

OTTAWA LETTER.

The Minister of Militia's Essex French was much admired though it lost some of the grace General Herbert's complimentary remarks were designed to impart in his address to the 65th Battalion in Montreal, the purport of which the Minister was asked to explain when reference was made by the General to the prowess of the Papal Zouaves who went from Quebec in 1860. It is unfortunate that General Herbert should have selected the traditionary examples of heroism he did, when seeking to infuse the military spirit into his force; it is not the fighting spirit of our citizen soldiery we want to evoke it is the patriotic spirit. *Pro patria mori* has through all ages been the noblest sentiment which inspired the manhood of nations. If the General had alluded to the heroism displayed by our French Canadian compatriots in the early part of this century in defending their soil, or more recent exploits in upholding the laws of their country in the North-West in 1885, where the 65th behaved so well, and when several of their regiment were pierced by the bullets of the Indians, he would have been more in the line of military discipline than appealing to their crasading sympathies on behalf of the Pope's temporal sovereignty.

"God for us all, and the devil take the hindmost," is the soldier's idea of religion. I cannot help quoting a verse in an English ballad entitled "Once in a Hundred Years." Speaking of the Spanish Armada, it says:

"Men all of English name and race
Combined for England's sake,
Nor Papal Bull nor Spanish gold
Could that firm union shake;
A Howard who revered the mass
Led forth the fleet to fight,
And with one voice the people prayed
"May God defend our right!"

Change Canadian for English and the sentiment is apt.

If General Herbert goes beyond the confines of our country for examples of heroism, he will have to compliment a number of other battalions from the 50,000 Canadians who fought during the great civil war in the ranks of the American armies to uphold their union. However, "if it pleases them it don't hurt we," and with that we may rest satisfied.

The tariff is virtually complete; it only requires the finishing touches to be put to it by the Commons and Senate. The Senate can reject it as a whole, or pass it as a whole Act, on the principle involved, but it cannot amend it. The Finance Minister has not displayed that strength a majority of fifty is supposed to give to the mature deliberations of Government during recess; the clerical errors have been numerous, and they have all indicated a return to bad habits.

Mr. Foster has evidently repented of the good resolutions he commenced the session with. Two years ago he confessed to moments of weakness, and it is with sorrow we observe the increasing return of them. If the brains of Nova Scotia should also fail us, what shall we do? We have nothing but wee Prince Edward's Island to fall back upon to give that spice to Canadian intelligence that the consumption of codfish is supposed to impart.

There is one thing it is desirable to draw the attention of the Government to, that is the new crop of patent medicines. Protection has driven out our old familiar friends, and now we have to learn all the new names

and read the new stories to find out what ills we are suffering from, and how to increase them. The liberty of the press and the liberty of speech are certainly birth-rights we should cling to with bull-dog tenacity, but while we protect the home article, we should charge an excise tax of ten cents a column on faith cures, miracles, and patent medicines, it would pay the subsidy on the fast Atlantic steamship line, and protect the intelligence of our people. Failing that it would be well to make each advertisement commence with the head lines of the tablet on the grave of a Spanish Solon: "I was well, I would be better, I am here," as a warning that internal rumblings can be best removed by self-denial and judicious living.

The question of our inland fisheries is engaging the attention of the Minister of Marine. The legislation of the U. S. gives a premium to fish caught by Americans in Canadian waters. The peculiar anomaly exists that in Lake Winnipeg an American company fishing with nets brought from the U. S. get free entry for their fish into the United States market, while fish caught by Canadians are charged $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cent per lb. This virtually gives a monopoly of our inland fisheries to American companies, which is one of those kind of things "no fellow can understand." It seems only just if the legislation of the United States institutes such lopsided commerce in our fish, Canadian legislation should restore the equilibrium.

Sir John Thompson's announcement that the revising barristers would get their instructions on the 1st of June shows that preparations will not be wanting should a general election force itself upon the attention of the Government. The lists, however, could not be got ready in less time than eight or nine months, which will bring us on to the heels of another session. So that public opinion will have ample time to crystallize itself.

A boom has been given to the discussion of the advantages of the Huron and Ottawa canal in city papers. Ottawa is also soon to become a cathedral town by the subdivision of the present diocese of the Church of England.

King Frost paid a hurried visit to the neighborhood during the past week without, however, inflicting any damage.

Ottawa, May 14th, 1894.

VIVANDIER.

Ostentation is the signal flag of hypocrisy.—*Chapin*.

The pewterer, or maker of pewter cups and dishes, is first noticed at Nuremberg about 1100.

The *Colonies and India* has the following item:—There is a feeling in some of the Colonies that colonial barristers do not receive fair treatment in the Mother Country. Under present arrangements, no matter how long a barrister may have practised in the Colonies, or how eminent he may be in his profession, if he wants to be called to the English bar he must go through the same formalities as a student who enters immediately after leaving college. On the other hand, in the Colonies, generally speaking, facilities are extended to lawyers from Great Britain by which they can practise within a short time after their arrival. Surely, a little reciprocity in matters of this kind would do much to strengthen the bonds of union between the different parts of the Empire?

CANADIAN LITERATURE.*

INTRODUCTORY.

Literature has been defined as any thing between the covers of a book, but surely that is a little too comprehensive a definition unless we return to De Quincey's two divisions, viz: *literature of knowledge* and *literature of power*. Technically speaking, the Hansard reports of House of Commons debates, Dana's Geology or Siever's Old English Grammar are literature, but are such only because calculated to lead up to a thorough knowledge of the subject treated. In these little or no imagination is required. Other works in prose, such as History and Biography, call for a greater use of the imagination, but are still based in a great degree on facts and are therefore more or less scientific, i.e., literature of knowledge. Essays are of all kinds, some æsthetic, some historical and others imaginative—the latter alone come under the head of literature proper. A canvass of the different kinds of prose will reveal the fact that fiction in all its forms is the only prose that is based upon imaginative foundations and along with poetry is what we purpose treating under the term literature. We may therefore define literature as the resultant product of the efforts of imaginative, creative genius. To this definition, embracing as it does, poetry and imaginative prose, we propose to hold in these articles and by way of appendix shall treat the subjects of Canadian history, science and other prose.

In asking ourselves the question, oft repeated of late, whether Canada has a literature, it may be well to briefly state the relation of any literature to the people for whom it is written. Arnold calls poetry a criticism of life. If we say literature instead of poetry and if we understand criticism as judgment then we may say, literature is a passing of judgment on the life of the times in which the author lived. There are three things to be kept in view in judging an author, viz: his inheritance, or the literature which preceded him, his times, and lastly, the author himself. Thus history and biography are found to be the two great aids to the study of literature. No author writes without reflecting the life around him and without showing how this life comes short of the ideal, thus passing judgment.

Moreover, the life and ideals of France and Frenchmen are not those of Germany and the Germans, nor yet of England and the English. These differences we find reflected in literature and it is therefore all but useless to compare Shakespeare with Homer, or Dante with Goethe. We can perhaps by thorough study, say to what degree Goethe is a perfect representative of German genius or how perfectly he represents German character and ideals. The comparison will then not be between the authors themselves but between their correspondences to the ideal standard of their respective countries.

Now then we may ask ourselves if our writers show any marked national characteristics. To this question the reply can truly be made in the negative, for we are of

* This article and those which are to follow are undertaken on the advice of friends interested in Canadian literature, who were kind enough to say that the address given by me in Victoria University, Feb. 9, 1894, deserved expansion. My aim then was to furnish students with an outline which they might afterwards develop at their convenience. That purpose is still in view in the writing of these articles.—L. E. H.