

seriously could have set his mind. But a man who is even a poet born cannot give up writing poetry for years, except as an occasional recreation, without losing, if not the gift, at least the art that makes the gift worth having. We still think, however, that a reconciliation had taken place, that the warm love of early years was fast returning, and that, if Mr. McGee had lived, he would, in the enjoyment of that leisure for which he so fondly hoped, have done the same for the historical and ballad literature of his adopted Canada, as he did, some twenty years ago or more, for that of the native land he loved so well.

We will now furnish the reader with a few more extracts from Mr. McGee's early poetry, and then proceed to the consideration of his "Canadian Ballads" and the still later offspring of his muse.

At the outset, however, of this part of our subject, it may be well to say a few words on the influences that fostered the germ of poetry in his soul, the scenery and history of his native land, and the circle of young, enthusiastic patriots and poets, in which he found himself at the beginning of his manhood.

There are instances abundant, no doubt, of persons being born into the world, for some purpose or other, in whom scenery and climate, with all their numberless combinations of beauty and sublimity—in whom mountain and ocean, "hill, dale and shady nook, and liquid lapse of murmuring stream,"—in whom the swelling flood of tradition, that has, with its thousand tributaries from far off sources, been flowing through the hearts or over the graves of centuries—in whom the "still, sad music of humanity" ever floating around them, find no answering chord that vibrates into poetry, uttered or unexpressed.

There were Hebrews, probably, in whose minds the scenic glory of Palestine, and all the wonders of the watery or desert path that led their fathers thither produced no deeper reflection than that they served for their personal advantage; Romans, in whom the story of Horatius awoke no pride, the sky of Italy no admiration; and even among the Greeks, whose heads were laid on the very bosom of nature, so that they felt her heart-throbs, whose "sunny wis-

dom" filled all earth with "blessed presences," there were those whose souls were never caught in the tragic network of the past, to whom wood and hill and stream revealed no sweet, sad secrets. Yet it is in countries that nature or destiny has made grand or pensive, or where nature has been kind and destiny cruel, that the spirit of song has ever loved to build her sanctuary. And hence it is that the Celtic races are more eminently poetic than their Latin or Teutonic brethren of the western half of Europe. And the Irish, because in them the original element has from circumstances discovered a stronger and more enduring vitality, possess the second-sight of the poetic temperament in a larger proportion than the other divisions of the great family of which they are members. Their story is one of the strangest in the records of nations, and this story lives not only in the hearts of the people from generation to generation, but in rath, and fort, and tower and church, meets the son of the soil wherever he turns his feet or his eyes. Pagan and Christian, Celt and Saxon. Norman and Dane, have each and all left the impress of their lives from the shore of the sounding sea to the innermost stronghold of the Island. Hardly a well or mound, or ruined wall, or aged tree but has its claim to be regarded with horror or veneration. The fairies, those "good people" of shuddering propitiation, are still as omnipotent as when, from the far east, they first sought their present western dwelling-place in some good Tyrian ship. The "Banshee" is still heard on stormy nights, weeping by the window in which burns the light of the weary watchers that wait for death. It would seem, indeed, as if Ireland were the border-land between the world that is seen and the world that is unseen, as it is really the border-land between the old world and the new. It is, therefore, now as it was centuries before an English pontiff gave it to an English king, a chosen land of song—the only land in Europe, perhaps, where the sacred gifts of poetry and music are sufficient to insure their possessor a willing welcome into castle and cottage.

In this land Thomas D'Arcy McGee was born, and nursed and reared. We do not