

"The Rosary of Pan"

A Review by Alice M. Winlow

In reading "The Rosary of Pan," a volume of rose-lit poems by Mr. A. M. Stephen, the writer is reminded of Compton MacKenzie's definition of poetry: "Poetry is the flame of life made visible."

At a time when success is measured by the amount of material accumulations, it is an inspiration to read Walter Pater: "To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy is success."

The artist, the sculptor, the actor, the musician, and above all the poet knows it. One senses in reading "Spirit of Beauty" the leaping of that gem-like flame,

"He who has heard

Thy laughter knows the primal sound
Of limitless desire that burgeoned forth
In sun and stars—the radiant flower of life.
But he, who for an hour hath held thee close
Will know himself a God—immortal as the Love
Which gave thee birth."

A conscious pantheism is found in "The Wanderer,"

"Through ages vast, in myriad ways, I sought thy face,
In rocky adamant, in plant and beast and bird—
In rubies, blood from the gentle bosom of the Earth,
I found Thee prisoned for a passing age.
I felt Thee call me in the crimson rose."

There is much ground for debate in "Woman."

"O Mother Substance—soul and sense, in fine,
Of God's own thought, whence stars and atoms grew,
We call Thee Earth or Woman. Why not divine?
Has God forgotten that He always knew
This want of you?"

The metaphysician will answer, "Nay. All is maya—illusion. God is spirit and spirit is all the substance that is."

But whatever the discussion, Mr. Stephen's poems on Woman are the red rays of the spectrum, passionate and beautiful.

Lover's of Vancouver's beauty will be grateful for the description of the North Shore as one sees it from the water in the evening.

"Our prow, preceding from the quay, passed through
The tremulous, golden colonnade the shore-lights cast
Within the water's murky depths. So might a stately
Barge, a part of some great sea-king's carnival,
Pass through a pillared entrance wrought from woodland,
Flowers and phosphorescent fire of southern seas.
Before us lay the silver strait, now veiled
By gathering mists; behind, tier upon glittering tier
The City's lights rose upward from the shore
As if these constellations sought to merge with those
Which gemmed the twilight o'er the mountain's rim."

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In "Scarlet and Gold" Mr. Stephen has caught the glory of the Maples.

"There is a story written no art can ever name

And golden

As of olden

The fiery heralds run.

Across the fields of Canada we trace their path of flame

Within the dim translucent haze,

The mellow mood of autumn days,

We catch the regal glory which outvies the elder fame

Of all the flowers of fairyland—

The gold and scarlet saraband

Of maples in the sun."

In "The Wall" there is almost a religion of friendship and love, and an august splendor in "Superman."

The crescendo of beauty and faith in these poems leads to the climax in that outstanding poem "The Sanctuary."

"Live on us as if each moment were thy last.

What we have given thee to know of Love's

Swift fire is as a spark of that great flame

Which lights the worlds. The shadows are thine own.

To KNOW is well. Hast thou the WILL to cleave

Thy way clear to the heart of God and DARE

To live within the splendour of this love?"

GEO. T. WADDS

PHOTOGRAPHER

VANCOUVER BLOCK

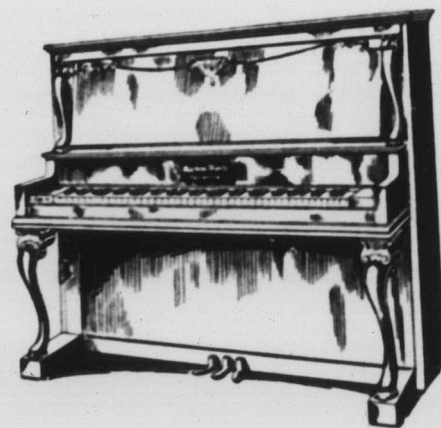
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