

sion in the line quoted, only I capitalize the word he italicized, "I am so glad that Jesus loves ME," and the grander, because more sympathetic spirit which breathes in another strain (which, by the way, is in striking contrast with the sect that cramped the author's life):

"Lord, Lord, Thy fair creation groans,  
The air, the earth, the sea,  
In unison with all our hearts,  
And calls aloud for Thee."

Further, I believe that the coming line of cleavage in the Christian community, as ecclesiastical lines wear out, and dogmatical walls crumble, will be between that exclusive individualism which at this present is manifesting itself in premillennial pessimism, and that larger life which the national churches in their day endeavoured to represent, which Jesus taught in that universal prayer, "Our Father," rather than Mine; and which Paul expressed in pregnant lines: "All things" (*τα πάντα*) reconciled to the Father in the work of the Son: Christian optimism; the earth is the Lord's and not the devil's; win it for its rightful Master.

My criticism on my friend's utterance is that individualism was not the Puritan ideal or characteristic. If the songs of a people indicate their sentiments, then Catholic hymnology has all the marks of individualism to be found in the Puritan school. Few instances of more intense individualism are to be found than in the mediæval hymns now happily becoming so common in Christian worship. Look through "the Christian year" of Keble, how "Sun of My Soul" strikes the chord of harmony with all its pages; and Newman's "Lead Thou me on" is pitched in that same egoistic key. On the other hand, when Puritan voices would utter with stronger emphasis than harmony:—

"We are a garden wall'd around,  
Chosen and made peculiar ground;  
A little spot enclosed by grace  
Out of the world's wide wilderness,"

the conception was not so much individualistic as that of separation for the Master's service. Hence the hymn continues:—

"Make our best spices flow abroad,  
To entertain our Saviour God."

Puritanism, like our pine apple, had frequently a harsh exterior, but there was sweetness within, and its true intent as I read it was well put by the Westminster divines, to glorify God first ere entering upon the enjoyment of Him for ever.

Puritanism, I mean the Puritanism of history, erred in imagining that the great Father of us all was to be glorified by the intense devotion of a few of his children rather than by the completion of the family circle. The Catholicism of *Lux Mundi* errs equally in maintaining that the great blessings of the Incarnation find their most effective channels of communication in the special institution with which its authors are identified. In the meantime let us be assured that

"God fulfils Himself in many ways"

"till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Gravenhurst.

JOHN BURTON.

#### A NOTE FROM MR. YEIGH.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—Mr. W. A. McLean's letter in *THE WEEK* of February 22nd calls for one comment only. In searching for some lines written by Miss Johnson on which to base a criticism that she is not a poetess, Mr. McLean has taken some non-sense rhymes from the Christmas *Globe* as his text. Surely that is not fair or honestly critical. One could riddle the reputation of any writer by such means, ignoring their good work. The lines he quotes were not intended as poems in the ordinary sense of the word, as anyone can see, but were merely rollicking rhymes "dashed off" to fit in with Mr. Smiley's prose sketches of travel. I am more than suspicious that Mr. McLean is, like a certain dweller in Thrums, "deficient in humour," or he would have seen the intention of the lines he holds up to criticism. Why does he not take some of Miss Johnson's beautiful descriptions of nature, or some of her canoe songs, or her lyrics, as samples of her work, not to mention her distinctively Indian poems that have won strong words of praise from Whittier and others, in-

stead of a jingle that is manifestly a jingle and nothing more? If your correspondent has not read Miss Johnson's work on these latter lines then he is hardly competent to pass judgment upon her abilities as a writer.

Toronto, Feb. 25.

FRANK YEIGH.

#### MISS JOHNSON AS A POET.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—In your last issue of *THE WEEK* appeared a letter over the signature "W. A. McLean," taking exception to certain utterances of Mr. Frank Yeigh, who had gallantly enough come to the rescue of Miss Johnson's reputation as a poetess. Referring to some fugitive verses quoted from "There and Back," the writer says: "What a hubbub it would have created had Tennyson foisted these stanzas upon us." Not at all, O mistaken one! Had Tennyson "foisted" stanzas twice as suggestive and three times as highly flavoured upon the generation, the generation, so far as the majority is concerned, true to its traditions, would have remained in blissful ignorance of the fact; as for the remainder, the generation—ever servile to a name already made—would have clapped its hands, still bent in humble adoration at the poet's altars and worshipped him.

Miss Johnson's offence is, of course, the—as yet—want of such an assured name. It may come. The author of "The Cattle Thief" need be afraid of no other Canadian poet—or critic either. Then we shall find censors as ready to hymn her praises as they now are—frequently because it is the fashion—to rant over the boils and blains of the realistic epidemic—with Thomas Hardy as head inoculator—or the indelicacies and worse of Ben Jonson, Swift, Fielding, Richardson, Pope, Byron, nay, Shakespeare himself, to say nothing of some greater prophets of an epoch long anterior.

A nation is not to be judged by its villains, but by its brightest children; so literature is not to be appraised by its defects, but by its excellencies. We will measure Shakespeare not by his nastinesses, but by his higher inspirations. Should less be asked on behalf of Miss Johnson or any other writer? Surely not. Let us admire her for her many good works and forgive her her occasional lapses from the path of literary rectitude, as we may overlook those of "Malcolm" and "W. A. McLean" himself.

There is a sad lack of humour in the present generation, perhaps the real estate agent and the fashionable church may be at the root of it. Certainly, the lines quoted from "There and Back" are witty and something more; but what hope is there—when anything but dollars or politics is the topic—of getting a camel through the eye of a needle, or a kilt into the Kingdom—of burlesque?

A. H. MORRISON.

#### MISS JOHNSON AND HER CRITICS.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—If anything were wanting to confirm the opinion that poetry evades definition, the discussion now going on in your journal as to the claims of Miss Pauline Johnson to a place within the circle of genuine poets would assuredly supply that want.

When it is remembered that the *Edinburgh Review* termed Coleridge's "Christabel" "a mixture of raving and drivelling," that Johnson said he would gladly find the meaning of the first stanza of "The Progress of Poetry," and Jeffrey regarded Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality" as the most unintelligible poem which the vicarious apostle of Nature had ever published, we should not attach too much importance to any individual assessment or "stock taking" of a poem.

Indeed, this habit of labelling poems with a ticket of value, like so much garden product in a market, is a waste of time—nay, more, a very injury to the true appreciation of poetry—a violence to its spirit and an affront to its dignity. That is the best poetry which stirs the spirit within, and adds a new power to the vision of the soul, whether it be wrapped up in the barbaric garment of Whitman, the courtly elegance of Tennyson, or lie concealed behind the disguising visor of a Browning.

As there are various minds and various moods of mind, so must the value of poetry shift and change in constancy with the changes of soul in the reader.