

that the place was protected by a large armed force of defenders the marauders hastened to retreat.

Canadian War Poets.

THE criticism is often made that war never produces any great poetry. It is true that many poems embody the idea of hatred toward the enemy and many more contain the cruder, more cruel elements of modern warfare. But through all of the best war verse are found the strains which produce truly great poetry,—love, sacrifice, death, and above all, the ideals of justice and righteousness that make for lasting peace. During the first two years of the present war Canadian poetry had not that spiritual quality which characterizes it now. It did not contain the purer sentiments of love for man, forgiveness toward our enemies, sorrow and pity for the German people oppressed by their war-mad leaders. On the contrary, these poems were a ruthless call to bloodshed, a “hymn of hate” toward the enemy, a glorification of the genius of war. Another characteristic of this earlier poetry was the fact that it was written almost wholly by poets at home and not by soldiers in the trenches. It lacked the spontaneity of those poems written in the midst of actual war conditions. As Mr. F. S. Osborn says, it did not contain “song-pictures of campaign and of the soldiers’ life.”

In the first rank among Canadian poets is Katherine Hale. Her little book, “Grey Knitting and Other Poems,” is worthy of high praise. It contains several tender lyrics such as “When You Return” and “In the Trenches, Christmas, 1914.” The latter has such special beauty of sincerity, simplicity, and tenderness that it seems worth while to quote it:

War gods have descended:
The world burns up in fire!
Warm your hands at the trench’s fire,
Dear lad o’ mine.
Bullets cease this Christmas night,
Only songs are heard,
If you feel a phantom step,
’Twas my heart that stirred.