

the organ-measure of our language. Here the weight of matter and solidity of meaning are almost superlative, being approached only by the noble uprightness of the poetic conception. The unequalled breadth and depth of his reading enriches but does not encumber these writings. His epic verses are strong yet smooth, well-toned yet true-filed, full of vigor of phrase, yet nowhere lacking in close accuracy of rendering. They possess terseness, virility, and true imaginative strength. We instinctively feel throughout the presence and the power of a poet and a thinker whose genius was not born to deal merely, or habitually, with ephemeral or casual matters. We say to ourselves almost unconsciously, here, indeed, is one finely equipped "to build the lofty rime." We involuntarily exclaim, truly here is a regal poet splendidly arrayed in all the "singing robes." The fine, solid blank-verse boasts of very many great Æschylean lines—streaks of gold in the massive rock—which afford the scholar inexhaustible delight. The strong, lofty thought strikes the mind with something of the pleasant awe that a towering promontory, with the clouds on its brow and the ocean at its feet, strikes the vision. His vast range of subject, his wide scope, his infinite variety, his comprehensive grasp everywhere, his energy and elasticity of genius, mark him as an intellectual Enceladus beside whose towering figure the stature of the greatest living English poet seems but that of an ordinary man, and the reigning Poet Laureate a veritable Lilliputian.

The tone of the poems throughout is democratic, in the primitive and proper sense of that greatly perverted term; as their sympathy goes out unfailingly to the virtuous lowly. I am aware *de Vere* has been called an aristocrat. There are many conflicting colloquial definitions of this word, and, owing to the potercy of usage, the dictionaries do not afford much aid. It does not mean the same thing in Canada that it means in the United States, and in England the word is assigned a significance quite different from, and partly contrary to, that attached to it on this side of the Atlantic. In order to meet this wide divergence of meaning within narrow limits and briefly to determine whether the poet is or is not a Democrat, I have formulated a brace of severe test questions; (*a*) does he light a lucifer match by friction *a tergo* with his trousers (*b*) does he hold a cuspidor in