

nation comes a bolder, freer note in the song of its poets. And Campbell is even more forceful and vigorous than most of his contemporaries, is original in conception, and less trammelled by futile conventionalities.

But though original, he does not hesitate to acknowledge a master in Tennyson. His technique is splendid, and he shows, in his handling of language and metre, some of the sympathetic sensitiveness to harmony of sound and sense, of thought and character, that marks the work of Tennyson and Keats. Though he is an ardent admirer of the former, he is far from being a slavish imitator; his individuality is too marked for that. His cry is,

“ To be a voice to thee, a nameless voice,
Voice of the new west calling to the east,
To tell thee of this wondrous western world;
Voice of the future calling to the past.”

Taking into consideration such aspirations, we are not greatly surprised to find that, when Mr. Campbell brings the force of his genius to bear upon the grand Arthurian theme, he extracts from it a new meaning, a significance ignored by all previous poetic interpretation.

His chief work along these lines is a tragedy entitled “Mordred.” In this he departs altogether from the beaten path. We have become so familiar with the noble Arthur of the Tennysonian idylls, that it comes to us with something of a shock that, for reasons poetic, or dramatic, or otherwise, a man could voluntarily raise his hand to mar the perfect purity of the ideal Arthur.

Tennyson's Idylls are pictures. With unerring taste and refinement of feeling he has passed over the grossness of some of the legends of Malory's books, and paints the perfect picture. Not so Campbell's. In his tragedy he embodies much of the grossness as well as the attendant beauties of Malory's conceptions, adding to these just such original touches as he may need to bring out in bold relief the inherent nobility of Mordred, whose character he has taken upon himself to defend.

His aim seems to be to show Mordred more sinned against than sinning in the movement of events at Arthur's court. He pictures him a man by nature of a strong and noble spirit, physically weak, mentally morbid because of his deformity and the misfortune of his birth—a man with a great capacity for love, and an infinite yearning to expend himself in service for some loved one. And this nature warped, embittered, maddened, hurried on to evil by the cruelty and callousness of others, is the central figure of Campbell's tragedy.