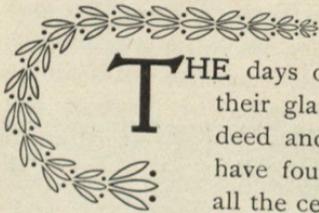


ARTHURIAN LEGEND AND CANADIAN POETS.



THE days of Arthur, legendary King of Britain, with their glamor of romance, their halo of chivalric deed and thought in the quest of the Holy Grail, have found expression in the prose and poetry of all the centuries since the days of good Queen Bess.

Sir Thomas Malory was first inspired, and countless legends, some beautiful, some otherwise, have come down to us; and ever since bards have sung their lays of Arthur and his noble knights.

Around the legends has gathered a literature rightly termed Arthurian. Pure gold these legends are, and, like pure gold, are malleable. Many and beautiful are the shapes they take in the hands of the master goldsmiths. Swinburne shapes them; his art is sinister in its beauty; his work the expression of fatality. We sum the whole and call it Swinburnian. The pure glow of the gold caught Milton's eye, and he contemplated shaping it to higher ends. But he stopped at contemplation. Literature sustained a loss when Milton's Arthur, Arthur the Sublime, was left unsung.

The fount of inspiration is exhaustless. Morris drank deeply, and gave us his "Defence of Guinevere." Tennyson's pure muse lingered lovingly amid the mystery and romance of high chivalry and holy quest and touched a golden harp of song.

English verse with its storied past and its honor-roll of poets has dealt largely and lovingly with the Arthurian legend. In it all there is an echo of the long ago, of the days that are no more. But

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new."

We cross the seas, and find ourselves face to face with a new and virile literature, the literature of a young country, conscious of present strength and future possibilities.

The poet of the new land voices the glad, ardent spirit-stirrings of the conqueror. The human interest is the dominant note of all that he sings. The patriotic fire burns in him. He strikes often and loud the note of Imperialism.

John Reade, the tender-hearted patriot, the Canadian singer of Britain's greatness, is the link between the subdued yearning song of the poet of the old days of struggle in the period of early coloniza-