

French Canadian poetry, however, has been often purely imitative of French models—like that of Musset and Gauthier—both in style and sentiment, and it consequently lacks strength and originality. It might be thought that in a new country like Canada, poets would be inspired by original conceptions—that the intellectual fruition would be fresh and vigorous like some natural products which thrive so luxuriantly on the virginal soil of the new Dominion, and not like those which grow on land that is renewed and enriched by artificial means after centuries of tilling. Perhaps the literature of a colonial dependency, or a relatively new country, must necessarily in its first stages be imitative, and it is only now and then that an original mind bursts the fetters of intellectual subordination. It is when French Canadian poets become thoroughly Canadian by the very force of inspiration of some home subject they have chosen, that we can see them at their best.

Frechette has all the finish of the French poets, and while it cannot be said that he has yet originated great thoughts which are likely to live even among the people whom he has so often instructed and delighted, yet he has given us poems—like that on the discovery of the Mississippi—which prove that he is capable of even better things if he would always seek inspiration from the sources of the deeply interesting history of his own country, or would enter into the inner mysteries or social relations of his own people, rather than dwell on the lighter shades and incidents of their lives.

When we compare the English Canadian with the French Canadian poets we can see what an influence the more picturesque and interesting history of French Canada exercises on the imagination of its writers. The poets that claim Canada for their home give us rhythmical and pleasing descriptions of the lake, river and forest scenery, of which the varied aspects and moods might well captivate the eye of the poet as well of the painter. It is very much painting in both cases; the poet should be an artist by temperament equally with the painter who puts his thoughts on canvas and not in words. Yet it may be said that descriptions of our meadows, prairies and forests, with their wealth of herbage and foliage, or artistic sketches of pretty bits of lake scenery, have their limitations as respects their influence on the people. Great thoughts or deeds are not surely bred by scenery. The American poem that has captured the world—that has even obscured the truth of history—is not any one of Bryant's delightful sketches of the varied landscape of his native land, but Longfellow's "Evangeline," which is a story of the affection that hopes and endures and is patient.

Mr. Lampman touched a chord of human interest in one of his