

my previous article on Mr. Bliss Carman, the first dominating note of song that rose from this Dominion found its expression in the publication of "Orion and Other Poems." If, I might also add, ample excuse for thrusting on one the paternity of a very self-conscious and garrulous school of versifiers may be found in many years' kindly help and guide to a hundred struggling compatriots, then still again must we call Professor Charles G. D. Roberts "The Father of Canadian Poetry."

But, to resume. The figure I saw before me as I waited in that book-lined den of letters—it was a good four years ago, yet the impression remains still vivid in my memory—was that of a slight, well-moulded man, about whom clung none of the abstraction of the scholar, though the regular, finely-chiselled features of the face itself clearly enough bespoke unusual intellectuality, together with a touch of humor, and a polish both urbane and urban. The alert, keen, inquisitive, almost scientific, activity of attention seemed to belong more to the laboratory than to the poet's library, and at the time I remembered, significantly enough, that the man before me had written a treatise on banking, as well as almost two dozen volumes of purely literary interest. The small, compact, well-shaped head—Dowden tells us somewhere that Shelley's head was of the same mould—was covered with black, straight hair, slightly touched with grey, worn rather long, and drooping almost girlishly over the forehead. This nimbus of hair, for all its Indian-like blackness of hue, gave the thoughtful face a sort of St. Martin's Summer of youthfulness, where the ploughshares of thought and time had left their mark. The eyes themselves were brownish-grey—and wonderfully comprehensive, responsive eyes they were!—with just a touch or two of Aristophanic fire in them, now and then lighting up a countenance, that was apt, in repose, to assume a true Nova Scotian severity of line.

When a quarter of an hour later, tobacco smoke drifted above us, and the decanter of Bohemianism stood between us, the talk itself, I must confess, became more Aristophanic than it was academic, and the photographic first impression of the grave profes-

sor of literature was insidiously blotted out in wonder at the kaleidoscopic activity and interests of the man of the world, the man who, as Merck said of Goethe, could be greater than what he wrote. For with the author of "Orion" the Goddess of Learning does not go on stilts.

Although Mr. Roberts has a Canadian home in Fredericton, he has of late spent the greater part of each year in New York, considering himself no less a good Canadian for that migration, and, I might add, rendering himself no less an efficient portrayer of mankind by that widening of interest and environment.

But, as a matter of record, I might here state that Charles George Douglas Roberts was born at Douglas, New Brunswick, on the 10th day of January, 1860, that nineteen years later he was graduated from the university of New Brunswick, that the following year he married, that for three years he was headmaster of the Chatham Grammar School, and for still another three years was a pedagogue in Fredericton. In the years 1883-1884 he was editor of the *Toronto Week*—which, take it for all in all, I fear we shall not look upon its like again for many a long day—and then, returning to his native province, he became a professor of English and French literature in King's College, Windsor, where for ten years he remained, honored by his colleagues, and idolized by his pupils, establishing, amid all his academic work, a still further claim to the term of poet-laureate of his Dominion. Then came his descent on the corrupt, yet beguiling, Mecca of New World letters, and his venture into American journalistic duties. During all this time, in verse, he had produced "Orion and Other Poems," "In Divers Tones," "Ave: An Ode for the Shelley Centenary," "Songs of the Common Day," "The Book of the Native," "New York Nocturnes," and the more comprehensive volume of "Poems," in which he has collected all that verse written previous to the end of the year 1898—at least all that which he cares to preserve.

In the field of prose he has been no less active. I need only mention "The Canadians of Old," "Earth's Enigmas" (but