

columns along the shores of time—Molière, Racine, Bruyère, Boileau, Bossuet, Bourdaloue.

It is not pretended that Canada has produced men like these. What is contended is that there is no reason why she should not. These men could not have matured without encouragement and congenial environment. Nothing, it is believed, is more certain than that the few men who stand prominently out in Canada, as literary men and nothing else, would, under kinder influence, have grown larger and produced better work, work more masculine and surer of itself. A certain lack of virile thought is perhaps due solely to want of knowledge of men; the shy air to absence of assured position. Before Canada will smile on her children, they have to be acclaimed elsewhere. To get any worthy acknowledgement they have to go abroad. We need not be surprised that once their wares are marketable, they fly to great literary centres; but we may be indignant that the praise of their own clime and country should for a moment wait for its cue from outside. The hour has surely sounded when we can assure ourselves it is not all third class in Canada.

Perrault's immediate object in asserting the superiority of the modern, over the ancients, was to flatter the king. The age of Louis the Great must be superior to all others in literature as in power and splendour: Bossuet superior to Demosthenes; Molière to Plautus; Racine to Euripides; France in advance of Greece and Rome; which was about as true as South's assertion regarding Eden that "an Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise." When Racine, La Bruyère & Boileau with sincerity and modesty rebutted these assumptions, Perrault wittily pointed to their own writings in proof of his contention.

But there was more than flattery of the King in this claim on behalf of the moderns. It was partly the outcome of the growing scientific spirit impatient to all deference to ancient authority. It was also, however, the expression of the national feeling in and respecting the literature of France and as the growth of certain weeds attest cultivation, it was an evidence among many that the nationalization of French literature had been accomplished. So arrogant a claim required a nation behind it.

By and by the cancer of despotism began to tell on the character of Louis the Fourteenth. He had done great things for France and French literature. The zenith of his power is usually placed by French writers at the Treaty of Nimeguen. In fact it marks the beginning of his decline. We shall see him repeal the Treaty of Nantes and, approve of the tyranny of Louvois, and, no longer surrounded by the statesmen, soldiers, diplomats who had accomplished so much for him, engage in enterprises beyond his strength, which land him at last in the Treaty of Utrecht.

Two years after this he died. His glories were long over: his last years enveloped in narrow gloom, superstition and hypocrisy: