

cannot share this advantage. From the snows of Labrador to the Andes, he may have no equal; but till he perform the Herculean task of mounting higher than the starry names in the literary galaxy of England, the world at large will only accord him his fitting rank among the authors who spoke or sang in the language of Shakspeare and Milton. Most of these latter remarks will apply equally to us in our position as British Colonists, with a few unimportant exceptions. Let us glance at the physical aspect of the country, as connected with the literary character of the inhabitants. The few local traditions haunting any particular spot, refer almost exclusively to the wild struggles of the first Colonists, with a savage, unlettered race, with whom we have no sympathies in common, and whose opposition could not even leave to posterity the stirring legends or the bright episodes of the soldier's stormy existence, which usually descend from a period of chivalrous or civilised warfare, to delight the winter fireside of the hardy peasant, or give to the ingenious novelist a store of materials from which to mould the pleasant tale or sparkling romance. No ruined castle, clothed in the wayward folds of the glossy ivy, and tenanted by the hooting owl, frowned from the pointed rock, or gazed on its own melancholy shadow on the free waters of the passing river. No harmless goblins scared the benighted shepherd in the twilight forest. No playful fairies danced by the moonlit fountain, or basked in the merry starlight in some open glade of the greenwood. Oberon and Titania held no sway over the Canadian forests.

*The honey-bees from the cowslip suck,
But Ariel lurks not there,
And bush'd is the voice of the merry Puck,
The child of the frolic air.*

Fancy and Fiction, with the filmy offspring of their fantastic dreamings, have but little to do with the matter of fact, sober, plodding routine of Colonial existence. Public business interferes with their development; popular taste asks for a coarser but more palatable stimulus; acquisitiveness despises, prejudice sneers at them. But with the altered circumstances of this rapidly improving country, these exotics may yet flourish. We are told, that when the early settlers first planted some of the fruit trees of their native land in their Canadian gardens, they blossomed at the period to which they were accustomed in the European spring. The frosts of this severe climate

soon withered their untimely efflorescence, but the vegetable instinct soon suited its operations to its changed circumstances, and after one or two more seasons had given experience to the strangers, they became perfectly acclimated, and blossomed and bore fruit as freely as if born in the rude soil to which nature so beautifully adapted them.

So will it be with literature and the arts in our new country. Now they are strangers totally unknown, or reduced and planted but to wave and shiver in the cold blast of our rude climate. Like the transplanted fruit trees, they too may acclimate themselves, and a golden harvest reward the exertions of the fostering hands that cultivated and cherished them.

Years, too, cannot pass over, without changing the face of the country itself. Its natural roughness must disappear before the march of improvement; its now inclement skies will moderate their rigour; and as great a physical amelioration must be in store for the Canadas, as that which has converted the cold and stormy regions described of old by Tacitus, into the fair and smiling fields of modern Germany.

An elegant writer of the present day, whose rapid transit through this country has been recorded in rich and eloquent language, thus meditates on the inevitable destiny of the fair land outspread before her:

"On reaching the summit of this hill, I found myself on the highest land I had yet stood upon in Canada. I stopped and looked around, and on every side, far and near, east, west, north and south, it was all forest,—a boundless sea of forest,—within whose leafy recesses lay hidden an infinite variety of life and movement, as within the depths of the ocean, and it reposed in the noontide so still and so vast. *Here* the bright sunshine rested on it in floods of golden light,—*there* cloud-shadows sped over its bosom, just like the effects I remember to have seen on the Atlantic; and here and there rose wreaths of white smoke from the new clearings, which collected into little silver clouds, and hung suspended in the quiet air.

"I gazed and meditated, till, by a process like that of the Arabian sorcerer of old, the present fell like a film from my eyes,—the future was before me, with its towns and cities, fields of waving grain, green lawns and villas, churches and temples, turret-crowned,—and meadows tracked by the frequent footpath, and railroads, with trains of rich merchandise steaming along—for all this will be,—will be? *It is already,* in the sight of Him who hath ordained it, and