

William Blake, Stevenson, and others for whom he has a kindred feeling, and also friends whom he has loved and lost. In the "White Gull," written for the centenary of the birth of Shelley, he thus apostrophizes that clear and shining spirit:

"O captain of the rebel host,
"Lead forth and far;
"Thy toiling troopers of the night
"Press on the unavailing fight;
"The sombre field is not yet lost,
"With thee for star.

"Thy lips have set the hail and haste
"Of clarions free,
"To huddle down the wintry verge
"Of time forever, where the surge
"Thunders and trembles on a waste,
"And open sea."

I suppose it is, generally speaking, quite true that no great poet has been fully appreciated in his lifetime, nor ever will be. Even Keats and Shelley never knew the sweets of public approbation. Those writers who have been extravagantly and generally praised by their living contemporaries did not, as a rule, survive the succeeding generation. It is enough, therefore, if a few voices be uplifted to tell what they know. Dr. Lee, in his study of Canadian poetry written for a foreign university, ranks Carman's work unhesitatingly with the lyric utterances of the great immortals.

Perhaps, on the whole, Carman's chief distinction as a writer will lie with his nature poems. His title to consideration, however, does not lie solely in his having written "Morning in the Hills," and "In the Heart of the Hills," perfect as these poems are; it lies also in his having given birth to such powerful pieces of grim emotion as "In the Wings," such charming phantasies as "The Dustman," such weird northern ballads as the "Yule Guest," such exquisite light verse as "The Paper Moon," such passionate love songs as "I Loved You When the Tide of Prayer," such rollicking, happy-go-lucky snatches as "In the House of Idie-daily," such finely polished gems as sundry pieces in "The Sappho," and such impressive philosophical poems as "On Ponus Ridge."

Carman's technical mastery of his art reaches a high plane of perfection. He makes use of nearly all kinds of verse with almost equal facility. The imagination of the poet which would be extremely sensitive to the influence of his environment is wide reaching and full of colour; his fancy is fine and delicate; his diction is cultured and of wide range; and he possesses a gift of melodious versification, unequalled on this continent, save the work of Edgar Allan Poe. So much for the artist.

As for the man himself, we know that he is modest, reticent, and no literary log-roller. We know little of his likes or dislikes, and nothing of his inner life, except what he has revealed in his artistic work. The wealth of biographical detail about authors that Sir Robertson Nicholl is so fond of giving in the Bookman is altogether lacking in Carman's case. He has succeeded well, I think, in that was his design, in keeping his personality out of the limelight. There is much respecting him that we should be glad to know. He is a voluminous writer of both prose and verse, but he has had little to say about himself. Some of the short, finely polished dainty lyrics are probably autobiographical, reflecting transient moods; some are merry and joyful, others are infinitely sad; but all are beautiful.

What awful despair caused its author to pen the "Red Wolf," we probably shall never know, nor perhaps, is it any of our business, but notwithstanding our curiosity is not lightly to be ignored. The impression that Bliss Carman's

works makes upon his readers cannot be expressed in more appropriate words than those he himself makes use of in speaking of a rain-bird's song: "It is a strain that pierces to the heart and plays upon the soul. The world is renewed for us. We pass backward a thousand years to the morning of the world before care and sorrow were begotten, before ever we bethought ourselves of retrospect or inquiry."

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