruttan, her father "couldn't pay for a sitting hen." It seems that even Nature conspired at this time to bring sorrow to her devoted son and eloquent mouthpiece; for in another communication—a telegram this time—Mrs. Ruttan, with characteristic impetuosity, tells of the destruction of her father's place of business by flood and fire:

HIS FACTORYS FOUNDATION FELL FROM THAMES
TORRENT COFFINS CASKETS CARD TABLES PIANOS
PIANOLOS BEDS BUNKS ETC SAILED DOWN RIVER
THAMES WILL WRITE TONIGHT AWAIT MY LETTER
BURNED UP FLOODED DOWN KATE RUTTAN

The fuller explanation in the letter runs:

He was the bright & shining star of Ingersoll Literary Society, attended a Night School for Elocution, & taught (unofficially), the boys, how to "spout." "Spout" was his own word for "declaiming or elocution or harangue." One morn at six he heard the crack of doom & the crash of worlds. His 3 story steam furniture factory fell, (note 3 f's) "Apt alliteration's artful aid." Foundation of furniture factory fell & sailed down the River Thames. Coffins, caskets, cupboards, card tables, chairs, pianos, pianolas—all commingled in confusion worse confounded. Also he was previously burned out. He wrote me his true townsmen collected Six Hundred Dollars for him that mournful morn. He was the loveliest man on earth.

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It has been erroneously stated that McIntyre had a very large factory and business, and died wealthy. It is generally believed that he was in the cheese business, and some have even thought that it was his own factory that made the "Mammoth Cheese" that was sent to the World's Fair at Paris, and inspired the poem generally recognized as McIntyre's masterpiece.

There is not the slightest foundation of truth in any of these rumors. McIntyre was not basely advertising his own concern when he wrote his various lyrics in praise of milch cows and the dairy industry that caused Oxford to be called "the banner county of Ontario." Any one who has ever penetrated to the upper story of one of these combined furniture and undertaking establishments, and found it stocked with stains and varnishes and embalming fluids, and very likely a corpse stretched out on a bench awaiting treatment, will realize that it was no place for the making of cheeses; and that McIntyre, who had an eye to the fitness of things, did not deal in foodstuffs, except in verse. His trade has been defined once for all in the memorial poem by Kate Ruttan:

TO JAS. McINTYRE

An undertaker bold
Who can't be undersold,
Jas. McIntyre;
He has caskets rich and rare,
Fit for the young and fair,
All you'd desire.

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And incomplete our verses,
Did we forget his hearses
All built of glass,
And draped with hangings golden,
Of barbaric splendour olden,
None can surpass.

His book he'll give you gratis,
Filled with divine afflatus
And local news;
High on the wall of fame
He hath written out his name,
Inscribed his muse.

McIntyre was genuinely inspired by the fertile and lovely mixed farming district around Ingersoll—as who is not moved that has ever seen that rich and beautiful country? And he was thrilled by the epic-pastoral drama of this large tract of Canada's loveliest land saved from ruin by excessive wheat raising through the introduction of cheese and butter making on a large scale. It was, in truth, a wonderful union—the grazing herds on the hill-side, the equivalent of the shepherd life the Greek poets sang of, with modern industrialism and international trade—so fruitful that it served to keep that portion of Ontario the garden one wishes it may always remain.

His poetic insight gave him early knowledge of all this; and if his themes are new, surely they are none the worse for that. There is plenty of precedent of the first order for a poet's endeavor to get away from sterile classicism, and refresh his art by singing of the heroic

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and beautiful in the life around him, even though the objects and thoughts he treats in his verse are so common as to be vulgarly thought prosaic. Instead of filling his landscapes with non-existent gods and goats and shepherdesses, he saw beauty in what was actually in every meadow—the pacific face of the cow:

THE VALE OF THAMES

In vale of Thames oft'times are seen
The cattle graze 'mong sweetest green,
Or there contented with their fate¹
The gentle cows do ruminare.

And enjoy a double pleasure
In re-chewing hidden treasure,
The cow is a kindly creature,
Kind and pleasant in each feature.

So McIntyre found his avocation. He became the supreme voice of the dairy industry and of the prosperous and progressive farmers of Oxford County; who were almost as content with their fate as the cows themselves. His first volume, *Musings on the Banks of the Canadian Thames*, was published in 1884; and was followed in 1889 by the larger collected and definitive volume, *Poems of James McIntyre*. Both books were greatly in demand, and attained large circulations for that time. He was respected and beloved by all who knew him. Engaged with his

¹Dairy cows would naturally be more contented with their fate than range cattle, that go to the slaughter-house at the age of one or two years.

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Iodges, a member of the Erskine Presbyterian Church, a shrewd man of business, honest and fair in all his dealings, selling card tables and pianos to the living and burying the dead, singing the cow from the beauty of her nose to the economic value of her manure, he graced the City of Ingersoll for many years, and died there at the age of seventy-nine, on March 5, 1906, greatly mourned as one who had been unfalteringly a public-spirited citizen.

II.—THE SONG OF ECONOMIC SALVATION

Then let the farmers justly prize
The cows for land they fertilize,
And let us all with songs and glees
Invoke success into the cheese.

JAMES MCINTYRE WAS LIVING IN INGERSOLL WHEN cheese-making began there, and he witnessed the triumphant expansion of the industry in the late seventies and eighties. Then it was that the farmers, exuberant over the new-found source of wealth, were at the pitch of their enthusiasm for the enterprise. Probably more cheese is now made in Ingersoll than McIntyre ever dreamed of—and he was bold in prophecy—but the inhabitants take it more prosaically. They are busier now in scientific merchandising than in trying to make monuments that, in their assault on the eye, may capture the imagination also, and impress the world with the jubilant news of their economic salvation. Then, however, in their delirious ecstasy, it was most natural that they should have endeavored to manufacture for display the largest cheese ever moulded by man; and history does not say they failed. This monster production weighed over seven thousand

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pounds. It doubtless accomplished the object of its makers; but it is doubtful whether it would have been widely remembered if it had not thrilled James McIntyre to the point of composing his immortal:

ODE ON THE MAMMOTH CHEESE

We have seen thee, queen of cheese
Lying quietly at your ease,
Gently fanned by evening breeze,
Thy fair form no flies dare seize.

All gaily dressed soon you'll go
To the great Provincial show,
To be admired by many a beau
In the city of Toronto.

Cows numerous as a swarm of bees,
Or as the leaves upon the trees,
It did require to make thee please,
And stand unrivalled, queen of cheese.

May you not receive a scar as
We have heard that Mr. Harris
Intends to send you off as far as
The great world's show at Paris.

Of the youth beware of these,
For some of them might rudely squeeze
And bite your cheek, then songs or glees
We could not sing, oh! queen of cheese.

We'rt thou suspended from balloon,
You'd cast a shade even at noon,
Folks would think it was the moon
About to fall and crush them soon.

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This monstrous lump of edible matter was a constant inspiration to McIntyre, for his poet's eye rightly saw it as a symbol of the glory of his community; and in another poem he explains just why a big cheese represents virtues that a little cheese cannot:

In barren district you may meet
Small fertile spot doth grow fine wheat,
There you may find the choicest fruits,
And great, round, smooth and solid roots.

But in conditions such as these
You cannot make a mammoth cheese,
Which will weigh eight thousand pounds,
But where large fertile farms abounds.

Big cheese is synonymous name,
With fertile district of the Thame,
Here dairy system's understood,
And they are made both large and good.

The romance that underlay this development, that was perceived by the poet, and caused him to dedicate his pen to its expression, began with the wretched state of agriculture in that section about the middle of the nineteenth century. The forests had been wiped out; the land had been long tilled, and was suffering badly from unscientific over-production of wheat. The hopes of the pioneers seemed, for the time, to have been misplaced. The farmers were discouraged. Also, when matters were at their worst, disturbing rumors came

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back to them from those who had gone to the Canadian West.

Ontario cannot compete
With the Northwest in raising wheat,
For cheaper there they it can grow
So price in future may be low.

The problem was to find some cheap fertilizer for the depleted soil. Cheese offered the ideal solution. Canada then imported it in great quantities. A man by the name of Ranney, who "began with just two cows" in 1856, soon had a large herd, plenty of natural fertilizer, and a most valuable by-product in the cheese he made on his farm on the dairy plan. Ten years after Ranney's start, Farrington in 1866, at the time plans for Confederation were in final shape, was the first to make this form of manufacturing his sole business, and thus spread the prosperity that had come to Ranney:

The farmers they now all make rich
Since Farrington went to Norwich,
And the system first there began
Of making cheese on factory plan;

This move revolutionized agriculture in that part of Ontario, and brought the farmers suddenly from despair to affluence. Soon they were exporting ten million dollars' worth of cheese annually; and it was their joy over this unexpected deluge of good fortune that communicated itself to McIntyre, and led him to

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devote his finest talents to celebrating cheese. The wealth he had perhaps visualized in his Scottish home in the form of nuggets had come at last to his community in the form of round, golden cheeses. The whole history of the movement, and its significance, is epitomized in the *Oxford Cheese Ode*. Though there is a sublimity in the lines on that single, gigantic cheese that the *Oxford Ode* does not quite equal, the latter unquestionably has an epic quality of spaciousness: in structure it is much smoother, and it is one of McIntyre's best poems:

OXFORD CHEESE ODE

The ancient poets ne'er did dream
That Canada was land of cream,
They ne'er imagined it could flow
In this cold land of ice and snow,
Where everything did solid freeze,
They ne'er hoped or looked for cheese.

A few years since our Oxford farms
Were nearly robbed of all their charms,
O'er cropped the weary land grew poor
And nearly barren as a moor,
But now their owners live at ease
Rejoicing in their crop of cheese.

And since they justly treat the soil,
Are well rewarded for their toil,
The land enriched by goodly cows
Yields plenty now to fill their mows,
Both wheat and barley, oats and peas,
But still their greatest boast is cheese.

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And you must careful fill your mows
With good provender for your cows,
And in the winter keep them warm,
Protect them safe all time from harm,
For cows do dearly love their ease,
Which doth ensure best grade of cheese.

To us it is a glorious theme
To sing of milk and curds and cream,
Were it collected it could float
On its bosom, small steam boat,
Cows numerous as swarm of bees
Are milked in Oxford to make cheese.

A great deal of space is taken up with allied and subsidiary matters. There are poems to the pioneers, Ranney, Salford and Farrington; and every phase of the industry is discussed with expert knowledge. McIntyre must have immersed himself in cream, and made cheese his chief mental diet, for years. To the new gospel of dairying, he was a convert so ardent that he barely missed becoming fanatical. He is saved by the sound sense of his remarks, and Joaquin Miller was justified in telling him he did wisely in "singing of useful themes." Here, in *Lines Read at a Parsonage Opening at the Village where Ranney had once flourished, 1883*, we see the general benefit of the enterprise, whereas the last quoted poem focussed attention upon the revenues derived directly from the cheese. Notice, then, the indirect blessings:

The farmers are in cheerful mood,
For harvest all it has been good,
And all the grain was sown this spring
An abundant yield will bring.

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And you can scarcely stow away
The yield of barley, oats and hay,
Such pasture it is seldom seen,
E'en now it is so fresh and green.

This beauteous colour nature decks,
While it insures you large milk cheques,
And certes you've much cause to praise,
For hogs and cattle that you raise.

The whole family profited as well as the farmer himself. To explain the quotation showing how their wives' happiness was increased by the advent of cheese, it should be stated that it has been a Canadian farm custom for the wives to treat the eggs and the butter they make as their personal incomes. These commodities are traded at the village store, and the women get in exchange whatever dress goods or groceries they need. The inauguration of cheese-making caused all dairy produce to go up in price.

And the ladies dress in silk
From the proceeds of the milk,
But those who buy their butter,
How dear it is, they mutter.

McIntyre's altruism is nowhere better illustrated than in his pleasure over enhanced prices of these things of which he was a consumer only. His sympathies were too much engaged for him to worry about his own small losses. Or perhaps the farmers now bought more and better furniture, and indulged in more expensive funerals. Be that as it may, he gives

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advice on the different breeds of cattle, and elaborate instructions for their care and feeding:

If bran slops you on cow bestow
Of milk it will increase the flow.

He tells of the proper seasons for making cheese, and when not to:

Our muse it doth refuse to sing
Of cheese made early in the spring,
The quality is often vile
Of cheese that is made in April.

Any sort of cheese his muse would balk at must have been reprehensible cheese indeed. But thus he goes on, even covering sanitation in the dairy:

Utensils must be clean and sweet,
So cheese with first class can compete,
And daily polish up milk pans,
Take pains with vats and milk cans.

Nor does he forget to put in a good word for his home town, to attract the business of the farmers, whose interests he had made his own:

Now we close this glorious theme,
This song of curds and rich cream,
You can buy your hoops and screws,
And all supplies for dairy use,
Milk cans and vats, all things like these,
In Ingersoll great mart for cheese,
Here buyers all do congregate
And pay for cheese the highest rate.

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He was determined that, if possible, there shall be no waste in this dairy business; and therefore he was eager to turn all by-products to profitable use:

Grant has here a famous work
Devoted to the cure of pork,
For dairymen find it doth pay
To fatten pigs upon the whey,
For there is money raising grease
As well as in the making cheese.

* * * *

And it pays best to sell each pig,
Plump and young, not old, fat and big,
Young and tender now's the vogue
Either in cattle or in hog.

And it was inevitable that he should occasionally step over into agricultural fields that have no connection at all with cheese:

And in Ontario the hen
Is worthy of the poet's pen,
For she doth well deserve the praise
Bestowed on her for her fine lays.

That is as far as we shall accompany the poet in his "glorious theme" *as such*; but it is impossible to promise it will not crop up again incidentally, for he is so in love with his pleasant faced cows that their sweet breath is smelled even in his definition of poetry:

For poetry is the cream,
And essence of the common theme.

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What his lyric encouragement meant to the people of his community we can only guess. It is good to know, however, how fully his desires for their advancement have been fulfilled:

All dairymen their highest aims
Should be to make the vale of Thames,
Where milk doth so abundant flow,
Dairyland of Ontario.

Who can say it is not so?

III.—THE WIDER OUTLOOK

And they'll plant churches in the North West,
Where they can serve the Lord the best.

NEVER LIVED POET WHO TOOK A MORE PRACTICAL VIEW of human affairs than McIntyre, nor who gathered upon himself less of the cant of art. That is not to say he was prosaic, unless one is willing to admit—as I am not—that Tennyson was prosaic when the romance of industrialism in nineteenth century England led him to prefer “fifty years of Europe” to “a cycle of Cathay.” As I have tried to make clear in the cheese section of this study, McIntyre was moved by cheese as the thing that had brought a large number of people from misery to joy. It is true he turned didactic, which is usually considered a peril to a literary creator's art; but then he made no pretensions to art. Unlike Gay and Gillis, he disclaimed any great amount of artistic merit in his writing, saying: “We are not vain enough to suppose that because we have produced some lines that said rhymes are poetry. If we furnish an occasional poetic gleam like a dewdrop sparkling in the sun, it is all we dare hope for.” I am inclined to think he over-stated his humility; and certainly cannot agree with his own low estimate of

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his performance. His frequent device of double rhyme is clear proof of conscious artifice:

They must be clad in fur well,
For it blows cold at Burwell;

And when he ventured into the triple rhymed structures the happier specimens of his ingenuity are beyond praise:

Other lakes seem inferior
In size to great Superior.

In so complicated a construction, he is not always up to the mark of the lines just quoted. For instance, I do not care nearly as much for:

'Mong choicest fruits you ramble on
From Niagara to Hamilton,

and, while all will agree that Killicrankie is a much harder word to rhyme than Timbuctoo, which Sir William Gilbert could only match with "hymn-book too", McIntyre's attempt was more courageous than wise:

And historians will rank the
Chief highland victory of Killicrankie.

We read McIntyre, however, more for his thought than for his metrics—interesting as they often are. What he grasped was the vital significance of the expansion in his time of farming and manufacturing, and of the improvements in their methods. He did not disdain to write of these things, for they were

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moulding the lives of the people. He looked on Canada chiefly as the salvation of the tenant farmer, and farm labourer, in Great Britain, as cheese had been the salvation of Ingersoll and vicinity. He was calling people to a better life, and that is the precise function of didactic poetry. His *Donald Ross*, a short narrative, was immigration propaganda forty years before the government established a branch to do that work. The poem concludes:

He sought a distant strand,
In Canada bought land,
To him a glorious charm
To view his own broad farm,
His horses and his cows,
Cultivators and plows,
And now his daughter Flora
She is the flower of Zorra.

Practical, too, was his patriotism. Like Gay, he addressed an ode to *Governor Lorne and the Princess Louise*, on their arrival in Canada; but he was primarily intent on making this country a good one to live in, and content to let the Royal Family get on without his advice. He was proud of his Scottish birth, yet who can read his poems without seeing that the best part of his heart had been given to his adopted land? The race's future here meant more to him than its past in the British Isles. His song is almost all of Canada, and how it may best be developed into the New Homeland. A pleasant exception, however, is found in the

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ode written on the occasion of the future King Edward VII embarking for Canada in May, 1860. The similar popularity of his grandson, the later Edward, Prince of Wales, served to keep the sentiment of the old poem fresh, though the reader will notice the quaintly innocent diversions our grandparents were preparing for the entertainment of the royal guest.

WELCOME TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

In his long voyage o'er the sea,
To where doth grow the maple tree,
May he be blest with pleasant gales,
The coming man, the Prince of Wales.

The maple grows but in good soil,
Where nature doth reward for toil;
The farmer splitting his fence rails,
He welcome bids the Prince of Wales.

In the woods the axe is ringing
And the yeomen merry singing,
The sound resounds o'er hills and dales,
Our future king the Prince of Wales.

Round the brow of our future chief
We'll weave a wreath of maple leaf,
For o'er broad Canada prevails
Kind feelings to the Prince of Wales.

When in this land the Prince arrives,
May he have many pleasant drives,
And on our lakes have merry sails,
Great king of princes, Prince of Wales.

McIntyre was a philosopher, as the best poets are, and a realist, as the best philosophers are. He was not

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one to go into a pink decline over the abandonment of obsolete, picturesque methods. He saw the value of efficiency, and, for the poetry, realized that a little extra change in the pocket can jingle a very pretty tune. When he wrote of agricultural implements, he was no sentimentalist:

Poor labourers they did sad bewail,
When the machine displaced the flail,
There's little work now with the hoes,
Since cultivators weed the rows.

Labour it became more fickle,
When the scythe took place of sickle,
Labour still it did sink lower,
By introduction of mower.

And the work was done much cheaper
When they added on the reaper,
Another machine to it they join,
Mower, reaper, binder, all combine.

Machines now load and stow away,
Both the barley and the hay,
And the farmers do get richer
With the loader and the pitcher.

Thus we see that McIntyre's horizon was wider than the circumference of the Mammoth Cheese. He liked to see anything growing or being made. For example:

The apple, which is queen of fruits,
Was a good crop and so is roots.

In particular, he had great faith in the development of the Canadian West; and I like to remember

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that he lived long enough to see Alberta and Saskatchewan erected into provinces. It must have pleased the old man greatly. Mindful of his own hard experiences in youth, helping to clear the hardwood forests, he expresses perfectly the feelings of the Ontario farmers of that day toward the newly discovered prairie lands. The place seemed to them a farmers' paradise where the plough could be inserted in wild land, and a long, loamy furrow turned without preliminary labour, and a crop could be harvested the first year:

And while we plow we don't get thumps
By running it against the stumps.

He had a far-seeing eye, and went so far in his speculations as to the future of the West that once he said: "Winnipeg perchance may be the capital of the Dominion." Optimistic as many Westerners are, and long ago as that was said, it still remains the boldest prediction on the destinies of the newer half of Canada. In the 'eighties, it was a strong thing to say. When he came to prophesy the colonization of the arctic and sub-arctic regions, he was clearly thinking beyond the men around him; and until the last few years there has been no apparent justification for a national outlook as comprehensively sanguine as his. We are not yet as awake to the possibilities of our North as Eastern Canada was to the possibilities of the West forty years ago. For the sake of brevity, I have taken

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the liberty of making one poem out of scattered stanzas, to show how wide was McIntyre's national thinking. The title also is composite:

CANADA AND ITS FUTURE

Canadian provinces they lay
Divided by river and by bay,
Many a separate division,
Among them there was no cohesion.

But statesmen saw that a great nation
Could be formed by federation,
And soon they led public opinion
To favour forming this Dominion.

Though the North-West is filling slow
Yet soon there will be a mighty flow,
Millions to North-West will hurry
In last decade of century.

For therein is an opening grand
In great fertile prairie land,
For there the choicest wheat it grows
Near where the Saskatchewan flows.

But we sing more glorious theme,
It is our verdant pasture land,
Where cows produce a flood of cream,
Doth make cheese of the finest brand.

From balmy breezes of Lake Erie
To the far north frozen ocean,
Where it now seems lone and dreary,
And will yet be life and motion.

While British blood doth course each vein,
Proudly this heritage maintain,
With fertile acres by the billions,
Future homes of two hundred millions.

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Wherever cows come on the scene, be it noted, the poet grows particularly tender. Perhaps what he meant to convey in that last passage was the need the West would soon feel for mixed farming, and a fear which modern scientific agriculturists confirm. There is also to be taken into account the difference between thought and emotion. He understood the greatness awaiting other districts, but his own he loved.

Some see no beauties near to home,
But do admire the distant far.
Each one doth know it is not wise,
Though our songs may not be vocal,
Chants of our home for to despise,
But to prize them 'cause they are local.

This is adequate apology and introduction to the dual section of McIntyre's work entitled *South Ontario Sketches* and *Sketches on the Banks of the Canadian Thames*. The former is represented by part of the poem on St. Thomas, the latter by short extracts from poems on Woodstock, Beachville and Stratford:

No more need to stay at home as
There's lots of railroads to St. Thomas,
You pluckily did boldly venture,
Now you are great railroad center.

Your city now it hath high hopes
From its great railway workshops,
And higher yet it still will rise,
The seat of so much enterprise.

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When young man wants a wedded mate
He seeks Alma girl graduate,
And he loves her Alma mater
For the sake of her charming daughter.

* * * *

And through the air there sweetly floats
Harmonious Woodstock organ notes,¹
And men employment secure
In factory for furniture;
Old Oxford is a seat of knowledge,
Woodstock has a fine new college,
And farm implement work shops,
So farmers easy reap their crops;
The old court house is a disgrace,
Grand structure soon will take its place.

* * * *

Though river here it is not deep,
Yet banks slope graceful up the steep,
And from the summit of the hills
You look down on the famed lime kilns,
And 'tis full worthy poet's rhyme
The whiteness of your pure white lime,
Your glory never shall be gone
While you have quarries of this stone,
In influence you yet will wax
With mills for flour and also flax.

* * * *

For here in Stratford every ward
Is named from dramas of great bard,
Here you may roam o'er Romeo,
Or glance on Juliet bestow.

¹The "Woodstock" reed organ, made at the city of the same name, was one of the most popular musical instruments in use in Ontario at that time, dividing the field with the "Bell" organ, made at Guelph. Gay makes no mention of the "Bell," perhaps because he found his flute sufficient. In the place of honour in the parlor, the organ filled the same function in the Canadian home of the period that the radio and television do now.

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The chief poets of England, Scotland and the United States were well known to McIntyre. A substantial section of his book is made up of poems to each of them. As these are mostly polite salutations between bard and bard, they need not be gone into here, beyond selecting two of the shortest to illustrate McIntyre's condensation of utterance. It has been obvious throughout that he does not pad his poems, except for once in a long time when he is at his wits' end for a rhyme: usually he will get to any lengths of inversion, and extend poetic license even to grammar, to avoid the delivery of his message in anything but its most compact form. His refusal of ornamentation is sublime. The career of Shelley came near being reduced to an epigram; and this is the more wonderful because the first line of the quatrain is one of the rare cases of an empty line to fill out the measure:

SHELLEY

We have scarcely time to tell thee
Of the strange and gifted Shelley,
Kind hearted man but ill-fated,
So youthful, drowned and cremated.

WALT WHITMAN

For erratic style he leads van,
Wildly wayward Walt Whitman,
He done grand work in civil war,

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For he did dress many a scar,
And kindly wet the hot parched mouth
Of Northern soldiers wounded South.

Shakespeare was his favourite poet; and he had a keen appreciation of the better-known plays. The Baconian theory did not exactly annoy him; but he disbelieved it, and could not see how the genius of the plays would be affected by changing the name of their author. The nature of his reply is indicated in the first stanza of the poem dealing with the point:

Some critics think they do make clear
The fact that Bacon wrote Shakespeare,
But a gent lives in New York
Asks what effect will it have on pork.

The social life of the people, as distinguished from the industrial, does not receive any great amount of the poet's attention. A genial soul, he took manners for granted, and only at rare intervals, and usually incidentally, is there any mention of them. One of the few examples recalls the buggy-riding that then formed one of the chief mechanical aids to courtship:

FEMALE REVENGE

I heard Bill say to-day, Mary,
That you are a charming fairy,
And that to town he'd give you drive,
But just as sure as you're alive,
He does intend to have the bliss,
Of stealing from your lips a kiss.

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I'll let him drive me now, Jane,
His efforts they will all be vain,
I hate him, and I him defy,
And anger flashed from her eye,
The monster's wiles I will defeat,
Peck of strong onions I will eat.

Finally there are many ballads, and without some acquaintance with these the student's knowledge of McIntyre is insufficient. To illustrate this phase of his art I have selected three, of which the first is quoted in part only, and the last two in full. These narratives—pathetic, tender and dramatic—need no comment.

THE GATES AJAR

A good kind man who knew no malice,
Happy with wife and daughter Alice,
More precious far to him than gold,
His little darling six years old.

True nobleman with many friends,
His career too soon it ends,
The casket friends enshrined with flowers,
While soul had fled to heavenly bowers.

The wreaths were lovely, but the star,
Admired by all was gates ajar,
The widow led her little girl
To where death his dart did hurl.

And stricken her poor father down,
But the child exclaimed he's won the crown,
And he will watch for me afar,
And keep for me the gates ajar.

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Pa will admit his little Alice
Safe into the heavenly palace,
And glories to me will unfold
As we tread the streets of gold.

EVERY ROSE HATH ITS THORN

There was a maiden all forlorn,
She loved a youth, his name was Thorn,
But he was shy for to disclose
How he loved dear the sweet May Rose.

Lustre sweet it would give to Thorn,
If this fair flower would it adorn,
Said he all other names above
Your charming name alone I love.

Said she of beauty 'tis soon shorn,
Unless that it be joined to Thorn,
It very soon doth droop and die,
And she heaved a gentle sigh.

Said he we'll wed tomorrow morn,
No more from me shall you be torn,
For you will banish all my woes,
And near my heart I'll wear the rose.

Now little rose buds they are born,
All clinging to the parent Thorn,
In grace and beauty each one grows,
Full worthy of the sweet May Rose.

Some flowers they only shed their bloom
In the sweet month of leafy June,
But May doth bloom each month in year
A fragrant Rose forever dear.

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LOST SON FOUND

An English ship when homeward bound,
Near to its port was shipwrecked found,
For it had struck a sunken rock,
And was slowly sinking from the shock.

In port they quick did man life boat,
Which o'er tempestuous sea did float,
They rescued all the crew, save one,
And were content with what they done.

But they had not their captain, Harry,
Who on the shore was forced to tarry,
And knew not of the disaster,
So crew had worked without a master.

But when he heard of the shipwreck,
And that a man was left on deck,
He quickly hurried the boat's crew
For to again attempt his rescue.

But earnestly his old mother,
Reminded him of his lost brother,
Perhaps drowned in a foreign sea,
She cried, son, stay and comfort me.

But wreck they reach and rescue man,
And thrill of joy o'er city ran,
When it was found 'twas Harry's brother,
Had returned to comfort mother.

Thus providence rewards the brave
Who strive their fellow men to save,
The mother's griefs it did assuage,
And happy now is her old age.

James D. Gillis: A Man of Parts