

given proof of their absolute unfitness for the task. Strict critics, or to speak more accurately, the hypercritically rigorous, acknowledge only two epics—"The Iliad" and "The Aeneid"; critics less exacting have placed the number at eight or nine; the *juste milieu* might probably be attained by admitting besides the two just named, Homer's "Odyssey", Lucan's "Pharsalia", Tasso's "Jerusalem", and Milton's "Paradise Lost"; thus making the number of epics six, and of epic poets five.

In the face of this monumental pile of evidence to establish and sustain the lofty character of epic poetry, and at the same time to warn human frailty of the well-nigh unattainable altitudes to be attained by whoso would presume to seek admission to this exclusive company of immortals, there is certainly occasion for more or less fear and trembling in the present venture; the object of which is to direct attention to the credentials of a new claimant to the sublime distinction of ranking with Homer and Virgil. Under such a very suggestive title as that which heads this paper, there is necessarily danger of the hopeless scribbler appearing in the unenviable light of a self-appointed, and consequently self-conceited, literary dictator. This consideration leads the writer to remark, with what, it is to be hoped, may be esteemed becoming modesty, that he makes no pretence to speak with judicial authority, or to judge with critical acumen. The sole and simple purpose of this essay is to apply that trite old mathematical axiom, according to which, "two things equal to a third are mutually equal;" this seems no very difficult literary undertaking, otherwise it must have been left to abler hands.

The casual remark of a former distinguished professor of English literature in Ottawa University, one whose opinion on such matters would give weight to any theory, some years ago directed the attention of his class to the epic character of De Vere's great work "The Legends of St. Patrick," and, though the teacher may not have intended any such conclusion, subsequent study has led at least one of his hearers to consider that modest-appearing booklet of poetry as among the veriest of epics. Though, a most unpretentious little volume, "The Legends of St. Patrick" is a book which has attracted widespread attention and greatly enhanced the reputation of its author. Its many