

of death! Still on the dusky Lena arose in my ears the voice of Carril. He sang of the friends of our youth, the days of former years, when we met on the banks of Lego, when we sent round the joy of the shell. Cromla answered to his voice. The ghosts of those he sung came in their rustling winds. They were seen to bend with joy towards the sound of their praise!

"Be thy soul blest, O Carril! in the midst of thy eddying winds. O that thou would'st come to my hall, when I am alone by night! And thou dost come, my friend. I hear often thy light hand on my harp; when it hangs on the distant wall, and the feeble sound touches my ear. Why dost thou not speak to me in my grief, and tell when I shall behold my friends? But thou passest away in thy murmuring blast; the wind whistles through the grey hair of Ossian!"

These are fair samples, taken almost at random, of what Ossian is like in McPherson's translation. It is not the poetry of the schools, but of Nature—and of Nature as she presents herself in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland.

Lewes in his "Life of Goethe," quotes Gervinus as saying that Goethe had "turned from truth to poetry, and in poetry, from the clear world of Homer to the formless world of Ossian." "Very characteristic of the epoch," continues Mr. Lewes, "is the boundless enthusiasm inspired by Ossian, whose rhetorical trash the Germans hailed as the finest expression of Nature's poetry. Old Samuel Johnson's stern, clear sense saw into the very heart of this subject when he said, 'Sir, a man might write such stuff forever, if he would but *abandon* his mind to it.'" But poetry that has held its place in the hearts of all classes for so long a time, cannot be killed by the meer abuse of hostile critics. Granted that Homer's world is "clear," and Ossian's, in a sense, "formless," does that not prove the truthfulness of the poetry of each? Homer gave expression to the mind of a people living under a clear, warm sky, in a pleasant fruitful land, free from great disturbances of Nature. Ossian, on the other hand, voiced the thought of another people, living in a land of mists and shadows, and rain—of rugged mountains and barren heaths—of bleak winds and wild storms. And it is one of the peculiar charms of Ossian, with his keen Celtic susceptibility to the influences of Nature, that his poems reflect so perfectly his country and his age.

This exquisite sensibility of the Gael, so noticeable in Ossian, has been remarked by some as the basis of Celtic character. Nature in her various moods has great power over him. Ossian, in his poetry, sees her on her bright side, in the "faint beam of the morning," in "the streams from the mountain," in the "bright sunshine after the rain." But Nature to the Gael had usually, in those days, a malign aspect, and this darker side is still more frequently touched in his song. He sees it in the raging of the stormy sea, in the moaning of the wind, in the pine tops, in "the blast of winter on the sides of the snow-headed Gormal." Perhaps the high-water mark of this old Gaelic poetry is reached in Ossian's Hymn to the Sun—a poem of undoubted antiquity—said by one critic to be only slightly below the description of the sun in the nineteenth Psalm. Dr. Clerk's literal translation is as follows:—

"O thou that travellest on high,
Round as the warrior's hard full shield,
Whence thy brightness without gloom,
Thy light that is lasting, O Sun!
Thou comest forth strong in thy beauty,
And the stars conceal their path;
The moon, all pale, forsakes the sky,
To hide herself in the western wave;
Thou in thy journey, art alone;
Who will dare draw nigh to thee?
The oak falls from the lofty crag;

The rock falls in crumbling decay;
Ebbs and flows the ocean;
The moon is lost aloft in the heaven;
Thou alone dost triumph evermore,
In gladness of light all thine own
When tempest blackens round the world,
In fierce thunder and dreadful lightning,
Thou, in thy beauty, lookest forth on the storm,
Laughing mid the uproar of the skies
To me thy light is vain,
Never more shall I see thy face,
Spreading thy waving golden-yellow hair,
In the east on the face of the clouds,
Nor when thou tremblest in the west,
At thy dusky doors on the ocean.
And perchance thou art even as I,
At seasons strong, at seasons without strength,
Our years, descending from the sky,
Together hasting to their close.
Joy be upon thee then, O Sun!
Since, in thy youth, thou art strong, O Chief!"

Many more quotations might be given from these poems, showing the Gaelic love of home and kindred, the veneration for their heroes, the dark presentiment ever before them, that their race would be scattered over the earth—a prophecy that has been largely fulfilled even in our own times—and the burning desire to have their deeds immortalised by song.

"Such were the words of the bards, in the days of song; when the king heard the music of harps, the tales of other times! The chiefs gathered from all their hills and heard the lovely sound. They praised the voice of Cona! the first among a thousand bards! But age is now on my tongue; my soul has failed! I hear at times the ghosts of bards, and learn their pleasant song. But memory fails on my mind. I hear the call of years! They say, a they pass along, why does Ossian sing? Soon shall he lie in the narrow house, and no bard shall raise his fame! Roll on ye dark brown years; ye bring no joy on your course! Let the tomb open to Ossian, for his strength has failed. The sons of song are gone to rest. My voice remains, like a blast that roars, lonely, on a sea-surrounded rock, after the winds are laid. The dark moss whistles there; the distant mariner sees the waving trees!"

Some there may be trained in the conventional schools, to whom this poetry will never yield any pleasure. But to those whose hearts are open to the simple strains of human joy and sorrow, to those who are wearied by the heated turmoil of modern life and delight sometimes to refresh themselves in this cool morning air of the world, Ossian can never grow old.

JOHN M. GUNN.

POLITICAL SCIENCE CLUB.

The second meeting of the Club was held on Thursday afternoon in University College and was largely attended. The various subjects of the Political Science Course were up for criticism and definition. Short papers were read by the following: A. H. Birmingham, '99; G. F. Poole, '97; Don. Ross, '98; A. M. Fulton, '97; M. N. Clarke, '97; H. Boulton, '97; F. C. Harper, '98, and G. W. Goodwin, '97.

Yesterday the Club met again, and heard interesting and instructive papers read by W. H. Moore, B.A., on "The Woollen Industry of Canada," and by M. G. V. Gould, on "The Influence of Organized Labor on Wages in Canada," both of which papers we hope will find a place in the *University Quarterly*.

The next meeting is for Historical Study and will be held on January 14th, 1897.