

portions of the Empire, interesting them in each other's status and aspirations, and strengthening the ties between the metropolis and the Greater Britain beyond sea. If it were only for the impulse that it has given to the study of Imperial geography and history, the League's work merits grateful recognition.

It may occur to some of our readers that if Canadians master their own geography and history, they will have performed no trifling feat—one, besides, which patriotism suggests as a primary duty. And we gladly accept the prompting. Our own country has the first claim on our attention, and a vast field it offers to the diligent student. But no region, no people, can be profitably contemplated apart from the rest of the world. And if this was true in past generations, it is more than ever true just now. "All people that on earth do dwell" are interdependent to an extent and in a variety of ways that must excite our astonishment, however commonplace the network of mutual obligation and service may seem. A glance around our offices or homes brings the fact before us at any moment. But this abounding evidence of far-reaching interrelation simply confirms the claim that our own country has upon our thoughts. We often hear the complaint that Canadians are not sufficiently proud of their birthright. Before the confederation of the provinces, the many slights that Canadians inflicted on Canada were set down to our lack of cohesion. We were mere Provincials. To be a Canadian was to be something appreciably less than an Englishman or an American. We had, it is true, the privileges of the one and the reputation of the other. But virtually we were neither. Happily the day is past when any son or daughter of Canada, by birth or adoption, would stammer in asserting the fact. But our national sentiment still falls short of what it ought to be. Australians speak of us as a great people, with a domain as large as Europe, with resources of soil, mine, river and forest practically exhaustless, with means of communication suited to our millions of industrious workers, a constitution admirably adapted to our needs, and the assurance of a grand destiny in the fulness of time. Englishmen write with rapture of our great heritage. France felicitates her sons in the New World on the position they occupy as heirs of two civilizations. No tourist that visits our shores in fact, no student of our political system, no economist who has had an opportunity of surveying our treasures of natural wealth, has failed to congratulate us on so fine an inheritance, on prospects so full of hope.

Yet we belittle ourselves. Our tone is too often that of malcontents and ingrates. We contrast ourselves, to our own disparagement, with our neighbours. We exaggerate our divisions and emphasize our local rivalries. We bewail our slowness of initiative, our lack of fruitful enterprise, our talents left buried in the ground. Save the organs of party, with which we assail each other, we support no periodical press. Our neighbours publish their weeklies and monthlies by the score and make fortunes out of them, while in Canada no worthy literary venture has lived more than ten years—few of them so long. Australia and New Zealand, South Africa, the West Indies, are all, in this respect, in advance of Canada. Cuba has its *Revista*; Canada (beyond the range of the technical or the religious) has neither monthly nor quarterly. We look abroad for our culture, for our ideas, for our opinions on everything but politics. In fine, we have no national spirit, no pride in our country, no patriotic enthusiasm. This is the sort of complaint that we are weary of listening to.

Yet it is to Canada that Sir Henry Parkes points as an instance of the triumph of the federal idea. Once the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria and Queensland and New Zealand, and all the rest of the great South Pacific group, have been brought together under a federal government, the era of isolation and weakness, of rivalry and jealousy, will be succeeded by that of common aims, of natural feeling, of effective coöperation. What the ultimate

issue may be he does not pretend to forecast. Whether the adoption of the federal principle will prepare the way for a federation that will embrace the whole Empire, or whether, as Mr. Dibbs rashly declared, it will have its logical sequel in an independent Australia, he does not venture to predict. But he does not hesitate to prophesy for the Dominion of Australia all the advantages that the British North America Act conferred on the previously isolated provinces that constitute the Dominion of Canada. In being thus indicated as an example of the successful working of the federal system, we have certain responsibilities thrust on us. *Noblesse oblige*. We must show ourselves worthy of the high opinion that our distant kinsmen entertain of us. If our position is not quite so enviable as Sir Henry Parkes seems to consider it, there is, at least, enough in it to inspire us with confidence in the future, and if that future should fall short of the world's expectations, a good share of the blame will undoubtedly rest with ourselves. Let us be Canadians, then, and if we are worthy, we shall have a right to be proud, of the name.

### ENGLAND'S LAUREATES.

Of late the question of the successorship to the position of honour, long held with such credit by Lord Tennyson, has been discussed by both the English and American press. This is a good sign. The time was when the laureateship was simply a berth for some needy or greedy court favourite, and the list of the incumbents of the office for nearly three centuries shows to how small an extent, until a comparatively recent period, real poetic worth was considered a recommendation in the selection. The first Englishman who claimed that distinction was John Kay, who served King Edward IV. in that capacity. John Skelton, who flourished in the reign of the two following Kings, was poet laureate of three universities—Oxford, Cambridge and Louvain. But, though Skelton was tutor in the family of Henry VII., he did not pretend to be the court poet; nor does anyone appear to have regularly filled that office from Kay's time till the Restoration. To Davenant succeeded no less a personage than John Dryden, but many generations were to pass before Dryden had a worthy successor. He was the only laureate who did not continue so from his appointment till his death. Though he welcomed the returning King within two years after he had printed his laudatory verses on the death of Cromwell, he could not satisfy his conscience regarding the oath of allegiance to William III. So Shadwell, "mature in dulness from his tender years," was raised to the vacant throne. When Shadwell died three years later, the Rev. Dr. Brady preached his funeral sermon and Nahum Tate was made laureate. Both these names are familiar to us from their association with the Psalms of David. Nicholas Rowe, who merits respect as the first editor of Shakespeare, who wrote several dramas and who translated Lucan's "Pharsalia" into English verse, followed Tate, and was, in turn, followed by the Rev. Lawrence Eusden, who held the office for twelve years. On his death in 1730, Colley Cibber, the son of a Danish sculptor, who had settled in England, was offered the post of laureate as a reward for a play in which he had satirized the sympathizers with the banished Stuarts. He has a place in the history of the English stage; his literary fame is embalmed in Pope's "Dunciad." He was a conspicuous figure in the London of George II., and, when he acted, was well paid, and drew crowds from a personal attraction, which was not altogether due to merit. He was nearly ninety when he died in 1757.

The next Laureate was William Whitehead, whose appointment was mainly due to the influence of a noble family which he served as tutor. He held the position until his death in 1785, when Thomas Warton, who had been Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and whose History of English Poetry is still a standard work, was chosen to succeed him. It is to Warton that Gibbon refers in his note to the account of Petrarch's corona-

tion. "I much doubt," says the historian, "whether any age or court can produce a similar establishment of a stipendiary poet, who, in every reign, and at all events, is bound to furnish twice a year a measure of praise and verse such as may be sung in the chapel, and, I believe, in the presence of the Sovereign. I speak the more freely, as the best time for abolishing this ridiculous custom is while the prince is a man of virtue and the poet a man of genius." The "man of genius" died so soon that he had little time to revolve his friend's proposal, and Gibbon lived long enough to see Henry James Pye in Warton's place. Whether Pye thought that Gibbon's compliments were hardly applicable in his case we do not know, but he does not seem to have made any effort to follow his counsel. He accepted the royal favour with proper submission, and sang in due season for twenty-three years. Neither Gibbon's quiet contempt nor Peter Pindar's satiric shafts disturbed his equanimity. His reign is memorable as that of the last of the King Logs who wore the poet's crown.

In 1813 a new régime began when Robert Southey, with the good will of all his brethren in song, ascended the throne. He occupied it for thirty years, and when in 1843 he passed away in his quiet northern home, his place was filled by the still more majestic presence of William Wordsworth. But that great and true poet was at that time in his 74th year, and it was evident that another must soon undertake the laureate's duties. The succession fell to Tennyson, who, like Wordsworth, had determined to make poetry the serious business of his life. Of the whole line of laureates, indeed, to him alone it has been permitted to devote his whole time and thought to his beloved muse, and in the pursuit of poetry as an art, none has come so near perfection as he.

### Cochineal.

On the skirts of this delightful property I was introduced to the cochineal insect; as usual, in a cloud of white dust, on the eccentric ear of the prickly pear. He is a fat, dark, spherical little creature, looking like a black currant, and with neither head, legs nor tail, to the casual observer. In fact, he is so inanimate that one may squash him between finger and thumb without any qualm of conscience. He is nothing but a black currant, sure enough, though the bright carmine or lake exuding from his body, which serves him for blood and us for dye, is a better colour than the juice of the currant.

It was the cultivation of these pleasant little individuals which, a score of years ago, put no less than 40 per cent. per annum upon investments into the pockets of the cultivators. Such prosperity was too good to last. The insect was not introduced into Teneriffe until 1825; and for a time it could not be encouraged to propagate successfully. A priest was the discoverer of the right method of nurture, and to him it is due that from 1845 to 1866 an annual crop of from two to six million pounds of cochineal was produced.

A cochineal plantation has a singular aspect. The larvæ, being very delicate and rather thick-witted, have to be tied upon the cactus plant, which is to be their nurse and their nursery at the same time. Thus one sees hundreds of the shoots of the prickly pear—the cactus in question—all bandaged with white linen, as if they had the toothache. In this way the insects are kept warm and dry during the winter, and induced to adhere to the plant itself. When they are full grown, they are ruthlessly swept from their prickly quarters, shaken or baked to death, and dried in the sun. The shrivelled anatomies are then packed in bags and sold as ripe merchandise at about £5 a hundredweight.—C. Edwards,

### The Ideal Short-Story Writer.

The writer of short stories must be concise, and compression, a vigorous compression, is essential. For him, more than any one else, the half is more than the whole. Again, the novelist may be commonplace, he may bend his best energies to the photographic reproduction of the actual; if he show us a cross section of real life, we are content; but the writer of short stories must have originality and ingenuity. If to compression, originality and ingenuity he add also a touch of fantasy, so much the better. It may be said that no one has ever succeeded as a writer of short stories who had not ingenuity, originality and compression, and that most of those who have succeeded in this line had also the touch of fantasy. But there are not a few successful novelists lacking not only in fantasy and compression, but also in ingenuity and originality; they had other qualities, no doubt, but these they had not. If an example must be given, the name of Anthony Trollope will occur to all.