

Golden prospects and ominous clouds :
 Impassable walks and level drives :
 Glittering silks and colorless shrouds :
 Flattering records and shattered lives.

These were the elements of its every change, and to his eternal *quid novi?* it had nothing further to answer. So that he who had begun life by being an enthusiast had almost finished it by becoming a cynic.

All heartsick and headsick and weary,
 Sore wounded, oft struck in the strife,
 I ask is there end of this dreary
 Dark pilgrimage called by us life ?

I ask, is there end of it—any ?
 If any, when comes it anigh ?
 I would die, not the one death, but many
 To know and be sure I should die.

To know that somewhere—in the distance,
 When Nature shall take back my breath,
 I shall add up the sum of existence
 And find that its total is—death ?

It was impossible, being what he was, that his poetry should be free from occasional pessimism. This was the natural product of the circumstances of his life. It was necessary from the character of the age in which he wrote ; it was inevitable from the quality of his own mind.

It is not without meaning that he sings in the last Springtime of his life,

We reach for *rest*, and the world wheels by us
 And leaves us each in our vale of tears ;
 Till the green sod covers and nought comes nigh us
 With hopes and fears.

Nor that in its last month we hear him say, as he looks out into the unknown,

For we shall rest. The brain that planned,
 That thought or wrought or well or ill,
 At gaze like Joshua's moon shall stand,
 Not working any work or will ;
 While eye, and lip, and heart, and hand
 Shall all be still—shall all be still.

The truest life of a poet is written in his songs. Why then, go further ? If they hear not Moses and the prophets,—You know the rest.

From the present he asked nothing ; and from the future—but, let him speak for himself :

We only ask it as our share
 That, when your day-star rises clear,
 A perfect splendor in the air,
 A glory ever far and near,
Ye write such words as these—of those who were !

In scanning this Preface a few thoughts suggest themselves. What a prolific pen our author had ! If the balance of his work has the merit contained in that be-

fore us, it is unjust to the writer to stipulate that it shall be given to the world only in the event of the "Lyrics" receiving a kind reception. Popular taste neither makes nor mars the poet ; it may and does the man, but the singer—never. Add to this that it is a contribution to a literature that is in its formative stage, and its detention becomes a crime. Produce it, it is the writer's due, though the writer himself said,

"And when these musings into verse will flow,
 I hold it right to keep them to myself,
 Nor lumber up my neighbor's groaning shelf !"

There need be little fear as yet that shelves are groaning with Canadian literature.

I hardly like the idea of considering the writer of "Adelphi," "Death," or the "Dedication" to his mother, *blase*. Pessimism may be natural, but when it is acquired by running the gamut of life's pleasures and pains in thirty years, it loses its truth. Such cynicism is questionable, for it is not the result of tired thought, but the outcome merely of overworked energies.

The writer's *quid novi?* The whole of God's creation, the impulse to honest action, the grandeur of making "impassable walks" flowery glades, "level drives" with new verdant beauties at each turn of the wheel ; this for answer silent songster ! But your own later utterances say more for your honor and are a better explanation than any pen can make for you. Listen to the believer in Nirvana of 1879,

"I would die, not the one death, but many
 To know and be sure I should die."

Compare this utterance of four years later,—

"Oh, I have sinned and I have strayed
 From Thee, the Shepherd of the flock,
 Have scorned Thy guidance, and have made
 Thy law divide a mock.

"But, like the prodigal, my heart—
 Too long undone and desolate—
 Seeks Thine, believing that Thou art
 As good as Thou art great !"

At the close of his "Life" already quoted we find,—
 "Did not bubble over in his verse with loyalty to the throne." Do I read aright ? Can any Canadian—true to his birthright—deny his obligation, forget his country's welfare, cavil at the fact that England, as expressed by the word throne, has acted other than as an Alma Mater to her young charge ; and now, when her pupil's judgment is called into operation, is there a sign of disaffection ? Let the times answer. Introduced discord there may be, but it is the necessary broil to shew the eternal peace.

"There have been kings ! There have been kings !
 Proclaim it while it is to-day :
 For, lo ! the ages pass away,—
 And men will doubt there were such things
 Ere many centuries decay."