

but McLachlan takes his place far above the choir of mere euphonious singers. He is obviously one of those gifted men who add to the real capital of the world's stock of thought. It may take some time, yet assuredly the day will come when every Scotchman of taste will place these poems in his library near the poems of Burns, and, in doing so, will feel a generous pride in thinking, that if his country produced in the last century the greatest of all lyrical poets, the same country has given birth, in the present century, to another poet, sprung also from the labouring class, whose songs will ere long be sung with delight in many parts of the world, and whose weighty thoughts, in fragments of verse, will yet be woven into the common speech of men.' And still further and again, in one of the notices of Charles Sangster's poetry in the same volume, I found the following sentence in reference to McLachlan's: 'But in strong human sympathy, in subtle appreciation of character, in deep natural pathos, and in those gushes of noble and manly feeling which awaken the responsive echoes of every true heart, McLachlan is peerless.'

On reading such laudatory notices and extracts my first thought and enquiry was, can it be that I have been in Canada for four years—in Halifax, St. John, Montreal, Toronto, and other centres of thought and activity, and among men who were supposed to be interested in literature as well as in politics and merchandise, and that I have never once heard the name of a poet such as McLachlan is here represented to be?—that I have never even once seen him referred to before by magazine or newspaper as a poet of worth? It could not be, I thought, that I had not been interested in these things, or on the look-out for notices of books; for I had been looking into a very fair proportion of magazines and newspapers; and whatever else might escape me, notices and reviews of poetry and of books, and references to prominent Canadian authors, could hardly pass unnoticed. I was somewhat puzzled, I confess, between the high eulogies that I had lately seen passed on the poetry on the one hand, and the seeming ignorance, on the other, of all classes of the people with its very existence. And my wonder was not in the least lessened, when, having sent through the bookseller for the volumes I

had seen named, I was told that they were not to be had—that there was not one of them in print, and that the only volume of McLachlan's which was in the market was 'Poems and Songs,' which I had not before heard of! The inference seemed to be, either that the notices I had seen of his poetry were laudatory out of all proportion to its merit, or that Canadians were sadly blind or indifferent to the merit of their own poet's productions; for if they had had anything like the same appreciation of them that the reviewers, whose notices I had seen, apparently had, there would not likely have been much difficulty, I thought, in procuring a copy of at least some one of the volumes wanted. The appreciation of them would have been accompanied by a demand for them, and the demand for them would soon have called forth new editions to supply it. So at least it seemed to me; and so, no doubt, it would have been. But it was not so.

Whether the lack of supply to which I have referred was owing to the want of due appreciation on the part of the public, or of real merit on the part of the volumes asked for, or to the want of something else, might possibly be a point of dispute among men of different minds and tastes; but, since reading with some care all that I could get of Mr. McLachlan's poetical works, and taking note of other things, I am inclined to believe that, in a very large measure, it is the same old story over again, viz., that 'a prophet is not without honour save in his own country' and in his own times. 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' it was asked of old; and Canadians, by birth and adoption, have been asking of their own country, in the same sceptical way, can anything good from a literary point of view come out of her? And so doubtful have they been of the fact, that no work which is originally published within the Dominion, I am told, is likely to succeed financially, unless it be sold by subscription and be specially canvassed; but if it first be published in the Old Country, or in the neighbouring Republic, and then appear as a reprint, it may sell—but hardly otherwise so as to pay. That, we have reason to believe, is a fact; and a noteworthy fact it is, and one which is not very favourable to the growth of a native literature.