

BOOK REVIEWS

"TWO COUNTRY WALKS IN CANADA."*

Charles Lamb tells us how his spleen was wont to be roused by things in books' clothing which are no books, such imposters as Scientific Treatises, Statutes at Large, the Works of Flavius Josephus, and Paley's Moral Philosophy. The reading public might be pardoned for similar irritation at the frequency with which its admiration is claimed for Canadian literature, which is either not distinctively Canadian, or, more frequently, not literature. All the more welcome is this little volume, which treats a Canadian subject with real literary charm, is clothed in beautiful and fitting material shape by a Toronto publisher, and is written by one of our own graduates, a Canadian, if not by birth, yet by life and education, though we are sorry to gather he rather chooses to regard himself as an alien. Mr. Haultain's essays are literary both in conception and form. They are the work, not of the mere observer and recorder of facts, but of the literary artist, for whom things have an aspect and a significance other than the utilitarian; and they exhibit a beauty and finish of style, the outcome of skilled and conscientious workmanship directed by a highly cultivated taste.

The first of the walks is a short one, taken early one winter morning in the outskirts of a certain Ontario town, which the author conceals under the pseudonym (not complimentary in its suggestions) of Dummer. "Snow lay deep over the whole land, thick on every roof, over the edges of which it protruded itself in irregular curves—solid cataracts suspended in air, and vainly endeavoring to complete their descent by long six-foot icicles. Snow-white was every road, save for the two dirty grooves beaten down by the hoofs of horses. Snow covered the country, far as the eye could reach; glistening like glaciers on the hillsides, deep purple and blue in the patches shaded by the pines; only the woods showing black against the dazzling white, the perpendicular walls of the wooden farm buildings, the solitary trees and shrubs, and the straggling snake-fences—long, unshapen logs of split timber, their ends placed zigzag the one over the other, to keep the structure erect—relieved the white monotony." The landscape, the indications of human activity, the people the writer meets, give occasion for pictures of life in Dummer and, indeed, of men and things in Canada at large; for the paper, originally published in the *Nineteenth Century*, was intended primarily for a British public. The second essay describes a much longer tramp, along the Kingston road, from Toronto some forty miles eastward, and, like the earlier paper, consists of vignettes of Ontario scenery, gracefully intermingled with the writer's impressions and reflections. We might quote, were it not too long, the vivid picture of a Sunday afternoon in a small village, but must be content with something shorter. As the writer was beginning to leave the suburbs of Toronto behind him he fell in with a certain nice-mannered but Philistine youth. "I nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice when I say that that utterance of his, most pregnant of observation of the passing scene, was contained in the words, 'That's a potato-patch'!—so he called it. The early morning sun fought its way between

dense gray clouds, and fell in cheering light on the tops of the trees, and in silver showers upon the gleaming lake below; the rich green meadows caught the rays; the very air seemed laden with treasures of sunlight; young and graceful maples, in crimson tints, like Maenads at vintage-time, flung flaming torches towards the sky, unmindful of the morn; the sumach and the gorgeous Virginia creeper were ablaze with beauty; yet of all this he saw nothing; a brown potato-patch by the highway rim a brown potato-patch was to him, and it was nothing more.—Yes, by the by, it was something more; it was an appreciable piece of property, a prospective town lot, at so much per foot frontage, one-third cash down and the balance in half-yearly instalments to suit the purchaser, all local improvements paid."

It would be unfitting to close this notice without a word of praise for the material embodiment of these essays. Paper, typography, etc., are of the kind which the enterprise of Mr. Morang has fortunately made not unfamiliar in Canadian bookmaking. It is only a pity that instead of the, no doubt, excellent and representative photographic views with which the volume is illustrated, it had not been possible to employ reproductions from Canadian landscape art. The hardness of the photographic print is lacking exactly in that touch of artistic grace and feeling which is the main excellence of Mr. Haultain's work.

W. J. A.

THE BRITISH NATION.

Wrong. Morang & Co. \$1.00.

Prof. Wrong has undertaken a great and good work, no less, as he tells us, than "covering within the compass of a handy volume, the salient features of the history of

He recognizes, as so many have not done, that the history of a nation is the life story of its people, great and small, and consequently the modes of life, customs, manners, dress and amusements are fairly chronicled and given their place in the great movements of national development. Architecture from earliest times is allowed to tell its story, and the supreme importance of naval power to Britain is emphasized, for the sea has made us what we are, and must ever unite, not separate, motherland and colonies, making her independent of continental upheavals.

The great men, the leaders of thought and action, are made alive, and we realize, by word and illustration, what manner of men they were.

A useful summary of dates is given after each chapter, and a list of books of reference.

The illustrations are worthy of special mention, being enough, on their own merits, to commend the book to all who wish to study and enjoy history. Messrs. Morang & Co. have done their work well; the book is well made and attractive.

CHESS CLUB.

On Tuesday evening, February 23, the annual match between teams from the faculty and students was played. Professors Hutton, Milner and Keys, and Messrs. Fife and Moure represented the faculty. The students' team consisted of W. W. Hutton, W. Treadgold, F. Watt, H. Keys and J. Lang. The match was very well contested and resulted in a score of three to two in favor of the faculty.

C. F.

*Two Country Walks in Canada, by Arnold Haultain; illustrated. Toronto: George Morang & Co., Limited; 1903.