

CANADIAN CHRISTMAS CARDS.

NO greater proof could be given of the recent wide-spread interest in art and art education, on both sides of the Atlantic, than the development of the prolific trade in Christmas Cards, and the impetus it has given to art designing in every branch of manufacture. The growth of a cultivated art taste in recent years is something quite unparalleled. It shows itself in a thousand departments of industry, sometimes, it is feared, in a too profuse display of uneducated and undisciplined effort, but on the whole, with a success and pleasure-giving effect which must exercise a refining influence on the coming generation. Elsewhere in the present number we have referred to a great native enterprise, in the publication of 'Picturesque Canada,' the production and dissemination of which, at home and abroad, must secure for Canadian literary and art culture a more than respectful consideration—we had almost said, an enthusiastic one. We could wish that in the department of Christmas Card designing and execution it were possible to show such results as Canada will have the credit of producing, in the work we have referred to, in the black and white effects of a wood engraver's block. But colour work is proverbially, we won't say, a higher achievement, but undoubtedly a more difficult one; and success in colour-printing, we must yet wait to see come to us in after years. However, if the execution of the work attempted in Canada in Christmas card production is not all that we would wish it to be, in its composition, drawing, and colouring, what has been produced is at least our own—and that is something—and, moreover, the subject of most of the work that has come under our observation is peculiarly and distinctively Canadian. Here again, however, there may be room for regret, as the conventional treatment of Canadian art-subjects is apt to run exclusively into the old ruts of winter representation, with the concomitants of furs and sleighs. Nevertheless, they make pretty pictures, and suggest a

hearty social life, with unlimited opportunities for romantic love-making, and, in the skating and tobogganing scenes, for that physical development and healthfulness which the bracing atmosphere and active out-door exercise do much to secure. Another thing, moreover, in favour of our Canadian Christmas cards is this, that their designs are an agreeable change from the sickly medievalism, and the tiresome repetitions of religious art, of which we have long had a surfeit from the Old World. We may have gone, in this recoil, to the other extreme, and left out all the significance which belongs to the season of Advent, and forgotten that a Christmas card should have some relation to Christmas. Still, for the purposes for which in the main they are used, viz., as tokens of remembrance and regard at a festive, holiday season, they 'fill the bill,' and as souvenirs from Canada to friends in the Mother land, their local colour is an especial charm and their picturesque scenes a wonder and delight. Of the cards of the present season that specially deserve notice, and that have had a most successful sale, the series published by Messrs. James Campbell & Son, of Toronto, from water-colour drawings by Canadian artists, may first be spoken of. They consist of some twelve designs, lithographed in colours, all but two of them representing Canada in winter. The two exceptions are autumn scenes, one of a sheet of water, with a background of trees in their autumnal foliage, the undulating line of some distant hills, and an Indian encampment in the foreground. The other is a spirited scene of a number of picturesquely-dressed *voyageurs* in a bark canoe running the rapids. Two others deal with Niagara in winter: one portraying the rapids above the Falls, and the other a moonlight scene of the Falls themselves—both of them artistic in execution, and faithfully depicting the scenes they represent. Four of the series are devoted to sleighing subjects, suggesting happy drives to some family gath-