

ple, in a generously appreciative spirit. Of Montgomery he speaks in warm terms of eulogy; but although he admires the bravery and strategic ability of Benedict Arnold, the shadow of the perfidy to come seems to be thrown across the scene in advance, casting a sombre gloom over the portraiture of the man who betrayed his country. Mr. Lesperance has a sense of honour too keen and delicate to speak with patience of that treason, still less to mention it, as we have somewhere read, as a 'returning to his allegiance.'

It would be unfair to give even a meagre outline of the imaginative portion of the tale, which gives light, life, and colouring to the whole. The circumstances under which so singular an exchange of lovers took place strike us as strange, and one would almost think that the author is sceptical of abiding constancy in love. Pauline Belmont and Roderick Hardinge appear to have been devotedly attached, and their affection has already survived several rude shocks when Cary Singleton, a noble specimen of the manly rebel, comes upon the scene. Then there is Zulma Sarpy, who appears to have been enamoured of both young men simultaneously, and in the end matters take a very strange turn. This appears to be odd, however, only when the tale is subjected to cold analysis, for the author is so fertile in expedients, and events happen so naturally, that everything seems to be inevitable. Pauline is a sweet girl, the beauties and latent strength of whose character are developed by the storm of adversity. Zulma, however, is the heroine, a noble, fearless, self-reliant maiden, a Gwendolen, differing from George Eliot's in her helpfulness, and in the want of petulance and wrong-headedness.

The author dwells with evident affection upon descriptions of the female character. He is a philogynist in the best sense of the word, and his tender delineations, displaying an intimate acquaintance with his subject, prove that he only can understand the character and idiosyncrasies of woman, who has learned to respect and reverence her. Mention has been made of the author's powers of description, especially of natural scenery. Perhaps the finest example of it is his word-painting of the Falls of Montmorenci. This graphic sketch, with its suggestion of supernatural machinery, reminds us of a firmly drawn and deeply interesting figure, that of Batoche, with his little Blanche, the intrepid recluse of the Falls. This weird old figure, either listening to the roar of the cataract, or extracting through his violin the meaning of its solemn sounds, is unique in character, and so tenderly limned as to be peculiarly attractive. The minor characters we have not space to comment upon, and it only remains to commend the work most conscientiously to our readers, as an ably written and thoroughly attractive Canadian story.

THANKFUL BLOSSOM. By Bret Harte. Illustrated: Toronto, Belford Bros., 1877.

Bret Harte has here taken a 'new departure,' and in so doing has overstepped the limits of ordinary comprehension. It may be that he has soared above it; but, while that is at least questionable, it is certain that he has got beyond it. He has broken new ground by choosing, as the scene of his story, 'The Jerseys,' during the War of Independence, and by leaving the 'rough-diamond' type of miners and adventurers, with whose large hearts and vigorous profanity he has made us familiar, for a group of shadowy last-century personages, whom regard for brevity rather than for accuracy forces us to call characters. 'Thankful Blossom' is grievously disappointing. It opens with one of those clever, clear-cut bits of description which are always charming in Bret Harte's writings, notwithstanding that they are all much of one pattern, and have of late conveyed suspicions of a tricky and monotonous rather than a spontaneous and flexible skill. Nor is there wanting the dry humour and the ready perception of quaint and incongruous detail which are peculiarly his. But pretty description and quiet fun—both very good things in their way—obviously will not suffice for a story, without a connecting thread of interest either in plot or characters. We will not say that 'Thankful Blossom' is lacking in plot. On the contrary, it glories in a superabundance of little plots, leading with much mystery away from one another, and up to nothing in particular. They leave the impression that the author changed his intention at every few pages, without caring to start afresh each time that he did so. The characters have nothing distinctive or positive about them but their names; in two cases there is mystery even about these. All of them suffer from an absence of motive or intention, and from a general vagueness, resulting in painfully jerky and purposeless action. The hero (or the gentleman we venture to suppose the hero) allows Mistress Thankful Blossom to lash him playfully across the face with her whip on the slightest of provocation, and thus to furnish a prominent instance of an artless impetuosity by which that young lady is evidently expected to win the hearts of all readers. Unfortunately she just falls short of the point where faults become virtues. She is silly; rather than artless, rude rather than frank; and her general behavior is less coquettish than hoydenish. The sketch of George Washington is one of the few things in the book worthy of Bret Harte. It is marred, however, by the introduction of phantom-like nocturnal wanderings on the part of the Commander-in-Chief, with no apparent purpose but that of compassing one more joke on the threadbare subject of his veracity.

On the whole it is a pity that an author capable of better things should draw so heavily,