

—Mr. J. Macdonald Oxley, Mr. Gilbert Parker, Miss Agnes M. Machar, Mrs. J. W. F. Harrison, and many others, will, I take it, vouch for this. Mr. E. W. Thomson, too, is known wherever the *Youth's Companion* is known. And more than one Canadian novelist American publishers wot of. M. Frechette has been laurel-crowned; Mr. Lampman has been lauded in London; Professor Roberts is accounted among the "Victorian poets;" Mr. Campbell is recognized in New York. What more do we want? That they should be recognized in Canada? Surely a continental recognition will more speedily bring about this, than would colonial recognition bring about the other. And surely, too, it is the continental recognition that such writers prefer and aspire to. In fine, I venture to think that such writers would, more perhaps than all others, deplore this vociferous shouting of "Great is Literature of the Canadians," by the space of as many columns as may be, and would politely request to be allowed to go their own way in peace, not only remembering and acquiescing in the saying that a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, but rejoicing that that honour came to them from a country where their rivals were the great ones of the earth.

But, after all, can the home market be bulled or the home product augmented by any clamouring for the one or the other, however earnest and sincere? Those who know good writing from bad are naturally in an inconceivable minority. The bulk of our newspaper press is sufficient proof of that—if any were necessary. The power to discriminate between the ephemeral and the lasting is not gained in a day, or even in a generation. And will anyone say that any

amount of entreaty will enable those who prop their minds on the columns of the daily newspaper to so discriminate? Surely this is sheer nonsense. Nothing will make the populace read classics. As well expect a child to lay aside the nursery rime for the "Æreopagitica." Many things are necessary before either literature or a wide-spread taste for literature can arise: time and education, and perhaps wealth and leisure, and probably vicissitudes of national fortune; wars and rumours of wars, perhaps even bloodshed and a fight for hearths and homes. These are the things that have made national literatures and national arts. Athens's glory and the Persian invasion were nearly allied; the Augustan era, or rather, that immediately preceding it, was by no means one of peace and quietness; Elizabeth's reign is as famous for its warlike adventures as for its letters; the Commonwealth and the Restoration, what troublous times were they; the age of Coleridge, Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley—that was an age bounded by two such momentous events as the French Revolution at one end and Waterloo at the other. And in our own day, and before our own eyes, has there not been evidence of the influence of national danger on national literature? French literary activity has been the wonder of Europe since the siege of Paris and the Commune. America's brightest products are the offspring of its internecine strife, and the songs of its civil war still hold their own throughout the land.

Ah! it is no light thing, is "literature." It is very literally the life-blood of a nation. And to go about deploring its absence or craving its existence is simply to show a lamentable ignorance of the height of its aims and of the depth of its motives.