

A SEA-SIDE WAIF.

Written for an Album.

You wave that bursts in brilliance on the shore,
 Resolved in primal dew is lost to sight;
 No mortal then divines its ancient might,
 None hears a murmur of its ancient roar.

The grandest life is but the sum of deeds
 Which duty bringeth every rising morn;
 Not one day's toil—some brighter page out-torn
 From Fate's dark book and craving highest needs.

These passing hours are full of rich presage,
 Used well e'er they irrevocably flee;
 Learn that a soul heroic, happy, free,
 Is Time's and not a moment's heritage.

C. E. M.

ORIGINALITY.

The quenchless thirst for change, which is at once the law of man's being and the secret of his progress, has reacted upon literature in myriads of wonderful ways. The orthodox test of literary greatness is unquestionably *originality*,—itself but the expression of this primal tendency.

To justify this rule, so long and firmly established, might well be considered unnecessary. Nevertheless, it is well to consider its actual scope and bearing, and mark off its delimitations.

Undeniably the best mental discipline, the highest culture, is to be obtained only by the study of the works of the world's master-minds, the leaders of the human race, who differ from their humbler brethren in the many-sidedness and intensity of their thoughts and feelings. Students of literature, however, too often find that rigorous application and sympathetic zeal may fall short of a perfect ability to appreciate a great work. Again, the study of classics, ancient and modern, may have the opposite effect, and engender a wholesome enthusiasm for a better knowledge of these priceless treasures.

The wish to originate is the legitimate outcome of this sentiment. Hence follows the marvellous literary activity attending in the wake of a man of genius or of a school of original thinkers. The impulse once given, the example once set, and a movement ensues which may be of short or long duration, may fall of its own weakness or of its own weight, or be absorbed in the overmastering influx of newer systems.

We are most of us disciples of genius,—our politics, our art, even our religion all show it, for each has its heroes. Their works are the glory and the despair of their admirers. To surpass the master is a task not to be thought of; to equal him is hardly less unattainable. But time brings change; the truth of the old becomes but the half truth of the new; and old and new are fused in a larger synthesis in the mind of the great thinker.

Originality therefore, if it is to be retained as a legitimate criterion of literary work, must be understood not as a breaking with past ideas, but as a later and higher growth from them and out of them,—a recast-

ing and reinforcing of old things through more enlightened methods, in the clearer light of a fuller day.

Let our young authors remember this, and not despond because most of their good things were said before they were born. They themselves could not be what they are if it had not been for the toils and struggles of thousands now hushed in eternal repose. If the "empire of the dead over the living increases from generation to generation," as Auguste Comte says, it is equally true that the debt of the present to the past increases in the same ratio.

It is quite true that an advance upon existing ideas has been signalized sometimes by men who broke loose from received systems, and boldly announced new theories. But humanity has as yet failed to produce one who did not owe much to his predecessors in the world of thought. The most durable fame is that of the genius who separates the dross from the gold in the old systems, and arrays it afresh in the splendors of his own meditation and sentiment, until by its aid and through the noble stimulus within him, he reaches further heights and greater depths.

Aristotle, Shakespeare, Goethe,—is not this true in an eminent degree of each of these? Each one of them was a man many times over, who had passed in himself through a thousand existences, by identifying himself with the objects of his study and putting himself as far as may be in touch with the countless influences at work throughout the world.

Absolute originality must ever remain impossible for mortal man. He is hedged in and around by insuperable limitations: his finite intelligence relies upon a moulding environment for that fullness of life which is its eternal quest, and is itself the product of an evolution which we can only conceive in method and not in detail, as the supreme fact among phenomena.

Another consideration of value is the usefulness of every man who does anything towards the common cause of enlightenment. Whether he be philosopher, scientist, poet or novelist, if he helps men to a better understanding of the value of life and effort, he is entitled to esteem and respect. Even those whose humbler task is only to amuse and beguile care are valuable in the universal economy.

The moral of all this can be summed up in a word: work and despair not. The modest and honest worker may live and die obscure, but such a fate is infinitely preferable to a selfish and sensual life. Industry and aspirations are always their own reward, and must ever be the twin lights by which man can best approach the great Originality *par excellence*—the uniform complexity of nature.

P. C. R.

SPORTING COLUMNS.

On Saturday evening, December 16th, a meeting of the Canadian Rugby Football Union was held in Toronto.

Montreal and Britannia Football clubs were represented by Messrs. E. D. Black and A. Cameron respectively. R. B. Henderson, a former captain of the University team, put in "the good word" for McGill.