

the City of Toronto. Take, for instance, the kindred questions, How shall the city be supplied with water, and How shall it be supplied with gas? The answers which have thus far been found are strangely anomalous. There seems to be no good reason in the nature of things why, if the wants of the citizens in regard to water can be best supplied directly by the citizens themselves, through the agency of a board of managers, or other set of officers appointed directly by the civic council, their wants in respect to artificial light and heat should not be best supplied in the same way. And yet, in our municipal wisdom, we have arranged to supply ourselves with the water we need, directly, through the agency of agents and labourers employed for the purpose by the corporation, while the majority of us have decreed that the matter of lighting shall be left in the hands of a private company. Stranger still, many of those who would not consent, under any conditions, that the supplying of the city with water should be given over to a private company, are ready to argue strenuously that it would be comparatively ruinous to attempt to supply the city with light in the same way in which it is now supplied with water. If no other reason presents itself, they will assure us that neither the honesty nor the business capacity of the average city alderman can be relied on to supply artificial light, in the same way, consequently the right of supplying the city with gas has been, and, very probably, that of supplying it with electricity at an early date, will be given over into the hands of a private company.

The same question, in substance, arises in regard to the street railway and any other service in which the whole body of citizens are interested. "Does anyone think," asks a contemporary, in an article now before us, "the service would be better, or that the municipality would reap more profit, if it operated the street railway? Only he whose ideas of government are Socialistic." What a very convenient bugbear, by the way, that word "Socialistic" is becoming. We do not know why it should be deemed so much more Socialistic for the citizens to own and operate their own street railway, than for them to own and operate their own waterworks. Seeing that the management of the street railway is for the present excellent, one may readily answer the first part of the question in the negative, though there have been occasions since the contract with the company was made when the interests of the citizens could have been better served had the control of the railway been in the hands of their own officials, and such occasions may arise again at any moment.

But in regard to the second question, a moment's reflection will show anyone that a negative answer is warranted only on the assumption that a Board of Management

appointed by the Council could not be trusted to do the work as wisely and as economically as a similar board appointed by a private company. Apart from such an assumption the way is clear to an affirmative answer. No one supposes that the private company are receiving, or would be content to receive, simply the rate of interest which the city would have to pay, on their capital. As shrewd capitalists they expect to make handsome profits year by year out of the enterprise. It is scarcely necessary to point out that the company has to employ and pay managers and other employees just as the city would have to do. No good reason appears why these men, or others equally competent, should not be willing to give as faithful service to the city as to a private company. It follows, therefore, that the municipality should save expense in operating its own railway, to the extent of the excess of profit made by the present company over and above the municipal rate of interest upon the capital invested. If this argument be valid, it is, of course, equally applicable to the work of lighting the city, the management of telephones and any other services required by a large body of citizens which are in the nature of monopolies because competition is inadmissible.

Thus far we have simply been trying to present the other side of the argument, in opposition to that which is presented by most of our city papers. We do this, not because we are firmly convinced that it would be wise for this particular city to embark at this particular time in an enterprise demanding large outlay of capital, and wise and skilful management, such as would be involved in supplying the citizens directly with electric light. That is a question largely of facts and figures, but one which involves also other practical questions, such as that of the capability and integrity of our municipal councillors. The local question is also further seriously complicated by the fact that franchises have already been granted to two companies, and that the municipality would have, therefore, either to compete with these, which might not be quite fair to them, and would moreover militate seriously against the financial success of the undertaking, or to purchase their properties and rights, which might be found to be impracticable.

On one of the many other aspects of the question which suggest themselves, we may venture a word. The strongest practical argument, and that which seems to come most readily to the surface, against any proposal looking to municipal ownership and management of such a business, is that based upon the alleged incompetency and untrustworthiness of the average municipal council. Admitting that there is often too much ground for so unpleasant an argument, and admitting, too, that the immediate responsibility for this rests with the

rate-payers, who are either too indifferent to their own interests to take pains to choose the best men for municipal honors, or too amenable to selfish and unworthy influences, the question might still arise whether such a state of things would not be more speedily rectified by throwing larger responsibilities upon the men chosen, and at the same time taking hostages from the citizens themselves for the conscientious use of the municipal franchise. Whatever tends to give to citizens a deeper personal interest in the wisdom and integrity of the representatives whom they choose to manage their affairs, tends equally to make them more careful in their selection of such representatives, and more jealously watchful of the manner in which they perform their duties.

Whatever may be the best for present practical purposes in Toronto, there can be little doubt that on general principles those who favour municipal control of all great civic monopolies have, in the abstract, the best of the argument. To deny that those principles are applicable to this or that municipality is to make a humiliating confession of incapacity.

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## CANADIAN LITERATURE.

### CHAPTER II.

#### THE UNION PERIOD.

Let no reader of THE WEEK imagine for one moment that the divisions of Canadian Literature which I have adopted are meant to be hard and fast in their nature. But, corresponding as they do to the political development of the country, they are convenient; and at the same time, as I pointed out in my introductory article, the literary worker seems to have broadened with the growing political horizon.

For this second period of our literature Dewart's "Selections from Canadian Poets" is an indispensable guide to the poetry of the country up to 1864, the year of its publication. The *Literary Garland* of Montreal, which appeared from 1839 to 1862, is a mine of information, especially for the prose literature, but has as yet been little developed. Through numerous other short-lived periodicals are scattered many fugitive contributions to our young literature which it shall be my duty to collect and classify. Outside of Canada, *The Atlantic*, of New York, and several Boston papers, especially the *Waverly Magazine*, contained numerous articles from Canadian pens.

The rapid strides made by Ontario (then Upper Canada) in material prosperity are reflected in the literature. Throughout the country there seems to have been a real outburst of literary ardor roughly bounded by the dates of 1855-65. Not that the period from 1840 to 1855 is to be considered barren, but, as we shall see, this portion of our second period was a seed time, and the portion 1855-65 the harvesting. Without any further introduction at present, I shall at once proceed to a brief study of one of the stars of those days.