

DEGREE CONFERRED

1903

Dep
Col
Thesis
C 751

A. CONSIDERATION OF CANADIAN VERSE.

Thesis for M.A. Degree.

Submitted by

A.T. Condell .

B.A. M.A. C.M.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
LIBRARY

L
SESSION NUMBER

75746.

A. Consideration of Canadian Verse.

It will be apparent to all who have given the subject much thought that its treatment here must be suggestive rather than exhaustive. The abundance and variety of the materials with which we have to deal, and the conditions and circumstances under which the work has been produced render this course the only one practicable. Progress is so rapid in a new country as to demand an almost continuous revision of our estimates. What was true of last century will scarcely hold for this and the leaders of a decade just ended may be succeeded by others in the present. So the work of criticism or appreciation has never been kept abreast of production, as in the older countries, nor is there as great familiarity with the works of Canadian Authors, which necessitates attempts of this nature being in part critical and in part explanatory. And it is not only the question of material, but the question of how to use this material, what to use and what to reject, in order to give that ordered view of process and product which has been presented for the literature of other lands.

It is indeed true, as the Germans have said that all beginnings are difficult. The wonder is that things ever get beyond a beginning and how they pass upwards into those complexities of material and agency that coming from the past confront us, in the present. At a time when the chronological or historical sense was the only one operating in the literary field and each production was seen as such and nothing more, the multiplicity of events was astounding, and even when the philosophical faculty had scanned the field and endeavored to introduce some order, of importance or insignificance among the facts of history still their variety and isolation were amazing; but when the idea of causation came, viewing events not merely as such, but as causes and effects having a continuous relation of antecedence and sequence, something more of order among the conditions and circumstances among literary influences and movements themselves was gained, and the mind was enabled thereby to grasp the more salient details. And subsidiary to, but of great moment in adding the use, and definite application of the idea of causation came the idea of development. Whatever its defects it has certainly been productive of much good in stimulating

research and leading to the adoption of a more philosophic and scientific mode of thought and procedure; and under the full and unreserved employment of the scientific method we may hope for a still clearer and more comprehensive view of the development of all literature.

Perhaps from these general, primary, and elemental considerations to an examination of Canadian Verse seems a far cry, but it is just here that we think the mistake is likely to be made, and indeed has been made. In all articles dealing with the subject, one finds only statement of unrelated facts; personal items, historical notes, dates, and a few statistics. Where the whole field has been gone over, there is only enumeration and the only order, or classification attempted is an alphabetical, or chronological one. To attempt something more than this is desirable, even though the time is not yet ripe for the achieving of any large result; and perhaps we can profit by the work of others even where we are compelled to follow other paths. It may be ^{true} ~~time~~ that "the dwarf on a dead giants shoulders sees more than the live giants eyesight availed him before," and not only sees more, but sees differently. With the years comes a change of faculty; at all events one of media. There comes a revision of our judgements and the processes by which we reach them, and while we are near enough to hold to the facts, we may through time, and better distance, get a proper perspective.

It may be fairly admitted that those who have dealt with the subject have erred either through pride, or through prejudice and not that either held to these sentiments ^{willingly} or even consciously, but their position, their point of view, was necessarily determined by their birth, heredity and environment. Listen to one otherwise perhaps, the most competent appraiser we have hitherto had: "A Canadian by birth education and life-service as were my father and his father, my mother and her mother I may be pardoned ~~the~~ feeling of a national pride that the materials are so abundant from which to prepare a representative volume, much of whose contents will not suffer by comparison with the verse of older Countries." And in this is a double mistake for comparison, to be useful, should have a common basis on which to operate and should look not only to results, but to the conditions under which those results were attained. Canadians delight in the youth, energy, and enthusiasm of their country

sometimes forgetting the faults invariably connected therewith. They point to the general intelligence and to some instances of profound scholarship, but they forget that great growths are not begotten in an hour. The circumstances in which she was placed at birth and the influences surrounding her youth have been such as to give her a strong and steady growth without forcing a too precocious display of accomplishments, and she should be satisfied with growing, and content to await the development of a literature with her national life. Is not this the way in which all poetry worthy the name has been produced. It must come from the inner vitality, the heart-blood or even the life-blood of a nation. It will be all that is highest in the thought of the people, all that is deepest and truest in their feeling, and all that is noblest in their action embodying and embalming itself in their language. It is the expression of a life that reaches out after a faith, pure and unfettered, that struggles for freedom, or dies in maintaining it and that protects and preserves inviolate, the sanctities of the home. But this effort has not been called for on the part of Canada for she enjoys what in other countries a thousand struggles have contributed to form. She has been resting in the calm untroubled consciousness that she possesses all the essentials of prosperity and happiness. She has all of these in her constitution as a British birthright; they are hers by inheritance—security, liberty, and equality, reign throughout the land from ocean to ocean. In the practical prosperity of our country we may find a reason for the absence of a distinctive literature. She is engaged in a peaceful productiveness in those things that pertain to her growth and development. That ours is a great country, great in extent, great in the grandeur of its mountains, lakes, forests, and streams, and great in its possibilities, is coming to be recognized; and that does not touch the intellectual and spiritual life of its people, at least not directly. So it behoves Canadians to see that their pride and appreciation of the past be tempered with modesty and their earnest hope for the future forget not the present. Too often pride and hope beget such a glamour and prospective glow of mind as to lead them to accept promise as of equal value with performance, and they

forget ⁱⁿ gazing upon this ideal that it is yet unrealized, a fact not yet accomplished .

It is equally true that it is impossible for a citizen of the old world to get the proper view point, for his mind is biased by the prejudices that his position renders inevitable . If it be true that the mind of the man of the New World turns westward, undervaluing the past and overvaluing the promise of the future, or rather discounting drafts upon the future, it is equally true that the mind of the man of the Old World turns eastward, exaggerating the past and discrediting the new, and the unfamiliar . He is apt to think or even say " Can any good come out of the west?" and this is true of not only Canadians but all American work. Slowly the vastness and importance of our Country geographically has been brought home to them ; slowly too have they been able to realize the changed industrial conditions that ~~xxxx~~ obtain here and it is only through time and sympathetic study that they have been able to get anything like a proper view of the social and political life of Canadian people. It is only in the same way we can hope for a proper estimate of Canadian verse, yet there is not wanting now and then one among them who has given due credit to Canadian effort . On a recent list of the poets of prominence of the last fifty years, compiled by Mr Archer of London, the names of Carman and Roberts hold high rank. Even half a century ago on the appearance of Heavyside's "Saul" a writer in the North British Review declared that the work was indubitably one of the most remarkable English poems ever written out of Great Britain.

But let us examine Canadian verse itself; let us see if we can come to know it, in that way which Oliver Wendell Holmes so delightfully illustrates by the boy who liked sugar because it was sugar; this he gives as analogous to true literary taste. The good is still the good, the flower the flower, and no amount of analysis, technical terms or critical instrumentation will make them dearer to the philosopher than to the plain man. The kind of Canadian verse usually considered first is that in which the freshness and richness of nature has impressed itself upon the writer. With open eye and ear alert and all the senses vibrant to the sweet spirit and every influence of nature they write with that primal feeling and instinct

born of kinship and close contact with earth, sea, and sky with bird and blade, and bloom. Their songs are fragrant with the odors of forest and meadow, through them beats the full free pulse of nature aglow with the wild and matchless gifts of glade and glen. There is a raciness in these almost unequalled, and the heartiness in them, yet all unconscious, is refreshing; And closely allied to these both in their nature, and in order of production is the depicting of simple, primitive emotions and life under new and uncomplicated conditions, but all these qualities whether without or within are humanized. There is a genuineness about them, though they are often portrayed with deft and delicate hand, with light touches of fancy that give them a beauty almost ideal. Of this quality of verse we have an abundance. Mr Lighthall who made ^{an} anthology in 1888 says that at that time, the number of writers who have produced really good verse may be placed at about three hundred. Of course the number has greatly increased since, for while the tendency to verse in the older countries may be waning, there seems not many signs of it here. Of this nature poetry there are found writers among the representative portion of our population— among the remnants of the Indians east and west, among the French-Canadians whose songs are a curious blending of fragments from old France and especially Normandy with additions drawn from life on a new soil. The Irish, the English, and the Scotch Canadians show the same recurrence in their verse, both in matter and method, so that it is only recently we have broken from traditional treatment. Each element of our population has tended to exalt unduly that writer, and that phase of his poetry which showed a lingering legacy of the home-land like the glorious after-glow of a prairie sunset. Sangster was the Canadian Wordsworth "McLachlan the" Canadian Burns" and Rand the "Browning of Canada". This has made it difficult to fix upon the relative stature of our poets, either from the opinion of matured thinkers or from popular approval; for the country itself lacks unity and complete assimilation so with the verse of its people.

But can we discover nothing more than this in Canadian verse? Still the question is asked what is Canadian poetry? Which being interpreted would probably mean in the mouth of the questioner not so much what it

has been, as what it should be. The question is asked as though the answer could be crystallized into a happy word or phrase or a fitting formula. But this is difficult to find. Someone has answered by saying that as Australian rhyme is a poetry of the horse, Canadian is that of the canoe. We do not think this estimate is adequate. It is confusing the incidental and essential. It may have represented one phase of Canadian verse at one time, and among the poets of a particular section, but it is not that elemental, permanent, universal note of our song overheard in its under-tone. Another has said that it is simply a picture of a field, a forest or a stream, and that our poets have expended their energy, and their art on trifles. But this should not be very discouraging to the singers of a young country; time, may vindicate the wisdom of their course. But is it true that all the product must be branded with externality, superficiality and trifling? Have they only pictured what has drifted in, or been forced upon a vision lacking in depth, one of the earth, earthy. We think it must be frankly admitted that much time and attention has been given to all forms and aspects of the beauty, strength, and goodness in Nature. But it is not true they have seen no further than the symbol; there is scarcely a poet from first to last, from Songster to Carman who has not perceived with clear vision, and expressed with fine felicity, the universal in the particular, the permanent in the transient, the spiritual in the natural; but these may be considered more profitably when we come to treat of individual writers.

Let us endeavor to find some order, some classification or arrangement of Canadian poets and poetry, not only that which will harmonize with its nature and occurrence, but such as will also aid us in gaining a better survey of the whole work. To make chronology the basis of this process will not suffice and to treat it fully by the scientific method, must be left for other hands than ours. Perhaps a combination of methods will best suit our purpose. The usual method of taking some towering literary landmark, from which the work before and after is viewed, is not applicable here. Nor can there be said to have been any great literary movement where men of lesser genius, have shared more equally the work and the reward. The usual division into ages, epochs, or schools, fails us

here. The fact that the date of Confederation July the 1st. 1867 has been often used as a vantage-ground for looking before and after, would seem to suggest a reason other than convenience; but it may be that this reason will be sufficient for its employment at this time, If then we speak of a Pre- Confederation and of a Post-Confederation Period it will serve not only to keep us in touch with the time but will be suggestive of condition. The first will suggest the emigrant, the colonist, the pioneer, the trapper, trader, the woodsman, the ploughman and possibly too the sailor, soldier, and statesman, but it will be remembered that some of these were of noble even royal blood and many were gentlemen and scholars. In the Post-Confederation Period we think we find three or four groups of workers who had something in common. These may be taken as representative of as many decades which may be approximately marked off by the seventies, the eighties, the nineties, and the dawn of the new century. These might be designated by names, but they would be merely descriptive such as the Natural School, the National or Acadian School, the Psychological School, and the Imperial, or Aesthetic School; but it may be these designations are too fanciful, still if they help to fix the order they may be of some service.

If decisive pronouncement has not yet been made upon Canadian Literature, if we do not know what it really is, nor indeed should be, still we ^{may} have a conception of what good literature is, and ^{may} be able to place in the respective periods those who have done the best work in verse. In the Pre-Confederation Period the consensus of opinion points to Heavyside as the most gifted writer of poetry, and not only Canada but America and Great Britain place him high among dramatists. When a copy of "Saul" came into the hands of Hawthorne he praised it highly, and soon Longfellow gave it high commendation. The opinion of the writer in the British Review has been already adverted to, As their greatest and most original writer, one with deep insight, dramatic vision and rare introspective power his place is unique among the early writers of Canada but it must not be forgotten that this was not the first work in verse published in Canada. In the previous year appeared Sangsters "The St Lawrence" and the "Saguenay" which has the honor of being the first volume of poetry published in Canada. Reference must also be made to

the work done in this period by Thomas D'Arcy McGee, John Reade, and George Murray, who, coming to Canada during this formative period have done much to cherish and mould Canadian Art. Their ripe scholarship, their Classical culture and their kindly yet firm criticism has done much to determine the excellence of the Canadian output. To the energy and creative fervour of the younger writers they brought refinement and a regulative faculty of high order. Some other of our singers were earlier heard, but their place more properly belongs to the next period. That recognition of the share which women are taking in literary activity, which leads us to speak of "The " Brownings" should here give a word of welcome and warm appreciation to those whose graceful verse and womanly wisdom have done so much to nourish and cultivate a more refined Canadian Sentiment. And among those of the pioneer period none sang of its rough but ruddy cheer more sweetly than Mrs Susanna Strickland Moodie. In some of her verse you catch the plaintive strain of the emigrant and exile but for the most part it breathes a spirit of cheerfulness and the compensation of life in a new Country. During this same period and chiefly in the fifties Mrs Lephrohon of Montreal gave good verse marked by much simplicity and grace.

At the time of Confederation and for sometime after the most popular poet was Sangster. In his verse we find the poet of energy rather than the poet of art. He worked under many limitations but had true poetic fire, and at times this passion transformed his lines into passages of great beauty. An ardent love of nature and genuine appreciation of her many moods and phases is found in his verse. His songs of Canadian woods and fields, of the rocks and the rapids, of crag and pine, are among the finest in our literature. In his patriotic verse there is noted an absence of the self-reliant independent spirit soon to sweep through the songs of our singers. To this same period belong William Kirby, and Alexander McLachlan. Kirby excels in graphic description; his studies of Canadian history and romance, and his pictures of early Canadian scenes are bright with beauty, done with sure but delicate touch. As a song-writer voicing the joy that is three parts pain, yet full of courage cheerfulness and hope McLachlan has

endeared himself to many of our people. His verse possesses those prime essentials of the good song-writer, heartiness and melody, and few have sung as he has, the heart-songs of his people. His stirring lines on early settlement life, have made him widely and favorably known. ~~And~~ ^Worthy of mention as ~~doing~~ pioneer work, though perhaps in a different way, are the names of two public men, one in the east and one in the west, whose energy and enthusiasm in all things Canadian were only equalled by their cultured and classical verse. Joseph Howe the distinguished Acadian and able Canadian Statesman has given us some very patriotic verse and may be said to have lighted within the young Acadians the fire that burst into such a flame soon after his decease. Nicholas Flood Davin, not only in his fugitive verse, but also in Eos: "An Epic of the dawn" has presented a breadth of view, philosophic insight, prophetic vision, and ~~pl~~assic culture as is seldom met with among the poets of a new clime.

Of the Canadian women who have written in verse during this period perhaps the palm should be awarded to Miss Agnes Maule Machar, though in differing fields, Mrs Curzen, Mrs Kate Seymour McLeen and Mrs Pamela Vining Yule have each done worthy work. Miss Machar has "a vigorous, various, versatile mind," her wide sympathy and close observation have led her to deal with a variety of subjects. Her faculty is both creative and critical; but the movement of her pen is always purposive. In all her work you feel a force and breadth, a keen clear practical grasp of her subject seldom met with elsewhere. Fidelity, conscientiousness and sincerity breathe from all her books which are stamped with a simple old fashioned sense of honour and loyalty. Mrs Curzon is said to have had the mind of a man wedded to the heart of a woman. Certainly her writings show virility and the power and spirit almost masculine, yet there is a secure, a deft and delicate touch, an exquisite taste and right good judgement in all things literary.

The group of poets of the next decade own as their leader Charles G.D. Roberts. When Lighthall made his compilation of the works of Canadian poets in 1888 he said: The foremost named in Canadian song at the present day is C.G.D. Roberts, poet, ~~com~~^opoet and Professor of Literature

who has struck the supreme note of Canadian nationality in his "Canada" and "Ode for The Canadian Confederation." To what powers within himself and to what opportune condition in the life and evolution of the nation to which, and for which, he sang is a most interesting speculation. That the time was ripe for this outburst of National feeling we cannot doubt. That he voiced the emotions and ambitions of a people just freed from political dissension and governmental discord now unified and turning to look upward and outward, we are now able to recognize. To a most interesting personality projected, sometimes above, but often among his audience, he added a youthful enthusiasm robed in classic garb, and adorned with an easy grace and polish. Most happy in his choice of themes and skilful in their treatment ~~he~~ touch^d with master-hand the heart-strings of the people. Equally at home among subjects dealing with history or mythology or the moving glories of his own Acadian scenes, his strong love of Country and the fervour with which he painted the picture of its future caught the popular imagination empurpling it with pride. The personal element, the richness of colour, and the freedom of emotional expression was sweet to the palate of a young country and a young people. His words were words of hope, of promise, of prophecy. His listeners were led to look forward to a luminous career of the highest genius. But his course has not shown that growth, that developement in wider, truer vision, in enlarged sympathies in the deepening and intensifying of the hidden springs of the greatest poetic power. As has been pointed out by Rand in a later Anthology these verses are not by any means the highest product of ^{the} Canadian muse. For intensity we have had to sacrifice some tolerance and in the aggrandizement of the local and personal the soul has lost something of wide human charity. Yet when we consider the extent and variety of Roberts' accomplishments, his resourcefulness in art, his command of technique, and the wonderful union of sweetness and strength in his lines, we cannot fail to recognize him as a master-builder. But he is still the craftsman and we are ever conscious of mechanism and art in reading his poetry. This seems to exclude him from that place where we consider a work of art as we consider the lilies of the field. There is a higher atmosphere, a loftier temper characteristic of the highest poetical production. We must seek in some other verse that diviner air where passion and power are one, where energy and art

confer, and the music and the song gush from the selfsame spring. Associated with Roberts both in the spirit and ^{in the} style of their earlier writings are the Lockharts, Barry, Straton, Frederick Cameron, Bliss Carman, and the younger members of his own family. All of these in their best work, and even in their earlier efforts have given us such charming verse that it seems scarcely fair to be unsatisfied. But it is the pursuit of a loveliness not yet attained, the quest of a soul that only attains to aspire and the vision of a world whose margin fades forever and forever as he moves toward it that constitutes the true artist and the great poet. And this pursuit, and this movement and vision is what lifts Cameron and above all Carman to a higher plane of poetry. But we must not anticipate as we shall have more to say of one of these hereafter. Here let us pause to consider some of the qualities in the verse of the Acadian School of the eighties. Two elements we think we find, one of the home and one of the school. That the domestic element afterwards expanded into a national spirit that was still domestic in sympathy and scope will be now no longer denied. The academic treatment and classical culture of the school gave to their first work a beauty and finish such as had not been met with before among Canadian writers. The personal factor, the relative vision, and the attachment to their own hearths and thresholds are very striking. With this is an intense love of Nature and familiarity with her changing aspects, comradeship with kindred of the wild. Their verse is mostly painting, beautiful if you will, but still largely word-painting. "Here are reflected the singular loveliness of our evanescent spring, the glow and luxuriant life of our hasting summer, the sensuous glory of our Autumn, and the tingle of the frosty air with the white winters cheer".

It is now generally conceded that Miss Isabella Crawford has done some of the best work in Canadian poetry, and that she has shown in her brief bright life superior poetic endowment. Though living in the lake region of central Ontario there is a close sympathy between her and the members of the Acadian group; The same fondness for nature and the same appreciation of natural beauty, but there is more elemental feeling for strength and primal instincts and passion in nature as in man. Her work is full of genius, heart and insight glowing with colour, and throbbing with originality. Along with Miss Crawford must be included

as writers of excellent verse, Mrs S. Frances Harrison, Annie Rothwell and Elizabeth Roberts McDonald. The work of these writers contains verse of much grace, delicacy and charm .

There is a principle in nature, and perhaps in man the contemplation of which presents an interesting problem. Among physical phenomena and within the realm of physical forces, the working of this principle is explained in the statement that action and reaction are equal and opposite. Does the same or a similar principle hold in the psychological field and among spiritual forces. The problem is rendered more interesting and intricate by that phase of it which might be termed interaction — that mutual influence and interchange among great minds and rich natures and that communion of spirit, and exaltation of soul where it is felt that in giving, we are getting and losing oneself in admiration and sympathy with the work of another, one finds oneself anew in a richer experience. And contrary to the law of conservation each knows himself, and the other enriched; such a relation as existed between Goethe and Schiller, or Hallam, and Tennyson. Some such problem as this seems ever asserting itself in considering the life and work the place and relation of poets. What is due to direct influence, what to indirect, and how much to that undetermined element, nor can we always find the thread of relation among the maze of conditions that bewilders us.

Certain it is that the outburst of feeling showing itself in the nature verse and nationalism of the Acadian band of singers, suffered some reaction in the succeeding decade . And now the centre of interest was transferred to Ontario, where a group of poets having many bonds of kinship had found a congenial soil and were in another field doing no mean work. What is ^{the} a secret sameness yet difference, in the verse of this group from that which preceded and that which followed. Is it that their lives had come more in touch with the practical than with the speculative side of life. Does this explain the hidden pathos and melancholy brooding over many of their finest passages. The old order was changing, new views of life and a new attitude thereto was round about them. The industrial, intellectual, aesthetic, social, and religious problems were being examined more intimately. From these, yet influenced by contact with them, they turn to nature for solace, comfort, and inspiration.

The vigor, depth of feeling, and lover-like enjoyment in stature, seen in Roberts early verse is not here, yet, the art evinced ranks not lower. And who shall we say is the best representative of this group? We feel that it must be William Wilfred Campbell though in saying so we would not lose sight of the strong claims of Lampman to an equal place. Yet Campbell's range is wider and his mastery more varied. He has attempted much more and much weightier work. He has struck a deeper chord than Lampman's more delicate nature permitted him to sound, and he has pierced a region of shadows that Lampman's sensitive nature shrunk from investigating. While Lampman shows a predilection for pastoral pieces, Campbell is at home among the rugged and sublime. No other has seen the storm and wrestling, the awful depth, the fleeing mists, and towering crags of our inland seas, and spoken in their changing tones like Campbell; but all these remarks might apply to his earlier work. In Harpers Magazine of April 1891, ^{appeared} "The Mother" which is said to have received more notice than any other single poem coming from the American press. The Chicago Inter-Ocean placed it among the gems of English Literature and pronounced it the nearest approach to a great poem which had ~~cropped out~~ in current literature for many a long day. His power of conceiving dramatic situations, and of expressing strong passion, and tender human emotions is a field in which Campbell has given promise of doing satisfactory work. Perhaps his power of portrayal is not so conspicuous as is that of some other members of the same group, and though his gems may not have the sparkle and glitter of Lampman yet they are genuine jewels none the less. As the interpreter of the secrets of Nature and of human passion he stands in a high place. Duncan Campbell Scott, Arthur Stringer and W.T. Allison, show many of the qualities of this school. Stringer's verse has a clear ^{cut} beauty almost Grecian and his epigrammatic lines are in strong contrast to the verse of some others of this group.

As we approach the present it becomes more difficult to decide aright the respective claims of Canadian women in the realm of song. During the nineties, verse worthy of high praise was produced by E. Pauline Johnson, Sophie M Almon-Hensley, Jean Blewett, Mrs LeFevre, Mary Morgan and Helen Merrill. Miss Johnson possesses a strong personality, a keen

appreciation of ^{nature} and ^{rare} facility of expression . She sees clearly and feels deeply and her sympathy with a pathetic or tragic situation develops strong dramatic feeling . Combined with this is a lyrical sweetness seldom equalled. Her work manifests her warm sympathy, ^{and} artistic tastes; and her cultured sensibilities are quick to the tenderest and sternest influences of the life about her. N

Someone has said that we pay so much attention to the songs and singers of other lands, that too often we fail to hear the sweet voices in our midst ; and this remark will apply not only to the singers of other lands ,but to the singers of other times. The ancient and the distant lure; ,stargazing we miss the flowers . What shall we say of the Canadian women of today who are giving us their thought in verse. To say that it is all good without discrimination would be to sacrifice courage to courtesy, or to say it is the best possible would be, we think, to lull aspiration with a vain content. It is now upwards of a decade since Miss Johnsons volume of verse came from the English and Canadian Press . In 1896 appeared " The house of Trees" by Agnes Ethelwyn Wetherald. The verse therein contained and the work Miss Wetherald is doing in the Magazines incline us to think that she now takes a foremost place among the Canadian women of verse. But the work of those women mentioned in the preceding period together with that of other and younger singers gives promise of much fulness and beauty of song. Is it not Carlyle who tersely says that the house abuilding and the house when built are very different; so judgement on unfinished work must be deferred.

And who today is doing the best work among Canadian poets? Perhaps our estimate here has been anticipated by our remarks concerning Bliss Carman. Certain it is we think he holds first place, and not because this position has been assigned him by the most thoughtful and most competent of American and English critics, but because it is now becoming apparent to Canadians in examining his whole life and work that he has most continuously and consistently held to the highest ideal of the poetic vision. Others may have passed him temporarily in flight, but his is the course, that wins steadily to the goal. And first among the qualities of his verse early and always, manifest, is his feeling for music, harmony, proportion. It is said that primarily music and poetry were one, and that

it is only in the progress of art from the implicit toward the explicit, that they have become differentiated. The development in the individual is typified in the race where the poet is first a singer and later an inventor. That Carman is our sweetest lyrist every line he has written will attest. He has an instinct for music and melody that never fails him and this is seen, not only in his choice of theme and adaptation of metre, which is always felicitous, but in his choice of word and phrase. There are phrases that remind one of the old masters, that linger long in the memory and refuse to be forgotten.

Closely allied with the artistic sense, perhaps a part of it, is the suggestiveness of power. Here is strength, here is passion, but here also is perfect control and a fine feeling of reserve. For the great artist power of suppression is as precious as that of expression. He is pre-eminently an artist of the beautiful; in imagery, depth of thought and poetic vision, his work is superb. "His writing is dusted with a faery pollen and yet the strength of it is human, deep, real." "He holds close to the symbol and combines an alluring fancy with a perfect art".

Wherein then does Carman's pre-eminence consist. He has the love of nature and communion with her seen in the poetry of the pioneer. He has the sympathy and direct contact the wild-wood charm of Sangster, The Nationalism of the Acadian poets finds response in him; and the Psychological trend of the poets of the nineties has caught him in its sweep; but all of these forces and movements are emphasized in Carman. Symbolism of the earlier singers is only a means to amend; with him Nationalism becomes imperialism and the psychologic spirit, becomes a part of the philosophic growth. His horizon is widened, his insight is clearer, deeper; in him you get the third dimension. His type is spherical his growth is the growth of the apple, not that of a house or a railway line. For combination he replaces organization. The springs that animate his poetry are vital not mechanical. For freedom he gains the idea of function and where others have perceived only associated entities he has perceived organs and organism. In him in the apt words of another "the sympathetic reader will notice a marked pictorial use of nature as well as sensuous delight in Nature itself, depicted as it is with true feeling

and not infrequently with an almost flawless art. He will notice also that nature is often humanized and tenderness love and pity and the subtle problems of mans life are enshrined in original and poetic similitudes to the melody of haunting music. Nor are there altogether wanting instances of that insight and vision which beholds the phenomenal and cosmic with rapt wonder as awesome beauty gleams, radiant symbols or sublime manifestations of the immanent and loving One on whom all things consist."

In a recent review of the literature of 1902 by the London Academy and Literature among the most noteworthy efforts in poetry is placed, Bliss Carman's Coronation Ode. In this will be found confirmation of many of the statements previously made regarding Carman's work. Examine it carefully and you will find in the best of it something of Tennyson, Browning and Kipling, and a touch of Shelley always. But above and through all there is the indefinable flavor of the Authors own style. This too is seen at its best in the "Overland" in "The Pipes of Pan" published late in last year where he sings:

" Lord of the haunted hush
Where raptures throng
I am thy hermit-thrush
Ending no song"

Yet forever singing and filling the silences with the haunting melody of marvellous music. The productiveness of Carman and his varieties of poetic forms may be seen in his "Sappho Lyrics" appearing in the "Reader" of November and December. All of these recent efforts in poetry sustain and enhance the high regard in which he is held as our most gifted voice of song.

