

the case if we were an independent people, holding our own as best we could in the great family of nations? No one will suppose so for a moment. The only question seems to be whether after our long tutelage, we are really fit for the burdens of an independent national life. We might be at a loss at first, but surely the spirit of our people would rise to the occasion, and we should find within ourselves a strength we have never realized. Every year

passed under the present system, is a heavy loss to the country. We all feel it, young and old. We know we are not doing justice to ourselves, and yet in deference to the Grit and Tory Grundies, we hold our peace. But let some able politician, shaking himself aloof from party, declare boldly that the hour of Canada's majority has arrived, and he will perhaps be surprised at the amount of support he will receive.

VOX CLAM.

BOOK REVIEWS.

A History of Our Own Times, from the Accession of Queen Victoria to the Berlin Congress, by JUSTIN MCCARTHY. Vols. I. and II. New York: Harper Brothers; Toronto: Willing & Williamson.

It is with much pleasure that we hail this recent contribution to contemporary history, and our pleasure is the greater when we see that the subject has sufficient charms to attract the attention of a liberal Member of Parliament. It has been well said that the history of the day before yesterday is less known than that of any other period of our national life. We know of to-day's doings in a more or less fragmentary, confused way from the newspapers. But there are few among us who could sit down and write a tolerably connected account of the way the world wagged in 1878. The historian of recent periods suffers most from lack of material. There are, it is true, newspaper files by the car-load,—but in one way or another experience soon teaches the student how little their columns are to be relied on. Read from day to day, their contents bear the impress of truth, but we too often find that their gravest announcements of facts are only the condensation of idle rumour, their most serious personal charges only the outcome of malignant political hatred and backstairs gossip. Such a historian finds the living actors who grace the scenes he paints all interested, perhaps unconsciously, in warping or

colouring facts,—and it is not till years have elapsed and struggling ambitions lie quieted in their graves, that the information stored away in correspondence, diaries, and memoirs, begins to see the light. The difficulties that beset the man who essays to picture what passed beneath his own eyes are well exemplified in Mr. Kinglake's 'History of the Crimea,' as are also the peculiar advantages that attend such a position. No historian writing fifty years after the event could have amassed the wealth of illustrative detail as to the currents of the 'heady fights' of Balaklava or Inkerman that Kinglake gathered from the lips of the survivors; but at the same time, we may add, no such historian would have cared to use this material. It is well perhaps that there should be on record such a full account of individual deeds of prowess, and the book will always be of interest to the military student; but, as a whole, one may parody the famous saying uttered *à propos* of a charge recorded in its voluminous pages, '*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas l'histoire.*'

In one way newspapers afford invaluable assistance to the writer of modern history. We refer to the infallible test they afford to the varying pulse of public opinion. They may, and often do, mislead as to facts, but there is one thing they never seek to conceal from us, and that is the public feeling as to these facts. Of course we refer at present to the general English press, and