

unaided, to the very zenith of the universe of sentiment and spiritual desire. They are the warriors of the ages, animating the phalanx before the thronging foe, leading Rollo's hosts to conquest, inciting the patriot at his post, presaging the triumph of Luther, causing the *barrières* to resound with the echoes of the Marseillaise, bearing messages of grace to the beleaguered of Lucknow, cheering the lonely watches by the Rhine, and weeping everlasting elegies over the fallen brave. They are the subjective ministers of prospective life, plenipotentiaries of Hope and Faith, holding the portfolios of immortality. But for the poet, the soul of music itself would be unrendered, for he gives articulate expression to sound, and moulds harmony into a transferable thought. The thunder of the organ bass is grand and inspiring, the flute-like accords of the upper notes are buoyant and elevating, but not till the human voice is heard, breathing the delight or the pathos of the poet, and soaring bird-like from the instrumental coverture, does the rapt listener realize what music truly means. The orchestra is in a measure bound to earth, beautiful yet mechanical, brass and string and reed and stop; but the singer's notes transcend the accompaniment, and emerging from the sweet accords that linger below they fold their wings in heaven.

How can an age, any age, let such a legacy perish from its midst? We are sometimes told that originality is exhausted, that it is impossible to be original in an age that has accomplished or has seen the accomplishment of so much, and, that without originality the poet's bays are but a second-hand sort of commodity, rather to be avoided than sought; better to bury the poet and let his high office fall into disrepute, than catch from æon to æon the reflected glory of some solitary but resplendent sun of song. *We must be original or nothing.*

This is part of the burden of a stultifying civilization. It is another fallacy of the times, the natural outcome of prejudice, superficiality, and the stock exchange. Because, forsooth, Tennyson employed in his matchless elegy a certain quatrain, we are to be refused the privilege of cantering Pegasus over the same flowery pastures. Because Shakespeare was addicted to blank verse and Bacon to philosophic prose, we are to renounce forever the stately rhythm of the one, and the speculative intricacies of the other. Such is Nineteenth Century reasoning, to such a pitch has the materialistic speciousness of cant arrived. We promise to forego next summer's glories, having had a surfeit of last June's blossoms. And some of the callow brood of modern songsters, heaven help them, try to be original. We occasionally stumble across a nondescript of the New Creation, and truly the result is edifying. We feel forced to cry with Byron:

Better to err with Pope, than shine with Pye.

Better be a rational copyist if animated by a spark of the divine fire, than a creator of jingling "originals," sans rhythm, sans soul, sans feet, sans everything but an attenuated stature of simpering self-sufficiency, "spindling into longitude immense," linked crudeness long drawn out. Rather than nourish such originality on the dews of a pseudo-sentimentality and corrupt taste, let us resign for ever the high pitched rhapsodies anent a purely colonial literature and import by the wholesale from realms where all sense of the eternal fitness of the poet's obligations to humanity has not yet perished.

Poetic obligations, we repeat, for does the rhymster owe nothing to the shade of Lindley Murray? One would think not when perusing lines like the following:—