

as 'dangerous'; and the more so when they find him sometimes giving expression to a liberalism which seems to place nearly all theological beliefs on an equal footing. For there are many who have no tolerance for the expression, especially in print, of such beliefs and tendencies. They think it leads to license rather than liberty. But not as it exists in 'Poems and Songs,' if taken in connection with what is otherwise taught; for there is a constant inculcation of the principle that every departure from moral principle—from law, whether natural or spiritual—bears with it its penalty—that 'God and Nature can't be cheated.' Even the 'Backwoods Philosopher,' notwithstanding his belief that we are merely the creatures of circumstances, would tell you that; and the 'unco guid' themselves would do well to give heed to what he says in that respect:

'Another thing which took my eye
Was Natur's moral statur;
For Natur will not tell a lie,
Nor wont have lies will Natur;
A tree will fall the way she's cut,
No words aside can win her,
And smash you splay, if in her way,
Let you be saint or sinner.

'And when you go to square her up,
Nor heed what fools may say,
Cut to the chalk, aye, that's the talk!
Let chips strike who they may.
He who would talk you off the straight,
You tell him that he drivels;
The right is right! 'twill stand the light,
Be't God's law or the devil's.

'And he's no better than a fool,
A little silly critter,
Who thinks by cunnin' to out-pull
Or cheat Old Mother Natur.'

Of the three divisions of 'Poems and Songs,' the 'Idyls of the Dominion' are upon the whole the least satisfactory, both in thought and expression. There is in them a good deal that seems commonplace and tame; various limping and broken rhymes; and some indications of coarseness—which latter fault may belong perhaps to the subjects dealt with. For there is much that is rough in the backwoods. But why should subjects incompatible with true artistic taste be introduced into poetry at all? There are many delightful idyls, however,—such as 'O! Come to the Greenwood Shade,' 'Neighbour John,' 'Indian Summer,' 'October,' 'To a Hum-

ming Bird,' and 'Bobolink'—some of which give a very pleasing picture of the Dominion. And through all the idyls there breathes that spirit of youthful freedom and independence which is so enjoyable, and which every old countryman must feel on coming to this side of the Atlantic. We cannot give any more extracts; but there is a poem in full which will make a fitting close to our quotations. It is quite a little gem of its kind—so simple and neat, so tender and expressive. Hark!

'There is a lonely spirit,
Which wanders through the wood,
And tells its mournful story
In every solitude:
It comes abroad at eventide,
And hangs beside the rill,
And murmurs to the passer-by—
"Whip-poor-Will."

O, 'tis a hapless spirit,
In likeness of a bird!
A grief that cannot utter
Another woeful word;
A soul that seeks for sympathy,
A woe that won't be still,
A wandering sorrow murmuring—
"Whip-poor-Will."

It will be seen that, while the volume we are reviewing is called 'Poems and Songs,' we have so far said nothing as to the songs. And the reason is, we believe that the title is somewhat misleading—a misnomer. It might lead critics who were disposed to be captious to say, 'The Poems we see, but where are the Songs?' A song, properly so called—verse that is fitted for vocal music—a species of composition in which some of the greatest, the most subtle and melodious of poets have failed of success—Spenser for instance, and Coleridge, and Shelley. And, judging from the volume before us, we are inclined to believe that McLachlan must be placed among the number of those who have failed. Of all the pieces in the volume, not one, perhaps, looks more like a song than 'Garibaldi'; yet, overlooking its resemblance to 'Scots wha hae,' we do not know that such similes as, 'Like lava of your burning lake,' 'Like Ætna belching forth her flame,' could very well be translated into music. There is a something there which tone and semitone could not convey. Perhaps it would have been as well had nothing been said about songs on the title-page or the back of the volume.

And now, in concluding our remarks