

are rendered fertile, is not for us. It is to us almost a strange work. And yet we have some compensations. We live in a free country, inheriting the traditions of two of the greatest literary races that the world has seen; and, if we sit humbly, as we and all men ought to sit, at the feet of the mighty ones of past ages, it is as learners desirous of catching their spirit, rather than as mere imitators or copyists.

Nor has our success been altogether insignificant. In fiction and in poetry we have produced writers who are appreciated and admired wherever our language is spoken. Those who, years ago, discerned the promise of the "Chien d'Or," have wondered that Mr. Kirby has not further enriched our library of fiction; and we are certainly not without contemporaneous novelists of merit. Mr. Gilbert Parker, who began his literary career with the publication of poems which attracted attention and admiration, has, as a novelist, taken his place in the first rank of living writers; and most of his themes are drawn from Canadian sources. Mr. Robert Barr, again, who, although born in Scotland, was brought to Canada as a child, and received his education in this country, is becoming widely known on both sides of the Atlantic as a novelist of mark. In this department there are lady writers not a few of high merit, probably many more than are known to the present speaker. Among these may be named Mrs. Harrison, Mrs. Jean Blewett, Miss Wetherald, and others. But still more remarkable are the poetical gifts of a very considerable number of our countrymen and countrywomen, including some of those already named. We live in a poetic age. We have writers of poetry, in the old world and in the new, who will be forgotten almost

as soon as they become known, whose effusions will compare favorably with those of some who attained the rank of standard poets in the 18th century. This is said deliberately and advisedly, however it may be explained. It may be that the spread of education and the consequent wider acquaintance with the great writers of early times has something to do with it. It may be that the great revival of religion in the Methodist movement of the last century and the Oxford movement of a later time has aroused men to the perception of new and higher ideals. Indeed, it is plain that every department of art has received a stimulus and an impulse, music, and painting, and poetry alike. But however this may be, the fact can hardly be denied, and our share in the harvest is not small. It is possible that our poets exercise hardly enough of self-restraint, are too ready to put forth their thoughts and emotions as though every utterance of theirs must be worthy of being perpetuated. In this respect they are not unlike some of their great predecessors. How much greater Wordsworth would appear if we could forget half of what he has written! Byron, Burns, and many another have left us contributions of which we heartily wish that they could have been consigned to the waste paper basket, and never have emerged from thence. One great poet there is, one not long lost, who sat silent for years and nursed his muse until the fire burned bright and he was constrained to speak with his tongue. If all our poets could emulate the humility and reticence of Tennyson, some of them might be numbered among the immortals. And we believe that much of their work will live on beyond the age of its birth. It is not quite easy to discriminate, and one is sure to pass over some