

In the longest poem of the volume, 'Corydon and Amaryllis,' is contained under a thin veil a passionate tribute to the memory of his parents—the unending plaint of Amaryllis for her dead Corydon, and the fruitless efforts of the narrator to assuage her grief. The spirit of this poem in blank verse is perhaps not just what would naturally be looked for in a tale told of shepherds of the classic Arcadia. For that there is too much of the meditative, the reflective. We do not feel ourselves so completely transferred to that ancient poetic world as when reading, for example, the 'Actæon' of Charles G. D. Roberts, that gem of Canadian verse of this kind. But there is in 'Corydon and Amaryllis' a serene beauty of speech and elevation of thought. In all that Stewart has written there is absolutely nothing of the commonplace. In this uniformity of purity and grace he emulates within his own sphere the rapture of Keats and the sustained elevation of Tennyson. He has a deep love for nature, a keen joy in the beauties of the earth, which he looked upon with the contemplated gaze of Wordsworth. As one out of numberless examples of this I will insert at length the following beautiful lines addressed to the robin in 'Corydon and Amaryllis.'

"And thou,

A robin, with the yellow flute so full
Of melody, 'twas almost to forget
That this fair world of ours could know one pang
Or tear, it was so beautiful, so full
Of joy. How my young heart did wildly bound
With thee in warbling greenness of glad spring!
My youth hath been attuned to thy sweet song;
We have together roamed by mossy streams
Whose gladness mingled with our own, through fields
Where buds and berries ripened into bloom,
And by the leafy greenness of cool woods,
Our lives were like a merry dream, serene
And shadowless, passion and apathy
Were far away, when thou wert breathing forth
Thine ecstasy. With thee I drove the kine
Homeward along the lane, whose winding way
Left far behind the tangled trees and gloom—
That daisied lane, how like the tender thought
Of early home! Then did the brown-armed maids
Come tripping with their ample pails, calling
The kine with simple names, until they drowsed
In girlish laughter and low sweet-lipped rifts
Of song. In happy rivalry we stood,
With eager eyes, and linked our childish dreams
Unto the first born star. The moonlight brought
Dim fairy tales and June's rose-heavy wreaths
By fragrant doors and lingering good-nights.
Thy merry song was wont to wake the morn
To eager-footed play and careless joy;
But time has brought a spiritual change,
The light of sadder thought. Now, when I leave
The dream-paved palaces of sleep, thou art
A Dorian flute of wordless grief and pain,
A feathered memory of the vanished years.
One night I could not sleep, but knelt beside
The window sill. The red sun rose behind
The hedge; thy song became an elegy
Of dying love. O God, how little do
We cling to what we have, how much to dreams!"

Scattered throughout this and most of the other poems are passages of similar beauty showing how clearly Nature in many of her phases had mirrored herself upon Stewart's mind from his childhood. To quote once more from "Lines to My Mother," which is largely made up of recollections of his early life:

"My youth hath taught me love for humble men.
How fair those brows weary with honest toil,
Those arms brown with the sun of harvest days,
Those homes that lie like silver sails afar
In silver peace upon an emerald sea!"
There is little or nothing of purely local coloring in his poetry, nothing that would stamp him plainly as a Cana-

dian. And yet many a light touch naturally carries a more vivid illustration to the minds of us who have grown up amid similar scenes than of those who have lived surrounded by other landscapes and beneath other skies. And it is not just this intangible quality, unconsciously part and parcel of the poet's mind, that alone gives nationality to any poetic creations worthy of being claimed with pride by a people as its own? What means nationality in literature beyond this? Even true songs of freedom, national hymns, great epics are not 'national' in the common narrow sense of the term. They are only grand, only soul-stirring, only of universally felt power because, underlying all that is individual in them of time and place, is to be found an embodiment of the best and warmest aspirations, which are best and warmest in that they are in accord with the instincts of all humanity. Men who are men, who have deeds to do and thoughts to put forth in speech, will spend but little time in the attempt to create a national literature.

While Stewart was an undergraduate of our University he received a prize for a poem entitled 'The New World.' The lines, 'At Sea,' 'Morn,' 'Fame' and 'Home' in this published volume are extracts from it. The beautiful ode 'To a Winter Bird' appeared originally, if I remember aright, in almost exactly its present form in THE VARSITY, with the title 'To a Snow-bird.'

To the reader of Stewart's poems it will be easy to perceive the tenor of his life's philosophy. Up to a certain point it resembles that of George Frederick Cameron, who of all Canadian poets wrote during his too short life the most impassioned love lyrics, and who spoke of himself as

"Standing on tiptoe ever since my youth,
Striving to grasp the future just above."

The lives of both were in their different ways episodes in the world's ever-continued drama, where the tragic elements are those which George Eliot has so often in her novels given human form to—the mighty trend of universal things, and the will of the individual, now acting in harmony, now opposing their forces with the inevitable result. Stewart's was a clear mind, whose logical directness preserved itself throughout every experience. He uncompromisingly followed the light of his reason. To use his own words,

"Who will not take the light of truth,
Nor grow, must cling unto the glimmering lamp
Of self made gloom; who loves not freedom loaves
Not man; who fears to follow truth where'er
She leads, is but a slave tricked by his birth."

He believed that

"Man makes religion, not religion man,"

and consistently with his delight in independence and freedom, he deprecates the ruthlessness that would make even the warmest of personal conviction an excuse for the attempt to proselytize. Speaking of the happy rustic he says:

"Take not his village rhymes,
The sweet church-bells of youth and love and death.
They have a power o'er him thou mayst not give,
Take not this music from his footsteps, lest
He fall. Unless thou give the larger mind,
Break not his dream!"

If I have spoken at greatest length of Stewart's characteristics as a thinker, it is because in this respect he seems to me to stand out most prominently among the little band of Canadian poets who have made themselves dear, not only to their fellow-countrymen, but to many beyond our country, to whom they speak a common tongue. The circle of his readers, of those who can enter with fullest sympathy into his thoughts, will be smaller than that of most others who rank with him in poetic power. He will, I think, always be best understood and most loved by poets themselves. He certainly was of those who see deep down into the immutable beauty and majesty of life, and reflect the secrets of its depths, each in his own way, to the benefit and joy of their fellows.

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