

# THE PORTFOLIO.

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## A SPRING SONG.

WHEN soft winds breathe o'er pale young flowers,  
The first born of the year,  
Just sprung to meet the sunny hours  
That bring the swallow here;  
When happy birds, in loving strain,  
Make music on the wing,  
Our hearts give back a glad refrain  
To welcome thee, dear Spring.

The gloomy winter's sullen-storm,  
Has drifted from the sky,  
And bathed in sunshine, bright and warm,  
Both hill and valley lie.  
Each stream set free from winter's chain,  
In joy of heart doth sing,  
And we give back a glad refrain  
To welcome thee, dear Spring.

Alas for man when autumn wind  
Breathes o'er his failing hours;  
Ah! nevermore his life shall find  
Its happy springtide flowers.  
But out of midnight comes the morn,  
Heaven's tears the young flowers bring.  
And of death's winter shall be born  
A never dying Spring.

## CONCERNING CANADIAN LITERATURE.

WE all know the story of the author who began an article entitled "Of the Snakes of Iceland," by saying "There are no snakes in Iceland." We are going to do likewise, and begin with the statement there is no Canadian Literature. Having a great mother in whose beautiful garden "Milton lifts his head to Heaven, in the spotless chalice of the tall white lily, and Shakespeare scatters his dramas round him in beds of fragrant roses, blushing with a thousand various shades; some stained to the core as if with blood, others unfolding their fair pink petals with a lovely smile to the summer sun." We are content with the fragrance and beauty of her roses, the stately loveliness of her lilies, while that which should be our garden, is filled with coarse, rank grass, and thousands of weeds, with here and there a flaunting sunflower, or a gaudy hollyhock or two, with an occasional pansy peeping from the dust. We find ourselves asking why should these things be;

are not our mice and daises as suggestive as those of Scotland? Our Indians as brave as Hiawatha? Are not the lives of those about us as full of romance as Tim Linkinwater's or Maggie Tulliver's? Some say "Oh! we are young," and what of that? Did other nations wait till they were in vigorous manhood or hoary with age before their children amused, instructed or thrilled them by their thoughts; or does a line marked 49° North Latitude make us any more juvenile than our neighbors over the way? The Americans have Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant, and many others of whom any literature but that which has Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton would boast; they have metaphysicians, scientists, historians, essayists; they have a Lowell, a Bret Harte, a Mark Twain, who have made not only their own vast republic laugh, but all England; and even Canada has smiled. It seems as though one reason for this is, that the Americans believe most emphatically in themselves. We do not believe in ourselves at all; we have no national pride either; we expend it all on "home" as we think of, and call England. The consequence is, our magazines die because no one supports them; they have no opportunity to grow into first-class periodicals; no Canadian author would write a book expecting to pay the printer from the proceeds, or expecting it to be read here. If there could be a species of literary National Policy to compel us to read the writings of our own authors, both "producer" and "consumer" might be so benefited that the literary "hum" would reach the ears of all nations; but the "consumers" would probably suffer very much at first. Individually, we have little ambition. We endeavor to be respectable—yes, and hope to be able to win our bread and butter always, and the result is we simply do nothing. When we do hear of something being done or written which is "highly creditable to Canada," we feel that this remark is the kindly pat on the head given to the unfortunate child of the family of whom little is