

## BOOK NOTICES.

*Britain and Her People.* By J. Van Sommer, Jr., Toronto.

This work is very timely, considering the practical questions which have arisen in connection with trade within the Empire. Mr. Van Sommer appreciates the situation, and, in forcible style, urges the feasibility of immediate action towards the consolidation of Imperial unity. The array of facts and figures which he presents regarding inter-imperial trade add much, also, in support of his proposals.

*Sea, Forest and Prairie: Stories of Life and Adventure in Canada, past and present.* By Boys and Girls in Canada's Schools. Montreal, John Dougall & Son, Witness Office.

This work is a credit to the *Witness* and to the Linotype Company, of Montreal, from whose plates it is printed. The collection is admirably selected and edited, and, better still the stories, as a whole, reflect credit on Canadian literary work. If the boys and girls of the Dominion can do such work in their teens, what may not the next quarter of a century develop in Canadian literature?

*The Sticket Minister and Some Common Men.* By S. R. Crockett. Toronto, William Briggs; London, T. Fisher Unwin.

Mr. Wm. Briggs, the publisher, is to be congratulated on having produced a very creditable edition in cloth, of the second edition of this popular work. Many are already acquainted with the merit of Mr. Crockett's sketches. Their pathos, action and close delineation of simple life, have given them a popularity second to but few works of similar character published in the past quarter of a century. Those who have missed reading the *Sticket Minister*, have a treat to look forward to.

*The Canadians of Old: an Historical Romance.* By Phillippe Aubert De Gaspé, translated by Charles C. D. Roberts. New York, D. Appleton & Co.; Montreal, Norman Murray.

The Province of Quebec is richer in stores of literature than Ontario, much as Ontarians are inclined to boast their superiority to the natives of Quebec. These stores are chiefly French, and the absence of translations, and the difficulty of preserving the charm of the original in the rendering into English, interfere with the English-speaking population of Canada fully appreciating the merit of the literature of Quebec. The task of translating *The Canadians of Old* could not have fallen into better hands than those of Prof. Roberts. He has rendered the work of De Gaspé in a style which is not that of a mere translator, but of a gifted author, and he has reproduced in felicitous English, one of the kindest, most graphic, and most faithful to life, of the stories of the earlier part of the century. De Gaspé's story is associated with the period of the Conquest of Canada; it

is fair in treatment of both the French and the British régimes, is broadly sympathetic with human nature, regardless of nationality, and is full of information which is of value to Canadians and tends to cement the thorough union in aim and sympathy that should subsist between the descendants, in Canada, of our two great mother countries.

*Marcella.* By Mrs. Humphrey Ward, author of "Robert Elsmere," "The History of David Grieve," etc. Two volumes. New York, McMillan & Co.; Toronto, The Toronto News Co.

When it was announced that Mrs. Ward's new book would have a woman as a leading character, every one expected that she would describe a noble being who would pass through the fiery furnace of a wicked world and come forth pure gold of full weight. Robert Elsmere was a man whom we respected, and with whom we sympathised, and when his doubts came we could not help but feel that they were honest doubts. With David Grieve we had the same sympathy, and we felt for him as much in his early material struggles as in his later spiritual doubts.

But with *Marcella Boyce* it is different. She does not possess the exceeding gentleness and timidity or the domestic turn of mind of a *Desdemona*, the natural reserve of a *Cordelia* nor the elegance and commanding grace of a *Portia*, and she lacks to a certain extent the dignity, the sweetness and the tenderness which characterize her sex generally. Having spent her younger days at a boarding school, she had no father's kindness or mother's tenderness to aid the development of the gentler side of her nature. As the author says, "Friendship and love are humanizing things," and her sensitive nature both felt and showed a lack of them. Her isolation from these influences developed in her a lack of consideration for those things for which a woman is supposed to have the greatest consideration.

It is just this feature which causes the reader to be, at times, out of sympathy with the whole story. When we come to the point where she allows herself to be hypnotised by the transparent impostor, Harry Wharton, we feel that we should like to throw the story aside, although only two-thirds of the first volume has been read. But we read on and find that the best wine is reserved for the last of the feast.

*Marcella Boyce* was the only daughter in an English family which traced its history back through many generations, but in her early days the sins of her father prevented his taking his proper place in English Society. After leaving her boarding school, *Marcella* spends some time studying art in London, and there makes some friends among the *Venturists*, a society of Socialists in that city. Through her associations