

is simply to be regarded as illustrative of the milder methods of a growing civilisation, and a triumph of the new Adam who believes in moral suasion over the old Adam who probably believes in war, that should not be lightly regarded.

"Yes," said a prominent picture-dealer to me recently, "there has certainly been progress within the last decade in art feeling in Toronto. Ten years ago we sold more chromos, at twenty-five cents apiece, than anything else. There is no demand for them now. People like these carbon photographs, and will pay for good engravings. A hesitating patronage is being held out to Canadian men, and now and then a foreign picture is sold. When we say that vulgar taste is declining we say that true appreciation is looking up, for people must have pictures of some sort."

"Still," he said, "it is marvellous, the lack of sympathy with art that prevails here. You may count on your fingers the number of more than ordinarily valuable paintings in Toronto, on those of one hand the names of people known as art patrons upon the most limited scale. Fine houses, well planned and appointed, costly dinner services and trained servants, corning and carpeting, upholstering, all quite magnificent, and on the wall—lithographs perhaps, family photographs, here and there, the dreadful results of the young ladies' instruction in art at the seminary.

"I have in my possession a water-colour by Turner. I never show it. It would be too disheartening. It is a small affair—only about eight by twelve—a weather-stained arch and some hills. It would provoke no enthusiasm. People would say what a pity it was it had faded, and turn from its breadth and atmosphere to something that—*isn't* faded. Eyes have they, but they see not."

One's own experience straightens the unconscious bias that might be suspected in this gentleman's views, and makes his statement of them run parallel with the facts.

"Down in Montreal" it is believed we do better. It is not long since a noble picture, the property of a gentleman in that city, was placed on exhibition here and in Hamilton, for the benefit of certain churches. And was it not a Montrealer who was last winter made to answer to the authorities for having in his possession a classical plaster cast?

Clearly it is in the direction of Montreal that the first stirrings of our renaissance may be looked for. And it would be a good and a glad thing to believe, that when our Society of Artists changes its undignified attitude in petitioning for a tax on foreign pictures, and our newspapers theirs in sending to "write up" an art exhibition reporters not necessarily or often qualified for such an undertaking, and our people theirs in gravely talking about a "Canadian 'etching' club," intended to encourage and promote the art of etching—on paper!—that when all this great and notable change shall come, we of Ontario also may share the burgeoning and the blossoming of the growth that will be national.

SARA JEANNETTE DUNCAN.

#### RECENT MISCELLANY.

It is necessary only to note the publishers' name on the title-page to be fully persuaded of what sort is the volume which the Rev. Reuben Thomas has entitled "Grafenburg People." The Lothrop's, of Boston, seem to have undertaken a crusade against everything that makes for unrighteousness in literature, and to be carrying it on by the most effective method of assault possible—the constant publication of books that have a high moral aim, and teach a deep moral lesson. The author of "Grafenburg People" is evidently inspired by the one, and will doubtless succeed in the minds of many people in accomplishing the other. "Grafenburg People" is a story of village life in England, from the standpoint of a Dissenting minister. Its plot, if it contains anything so compromising, is constructed upon the relations of the respective pastors and flocks of Emmanuel Church and St. Barnabas—the latter being, it is needless to say, Episcopal. The relations are too agreeable for the dogmatic consciences of some of the Emmanuel people, and the result is the outburst of sectarianism which illustrates the motive of the book. The story is somewhat feeble in plan, and is pervaded by a marked element of priggishness, which is especially noticeable in the conception of the chief characters. Apart from this, the style is pleasant enough, although the Rev. Thomas is frequently more hortative than circumstances make necessary or desirable. The subordinate character work is on the whole very fairly done; and the book has the interest of marking the growth of a common cause among the churches.

"Brother and Lover," by Eben C. Rexford, is a short pathetic little story in blank verse that deserves, for the tender feeling in it, kinder treatment than its degree of poetic merit will probably obtain for it. A woman tells of the bereavement of her childhood when her mother dies, of the love for her brother she could not divide with his friend, of their going

away together to the battlefield where the brother was killed, and the lover sorely wounded, and of her visit to what may be, but is not, the hospital death-bed of the latter. A story in blank verse must avoid innumerable pitfalls of the commonplace which are evident in every page of "Brother and Lover." Nor is it redeemed from these by any striking heights or climaxes. Yet it is instinct with pure sentiment, and expresses everywhere a gentle sweetness that disarms the critic as effectually as the unpretending beauty and fragrance of a wood violet. (New York: John B. Alden.)

We have always paid the great Republic to the south of us the compliment of wanting to know more about her people than they have ever cared to learn about us. This desire, on our part, seems very likely to descend to our children, who will doubtless read Henrietta Christian Wright's "Stories of American Progress," published by the Scribners (Standard Publishing Co., Toronto), with a great deal of interest. In its various chapters upon "The First Steamboat," "The War of 1812," "The Purchase of Florida," "The Story of Slavery," "The Discovery of Gold," etc., etc., the book really makes a very fair compendium of the chief facts of American history. The choice of salient points is very good in the main; but the author has made the mistake of trying to be too comprehensive, thus weakening the effect of important episodes upon the juvenile mind. The stories are written with a careful eye to comprehension by the children, but apparently without great desire to entertain them—an important omission.

This desire is conspicuous in everything that Wm. O. Stoddard writes for children, and especially for boys, as the many readers, old and young, of "Dab Kinzer" will abundantly testify. It is evident no more in his juvenile romances than when he takes up a more careful pen to write seriously and historically for his youthful public. The two "Lives of the Presidents," which Mr. Stoddard has contributed to White, Stokes, and Allen's series, are written in a way that will delight the boyish heart, wherever the boyish intelligence is able to appreciate good work done for its benefit. The peculiar character traits of George Washington and Ulysses S. Grant are brought out in a way that will bring them home to the juvenile understanding in a fresh and forcible fashion, and the interdependence between these and the various incidents of history is distinctly shown. The books, which are brought out in rather an over-gorgeous binding of red and gilt, but are capitally illustrated, will form valuable additions to every boy's library. (Toronto: Standard Publishing Company.)

From the press of Houghton, Mifflin, and Co., Boston, come three or four neat little volumes, all to be had in this city at Williamson and Co.'s. The first, "Beckonings for Every Day," is a thought calendar, arranged by Lucy Larcom. Miss Larcom belongs to that class of American women to whom American literature owes so much of the fineness and delicacy of texture which is more and more characteristic of it. Her poetry finds many readers here, and may well be considered typical of the graceful work in spiritual arabesques to which we refer. It is very beautiful, very gossamer, very suggestive of the infinite differentiation theory by which man, the present animal, shall become man, the future archangel. It expresses, in short, a very refined and lovely intellectuality, any exercise of which, in a matter of choice, could not fail to be happy in its results. As Miss Larcom's calendar does not consist of selections from her own works, this is important, and the reader of her "Beckonings" cannot fail to be struck by the truth of it. They are full of high and beautiful thought, drawn from many sources, familiar and unfamiliar. There is a never failing charm about these haphazard daily sentiments. Even the publication of an "E. P. Roe Birthday Book" could not cause their popularity to wane, which is about as severe a test as one could imagine them subjected to. Miss Larcom's "Beckonings" will go towards making them more popular than ever.

"The Silver Bridge" is the title of the initial poem in a small collection by Elizabeth Akers. The verses are chiefly love-songs, and vary much in value both of conception and execution. They are nearly all in the common minor key of women poets, and some are very graceful metrical productions indeed. The average of the verses would be about the same as that of the poetical contributions to any of the standard magazines for a year. The idea in most of them is almost too slight for its somewhat elaborate treatment; one receives an impression of immaturity of design. There is really no reason why rhyme and metre should be laid under contribution to express the following, for instance:

The grass is greener where she sleeps,  
The birds sing softer there,  
And Nature fondest vigil keeps  
Above a face so fair—  
For she was innocent and sweet  
As mortal thing can be—  
The only heart that ever beat,  
That beat alone for me.