

CHAPTER VI

NOTE ON THE INFLUENCE OF FINNISH POETRY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

THE subject of Finnish poetry ought to have a special interest for the Japanese student, if only for the reason that Finnish poetry comes more closely in many respects to Japanese poetry than any other form of Western poetry. Indeed it is supposed that the Finnish race is more akin to the Tartar races, and therefore probably to the Japanese, than the races of Europe proper. Again, through Longfellow, the value of Finnish poetry to English poetry was first suggested, and I think you know that Longfellow's Indian epic, "The Song of Hiawatha," was modelled entirely upon the Finnish *Kalevala*.

But a word about the *Kalevala*, which has a very interesting history. I believe you know that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the *Kalevala* was not known to exist. During the first half of the century, Finnish scholars in the University of Helsingfors (where there is now a great and flourishing university) began to take literary interest in the popular songs of Finland. For years the people had been singing extraordinary songs, full of a strange beauty and weirdness quite unlike any other popular songs of Europe; and for centuries professional singers had been wandering about the country teaching these songs to the accompaniment of a kind of *biwa* called Kantela. The scholars of the University began to collect these songs from the mouths of the peasants and musicians—at first with great difficulty, afterwards with much success. The difficulty was a very curious one. In Finland the ancient pagan religion had really never died; the songs of the peas-

ants were full of allusions to the old faith and the old gods, and the orthodox church had often attempted in vain to prevent the singing of these songs, because they were not Christian. So the peasants at first thought that the scholars who wanted to copy the songs were government spies or church spies who wanted evidence to justify punishments. When the fears of the people had been removed and when they came to understand that the questioners were only scholars interested in literary beauty, all the secret stores of songs were generously opened, and an immense collection of oral literature was amassed in the University at Helsingfors.

The greatest of the scholars engaged in the subsequent work of arranging and classifying was Doctor Lönnrot. While examining the manuscript of these poems he was struck by the fact that, put together in a particular order, they naturally made one great continuous story or epic. Was it possible that the Finnish people had had during all these centuries an epic unknown to the world of literature? Many persons would have ridiculed the idea. But Lönnrot followed up that idea, and after some years' study he disengaged from all that mass of song something in the shape of a wonderful epic, the epic of the *Kalevala*. Lönnrot was probably, almost certainly, the only one who had even understood the idea of an epic of this kind. The peasants did not know. They only had the fragments of the whole; parts of the poem existed in one province, parts in another; no Finnish musician had ever known the whole. The whole may have been made first by Lönnrot. At all events he was the Homer of the *Kalevala*, and it was fortunate for Finland that he happened to be himself both a scholar and a poet—qualifications seldom united in the same person.

What is the *Kalevala* as we now possess it? It is an epic, but not like any other epic in the world, for the subject of it is Magic. We might call it the Epic of Magic. It is the story of how the world and the heaven and the sun and the moon and the stars, the elements and the races

of living creatures and all other things were created by magic; also how the first inhabitants of the world lived, and loved, and fought. But there is another thing to be said in a general way about this magic. The magic of the *Kalevala* is not like anything else known by that name in European literature. The magic of the *Kalevala* is entirely the magic of words. These ancient people believed in the existence of words, by the utterance of which anything might be accomplished. Instead of buying wood and hiring carpenters, you might build a house by uttering certain magical words. If you had no horse and wanted to travel rapidly, you could make a horse for yourself out of bits of bark and old sticks by uttering over them certain magical words. But this was not all. Beings of intellect, men and women, whole armies of men, in fact, might be created in a moment by the utterance of these mystical words. There is the real subject of the *Kalevala*.

I told you that the epic is not like anything else in European literature and not like anything else in the world as to the subject. But this is not the case as regards the verse. The verse is not like Japanese verse, indeed, but it comes nearer to it than any other European verse does. Of course even in Finnish verse, accents mean a great deal, and accent means nothing at all in Japanese verse. But I imagine something very much like Finnish verse might be written in Japanese, provided that in reciting it a slight stress is thrown on certain syllables. Of course you know something about Longfellow's "Hiawatha"—such lines as these:

And the evening sun descending
Set the clouds on fire with redness,
Burned the broad sky, like a prairie,
Left upon the level water
One long track and trail of splendor,
Down whose stream, as down a river,
Westward, westward Hiawatha
Sailed into the fiery sunset,

Sailed into the purple vapors,
Sailed into the dusk of evening.*

You will observe this is verse of eight syllables with four trochees to a line. Now it is perhaps as near to Finnish verse as English verse can be made. But the Finnish verse is more musical, and it is much more flexible, and the rules of it can be better carried out than in English. There is much more to be thought about than the placing of four trochaic feet to a line. Not only must the verse be trochaic, it must also be alliterative, and it must also be, to some extent, rhymed verse—a matter which Longfellow did not take into consideration. That would have doubled his difficulty. To make verse trochaic, alliterative and rhymed, is very difficult indeed—that is, to do it well. Only one liberty is allowed; it is not necessary that the rhyme shall be regular and constant; it is necessary only that it should be occasional. But the interest of Finnish verse does not end here. I have not yet mentioned the most important law of Finnish poetry—the law of parallelism or repetition. Parallelism is the better word. It means the repetition of a thought in a slightly modified way. It is parallelism especially that makes so splendid the English translation of the Bible, and the majesty of such passages in the Book of Common Prayer as the Funeral Service. So that Finnish poetry is anything but very simple. We may now sum it up thus—trochaic verse of eight syllables, with alliteration and rhyme, a caesura in the same part of every line, and every line reiterated in parallelism.

A little above I mentioned the English of the Bible. Long ago I explained why that English is so beautiful and so strong. But remember that much of the best of the Bible, in the original Hebrew, was not prose but verse, and that the fine effects have been produced by translating the verse into musical prose. The very effect can be produced by translating the *Kalevala* into prose. Occasionally the passages are of surprising beauty, and they are always of surprising

* *The Song of Hiawatha*, XXII *Hiawatha's Departure*.

strangeness.

It is in parallelism especially that Finnish poetry offers a contrast to Japanese, but there is no reason whatever why, in the longer poems of Japanese poetry, parallelism could not be used. All things have value according to place and time, and this has value—provided that it has a special effect on a special occasion. All through the *Kalevala*, all through five hundred pages, large pages,* the parallelism is carried on, and yet one never gets tired. It is not monotonous. But that is because the subject is so well adapted to this form of poetry. See how the poem opens, when the poet begins to talk about what he is going to sing:—

“Anciently my father sang me these words in hewing the handle of his ax; anciently my mother taught me these words as she turned her spindle. In that time I was only a child, a little child at the breast,—a useless little being creeping upon the floor at the feet of its nurse, its cheek bedaubed with milk. And there are other words which I drew from the spring of knowledge, which I found by the wayside, which I snatched from the heart of the thickets, which I detached from the branches of the trees, which I gathered at the edges of the pastures—when, in my infancy, I used to go to guard the flocks, in the midst of the honey-streaming meadows, upon the gold-shining hills, behind the black Muurikki, behind the spotted Kimmo, my favourite cows.

“Also the cold sang the songs, the rain sang me verses, the winds of heaven, the waves of the sea made me hear their poems, the birds instructed me with their melodies, the long-haired trees invited me to their concerts. And all the songs I gathered together, I rolled them up in a skin, I carried them away in my beautiful little holiday sledge, I deposited them in the bottom of a chest of brass, upon the highest shelf of my treasure house.”

Now when a poem opens that way we may be sure that there are great things in it; and some of these great things

* *Le Kalevala*. Traduit par L. Leouzon de Duc. Paris: Internationale. 1867. (Hearn Library No. 1764).

we shall read about presently. The *Kalevala* is full of wonderful stories. But in the above quotation, I want you to see how multiple it is, and yet it is beautiful. Now there is a very interesting thing yet to tell you about this parallelism. Such poems as those of the *Kalevala* have always to be sung not by one singer but by two. The two singers straddle a bench facing each other and hold each other's hands. Then they sing alternately, each chanting one line, rocking back and forward, pulling each other to and fro as they sing—so that it is like the motion of rowing. One chants a line and pulls backward, then the other chants the next line and pulls in the opposite direction. Not to be able to answer at once would be considered a great disgrace; and every singer has to be able to improvise as well as to sing. And that is the signification of the following verse:

“Put thy hand to my hand—place thy fingers between my fingers—that we may sing of the things which are.”

The most beautiful story in this wonderful book is the story of Kullervo. It was after reading this story that Longfellow imagined his story of the Strong Man Kwasind.* Kullervo is born so strong that as an infant he breaks his cradle to pieces, and as a boy he cannot do any work, for all the tools and instruments break in his grasp. Therefore he gives a great deal of trouble at home and has to go out into the world to seek his fortune. In the world, of course, he has just the same trouble; for nobody will employ him very long. However, the story of Kullervo's feats of strength, though interesting, need not now concern us. The great charm of this composition is in the description of a mother's love which it contains. Kullervo brought misfortune everywhere simply by his strength and by his great passions—at last committing a terrible crime, causing the death of his own sister, whom he does not recognize. He goes back home in desperation and remorse; and there everybody regards him with horror, except only his mother. She alone

* In *The Song of Hiawatha*.

tries to console him; she alone tells him that repentance may bring him rest. He then proposes to go away and amend his wrong-doing in solitude. But first he bids them all goodbye, and the episode is characteristic.

Kullervo, son of Kalervo, gets him ready to depart; he goes to his old father and says: "Farewell now, O my dear father. Wilt thou regret me bitterly, when thou shalt learn that I am dead?—that I have disappeared from among the multitude of the living?—that I no longer am one of the members of thy family?" The father answered: "No, certainly I will not regret thee when I shall hear that thou art dead. Another son perchance will be born to me—a son who will grow up better and wiser than thou."

Kullervo, son of Kalervo, answered: "And I also will not be sorry if I hear that thou art dead. Without any trouble I can find me such a father as thou—a stone-hearted father, a clay-mouthed father, a berry-eyed father, a straw-bearded father, a father whose feet are made of the roots of the willow tree, a father whose flesh is decaying wood." Why does Kullervo use these extraordinary terms? It is a reference to magic—out of stone and clay and straw, a phantom man can be made, and Kullervo means to say that his father is no more to him than a phantom father, an unreal father, a father who has no fatherly feeling. His brothers and sisters all questioned in turn if they will be sorry to hear that he is dead, make the same cruel answer; and he replies to them with the same angry words. But it is very different when he speaks to his mother.

For to his mother he said—"Oh my sweet mother, my beautiful nurse, my loved protectress, wilt thou regret me bitterly when thou shalt learn that I am dead, that I have disappeared from the multitude of the living, that I am no longer one of the members of thy family?"

The mother made answer: "Thou dost not comprehend the soul of the mother—thou canst not understand the heart of the mother. Assuredly will I regret thee most bitterly when I shall learn that thou art dead, that thou hast dis-

appeared from among the multitude of the living, that thou hast ceased to be one of the members of my family. Floods of tears shall I weep in my chamber. The waves of tears will overflow on the floor. And upon the stairway lamentably shall I weep; and in the stable loudly shall I sorrow. Upon the icy ways the snow shall melt under my tears—under my tears the earth of the roads shall melt away; under my tears new meadow grass shall grow up, green sprouting, and through that grass little streams shall murmur away.” To this mother, naturally, Kullervo says no unkind words. He goes away, able at least to feel that there is one person in the world who loves him and one person in the world whom he loves. But how much his mother really loves him he does not yet know; he will know that later—it forms the most beautiful part of the poem.

“Kullervo directed his steps once more to the home of his fathers. Desolate he found it, desolate and deserted; no person advanced to salute him, no person came to press his hand, to give him welcome.

“He drew near to the hearth: the embers were extinguished. By that he knew that his mother had ceased to be.

“He drew near to the fire-place, and the stones of the fire-place were cold. By that he knew that his father had ceased to be.

“He turned his eyes upon the floor of his home; the planks of the floor were covered with dirt and rubbish. By that he knew that his sister had ceased to be.

“To the shore of the sea he went; the boat that used to be there was there no longer. By that he knew that his brother had ceased to be.

“Then he began to weep. For a whole day he wept, for two whole days he wept; then he cried aloud: ‘O my mother, O my sweet mother, what didst thou leave thy son yet in the world? Alas! now thou canst hear me no longer; and it is in vain that I stand above thy tomb, that I sob over the place of thine eyebrows, over the place of thy temples; it is in vain that I cry out my grief above thy

dead forehead.'

"The mother of Kullervo awakened in her tomb, and out of the depth of the dust she spake to him: 'I have left the dog Mastif, in order that thou mayst go with him to the chase. Take therefore the faithful dog, and go with him into the wild forest, into the dark wilderness, even to the dwelling place, far away, of the blue-robed Virgins of the wood, and there thou wilt seek thy nourishment, thou wilt ask for the game that is necessary to thy existence.'"

It was believed that there was a particular forest god, who protected the trees and the wild things of the wood. The hunter could be successful in the chase only upon condition of obtaining his favour and permission to hunt. This explains the reference to the abode of the forest god. But Kullervo cannot go far; his remorse takes him by the throat.

"Kullervo, son of Kalervo, took his faithful dog, and directed his steps toward the wild forest, toward the dark wilderness. But when he had gone only a little way he found himself at the very place where he had outraged the young girl, where he had dishonoured the child of his mother. And all things there mourned for her—all things; the soft grass and the tender foliage, and the little plants, and the sorrowful briars. The grass was no longer green, the briars no longer blossomed, the leaves and the plants hung withered and dry about the spot where the virgin had been dishonoured, where the brother had dishonoured his sister.

"Kullervo drew forth his sword, his sharp-edged sword; a long time he looked at it, turning it in his hand, and asking it whether it would feel no pleasure in eating the flesh of the man thus loaded with infamy, in drinking the blood of the man thus covered with crime.

"And the sword knew the heart of the man: it understood the question of the hero. And it made answer to him saying: 'Why indeed should I not gladly devour the flesh of the man who is loaded with infamy? Why indeed should I not drink with pleasure the blood of the man who is burdened with crime? For well I devoured even the flesh of

the innocent man, well can I drink even the blood of the man who is free from crime.'

"Then Kullervo fixed his sword in the earth, with the handle downwards and the point upwards, and he threw himself upon the point, and the point passed through all the depth of his breast.

"This was the end of all, this was the cruel destiny of Kullervo, the irrevocable end of the son of the heroes—the death of the 'Man of Misfortune.'"

You can see how very much unlike other Western poetry this poetry is. The imagination indeed is of another race and another time than those to whose literary productions we have become accustomed. But there is beauty here; and the strangeness of it indicates a possible literary value by which any literature may be more or less enriched. Many are the particular episodes which rival the beauty and strangeness of the episode of Kullervo; and I wish that we could have time to quote them. But I can only refer to them. There is, for example, the legend of the invention of music, when the hero Wainamoinen (supposed to represent the Spirit of the Wind, and the sound of the name indicates the wailing of the wind) invents the first musical instrument. In no other literature is there anything quite like this except in the Greek story of Orpheus. Even as the trees bent down their heads to listen to the song of Orpheus, and as the wild beasts became tamed at the sound, and as the very stones of the road followed to the steps of the musician, so is it in the *Kalevala*. But the Finnish Orpheus is the greater magician. To hear him, the sun and the moon come nearer to the earth, the waves of the sea stop short, bending their heads; the cataracts of the rivers hang motionless and silent; the fish raise their heads above the water. And when he plays a sad melody, all nature weeps with him, even the trees and the stones and the little plants by the wayside. And his own tears in falling become splendid pearls for the crowns of kings.

Then very wonderful too is the story of the eternal smith,

Ilmarinen, who forged the foundations of the world, forged the mountains, forged the blue sky, so well forging them that nowhere can be seen the marks of the pincers, the marks of the hammer, the heads of the nails. Working in his smithy we see him all grime and black; upon his head there is one yard deep of iron firing, upon his shoulders there is one fathom deep of soot—the soot of the forge; for he seldom has time to bathe himself. But when the notion takes him to get married, for the first time he bathes himself, and dresses himself handsomely; then he becomes the most beautiful of men. In order to win his wife he is obliged to perform miracles of work; yet after he wins her she is killed by wild beasts. Then he sets to work to forge himself a wife, a wife of silver, a bride of gold. Very beautiful she is, but she has no heart, and she is always cold, and there is no comfort in her; even all the magic of the world-maker cannot give her a warm heart. But the work is so beautiful that he does not like to destroy it. So he takes the wife of silver, the bride of gold, to the wisest of heroes, Wainamoinen, and offers her to him as a gift. But the hero will have no such gift, “Throw her back into your forged fire, O Ilmarinen,” the hero makes answer—“What greater folly, what greater sorrow can come upon man than to love a wife of silver, a bride of gold?”

This pretty story needs no explanation; the moral is simply “Never marry for money.”

Then there is the story of Lemminkainen (this personality suggested the Pau-Puk-Keewis of Longfellow*)—the joyous, reckless, handsome, mischievous pleasure-lover,—always falling into trouble, because he will not follow his mother’s advice, but always loved by her in spite of his follies. The mother of Lemminkainen is a more wonderful person than the mother of Kullervo. Her son has been murdered, thrown into a river—the deepest of all rivers, the river of the dead, the river of hell. And his mother goes out to find him. She asks the trees in the forest to tell her where her

* In *The Song of Hiawatha*.

son is, and she obliges them to answer. But they do not know. She asks the grass, the plants, the animals, the birds; she obliges even the road upon which he walked to talk to her; she talks to the stars and the moon and the sun. Only the sun knows, because he sees everything; and he answers, "Your son is dead, torn to pieces; he has been thrown into the river of Tuoni, the river of hell, the river of the dead." But the mother does not despair. Ilmarinen, the eternal smith, must make for her a rake of brass with teeth long enough to reach into the world of the dead, into the bottom of the abyss; and out of the abyss she brings up the parts of the torn body of her son; she puts them together; she sings over them a magic song; she brings her son to life again, and takes him home. But for a long time he is not able to remember, because he has been dead. After a long time he gets back his memory—only to get into new mischief out of which his mother must help him afresh.

The names of the three heroes quoted to you represent also the names of three great stories, out of the many stories contained in the epics. But in this epic, as in the Indian epics (I mean the Sanskrit epics), there is much more than stories. There are also chapters of moral instruction of a very curious kind—chapters about conduct, the conduct of the parents, the conduct of the children, the conduct of the husband, the conduct of the bride. The instructions to the bride are contained in the twenty-third Rune; there are altogether fifty Runes in the book. This appears to me likely to interest you, for it is written in relation to a family system not at all like the family system of the rest of Europe. I think you will find in it not a little that may remind you of Chinese teaching on the same subject—the conduct of the daughter-in-law. But there are of course many differences, and the most pleasing difference is the tone of great tenderness in which the instructions are given. Let us quote some of them:

"O young bride, O my young sister, O my well beloved and beautiful young flower, listen to the words which I am

going to speak to you, harken to the lesson which I am going to teach you. You are going now very far away from us, O beautiful flower!—you are going to take a long journey, O my wild-strawberry fruit! you are about to fly away from us, O most delicate down! you are about to leave us forever, O velvet tissue—far away from this habitation you must go, far away from this beautiful house, to enter another house, to enter into a strange family. And in that strange house your position will be very different. There you will have to walk about with care, to conduct yourself with prudence, to conduct yourself with thoughtfulness. There you will not be able, as in the house of your father, as in the dwelling of your mother, to run about where you please, to run singing through the valleys, to warble out your songs upon the roadway.

“New habits you must now learn, and forget all the old. You must abandon the love of your father and content yourself with the love of your father-in-law; you must bow very low, you must learn to be generous in the use of courteous words. You must give up old habits and form new ones; you must resign the love of your mother and content yourself with the love of your step-mother: lower must you bow, and you must learn to be lavish in the use of kindly words.

“New habits you must learn and forget the old: you must leave behind you the friendship of your brother, and content yourself with the friendship of your brother-in-law; you must bow lower than you do now; you must learn to be lavish of kindly words.

“New habits you must acquire and forget the old ones; you must leave behind you the friendship of your sister, and be satisfied with the friendship of your sister-in-law; you must learn to make humble reverence, to bow low, to be generous in kindly words.

“If the old man in the corner be to you even like a wolf, if the old woman in her corner be to you even as a she-bear in the house, if the brother-in-law be to you even

as a serpent upon the threshold, if the sister-in-law be to you even as a sharp nail, none the less you must show them each and all exactly the same respect and the same obedience that you have been accustomed to display to your father, to display to your mother, under the roof of your childhood home.”

Then follows a really terrible list of the duties that she must perform every day from early morning until late at night; to mention them all would take too long. I quote only a few, enough to show that the position of a Finnish wife was by no means an easy one.

“So soon as the cock crows in the morning you must be quick to rise; you must keep your ears awake to hear the cry of the cock. And if there be no cock, or the cock does not crow, then let the moon be as a cock for you, let the constellation of the Great Bear tell you when it is time to rise. Then you must quickly make the fire, skilfully removing the ashes, without sprinkling them upon the floor. Then quickly go to the stable, clean the stable, take food to the cattle, feed all the animals on the farm. For already the cow of your mother-in-law will be lowing for food; the horse of your father-in-law will be whinnying; the milch cow of your sister-in-law will be straining at her tether; the calf of your brother-in-law will be bleating; for all will be waiting for her whose duty it is to give them hay, whose duty it is to give them food.”

Like instructions are given about feeding the younger animals and the fowls and the little pigs. But she must not forget the children of the house at the same time:

“When you have fed the animals and cleaned the stables come back quickly, quickly as a snow-storm. For in the chamber the little child has awakened and has begun to cry in his cradle. He cannot speak, poor little one; he cannot tell you, if he be hungry or if he be cold, or if anything extraordinary has happened to him, before someone that he knows has come to care for him, before he hears the voice of his own mother.”

After enumerating and inculcating in the same manner all the duties of the day, the conduct to be observed toward every member of the family—father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister and brother in law and the children of them—we find a very minute code of conduct set forth in regard to neighbours and acquaintances. The young wife is especially warned against gossip, against listening to any stories about what happens in other people's houses, and against telling anybody what goes on within her own. One piece of advice is memorable. If the young wife is asked whether she is well fed, she should reply always that she has the best of everything which a house can afford, this even if she should have been left without any proper nourishment for several days. Evidently the condition of submission to which Finnish women were reduced by custom was something much less merciful than has ever been known in Eastern countries. Only a very generous nature could bear such discipline; and we have many glimpses in the poem of charming natures of this kind.

You have seen that merely as a collection of wonderful stories the *Kalevala* is of extraordinary interest, that it is also of interest as describing the social ethics of a little known people—finally that it is of interest, of very remarkable interest, merely as natural poetry—poetry treating of wild nature, especially rivers and forests and mountains, of the life of the fisher and hunter and wood-cutter. Indeed, so far as this kind of poetry is concerned, the *Kalevala* stands alone among the older productions of European poetry. You do not find this love of nature in Scandinavian poetry, nor in Anglo-Saxon poetry, nor in old German poetry, much less in the earlier form of French, Italian, or Spanish poetry. The old Northern poetry comes nearest to it; for in Anglo-Saxon composition we can find at least wonderful descriptions of the sea, of storms, of the hard life of sailors. But the dominant tone in Northern poetry is war; it is in descriptions of battle, or in accounts of the death of heroes, that the ancient English or ancient Scandinavian poets ex-

celled. In Finnish poetry, on the other hand, there is little or nothing about war. These peaceful people never had any warlike history; their life was agricultural for the most part, with little or no violence except such as the excitement of hunting and fishing could produce. Therefore they had plenty of time to think about nature, to love nature and to describe it as no other people of the same period described it. Striking comparisons have been made between the Anglo-Saxon Runes, or charm songs, and Finnish songs of the same kind, which fully illustrate this difference. Like the Finns, the early English had magical songs to the gods of nature—songs for the healing of wounds and the banishing of sickness. But these are very commonplace. Not one of them can compare as poetry with the verses of the Finnish on the same subject. Here are examples in evidence. The first is a prayer said when offering food to the Spirit of the forest, that he might aid the hunter in his hunting.

“Look, O Kuntar, a fat cake, a cake with honey, that I may propitiate the forest, that I may propitiate the forest, that I may entice the thick forest for the day of my hunting, when I go in search of prey. Accept my salt, O wood, accept my porridge, O Tapio, dear king of the wood with the hat of leaves, with the beard of moss.”

And here is a little prayer to the goddess of water repeated by a sick man taking water as a medicine.

“O pure water, O Lady of the Water, now do thou make me whole, lovely as before! for this I beg thee dearly, and in offering I give thee blood to appease thee, salt to propitiate thee!”

Or this:

“Goddess of the Sea, Mistress of waters, Queen of a hundred caves, arouse the scaly flocks, urge on the fishy-crowds forth from their hiding places, forth from the muddy shrine, forth from the net-hauling, to the nets of a hundred fishers! Take now thy beauteous shield, shake the golden water, with which thou frightenest the fish, and direct them toward the net beneath the dark level, above the borders

black.”

Yet another:

“O vigorous mistress of the wild beasts, sweet lady of the earth, come with me, be with me, where I go. Come thou and good luck bring me, to happy fortune help me. Make thou to move the foliage, the fruit tree to be shaken, and the wild beasts drive thither, the largest and the smallest, with their snouts of every kind, with their paws of fur of all kinds!”

Now when you look at these little prayers, when you read them over and observe how pretty they are, you will also observe that they make little pictures in the mind. Cannot you see the fish gliding over the black border under the dark level of the water, to the net of a hundred fishers? Can you not see the “dear king of the wood,” with his hat of leaves and his beard of moss? Can you not also see in imagination the wild creatures of the forest with their snouts of many shapes, with their fur of all kinds? But in Anglo-Saxon poetry you will not find anything like that. Anglo-Saxon Rune songs create no images. It is this picturesqueness, this actuality of imagery that is distinctive in Finnish poetry.

In the foregoing part of the lecture I have chiefly tried to interest you in the *Kalevala*. But aside from interesting you in the book itself as a story, as a poem, I hope to direct your attention to a particular feature in Finnish poetry which is most remote from Japanese poetry. I have spoken of resemblances as to structure and method; but it is just in that part of the method most opposed to Japanese tradition that the greatest interest lies. I do not mean only the use of natural imagery; I mean much more the use of parallelism to reinforce that imagery. That is the thing especially worthy of literary study. Indeed, I think that such study might greatly help towards a new development, a totally new departure in Japanese verse. In another lecture I spoke as sincerely as I could of the very high merit in the epigrammatic forms of Japanese poetry. These brief

forms of poetry have been developed in Japan to perfection not equalled elsewhere in modern poetry, perhaps not surpassed, in some respects, even by Greek poetry of the same kind. But there can be no doubt of this fact, that a national literature requires many other forms of expression than the epigrammatic form. Nothing that is good should ever be despised or cast aside; but because of its excellences, we should not be blind to the possibility of other excellences. Now Japanese literature has other forms of poetry—forms in which it is possible to produce poems of immense length, but the spirit of epigrammatic poetry has really been controlling even these to a great degree.

I mean that so far as I am able to understand the subject, the tendency of all Japanese poetry is to terse expression. Were it not well therefore to consider at least the possible result of a totally opposite tendency,—expansion of fancy, luxuriance of expression? Terseness of expression, pithiness, condensation, are of vast importance in prose, but poetry has other methods, and the *Kalevala* is one of the best possible object-lessons in the study of such methods, because of the very simplicity and naturalness with which they are followed.

Of course there was parallelism in Western poetry, and all arts of repetition, before anybody knew anything about the *Kalevala*. The most poetical part of the English Bible, as I said, whether in the Bible itself or in the Book of Common Prayer, depends almost entirely for its literary effect upon parallelism, because the old Hebrews, like the old Finns, practised this art of expression. Loosely and vaguely it was practised also by many poets almost unconsciously, who had been particularly influenced by the splendour of the scriptural translation. It had figured in prose-poetry as early as the time of Sir Thomas Browne. It had established quite a new idea of poetry even in America, where the great American poet Poe introduced it into his compositions before Longfellow studied the *Kalevala*. I told you that the work of Poe, small as it is, had influ-

enced almost every poet of the great epoch, including Tennyson and the Victorian masters. But the work even of Poe was rather instinctive than the result of any systematic idea. The systematic idea was best illustrated when the study of the *Kalevala* began.

Let us see how Longfellow used the suggestion; but remember that he was only a beginner, dealing with something entirely new—that he did not have the strength of Tennyson nor the magical genius of Swinburne to help him. He worked very simply, and probably very rapidly. There is a good deal of his “Song of Hiawatha” that is scarcely worthy of praise, and it is difficult to quote effectively from it, because the charm of the thing depends chiefly upon its reading as a whole. Nevertheless there are parts which so well show or imitate the Finnish spirit, that I must try to quote them. Take for instance the teaching of the little Indian child by his grandmother—such verses as these, where she talks to the little boy about the Milky Way in the sky :

Many things Nokomis taught him
Of the stars that shine in heaven;
Showed him Ishkoodah, the comet,
Ishkoodah, with fiery tresses;
Showed the Death-Dance of the spirits,
Warriors with their plumes and war-clubs,
Flaring far away to northward
In the frosty nights of Winter;
Showed the broad, white road in heaven,
Pathway of the ghosts, the shadows,
Running straight across the heavens,
Crowded with the ghosts, the shadows.*

Or take again the story of the origin of the flower commonly called “Dandelion” :

In his life he had one shadow,
In his heart one sorrow had he.
Once, as he was gazing northward,

III. *Hiawatha's Childhood.*

Far away upon a prairie
 He beheld a maiden standing,
 Saw a tall and slender maiden
 All alone upon a prairie ;
 Brightest green were all her garments
 And her hair was like the sunshine.

Day by day he gazed upon her,
 Day by day he sighed with passion,
 Day by day his heart within him
 Grew more hot with love and longing
 For the maid with yellow tresses.*

Observe how the repetition served to represent the growing of the lover's admiration. The same repetition can be used much more effectively in describing weariness and pain, as in the lines about the winter famine :

O the long and dreary Winter!
 O the cold and cruel Winter!
 Ever thicker, thicker, thicker
 Froze the ice on lake and river,
 Ever deeper, deeper, deeper
 Fell the snow o'er all the landscape,
 Fell the covering snow, and drifted
 Through the forest, round the village.

Hardly from his buried wigwam
 Could the hunter force a passage ;
 With his mittens and his snow-shoes
 Vainly walked he through the forest,
 Sought for bird or beast and found none,
 Saw no track of deer or rabbit,
 In the snow beheld no footprints,
 In the ghastly, gleaming forest
 Fell, and could not rise from weakness,
 Perished there from cold and hunger.

O the famine and the fever!
 O the wasting of the famine!
 O the blasting of the fever!
 O the wailing of the children!
 O the anguish of the women!

All the earth was sick and famished ;

*II. *The Four Winds.*

Hungry was the air around them,
Hungry was the sky above them,
And the hungry stars in heaven
Like the eyes of wolves glared at them! *

This is strong, emotionally strong, though it is not great poetry; but it makes the emotional effect of great poetry by the use of the same means which the Finnish poets used. The best part of the poem is the famine chapter, and the next best is the part entitled "The Ghosts." However, the charm of a composition can be fully felt only by those who understand something of the American Indian's life and the wild northwestern country described. That is not the immediate matter to be considered, notwithstanding. The matter to be considered is whether this method of using parallelism and repetition and alliteration can give new and great results. I believe that it can, and that a greater Longfellow would have brought such results into existence long ago. Of course, the form is primitive; it does not follow that an English poet or a Japanese poet should attempt only a return to primitive methods of poetry in detail. The detail is of small moment; the spirit is everything. Parallelism means simply the wish to present the same idea under a variety of aspects, instead of attempting to put it forward in one aspect only. Everything great in the way of thought, everything beautiful in the way of idea, has many sides. It is merely the superficial which we can see from the front only; the solid can be perceived from every possible direction, and changes shape according to the direction looked at.

The great master of English verse, Swinburne, is also a poet much given to parallelism; for he has found it of incomparable use to him in managing new forms of verse. He uses it in an immense variety of ways—ways impossible to Japanese poets or to Finnish poets; and the splendour of the results cannot be imitated in another language. But his case is interesting. The most primitive methods of Finnish poetry, and of ancient poetry in general, coming into

*XX. *The Famine.*

his hands, are reproduced into music. I propose to make a few quotations, in illustration. Here are some lines from "Atalanta in Calydon"; they are only parallelisms, but how magnificent they are!

When thou dravest the men
Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again,
Nor endured he thy face
Clothed round with the blush of the
battle, with light from a terrible place.

Look again at the following lines from "A Song in Time of Revolution":

There is none of them all that is whole ; their lips gape open for breath ;
They are clothed with sickness of soul, and the shape of the shadow of
death.

The wind is thwart in their feet ; it is full of the shouting of mirth ;
As one shaketh the sides of a sheet, so it shaketh the ends of the earth.

The sword, the sword is made keen ; the iron has opened its mouth ;
The corn is red that was green ; it is bound for the sheaves of the south.

The sound of a word was shed, the sound of the wind as a breath,
In the ears of the souls that were dead, in the dust of the deepness of
death ;

Where the face of the moon is taken, the ways of the stars undone,
The light of the whole sky shaken, the light of the face of the sun.

Where the sword was covered and hidden, and dust had grown in its side,
A word came forth which was bidden, the crying of one that cried :

The sides of the two-edged sword shall be bare, and its mouth shall be red,
For the breath of the face of the Lord that is felt in the bones of the dead.

All this is indeed very grand compared with anything in the *Kalevala* or in Longfellow's rendering ; but do you not see that the grandeur is also the grandeur of parallelism ? Here is proof of what a master can do with a method older

than Western civilization. But what is the inference? Is it not that the old primitive poetry contains something of eternal value, a value ranging from the lowest even to the highest, a value that can lend beauty equally to the song of a little child or to the thunder of the grandest epic verse?