

editor of the *Buffalo Courier*. He had no kinship, I believe, with his namesake, the author of 'The Luggie and Other Poems,' though, like the latter, he was one of those rare souls who seem to be sent into the world at intervals to keep tender the human heart, and to compel our reverence for endowments, intellectual as well as moral, which must find—if not here, then hereafter—an ample and unhindered field for their exercise."

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

THE OLD HOME.

It is not changed, at least in outward seeming,
Since all my little world I found within it;
The years that passed since childhood's happy dreaming
Seem but a minute.

As here I stand and watch the branches waving
Of trees that shade the old, familiar places,
And naught is missing from the landscape, saving
Those well-loved faces.

The wise may smile, the thoughtless may deride me,
But still, by smiles and sneering nothing daunted,
I know that vanished forms are here beside me—
The place is haunted.

I feel my father's hand upon my shoulder,
My mother's garments flutter as she passes,
And yet, I know, that o'er the grave that holds her
Wave the long grasses.

I hear my sister's sweet and tender singing,
My brother's prattling accents follow after,
And round my neck his baby arms are clinging,
With happy laughter.

Would not their living hearts, so true and tender,
Turn back to me, with strong and mighty yearning?
Will not the dead their joy one hour surrender,
To earth returning?

This consolation God doth surely grant us,
While by His will we live on, broken-hearted;
Even his glory shall not quite supplant us
With our departed.

So here I stand, the dear scene spread around me,
And feel by science's precepts nothing daunted,
That by the souls to whom the close ties bound me
The place is haunted. —*Kappa Mu.*

A NEW SAVONAROLA.

THE denunciation hurled by Dr. Liddon from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday, December 29, against the increasing luxury of the age, and the wicked manner in which marriages are too often contracted, was as timely as it was needed. When Dr. Liddon speaks he has usually thought his subject well out. It is acknowledged by all men that he is the most eloquent preacher the Church of England possesses, but he is not one of those who allow a torrent of unpremeditated words to flow from their lips. His sermons are not only written out beforehand, but their subjects occupy much of his attention during the couple of months which precede his residence at St. Paul's. We are very glad that his words have caught the ear of the general public, for they will make people talk and think of two subjects which are of the highest importance to our well-being as a nation. The eloquent Canon's remarks have also been made the subject of criticism in the press, and, though this has not on the whole been favourable, people will draw their own conclusions, and the greater publicity that is given to Dr. Liddon's denunciations, the more chance there is of English people taking them to heart. With all due respect to our brethren of the pen, it stands to reason that a clear and able thinker, a priest exercising one of his most solemn duties, a preacher who knows that thousands hang upon his words, an upright and honourable man, who has nothing to gain from public favour, will be much more likely to know what he is talking about than those who have to dash off, at a moment's notice, a readable article or a brilliant "note" on such subjects as those which formed the staple of Dr. Liddon's restrained eloquence.—*Church Review.*

THE LAST OF THE POETICAL DRAMATISTS.

WITH Dr. Westland Marston, whose death at the age of seventy-one has occasioned some regret, passes away an interesting figure in the world of literature. The deceased poet devoted his talents at an early period of his career to the stage, and for many years continued to be one of the most prominent English dramatists. But he also shone in other capacities. He was a prolific contributor to literary journals; he was an acute and discerning critic; he wrote several highly popular lyrics, "The Death Ride to Balacava" being perhaps the best known—and he also tried his hand with success at fiction. It is, nevertheless, as a dramatist that Dr. Marston earned his claim to permanent renown. What is more, he is perhaps legitimately entitled to be classed as the last of the poetical playwrights. In saying this we by no means affect ignorance of the merits of Mr. W. G. Wills, who has done excellent work in the same domain. It may be questioned,

however, whether anything so lofty in aim and dignified in execution as "The Patrician's Daughter" and "Strathmore" has been produced by dramatic authors of a more modern date than Dr. Marston. The latter had the good fortune to win his spurs at a time when there was still a strong taste for blank verse and what may be called the romantic drama in classical form. When Dr. Westland Marston began to write for the stage, its traditions, so worthily maintained by Sheridan Knowles, had still their hold on the public. A man might write a five-act tragedy and hope, not only to see it produced on the stage, but to find it received with favour. The poet who does so now is a fit object of compassion for his friends.—*Newcastle Daily Chronicle.*

BROWNING.

AMONG the wondrous ways of men and time
He went as one that ever found and sought,
And bore in hand the lamplike spirit of thought
To illumine with instance of its fire sublime
The dusk of many a cloudlike age and clime.
No spirit in shape of light and darkness wrought,
No faith, no fear, no dream, no rapture, nought
That glooms in wisdom, nought that burns in crime,
No virtue girt and armed and helmed with light,
No love more lovely than the snows are white,
No serpent sleeping in some dead soul's tomb,
No song-bird singing from some live soul's height,
But he might hear, interpret, or illumine
With sense invasive as the dawn of doom.

A graceless doom it seems that bids us grieve:
Venice and winter, hand in deadly hand,
Have slain the lover of her lovely strand
And singer of a storm-bright Christmas Eve.
A graceless guerdon we that loved receive
For all our love, from that the dearest land
Love worshipped ever. Blithe and soft and bland,
Too fair for storm to scathe or fire to cleave,
Shone on our dreams and memories evermore
The domes, the towers, the mountains and the shore
That gird or guard thee, Venice: cold and black
Seems now the face we loved as he of yore.
We have given thee love—no stint, no stay, no lack:
What gift, what gift is this thou hast given us back?
—*Swinburne in the "Fortnightly."*

WILLIAM SHARP, writing in the *London Academy*, expresses the opinion that Howells' new story, "A Hazard of New Fortunes," is "unquestionably inferior only to 'The Rise of Silas Lapham,' if to that."

SEA-BATHING is one of the needs of residents in the far inland districts of America where the dry atmosphere does not contain the salt moisture so desirable for invigorating and renewing personal health. A more temperate and enjoyable summer could scarcely be found than that of Canada with its lake and forest districts so sought for by residents of more southern climes. To go sea-bathing during the winter is, therefore, the true method for Canadians. But where? Bermuda, well out in the Atlantic but tempered by the great Gulf Stream, Nassau and the Bahamas, Barbados, Trinidad, Jamaica and a whole host of Islands among the West Indies are easily accessible and offer their winter seasons to travelling Canadians with all the inducements of climate similar to our own during our own summer months. To seek these summer resorts during winter months, particularly February, March and April, is constantly becoming more frequent among those who enjoy their summers at home and seek for recreation and a holiday elsewhere.

NORTH AMERICAN LIFE.—We have great pleasure in directing the attention of our readers to the Report, in another column, of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the North American Life Assurance Company. The success of this popular company since its organization, only a few years ago, testifies unmistakably to the soundness of the principles on which its business has been conducted and to the energy and wisdom which characterise its management. It is as surprising as it is gratifying that so young a company is now able to challenge comparison, in all commendable features, with the leading life insurance companies of Canada and the United States. It will be seen that the business of the year was greater than that of any previous year and considerably exceeded the amount ever attained by any other Canadian life insurance company at the same period of its existence. The large increase in cash premium receipts, and the handsome surplus, after providing for every known liability, are other features in the report which must be gratifying to policy-holders and guarantors. Mr. Blaikie, who, in the absence of Hon. Alex. Mackenzie, occupied the chair and moved the adoption of the report, indicated very clearly a point of great importance to policy-holders and intending insurers, viz., that instead of looking at the amount of assets of different companies the percentage of general surplus to assets should be examined. In this as in other respects the North American compares favourably with other companies, Canadian and foreign. The directorate, always a strong one, has been strengthened by the election of Hon. Edward Blake, Hon. Frank Smith and Hon. Oliver Mowat, of whose fitness and influence it is quite unnecessary to speak.

NORTH AMERICAN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY.

The annual meeting of this Company was held at its head office, Toronto, on Tuesday, the 28th of January, 1890. There was a large attendance of those interested in the institution. The Directors' report showed that the new business for the past year was the largest in the history of the Company; also that large increases had been made in every branch of the Company's business, tending to its continued progress and prosperity. It was also pointed out that the greater part of the Company's business was on the semi-tonne investment plan, and further, that nearly all the home companies were now issuing policies on this plan under one name or another, clearly indicating that the insuring public prefer this form of insurance. The financial statement, together with the auditors' report thereon, was duly submitted to the meeting.

Abstract of Financial Statement for the year ending December 31, 1889.

Cash income for year 1889	\$ 302,680 53
Expenditure (including payments to policy holders of \$50,000 94)	161,687 23
Assets (including uncalled guarantee fund)	1,063,250 49
Reserve fund (including claims under policies awaiting proofs \$5,500)	682,870 00
Surplus for security of policy-holders	380,380 49

WILLIAM MCCABE, *Managing Director.*

We have examined the books, documents and vouchers representing the foregoing revenue account, and also each of the securities for the property in the balance sheet, and certify to their correctness.

JAMES CARLYLE, M.D.,
W. G. CASSELS,
Auditors.

TORONTO, January 14, 1890.

We concur in the foregoing certificate, and have personally made an independent examination of said books, quarterly and also of each of the securities representing said property.

E. A. MEREDITH, LL.D.,
B. B. HUGHES,

Auditing Committee of the Board.

Mr. John L. Blaikie, Vice-President of the Company, took the chair in the absence of the President, Hon. A. Mackenzie M.P., who was attending to his duties at Ottawa. The honourable gentleman, however, did not forget the company with which he had been connected since its inception, and addressed a letter to the policy-holders and guarantors, which was read at the meeting. He expressed his regret at not being present, and especially so as the year 1889 was the most successful in the history of the Company, and the statement showed the greatest advance of any year. He also dwelt on the fact that the assets had in every instance been brought down to a cash basis, thereby continuing in the same course that had been adopted at the outset, viz., to build the Company up on a solid foundation.

The letter from the President was received with loud applause.

Mr. Blaikie, the Vice-President, then addressed the meeting and dealt very fully with the main features of the report. He also referred in feeling terms to the loss sustained by the death of the late Vice-President, Hon. Alexander Morris, which had occurred since the last annual meeting of the company. By comparisons with other leading companies, he demonstrated to the satisfaction of all present that the security offered to policy holders by the North American can truly be said to be "unsurpassed on this continent."

In referring to the competition experienced from the large American companies, he showed in a very clear manner, taking the figures from an official statement published in the United States, that the percentage surplus to assets of the largest companies was much less than those of many of the smaller companies. Dwelling on this point, and also on the low mortality that the companies doing business in Canada had so far experienced, and further on the higher rate of interest obtainable in Canada as compared with other countries for safe investments, he showed very clearly that it was certainly to the advantage of Canadian insurers to patronize their own companies. He stated that the company's solid investments in mortgages and debentures constituted a relative security for policy holders never before attained by any Canadian life insurance company at the same period of its history.

The agents expressed great satisfaction with the reference made to them by Vice-President Blaikie. He commended them for the good work they had been doing, and illustrated in glowing terms the advantage to many widows and orphans that had accrued through life insurance, which, however, would never have reached them but for the work of the agent.

The motion to adopt the report was seconded by the Hon. Frank Smith, who expressed his opinion that the report was a splendid one, and further, that he should say that it would be almost impossible to beat this company's record in any part of the world.

The usual votes of thanks were then passed. The following gentlemen were elected as directors: Hon. Alexander Mackenzie, M.P., John L. Blaikie, Hon. G. W. Allan, Hon. D. A. Macdonald, Hugh McLennan, Dr. L. W. Smith, J. K. Kerr, Q.C., John Morison, E. A. Meredith, LL.D., A. H. Campbell, D. Macrae, E. Gurney, Hon. Edward Blake, John N. Lake, Edward Galley, Hon. C. Mowat, B. B. Hughes, James Thorburn, M.D., James Scott, William Gordon, H. H. Cook, M.P., Robert Jaffray, Edward F. Clarke, Hon. Frank Smith, and William McCabe, the addition to the directorate for this year being the Hon. Edward Blake, Q.C., M.P., the Hon. Frank Smith and Hon. Oliver Mowat, Q.C., M.P.P.

Subsequently the new Board met and unanimously re-elected Hon. A. Mackenzie, M.P., President, and John L. Blaikie and the Hon. G. W. Allan, Vice-Presidents, and the usual standing committees with the addition of the Hon. Edward Blake, Q.C., to the company's most important committee, viz.: that on insurance.

HON. A. MACKENZIE, M.P.,
President.

J. L. BLAIEKIE,
HON. G. W. ALLAN,
Vice-Presidents.

WILLIAM MCCABE,
Managing Director.