

poetic instinct to be the key note to the conception of infinite wisdom, and power and love. How man became a poet may at first sight seem hard to determine. Just here is the difficulty, for true poetry has little to do with matter, and here comes in the idea of a divergent evolution; but the poetic instinct once evolved, the rest follows easily enough. The first poetical image that dawned in man's mind was the reflection from the light of an exterior and non-material sphere non-material, as we understand the word "material," and heralded the dawn of worship, and later the full noon-tide conception of Divinity and creative purpose and power; for the poet, however crude, and elementary, must see with spiritual eyes; but if there be no *raison d'être* for spiritual visions, he could never see at all. The very fact of his possessing spiritual eyes that were objectless, would be a direct contradiction of evolutionary principle, which assumes that life, and therefore its faculties and functions, must adapt themselves to surroundings or perish. Hoofs would be useless to the camel, therefore it has none. A long neck, however graceful, would be of no service to an elephant, therefore, it has it not. In the mammoth cave, Kentucky, various eyeless animals are found, and in the river within the cavern is found the blind fish (amblyopsis spelæus). The power of vision to these creatures is needless and is therefore wanting. If logical deduction be worth anything at all, useless to man would be his spiritual eyes without a spiritual sun to exercise their faculties and reward the effort of vision. Surely the spiritual monition must be the index-finger to a further stage in the road whose terminus is a completer evolution.

I have said that poetry is the parent of the highest religious instinct, for I deem that poetry is

older than a lofty religious faculty, so called. Do we need proof? The Sagas are older than Britain's cathedrals; the Vedas and the Iliad antedate Christianity; the hymns of Luther heralded the Protestant Reformation. I maintain that a people must begin to sing before they can begin to worship aright; they must sing well before they can worship well. The skylark's invocation to light is more beautiful than Milton's, and is nearer the sun. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." This is the apex of the Creed of Love whose basic stone was the poetic conception. "But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," are the initial lines in the new-framed epic of Hope-Eternal.

There remains a concluding thought. If there be any truth in the sentiment, "Let me make a people's songs, I care not who makes its laws," I believe a yet greater truth is shrined in the simple paraphrase, "let me make a people's poetry, I care not who constructs its theology." And here a hard and relentless fact stares us in the face. We have in this broad Dominion of ours too little expressed poetry, and the little expressed poetry we have is not always of the right kind. We have too little poetry and too much politics, the verbal see-saw, grammarless jargon, and trite commonplace of the hustings and the platform. Too often, alas! has the august floor of the Council Chamber itself nothing in common with the Divine afflatus. It is time that men lived for some better purpose than to vilify political opponents and, while repudiating murder as an outrage of Christian principle, stab to the death the reputation of some one who cannot think just the same as themselves. And most of this murder is of a dual kind; not alone