

lectures in English and Mathematics, but they seem to have left no very vivid impression upon him, for afterwards in his talks with me about those Edinburgh days he never referred to them. All his talk was of his quiet life in lodgings with Pickard, and their unadventurous prowlings about the grey old city. Pickard had a gentle and lovable personality, and an able intellect. But he was interested in books rather than in life. Unlike Carman, he was in Edinburgh with a definite purpose and ambition. He was fitting himself for a professorial career. He gave himself up to his studies with an ardour which was ultimately to sap his vitality and cut him down before he reached his goal. As far as fresh cultural influences were concerned, these two young exiles from their beloved little city on the St. John, shut in upon themselves by their inexperience and strangeness, might as well have been in a monastery. And so it was that when, in 1883, Carman returned to Fredericton, he brought with him little more than a few surface impressions, and a confirmation of his own restlessness and uncertainties.

The Muse, set on shaping a poet to her taste who should own no divided allegiance, kept diplomatically heading him off from the entanglements of anything like a settled career. Back in Fredericton, after experimenting, as I have said, with school-teaching, and incuriously sniffing at the musty tomes in a law office, he tried his hand at surveying for a while, which was more congenial to him because it took him into the wilds and he could make-believe he was just "camping-out." But meanwhile he was fitting himself, whether consciously or unconsciously, for his destined work in life. He was writing quantities of verse, all in intricate and rigid forms which he taught himself to handle not only with ease but with severest exactness. He had got hold of a little volume on "Ballades and Rondeaux" and other French verse-forms, by Gleeson White, which fired him by the fascinating difficulties it presented. Presently he was turning out a profusion of perfectly wrought ballades, rondels, rondeaux and triolets,—but the last two especially. That most unyielding of verse-forms, the rondeau, was plastic as wax in his hands. When I was editor of the *Toronto Week*, (in 1884, I think), I printed a column-and-a-half poem of his, called "Ma Belle Canadienne, Julie," of which every stanza was a rondeau. That frail and tricky trifle, the triolet, light as a thistle-down, yet unbending as glass, was complaisant to his touch. He addressed to me a triolet beginning—

My glad Greek boy, in love with life,
Wake the old echoes with your song—

Goldwin Smith, started *The Week*, as an organ for the advancement of culture and for the promulgation of his own peculiar views as to the destiny of Canada, he made one of his mistakes when he called me up from Fredericton to Toronto to take the post of editor. My chief qualification for the post was a touching but quite unjustified faith in my fitness for it. I had a much more vivid realization of the importance of editors than I had of the importance or the rights of proprietors. Also my views as to the destiny of Canada were passionately, and vocally, opposed to those of Goldwin Smith. My heart goes out in sympathy to him when I think of the annoyance I must have caused him,—and that for so much longer than I could have expected! Then, with generous compensation, he dispensed with my services, and I returned to Fredericton, the richer by an interesting, if strenuous, experience. About a year later I was appointed to the chair of English at the old U. E. Loyalist University of King's College, at Windsor, Nova Scotia, where I was to spend perhaps the most fruitful ten years of my life—and where I was to find the opportunity of renewing my old intimacy with Carman.

Of all my sins of omission, the one for which I am most often moved to do penance is my neglect to keep a diary. Any kind of diary, however haphazard and fragmentary, is infinitely better than none. How I wish I were able to give now the date of Carman's first visit to me at King's College! I remember only that I had been several years at King's before I succeeded in luring him away from his journalistic and other adventurings in New York to the lovely and storied Acadian land, which was to stamp its colour and its emotional atmosphere so ineffaceably into the texture of much of his greatest poetry. That first visit was to give us, eventually, "Low Tide on Grand Pré" and a long line of kindred poems. He came, saw, and was conquered. Thereafter he came often and often lingered long, knowing well that the latch-string of Kingscroft-in-the-Firs was always hanging out for him with eager expectancy.

It was natural that Carman should feel himself at home here from the first. King's College, founded by the Loyalists, modelled on Oxford, and first of all colonial universities to be endowed with a Royal Charter, had a gracious, old-world atmosphere peculiarly contenting to Carman's distinctly aristocratic spirit. The College building itself, standing grey and venerable among its elms on the brow of a park-like westerly slope, and looking out across wide green dyke-meadows toward the far-off misty purple of the Ardise Hills, was screened off from view of the town of

him as an agreeable mystery, and never got very intimate with him. When they saw him prowling aimlessly about or around the house, loose-jointed, riotous-haired, and the fair blue eye unseeing, while he murmured and mumbled inarticulately, ("like a big bumble-bee", as they put it), they would decide that he was composing a "pome" and would drift off, much impressed, to some far corner of the woods or the football field, that their play might not disturb the sacred process. They seemed to understand this sacred process instinctively. But to my wife it was a never-ending source of mild amusement. She approved of him, —but it seemed to her such a queer way to write poetry.

Different as are Carman's methods from my own, and much as we differ in some fundamental characteristics, there was always such a degree of sympathy between us that in all our years of association we never got on each other's nerves, or had anything like a misunderstanding. We disagreed quite widely on many important points. But that was of no more consequence to us than the difference in our stature or in the way we wore our hair. His method of composition, as a rule, was to write right on,—leaving gaps when he came to obstacles which could not be taken in his stride,—and afterwards to revise with meticulous care. My own method has always been to write very slowly, finishing and condensing as I go, and stopping to deal with each difficulty as I come to it. I cannot think that the one method is better or worse than the other. It is a matter of temperament. When Carman conceived a poem, it was likely to grow in the writing to a greater length than he originally intended. When I plan a poem, it is likely to turn out much shorter than I expected, my idea of revision being to cut out everything that can be spared.

Over and above the innate sympathy which existed between us, there seemed to be at times a sort of telepathic contact. One morning at breakfast I told Bliss that in the night I had dreamed a poem, of which on waking I could remember nothing except the two opening lines. I said these lines were good enough, but I couldn't do anything with them. They meant nothing to me, and did not seem to belong to me. They ran this way:—

Buried alive in calm Rochelle,
Six in a row, by the crystal well.

Bliss pounced upon them at once. "Give them to me, Old Man," he exclaimed eagerly. "I feel them all right. That dream got into your brain by mistake. It was intended for me. I'll capture the whole poem."

let me digress for a moment to recall one night in New York when Carman and I were dining with Gilbert Parker at Monquin's. Carman said something about a poem he was going to write, to be called "The Gift of The Simple King." Parker instantly fell in love with the title, and begged for it. Carman was inexorable. At last Parker said "I want it for a story. That won't prevent you using it for your poems. I'll put it in quotation marks if you like. Here's twenty-five dollars for it. But if you won't sell it to me, I'll commit highway robbery and take it."

"I couldn't bear to be responsible for your moral downfall," said Bliss, and contentedly pocketed the cash.

But to return to Dick Hovey's game for poets. This was the manner of it. First we would agree as to what form of poem we were to exercise our craftsmanship upon, whether a fixed form, —sonnet, quatrain, dizain, as might be chosen,—or a piece of verse of any form, or of any length up to about a hundred lines. We limited the length because we limited the time,—usually to forty-eight hours. Never less than that, because we took the game very seriously, and would not encourage the perpetration of any slap dash impromptus. These weighty points settled, we would each select three titles upon which we would like to write. Each title was written on a separate slip of paper, folded minutely, and dropped into a hat. Then some unprejudiced hand would draw one slip, and read out the title. After that it was a go-as-you-please until the appointed hour, some days later, when we would meet in my study and compare the fruits of our labours.

And these labours were not altogether unfruitful. Among the compositions thus produced we each of us found two or three which we judged worth preserving, and afterwards included in our collections. Of the three, Hovey was rather the best at the game. He always managed to turn out something worth while, at the same time conforming strictly to the rules with which we deliberately fettered ourselves. Carman was the most lawless in this respect. If a quatrain or a sonnet was the form called for, he might start upon it conscientiously enough, but suddenly burst the bars and express himself in a forty-line lyric. On one occasion the title which had been given him by the fortune of the draw proved so much to his liking that he came to the show-down with a hundred-line fragment, which he said was merely the introduction to his poem. We frowned, at first, on this reckless infraction of the rules. But when he read us what he had written, we enthusiastically forgave him. That poem ultimately ran to between three and four hundred lines, and appeared in one of his volumes of