

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

Among the Millet.

Through the magazines the name of Mr. Lampman has been for several years before us. To a few friends among Canadian men-of-letters his work has been more thoroughly known in manuscript; and now, when his long-expected volume\* appears, he finds himself with an audience awaiting him—an audience to whom his name is already deeply significant.

To one who is watching with fervent solicitude the awakening of intellectual life in Canada, the past year has been one for profound congratulation. There have been manifestations, unmistakable enough to the heedful observer, of an approaching harvest for these acres which so long we have been tilling almost in vain. The indications here in Canada are, it seems to me, far more favorable than those to the south of us. The note among our rising writers is one of more passion, more purpose, more seriousness and import than that sounded by the younger Americans. It is a note akin rather to that which our neighbors heard when the voices of Bryant and Poe, of Longfellow, Holmes and Emerson captured their ears. With us in Canada, though we may appear to trifle a little with ballades and villanelles and triolets, there is a strenuous undercurrent almost always to be detected. The apparent trifling is but the striving after an unimpeachable technique; the underlying motive is one of deep seriousness and impassioned expectancy.

The verse of Mr. Lampman is strongly individual and distinctive. It is the work, unquestionably, of an original singer, one possessing the essential, but Protean, quality which we indicate by the term genius. It is, nevertheless, not difficult to detect certain affinities. It helps us much to an understanding of a poet's subtler utterances if we find out the masters who have moulded him. It seems to me that Keats, that shaper of poets, has taught Mr. Lampman much; that Emerson, the consummate flower of the genius of New England, has effectively marked his thought; and that the matchless rhythms of Mr. Swinburne have at times ensnared his feet. Surely this is a promising choice of masters. It shows a right appreciation of values. Each one of these masters supplies some splendid excellence which the others partly lack. Hence the admirable completeness which we find in Mr. Lampman's work is the less surprising to us. There are, for a volume of first fruits, comparatively few defects, and these unimportant. There is now and again a touch too much of what I may call, for lack of better phrase, *naivete*. Two or three of these poems do not quite escape the charge of diffuseness, or at least of over-elaboration. There are one or two places in which I cannot but feel that a keener sense of humor might have led Mr. Lampman to express himself differently, as where he says:

On a sudden seven ducks  
With a splashy rustle rise,  
Stretching out their seven necks  
One before and two behind,  
And the others all arou.

This may show its ludicrous side to no one but myself; but surely few will disagree with me when I take exception to the phrase "goatish smell," which defaces the otherwise fine sonnet on "The Poets." There is no other slip so serious in the volume.

Mr. Lampman's work is such as the lover of nature will revel in. His every description is transfused with human feeling and flooded with

The light that never was on sea or land,  
yet minute in its fidelity and accurate in its interpretations. Mr. Lampman seems to direct himself in his landscapes, so that the very essence of them is reproduced in his verse. He has also a fervent humanity, pathos, a rich creative imagination, the romance flavor, and the true singing-voice. He can invent, moreover, strange and delightful rhythms, such as those in "One Day," from which I take the following extract:

The trees rustle; the wind blows  
Merrily out of the town;  
The shadows creep, the sun goes  
Steadily over and down.  
In a brown gloom the meads gleam;  
Slender the sweet willow stands;  
Her lips are red, her eyes dream;  
Kisses are warm on her hands.

A strange and weird piece of fantasy is "The Weaver"—a poem which I cannot praise fitly without appearing extravagant:

THE WEAVER.  
All day, all day, round the clacking net  
The weaver's fingers fly;  
Grey dreams like frozen mist are set  
In the hush of the weaver's eye;  
A voice from the dusk is calling yet,  
"Oh, come away, or we die!"  
Without is a horror of hosts that fight,  
That rest not and cease not to kill,  
The thunder of feet and the cry of flight,  
A slaughter weird and shrill;  
Grey dreams are set in the weaver's sight,  
The weaver is weaving still.

"Come away, dear soul, come away, or we die;  
Hearst thou the moan and the rush! Come away;  
The people are slain at the gates, and they fly;  
The kind God hath left them this day;  
The battle-axe cleaves, and the foemen cry,  
And the red swords swing and slay."

And the weaver wove, and the good wife fled,  
And the city was made a tomb;  
And a flame that shook from the rocks overhead  
Shone into that silent room,  
And touched like a wide red kiss on the dead  
Brown weaver slain at his loom.

\*Among the Millet. By Archibald Lampman. Ottawa: J. Durie & Son.

For masterly rendering of elusive effects I will quote—being debarred from the longer poems—the strong and simple quatrains called

MIDNIGHT.

From where I sit, I see the stars,  
And down the chilly floor  
The moon between the frozen bars  
Is glimmering dim and hoar.

Without in many a peaked mound  
The glinting moon-drifts lie;  
There is no voice or living sound;  
The embers slowly die.

Yet some wild thing is in mine ear;  
I hold my breath and hark;  
Out of the depth I seem to hear  
A crying in the dark:

No sound of man or wife or child,  
No sound of beast that groans,  
Or of the wind that whistles wild,  
Or of the tree that moans:

I know not what it is I hear;  
I bend my head and hark;  
I cannot drive it from mine ear,  
That crying in the dark.

I would like to quote, had I space, the intricate and exquisite melodies of the "Song of the Stream-Drops"; the stately and luminous lyrics of "April," "Winter," "Storm" and "Among the Timothy"; the fine Italian story of "The Monk," with its reminiscences of "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "Isabella"; the faithful home pictures, moving, strong, tender, and Canadian, of "Between the Rapids"; and very many more of hardly inferior excellence. But I must quote a sonnet or two, for in this department is some of Mr. Lampman's most characteristic work. This section of the volume contains some 29 sonnets, the majority of which are altogether admirable. Here is some of the most lucid and suggestive sonnet-work yet done in the New World. Take, for instance, this, entitled

OUTLOOK.

Not to be conquered by these headlong days,  
But to stand free: to keep the mind at broad  
On life's deep meaning, nature's altitude  
Of loveliness and time's mysterious ways;  
At every thought and deed to clear the haze  
Out of our eyes, considering only this:  
What man, what life, what love, what beauty is,  
This is to live, and win the final praise.

Though strife, ill fortune and harsh human need  
Beat down the soul, at moments blind and dumb  
With agony; yet, patience—there shall come  
Many great voices from life's outer sea,  
Hours of strange triumph, and, when few men heed,  
Murmurs and glimpses of eternity.

And even finer, perhaps, is "Knowledge," or this, called

THE TRUTH:

Friend, though thy soul should burn thee, yet be still.  
Thoughts were not meant for strife, nor tongues  
For swords.

He that sees clear is gentlest of his words,  
And that's not truth that hath the heart to kill.  
The whole world's thought shall not one truth fulfil.  
Dull in our age, and passionate in youth,  
No mind of man hath found the perfect truth,  
Nor shalt thou find it; therefore, friend, be still.

Watch and be still, nor hearken to the fool,  
The babbling of consistency and rule:  
Wisest is he, who, never quiet scene,  
Changes his thought for better day by day:  
Tomorrow some new light will shine, be sure,  
And thou shalt see thy thought another way.

The get-up of the volume is characterized by dignity and quiet good taste. The publishers are to be congratulated. Books made in Canada are all too seldom free from gaudiness on the one hand, or commonness on the other.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

Notes and Announcements.

The *Apostate*, by Daudet, is to be published by the Appletons.

Alfred Wallace's new book on Darwinism will be published by Macmillan & Co. Mrs. Oliphant's new novel is called *My Neighbor on the Green*. It will be published by Macmillans.

In the *American Magazine* for January is a short story, "The Valley of the Saint Eustache," by Mrs. S. F. Harrison, of Toronto, who is easily first of Canadians in the department of fiction. Mrs. Harrison is better known as "Seranus."

Canon Farrar has prepared some *Further Talks on Eternal Punishment*. It will be remembered how quickly his first published views on this subject, a few years ago, after the first shock, brought about a readjustment and amelioration of opinions held both in England and in this country.

In the January *Century* we find a remarkably strong and fresh piece of descriptive verse, (which is reprinted elsewhere in this number of *PROGRESS*) entitled "The Winter Lakes," by Rev. W. W. Campbell, of St. Stephen. In his winter poems Mr. Campbell is working a distinctive Canadian field.

Miss Marietta Holley ("Josiah Allen's Wife") is fitting up a new house for herself in Adams, N. Y., in which provision is made for the accommodation of ten or twelve guests, selected from the sewing girls of New York city during the summer months. She expects to entertain four or five sets of them in succession.

A good story regarding the late Bayard Taylor which has never appeared in print is told at Cornell university as one of the choice bits of college lore. In the early days of the university, Taylor was at a large dinner party given by President Andrew D. White. In the post-prandial conversation something was said regarding restaurants. "By the way," said one, "What does the word restaurant signify?" Quick as a flash Bayard Taylor said: "It comes from *res*, a thing, and *taurus*, a bull, therefore a bully thing."

The appearance of the latest English dictionary, absolutely unabridged and bound in cloth, at the low price of \$1.75 a copy, lets a flood of light on modern publishing methods. It would seem impossible

to get out the book so cheaply, with its vast contents, its Greek and Latin roots, and all its complicated arrangements of type. But it was not set up at all. It was simply photo-lithographed. Photographs were taken of the separate pages, and these next were made into electrotype plates to be printed on cheap paper and bound together. Of course the original cost was the mere trouble of printing the book. In this way the standard works of science and fiction are now turned out at a cost that makes a good library within every one's reach.

MUSIC, AT HOME AND ABROAD.

At the recital that will be given, at an early date, in St. Stephen's church, the Oratorio society will probably assist Mr. Morley by giving Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer," which will be a great treat, this beautiful work being certainly one of the gems of oratorio music.

The City Cornet band's concert drew a very full house; in fact, the tickets were sold for every seat in the lower portion of the house. The selection the band played best was the one from the *Bohemian Girl*, and when the members get a little more used to their new instruments they will undoubtedly keep up their position as the leading band of the city. The instruments certainly seem a very fine set, and are well worth the money paid for them. Naturally, the band, as a whole, will sound best in the open air, there being a large majority of brass over reed instruments. Of the vocal portion of the programme, the successes of the evening were made by Mrs. Perley, who was in capital voice, and gained a hearty encore for her singing of the "Irish Emigrant," and responded with the "Pride of Kildare"; Miss Quinton, who sang, "Surely," so much to the taste of her auditors, that she had to respond with a second song, which she gave with much archness; Mr. A. T. Moore—who has a voice with the true tenor ring in it, but which lacks training—who was recalled for his singing of "Marguerite"; and Mr. H. G. Mills, who has apparently given up ballad singing for comic songs. He is equally good in both, to my mind, and certainly it is a great relief to one to have a good comic song of the unobjectionable kind introduced into such a programme as the one at this concert. Clearly his auditors were delighted, as they were not content with his giving "I took it," as an encore to "Ballyhooly," but insisted on his appearing again, when he told how the Frenchman taught French at "Killaloo." Of the rest of the performers it is only necessary to say that their efforts met with more or less appreciation from the listeners.

The Boston *Leader* of this month devotes two and a half columns to Signor G. B. Ronconi and his new discovery as to the comparative pitch of the bass, tenor, alto and soprano voices. Much of the correspondence that appeared in *The American Musician* since Oct. 6 (when this notable fact was first made known to the public) is reproduced, and apparently the signor has only attained one object, viz., the gaining of free advertising by making himself supremely ridiculous. The *Leader* makes a point as to why the signor should have gone to a New York publication to give this piece of news to the world, and hits him rather hard when it suggests that he is probably better known in New York than in Boston!

I hear that Mr. Hill's three months' engagement at Trinity church is not likely to be renewed, and that the powers that be are in treaty with an organist from England, who has been very highly recommended to them.

The recitals at the Mission church are drawing good attendances of the best musical people in St. John. On the night of the 18th, the selections from the *Messiah* went off very well, the chorus, "And the Glory," going without a fault. Mrs. Perley sang, "Rejoice Greatly," with much more effect than at the recent Stone church service. There were very few in the audience who were not delighted that Mr. Morley could not find his copy of Spohr's "As Pants the Hart" (much as they like that splendid composition), when he substituted a splendid improvisation, which not only showed his own thorough mastery of musical composition, but brought into play the best points of the new organ. The only fault in his part of the evening's performance (if it was a fault) was that, in my opinion, the solo spot used for the "Lost Chord" was hardly powerful enough—the air of the song being occasionally lost in the accompaniment.

Wanted, badly, by the 62nd Fusiliers, a bandmaster. This is a free ad.; for if the officers of the band committee wish their band to hold any rank as a musical body in St. John they will have to bestir themselves very quickly. A competent headship applies to a band as well as to any other organization, as also does a willing and ready obedience on the part of the subordinates to such headship.

I think the Minstrels might take a hint from the fact that at any concert given in this city (I don't care whether by professionals or amateurs) the old and favorite

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I wonder who will stage manage and cast the characters for *Iolanthe*, which I hear our musical amateur actors are thinking of producing? There will be a rather original rendering of some of the characters, I imagine, as not many of our St. John folks have seen the opera and it is pretty difficult to do the necessary "business" without some previous acquaintance with it.

Two old British sailors were talking over their short experience. One had been to a cathedral and had heard some very fine music, and was descending particularly upon an anthem which gave him much pleasure. His shipmate listened for a while and then said: "I say, Bill, what's a hanthem?" "What?" replied Bill, "do you mean to say you don't know what a hanthem is?" "Not me." "Well, then, I'll tell yer. If I was to tell yer, 'ere, Bill, give me that 'andspike' that wouldn't be a hanthem; but was I to say, 'Bill, Bill, give me, give me, give me, that, Bill, give me, give me that hand, handspike, hand, handspike, spike, spike, spike, ah-men, ah-men. Bill give me that handspike, spike, ah-men! Why, that would be a hanthem.'" —*Musical World*.

He was fond of singing revival hymns, and his wife named the baby "Fort," so that he would want to hold it. —*Boston Times*.

The Honored Name of Armstrong.

For nearly half a century past, conspicuous upon the roll of faithful and earnest evangelical churchmen of New Brunswick has been the honored name of the Armstrongs. Who that knew him does not cherish delightful memories of that most devoted and consistent Christian, the venerable John Armstrong, rector of St. Jude's, Carleton? He was a man of rare simplicity and spirituality of mind. His was a winsome and gracious Christianity, which made him a living epistle. In him there was conjoined a rare strength of decision and loyalty to truth with gentleness and genial kindness which made him universally beloved. Two like-minded sons carried on his work, and re-asserted his testimony to the great principles of evangelical truth. One of these, the Rev. William Armstrong, for many years rector of St. James' church, St. John, has now entered into his rest. He was of a kindly, gracious, loving nature; strong in his attachments, and greatly beloved by all who knew him. He was emphatically a pastor. In his parochial work he was pre-eminently successful. In the homes of his people he was welcomed and beloved as a friend and father. His warm sympathies, overflowing kindness, and ripe Christian experience enriched his ministrations among the sick and sorrowful, and left endearing memorials in the spiritual life, and grateful remembrances of those among whom he labored with Christ-like devotion.—*Evangelical Churchman, Toronto*.

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