

“Then like high flutes in silvery interchange
Ye piped with voices still and sweet and strange,
And ever as ye piped, on every tree
The great buds swelled; among the pensive woods
The spirits of first flowers awoke and flung
From buried faces the close fitting hoods,
And listened to your piping till they fell,
The frail spring beauty with her perfumed bell,
The wind flower and the spotted adder-tongue.”

A later fancy is to make them the favorites of Pan, and their voices the only echo in our dry hard day of the pipes of the goat-foot god. And so he takes the different aspects of our changing seasons, singing only what he knows; the grey river ice, with the blue water looking through, in the hot spring, the welcome heat of mid-summer in which one bathes and revels, while the brain stirs and clarifies, the coming of winter, keen frosts, the fall of the snow, the Canadian delight in the wonderful winter sunsets seen across leagues of white country, the storm that blots out life in the winter city but is not so fierce as the stormy human hearts, or the cares “barricadoed evermore within the walls of cities;” and singing all without a single false note. This should awaken the dullest to the fact that the ideal is about us, everywhere, in the present, despised actual. And this is one great merit of Mr. Lampman's work.

His poetic faculty is shown most clearly perhaps in his very shortest poems, those compressed “lumps-of-delight” where sentiment, thought, and workmanship must be equally combined, if the result is to be pleasing. The lyric snatches of the two dedications are exquisite in their simple charm and unstudied grace; but they are perhaps too intimate in character to be quoted. This is in a sadder mood, but how completely the impression is given within eight short lines:

“I heard the city time-bells call
Far off in hollow towers,
And one by one, with measured fall,
Count out the old dead hours;

I felt the march, the silent press
Of time and held my breath;
I saw the haggard dreadfulness
Of dim o'd age and death.”