

of genius may be on the far horizon line, but the race turns to the past and the structures it has reared, as a child turns from the landscapes of summer to stand in disconsolate rapture over its crumbling mud pies!

After the death of Browning and Tennyson the muse of the Anglo-Saxon world was silent—so intensely silent that some even questioned if the time of poetry were over. Those who express this fear for the future of poetry, let us say in passing, only exhibit thereby their narrowness of view; for so long as a human heart is beating, so long as there is beauty in the world, or mystery in life, there is a field for poetry. Even now one poet has arisen who builds his song on the present, and looks out to the future with assurances. And so his poetry to-day may be said to resound throughout the world clear and distinct. For who has not heard the rugged songs of Kipling come ringing in the hush of the evening of this century?

Kipling is a strange phenomenon. In the history of modern literature we are accustomed to classify all works in two divisions: as romantic or as realistic,—that is, as fanciful and ideal, or as portraying the commonplace. The great modern writers have been pre-eminent in one class alone. Scott or Victor Hugo could not write of a "Cotter's Saturday Night," or any such simple theme. The attempt would likely have been ludicrous. But Kipling, a romantic like Hugo, turns to the real world around him for his subject, while his inspiration remains romance. Thus he combines the two different classes in himself, and stands as the representative of a new era, in which perhaps there will be less half treatment, and more symmetrical combination of the two distinct ideas. Realism will remain the groundwork for all literature, but in its treatment there will be the ideal colors of romanticism. Yet this is not entirely new. It is Shakespeare's method. And Wordsworth found the daisy on the moorland a subject for song, only because it held a suggestion for the imagination, pointing it to some fact of eternal beauty,—not because of its size, color or perfume, or any such scientific data.

If art and literature are almost at a standstill, not so science. Science, long ages dormant, while literature flourished, now will not slumber any more. Tireless, and with unflinching purpose, it pursues its work. Like art, it looks into the secret ways of the universe, but it has a different method. The poet tracks the solitude of life as an explorer,—lead on by the joy of exploration and the beauty of the world explored; the scientist, like a sober woodsman, clears up the forest as he goes, and if he joys at all it is that the clearing is becoming larger and the forest less. And yet they both have the common office of revelation.

So much for literature and science. Let us now turn to a wider theme—the social and political aspect of the present. How different is the world to us to-night from what it was to our ancestors on the 28th of January, 1798! Behind them lay a century of cold formality and cynical unbelief—the time of Voltaire in literature and Walpole in politics. This was behind them, but already the change had come, the new era was dawning. A section of the Anglo-Saxon race, which had stepped aside from the community of nations to build a state in America, broke from the traditions of the past and gave the world a new idea—the idea of the free equality of men.

This was the keynote to the age which still is ours. Formerly if nations had warred for territory or for glory, it was seldom that those who fought or suffered had interests to defend. The quarrel was theirs merely because it was their king's. Whether it had arisen from reasons of justice and national honor, or because of a private whim, the people did not enquire. But now all was changed. The fighters of the new struggle, both in France and in America, did not fight for the flag of an ancient dynasty. Their inspiration was the strong determination of men

fighting each for his own right. And the right they claimed was the liberty of self-development; the right to begin a new era in human history—and the era was begun.

We to-night look back a hundred years to that hour of dawn, and in the dim perspective there is much we cannot distinguish. Hopes were cherished then of systems we have entirely forgotten. We smile at the enthusiasm of these first democrats for their Utopia. We cannot get a proper setting of the time. We cannot see how sharp the contrast was between their past and the ideal future which held a new, untraversed world. That future has been the nineteenth century, and we know how it has been filled with action and advance; but not in such a way as was expected. Democracy has triumphed. Men have made the old world new by scientific discovery; yet the Utopia has not been gained. The race has become more intelligent, more respectable. But each man feels that the gain is not for him. And so, from the experience of this century, we are now almost indifferent as to whether the future will bring us new disclosures or not, for men feel that they will be just as happy undisturbed.

One word on the future of Canada and I have done. We are the Northmen of the New World. Let us not envy too much the rich luxuries of the south, remembering how they enervate. Our heritage is the Anglo-Saxon heart. Let us accept the stern conditions of our soil and climate as the only setting to our national character. We shall fail if we try to build up here the windy greatness of a state on material prosperity. Leave that for those on our south. But we can make Canada the classic Greece of the coming centuries.

Is not that a higher destiny than the implanting of a race of immigrant paupers on our northern fields, and their acceptance as co-citizens with us in the desire to add a hundred or a thousand more to our population? We must choose between the empire of earth or sea or air. Supremacy in the first two is denied to us. Let us choose the Empire of Human Thought—and achieve our supremacy there.

J. T. SHOTWELL.

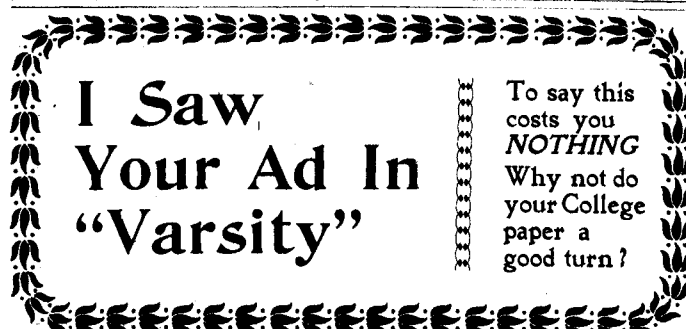
AN AGGRIEVED POET.

Editor VARSITY:

DEAR SIR,—I was almost impelled to commit suicide when I came across my "beautiful poem" in last week's VARSITY. Never again will I send in along with a contribution an explanatory note to the editor, in the fond hope that he may understand the explanation without printing it. I put in a note about the amateur style of the poem lest you should confuse its aim with that of the many unintentionally amateur verses, whose style VARSITY sometimes forgives, for the sake of the thoughts they contain; for in my poem, as Browning said, the style is everything. It makes one writhe more frantically than when reading one's Year Book biography, to find over one's signature in a paper a feeble joke with the explanation carefully printed below.

Yours in tears,

R. M. CHASE, '98.



I Saw
Your Ad In
"Varsity"

To say this
costs you
NOTHING
Why not do
your College
paper a
good turn?