

ness which belongs to literary men as a class has been intensified by national predilections; and were not the Atlantic between them we should, we fear, witness such scenes as would put to the blush the "Society on the Stanislaus." As things are, the frayed egoism, and resultant damage to literary reputation, marks the intensity of international criticism, and is ominous of strife in the future rivalry of English and American authors. Formerly, this acrimony had its field of operation in diplomacy and public affairs: now it seeks the rifle-pits of literature. The strife is, no doubt, aggravated by the absence of protection to the American author, and the strangulation of native literature by the hydra-headed reprints of the free-booting American publisher. For this state of things, however, the American people have themselves to blame. Nevertheless, it is a misfortune that the amity of two nations should be in constant peril from the greed of publishers and the jealousy and super-sensitiveness of authors.

These remarks are more immediately suggested by the appearance of Prof. Nichol's "Historical Sketch of American Literature," and the hubbub which its issue has occasioned. The guild of fretful authorcraft on this side of the Atlantic, it seems, has taken offence at Dr. Nichol's frank estimate of many American writers, and is up in arms against his alleged favouritism and occasional disparagement. The din is increased by an international controversy on the art-methods of the new school of American novelists, and by a vigorous onslaught on Mr. Howells, in English journals, for his unfair representation, in his recent novels, of English women. As we have no desire to be participants in the fray, our readers will excuse us from entering further into the controversy; though we are bound to add, that it is a pity that bumptiousness on the one side and petulance on the other should be permitted to ruffle international temper. Perhaps the Mother Country, in this affair, is most to blame, as in Mrs. Trollope's criticisms and in Dickens's American Notes, she set the fashion of unkindly and unreasoning comment, though both in literature and in

diplomacy, it will be admitted, ample atonement for these offences has since been made. For literature's sake, as well as for that of peace, we hope that the controversy will subside, and that each nation will seek the good in the other, and add many a chapter to the "amenities of literature."

Whatever has marred Dr. Nichol's work, we are sure, that to most American writers he has done justice. On the whole, the book, though discriminating in its judgments, is an appreciative and scholarly tribute to American genius; and the nation to the south of us ought to be gratified that it finds in Prof. Nichol so eminent a critic and so loving an historian of its literature. To the class across the line who not only brag of an American literature, but plume themselves upon an American language, of which English is a mere provincialism, Prof. Nichol's dispassionate sketch will be a rank offence. But no writer is called upon to satisfy this class; and Prof. Nichol would take leave of his self-respect were he to attempt it. The Canadian student of the subject, at all events, will find much in the work to profit him. The range of American literature is now rapidly extending, and much of it is not only interesting but artistic. The Colonial stage has long been left behind, and in every branch of letters American writers are now doing creditable work. The growth of mind in nations and individuals is always an interesting study, and there is much in the literary work of the Republic to repay perusal and gratify research. Would that Canada could see the promise of a like achievement!

#### RENOUNCING THE PROFESSION.

THE announcement that Mr. G. H. Robinson, M.A., had resigned the Principalship of the Whitby Collegiate Institute, to go into mercantile life, was at first received by us as a *canard*, so unlikely did we think it that a gentleman of Mr. Robinson's ability and success in the profession would desert its ranks, throw away his prospects of advancement in it, turn his back on the work for which he had toilsomely fitted himself, and begin life afresh in a new, though more