

The veery, also, and the brown thrush are vocalists of the very first rank. Then we have four or five sparrows with melodious throats. Every one ought to know the notes of the song-sparrow. The vesper sparrow's plaintive ditty when heard in chorus is charmingly pathetic. The field sparrow and the swamp sparrow have songs for those who go afield with listening ears. And then the white-throated sparrow that sings by Lake Superior. What a voice has he! He was immortalized lately in a poem by Elizabeth Akers in *The Century*. Oddly enough she styled him "The Sunset Thrush":

"He trills his marvellous ecstasy—  
Sweet, sweet, sweet,  
Sorrowful, sorrowful, sorrowful."

But none of our Ontario birds can be said to sing! Why, even the catbird has a song of glorious dash and variety when he first arrives from the South. As a songster our goldfinch will sometimes startle you with strains of remarkable sweetness. Indeed, for attractiveness of song, for brightness of plumage, and for grace of flight, no bird can vie with the so-called "canary" of our woods. Even cock-robin occasionally in the mating season proclaims his kinship to his cousins, the molten-throated thrushes, and

"Ringing from the rounded barrow  
Rolls the robin's tune."

Mr. Goldwin Smith has never listened to a purple finch in one of his supreme ecstasies, as the present writer has listened this very day. As his breast throbs and his crimson body sways, drunk as he is with passion, you listen entranced till the finale is attained and then you crave for more.

I cannot prolong this letter by referring at any length to the gurgling notes of the blackbird, to the vigorous and pleasing ditty of the house wren, to the flute-like tones of the oriole, to the smart performances of the yellow warbler, the warbling vireo, the solitary vireo, and the red-eyed vireo, to the tinling bell notes of the bobolink, to the rapid strains of the brilliant indigo bird. All these are not foreign birds. They are all frequenters of our Ontario woods, and may be heard and seen by any ramble in one day's stroll. Mr. Goldwin Smith with all his erudition has something yet to learn, and, I trust, to enjoy. His statement about our birds, which he has sent into English homes all around the world, is provokingly untrue. Nothing that was ever uttered, in fact, could be farther from the truth than the astonishingly rash statement: "A pleasant chirp is their best melody."

This unfortunate utterance of Mr. Goldwin Smith's has an additional significance that cannot be overlooked. It reveals the fact that this distinguished scholar has not read Canadian poetry. Our younger Canadian poets are wide-eyed and open-eared; they have seen and heard the birds. For illustration, the hermit-thrush has thrilled the hearts of nearly all our young nature poets. Roberts has composed a poem on the bird's song:

"O singer serene, secure,  
From thy throat of silver and dew—  
What transport lonely and pure,  
Unchanging, endless, new."

Duncan Campbell Scott has also been moved by this great singer:

"The hermit-thrush begins again,  
Timorous eremite,  
That song of risen tears and pain,  
As if the one he loved were far away."

In Bliss Carman's "Overlord" occurs this reference to our bird:

"Lord of the haunted hush  
Where raptures throng,  
I am thy hermit-thrush,  
Ending no song."

And now that I have called Mr. Goldwin Smith's attention to the fact that we have poets as well as birds that can sing, I hope that if he ever has occasion to use his scholarly pen in an article for English readers on Canadian literature, he will not feel it his duty to say of our poets what he has said of the birds which they love so well, "None of them can be said to sing—a pleasant chirp is their best melody."

J. E. WETHERELL.

Strathroy, May 3rd, 1895.

## Mental Development.\*

BEFORE reviewing the subject matter of this volume we must clear our conscience by referring to the literary character of the work. Knowing something of the vagaries of the printer's art and the emendations of the proof reader's closet, we can readily pass over to one of those departments such a lapsus as this: "Each new accommodation—rest (*sic.*) directly —; but when upon the opposite page we read: "While the sensory side represents the shifting, varying life of stimulation; the relatives, the modifications, the reasons for accommodation, in short"—find no relief beyond the period, save in a sentence all but immediately following: "Stimulations can be accommodated to only as far as, etc.," and, meeting similar constructions in the midst of some abstruse argument requiring close attention, we get slightly exasperated and wish that the schoolmaster had been at home instead of wandering in regions remote. The jerky sentences of Carlyle shock you as with a giant's grasp; Browning obscurity reveals to the explorer bright gems; the literary blemishes of "Mental Development" — well, we are glad to be quit of them.

Sitting under the inimitable teaching of the late George Paxton Young the impression made was that metaphysics was *par excellence* the science. The friendship and intimacy of the class continued unbroken till the professor and friend entered the unseen. During those years of intercourse, as the many changes in his presentations appeared (for Mr. Young was proud to confess himself a student to the end), where-in he severely cut away the proof on which he had rested what, in my student days, had been so implicitly received at his hands, the force of Faust's words in the studio, where Goethe finds him, impressed me the rather:

"I've studied now Philosophy  
And Jurisprudence, Medicine,—  
And even, alas! Theology,—  
From end to end, with labour keen;  
And here, poor fool! with all my lore  
I stand no wiser than before."

You get legitimately from a syllogism nothing that you have not put into your premises: each metaphysician records his experiences in terms of his own definitions. And yet who would seek to live on bread only, or cease to knock at the door of nature's workshop, if perchance some day the great secret may be revealed? Matter, mind; body, spirit; subject, object; power, energy; what are they? What are their relations? Are they many? or but varied manifestations of one great whole? We are all more or less metaphysicians, and scan with eagerness any work that would trace these lines of mystery.

Metaphysical studies have changed greatly in their methods during the past quarter of a century; evolution, as a working theory, has so stimulated and directed research that discovery is anticipated rather than stumbled upon; the explorer has a compass and is not left to the mercy of wind and tide when skies are overcast, sun and star hidden. Thus far it has not disappointed scientist, philologist, philosopher; even theology is yielding to its potent sway. In every department of human learning the evolution theory has effected changes, only paralleled by such discoveries in physics as those of Galileo and Newton. It is needful, however, to keep in mind this fact, that evolution is to us but a method of observation, it may open up a *modus operandi*, but the mystery of being is shrouded as ever. Given, says the evolutionist, the play of force and energy upon matter, and the process by which the universe is made manifest is not difficult of explanation. But matter, force, energy,—these are terms which cover all the mystery; what are force and energy? A true definition must cover not only such powers as attraction, affinity, but also love and righteousness, for evolved or created such consciousnesses are. Not letting go these manifest considerations we may calmly follow Professor Baldwin as he upholds

\* "Mental Development: Methods and Processes." By J. M. Baldwin, M.A., Ph.D. New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: The Copp, Clark Co. 8 vo., pp. 496.