

Accompanying the several spirited and very beautiful, though short, poems, from the pen of James Holmes, Esq., which appear in our previous pages, we received the following letter. The author is almost an enthusiast in the cause of Canadian Literature, and as such, claims our esteem, independently of every other consideration. The hints contained in the note we take in the candid spirit which prompted them, and we give them a place here, as they will explain our reasons for declining many contributions which have been kindly tendered us.

We have hitherto endeavoured to measure every article submitted to our scrutiny, through its own merits, and its own merits only—regretting much when the promise of excellence did not justify us in giving that encouragement so necessary to the development of the intellectual energies of man; but shrinking not from the duty, invidious though it seem, which we have voluntarily assumed. That we have succeeded, beyond what we could have anticipated,—nearly as fully as we could have hoped—the unanimous commendations of press and people have borne witness. True, we attribute much to the generosity of our critics, who have viewed our blemishes leniently, and have commended wherever an opportunity occurred. Such has been the friendly spirit universally extended to us that we must have been ungrateful indeed, to have faltered in the attempt to merit it.

Enough, however, of our egotism; we have done with it, for the present, and beg to subjoin the letter:—

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LITERARY GARLAND.

SIR,—A monkish legend declares, that the good St. Denis, (after suffering martyrdom by decapitation,) found no difficulty in *tucking* his head under his arm, and walking off to his saintly tomb, in stately style, and slow; a wit very pertinently remarked thereon, "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*," not venturing, (as a wit) to cast further doubt on the miracle. The application of this *véritable histoire* is this:—A writer recoils, at first, from notoriety,—he is sensitive as the aspen,—he feels disgust that his name should be mouth'd over, indiscriminately,—but after a little while, he derides it, as a veteran *moustache*, danger:—this will explain, why I announce, under my sign manual, the authorship of the fugitive pieces, which I now enclose, and to which I have placed my name. They are not, wholly, the productions of present moments,—but, of moments long past. Their frame-work, may not be new to the eye of the Canadian public, but, in their present *finished* state, they are.

Permit me to ask from you, as a favour, your keenest criticism. The literature of a country is the *measure* of its progress towards refinement. Poetry is to literature, what the bright stars are to the blue sky. Hereafter, the pages of the *Garland* will be refer'd to by Canadian Literati, with the same object, as the biographer now traces the doings of the *renoun'd*, (in letters or in arms) in earliest infancy. If, then, a century hence, (when all who, now, are breathing, shall long have moulder'd into *dust*,) the *Genius* of *Canada* shall have cause to blush for its Literary infancy,—your *Garland* will be liken'd to the cap of the fool. The *Garland* is the only book of record we now possess, for the flow'rs of fancy: you are the registrar. Let not the future historian of *Canada* be constrain'd to proclaim a *Literary* infancy, as contemptible, idiotic and ricketty, as has been its *political*. So far as my participation in such a judgment is concern'd, I cannot hesitate between Damnation and Oblivion.—I, therefore, pray your keenest criticism.

Should these *trifles* emerge to-day from the furnace of your criticism, I shall submit others to the same ordeal.

This is not precisely the land where a *prudent, politic*, man, will announce himself a candidate for poetical fame. Where the trader is "the observ'd of all observers," the poet is star'd at, as the vulgar gaze at the meteoric masses which, occasionally, are attracted by the earth. If, therefore, my verse should be pronounced superior to ridicule,—I expect not to escape it. Some minds, however, attach a priceless value to the gem of poetry. It is declar'd, biographically, that the *immortal Wolfe*, (the night preceding the victory on *Abram's Heights*, whilst in the boat which bore him towards his field of glory,) repeated to his Aides-de-Camp, the celebrated *Elegy* of *Gray*; then, *feelingly*, observ'd, that, to be author of that *Elegy*, he would gladly forego the fame he hop'd to win, the morrow. Such was his appreciation of poetry. I dream not, however, of the remotest application of the observation to my lines, but rather such apprehend an exclamation, as that of the *naturalist*, (vouch'd for by Peter Pendar:—)

"Fleas are not Lobsters, damn their souls."

Nevertheless, my motto being,

"Faint heart never won fair lady,"

I subscribe myself, your very obedient servant,

JAMES HOLMES.