

untracked and all but unindicated. Left to the reader, also, must be the interesting opening chapter, giving a brief account of the C. P. R. and its wonderful enterprise, with the facts and figures of unusual value to those contemplating a holiday or business tour to the Pacific. We must congratulate Mrs. Spragge on her work, and on the felicitous manner in which it has been executed. She is a close observer, has a keen eye for the beauties of Nature, and a graphic, often eloquent, pen in describing scenery, and in investing its transcription with reality. In the re-perusal of her book we have had fresh delight, which our readers, if they follow our example, will not fail to experience. Nor will they fail to join us in expressing the hope that our author, on some further holiday, may soon take us on another and equally pleasant excursion.

G. MERCER ADAM.

A HISTORY OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE.*

ADOPTING the title of Mr. Green's well-known work on the English people, Prof. Bryce, of Winnipeg, has just issued in London and Toronto a work which he calls "A Short History of the Canadian People." The volume differs little, either in plan or in purpose, from the ordinary Canadian histories, though its author claims for his work that it is neither a "drum and trumpet history" nor a "mere record of faction fights." In so far as the strifes of the battle-field and the legislative chamber enter into Canadian history, these strifes we find dealt with in the volume before us; hence, in this respect, the author has not specially struck out any new path for himself. Nevertheless, the work has features of its own which distinguish it from other native histories, and commend it to the favourable recognition of Canadian readers. This much, at the outset, we gladly and ungrudgingly say of the work; though we notice that the author, not in the best taste nor in the most Christian spirit, as we think, has an inconsiderate fling at his contemporaries in the field of authorship, whom he charges with "gaining a livelihood without rendering value to unsuspecting book-buyers" by joining with publishers in the "nefarious" work of making Canadian literature subservient to the interests of the book-maker's pocket. Here is Prof. Bryce's aspersion on his brother-authors engaged in the arduous and ill-requited work of doing something for Canadian literature in the department in which he himself is a worker: "Some partisan purpose to serve, the *cacoethes scribendi*, or the unworthy motive of receiving Government patronage, have induced a somewhat prolific crop of political biographies, local 'histories'—mere uninteresting and unsympathetic collections of facts, dry and raw manuals, known as 'school histories,' all dishonouring to the name historian, and producing on the public a nauseating effect on the mention of the name of history. If the historian be not free and courageous enough to give his opinion, history is valueless." It is a matter of little moment to whom our author here refers; but we cannot help saying that the passage, and Prof. Bryce's general tone in referring to the product of British-Canadian literature, are indicative of a spirit the reverse of helpful to native letters, unkind to those engaged with him in authorship, and apt to raise the question, how far Prof. Bryce's own work and motives are higher and better than those he thus offensively arraigns. Nor is our author's dictum to be taken without question, that history is valueless unless the historian be both free and courageous in the expression of his personal opinion. It is by no means desirable—in the main, indeed, it is not often expedient—that the historian should intrude his own opinion. His purpose is rather to get at facts, and to present them dispassionately, with due regard to their influence, near and remote, on the events and characters under review. Neutrality, in fact, should be his aim; and where the historian has forgotten this, history, as a rule, we know, has become biassed and partisan. Much, of course, will be forgiven if an author is interesting, and invests his subject with the charm of a good literary style; but style will not go far if the writer's work or his judgment are not to be trusted, and if his facts bear a partisan hue.

But this remark, we fear, will excite anticipations in the reader's mind which Prof. Bryce does little to satisfy. Our author has nowhere committed himself to the expression of any very pronounced or mind-arresting opinion; nor does he possess any unusual attractions as a writer. He never gets away from his subject, rarely treats us to any acute thought, and seldom indulges in any broad generalisations. Throughout the volume he is a painstaking, conscientious, but matter-of-fact historian, never exciting us to enthusiasm, and himself somewhat under the spell of the prosaic incidents of his narrative and the unenlivening statistics of the country's expansion. Where his theme might be expected to quicken his pulse, the weight of his pen seems to cramp his hand and check any tendency to fervour. As an instance of this let us quote the concluding paragraph of the section dealing with the heroic conquest of Quebec and the close of the French régime. The paragraph reads like the jottings of some jaded itinerant, and reminds one of the dreary sententiousness of a "school history" index.

"Vaudreuil," writes Dr. Bryce, "withdrew to Montreal, and, to his disgrace, threw the blame of the defeat on the dead soldier, Montcalm. Brigadier-General Murray now remained in command in Quebec. In the following year De Levis attacked Quebec, coming from Montreal. The British forces left Quebec, and received the attack at Ste. Foy, near the city. The French were successful. The British fell back on the city. A pillar at Ste. Foy commemorates this victory of De Levis. The arrival of a British fleet made De Levis' efforts hopeless. This fleet destroyed the

six French vessels above Quebec. It but remained to take Montreal. Generals Amherst and Murray, coming from Schenectady by way of Oswego, and down the St. Lawrence, landed on Montreal Island, and invested the city on the 6th of September, 1760. On the 8th of September Governor Vaudreuil yielded, and New France became a dependency of Britain, so that by 1761 French rule had ceased in every part of Canada, having endured for a century and a half."

Within the limits we have indicated, our author, however, has done good work in this "History of the Canadian People," and given a new setting to the old facts of the country's history. Occasionally he turns aside from the main highway of recorded events, and leads us pleasantly through some unfamiliar by-paths, here and there throwing light upon matters hitherto unknown or obscure. Of this character are the opening chapters, to which the author has devoted much research, and not a little congenial study. These are entitled "Prehistoric and Early America," and "The Ancient Inhabitants of Canada,"—the former dealing with geological data, the myths and traditions of the Norse Explorers of the Eastern coast of the continent, and the French, English, Spanish, and Portuguese discoveries; and the latter with the present Indian tribes, the old Mound Builders, and the language, manners, and customs of the Aborigines. Following these are two chapters, one on "The Old Colonies Along the Atlantic," and the other on "The French Régime in Canada and Acadia." In these chapters, if the history does not lend itself to broad and luminous treatment the fault can hardly be said to be the author's, for the narrative covers a long period of years, and for the most part deals with a succession of more or less bald and unrelated facts. Even where the incidents are thrilling, however, the author rarely pauses to produce effect, and the reader loses the delight which a little more enthusiasm and picturesqueness of narration might afford him. But crowded as are the pages of this period with the story of the passing years, that the narrative is not less graphic than it is must be a surprise to the critical reader.

The most interesting chapters of the British period are those on "The Loyalist Settlement," "The King's Country," a record of colonisation; and that entitled "The Making of Canada," dealing with immigration into the upper Province, the doings of the Family Compact, and the constitutional struggles which preceded Rebellion. Interesting also is the chapter on the later and formative period of the nation's life, with the record of progress in the various Provinces, and the narrative of occurrences which ushered in Confederation. Instructive, too, though it has elsewhere been fully dealt with, is the chapter on "The Remote Kingdom of the Fur-traders," and that final one on "The Canadian People Under Confederation." With some statements of fact in several of these chapters we should have liked to deal, as well as with one or two expressions of opinion from which we strongly dissent; but space will not at present permit of our taking these up. For the same reason we must also forego dealing with a portion of the closing chapter on "Native Literature," the least satisfactory section of the book. From his remarks on Anglo-Canadian literature we infer that Professor Bryce is either indifferently read in the literary history of Canada, or utterly lacks sympathy with the aims and achievements of native authors. Dr. Bryce's cynical and unpatriotic reference to Canadian periodical literature, and his feigned consideration in abstaining from mentioning the names of what he is pleased to term "untimely and unproductive enterprises," are not creditable to him as a Canadian writer. Nor is he more complimentary in speaking of the newspaper press, few reputable specimens of which would seem to come under our author's observation.

The closing section on "The Destiny of Canada," is equally disappointing, principally in its hazy utterances about Imperial Federation, and the evident disinclination on the part of the author to commit himself to any emphatic expression of opinion. Secondly, and more seriously, it totally fails to set before the reader the perils which have long beset Confederation, and is silent on those discordant elements, now finding sinister expression in many of the Provinces of the Dominion, which detract from the homogeneity of the nation, and menace the path of the Canadian people. But we must be content with what the author has given us, and overlook what he has not; seeking in other quarters, and hoping that at another time what is now lacking may be supplied. For what Dr. Bryce has given us we must at least be thankful; and if we have dwelt upon his shortcomings rather than upon the merits of his book, it is because we had looked for better things, and particularly for a more chivalrous tone and manner in the author's treatment of intellectual matters, and the product so far of native literature.

G. MERCER ADAM.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

We have received also the following publications:

- AMERICAN MAGAZINE. May. New York: 130, 132 Pearl Street.
- FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. May. New York: 53-7 Park Place.
- LIBRARY MAGAZINE. April. New York: John B. Alden.
- MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE. April. New York: Macmillan and Company.
- CHURCH REVIEW. April. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company.
- ST. NICHOLAS. May. New York: Century Company.
- LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE. May. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.
- CONTEMPORARY REVIEW. April. Philadelphia: Leonard Scott Publication Company.

In connection with the Jubilee celebration, Messrs. Frederick Warne and Company, London, have in preparation, in several popular forms, "The Queen: Her Early Life and Reign," popularly written and illustrated; also touching on the refining influences of the last fifty years. Also, "A Victoria Birthday Book," illustrated with portraits.

* A Short History of the Canadian People, by George Bryce, M.A., LL.D., Professor in Manitoba College, Winnipeg. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington. Toronto: W. J. Gage and Company, 1887.