

INTRODUCTION

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Colonial—to the destiny of the race that produces it. The article enunciated the thesis that if the English language should not in the near future contain the finest body of poetry in the world, the time is now upon us when it ought to do so; for no other literature has had that variety of poetic material which is now at the command of English-speaking poets. It pointed out that at the present moment this material comprises much of the riches peculiar to the Old World and all the riches peculiar to the New. It pointed out that in reflecting the life of man the English muse enters into competition with the muse of every other European nation, classic and modern; and that, rich as England undoubtedly is in her own historic associations, she is not so rich as are certain other European countries, where almost every square yard of soil is so suggestive of human associations that it might be made the subject of a poem. To wander alone, through scenes that Homer knew, or through the streets that were hallowed by the footsteps of Dante, is an experience that sends a poetic thrill through the blood. For it is on classic ground only that the Spirit of Antiquity walks. And it went on to ask the question, "If even England, with all her riches of historic and legendary associations, is not so rich in this kind of poetic material as some parts of the European Continent, what shall be said of the new English worlds—Canada, the United States, the Australias, the South African Settlements, etc.?" Histories they have, these new countries—in the development of the human race, in the growth of