

more or less plainly, what they believe as to the nature and end of their work. Mr. Campbell leaves us in no uncertainty as to his standpoint. In his prose introduction to the collected poems, he treats of the nature of poetry and the standards by which it should be judged. He acknowledges the capacity of the great mass of readers to recognize true poetry:

There is the universal beauty which all see. There is the greatness of life as life, the greatness inherent in noble actions and noble aims, the pathos of a great love, a great self-denial, or a great despair. There is the greatness of a struggle for a lost cause. There is the majesty of life and death; the majesty of ocean and shore and lofty hills. All of this is universal, and of this poetry is made.

After saying "the greatest poetry is that dealing with the human soul," he goes on:

In the work of the great nature poets, the very strength and beauty of the verse is owing to the fact that the thought and imagination dwell upon the human, and nature as affecting the human, rather than upon the mere objective nature, as solely an æsthetic aspect. The greatness of such verse consists in its *lofty emotion*, whereby it conveys to the soul an impressive sense of the majesty of life and death whether the idea be death or a season, *the mood is a creation of a soul strongly imbued with a feeling of the sublimity of life*. In such verse one is lifted out of the common into an atmosphere of spiritual exaltation such as only true poetry has the power to create.

Was it not Emerson who said that poetry was to be measured by the mood which it induced? That is evidently Mr. Campbell's belief. But however lofty the mood of the poet, the inducing of like emotions in his hearers depends upon his skill as an artist, that "accomplishment of verse," which, as Wordsworth reminds us, is denied to many who possess "the highest gifts, the vision and the faculty divine." The endowment of these highest gifts has not been denied to this poet. The scene of the "sublimity of life" is present through all his poetry. Nor is he lacking in some measure of technical skill, marred or obscured though his message sometimes is, by occasional strained comparisons, meaningless epithets, or lapses in metre, hard to understand in the work of one who could write such lyrics as his best. Again and again he repeats in verse what he has said in the "introduction" of the function of poetry.

In the opening lines of the collection, the poem called "Poetry," he writes:

That rare spirit of song will breathe and live
While beauty, sorrow, greatness, hold for men
A kinship with the eternal; until all
That earth holds noble wastes and fades away.

In "The Lyre Degenerate," he fiercely arraigns those decadent poets who debase their art to sing of sheer animalism, and laments that—

No more those ladders to heaven
Golden rung upon rung,
Of the lofty deed and the splendid dream
In the song of singers is sung.

Not of man "reeling back into the brute," but of imperfect man, in whom "begins anew the tendency to God," would he sing, and he prays

Teach me the lesson that Mother Earth
Teaches her children each hour,
When she keeps in her deeps the basic root,
And wears on her breast the flower.

And as the brute to the basic root
In the infinite cosmic plan,
So in the plan of the infinite mind
The flower of the brute is man.

And when doth come that marvellous change,
Thou Master of being and earth,
O, let me die as the great dead died,
Not passing of instinct's breath.

Let me lie down with a loftier thought
Than passing of beast and leaf,
That the cry of the human soul for soul
Is greater than nature's grief.

That man is nearer the mountains of God
Then in the ages when
He slept the sleep of the tiger and fox
And woke to the strife of the den.

And when from the winter of thy wild death
Thine angels of sunlight call,
Wake me unto my highest, my best,
Or waken me not at all.

Mr. Campbell's very strong dramatic power is shown in "The Mother," in "Unabsolved," and in "Lazarus." The first named poem, as we have said, won high commendation when it first appeared; and Jean Graham, writing in the *Canadian Magazine* for December, 1905, says that it is the "highest expression yet reached by Canadian poetry." On the other hand, Mr. Gordon Waldron, in a somewhat scathing article on the said poetry which appeared in the same periodical in December, 1896, had attacked this poem as materialistic, redolent of the charnel house, and lacking in refinement. The story, we are told, was suggested by the German superstition "that the dead mother's coming back in the night to suckle the baby she has left on earth may be known by the hollow pressed down in the bed where she lay." In Mr. Campbell's rendering the mother comes back after she