

temple of literary fame he would wish to be placed, he would reply, "Among the Poets." We have no doubt that, if his life had been prolonged, a goodly share of that leisure, to which he looked forward, would have been devoted to the cultivation and maturing of this—his natural gift. Of this intention of his we have been assured, and this assurance weighs heavily on our hearts when we consider the loss that our young literature has sustained.

All along, from the day of his arrival in Canada as a politician, Mr. McGee "gave the people of his best"—the best according to his painfully-won convictions—the best resulting from the union of an enthusiasm that could not die with the wisdom gained by years of observation and reflection. In that mode of imparting information in which he excelled—the lecture—he has left the impression of his mind on the minds of others through the length and breadth of our Dominion. He has given to his countrymen and the world a history of Ireland, which contains all the most excellent features of preceding works on that subject, and which is exemplary for its fairness. He wrote pamphlets and letters innumerable on matters connected with the interests of Canada and Ireland. He contributed articles to the press, since his disconnexion with regular journalism, on almost every topic that attracted public notice. He was, in fact, so indefatigable a worker in other and more practical fields of labor, that, in popular opinion, it may appear almost absurd to speak of him at all as a poet.

And yet poet he was, essentially, by nature, and above all things else. As a poet he earned his earliest fame. As a poet he last appeared before the literary world. Had he never written a verse, he would, no doubt, have achieved greatness; yet we believe his natural vocation was to appeal to the heart by the written words that "voluntary move harmonious numbers."

Like many others of the sons of song, he was, by force of reason or circumstances, early separated from his first love,—not, as we shall see, by any quarrel, but, probably, because the alliteration of poetry and poverty did not present to him very pleasant

prospects. So he parted from her—only seeing her now and then—hoping, one day when fortune had found him, or he had found fortune, to come or call and sing once more. Alas! loves that are thus slighted, even if they remain true, cannot be expected to keep all the strength and beauty of their youth. So the reader need not be surprised if we say that McGee, the lecturer, and McGee, the statesman, did during the days of their ascendancy,—no little violence to McGee, the poet.

And yet the first love had been faithfully remembered. Never, for a day, was there the slightest intention of repudiating her for the sake of any of those favorites that, for the time, might seem to occupy her throne of affection. She was, in fact, rapidly rising into acknowledged queenhood—the crown was just slanting upwards to her head—when the deed was done.

We would put on that crown on McGee's first love and restore the light of youth to her eyes. We can imagine what she would have become in stateliness and dignity by and by, in those days of sweet retirement with kindred friends that were not to be. She, his Muse, may sleep with him now, on that lonely rath. But for us she is not dead; and from the promise and fulfilment of pages written years ago, many or few, written as it seems but yesterday, and read by us in the *NEW DOMINION MONTHLY*, we will gather up fragments of beauty that will come together and live—the impersonation of his goddess. And thus shall we say to ourselves: "In quiet hours this was the companion of him you mourn. This Muse he loved better than loudest honor. Over these words his eyes beamed gladly; and, as we read them now, again and again with sorrowful pleasure, the boy becomes man, and the man becomes boy in magical succession."

This was written beyond seas. This wild burst of patriotism was read to Davis or to Duffy, or the whole assembled "Spirit of the nation," amid plaudits that went to the boy's heart. This was written at sea, one fine morning, not far from land, and shewn with modest manner to the poetical friend who happened to be aboard; and this again was thrown off in the midst of arduous labors by day and night, as a sort