

than the people of the other Provinces; they do not read so much, and are largely governed, through prejudice and national feeling, by the political orator. If, therefore, you know the leaders of politics, you can generally be certain of the political future—a condition very different in this and the other Provinces, where even the strongest politician's tenure of power is uncertain.

The race has spread over New England, and has made itself felt already as a solid vote: in many towns they have succeeded in obtaining for their religious and national schools the privileges of the public schools of the State; but their power is not likely to go further, in the absence of such a protection as is given by the parish system in their native Province.

With us, however, there is a greater danger: they may by their compact voting power secure the concession of some of the western Provinces in which to establish, with the same immunities and privileges to their race and faith, another Province of Quebec in all its exclusive character. There is no doubt that they felt a great disappointment at the result of events in Manitoba after the Province was first formed. They had hoped to get a large immigration from the French-Canadian colonies in the States, and to secure a controlling vote-power in that Province. The rapidity of settlement balked their aim; but when they try next time they will make more certain, and recent events seem to make the field ready for the contest.

Taking a period in English history, we may say that the sending of the bishops to the Tower by James II. was not likely to have struck the Cornishmen in the light of being either constitutional or unconstitutional. The only matter that affected them when they came out of their mines and marched on London was that one of the bishops was a Cornishman,—

And shall Trelawney die?
And shall Trelawney die?
Then twenty thousand Cornishmen
Shall know the reason why.

There was as chief element the feeling of race-kinship: that was enough to rouse Cornwall. The feeling that spread like wildfire over Lower Canada is, to a great extent, of the same unreasoning character. Even the Rouge leaders must have been surprised at the sudden outburst among a people who had responded so slowly to the appeal for subscriptions to a defence fund that, in order to insure a fair trial, the prosecution was obliged to furnish means for producing evidence in favour of the accused. The people who were so apathetic in the crisis of Riel's fate became furious when all was over: the leaders of party for once found themselves obliged to follow popular clamour, and the only note of discord is the protest of the Rouges against the action of the Bleus in coming at the last hour to share in their victory. Chapleau, Langevin, and Caron not only stand alone, but are pilloried and pelted with vile epithets. A National Party is to be formed, and no more divisions will be allowed to exist. Will this last? Will the fury of the masses die out? Will the party leaders quarrel over the prizes of rank and position, or will they accept for the leader of a solid French-Canadian party some acknowledged superior such as Sir Antoine Aimé Dorion, if he consent to descend from the Bench? If this last should be the case, I would not be surprised if, for one or two years, this French phalanx should rule the destinies of the Dominion. Mr. Blake, or whoever would join hands with them, would be so dependent in the other Provinces on a certain number of French constituencies that he would be obliged to bow his neck to the French yoke to a far greater extent than Sir John Macdonald has been accused of doing.

During this tenure of power the party might be able to carry out the scheme of organizing another Province of Quebec in the North-West, and the danger of this is the most imminent of any overhanging the future of the Dominion. Any talk of Annexation would be futile, for Lower Canada will not surrender the laws which give immunity to the Roman Catholic Church; and, on the other hand, the constitution of the United States will never be amended to permit the entrance into the Union of a State in which the Church is a power having legal authority.

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SOME QUALITIES OF A POET.

ADMITTING that it is worth while in this world to be great, what particular form of greatness is quite so alluring as that possessed by the poet? The prince has not always a princely soul; the politician, who sheds a strong light over one of the dark ages, might not present so vivid a contrast to his fellow mortals in this enlightened age; the painter's reputation, like his canvas, fades; the actor leaves nothing behind him but a tradition; the millionaire endows an institution of learning or charity, and is forgotten; the power of the orator is buried in his grave: all flesh is grass, and the grass withereth, but a poet, whose words, centuries old, are "felt in the blood and felt along the heart," is of all living creatures the most alive. In

the race for immortality he has the advantage of being born great, which gives him an immensely good start, though he is no more responsible for it than he is for his age or height or the amount of money he inherits. How supremely fortunate a fate is this! Every man, it is said, has been a child once, and he may some time be an angel, but between those extreme and most attractive periods of existence stretches a dry, prosaic length of days in which, if one cannot be a poet or a worshipper of poets, the outlook is dull indeed. No adequate provision has as yet been made for this very large class of suffering humanity, who, like those born blind, have never fully realized the extent of their deprivation.

The great poem, like the great poet, is born, not made. It is written not from choice, but necessity—the divine necessity that weighs inexorably upon those to whom "the Angel says write." A poet cannot be a manufacturer. The writer of verses may excel in acuteness of perception and sensibility; he may be gifted with fancy, even imagination, and he may select and combine with unerring taste the choicest materials for his dainty task; but he is a builder, not a creator. The product of his pen is as life-like as a French doll. Its form is unexceptionable, its features unusually delicate and regular, it is exquisitely tinted and sumptuously adorned, but it does not breathe, it cannot bleed. Compare with it the production of a genuine poet who can scarcely spell or write: it may be ugly and unkempt as the child of a savage, but it is free, natural, alive.

It is difficult to give a perfect definition of a poet, but the world is quick to recognize him, and gives him joyful greetings when he comes. Let us enumerate some of his qualities, not, perhaps, in the order of their merit, since two critics can scarcely be found who will agree upon that.

Then, first, the true poet must give us the luxury of reading what we ourselves could never have written. That is not asking very much. We are accustomed to breathe an air and tread upon an earth and look into a sky that we could never have created, and when in the midst of these everyday marvels we open a volume of poems that, by means of a good education and ill-regulated emotions, we ourselves might have written, the result is dispiriting. Not only must the poet look into his heart and write, but he must find in his heart something that is abundantly worthy of being written.

Secondly, he must have individuality. Keats may be unripe Tennyson, and Swinburne overripe Tennyson; but it is no pleasure to make the discovery. A parrot may appear very brilliant, but it is not a singer; and a poet must be a creator of sweet sounds, not an imitator of them. The impressions he produces were not received from others, they are not second-hand.

Thirdly, his effects are pure, thrilling, magical, and produced generally by means of the simplest words, and apparently with the greatest ease.

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky!

No double-jointed epithets or compound adjectives here, no straining after effect. Commonplace words; but, upon reading them, how the heaviest heart leaps up!

And next, condensation. Diffuseness is another name for weakness. The addition of water increases the quantity but ruins the quality. What can be more complete and concentrated than the line,

An open sky, a world of heather.

More could scarcely be expressed in smaller space.

That he must appeal to the emotions rather than the intellect goes without saying; but, so long as Swinburne and his followers are alive, he must bear in mind that, in the emotional as in the material world, it is disgraceful to be drunk and disorderly. He may be allowed to rhyme sweet with

The paces and the pauses of her feet;

but the gloying richness of

Oh, sweet, and sweet again, and seven times sweet,
The paces and the pauses of her feet,

palls upon the taste. If only this word, sweet, might become obsolete for a score of years, or until we had time to forget that butchers ever applied it to meat ("nice sweet pork") and essayists to reasonableness, and poets to nearly everything else!

But, on the other hand, he must not preach. Every field of philanthropic effort needs to be cultivated; but Pegasus does not excel as a plough horse. When any doubt exists as to whether a piece of metrical composition is a sermon or a song, it may be safely asserted that at any rate it is not a song. Birds and poets have no other mission beyond filling this dull world with their own irrepressible and overflowing gladness.

Another quality of the poet is that elusive one which makes him