

"Love and the Universe"

When Dr. Albert D. Watson published his "Wing of the Wild Bird," critics discovered a new note in Canadian poetry. There was a lilting lyricism that was purest melody. The issuance of his "Love and the Universe" (Macmillan) scarcely bears out the promise of that earlier volume, yet there is much in these later poems to constitute the offering of one of the finest contributions of the year. An unerring sense of poetic rhythm, a chastely classical diction, combined with a studied and careful expression, that is yet devoid of any hint of artificiality, make of the passages where he sings for the pure love of singing his supreme achievement—an absolute lyricism.

The title poem, highly dignified, is marred to some extent by an unevenness, not in form, for Dr. Watson could not err in the technicalities of construction, but in thought. Several stanzas of high imaginative beauty, and structural perfection are spoiled by a banal line that detracts from its effectiveness. My space is too limited to quote as I would wish to quote, but there is such sheer beauty of conception in the following stanza, it emphasizes so well the colourful qualities of the verse, that I cannot but quote it:

"The voiceless symphony of moor and highland,
The rainbow on the mist,
The white moon-shield above the slumber-island,
The mirror-lake, star-kissed,
The life of budding leaf and spray and branches,
The dew upon the sod,
The roar of downward-rushing avalanches,
Are eloquent of God."

But it is in the lyrics that abound in the book that Dr. Watson's power is most evident, although his sonnets are characterized with a nobility of thought and high sustained dignity that make them most praiseworthy. The making of music is to the writer a pleasurable pastime, and there are few, if any, Canadian writers who can achieve a more purely lyrical effect. The series of monologues called "The Immortals" show remarkable insight into the lives and individualities of the great men he has sought to interpret.

If a mere reviewer may say so, however, the most noteworthy portion of the volume is the foreword by Katharine Hale, exquisite in conception and noble in achievement, although I cannot quite agree with her estimate of Dr. Watson.

English Opinion on a Canadian Choir

THIS is what the London "Musical Herald" has to say about the 1915 visit of the Mendelssohn Choir to England a year from next June:

"The Toronto Municipal Board of Control decided to vote £2,000 as a grant to the Mendelssohn Choir to help finance the proposed European trip of 1915. Already about £5,000 is assured for the guarantee fund by friends of the Choir, so that there is a little more than half the amount still to be raised. It is probable that the Ontario and Federal Governments will do their share, as the appearance of the Choir in England, France and Germany would have an incalculably fine effect both as an artistic and commercial advertisement. The visit will require six weeks."

At the present time considerably more than the amount indicated by the "Herald" has been raised. There are still several thousand dollars to find to complete the \$75,000 necessary. The Choir are already holding weekly rehearsals on the programmes for the European concerts. All but less than ten of the 235 members are able to go on the trip. The itinerary is expected to cover most of the music centres of England and some on the continent. Before sailing the Choir will probably give one concert in Montreal, and one in New York with the Philharmonic Orchestra. Boston tried to get them, but without result. That is just as well. It might have been as well if the Choir had cut out the New York concert at this time.



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