



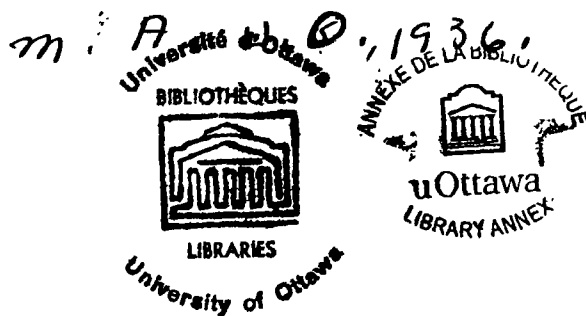
BLISS CARMAN
From a photographic study by J. Vanderpant, F.R.P.S.

BLISS CARMAN

HIS STATUS IN THE ANNALS OF CANADIAN

LITERATURE

19



BY

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THE BOOKS OF BLISS CARMAN

- LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE
A Book of Lyrics ----- 1893.
- SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA
(with Richard Hovey) ----- 1894.
- BEHIND THE ARRAS
A Book of the Unseen ----- 1895.
- A SEAMARK
A Threnody for R.L. Stevenson --- 1895.
- MORE SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA
(with R. Hovey) ----- 1896.
- BALLADS OF LOST HAVEN
A Book of the Sea ----- 1897.
- BY THE AURELIAN WALL AND OTHER ELEGIES 1898.
- A WINTER HOLIDAY ----- 1899.
- LAST SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA
(with R. Hovey) ----- 1901.
- BALLADS AND LYRICS
(A Selection) ----- 1902.
- ODE ON THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII
----- 1902.
- FROM THE BOOK OF MYTHS
(Pipes of Pan No. 1.) --- 1902.
- FROM THE GREEN BOOK OF BARDS
(Pipes of Pan No. 2.) --- 1903.
- THE KINSHIP OF NATURE
(Essays) ----- 1904.

THE BOOKS OF BLISS CARMAN

- SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN
(Pipes of Pan No. 3.) ----- 1904.
- SONGS FROM A NORTHERN GARDEN
(Pipes of Pan No. 4.) ----- 1904.
- THE FRIENDSHIP OF ART
(Essays) ----- 1904.
- SAPPHO
One Hundred Lyrics - (500 copies)- 1905.
- FROM THE BOOK OF VALENTINES
(Pipes of Pan No. 5.) ----- 1905.
- THE POETRY OF LIFE
(Essays) ----- 1905.
- COLLECTED POEMS
Two Volumes - (500 copies) ----- 1905.
- THE PIPES OF PAN
(Definitive Edition) ----- 1906.
- THE MAKING OF PERSONALITY
(Essays) ----- 1908.
- THE ROUGH RIDER AND OTHER POEMS ----- 1909.
- ECHOES FROM VAGABONDIA ----- 1912.
- DAUGHTERS OF DAWN
A Lyrical Pageant - with M. King
----- 1913.
- EARTH DEITIES AND OTHER RHYTHMIC MASQUES-
(with M. King.) ----- 1914.
- APRIL AIRS
A Book of New England Lyrics -- 1916.

THE BOOKS OF BLISS CARMAN

LATER POEMS

(with an appreciation by R.H.
Hathaway) ----- 1922.

BALLADS AND LYRICS

(Selected and arranged by
R.H. Hathaway) ----- 1923.

FAR HORIZONS ----- 1925.

WILD GARDEN ----- 1929.

SANCTUARY

Sunshine House Sonnets - (Pref-
atory Note by Padraic Colum.)-- 1929.

PREFACE

The sunlight sleeps on the purple hill,
The world is a-dream in dim blue haze,
Even the poplar leaves are still,
As if aware of a day of days
Vouchsafed the creatures of earth to employ
In the wonder of life, in the fulness of joy.

The purpose of the foregoing study is not an attempt to evaluate the poet by the standards of modern literary criticism. For, states the author of *THE POETRY OF LIFE*, " It is never wise to try to make just estimates of our contemporaries. At best, we can only give opinions limited by our angle of outlook and colored by the atmosphere of our own time. " Thus, the passages in the pages to follow set forth simply and conscientiously, (and perforce, too briefly), my limited opinion of the poet's true picture in the gallery of Canadian literature. How well the poet has succeeded in making his mark therein remains for the ultimate judge to decide--- namely, the reader himself.

M.S.M.

CHAPTER I

L I F E

Poeta nascitur, non fit.

-Anon.

L I F E

Have little care that Life is brief
And less that Art is long,
Success is in the silences
Though fame is in the song.

Bliss Carman seemed to have been destined to become a poet of international renown. Born just seventy-five years ago, near the beautiful land of Evangeline, in the Maritime province of New Brunswick-- the Arcadia of Longfellow's "murmuring pines and hemlocks" --Carman has descended from the staunch United Empire Loyalist stock which had emigrated from Long Island to Canada after the revolt of the American colonies. Moreover, through the Bliss family, on his mother's side, he and his cousin, the Canadian poet Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, were related to the American essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson. His parents, too, had not neglected to bring to their new home the old spiritual traditions of New England Puritanism wherein

books and literature were considered a sort of daily subsistence for family life. Thus, the poetry of Longfellow, Whittier, Cowper and Wordsworth ranged familiarly on their shelves; and herein, throughout many a long winter's evening, the young lad came to be their staunch admirer and friend. In fact, the musical tone of Longfellow has often been discernible in some of his own lyrics. Moreover, the delightful Acadian summer with its clear sky and sunshine, its beautiful gardens and surrounding woods, called forth his inherent poetic love of natural beauty; for here, amid the forests and streams, easily accessible from his own home, he daily learned to delight in the joys of nature. Thus, the native literary blood that flowed through the poet's veins, the quiet, idyllic atmosphere of his home as well as his poetic appreciation of nature, undoubtedly did much to prepare this youthful Canadian for his future work.

After receiving his early education from his father, who was a barrister, he then attended the Collegiate school at Fredericton where his literary ability soon attracted the attention and encouragement of the headmaster, a scholarly man of Oxford training, who was later to become Sir George Robert Parkin, secretary of the Rhodes Scholarship Foundation. A practical sort of man he was, yet with a keen aptitude for literature, always anxious to do thoroughly whatever he took in hand. Indeed, it has been said that he zealously drilled both his pupil and Roberts in the poets, often reciting Tennyson and Rossetti when he took the boys out for a walk. Thus, it was to the inspiration of this man that our national lyricist owed his first interest in the literary world; and this inspiration has been rightfully and graciously acknowledged in the dedication of one of his essays, THE KINSHIP OF NATURE.

Upon the conclusion of this period, the young student attended the University of New

Brunswick where he graduated with medals and honours in Greek and Latin. Herein, the New Brunswicker acquired a thorough classical training which later enabled him to write in a true Hellenic spirit some of his finest works. His Sappho lyrics have afforded us a splendid example. Then, for a year, he seemingly did nothing. No doubt, the poet-to-be was cogitating about his ultimate profession--a rather momentous problem which we all have had to decide. However, his academic career continued, this time, as a student at the University of Edinburgh. During his sojourn there, his first writing in verse appeared--certain translations from Horace and the Homeric Hymns. Here, the young man remained for one year, dabbling in a varied curriculum, a little philosophy, some mathematics and a little physics. Then, perhaps like a number of us, during the next two years, he attempted numerous vocations--studying law, teaching school, as well as working at field engineering.

Thus, five and twenty years of his life had passed; but throughout their brief duration, his quiet, retentive mind was voraciously assimilating countless bits of valuable information to his storehouse of knowledge. Yet, no doubt, being still dissatisfied with himself, he left home once more, but this time, it was to Harvard University, the place that ultimately determined his future career. Here, he began to prepare himself for a professorialship in English under the able direction of Francis Child. However, the young Canadian was somewhat drawn away from this purpose by his persistent interest both in science as well as in the brilliant philosophy lectures delivered by Professor Josiah Royce, a man whom the Maritime student greatly admired. But gradually, he found himself pushing aside English literature, science and philosophy to make way for his natural need of self-expression. Time was now beginning to reveal the inherent creative instinct in this poet-to-be. Thus, during his

two year sojourn at College, he began to contribute original verse for the HARVARD MONTHLY. At this same time, too, an intimate friendship began with a fellow class-mate named Richard Hovey; and it was here that this mutual association simultaneously changed both their careers. For, Richard Hovey, a Nova Scotian, had entered Harvard with the purpose of studying for the ministry, just as the New Brunswicker was preparing himself for a professorship. Yet, two years later, this pair of vagabonds, with their hearts set full sail for poetic Vagabondia, suddenly turned their backs, the one on the pulpit, the other on the pedagogical chair, to pursue instead the then somewhat doubtful profession of writing.

The young man then began spending his summers with his cousin Charles G.D. Roberts at Windsor, Nova Scotia, a few miles from the beautiful Acadian country, made famous to the world by Longfellow's EVANGELINE. Roberts, who

was then a professor of English at Windsor, was also a poet of no small repute, and herein, he did much to influence his cousin's early style of writing. In fact, it is quite easy to discern a similarity in phrasing between the two poets. Thus, during these dreamy sojourns in Acadia, amid the suggestive spirit of Canadian woods and waters, our writer's first individual book of verse, *LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE*, was composed. Then, upon the publication of this small volume a few years later in 1893, and until the time of the Great War, his work continued to appear at the steady rate of a volume every year. Perhaps, the best known poems were the various collections comprising the *PIPES OF PAN* series.

However, to resume the somewhat chronological pathway of his experiences--we find him, still in close friendship with his co-worker Hovey, spending a number of years in active and advisory, editorial capacities in New York and Boston. In fact, just shortly after his course at Harvard

University, he became an editor of the New York INDEPENDENT for two years. Then, he was engaged at various times on CURRENT LITERATURE, and still later, on the ATLANTIC MONTHLY. For a year also, the clever and influential CHAP BOOK in Boston came under his edition. Then, in 1892, the poet-editor spent the first of his several winters at the home of his intimate and congenial vagabond friend, who then lived at Washington, D. C.

In the subsequent year, however, he decided to forego this professional journalism as a career. No doubt, the office duties and daily business worries of an editorship somewhat limited his frequent flights of poetic fancy. Then, too, a poet's judgment might not often find the public favour as readily as the writer of a sports' column. Nevertheless, it has been said that he performed his editorial work in a diligent and orderly manner--"clearing his desk at the end of the day, with exemplary regularity." Yet, the young man did not seem to be making a success of it.

Thus, after a year or two of such editorial labour, he definitely abandoned it for an independent career as a poet; and so, in 1893, his formal debut appeared with a publication of beautiful Canadian lyrics, *LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRÉ*, composed, as we have seen, during his pleasant summer sojourns in Acadia.

This editorial venture had not altogether been in vain. For, therein, he was able to make some remunerative journalistic connections in New York and Boston which helped the struggling poet to climb the literary ladder of success. Thereupon, he began writing a signed weekly column for the *BOSTON TRANSCRIPT*, first entitled the *MODERN ATHENIAN*, and later, *MARGINAL NOTES*. Now these articles, setting forth a variety of topics, were continued up to the year 1900, during part of which time, they were also copied by newspapers in New York City and Chicago. It might be interesting to note, also, that his prose books, later published under the titles: *THE KINSHIP OF*

NATURE, THE FRIENDSHIP OF ART and THE POETRY OF LIFE, were largely made up from these various editorial essays.

Unfortunately, such weekly contributions were not very remunerative, and much of his younger life was spent in comparative poverty. In fact, during his early days in New York City, it was very often the old story of "the struggling poet scribbling on odd bits of paper in his attic" or perhaps, "browsing listlessly over a bookstall." But, he did not care about wealth or social position, nor as his cousin the poet Roberts has stated, for fame. Doubtless, the earnest desire to live his life as fully as he understood it accounted for this pecuniary, trekker-like sort of existence. In later years, however, he had a comfortable winter rendezvous at New Canaan, Connecticut, a little town nestled amongst the hills, not many miles from Long Island Sound. Meanwhile, during the summer seasons, much of his time was spent travelling hither and thither -- in the mountains, along the sea coast

and up the beautiful Canadian rivers near his native home. Then, too, his life had been further varied by a walking tour of England and France in company with an intimate friend B.G. Goodhue. At the same time, also, the poet found fresh woods and green pastures in a delightful visit to the Bahama Islands and California. During the early winter of 1920, a serious break-down in health caused an alarming concern among his friends, but happily, a short period of rest brought him back to health and vigor once more. Now, strangely enough, the public interest in his work steadily increased since his illness, so that the unknown Canadian, formerly a poet of just a chosen few, now suddenly became a writer of international renown. Thus, this newly stimulated interest in his work made it necessary for the poet to take extensive lecture and reading tours across Canada and the United States in the years following his recovery until practically the time of his death.

Moreover, it has been noted among his memoirs that while the poet was wintering in California, just a decade ago, his friend and collaborator, Mary Perry King, happily suggested that he visit our principal universities and deliver a series of lectures accompanied by readings from his own poems. Upon consultation with the heads of these institutions in both eastern and western Canada, who were exceedingly hospitable to the idea, the Canadian Poet Laureate gladly undertook these interesting literary tours in person. His first two lectures began at Queen's University, Kingston, in November 1925; then, he spent two weeks at McGill University, Montreal, continuing his itinerary to the University of Toronto. Here, he gave a series of five lectures called "TALKS ON POETRY AND LIFE", which constituted one of his prose selections by the same name. His eagerly anticipated literary tour then proceeded westward taking in the leading universities from coast to coast. Now, although the New Brunswicker was not a brilliant lecturer,

as he naively confessed, his personal travels across the country proved to be immensely popular both to himself and to the university students, as well as to the Canadian public. The welcome and appreciation shown therein to our national lyricist might be quoted without end. The opening words of Dean Hodgins of Trinity College, University of Toronto, introducing the poet on the occasion of one of his talks, has been chosen at random and cited as follows: "Like the poet Yeats, who when you shake him all sorts of delightful things come tumbling out, so too, when Bliss Carman shakes his poetical wallet a great variety of lovely things pour forth." In a like manner also, and with the same results, our newly-discovered Canadian author traversed the American continent, appearing in all the larger cities and town from Los Angeles to New York.

Now, it was towards the end of the artist's life; and doubtless in recognition of his voluminous poetic contribution to the annals of Canadian literature, as well as to his popular

poetic travélogues, that our leading colleges and societies in Canada rightly and duly accorded him a number of honours and awards. Yet, all too soon, these meritorious emoluments were destined to brief enjoyment by the writer--for his race of life was almost run. One might wish it could have been prolonged. In the month of June 1929, while he was zealously engaged on a new edition of the OXFORD BOOK OF CANADIAN VERSE, our Poet Laureate unexpectedly departed from this earthly midst to take his place with the immortal bards above.

His death occurred at his winter residence in New Canaan, Connecticut, but his ashes were brought home by the New Brunswick Government and placed in a tomb at Forest Hill Cemetery, Fredericton, the town of his birth. Yet, at the poet's own request, his ashes were buried neath a scarlet maple tree, overlooking the beautiful Saint John River valley -- the Silent Valley of his own poem, "THE GRAVE TREE.", from which the following two verses have been quoted:

Let me have a scarlet maple,
 For the grave-tree at my head,
 With the quiet sun behind it,
 In the years when I am dead.

.....

Let me have the Silent Valley
 And the hill that fronts the East,
 So that I can watch the morning
 Redden and the stars released.

Moreover, to perpetuate his memory, the New Brunswick Memorial National Committee have proposed to erect a statue of the poet, cast in bronze, to be placed on the campus of his Alma Mater, the University of New Brunswick.

Thus, with these foregoing remarks, the reader may, perhaps, be able to gain a perspective of the man himself, the vicissitudes and experiences he encountered throughout life, each of which indubitably affected the writer's literary production. Indeed, like Wordsworth, it was the early associations with the natural

beauty and harmony of wood and stream --- as
well as the goodness that goes with it -- which
later helped to make him be remembered as
Canada's ever living nature-lyrical poet.

With the orient in her eyes,
Life my mistress lured me on.
"Knowledge," said that look of hers,
"Shall be yours where all is done."

Like a pomegranate in halves;
"Drink me," said that mouth of hers,
And I drank who now am here,
Where my dust with dust confers.

//

CHAPTER 11

E A R L Y P O E M S

Carmina quam tribuent, fama perennis erit.

- Ovid.

EARLY POEMS

Poetry is one of the greatest of the fine arts; the cream and the gist of literature being embodied in poetic form. Through it, we become aware of the best that has been said and thought in the world, as well as the best in nature and in life; and through it our spirits are enlarged.

The beginning of the poet's literary activity might be fixed chronologically just shortly after his departure from Harvard University, in the year 1888. Then, from that time until the year of his death --- a period extending over thirty-five years --- he steadily produced a voluminous body of poetic material. Moreover, like most of our writers, his work varied with the march of time. Thus, the writing of his youth was strongly characterised by its romantic flavour. Doubtless, the mere joy of living compelled him to share his youthful exuberance with others through the medium of poetry. This natural, over-abundant romanticism

soon gave way to a transitional or meditative brooding, wherein the poet passed from an imaginative to a philosophical attitude towards life. The final chapter, however, and by far the most artistic of his contribution to Canadian literature, was the classical manifestations of his later poems. Herein, the poet was now able to balance the excessive imaginative spirit of his early poetry with the philosophic reason of the transitional stage; and thus, by continued attention to the ancient classics for models and materials succeeded to attain a mastery of expression. In this closing period then, appeared that grace and charm of manner, the co-mates of lucid simplicity, as well as reason, the temperate handmaid of imagination, wherein each became synthesised to form a new poetic unity in the writer's art.

Now, upon the abandonment of professional journalism as a career, the young man courageously turned to poetry as his life's work and future in-

come. Thus, the first important individual verse in which he made his formal debut was a small volume of twenty-five lyrical numbers entitled, LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE, published in the year 1893. It received its title from the opening selection, that has been perhaps the most widely appreciated among this collection of lyrics. The following lines, taken from the above, exhibited the smooth-flowing, simple, yet pensive, lyrical sweetness contained therein:

The sun goes down, and over all
 These barren reaches by the tide
 Such unelusive glories fall,
 I almost dream they will bide
 Until the coming of the tide.

.....

And that we took into our hands
 Spirit of life or subtler thing --
 Breathed on us there, and loosed the bands
 Of death, and taught us, whispering,
 The secret of some wonder-thing.

Although this GRAND PRE volume appeared as

the initial work of an author thirty-two years of age, yet, it was by no means an immature literary experiment. For, prior to these twenty-five poems being placed in popular circulation, their composer, as related in the previous chapter, had been writing poetry for seven or eight years, until his technical facility in verse was already quite highly developed. Moreover, in perusing this small volume, even the cursory reader might easily discern that the poems had been written by a creative young man, because of their vigor and freshness, their youthful exuberance and musical sweetness. Thus, the mere joy of living strongly reacted upon his highly sensitised imagination. Life to him was a song --- a beautiful song, which had to be sung. The whole world, too, with its newness and wonderment seemed to bewitch the young man

overwhelming him with a wealth of experiences that were oftentimes incapable of coherent utterance. In this period, then, he produced a variety of songs intensely rich in verbal music and imaginative power, yet, at times, vaguely obscure and void of meaning. Doubtless, the natural outpouring of poetic emotion was more for the joy of beautiful sound and magical imagery than for meditative feeling. Hence, among this group of verse, some six or eight might be chosen as especially lyrical in tone and treatment; but perhaps, the one wherein the poet has portrayed most exquisitely a haunting rhythmic strain was in the following ballad, WHY:

For a name unknown
Whose face unblown
Sleeps in the hills
For ever and aye;

For her who hears
The stir of years
Go by on the wind
By night and day;

And heeds no thing
Of the needs of spring,
Of autumn's wonder
Or winter's chill;

For one who sees
The great sun freeze
As he wanders a-cold
From hill to hill;

And all her heart
Is a woven part
Of the flurry and drift
Of whirling snow;

For the sake of two
Sad eyes and true
And the old, old love
So long ago.

Two unhappy lovers, one unmindful of the other and separated amid the far-away hills of long ago, has he fancifully depicted. Although by no means the finest expression in this introductory volume, yet, the writer has deftly woven the lines with magical words into a distant and mystic atmosphere, reminiscent of the ancient ballad with its thoughts of love and vague melancholy.

Another worth-while representation of his early lyrics was a powerful and highly

imaginative poem, bearing the somewhat too erudite title, PULVIS ET UMBRA. On perusing this haunting literary verse, wherein the poet transcended the bounds of time and space to carry his reader into the star-lit shadows of mysterious gloom, one might read in comparison Edgar A. Poe's familiar selection, THE RAVEN. Indubitably, the New Brunswicker fell under the charm of this dreamy, fantastic, American writer who had likewise belonged to the romantic school of poetry. Perhaps, because of the Canadian's natural love for the sea as well as his boyhood proximity to it, a somewhat more realistic setting has been portrayed. Compare the beginning of the latter, effective by its local colouring -- the small cottage by the sea, at "Arrochar", in Acadia:

Harvest with her low red planets
 Wheeling over Arrochar;
And the lonely helpless calling
 Of the bell buoy on the bar.

Where the sea with her old secret
Moves in sleep and cannot rest.

.....

with the American poet's mystic introduction:

..... tapping at my chamber door;
Only this and nothing more.

Moreover, instead of using a sombre, grim, yet truly significant, stately Raven, symbolising Death and ominously croaking its melancholy refrain of "Nevermore", our own artist has pictured a less foreboding nocturnal visitor, namely, a gentle moth that had vagrantly come "from the night's blown winnowings" to rest at the poet's lonely study. Thus, the reader might observe how skilfully the young man was able to interpret and to transform the subsequent romantic lines of his early master:

In there stepped a stately Raven of the
saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he; not a
minute stopped or stayed he;

But with mien of lord or lady, perched
above my chamber door ---

.....

Ghastly, grim, and ancient Raven, wan-
dering from the nightly shore,
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the
Night's Plutonian shore:
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore".

into his own natural and fanciful treatment
of the poem:

There is dust upon my fingers,
Pale gray dust of beaten wings,
Where a great moth came and settled
From the night's blown winnowings.

.....

From that dark beyond my doorway,
Silent the unbidden guest

Came and tarried, fearless, gentle,
Vagrant of the starlit gloom,
One frail waif of beauty fronting
Immortality and doom.

Through the chambers of the twilight
Roaming from the vast outland,
Resting for a thousand heartbeats
In the hollow of my hand.

Then again, just as in the original verse,

Poe has asked his mysterious visitor a series of Plutonic questionings, so too, did the New Brunswicker; but perhaps the latter's exuberance and fondness for classical allusions somewhat obscured the frail and earthly guest:

Surely thou art not that sun-bright
Psyche, hoar with age, and hurled
On the northern shore of Lethe,
To this wan Auroral world!

Ghost of Psyche, unaccompanied,
Are the yester-years all done?
Have the oars of Charon ferried
All thy playmates from the sun?

Nevertheless, the desire for colorful verbal artistry, each complete within itself, has highly augmented the poem's suggestive reverie. Such an expressive picture of Egypt's Queen could scarcely be more effective anywhere as in these four lines:

In the hush when Cleopatra
Felt the darkness reel and cease,
Was thy soul a wan blue lotus
Laid upon her lips for peace?

And with it, too, might be added this charming

literary analogy:

Beauty, the fine frosty trace-work
 Of some breath upon the pane;
 Spirit, the keen wintry moonlight
 Flashed thereon to hide again.

In the poem, also, the writer's ephemeral and gloomy interpretation of life

For man walks the world with mourning
 Down to death, and leaves no trace,
 With the dust upon his forehead,
 And the shadow in his face.

Pillard dust and fleeing shadow
 As the roadside wind goes by
 And the fourscore years that vanish
 In the twinkling of an eye.

might perchance recall to the reader Shakespeare's well known lines:

Life's but a walking shadow --
 A poor player that struts and frets
 his hour upon the stage,
 And then is heard no more.

In A NORTHERN VIGIL, the scene has likewise been taken from the beautiful land of Evangeline, with its low-lying meadows and marshes

bordering the historic Minas Basin. No doubt, the gloomy, unwelcome atmosphere that pervaded this GRAND PRE volume was reminiscent of a vanished village once peopled by the French folk in Acadia long ago. Throughout these poems, too, the author has endeavored to portray a local colouring by his frequent allusions to place names; yet, at the same time, raising them from the banality of prose to give the verse a romantic, poetic flavour. Thus, in A NORTHERN VIGIL, Ardise was a real name derived from "ardoise" because of the slate quarries located in Acadia, not far from the poet's residence at that time.

Come, for the night is cold,
Thy ghostly moonlight fills
Hollow and rift and fold
Of the eerie Ardise hills!

Herein, also, has he compactly pictured a typical Canadian season that might well apply to any part of the Dominion.

The windows of my room
Are dark with bitter frost -

However, to appreciate fully the haunting beauty of the poem, the reader should continue from above:

The stillness aches with doom
Of something loved and lost.

Outside the great blue star
Burns in the ghostland pale,
Where giant Algebar
Holds on the endless trail.

Come, for the years are long,
And silence keeps the door,
Where shapes with shadows throng
The firelit chamber floor.

Compared with his previous work, the young artist had now begun to forego that all-too mysterious background with its dim outline and vague suggestiveness. The dreamy, romantic strain of night, love, the ghostly moonlight with the great blue stars, the shadows and the silence of doom somewhat seemed to dispel the thoughts of mel-

ancholy from his "eerie Ardise hills". Yet, there still existed in his earlier numbers the haunting mystery of sky and sea, as shown in the same selection,

Here when the smoldering west
 Burns down into the sea,
 I take no heed of rest
 And keep the watch for thee.

I sit by the fire and hear
 The restless wind go by,
 On the long dirge and drear,
 Under the low bleak sky.

wherein the wind and waves ominously sound some impending fate. The EAVESDROPPER, too, should be another lyric well worth the reader's perusal. Set amid the autumnal stillness of a lovers' haunt, the poem intended to suggest not so much the beauteous silence of a leafy bower, but rather, the contented happiness of two nature lovers as they mutely gazed in wonder upon the sunlit, crimson foliage that ever rustled and stirred in the gentle breeze. What English verse could surpass the descriptive beauty of

Nature in these highly suggestive lines?

Outside, a yellow maple tree,
 Shifting upon the silvery blue
 With tiny multitudinous sound,
 Rustled to let the sunlight through.

The livelong day the elfish leaves
 Danced with their shadows on the floor;
 And the lost children of the wind
 Went straying homeward by our door.

And all the swarthy afternoon
 We watched the great deliberate sun
 Walk through the crimsoned hazy world,
 Counting his hill-tops one by one.

Then, this pastoral picture characteristically
 closed with a weird mystic melody, so expressive
 of his early writing.

I saw retreating on the hills,
 Looming and sinister and black,
 The stealthy figure swift and huge
 Of One who strode and looked not back.

Should the reader now turn back once more
 to the initial poem, LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE, he
 might now appreciate perhaps, in a poetical way,
 the wanderer's heartfelt yearning for "the fields
 of Acadie" where many a time he had loved to

roam so well. The woodland waters, too, seemed to sound a certain wistfulness for his scanty return.

A grievous stream, that to and fro
 Athrough the fields of Acadie
 Goes wandering, as if to know
 Why one beloved face should be
 So long from home and Acadie.

To this, the youthful vagabond, in doubtful,
 reminiscent strain, replied;

Was it a year or lives ago
 We took the grasses in our hands,
 And caught the summer flying low
 Over the waving meadow lands;
 And held it there between our hands?

The poem then lapsed into a dreamy,
 imaginative mood,

So all desire and all regret,
 And fear and memory were naught;
 One to remember or forget
 The keen delight our hands had caught;
 Morrow and yesterday were naught.

until, at last, there came the realization
 that

The night has fallen, and the tide ..
 Now and again comes drifting home,

Across these aching barrens wide,
A sigh like driven wind or foam
In grief the flood is bursting home.

Herein, the poet expressed this rather vague, emotional thought with a classical clearness that gave to it a firm sense of reality, yet not too real, however, to mar its creative beauty. In fact, such pensive, lyrical sweetness did the poem suggest that the author himself placed it first in this volume of lyrics as the title poem. Now, in addition to these mystical reminiscent ballads, there appeared at this time some nature poems, which were destined later to become a characteristic feature of his literary production. For, by reason of his boyhood association with nature, as well as by the intimate understanding and keen appreciation of wood and stream, the Canadian lyrist seemed thereby able to vivify mother nature, merging like a spirit into her every flower and every tree, till each became an expres-

sive flower, a thoughtful tree. The following number, A WINDFLOWER, might serve to illustrate this sympathetic interpretation of flower life:

Between the roadside and the wood,
 Between the dawning and the dew,
 A tiny flower before the sun,
 Ephemeral in time, I grew.

And there upon the trail of spring,
 Not death nor love nor any name
 Known among men in all their lands
 Could blur the wild desire with
 shame.

.....

And then my heart beat once and broke
 To hear the sweeping rain forebode
 Some ruin in the April world,
 Between the woodside and the road.

To-night can bring no healing now;
 The calm of yesternight is gone;
 Surely the wind is but the wind
 And I a broken waif thereon.

Then, in MY TEACHERS, another delightful nature song, the lyricist has given us some pedagogical reasons for his cherished love of the coloured forest. The scarlet Canadian maple, however, the tree that now

stands guard over his ashes, completed
his list of favourites.

The people of the forest
In crimson, green, and tan --
The trees, - have been my teachers
To make of me a man.

I love the dark-hued spruces
Because their hearts are warm.
And the tall pines have taught me
To front the winter storm.

.....

And little trembling Aspen
Who always says her prayers,
Has taught me by example
To tell God all my cares.

And One in gown of scarlet,
The first beloved of all,
Still tells me tales of glory
When autumn days befall.

Moreover, just as nature has ever been one
of God's divine revelations of earthly
beauty wherein man could not help but admire
and revere, so too, did the writer earnestly
endeavour to express his poetic gratifica-
tion to God by a sort of religious interpre-
tation of nature herself. In fact, to this

highly emotional and imaginative lyrical, every little stream, rock and tree became symbolic of the Creator's ubiquitous handiwork. The poet's religion, therefore, felt just as much a sensitised religion as a spiritual religion. The more he gazed on nature, the closer he seemed to God. Yet, really, for the reader to experience this omnipresent, aesthetic belief in nature, he himself should someday wander through the woods alone, and with all his senses alert try to feel what the poet actually felt in his lyrical vision, VESTIGIA.

I took a day to search for God,
 And found Him not. But as I trod
 By rocky ledge, through woods untamed,
 Just where one scarlet lily flamed,
 I saw His footprint in the sod.

Then, suddenly all unaware,
 Far off in the deep shadows, where
 A solitary hermit thrush
 Sang through the holy twilight hush
 I heard His voice upon the air.

.....

And even as I marvelled how
 God gives us Heaven here and now,
 In a stir of wind that hardly shook
 The poplar leaves beside the brook-
 His hand was light upon my brow.

.....

Back to the world with quickening start
 I looked and longed for any part
 In making saving Beauty be ...
 And from that kindling ecstasy
 I knew God dwelt within my heart.

Perhaps, too, one might recall a Wordsworth-
 ian reminiscence in another simple, direct,
 yet symbolic poem, THE OLD GRAY WALL.

Time out of mind I have stood
 Fronting the frost and the sun,
 That the dream of the world might endure,
 And the goodly will be done.

Did the hand of the builder guess,
 As he laid me stone by stone,
 A heart in the granite lurked,
 Patient and fond as his own?

.....

Ah, when will ye understand,
 Mortals who strive and plod, --
 Who rests on this old gray wall
 Lays a hand on the shoulder of God!

Then, here and there throughout the poem,
all the beauties of nature have been ex-
quisitely and compactly portrayed in the
New Brunswicker's own original way.

No gleam in all the russet hills
But wears the solace of your smile.

.....

Your eyes were gray-deep as the sea,
Your hands lay open in the flowers.

.....

Back to a footpath by the sea
With scarlet lip and ruined fern.

Other verses, too, chosen from this selec-
tion, and meditative in their lyrical sweet-
ness, were mindful of his native environ-
ment that did so much to foster a spiritual
consciousness between himself and nature.

Because I am a wanderer
 Upon the roads of endless quest,
Between the hill-wind and the hills,
 Along the margin men call rest.

Because there lies upon my lips
 A whisper of the wind at morn,

A murmur of the rolling sea
 Cradling the land where I was born.

.....

Because I was a tiny boy
 Among the thrushes of the wood
 And all the rivers in the hills
 Were playmates of my solitude.

Meanwhile, the youthful wanderer continued
 his way along the lonely trail.

By stream and wood and marsh and sea
 Through dying summers of the North;

Until, some hazy autumn day,
 With yellow evening in the skies
 And rime upon the tawny hills,
 The far blue signal smoke shall rise,

To tell my scouting foresters
 Have heard the clarions of rest
 Bugling, along the outer sea,
 The end of failure and of quest.

Such elusive phrases as the "scouting foresters" and the "outer sea" did the writer love, to lure his reader into the haunting mysteries of wood and stream, there bewildering him with a myriad of strange pipings and reflections that to the meditative

traveller, now guided by the conscious spirit of nature, man's destiny seemed at last to have reached the end of life's trail, or as the poet has romantically expressed it, "the end of failure and of quest". The poem then closed with a pensive wistfulness for his dreamy, woodland home.

There will I get me home, and there
Lift up your face in my brown hand,
With all the rosy rusted hills
About the heart of that dear land.

Likewise, in the WANDERER, the same ruminating thought motivated the author along the endless trail of human aspirations. But, this time, he appealed to the spiritual consciousness of the reader by a figurative device wherein the four winds of the universe, North, South, East and West, each in turn, beckoned the weary wayfarer along a loftier quest of life. The wind of the East, the harbinger of morning, or the dawn of religi-

Saith the soft wind on the high June head-
 land,
 Sheering up from the summer sea.
 "While the implacable warder, Oblivion,
 Sleeps on the marge of a foamless sea!

"Come where the urge of desire availeth,
 And no fear follows the feet of rain;
 For a handful of dust is the only heirloom
 The morrow bequeaths to its morrow again.

In the last verse, however, the South wind acquired a more profound view of life in the unification of this Platonic appetite of the body with that of the spirit.

"Therefore, O wanderer, cease from desiring;
 Take the wide province of seaway and
 sun!
 Here for the infinite quench of thy craving,
 Infinite yearning and bliss are one."

Yet, with the approach of evening appeared a later development of civilization, the Western race, in the spirit of the West wind, exhorting the dreamer to achieve fame, wealth, beauty and renown on this earth, just as Caesar, Hannibal or Charlemagne, the illustrious heroes of the Occident had ventured, done, and accomplished.

"Who is thy heart's lord, who is thy hero?
 Bruce or Caesar or Charlemagne,
 Hannibal, Olaf, Alaric, Roland?
 Dare as they dared and the deed's done
 again!..

"Let loose the conquering toiler within thee;
 Know the large rapture of deed's begun!
 The joy of the hand that hews for beauty
 Is the dearest solace beneath the sun."

But, it was the wind of the North, emanating from the forest hills of his native land, that finally brought the tired traveller back to a spiritual perception of nature's divine handiwork. This four-phased vision therewith concluded the Canadian's delightful reminiscing of his childhood days amid wood and lake of the "auroral Ardise hills." The Northern wind, rustling through the leafy branches, seemed ever to continue to watch over and protect him even though he should wander far from his natal home.

"Have I not rocked thee, have I not
 lulled thee,
 Crooned thee in forest, and cradled in
 foam,

LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE, should now give the reader some conception of his literary endeavour. Indubitably, his attempt to broaden the the horizon of our poetic vision has not been in vain. But, it might be time, perhaps, to leave the artist's characteristic pensive musing for the present, his mystical sense of nature and romantic suggestiveness, to pursue in the subsequent chapter a new development in the lyrist's interpretation of life.

Far off shore the sweet low calling
Of the bell-buoy on the bar,
Warning night of dawn and ruin
Lonelily on Arrochar.

///

CHAPTER 111

T R A N S I T I O N

Heureux qui, dans ses vers, sait d'une
voix légère —
Passer de grave au doux, du plaisant au
severe.

--- Boileau.

TRANSITION

Life has no other logic,
And time no other creed,
Than: "I for joy will follow,
Where thou for love dost lead!

In the year 1894, subsequent to the publication of *LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE*, appeared the first volume of the *SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA* -- a selection of carefree, adventuresome lyrics. These ballads, as I have stated in an earlier chapter, were written in collaboration with his college friend, Richard Hovey, who had along with himself started our Canadian writer in the precarious profession of poetry. Being younger than the New Brunswicker, and indubitably of a bolder, gayer temperament, the American lyricist helped to make the initial production a frank, hilarious picture of an idealistic life beneath the starry or sunlit sky, where the cares

of the day and the morrow were to be forgotten. This, however, seemed paradoxical, at least to his co-worker, who like most of unknown bards was finding it difficult to make ends meet. In fact, the anecdote of his meagre livelihood has been narrated by the poet's younger cousin, Lloyd Roberts, that in the early days in a Ninth Street flat of New York City, this erstwhile vagabond was existing on twenty-five cents a day, drinking coffee that had to be replenished over and over again. Yet, it was fortunate for his sake that there were no additional responsibilities to bear. Throughout his career, he remained unmarried. Thus, his whole life did he devote to the expression of lyrical eloquence, and, here also, we might add, to national achievement in the annals of Canadian anthology.

Indeed, it was with these early songs, circulated in the popular, current magazines and periodicals, that both young men became known to

the reading public. Richard Hovey opened this Vagabondia edition with a boisterous air followed by the other's milder verse, THE JOYS OF THE ROAD. The latter written in rhymed couplets contained numerous delightful glimpses of nature's crimson wonderment, that ever bade the reader forget life's daily troubles by a vagrant walk along some woodland trail or open highroad.

A shadowy highway cool and brown,
Alluring up and enticing down

From rippled water to dappled swamp,
From purple glory to scarlet pomp;

There seemed also a wistful joy as one
espied

The palish asters along the wood,-
A lyric touch of solitude;

or perhaps stopped a moment to hear

The crickets mourning their comrades
lost,
In the night's retreat from the gather-
ing frost;

The poet, too, has thoughtfully and poignantly alluded to his fellow composer,

A lover of books, but a reader of man,
No cynic and no charlatan,

Who never defers and never demands,
But, smiling, takes the world in his hands,

Seeing it good as when God first saw
And gave it the weight of his will for law.

Likewise, in A VAGABOND SONG appeared this wanderlust theme exemplifying once more a native yearning for the open road that somehow seemed to set "the gypsy blood astir."

There is something in the autumn that
 is native to my blood-
Touch of manner, hint of mood;
And my heart is like a rhyme,
With the yellow and the purple and the
 crimson keeping time.

Yet, to appreciate fully this delightful seasonal lyric, I shall quote the remaining stanzas, trusting, moreover, that the reader may enjoy its autumnal appeal the same as did the present commentator.

Make me over Mother April,
When the sap begins to stir!

.....

Only make me over, April,
When the sap begins to stir!
Make me man or make me woman,
Make me oaf or ape or human,
Cup of flower or cone of fir;
Make me anything but neuter,
When the sap begins to stir!

Then, in THE MENDICANTS, the theme tended to be somewhat didactic, a bit of poetic preaching, clothed in allegorical trimmings. Many of us have been merely trekking along the pathway of life like hoboes, apparelled in the tatters and shreds of old fashioned customs and conventions. Thus, with these useless habillements have we reached no where, and although Time has frequently offered the numerous natural enjoyments of life, such wanderers as above knew not how to utilise them. In fact, only did the "vagabondish sons of God" show true wisdom.

We are mendicants who wait
 Along the roadside in the sun.
 Tatters of yesterday and shreds
 Of morrow clothe us every one.

Hopeless or witless! Not one heeds
 As lavish Time comes down the way
 And tosses in the suppliant hat
 One great new-minted gold To-day.

But there be others, happier few,
 The vagabondish sons of God,
 Who know the by-laws and the flowers,
 And care not how the world may plod.

Now, in the year following these VAGABONDIA SONGS, the author created a new kind of poetic vision entitled, BEHIND THE ARRAS: A BOOK OF THE UNSEEN, wherein the two chief numbers, BEHIND THE ARRAS and BEYOND THE GALUT, introduced his first formal philosophical venture. In this lyrical exposition, the fundamental thought was that of a mysterious, infinite power behind the arras or tapestry of human life, revealing to us a benign will by the awakening of spiritual questioning and hope in the spirit of man. The manifestation, too, of the beauty and joy throughout

the universe as well as its significant counterpart of evil or deformity in the world gave the writer reason for a further destiny beyond our present one. In this optimistic faith, then, of the reality of such divine representations in life, the Canadian philosopher not only became a firm disciple of Browning, as the former himself genuinely acknowledged in his second Vagabondia series,

Nine years have made you
My master still.

but also, he supported Browning's procedure by a similar monologue method in his philosophical reasoning. The poet, therefore, was able to demonstrate his highly imaginative faculty together with a fine dramatic style that was needed to enliven this speculative theme. Thus, the setting of the title poem, BEHIND THE ARRAS, became happily conceived in figurative form of a spirit dwelling within its house of life, visible

to the surrounding world and conscious of its earthly limitations, yet likewise aware of some unseen, penetrating power whose source it did not know. The style, too, easy and conversational, and particularly effective by one long recitative line, followed by a short, crisp verse, was such as to captivate immediately the reader's interest.

I like the old house tolerably well,
 Where I must dwell
 Like a familiar gnome;
 And yet I shall never feel at home.
 I love to roam.

Moreover, an element of mystery seemed to have pervaded the soul's abode as suggestive, half-spoken messages about the human destiny of departed lives confused this mortal spirit.

There at the window many a time of year,
 Strange faces peer,
 Solemn though not unkind,

As if they once had lived here, and stole
 back
 To the window crack
 For a peep which seems to say,

"Good fortune, brother, in your house of clay!"
 And then, "Good day!"

One should not fail to notice, also, in the course of this perusal, the delicate, descriptive lines of nature, artistically figured on the tapestry of life.

Save the soft purple haze
 Of smoldering camp-fires

Or tatters of pale aster blue, descried
 By the roadside.

The writer then began to speculate on the character of the invisible power that ever worked behind this mystical curtain. "Whence did it come?", the soul would anxiously ask; but nothing could be elicited from the omnipresent "world ghost."

And when I start and challenge, "Who goes there?"
 It answers "Where?"

Perhaps, its name might be "No-man's-friend"
 whose grim pranks and strange utterances

seemed to bewilder and to terrify this child-like spirit in the house of life. However, amid an earthly din, soft soothing, tranquil sighs were heard.

Fair as a woman, gentle as a child
And forest wild.

Suddenly, ethereal strains of rapturous music pierced the abode, played by some "dread mystery" on an old ancestral harp that idly swung to and fro in the spirit's house. Spring, that saraband of beauty in the universe, was its melodious lay; a song, indeed, which clearly manifested the artist's sense of the beautiful, making the spirit realise, moreover, the true reality of a benign unseen power moving behind this arras, whose potency ought surely to be wise and propitious in producing such apparent grandeur and harmony in the visible world. Therewith, the originator of music or rhythm, the controlling movement in all human life, began to sing his mystic refrain.

At first, the "mysteriarch" apologised for the
ruin it so rudely wrought in the world,

Though my wild way may ruin what it bends,
It makes amends

To the frail downy clocks
Telling their seed a secret that unlocks
The granite rocks.

but later, it closed with the assurance that
death need be feared no more, for it was merely
another form of creation accompanied by like
"agonies of bliss." Men and women also became
rhythmic patterns in this universal theme,
each rising into existence, yet returning in
due time to its own source.

A cadence dying down unto its source
In music's course;

In the same manner, too, the poet concluded
his first philosophical venture of the soul;
but perhaps the reader who believed that man
still continued to exist in spirit might dis-
agree with its strange, awesome, closing

Some quiet April evening soft and strange
When comes the change
No spirit deplore
I shall be one with all I was before
In death once more.

This impressive poem, BEHIND THE ARRAS, has indubitably been the Canadian's greatest achievement in the philosophical field; but unfortunately, its popularity by the reading public -- who desire a lighter form of thought -- has become very limited. Nevertheless, to every one of us, a desirable half hour's perusal amid the realm of speculative fancy would assuredly be well spent in following the sudden turns of phrase, the lively descriptive verse, the familiar style and natural rhythm of our national poet.

Another figurative poem, too, entitled, THE LODGER, musically narrated the soul's higher aesthetic life, wherein the spirit described its delightful innermost experiences with a queer room companion whom the writer has portrayed in these piquant, opening lines,

I cannot quite recall
 When first he came,
 So reticent and tall,
 With his eyes of flame.

Outlandish certainly
 He is -- and queer!
 He has been lodged with me
 This thirty year.

An ethereal violinist he was whose eerie har-
 mony, sometimes sweet, sometimes solemn, trans-
 ported the soul through a wealth of visionary
 vistas --- the autumn hills, martial music and
 muffled drums, happenings in a wintry town,
 the flight of birds and beasts, tidal winds, the
 radiant summer sea, memories of the past and
 poetic glimpses from art and song.

All this his fiddle plays,

There they are, all the beautiful things
 I loved and lost sight of
 Long since in the far away springs,

Memory and rapture and fire, --
 The touch of man's soul.

Yet, though the lyrist has again shown a natur-

al talent for this aesthetic type of verse, its ninety stanzas with their voluminous illustrations might become more effective, at least to the reader, if the number was reduced to ten or twelve. However, before leaving the above lyrical exaltation of human existence, a few of the more luminous and descriptive passages have been mentioned.

The sun like a herdsman spills
For drove and flock

Peace with their provender,
And they are fed.
The day without a stir
Lies warm and red.

.....

The wings of the sun, go abroad
As a scarlet desire,
Unwearied, unwaning, unawed
To quest and aspire,

Till the drench of the dusk you drink
In the poppy-field west;
Then veer and settle and sink
As a gull to her nest.

Now, in contrast to these selections, and one in which the young bard together with his co-mate, Hovey, were was to recite amid shouts of laughter, appeared the rollicking lines of

ROLLING HOME or that spirited song with its rather lugubrious title, THE GRAVE DIGGER. Here, the New Brunswicker expressed a gay, satirical note in the opening four lines of the latter, followed by a truly rhythmical refrain:

Oh, the shambling sea is a sexton old,
 And well his work is done.
 With an equal grave for lord and knave,
 He buries them every one.

Then hoy and rip, with a rolling hip,
 He nakes for the nearest shore;
 And God, who sent him a thousand ship
 Will send him a thousand more;

But some he'll save for a bleaching
 grave,
 And shoulder them in to shore,---
 Shoulder them in, shoulder them in,
 Shoulder them in to shore.

A lyrical melody bearing the name, A MORE ANCIENT MARINER, and belonging to his second Vagabondia series, should likewise merit the reader's attention. Indeed, such fanciful numbers as these, with their sparkling wit and artistic completeness did much

to make his poetry a success or at least to introduce the young writer to the reading public. The lines in this verse indicated the national spirit of the man even though he was seeking the favour of a wealthier and more encouraging people. A few stanzas illustrative of his sprightly humour and carefree inimitable style have been briefly quoted.

The swarthy bee is a buccaneer,
 A burly velveteed rover,
 Who loves the booming wind in his ear
 As he sails the seas of clover.

He woos the Poppy and weds the Peach
 Inveigles Daffodilly,
 And then like a tramp abandons each
 For the gorgeous Canada lily.

He pilfers from every port of wind
 From April to golden autumn;
 But the thieving ways of his mortal days
 Are those his mother taught him.

Then, to conclude such a group of playful songs, two appreciative ballads have been chosen. The first entitled, IN A COPY OF BROWNING, lightly reviewed the characteristics

of the nineteenth century poet, written in suggestive acknowledgment of this dramatic artist.

Browning old fellow
Your leaves grow yellow,
Beginning to mellow
As seasons pass.

.....

With you for teacher
We learned loves feature
In every creature
That roves or grieves;

.....

While some upbraid you
And some parade you,
Nine years have made you
My master still.

In a like manner, also, the other selection, At The Road-House, set forth a delightful panegyric composed in memory of that "prince of vagabonds", Robert Louis Stevenson.

You hearken, fellows? Turned aside
Into the road-house of the past!
The prince of vagabonds is gone
To house among his peers at last.

The Canadian eulogizer then admirably depicted this newcomer being welcomed by

the illustrious writers of the past, borrowed no doubt from Virgil's Elysian fields. Such men as Keats, "of the more than mortal tongue", "dear Lamb", "the credible Defoe", and "excellent Montaigne," formed the varied ensemble of hosts; Shakespeare and Cervantes were the announcers; and lastly, old Ben Jonson appeared as the genial door-keeper of this immortal literary haven.

And portly Ben will smile to see
The velvet jacket at the door.

During the subsequent period, between the years 1895 and 1902, our national poet produced divers volumes, chiefly memorial, elegiac and ballad verse. The first representation of these, *BY THE AURELIAN WALL*, was addressed in commemoration of John Keats, whom he has so finely portrayed in the above repertoire of artists. Indeed, the simple, pensive sweetness of this Aurelian title selection became a suitable introduction

to the lyrist's book of elegiac and memorial poesy. To suggest its musical tone and skilful treatment, the last few verses have been mentioned. Herein, the writer imagined that Keats's familiar piping has "spread through the world like autumn", till even the Canadian Grand Pre or Gaspereau resounded his name.

And the small Gaspereau
Whose yellow lines repeat it, seems
to know
A new felicity.

Even the shadows tall
Walking at sundown through the plain,
recall
A mound the grasses keep
Where once a mortal came and found
long sleep
By the aurelian Wall.

Yet, probably the best, and certainly the most popular of these poems, was A Seamark, a second memorial for Robert Louis Stevenson whom the New Brunswicker had personally met at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, and had kept up a friendly correspondence with him.

The latter ever appealed to the Northern vagabond, who loved this wandering freedom and adventuresome spirit of the English poet and story writer. The scenic descriptions contained in these thirty-eight stanzas, their cadenced melody, the brilliant metaphors as well as the tropical colouring of the Samoan isle on whose mount the bard was buried, has certainly made A SEAMARK rank high among the author's work. Any number of verses might be chosen from this poem, but for the purpose of brevity, only the concluding two have been given.

There in perpetual tides of day,
 Where men may praise him and deplore,
 The place of his love grave shall be
 A seamark set forevermore.

High on a peak adrift with mist
 And round whose bases, far beneath
 The snow-white wheeling tropic birds,
 The emerald-dragon breaks his teeth.

Furthermore, since I have alluded to Keats in the above, the lyricist's elegy on Shelly, marking the hundredth anniversary of

his birth, should not be omitted. The White Gull, as our poet called him, soaring in graceful, glimmering flight over a wide and shining sea admirably depicted Shelley's brilliant career but untimely close. Yet, in addition to being imaged as a white gull, the title of the poem, this leader of men in the struggle for life has successively been conceived amid a vista of fanciful visions -- a pilgrim of light, treading the spheral paths of night, a sea rover of the Northland, a marsh-wandering fire conducting the night march of the world through a ghostly fen, a captain of the rebel host, a resonant meteor of the North, and a clear spirit dwelling among the nomad tents of rain. The remaining stanzas, likewise loaded with beautiful imagery and music, suggestive too of that creative Shelleyean influence, became expressive of Nature's grandeur that must indubitably have nurtured Shelley's genius. The Tyrian autumn,

the whispering rivers, the voices of the hills and imperial azure skies, has each been carefully chosen from our own artist's treasured storehouse of natural beauties.

The next important literary production was the third volume of the SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA, published during 1901. Unfortunately, this became the final work of Songs written in collaboration with his amicable contemporary, Hovey, who had passed beyond, just prior to its publication. Both men ever since their first acquaintance at Harvard had remained staunch friends; yet, the American vagabond seemed the very antithesis of the Canadian bard. Where the former was small in stature, vivacious in spirit, neatly dressed, wearing a black Van Dyke moustache, the other towered over six feet in height, quiet in appearance, ruggedly clad in English tweed, wearing a large brimmed hat that covered a fulsome mass of light brown hair; indeed, altogether he resembled very much an

English parson. Gone then, for ever, was this energising, helpful, boon companion -- and in "The Lost Comrade", dedicated to his memory, our saddened poet feelingly regretted his loss.

So it's back to the Inn! for me,
 Where my great friend and I were
 happy and free
 And I will remember his beautiful words
 and his ways
 For the rest of my days.

Possibly, also, this was the reason why the later ballads from Vagabondia contained two commemorative selections which differed, however from several of the preceding numbers by their significance of a personal regret. Only one shall be mentioned, namely -- a simple poetic verse entitled and composed in memory of an old Massachusetts' friend, PHILIP SAVAGE. This sympathetic personal eulogy, set amid the native haunts of Massachusetts Bay, modestly celebrated a person unknown to everyone else save the writer's immediate associates. Its

forty couplets, too, modelled in Emersonian style, should sustain the reader's interest to the very end; but, to the present reader, just the introductory lines have been given.

Fields by Massachusetts Bay
Where is he who yesterday

Called you Home and loved to go
Where the cherry spreads her snow,

Perhaps, in order to complete his plaintive elegy, the last two lines might be quoted.

Rich in love, if not in fame
Philip Savage was his name.

The other songs resolved into a variety of moods. Some still retained that vagabondish spirit even to a greater degree than that of his earlier writings, while many again possessed a more serious tone. A typical representation of the former genre was his SPRING FEELING, a witty, amusing number wherein the twentieth century modernists became the theme of his playful vigour.

New Art, New Movements and New Schools
All maimed and blind and halt!
And all the fads of the New Fools
Who cannot earn their salt.

I'm sick of the New Woman, too,
Good lord, she's worst of all,
Her rights, her sphere, her point of view
And all that folderol.

THE DESERTED INN has likewise been chosen as exemplifying the poet's sombre type of vagabond songs. Herein were recalled the peaceful reminiscences of our former days with which the course of time would never unite. Its haunting melody, framed in figurative trimmings, resembled at first BEHIND THE BEYOND, where questioning souls in search of perfection were lured into a deserted dwelling. The strange reverie then expanded, soaring to myriad flights of fanciful images, too vague, perhaps, for individual interpretation, but suggestive no doubt of the inevitable loss and pain that ever darken the cherished thoughts and memories of human life. Throughout the poem, the writer has truly portrayed his masterful native treatment of

the mystical ballad, blending together his choice turns of phrase, his pleasant variations and delicate music in one harmonious fusion. Additional selections, equally expressive, might be quoted without end in this small volume alone; so that, be it a plaintive, mystical, haunting or carefree song, each indeed would adequately merit the Canadian lyricist's well-earned status among our national bards.

Now, in the ensuing phase of the author's work a stronger and more constructive form of verse than either his meditative elegy or familiar mystical song seemed to have been his epical purpose. This resolved, therefore, into the PIPES OF PAN series -- a work whose five volumes were published at various intervals from 1902 to 1905, wherein the artist gradually turned from the disturbing abstract thoughts of BEHIND THE ARRAS to the ancient classics for subject matter and models of form. These books, moreover, constituted the framework of forty years' careful observations and

philosophical reflections -- namely, the existing harmonising unity of Earth and Spirit both in nature and in man. Yet, though the first volume adhered to this organised thought, the poet's attempt to follow an artistic design in the remaining divisions became fragmentary, allowing the PIPES OF PAN songs to become a miscellaneous collection of independent poems, mostly short and varied in style and tone, but nevertheless, each manifested its philosophical design. However, to examine justly the five volumes of this salient contribution would require a book in itself. Thus, during our succinct perusal, the reader should not be disappointed if only a cursory survey of the representative numbers has been given. The introduction to the series took the form of an overture to the Greek god Pan. Here, the woodland deity became associated with the various symbols of nature and invoked as such: Lord of the grass

and hill, Lord of the blade and leaf, and so on. Then appeared the title poem, THE PIPES OF PAN, which also served as the opening selection to the first volume, called THE BOOK OF MYTHS. Just as the name suggested the Hellenistic legend of Pan, set amid the wild, hilly country of Arcadia in Greece, was woven into the story of his pursuit of the nymph and the invention of the shepherd's pipe. The poet added novelty to the old tale by portraying the Grecian nymph as a modern summer maiden.

Lissome as a bulrush wand,
Fresh as meadow sweet new-blown.

.....

Touched with rose and creamy tan.

In the chase, of course, she eluded her pursuer among the reeds, from whom the narrator has ingeniously expressed her sudden disappearance.

Vanished like a gust of rain
Or a footfall of the wind,
Leaving not a trace behind.

Pan thereupon cut, fashioned a reed into a shepherd's pipe and blew --

Such a music as was played
 Never yet since earth was made.

The piper then became the poet himself who described the soul's reactions to this new-born music.

So I felt the subtle change
 Large, enduring, keen, and strange;
 And on that day long ago
 I became the god ye know
 Made by music out of man,

The lengthy expansion of Pan's music followed, and the imaginative interpretation of the myth concluded the poem. A further treatment of the same theme might be found in *THE LOST DRYAD*, whose unrhymed, succinct stanzas formed a marked contrast with the preceding number. The metre so used was a modernized conception of the Sapphic versification, and herein the lyricist admirably exemplified a natural smoothness of rhythm and movement. This, by the way, was his favourite device in the Sappho volume, published some years later. A single verse from the above

might illustrate the expressiveness and effectiveness of such a metre.

Ere I at last through the twilight
Hear the soft rapturous outcry,
And as of old there will greet me
Far-wandered Daphne?

Perhaps, the best representation of the fourteen poems in this volume both with regard to thought length and style, was his DEAD FAWN, whose plaintive lyrical meditation for a departed sylvian sprite of Pan set forth the varied beauties of forest and stream.

The wind may whisper to him, he will heed
no more;
The leaves may murmur and lisp, he will
laugh no more;
The oreads weep and be heavy at heart for
him,
He will care no more.

The reverberant thrushes may peal from the
hemlock glooms,
The summer clouds be woven on azure looms;
He is done with all the lovely things of
earth forever
And ever more.

In recapitulating this BOOK OF MYTHS, the reader

should not fail to notice the excessive length and prolixity of some of its selections. Although the New Brunswicker himself stated that rhyming songs were meant to be sung on and on in order "to elude the too vigilant reason and so gain access to the spirit," yet this tendency might be overdone, especially as evidenced in the title poem, that numbered nearly five hundred lines. No doubt, the author was striving for effects by the accumulation of varied details rather than by the thoughtful selection of them.

However, in his second volume, THE GREEN BOOK OF BARDS, published one year later, the condensing of form and thought was noticeably apparent. The introductory romantic title number, in which has been given a poetic precis of the famous prophets and bards who had sought their inspiration in the green book of nature, outlined the magnitude of the poet's design.

The sweet Chaucerian temper
Smiling at all defeats;
The gusty moods of Shelley,
The autumn calm of Keats.

Here were divined the gospels
Of Emerson and John
'Twas with this revelation
The face of Moses shone.
.....

And all these lovely spirits
Who read in the great book,
Then went away in silence
With their illumined look.

One should not forget, also, the writer's naive allusion to himself as he inscribed his name in the final leaf of this green book of fame.

One page, entitled Grand Pre,
Has the idyllic air
That Bion might have envied:
I set a foot-note there.

Various other lyrics, comprising chiefly of nature ballads, mostly spring songs, whose heralding of spring delightfully sounded the exuberant joy and confidence in nature's divine manifestations, constituted the rest of the volume. From these, even the uninterested

reader of poetry would do well to acquaint himself with the five short poems, grouped under, **AMONG THE ASPENS**. Herein, he might experience a personal intimacy with nature as well as a strange feeling of her unapproachable mystery. Veritable mention ought likewise to be made to **THE HERETIC**, a pleasant little confessional selection that seemed to unify the spirit of nature and the spirit of prophecy in St. John, the Baptist.

One whisper of the Holy Ghost
 Outweighs for me a thousand tomes;
 And I must heed that private word
 Not Plato's, Swedenborg's, nor Rome's.

The voice of beauty and of power
 Which came to the beloved John,
 In age upon his lonely isle,
 That voice I will obey, or none.

.....

Be others worthy to receive
 The naked messages of God;
 I am content to find their trace
 Among the people of the sod.

The next volume of the **PIPES OF PAN** series resolved into a group of one hundred and twenty

love lyrics entitled, SONGS OF THE SEA CHILDREN, wherein the emotion of love was treated as the beautiful, and nature appeared in the movement of winds and tides like in a slumbering sea-bird's flight.

For when she said, "I love you,"
It was as when the tide
Yearns for the naked moonlight
An unreluctant bride.

And when she said, "Ah, leave me,"
It was as when the sea
Sighs at the ebb, or a spent wind
Dies in the aspen tree.

The majority of these light, fanciful, and whimsical lyrics expressed merely an outward caressing love that sometimes sparkled with the gaiety of a Vagabond song.

The rain on the roof is your laughter;
The wind in the eaves is your sigh;
The sun on the hills is your gladness
In Spring going by.

The sea to its uttermost morning,
Gold-fielded, unfrontiered and blue,
Is the light and the space and the splendour
My heart holds for you.

Then, it was one year later that the SONGS FROM A NORTHERN GARDEN appeared -- an entirely different style of writing, scarcely recognisable from his preceding production. To the Canadian reader, moreover, they formed an interesting phase of his work because of their national allusions represented in the unifying harmonies of Pan in the universe. Two of the more familiar excerpts have been mentioned, namely, ABOVE THE GASPHEREAU and CHRISTMAS EVE AT ST. KAVIN'S. In the former, the poet fell once more under Browning's spell by his strange but effective rhyming in long looping lines, as well as by his dramatic monolog^{ue} and forceful familiarities. The poem, though extended for nearly two hundred and fifty verses, should, nevertheless, sustain one's animated interest to the very end. His various sideglances, his sudden stops, his originality, and thought-

ful observations, together with the pleasant Acadian setting, all these certainly tended to make this selection the foremost of its series. Yet, the other number, CHRISTMAS EVE AT ST. KAVIN'S, should in no way suffer from the former's commendation. It, in turn, set forth a poetic sermon of sixty stanzas on a sanctified theme that pleaded for a Christian brotherly love among all peoples.

"Love one another!" And our time affords
 What greater scope than just
 To execute that trust?
 Love greatly; love; love is life's best
employ.

A religious colouring has also been introduced in the lyricist's treatment of some French Canadian church legends.

To the assembled folk
 At great St. Kavin's spoke
 Young Brother Amiel on Christmas eve;
 I give you joy, my friends
 That as the round year ends,
 We meet once more for gladness by God's
leave.

Throughout the entire poem, too, he was careful to retain our established Christian beliefs even though there seemed to be an association with the mythical spirit of Pan and his music.

Now, the final group in the PIPES OF PAN volume, THE BOOK OF VALENTINES, contained a wide variety of poems that could be placed quite conveniently in his romantic songs or philosophical pieces. One in particular should be commented, namely, AT THE GREAT RELEASE, for herein the three great fundamental elements, nature, love and religion, were delicately fused together in thirty-five lines of blank verse. The dignity of his diction, the suggestiveness of his imagery, the completeness of his thought and the perfection of his form, ought to ensure this poem a permanent place in the author's literary repertoire. For the purpose of brevity, the first and final stanzas have

rounded "the lost poems of Sappho" -- that ancient feminine Aeolian muse with her supreme tradition in lyrical poetry -- has always been a shadowy task of every literary age to conjecture. Our own Canadian artist, however, possessed the courage and creative ability to attempt the completion or restoration of these Sapphic fragments in the spirit of the originals. Many of the more familiar excerpts he translated, finishing them off by a verse or two of his own ingenuity; yet, more often, they were invented in their entirety with the conception of what Sappho on the island of Lesbos might have expressed or experienced at that time. Thus, as a fitting introduction to this poetic scheme, the opening poem, written in a light style of two unrhymed stanzas, was rightly addressed to Aphrodite, the Grecian goddess of beauty, and was composed from a single line of the original fragment.

Cyprus, Paphos or Panormus
 May detain thee with their splendour
 Of oblations on thine altars.
 O imperial Aphrodite.

Yet do thou regard with pity
 For a nameless child of passion,
 This small unfrequented valley
 By the sea, O sea-born mother.

Another delightful ode, Lyric XXlll, a love letter to the Muses' girl friends, began with the well-known single verse, "I loved thee, Atthis, in the long ago," developing into his typical fullness of ease, and charm of picturesque imagery for fifteen lines of blank verse.

.....
 And we would often at the fall of dusk
 Wander together by the silver stream,
 When the soft grass-heads were all wet
 with dew
 And purple misted in the fading light.

.....
 O Atthis, how I loved thee long ago
 In that fair perished summer by the sea!

This number, apropos, has been included by the poet himself in the compilation of that interesting anthology, OUR CANADIAN LITERATURE,

whose revised edition, recently published, (June, 1935), truly illustrated the appreciative, public response to its initial promoter and anthologer of our Canadian letters. Likewise, Song XXXIV, a free construction in eight lines, poetically contemplative over the fame of Sappho and her school of love poesy, would also merit the reader's attention.

"Who was Atthis?" men shall ask,
 When the world is old, and time
 Has accomplished without haste
 The strange destiny of me.

Haply in that far-off age
 One shall find these silver songs,
 With their human freight, and guess
 What a lover Sappho was.

Throughout this volume, the writer never seemed to come to realities with his elusive Muse whose literary identity has still been a problem among philologists. However, in Lyric LXXVII, he endeavoured to meet his phantom figure, or possibly, the maiden Atthis to whom he so fondly alluded.

This pleasing collection of lyrics, with its suggestive classical rhythm on an equally suggestive classical subject, enjoyed, unfortunately, little popularity among the general public, though it was widely read in England, where the appreciation for such themes seemed somewhat more profound.

Yet, so soon as this SAPPHO edition and PIPES OF PAN series were completed and published, there appeared almost in conjunction with them, or perhaps, as a supplementary exposition of them, four fairly large groups of essays, namely, KINSHIP OF NATURE, FRIENDSHIP OF ART, both in 1904, POETRY OF LIFE in 1905, and THE MAKING OF PERSONALITY, just three years later. These books, moreover, which really represented his poetic thought in verse form, served as a helpful understanding of his various romantic ballads and philosophical poems. Since the essays, too, were composed merely for periodical publication, the ideas therein were not developed or extended

from one to the other -- at least, in the first three. Each essay, therefore, constituted a complete whole within itself. But, throughout them all, the ever-recurring thought became that of a threefold unity of body, mind, and soul, which, by means of varied repetition, yet with no suggestion of monotony, the writer endeavoured to strike a balance of sense, thought, and spirit, both in religion, in art, and in nature -- most particularly, however, in mankind. His prose style, too, was quite clear, conversational, and simple; indeed, at times, it seemed far removed from the flowering, poetic imagery of his poetry. In fact, one could hardly believe it to be the same author both of prose and poesy who spoke in the following extract, *ATMOSPHERE*, taken from his *KINSHIP OF NATURE*, (page 295).

"One thinks of prose as the simplest, most natural means of expression, and of poetry as laboured in comparison. I fancy, however, that if we could interrogate those who have been masters of

both arts, we should find the reverse to be true. "Prose is toil," they would say, "while poetry is play."

Then again, the irresistible charm of his poetic style revealed itself especially when the New Brunswicker wished to impress his reader with the awakening of nature in spring, or the benign influence of beauty in life, as illustrated in his lyrical selection, RHYTHM, (page 111), from the above book.

"In the morning, as you stroll from the house, the buds are breaking, the grass is springing green and new; there is no need for introspection; it is enough to be alive; ... You realize this as the beauty of April comes over you once more and all your senses become absorbed in nature and forget to brood idly on themselves."

Likewise, an excellent example of his humorous essay, written in a philosophical vein, might be found in CONCERNING PRIDE, from THE KINSHIP OF NATURE, (page 216). "No love is complete without pride," stated the author; and hereto, he realistically portrayed a modern

situation between a pair of newlyweds, whose pride of attractiveness had disappeared.

"No sooner has Eve become Mrs. Adam than she takes Adam's love for granted. She begins to rely on her marriage certificate She no longer feels it necessary to please him, to appear to best advantage in his sight. He is only her husband; it doesn't matter. She "braces up" "for company", but when "only Adam" is at home she may go as slipshod and negligent as she pleases."

However, the writer showed no partiality to his own sex; for he continued:

"And Adam? Well, Adam doesn't shave every day now. There will be no one at breakfast but Eve. When the dinner is not good, he can grumble a little --- if there is no one present but his wife. He, too, has forgotten that pride is one-third of love."

The moral, of course, to this vignette was contained in the last sentence. Furthermore, in the plea for the continued appreciation or the impatience of the public to new forms in literature, there seemed probably an allusion to his own writing that suffered from

this impatience, as shown in the essay, THE FRIENDSHIP OF ART, (page 137).

"Anything exceptional and unusual demands an effort of the imagination before it can be appreciated; and this effort the average mind is unwilling to make. But the best art and literature always exceptional. ... They represent the courageous daring of the artist in creating new forms, in propounding new truths, in establishing newer and nobler standards of conduct and enjoyment."

In the third book, POETRY OF LIFE, the Canadian artist discussed divers questions of art and literature, such as, THE POET IN MODERN LIFE, CHEERFUL PESSIMISM in poetry, and so on. Poetry, he said, should delight the soul, bringing a sense of gladness into the heart. No poet ought to allow anxiety or sorrow to creep in. Wordsworth surely gained an inward joyousness of spirit as he composed these last two lines about the daffodils.

And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Optimism, too, should be worn on every countenance, even to the point of insincerity. Look on the bright side of life his maxim was, which no doubt had with it a beneficial psychological effect on others.

In his final prose book, THE MAKING OF PERSONALITY, the author maintained a coherence of thought throughout. In this task, too, he was aided by his literary associate, Mary Perry King, and between the two, they set forth the tenets of a cultured personality by the co-ordinating development of a spiritual and mental training as well as an energising physical education. Such a "triune ideal", based upon this symmetrical life and growth of the individual, would produce happiness --- and happiness is success. It has been our tendency, also, to promote mental culture far in excess of bodily culture, but in doing so, he stated, "no great achievement in art, in science, or in religion can be expected of a puny or perverted people." Fur-

thermore, he added,

We can never be personally well equipped with only one-third or two-thirds of a developed being, but must compass the ideal of a triune balance and symmetry of excellence, as the only adequate measure of perfection for every individual who is mentally, emotionally and physically endowed.

Other chapters dealt with the various phases of appreciating, interpreting and educating happy personalities, under such topics as, RHYTHMS OF GRACE, THE MUSIC OF LIFE, THE USE OF OUT-OF-DOORS and so forth. Herein, too, were included the three rhythmic and cultural arts of Mary Perry King -- Poetry, Music, and Dancing.

To epitomise briefly the principles contained in this and the three preceding essays, one could express it in no finer way than has been poetically written in a pithy philosophical gem, THE MEASURE OF MAN, that prefaced THE MAKING OF PERSONALITY.

He who espouses perfection
 Must follow the threefold plan
 Of soul and mind and body,
 To compass the stature of man.

.....

By loving, learning and doing,
 Being must pass and climb
 To goodness, to truth, to beauty
 Through energy, space, and time;

.....

Wherefore the triune dominion,--
 Religion, science, and art,--
 We may not disrupt nor divide,
 Setting its kingdoms apart,

But ever with glowing ardour
 After the ancient plan,
 Build the lore and the rapture
 Into the life of man.

///

CHAPTER IV

L A T E R P O E T R Y

Poetry is thought touched with emotion
expressed in forms of poetic beauty
and poetic truth. --- Matthew Arnold.

LATER POETRY

Little enough was our learning
Small was our craft and skill.
But we saw the feet of morning
Go by --- and our hearts were still.

During the years 1905 to 1908, we have seen that the poet had busied himself editing the above named prose works. In the subsequent year, until practically the time of his death, a renewed literary era ensued, beginning with THE ROUGH RIDERS in 1909, ECHOES FROM VAGABONDIA in 1912, and APRIL AIRS in 1916. These selections, including two volumes of light verse written in collaboration with Mary Perry King, together with some later compositions by himself, were collectively published in 1922, under the title, LATER POEMS. The Canadian writer had thus reached full fifty years when these editions

were printed, so that perhaps the reader might be able to discern a melowed and more realistic form of thought creeping in, as well as that mystic atmosphere of his early poetry gradually fading into the realm of normal everyday life. Even in his nature poesy, this seemed to be evident --- an easier and nearer approach to our ordinary sense of nature. Note the lack of mysticism, the cadenced rhythm, and naive simplicity of the following lines, from the **DANCE OF THE SUNBEAMS**.

When morning is high o'er the hilltops,
 On river and stream and lake
 Whenever a young breeze whispers
 The sun-clad dancers wake.

One after one up-springing,
 They flash from their dim retreat.
 Merrily as running laughter
 Is the news of their twinkling feet.

.....

Until at the gray day's ending,
 As the squadrons of cloud retire,
 They pass in the **triumph** of sunset
 With banners of crimson fire.

For the quieter moods with their softened lyrical fervor, the poet used the reflective and smoother form of blank verse, as in PAN IN THE CATSKILLS.

They say that he is dead, and now no more
 The reedy syrinx sounds among the hills,
 When the long summer heat is on the land.
 But I have heard the Catskill thrushes sing,
 And therefore am incredulous of death,
 Of pain and sorrow and mortality.

And then within my pagan heart awoke
 Remembrance of far-off and fabled years
 In the untarnished sunrise of the world,
 When clear-eyed Hellas in her rapture heard
 A slow mysterious piping wild and keen
 Thrill through her vales, and whispered,
 "It is Pan!"

Pan has no longer become the lofty deity of his earlier volume, rather he has resumed his own native Arcadian haunt as the woodland piper of nature's wild music.

Now, just as the master Robert Browning had influenced our Canadian author earlier in life by his dramatic lyrical monologs, so too, in selections like A PAINTER'S HOLIDAY and ON

THE PLAZA, it was Browning's narrative style and vivid realistic form of expression with its street scenes, its sudden surprises and psychological incidents of everyday life that have been represented in this LATER POEMS. ON THE PLAZA portrayed the poet sitting with a friend at a restaurant window in New York City, and there discerning the blazoned statue of General Sherman

In golden pomp against the dark
Green leafy background of the Park,
St. Gauden's hero, gaunt and grim,
Rides on with Victory leading him.

the asphalt pavement wet after a shower of rain that formed myriad pools of gold in the afternoon's sunlight; a few passers-by in hurrying haste; all the while, the watchers idly talked of various things,

..... books or art,
Or something equally apart
From the essential stress and strife
That rudely form and further life.

Then came a typical cosmopolitan picture --
 three Italian street singers, dragging a music
 box after them.

..... The man,
 With hair and beard as black as Pan,
 Strolled on one side with lordly grace,
 While a young girl tugged at a trace
 Upon the other. And between
 The shafts there walked a laughing queen,
 Bright as a poppy, strong and free.
 What likelier land than Italy
 Breeds such abandon?
 This splendid woman, chaffed and talked,
 Did half the work, made all the cheer
 Of that small company.

The poem thus ended with the lookers-on ideal-
 ising this characteristic light-hearted Neopol-
 itan woman.

No fear
 Of failure in a soul like hers
 That every moment throbs and stirs
 A simple heiress of the earth
 And all its joys by happy birth
 How rare
 A personality was there!

Other similar numbers could likewise be quoted
 wherein the writer became less dependent on
 heightened lyrical effects, employing instead

the concrete phase of life in its fullness of form and objectivity of vision. In the same way, one could go on, citing and commenting, without end, the interesting variety of works contained in this one volume alone; but that should be the personal prerogative of everybody -- to read and to enjoy them for himself; however, before leaving these LATER POEMS, I should like to note one verse from IN GOLD LACQUER, whose mirrored clearness and descriptive beauty would be difficult to surpass in any anthology.

Gold are the great trees overhead,
And gold the leaf-strewn grass,
As though a cloth of gold were spread
To let a seraph pass.
And where the pageant should go by,
Meadow and wood and stream,
The world is all of lacquered gold,
Expectant as a dream.

Yet, no account of our national poet and prose writer would be complete without a few remarks about his FAR HORIZONS, published in 1922. Herein, as the title suggested, he used

for his theme the Canadian West, whose vast prairie lands, lofty mountain ranges, manifold rivers, and wealth of pioneer history provided fresh fields of poetic imagination. Thus, DAVID THOMPSON was written in commemoration of this early settler in British Columbia, who envisioned what the West would be with cultivated farms and numerous towns, and even now is. Mark here, also, the absence of that "eerie Ardis" atmosphere, so familiar throughout his earlier ballads.

Before his feet lay a continent
 Untrailed, unmapped, unguessed.
 The whisper of the mysterious North,
 The lure of the unknown West,
 Called to him with a siren's voice
 That would not let him rest.

.....

Down through a maze of canyon walls
 He watched the mighty stream
 Sweep on in conquering plenitude
 With arrowy flight and gleam,
 And knew that he had found at last
 The river of his dream.

Furthermore, what finer description of the famed western Okanagan valley could the rea-

der suggest than this, as given in his poem,
IN THE OKANAGAN?

.....

Here balsam poplars capture
The scent of Paradise,
And strange new flowers enrapture
Our unaccustomed eyes.
The trees with fruit are bending,
The gardens gay with flowers,
A sense of peace unending
Is over all the hours.

Or again, how might anyone forget this graphic, terse portrayal of Vancouver City -- the Montreal of the West -- which by the way is now celebrating her fifty years of unparalleled progress?

Where the long steel roads run out and
stop,
And the panting engines come to rest,
Where the streets go down to the arms
of the sea
Stands the metropolis of the West.

The final number to be chosen from this concluding volume has been a figurative poem entitled, SHAMBALLAH, that mythical city of wisdom in the great Gobian desert of Arabia.

book. Howbeit, if the reader sua sponte has borne with me throughout this perusal, my intended purpose will have been accomplished, not in the reading of this essay, but rather in the hope of a continued study of the poet by individual effort. And so, with a modest confessional of the poet's own making, entitled, A COLOPHON, I shall bring the story of his life's work to a close.

When all my writing has been done
Except the final colophon,

And I must bid beloved verse
Farewell for better or for worse,

Let me not linger o'er the page
In doubting and regretful age;

But as an unknown scribe in some
Monastic dim scriptorium,

When twilight on his labour fell
At the glad-heard refection bell,

Might add poor Body's thanks to be
From spiritual toils set free,

Let me conclude with hearty zest
Laus Deo! Nunc bibendum est!

.....

CHAPTER V

C O N T E M P O R A R Y C O M M E N T S

Criticism is easy and art is difficult.

-- Destouches.

CONTEMPORARY COMMENTS

To judge rightly of an author, we must transport ourselves to his time, and examine what were the wants of his contemporaries, and what were his means of supplying them. That which is easy at one time was difficult at another.

-- Samuel Johnson.

Perhaps the reader might be interested in knowing how contemporary men of letters, who knew the poet either personally or by his works, estimated the man and his contribution to Canadian literature. In Dr. James Cappon's book, BLISS CARMAN, published at the time of the latter's death, the commentator's literary resume and criticism of the New Brunswicker -- who was his esteemed and familiar friend -- has been somewhat too scholarly or professorial to suit the general reader. Rather, his book tended to

be more of an analytical or critical volume, admirably adaptable for a series of class lectures than simply of an expository kind. Yet, in spite of the several deprecatory remarks scattered throughout this book, his appraisal of the poet's works has nevertheless been a learned and most valuable one. Indeed, his opening comment seemed especially fine when he estimated the man as follows,

There is an individuality in his voice which reaches the ear clearly amongst all contemporary strains, and he represents better than any other of our Canadian singers the effort of modern poetry in the nineties to break through into new poetic Horizons.

Then, an American critic and erstwhile friend of the artist, Odell Shepard by name, treated him in a more interesting, friendly, and personal manner. A smaller book than Cappon's, it portrayed the Canadian in a less critical atmosphere, depicting him as the Man, his Works, Nature, Art, Thought, and Style. Though this delightful volume

savoured somewhat of the South -which might in part be justifiable - the reader should no doubt understand and enjoy quite intimately our national poet.

An English commentator's remarks have also been added, in the person of H.D.C. Lee, who wrote a two hundred and fifty-four page volume on the Canadian laureate as his thesis for a doctorate degree from l'Universite de Rennes, in France. A striking quotation from Dr. Lee's study of the author, whom he considered "a distinctly original poet", has been given.

Bliss Carman is not only a singer of whom the Dominion has every reason to be proud, but one of the most original and captivating poets of the century. To describe the impression produced by his verse, we can find no more appropriate words than those he himself uses in speaking of a rainbird's song: "It is a strain which pierces the heart and plays upon the soul. We pass backward a thousand years to the morning of the earth, before care and sorrows were forgotten, before even we bethought ourselves of retrospect and inquiry."

Another worthwhile individual comment should be selected from William Archer's account of the lyricist in his excellent anthology, POETS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION. This likewise British anthologer treated our poet's literary contribution in the same frank, sincere manner as he did in the remaining thirty-five subjects of his book. A significant valuation from his luminous lines might be mentioned.

Of Carman's remarkable gifts there can be no doubt whatever. His fluency is sometimes a little out of proportion to the substance of his thought. He is apt now and then to dilute his ideas to the point of extreme tenuity, or to whip them up into a shimmering but elusive froth. He is always a poet, however; his vision is intense, his imagination potent; his diction strong and free; and when he achieves compression and clarity, the result is poetry of a very high order.

This impartial newspaper clipping from the pen of Percy Hutchison appeared in the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW just subsequent to the Canadian's death.

North American literature has produced few more authentic poets than Bliss Carman, born, buried, and still beloved in Canada.

Yet, the concluding remark to our commentary should be none other than that of the late poet's talented cousin, Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, whom I had the honour to meet during the time this thesis was being written. His judgment of the New Brunswicker, with whom he worked, loved and understood as a brother, might be succinctly summed up in one sentence, Bliss Carman has held and now holds the foremost place in the poetical annals of Canadian literature; indeed, the lyrical melody and simple sweetness of his verse still continues to sound its harmonious note amid the sanctum of our Canadian men of letters.

As a fitting epilogue from one literary Canadian to another, the following lines of

Wilson MacDonald's colophon, THE WORLD OF
 BEAUTY IS IN DEEP DISTRESS, to Canada's best-
 known lyricist have been quoted.

The world of beauty is in deep distress
 And sorrow like frost is everywhere;
 And one sweet singer has laid down his lyre;
 And now a great calm falls across the world --
 A peace like that deep silence when the birds
 Are gatered up from song at eventide.

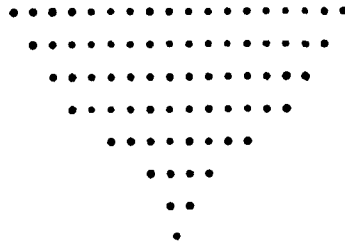
Kind was the Fate that did not let him go
 Before his priestess April, passed his way.
 And did she for this once forget to make
 His spirit over! Did her singing rain
 Neglect her old renewal of his song!
 Or did she make him over now so well
 That he was tuned to sing in a nobler choir
 In that new land where all his days shall be
 As lovely as late April at the dawn.

He left us at the noon day, ere one shadow
 Had fallen on the ardor of his soul;
 Nor strange was it the Caravan of Noon
 Should call him, who had noon day in his heart.
 Now Vagabondia's eyes are wet with tears
 And all the gypsy spirit of the world
 Is weakened by his going. Soon shall come
 Those dusty roadside flowers of his song;
 And they shall wait in vain for him who came
 And in a word redeemed their vagrancy.

He did not stand aloof as some have done:
 And who in all our country shal forget
 His great, gaunt figure, crowned with tameless
 hair

His fine, unhampered throat and ageless eyes,
 From Halifax to shining English Bay
 The echoes of his passing to and fro
 All still like music in our northern air.

To-night the tides at Grand Pre shall come in
 As slowly as a group of praying nuns.
 And Blomidon will lean against a cloud
 And the high elms of Fredericton will move
 With a strange, lonely gesture in their arms;
 And one new grief will wail amid the reeds
 On Minas Basin's poet-loving shores.



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No commentary of Bliss Carman and works can be published without grateful and unblushing acknowledgments to James Cappon, Sometime Dean of Arts, Queen's University, and Odell Shepard, the American biographer and poet's friend whose delightful, personal recollections of the author and the intimate associations with him as characteristically narrated in both their books are never likely to be forgotten.

In addition, the present writer wishes to thank most sincerely Sir Charles G.D. Roberts, Canada's eminent author and cousin of the late Bliss Carman for his personal helpful suggestions in the composition of this work. May I extend also the same kind acknowledgments to McClelland & Stewart, Limited, Toronto, publisher of Bliss Carman's poems.

Lastly, no small part of the pleasure

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I had in writing this little book was the generous assistance of those friends who gladly offered and procured for me such valuable source material. To these willing associates, therefore, am I ever graciously indebted.

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