

ERNEST DOWSON

it all seems, and they were the substance of poetry then. Sounds were the important things for Dowson, which is essentially the Swinburne echo. Significant then, that he worshipped "the viol, the violet, and the vine" of Poe. There was little else but singing in his verse however. His love of Horace did less for him than the masters of sound, excepting that the vision comes in the name "Cynara". But it was all struggle for Dowson, a battle with the pale lily. It was for this he clung to cabmen's lounging places. He was looking for places to be out of the play in. He couldn't have survived for long, and yet there is a strain of genuine loveliness, the note of pure beauty in the verse of Dowson. He was poet, and kept to his creed with lover-like tenacity.

He helped close a period that was distinguished all over the world, the period of the sunflower. Apart from its wildest and most spectacular genius, it has produced Lionel Johnson with his religious purity, and Aubrey Beardsley. It was the time of sad and delicate young men. They all died in boyhood really. These were, I think, with Dowson the best it offered. We never read Arthur Symons for his power in verse, he with so much of the rose-tinted afterglow in him, so much of the old feeling for stage doors and roses thrown from the boxes, and the dying scent of lingerie. His essays will be a far finer source of delight for a much longer time, for therein is the best poetry he had to offer.