

Provinces the city had "a bad time," and it required all Lord Durham's astuteness to conciliate disaffection and restore the reign of public confidence and good feeling. This, in some measure, was accomplished, and Toronto took another leap on the highway of civic progress, and extended its branching arms over the area between the old Sydenham Road and the bay. It may help the reader, who is familiar only with the Toronto of to-day, to form some idea of the condition from which the city emerged, if we quote a description of the place at the period of the Rebellion, though, it is to be said, the writer was no doubt suffering at the time from a fit of "the blues." The painter of the scene is Mrs. Jameson, the celebrated author, and wife of the then Chancellor of Upper Canada. Says her petulant ladyship:

"A little ill-built town, on low land, at the bottom of a frozen bay, with one very ugly church, without tower or steeple; some government offices, built of staring red brick, in the most tasteless, vulgar style imaginable; three feet of snow all around; and the grey, sullen, wintry lake, and the dark gloom of the pine forest bounding the prospect; such seems Toronto to me now."

Subsequently, in the work from which this extract is taken (*Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*), Mrs. Jameson gave a brighter and more cheerful account of the place.

The next decade was marked by the administrations of Lord Sydenham, Sir Charles Metcalfe, and Lord Elgin. The institutions of the country were now rapidly taking shape, and reforms were correcting the evils which retarded progress and kept the people in turmoil. With the "fifties" came the age of railways, and the impetus they gave to the opening up of the Province, and the centralization in Toronto of the brain and muscle that were to give it more vigorous life. The succeeding ten years opened auspiciously with the visit of the Prince of Wales, and inaugurated an era of higher evolution, and of remarkable social, industrial, and intellectual advancement. The population, which in 1851 was 30,000, ten years later was 45,000, and in 1871 touched 57,000. From 1861 to 1871 the city gained no little advantage from the civil war in the neighbouring States, though this, in some measure, was discounted by disturbances on the frontier, and by losses occasioned by the Fenian raids. In the birth of the Dominion, and in the giving to the capital a permanent Provincial Parliament, Toronto scored further successes and turned over a fresh leaf in the volume of progress. In the last ten years no city on the continent has relatively made greater headway; and Toronto completes her fifty years of incorporated life with honour and renown. Having reached such a prime, what her future shall be must press itself on the thoughts of many a citizen, and find answer with a flush of pride. When we consider not only the amazing increase in the area and population of the city, but the evidences on all sides of solid prosperity and substantial growth, we may venture to picture the Toronto of the coming time as a place of phenomenal importance, and wielding great influence over the destinies of the country. Much, in this respect, will of course depend on the character of its public men, the repute and public spirit of its citizens, and the manner in which its affairs are administered. Patriotism requires that a man shall work for his country and fellowmen as he works for himself. Self-seeking, and the building up of the individual at the expense of every other interest, has been too often the rule, and civic life has thus been deprived of its animating principle, and the public weal has been left to shift for itself. Cities, like nations, it should be remembered, are living and growing or atrophied and dying organisms; and the individual citizen has a proportionate interest in the life and prosperity, and a corresponding responsibility for the decay and retrogression, of the city in which he makes his habitation and finds his daily bread. If the Semi-Centennial celebration shall tend to awaken a more active and patriotic interest in the city's affairs, and make her citizens more zealous for her good name and well-being, it will be not the least of the benefits Toronto is likely to gain from the commemoration.

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A FIELD FOR CANADIAN ACHIEVEMENTS.

THERE are several things which Canada has not achieved, and which are within her power to achieve. She has not a recognized literature. This is not due to lack of population. Shakespeare wrote his plays to an England not so populous as Canada is to-day. Nor is it due to lack of wealth. The revenue of Canada to-day is equal and greater than was that of England during the reign of Elizabeth. Fancy a proposition from the last of the Tudors to build the Pacific Railway! A large and appreciative audience is ready-made in Canada waiting to welcome, to honour, and to immortalize the right man in the walks of literature.

The history of mankind reveals the fact that everything really great has been the result of some one man, who has thrown all his power and genius into one department, and made that the most important of the

time. Nothing great has ever been achieved without extraordinary effort, supreme devotion and heroic sacrifice. A man with large powers resolutely devotes himself to some special work. Difficulties are overcome, obstacles are surmounted, discouragements are ignored, and in the end a great fabric is created. No one has attempted this in Canada in the department of literature; and until this is done, we may expect to grope along in the same unsatisfactory condition we have occupied for years past.

Columbus discovered America. There were immense results from this one achievement. It taught the eastern world that there really was another world to be conquered—a New World to be developed. Once this was known, navigators started in all directions for the Western Continent, and the empire of Europe is soon to be transferred to America. No one has yet arisen to illustrate the fact that it is possible for a man of genius, taking advantage of all the circumstances of our position, all the distinctive features of our national existence, to build up a system, and with it a name, that shall not only be appreciated at home, but be recognized abroad; that the honours and rewards which attend splendid literary achievement in other countries are possible here. When this is done—when the hero of Canadian Literature is a real character, living amongst us, admired and applauded, or, dying, is venerated and remembered, we shall see numbers arising seeking to rival his fame, and in this active competition will spring up the taste, the fashion, for literary labour. This will grow by what it feeds on, and the lack of to-day will be supplied by the fact of to-morrow.

This matter of a literature—a distinctive national literature—is of sufficient importance to evoke the most earnest consideration and the best efforts of the people. It is descending to the hackneyed, to demonstrate that the literature of a country has a vast influence upon its development. Its politics are moulded as much by its poetry as its poetry is tinged by its political institutions. The true mission of the man of letters, be he poet, novelist or philosopher, is to pour forth in burning words the regnant aspirations of the mass of society—to put in tangible and glowing form the distinctive qualities and attributes of the national mind, so that all can grasp them, and form their hopes and aspirations in accordance therewith. Let us encourage the creation of a literature, if we can.

Some of the difficulties are apparent, and may be pointed out. We have not centralized the national mind. The Confederation is comparatively new, and sixteen years have not proved sufficient to draw together all sections to a common point. The only union we really have is a political union. The law requires that each constituency shall be represented at Ottawa, and the ambition of human nature provides that there shall always be men striving and struggling to obtain the representation. In this way the thought of the whole political world is turned to Ottawa. Hence aspirants from all sections flock thither for rewards and emoluments. Men go to Ottawa, lured by political interest, from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, because it is the centre of power—the fountain of patronage.

But, unfortunately, Ottawa is only the political capital of Canada. It is not its literary centre—witness its newspapers and periodicals. It is not the social centre, nor the commercial metropolis. Other countries which have flourished in literature have been situated more favourably than we in this respect. England—indeed, Great Britain—never had to question where the centre of the kingdom lay. London is not only the political but the social and literary centre. The best men of the nation go to London in the season. In the drawing-rooms of the rich and the titled, meet together the poets, the artists, the musicians, the scientists, the philosophers—the great literary lights of all kinds. There is an audience for them ready-made. It is in a cultivated and refined society that literature receives its greatest encouragement, and secures its most certain development. Genius is not *born* in the drawing-room, but genius is recognized and applauded there. Let London, in the season, pronounce for an author, and his book is a certainty.

How different it is in Canada. We have nearly a dozen capitals here. Provincial boundary lines are preserved, and Provincial prejudices are retained. Toronto does not bow down to Ottawa; neither does Montreal; neither, indeed, does Halifax or St. John. All these cities, and others, such as Quebec and Hamilton, have a larger population, a more extended trade, an equal, if not a superior social circle, better newspapers, and as able men. Ottawa is merely the spot, arbitrarily fixed, where Parliament is bound to meet—where Ministers are doomed to live, and where the machinery of government is carried on. During the season there is an influx of ladies attached to the Members and Senators, and at Rideau Hall something like a semi-courtly *salon* is formed; but it never has, and never can, embrace the full intellectual life of the country—only a mere fragment of it.

If we turn from Ottawa, there is no other city which can fairly lay claim to supremacy. The ambitious young man in England, who feels that