

AN EPISTLE IN CRITICISM,

Closely about the true formula of the Keltic genius and the causes of the failure of the Canadian Kelt in poetry.

Addressed to PETER MACLAREN MACDONALD, a veritable poet, in whose verse appears the ancient Gael's imaginative vision of spiritual reality and of enchantment in familiar things.

MY DEAR MACDONALD:

The Sonnets, Lyrics and Essay in this little volume—*Vagabunduli Libellus*—appeared originally in American and Canadian magazines and journals. They are here republished for three reasons. Through an aspect of their content as a text I wish to establish a principle of literary criticism, to define the formula—not Arnoldian—of the Keltic genius, and to answer the question why Keltic Canada has not produced an authentic poet.

My own Verses I have purposely named "PRELUDES"—a term meant to be taken literally. With them now, as in this little volume, neatly packed, boxed,—and out of the way, I have freedom to complete and perfect a larger and more entrancing Song, the theme of which centres about "the Cuchulain cycle of Gaelic sagas." Not in any other literature, Semitic, Grecian, Roman, Teutonic, are there such entralling tales of heroic love and adventure as in these inimitable sagas of the ancient Kelts. There is no other love story as such that approaches in simplicity and dignity, in beauty and pathos, in power and spiritual exaltation the story of the great-souled Naoise and matchless Deirdire, daughter of Colum the Harper,—“the fair-skinned Dearthula,” as the chroniclers call her, “whose locks were more