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LITERARY AND ARTISTIC CELEBRITIES.

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PAUL KANE.

In presenting our readers with some notices of one of the few artists, worthy of the name, which Western Canada has yet produced, we would observe, that as yet he hardly ranks under the category of a "celebrity," so far at least as the popular acceptation of the term is concerned. To the appreciators of the fine arts, indeed, in this quarter of British North America, the name of Paul Kane has long been familiar, as associated with the higher walks of painture, but the million have still to be indoctrinated with a knowledge of his characteristic excellencies. Happy are we to say that before long, this knowledge will be widely diffused by the publication of a series of engravings of some of our artist's leading delineations of Indian life and scenery, a work which unless we bethemore mistaken will command attention, not merely on this continent but in Europe.

We shall confine ourselves mainly to biographical details in the present article, reserving a critical review and description of the painter's works, till furnished with texts by the above mentioned publication.

Paul Kane is a native of the city of Toronto, and at an early age entered into the employment of an ornamental painter. In this very subordinate walk of art, he soon came to manifest great aptitude and ability, and his natural love of design induced him to devote many of those hours which boys

expend in pastime, to the cultivation of drawing. Lacking at once instruction and proper models from which to study, the difficulties with which he had to struggle were necessarily great, but by indefatigable perseverance, he managed to make head-way against them. Having acquired a respectable knowledge of perspective, he felt emboldened to wait upon Mr. Drury, the then drawing master of Upper Canada College, with some of his attempts at delineation. This gentleman at once recognized the marks of original genius, and the germs of future excellence in these essays, and promptly enrolled the young artist in the number of his pupils.

Under Mr. Drury's tuition Kane remained for about a year, and, as might have been anticipated, made a diligent use of his time. At the expiry of that period, he turned his attention to portrait painting, calculating that it would bring him in an immediate pecuniary return, and thus enable him to cultivate the higher branches of the art.

Accordingly in 1836, he removed to Detroit, and having there executed some "counterfeit presentments,"—as Hamlet hath it—travelled over the principal cities of the United States, in the exercise of his profession. Sailing down the Mississippi, he landed at New Orleans in the fall of 1838, literally without one shilling in his exchequer, having been robbed on board the steam-boat of every thing he possessed, except his garmenture. In order to pay for his passage, he was constrained to transfer the gruff features of the skipper to canvas.