

I have no hesitation in stating that in my estimation his poem *God* stands *par excellence* among McLachlan's productions; indeed, it is equal in grandeur and sublimity to the best efforts of the greatest Anglo-Saxon or Celtic poets. Could we, as Canadians, get rid of the notion that nothing good can come out of Nazareth, and believe that multiform genius can be found in our own country, aspiring deservedly, after fame and immortality, we would perceive beauty in much that we never recognize, because, forsooth, it is a *home production*? A prophet despised in his own country and among his own people is nothing new, and poets of rare merit are likewise often held in low esteem. We are not asked to go into raptures over mediocrity, even if displayed in our next-door neighbour, but it is unpatriotic to neglect and stupidity to fail to appreciate our sons and daughters of song, whom any land might be proud to acknowledge. It is scarcely justice to quote exceptional stanzas, but we cannot refrain from culling the following, to justify our opinion:—

God of the great old solemn woods,  
God of the desert solitudes,  
And trackless sea:  
God of the crowded city vast,  
God of the present and the past,  
Can man know thee?

God of the blue sky overhead,  
Of the green earth on which we tread,  
Of time and space:  
God of the worlds which Time conceals,  
God of the worlds which Death reveals  
To all our race.

From out thy wrath the earthquakes leap  
And shake the world's foundation deep,  
Till Nature groans:  
In agony the mountains call,  
And ocean bellows throughout all  
Her frightened zones.

But when thy smile its glory sheds,  
The lilies lift their lovely heads,  
And the primrose rare:  
And the daisies decked with pearls  
Richer than the proudest earls  
On their mantles wear.

These thy preachers of the wild-wood,  
Keep they not the heart of childhood  
Fresh within us still?  
Spite of all our life's sad story,  
There are gleams of thee and glory  
In the daffodil.

And old Nature's heart rejoices,  
And the rivers lift their voices,  
And the sounding sea:  
And the mountains old and hoary  
With their diadems of glory,  
Shout, Lord, to thee!

Here are simplicity, force, and vigour, in striking contrast to the pruriency, effeminacy, and bestiality of the so-called Latter Day poets, who glory in their shame. They scout as prudish and false modesty any protest against their disgusting naturalism. It is like entering an oasis from the arid desert to read the direct and vivid lines of a clean poet after wading through pages of trashy foulness, or of fetid mental exhalations, which none but impure minds could generate and clothe with verbal expression. These erotic rhapsodists have their admirers and defenders, who turn a deaf ear to the beautiful and soul-stirring lyrics, which find a responsive echo in the great human heart.

It is one of the signs of "a good time coming" that the authors of such emanations are seeking to apologize for their existence, and that these creations of hazy and corrupt mentality are needing an introduction into decent society. Poetic genius is prostituted often to ignoble ends, but when such is the case, it is satisfactory to all well-wishers of society to see it branded as a loveless outcast.

Space will not permit me to give any more extracts from McLachlan's poems. His *Britannia* and *Garibaldi* stir us as would the clarion notes of a bugle call on a battle field. His *John Tamson's Bairns* and *The Lang Heided Laddie* show his quiet humour, versatility, and good-intended sarcasm. His *Balaclava* does not lose by comparison with Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, or Aytoun's *Historic Ballads of Scottish Chivalry*.

The poems of our author, written during the last few years, are not as a whole equal to those composed in his earlier life. The same directness, smooth versification, love of man and of his country, with keen analysis and close observation are seen, but they lack in the same intensity the poetic fire of thirty years ago. Some of them border on the prosaic and commonplace. When they were penned the mantle of inspiration was not on the shoulders, nor was the soul touched with the former innate fervour. Now and then a couplet is met with which has the true ring in it, but these are diamonds in a good deal of what is partial dross. These blemishes are common to all poets, especially in the decline of life, and never will detract one iota from these bursts of poetic eloquence so often "singing as they shine" in the firmament of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

Toronto.

DANIEL CLARK, M.D.

Mrs. E. LYNN LINTON, the novelist, and wife of W. J. Linton, the engraver, lives in London, where she is just recovering from a very severe illness. Mrs. Linton is a most indefatigable worker, and only finishes one piece of work to begin another. She is "at home" to her friends in her apartment in Queen Anne's Mansions every Saturday afternoon, and is assisted in pouring out tea by two pretty daughters of Mrs. Alexander author of that charming novel, *The Wooing O't*.

## MONTREAL LETTER.

LAST Monday evening a small but respectable audience assembled in an upper chamber to witness the manoeuvres of the Archbishop's Guard. It is composed of sturdy young French Canadians, who in tight white breeches, long boots, short black coats, and kepi, looked very picturesque and handsome, if not very formidable. The most interesting work they did was when under the command of Professor Legault—a *maitre d'armes*, I believe, second to none in Canada,—the Guard went through the different movements required in fencing, now using the left hand, now the right. As glittering foil-points came perilously close to our noses, surmising what might be the result of a similar proximity under different circumstances was scarcely pleasant.

After some preliminary fencing bouts among the men, the great attraction of the evening came forward in the person of Madame Jeanne Camerone, *maitresse d'armes Espagnole*, as she styles herself. Such a designation calls up disagreeable visions of female prize fighters, so that it was quite a surprise to find Madame Jeanne a lithe, graceful, modest little creature, clothed in a dress, though short, essentially feminine. During her contest with the Professor she evinced most astounding dexterity. Indeed so easy was each movement, *quarte, tierce, octave*, etc., so eminently decorous the whole performance, that to any one who is happy enough to be afflicted with a little less than the ordinary share of old fogysm, such an exercise must commend itself as most beneficial to both men and women. According to Mr. Roland, no other is better calculated to develop and cultivate bodily activity; while another writer tells us that "the use of the foil and the broadsword diffuses ease, elegance, and grace over all the body, and imparts to the look and gesture an appearance of intellectual vigour; it teaches invaluable lessons of patience and self-command, and contributes to discipline the temper."

Far away in the dingiest, busiest, smokiest part of the city, where one can feel her great heart throbbing all day long, only perched high above the multitudinous sea, in the brightest corner of a rambling attic, is the studio of an artist, an artist in the truest sense of the word—William Brymner. This pretty, quaint little nook, standing amidst a hideous mass of public offices, with the seething waves of sordid life beating about, shines as it were, "a good deed in a naughty world."

The poor, smutty inhabitants of the attic look up like surprised cattle as we pass the open doors of their tiny rooms. Our artist's studio stands at the farther end of the gaunt apartment, and is partitioned off from the rest. There are studios and studios: workshops where the most attractive objects are the painter's works, curiosity shops to which every country "from China to Peru" has contributed something, so that we wonder whether after all we are not merely in a modern drawing-room. Mr. Brymner's belongs to the first class, but I assure you, so thoroughly is our attention occupied, so pleasantly are our senses flattered by his pictures that we have no time to deplore the absence of exotic treasures.

Mr. Brymner studied in the French school, and every inch of his work betrays it. We find here a counterpart of the very latest expression of Parisian art, that art which joins with the life and unconventionality of the "Impressionists" the sobriety of an older school. It is very curious and very interesting to mark the result of French ideas sown in an Anglo-Saxon mind. Whereas with the French artist the mere conquering of technical difficulties, the simple expression of new and curious effects, is often in itself an end, with the English one it is more likely to be only a means. Mr. Brymner's style is French, but he has subtly infused a certain something—soul—into his work that the artists with whom he would be ranked with in France not seldom lack. However, I am sure this "manner" is more suitable than any other for the picturing of Nature as she appears to us. The great charm of our scenery is its unconventionality and the most living French art is unconventional. It has taught us to find interest, nay, and even beauty in the roughest scene, the homeliest figure. To treat our wild, wayward country according to the dictates of the English school would be certain death. Ours is not a landscape of great trees, as tufted and prim as funeral plumes; embryo rivers, and velvety fields; but of unfinished aspect, akin to what one finds in a country lad, to whose delineation must be brought quite a peculiar talent.

In "The Swing," perhaps the best of the work Mr. Brymner showed us, is a group of delightfully natural youngsters, two looking on, two "high in the air," and one pushing the swing. As you see, the subject is simple enough, yet I assure you the bedizined mannikins of many a conventional canvas have not for us half the interest that is in these childish figures.

Very delicate and poetical appears a bit of road near the forest of Fontainebleau. On one hand are some feathery trees, and across the deep rutted way fall the sunshine and shadow of early spring.

Mr. Brymner is very fond of painting the light that floods through a window into a room. It is *real* light, you know. He has such a picture in the gallery at Ottawa, but I prefer the "Old Woman at a Loom," in his studio. We now come to some Canadian scenes, one of which is peculiarly admirable. In the foreground stands a half-mown cornfield, with sheaves here; then a great golden wave breaking against purple highlands. If you have not the good fortune to see this particular piece of Mr. Brymner's work, you will doubtless meet other pictures of his, and then you must readily realize what I have tried to show.

The time has come for this Canada of ours to be revealed by other tongues, other pens, and in other language than that of the railway magazine or emigration agent.

Schemes for the city's improvement rain on us thick and fast. Those for enlarging the parks and widening the streets are of course admirable.