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FROM HEINE.

I.

"*Du Lilje meiner Liebe.*"

Thou lily of my love that stands
And dreameth in the brook,
What dost thou, sighing "Woe is me"?
Why, Sweet, so troubled look?

"Let be thy kiss and caressing,
Thou light o' love, let be!
I know full well that Cousin Rose
Has won thy heart from me."

II.

"*Wie kannst du ruhig schlafen?*"

How canst thou sleep so calmly,
And know I live in pain?
The old rage comes and masters me
And then I break my chain.

Dost know the wild old ballad
How once at midnight deep
A lover dead his maiden fetched
With him in grave to sleep?

Be sure of this, sweet maiden,
So winsome and fair to see,
That I am living and stronger far
Than all the Dead may be.

BOHEMIEN.

A CANADIAN LITERATURE.

The recent publication in Canada of two books which may be said to come within the category of pure literature; the blare of trumpets which heralded in *Tecumseh*, the echoes of which are still in the air; and the praise lately bestowed by Lord Tennyson upon an older Canadian novel, *Le Chien D'Or*, are sufficient to draw the attention of the thoughtful to a consideration of the development of literary taste and literary production in this country. The signs of activity in the Canadian field of letters are perhaps greater than ever before, and are at least of sufficient importance to attract the notice of the ordinary reading public. Mr. Adam and Miss Wetherald promise us another book; several new weeklies have lately appeared, and a monthly magazine has been talked of for some time. It is not within the province of this article to discuss the merits of any of the books or periodicals mentioned, nor yet to investigate the probable amount of favour with which any of them have been received. The important fact is, that the literary spirit is abroad, and is seeking to make its voice heard. Let us hope that the voice is not crying in the wilderness.

It is worthy of note that almost all favourable press notices and reviews of late books lay stress on the fact that they are Canadian—the work of Canadian writers, published in Canada. Further, it is the fashion at present to insist on the encouragement of home productions because they are Canadian. We are told to "foster the old and to encourage the

new." This is excellent advice if it has the single object in view of securing a fair and sufficiently wide consideration for the works of Canadian authors. There can be no possible objection to pushing, in every legitimate way, the sale of Canadian books in the field of pure literature. But it is to be feared that this is not all that is meant when we are adjured to foster home productions. Of late years much has been said in our small world of letters about the absence of the literary spirit, and the total lack of a Canadian Literature. That there is no such thing as a Canadian Literature is most true, whatever possibilities there are for the future to deal with. So that when this *status quo* is brought prominently before our notice, and we are, at the same time, urged to patronize every attempt at literary production that is made, to judge it as Canadian work, from a Canadian standpoint, that is, not by an absolute, but by a relative standard of criticism, and to preserve it as the amateurish works of Canadian painters are preserved in our picture galleries—all these things mean something more than a strong recommendation to buy the books and read them. They mean the setting up of a standard—a standard for the reading public, and, what is more important, a standard for the Canadian writer. This would lead him to keep before his mind, as a matter of the first importance, the necessity of writing for Canadian readers and of making his work distinctively Canadian in purpose and tone. Anyone wishing to become known in the world of letters, and yet to send forth his productions from his native place, would seek to become known as a Canadian author, and would make his work bear evidence of his claim to that title. The result would be a localization of all productions in the realm of pure literature. Writers would strive after this, and the criticism of the day would judge their works, to a very great extent, by that standard.

Under existing circumstances of Canadian life, in view of the paucity of our population and its comparatively slow growth, and in view, still further, that, with the majority, it is, and will be for long, a struggle for pecuniary competence, it is almost impossible that within a measurable distance of time a distinctively Canadian Literature should arise. There is no *stuff*, no *ὄλη*, whence the genius might issue forth. True there is the French-Canadian stock of historical and legendary lore; but that is not enough on which to build hopes of a national literature. Besides, it will probably find expression in its own language, which is foreign in spirit to ours. But, grant the circumstances changed in some respects; suppose our population increased thirty fold, with a corresponding increase of wealth. If that were the case, literary life would soon display vast enterprise, as we may judge from what has happened in the neighboring Republic. Supposing that were so, how would this literary activity display itself in Canada, if those who guided it had in view the highest interests of literature and served it with a single eye? May we not venture to think that under these most favourable circumstances this literary activity would not devote itself to the creation of a purely Canadian Literature, but would aim at something higher and greater?

It is to be remembered that literature depends upon language; not altogether, it is true; but to such an extent as to render other factors, when compared with it, of somewhat small importance. Now, any literature of ours, to be permanently good and great, must express the genius and power of the English language. And to do this it must be comprehensive; it must embrace the universal in art; it must make use of the best that has been thought and done by the English-speaking race in all ages. It must express the deepest philosophy, the