

and everything so long as the mighty dollar can be acquired. But it is precisely this material prosperity, which so many affect to despise, that binds the American people by chains of adamant to their country, and creates within them an almost cynical disregard for all those who are unfortunate enough to differ from their well-established convictions.

Having thus pointed out what has not been done by Canadians and Americans towards establishing a national literature, together with the various obstacles which have impeded their progress in this direction, we shall next endeavor to outline as briefly as possible what has been already done, by whom it has been accomplished, and how far the literature of each country reflects the spirit of the people. As poetry is a truer mirror than history, of a nation's vitality and progress—we shall begin with the poets, and the first name that attracts our notice is that of Chas. G. D. Roberts. He is admittedly the sweetest of our Canadian singers, and his poems bear comparison with the best this continent has produced.

In strength and richness he has been compared to Swinburne, in gracefulness of style and refinement of versification he is the equal of Moore, while in the charm of his imagery, and the elevation of his moral teaching he is the peer of Longfellow. The following is the appreciation given by a leading New York journal of Mr. Roberts' poems. "The author has not rushed before the public with a great bundle of all kinds in his hands, but he has given us a book of choice things with the indifferent things well weeded out. *Orion* is a poem which Morris might not disdain, and which has this advantage over that poet's treatment of classic themes, that it is not dependent for its interest on a sensuous imagination." True, his poetry is not redolent of our Canadian forest, or Canadian soil, and for this he has been severely criticized, but if Moore could travel to the East, and Milton range Heaven, earth and hell for the subjects of their finest works there can be no good reason why the genius and imagination of our Canadian poets should be caged, even within the limits of this vast Dominion. Were this paper not limited to the treatment of English-Canadian literature, I should here speak of Quebec's most brilliant singer, Louis Honoré Fréchette, whose poems

have been so justly prized and whose charms of style and æsthetic taste entitle him to first place among our French-Canadian poets. It no longer remains for the future student of Canadian literature to see how vain were the boasts made by Lord Durham less than fifty years ago, that the French-Canadians having no history or literature of their own, would ultimately be absorbed by the English speaking population. Far from being absorbed, they have maintained their nationality and religion free from any trace of English influence, and in the fields of history and belles-lettres have out-distanced their English neighbors.

Next to Roberts, the poet who has endeared himself most to the hearts of Canadians is Chas. Heavysege, a man of whom any nation or literature, might well feel proud. He was the first Canadian poet to try his skill in the dramatic line, and his earliest and best production, "*Saul*," though undoubtedly the most remarkable English work ever written out of Great Britain, is like Milton's great epic, read but by the few.

Chas. P. Mulvany is our greatest lyrical artist. His "*Messalina*," "*In Nero's Garden*," and "*Theodora*" are works, which according to Collins, could have been produced but by one or two of his English contemporaries. In dramatic force he is the equal of Browning, while in lyric fire he will compare favorably with Rossetti.

The poems of Chas. Sangster, forcibly remind us of that simplicity and naturalness, which distinguished the writings of Cowper and Wordsworth. His graceful and poetic descriptions of Canadian life and scenery create within us, a more hearty appreciation of the manly virtues of our Canadian people, and a deeper and warmer love for the beauty and richness, with which nature has decked our land.

'Twere long, indeed, to recount even the names of those whose genius and talents have added fresh lustre to the poetry of Canada, but two there are, whose recent productions are superior to anything that has appeared in current literature for many a day. The first of these Mr. Archibald Lampman, is too well known to the readers of *THE OWL* to require further notice. The other, Rev. William Wilfred Campbell, the "poet of