

THE MAJOR NOTE IN CANADIAN POETRY

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HAVE we a body of poetry, however small, which can be correctly termed "great" when it is compared with that of the master artists in lands other than our own? If we can substantiate our claim to a place in world literature, we shall have done something of inestimable value for the people of Canada. At present there are many of our countrymen who are not aware that we have Canadian literature of the first rank. If they are wrong in their surmise, through inadequate knowledge, or innate prejudice, or because they are not possessed of reliable standards for criticism, we must not permit their opinions to influence us.

It has been said that a young country cannot possess the background for great poetry, and again that only in the old and more populous centres of culture similar to those in Europe can great art have its origin. I shall not attempt to refute these theories by indirect argument, but shall endeavour to show directly that we *have* produced literature which is, in itself, positive proof that such views are not in accordance with facts.

It will first be necessary to establish some standard or standards for literary criticism which can be applied in judging the merit of the works of art which we shall take into consideration. In our enquiry we shall not have time to trace the developments of critical theory, but shall be forced to accept the findings of the greatest of our contemporaries. The conventional rules which were current in the nineteenth century, the formal school of Macaulay and the academic cult of Arnold, have given way to the views held by Benedetto Croce. This man, author of the well-known work, *Aesthetics*, has done so much to influence the thought of to-day that he is justly held to be the Father of Modern Criticism. In presenting the fundamental ideas underlying his philosophy of style, I shall first mention principles which are of value at the present moment, and which are more adequate than ideas which exist among those who are still living, intellectually, in the past. When you have a measuring rod which is accurate, you will then be able to estimate the quality of the poetry produced in Canada, or in countries which can claim a history extending over the centuries before the birth of our Dominion.

The new criticism is in line with the new psychology, and with the concepts of the leading philosophers of our twentieth century.

It takes for granted that a critic of literature must, in the widest sense of the term, be a scholar and an historian of art. Beyond these intellectual attainments, it postulates that he must possess the faculty of intuition. To use Bergson's phraseology, he must be capable of "entering into the nature of the thing to be known". A poem must awaken in him a vibratory response, or a sympathetic understanding of the consciousness of the poet at the moment of creation. The critic may not have the gift of poetic expression; but he must, nevertheless, be so constituted that he is capable of the exaltation, the enthusiasm, and the ecstasy which accompany creative effort. He must be possessed of vision, or spiritual perception. He must not be bound by prejudices, opinions, creeds or dogmas, whether political, religious or artistic. In approaching a new art form, he should not endeavour to catalogue it, or to place it in any cast-iron compartement bounded by rules and arbitrary measurements. He must have that within himself which infallibly knows whether this poem, drama, essay or novel is the sincere expression of a human soul in adequate form. If it be sincere—if it is, in truth, the symbol of a spiritual experience—then, as surely as the day follows night, it will be beautiful, and will contain the breath of life which lifts, stimulates and impels to artistic action.

Do these truths in regard to literary criticism seem to be too involved or too profound for ordinary use? I think not. From them we can evolve a fairly simple method of procedure by which to judge a work of art. From them we can learn the qualities which a poem must reveal in order to be deserving of the term "great".

First of all, a poem, which strikes the major note, must display the quality of inspiration. It must be apparent, as our critic has said, that it is the sincere expression of a spiritual experience.

Secondly, it must be marked by intellectual content of a high order. There must, as Rossetti has declared, be present that "fundamental brain-work" which is the basis for all true art.

Then, too, there is the question of technique. Croce demanded of a work of art that it be "the sincere expression of a human soul in adequate form". The expression must be complete. Not only must the structure of the poem be strong and beautiful, but it must also have that subtle magic which marks the perfect marriage of thought and word. There must be the memorable line and the inevitable phrase.

Finally, a great poem must leave with us an impression of strength and nobility of utterance. It must be the manifestation of life itself, with power to influence life. To recognize this quality

in a writer, we must have steeped ourselves in the atmosphere of great thought, great emotion and great style. In order to be able to find this essence in a poem, we should be conversant with the work of the master artists of all time. If we have this knowledge, we shall be aware that the poetry of Homer, Dante, Goethe and Shakespeare has endured because these poets had "something to say" and knew how to say it. They were not viewing all things "as through a glass darkly." The eternal drama of the soul was at least partially unrolled before their eyes. They knew the meaning of life, and they lived intensely, fearlessly, fully. In immortal lines they pointed the way to the fulfilment of life's purposes.

Can we find these qualities, which I have enumerated, in Canadian poetry? Let us first consider a sonnet by Charles G. D. Roberts, the dean of Canadian literature. This poem was written when Roberts was a young man. During the closing years of the nineteenth century, there were many changes taking place in the prevailing ideas in regard to life and the universe in which we live. Darwin and Spencer had broken down the narrow conceptions of the creeds, and science had revealed to us a vast and complicated scheme of things built according to inevitable law. Men began to feel a strange sense of power. Nothing seemed beyond the reach of human thought, or beyond the perception of those who had so far conquered nature's secrets. Yet, in those who were deeply religious, there remained a certainty that there was a great and guiding Intelligence behind all that could be seen or known. Charles G. D. Roberts was in his study in Windsor, Nova Scotia, when there came to him the sudden vision of man's place in the vast order of the universe, and his personal relationship to Him whose power and majesty proclaimed Him to be the Supreme Architect. Going to a desk, he wrote the first lines of the sonnet entitled, "In the Wide Awe and Wisdom of the Night":

In the wide awe and wisdom of the night
 I saw the round world rolling on its way,
 Beyond significance of depth or height,
 Beyond the interchange of dark and day.
 I marked the march to which is set no pause,
 And that stupendous orbit, round whose rim
 The great sphere sweeps, obedient unto laws
 That utter the eternal thought of Him.
 I compassed time, outstripped the starry speed,
 And in my still soul apprehended space,
 Till weighing laws which these but blindly heed,
 At last I came before Him face to face,—
 And knew the Universe of no such span
 As the august infinitude of man.

This poem meets our first requirement. It was inspired. It resulted from the spiritual experience which came to the young man in his father's study. Then, too, it has an intellectual content more than ordinarily profound. On the form side, we find the nobility of the theme reflected in the sonorous march of words which conveys to us a picture of the "round world rolling on its way" through space. Like a rising wave, the music of the poem mounts in a crescendo until time is compassed and the questing soul outstrips the speed of the stars in their flight. The memorable lines and the inevitable phrase are especially striking in the concluding couplet:

And knew the Universe of no such span
As the august infinitude of man.

Here, if our ears are attuned to the harmony of words, we can reach through them to a perception of our own greatness, and shall go out from the reading or the hearing of this sonnet with an exalted sense of our responsibility. With an added power we shall take up the task of life. We shall, as heirs to a starry kingdom, comport ourselves more nobly because the poet has brought us into a finer relationship with the world in which we live. If we cannot feel this influence emanating from the poem, then we are without the ability to appreciate the meaning and the beauty of a work of art.

Place these lines beside some of the sonnets which have deservedly been given high rank in our English literature. Compare them with Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer", with Shelley's "Ozymandias", with Wordsworth's "Upon Westminster Bridge". Put aside the inferiority-complex drilled into you by your teachers of literature. Forget, if you must, that the poem was written by a Canadian. Imagine, if you like, that you found it in a complete edition of Wordsworth and had, somehow, overlooked it in previous readings of the volume. Let the beauty and power of it beat through your being in solitude, and there will be borne in upon you the conviction that here is greatness—here a "great" poem has been written by one of your fellow-countrymen.

In a less restricted form than that of the sonnet, Dr. Roberts has sounded the major note in "The Unknown City". It is to be expected that an artist, who has inherited the wealth of literary tradition, will embody in his work much that is reminiscent of his great predecessors. Being thoroughly saturated by the stream of English poetry, he will inevitably catch something of the grand manner and will, nevertheless, present in his own individual way the themes which have always appealed to poets. "The Land Where

Dreams Come True", "The Land of Heart's Desire", the City Beautiful, which reveals the perfection which our ideals foreshadow—these have existed in the imagination of seers, children and poets from the beginning of time. If the "melodious thunder" of the past has crept into these lines, they are still a distinctive embodiment of a universal theme:

There lies a city inaccessible,
Where the dead dreamers dwell.

Abrupt and blue, with many a high ravine
And soaring bridge half seen,
With many an iris cloud that comes and goes
Over the ancient snows,
The imminent hills environ it, and hold
Its portals from of old,
That grief invade not, weariness, nor war,
Nor anguish evermore.

White-walled and jettied on the peacock tide,
With domes and towers enskied;
Its battlements and balconies one sheen
Of ever-living green;
It hears the happy dreamers turning home
Slow-oared across the foam.
Cool are its streets with waters musical
And fountains' shadowy fall.
With orange and anemone and rose,
And every flower that blows
Of magic scent or unimagined dye,
Its gardens shine and sigh.
Its chambers memoried with old romance
And faery circumstance,—
From any window love may lean some time
For love that dares to climb.

This is that city babe and seer divined
With pure, believing mind.
This is the home of unachieved emprise.
Here, here the visioned eyes
Of them that dream past any power to do,
Wake to the dream come true.
Here the high failure, not the level fame,
Attests the spirit's aim.
Here is fulfilled each hope that soared and sought
Beyond the bournes of thought.
The obdurate marble yields; the canvas glows;
Perfect the column grows;
The chorded cadence art could ne'er attain
Crowns the imperfect strain;
And the great song that seemed to die unsung
Triumphs upon the tongue.

From Bliss Carman I shall choose three poems, differing widely in both content and form. The first is written in the familiar swinging quatrain so much used by this poet. There is apparent in it a greater simplicity than we found in the sonnet by Roberts, and yet there is an almost equal profundity. There is also a lyric quality, an ecstasy which lifts us upon wings of the imagination and carries us into the realm of things unseen, before we are quite aware that the magical deed has been accomplished. Something of this spontaneity, simplicity and lyrical exaltation is to be found in much of the poetry of Carman. Of him it was said by a professor of literature in the University of Rennes, France, that he is one "of the most original and captivating poets of the present century". The charm of his best work inheres in the poem, "Lord of My Heart's Elation", which was published in the volume known as *The Green Book of the Bards*:

Lord of my heart's elation,
Spirit of things unseen,
Be thou my aspiration
Consuming and serene!

Bear up, bear out, bear onward
This mortal soul alone,
To selfhood or oblivion,
Incredibly thine own,—

As the foamheads are loosened
And blown along the sea,
Or sink and merge for ever
In that which bids them be,

I, too, must climb in wonder,
Uplift at thy command,—
Be one with my frail fellows
Beneath the wind's strong hand,

A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust or mountain rain,
To walk the earth a moment
And be dissolved again.

Be thou my exaltation
Or fortitude of mien,
Lord of the world's elation,
Thou breath of things unseen!

Swiftly and adequately there is built a picture of man's evanescent life in the lines which make of him

"A fleet and shadowy column
Of dust and mountain rain"—

yet "the breath of things unseen" sweeps through the whole poem, leaving us with the conviction that life is more than the body which contains it, and that there is an exaltation of spirit which is proof of our divine nature. The inspiration is apparent. The intellectual content is there, although it is hidden beneath an elusive simplicity. The phrasing, which gives form to the essential idea in the poem, is in tune with the lift of pinions which can bear us to invisible heights.

Another selection from the pen of Bliss Carman will illustrate a point upon which I should like to dwell for a moment. It is not necessary that a great poem shall have for its theme a grand or exalted subject. The true poet is able to see the wondrous and the beautiful in simple things, as well as in the more lofty moods of man or of nature. If, in the little things of earth and in its changing seasons, he can catch the suggestion of the infinite and the unchanging, he may indeed be said to have the vision of the artist. In the sonnet by Carman under the title, "Winter", we have an example of this power to present "the world transfigured to a temple of her Lord". Here, in the exquisite colouring of a Canadian landscape, we have revealed to us the universal significance of all earthly beauty:

When winter comes along the river line,
And Earth has put away her green attire,
With all the pomp of her autumnal pride,
The world is made a sanctuary old,
Where Gothic trees uphold the arch of gray,
And gaunt stone fences on the ridge's crest
Stand like carved screens before a crimson shrine,
Showing the sunset glory through the chinks.
There, like a nun with frosty breath, the soul,
Uplift in adoration, sees the world
Transfigured to a temple of her Lord;
While down the soft blue-shadowed aisles of snow
Night, like a sacristan with silent step,
Passes to light the tapers of the stars.

Although the ecstasy of his joy in nature prompts the writing of Carman in the many volumes which he has added to our literature, it is interesting to know that the highest flight of his genius is in the portrayal of the character of one of England's sweetest singers. The threnody which bears the title, "The White Gull", is an ode written for the centenary of Shelley's death. If our author had maintained, throughout his work, the quality of this monody, he would undoubtedly be one of the greatest poets in our

language. Sincerity, imaginative power and splendour, the poignant phrase, the rhythmic sweep of melodious and inspired utterance, mark this truly great poem. I am especially glad to have these verses to quote just because so many of the selections which I have been forced to use are in sonnet form. That a Canadian has excelled in other exacting measures of a length which demands sustained force, is an achievement of which we may be justly proud. When thinking of great threnodies, we almost inevitably bring to mind Milton's "Lycidas", Tennyson's "In Memoriam", and Shelley's "Adonais". For one's own satisfaction and because it is well to be just to a fellow-countryman, one should place Carman's poem beside these others which I have mentioned? Approach this study with the determination to judge without prejudice. I shall quote only some of the most exquisite lines in "The White Gull":

A hundred years ago to-day
 There came a soul,
 A pilgrim of the perilous light,
 Treading the spheral paths of night,
 On whom the word and vision lay
 With dread control.

And again,

O, captain of the rebel host,
 Lead forth and far!
 Thy toiling troopers of the night
 Press on the unavailing fight;
 The sombre field is not yet lost,
 With thee for star.

Thy lips have set the hail and haste
 Of clarions free
 To bugle down the wintry verge
 Of time for ever, when the surge
 Thunders and trembles on a waste
 And open sea.

And:

Thou heart of all the hearts of men,
 Tameless and free,
 And vague as that marsh-wandering fire,
 Leading the world's outworn desire
 A night march down this ghostly fen,
 From sea to sea!

Through this divided camp of dream
 Thy feet have passed,
 As one who should set hand to rouse
 His comrades from their heavy drowse;
 For only their own deeds redeem
 God's sons at last!

Surely thou wert a lonely one,
 Gentle and wild;
 And the round sun delayed for thee
 In the red moorlands by the sea
 When Tyrian autumns lured thee on,
 A wistful child,

To rove the tranquil vacant year,
 From dale to dale;
 And the great Mother took thy face
 Between her hands for one long gaze.
 And bade thee follow without fear
 The endless trail.

.....

And yet within thee flamed and sang
 The dauntless heart,
 Knowing all passion and the pain
 Of Man's imperious disdain,
 Since God's great part in thee gave pang
 To Earth's frail part!

In our search for great poetry written by Canadians, we have followed an accepted procedure in first quoting from the work of Carman and Roberts. However, we do not by implication give to these two writers the pre-eminence which might be inferred from this way of approach to our subject. In the collected work of Archibald Lampman we find the major note. Although much of his verse was limited by a temperament which sought to escape from life, and by a physique which was not fitted to endure the defeats and victories of intense living, we can turn to his sonnets with assurance that he has made for himself a place in world literature. To all who are truly called to be poets, and who are thereby exiled from the ordinary life of men, there must come periods of intense loneliness. This spiritual solitude has caused many artists to follow pathways which are forbidden by the moralists. However, those who possessed the guiding star of an ideal have passed safely through these wintry wastes, and have found an added evidence that there is "a hidden Beauty at the goal of life", and that we are never really alone while we are a part of "the great human sea" in which we are borne forward to ends beyond our imagining. In this larger life we can become so absorbed that it compensates us for the loss of personal happiness and the ordinary rewards of living. In the sonnet sequence to which he has given the name, "The Larger Life", Lampman has given us great poetry in which he embodies these ideas:

I

I lie upon my bed and hear and see.
 The moon is rising through the glistening trees;
 And momentarily a great and sombre breeze,
 With a vast voice returning fitfully,
 Comes like a deep-toned grief, and stirs in me,
 Somehow, by some inexplicable art,
 A sense of my soul's strangeness, and its part
 In the dark march of human destiny.
 What am I, then, and what are they that pass
 Yonder, and love and laugh, and mourn and weep?
 What shall they know of me, or I, alas!
 Of them? Little. At times, as if from sleep,
 We waken to this yearning passionate mood,
 And tremble at our spiritual solitude.

II

Nay, never once to feel we are alone,
 While the great human heart around us lies:
 To make the smile on others' lips our own,
 To live upon the light in others' eyes;
 To breathe without a doubt the limpid air
 Of that most perfect love that knows no pain:
 To say—I love you—only, and not care
 Whether the love comes back to us again:
 Divinest self-forgetfulness, at first
 A task, and then a tonic, then a need:
 To greet with open hands the best and worst,
 And only for another's wound to bleed:
 This is to see the beauty that God meant,
 Wrapped round with life, ineffably content.

III

There is a beauty at the goal of life,
 A beauty growing since the world began,
 Through every age and race, through lapse and strife,
 Till the great human soul complete her span.
 Beneath the waves of storm that lash and burn,
 The currents of blind passion that appal,
 To listen and keep watch till we discern
 The tide of sovereign truth that guides it all;
 So to address our spirits to the height,
 And so attune them to the valiant whole,
 That the great light be greater for our light,
 And the great soul the stronger for our soul:
 To have done this is to have lived, though fame
 Remember us with no familiar name.

Here, once more, you have Canadian poetry which may confidently be placed beside that of the giants of the Victorian era in England. Keats, Rossetti, Wordsworth have all chosen the sonnet

form for much of their most enduring work. It is good for us to know that we have poets who, at times, reached heights attained by masters of their art. After these poems by Lampman have been submitted to the most rigorous analysis, I still feel assured that they will meet the requirements demanded for great poetry.

Of another, who was born at the time which ushered Carman, Roberts and Lampman into the world, it has been said by William Archer, the well-known English critic, "He is before everything a colourist. He paints in lines of a peculiar and vivid translucency. But he is also a metrist of no mean skill, and an imaginative thinker of no mean capacity." Duncan Campbell Scott was among the first Canadian poets to receive recognition abroad. By many he is regarded as the most skilful of our craftsmen in the realm of verse. With this judgment I cannot find myself in agreement. To me it is one of those literary myths which so easily arise, and are perpetuated by the unthinking. Someone in authority makes a statement. Others, without investigation, often without having read the work of the author, repeat the original error until it assumes the appearance of fact. With the criticism which I have quoted from William Archer I can find no fault. It fairly and adequately sums up the outstanding merits of this poet. It would, indeed, be surprising if a writer possessed of the mind and emotional capacity of Duncan Campbell Scott had not been inspired to write greatly. If, like the author of "The Elegy in a Country Churchyard", he has produced but one addition to English verse which can be given first rank, it remains true that he is an authentic poet and worthy of consideration in our discussion. I find, in his sonnet "To the Heroic Soul", the qualities which we are seeking:

Be strong, O warring soul! For very sooth
 Kings are but wraiths, republics fade like rain,
 Peoples are reaped and garnered as the grain,
 And that alone prevails which is the truth:
 Be strong when all the days of life bear ruth
 And fury, and are hot with toil and strain:
 Hold thy large faith and quell thy mighty pain:
 Dream the large dream which buoys thine age with youth.

Thou art an eagle in a sea-stopped cave:
 He, poised in darkness with victorious wings,
 Keeps nigh between the granite and the sea,
 Until the tide has drawn the warder-wave:
 Then, from the portal where the ripple rings,
 He bursts into the boundless morning—free!

Here we have exhibited the unity of conception and the musical effect which must characterize this poetic form. The true sonnet

is a wave of sound. The first eight lines represent the flow; the next three, the crest of the wave and its breaking; the last three lines, the ebb. Dr. Scott's technique is perfect in this instance. The rhetorical flow of language is in keeping with the thought content, and his phrasing,—“an eagle in a sea-stopped cave”, “keeps night between the granite and the sea”, “the warder-wave”—is original and picturesque. The alliterative effect in “the ripple rings” comes at the exact moment when the dying cadence of the music should fall upon the ear that has heard the sweep of wings when the soul was freed from its bondage. We feel that the poet has achieved greatness both in his conception and in its expression.

In bringing to a close this quest for the major note in Canadian poetry, I have no apologies to make for the omission of names which may be familiar to all. By the extravagant praise of mediocrity I believe that only harm can be done to literature in Canada. Too often adjectives—nay, superlatives—are recklessly applied to Canadian verse which is of the ordinary magazine variety. In this age, when education is wide-spread among the masses, when machine-made products are common not merely in shops but also upon our library shelves, when any gentleman of scholarly taste or leisure can manufacture verse over night and have it accepted by an undiscerning editor, when millions of presentable rhymes are printed within a passing year, it is very difficult to keep clear and shining the high standard demanded by art. We therefore owe a debt of gratitude to those who have wrought with infinite patience, and who have refused to lower their ideal.

Such an one was Marjorie L. C. Pickthall. Although she was not a native-born Canadian, she was brought to this country at the age of six. She spent her childhood in the city of Toronto, and all that went to the making of her mind and soul was derived from our soil. In her we have a woman poet whom we can place beside the greatest who have lived in older lands. Her exquisite and delicate craftsmanship has not been surpassed by any other Canadian writer, and, in the dream world of the creative imagination her place is unique. A sentence from Dr. Lorne Pierce's volume, *Marjorie Pickthall: A Book of Remembrance*, may seem like extravagant praise, but, to those who have studied the work of this poet, it will be justified. He says, “The light, celestial quality of her drifting rhythm, the unblemished beauty of her jewelled vocabulary, the colourful magic of her descriptive imagery, these she lovingly shepherded into the fold of her undying song.”

At the age of seventeen she submitted a poem in a contest arranged by the *Toronto Mail and Empire*. In sincerity, in spiritual

perception, and in technique it embodies the requirements demanded for a great work of art. The first line is usually given as the title for these verses:

Oh keep the world for ever at the dawn,
 Ere yet the opals, cobweb-strung, have dried;
 Ere yet too bounteous gifts have marred the morn,
 Or fading stars have died.
 Oh keep the eastern gold no wider than
 An angel's finger-span,
 And hush the increasing thunder of the sea
 To murmuring melody,
 In those fair coves where tempests ne'er should be.

Hold back the line of shoreward-sweeping surge,
 And veil each deep sea-pool in pearlier mist,
 Ere yet the silver ripples on the verge
 Have turned to amethyst.
 Fling back the chariot of encroaching day,
 And call the winds away,
 Ere yet they sigh, and let the hastening sun
 Along his path in Heaven no higher run,
 But show through all the golden years his golden rim
 With shadows lingering dim
 For ever o'er the world awaiting him.

And the last stanza—

Oh keep the world for ever at the dawn!
 Yet, keeping so, let nothing lifeless seem,
 But hushed as if the miracle of morn
 Were trembling in its dream.
 Some shadowy moth may pass with downy flight,
 And fade before the sight,
 While in the unlightened darkness of the wall
 The chirping crickets call.
 From forest pools, where fragrant lilies are,
 A breath shall pass afar;
 And o'er the crested pine shall hang one star.

There is a very grave responsibility facing the teachers in our Canadian schools. In their hands they have the material out of which must be developed the citizens of the future. Shall we, as many have done in the past, deny to our children the great heritage of their literature? We have a good working knowledge of the classics which have made the glory of Britain, and of the great poetry which has done so much to make the name of England a proud word upon the lips of her people. Are teachers familiar with Canadian poetry which will cause hearts to thrill when the name of Canada is mentioned? Can they impart to their pupils

some of the enthusiasm for their native literature which they have every right to feel? Unless, by some supreme effort, there can be destroyed that prejudice which refuses to give to Canadian letters the same meed of appreciation that is so generously and without question bestowed upon the literature of the older land, the task of making a nation north of '49 is a hopeless undertaking. Let us refrain from claiming merit for things Canadian unless they be absolutely worthy of praise. Let us insist that poetry in Canada must reach the standard demanded of art in all other countries and in all circumstances of place and time. But, let us be fair.

We are proud of the fact that we have taken a place at the table of the League of Nations, and have been given a voice in world politics. Let us be equally proud of our achievements in the more important realms of the intellect and spirit. Leadership in the arts and letters is something which will endure, and which can assure the permanence of our nation as a force making towards true progress. That we have, in the short period of sixty years, made an authentic contribution to world literature, that we have produced great poetry, is evidenced by the short study which we have undertaken here. In the highest attainment of writers who are still with us we can see our promise for the future.

Let us learn to think of Canada in terms of beauty—in terms of poetry, so that, at the very mention of her name, our hearts may be thrilled by song. An echo of our love finds voice in the following lines:

When the silver frost has jewelled
Tangled lace of leaf and fern,
We have bowed before thy splendour
Where the crimson maples burn.

Silent beauty of our Northland,
When the plains lie white and bare,
We have seen auroral rainbows
Fling thy banners on the air.

Maiden, Queen, and Mate of Valour,
Born of love beyond our ways,
We would hold thee as a vision
Meté to light our greatest days!

We would hold thee in our dreaming
'Til thy face from sea to sea,
Is a star of promise flashing
With the pride of liberty!