

as to pass us by with only a shiver. Mr. Froude is a great man, but is not supposed to be a man of much tact—at least so the friends of Thomas Carlyle seem to think—and it is probable we should have been told the truth about ourselves in his agreeable book, "Oceana."

The opinions quoted in this paper probably reflect the impressions of ninety-nine-hundredths of the people of Great Britain. Our only use, apparently, is to serve as a dumping-ground for pauper emigrants and to buy English goods,—manufactured specially for the Colonial trade, that is, as we all know, goods of comparatively inferior material and workmanship. It is true that the votaries of Imperial Federation profess to hold views not quite so mercenary. The journal which is published by the League overflows with affection and good will. A book of travels is reviewed in its first number, and the reviewer takes pains to point out that the author was most favourably impressed with Canada. It may be remembered that Sir Lepel Griffin and a certain Mr. Capper also expressed appreciation of Canada and Canadians; but this was merely to heighten the effect of their intelligent condemnation of the United States. It is not supposed, however, that the appreciation of either a Griffin or a Capper, even though it were genuine, would be much desired.

It has been remarked by ourselves, as well as outsiders, that Canadians are without national life and feeling. It is quite true. A colony is not the place to look for national life and feeling. Besides, the economic-political position of Canada is most abnormal. There is little, if any, community of feeling between the several Provinces comprising the Dominion. Better Terms and Provincial Rights form endless subjects for unseemly bickerings. Commerce between the different provinces is limited, and is forced by legislation into unnatural channels. Moreover, one of these provinces is given up to an alien people, and to a religion which stifles patriotism and intellectual aspirations. These obstacles to harmonious unity, together with the uncertainty which is felt as regards our future political relations, do not tend to promote the growth of national life and feeling. As intellectual life is largely dependent upon national life, the absence of the latter in Canada may perhaps account for the meagreness of our literary productions. The inspiration which comes from patriotism and national pride is lacking. The writer has seen it apologetically remarked in Canadian newspapers that the country is too young, and too busy to spare much time for the cultivation of letters. It seems true, then, that life with us is, in the words of Mr. Mantalini, "one demmed horrid grind." We are not only too busy "grinding after money" to "discern the odour of a passing joke," but also too busy to spare time for enriching our mental life. In education, the practical, the technical, the money-producing, receives the first consideration. Anything to win our commendation must have "money in it." Our standard of success in life is measured in dollars: so many dollars, so much success. How can this standard be compatible with high aspirations, cheerfulness, sanguineness, a belief not in the material but the spiritual future?

The future—What is to be the future of the Dominion of Canada? That our present political status is unsatisfactory and enfeebling is certainly the general impression. As a dependent and protected people we are deprived of the graver and more ennobling responsibilities of national existence. The glittering scheme of Imperial Federation meets with small favour in Canada. The "Something Else," which Mr. Froude believes will grow if Imperial Federation does not grow, may perhaps meet with a better reception. Meanwhile, it is not incompatible with a deep and lasting affection for the Mother Country that Canada should desire to be endowed with a nation's highest attributes and responsibilities. T.

#### JOTTINGS ALONG THE C. P. R.

WHEN I got up at half-past seven, a.m., on Friday, July 2, I found we were passing over an arid, rolling country, utterly devoid of tree or shrub. The presence of alkali in large quantities was marked by the white, salty appearance of the ground, where various ponds had dried up, leaving the earth exposed like patches of driven snow. The Old Wives' Lakes soon came into view. According to Mr. Fleming, "these are three salt-water lakes; together they extend fifty miles in length and from ten to six miles in breadth; they abound in wild duck." I saw none, but several large gray cranes, roused by the train, flapped solemnly over the white sandy beach, and flew away across the dark green water. We came upon occasional skulls and bones of the buffalo bleaching in the sun, while their trails are visible crossing and recrossing the plain in all directions and marking its surface with deep indented lines, where the grass which has now overgrown the well-worn tracks is sunk far below the natural level of the ground and shows what countless millions of feet must have trodden these deep-cut paths as the animals travelled across the prairie from one watering-place to

another. At several stations I noticed ghastly trophies of piles of bones several feet high awaiting transport to distant cities for fertilizing and chemical purposes, and heard it was a lucrative but now nearly-exhausted traffic.

At nine o'clock we reached Swift Current, not far from the bend of the South Saskatchewan. The town consists of a few low wooden houses on a grassy plateau facing the railway station. There are two or three Indian encampments in the neighbourhood, marked by their smoke-browned tepees. This is my first glimpse of the aborigines. At Swift Current the train makes quite a long halt to take in wood and water, and the attention of all the passengers is aroused by an Indian boy about sixteen years of age, who is, we learn, a son of Big Bear's, and rides on the platform attired in full dress, wearing a black felt wide-awake, carrying a lasso over the horn of his saddle, and mounted on a cream pony, about twelve hands high, with a gorgeous embroidered saddle-cloth. Most of the gentlemen and several ladies get out of the train to examine him and his steed more closely, and at last one passenger more venturesome than the rest persuades the boy to dismount, jumps upon the pony's back and canters the little beast up and down the platform close to the car windows, amid shouts of laughter from within and without.

After a delay of twenty minutes we move slowly out of the station and pass a number of new ploughs and heavy waggons standing on the grass near the line, which would seem to indicate farming propensities in the neighbourhood. The day is bright and clear, with a delicious fresh prairie wind blowing; all the windows are open, and we feel we have left the dust and heat of cities far behind us as we steam away over an undulating, treeless prairie, covered with short buffalo grass. We see numbers of gophers scampering about in all directions and sitting up on their haunches like rabbits outside their holes, examining the train as it rolls by. These animals are a species of ground squirrel; they burrow in the earth and look like large tawny rats; their tails are stiff and hard, not furnished with the soft feathery brush of the tree squirrel, which, however, they resemble about the head and body.

We soon come upon Gull Lake, so called from the numbers of these birds which are hovering over its placid waters. "We are," said Mr. Fleming, "five hundred and fifty-four miles from Winnipeg, north of the Cypress Hills. The lofty ground to the south of us is perfectly bare; the country is dry, the herbage scanty." We slacken speed and approach Cypress Station: at one o'clock Maple Creek is reached. After leaving there we move off again over the endless prairie; but the character of herbage changes and the plains are covered with low sage brush and great bunches of a silvery-looking plant like lavender, interspersed with quantities of short yellow grass and foxtail, which resembles dwarf barley.

At two o'clock we arrive at Dunmore, and here I part with the friends who have been such pleasant companions and able protectors from Toronto to the Far West, and who must branch off here on the Galt Railway to Lethbridge, near Fort McLeod, their rancho lying in that neighbourhood. We are soon off again, rolling over a vast plain broken here and there, however, by grassy bluffs, with scattered herds browsing upon them and occasional homesteads in the distance. Now we follow for some miles the half-dried bed of a tributary of the South Saskatchewan; the banks of the stream are marked by refreshing foliage in the shape of a few low, stunted trees. Evidently there has been no rain in this part of the country for many weeks, and presently all signs of water disappear, leaving a dry, sandy bottom exposed to view. A few minutes more and we steam into Medicine Hat, which is situated on a sandy area and consists of a row of wooden houses and low cabins on each side of the track. A steamer on the South Saskatchewan is distinctly visible, anchored below the Mounted Police barracks, which are on a high bluff on the opposite side of the river. When the train moves off again we cross a solid iron bridge over the river, some thirty feet above the water's level, just outside the town; then follow the course of the Saskatchewan for a little way, and ascend a heavy grade with high grass bluffs on one side and the valley of the river on the other far below us.

Soon the top of the ascent is reached, and we are once more upon the genuine prairie, which rolls away as far as the eye can reach in an unbroken line to the horizon. I cannot do better than to quote a few lines from Mr. Fleming's book to give an adequate idea of the monotony of the scene. He says: "Our point of vision is really and truly the centre of one vast grassy plain, the circumference of which lies defined on the horizon. As we look from the rear, the two lines of rails gradually come closer till they are lost seemingly in one line; the row of telegraph poles recedes with the distance to a point. I should estimate the horizon to be removed from us from six to eight miles. The sky, without a cloud, forms a blue vault above us; nothing around is visible but the prairie on