

present time with that of any period, not too remote, in the past. To enter at length into such a comparison would carry us beyond our present purpose; we shall, therefore, content ourselves with a brief reference to a few points of contrast. The first and most obvious, is the immense improvement in the typographical execution of our books and periodicals. Whatever literary merit may have been possessed by the essays and lectures of twenty years ago, the manner in which they were embalmed for posterity, was sufficient of itself, to repel all but the most curious readers. How folks managed to wade through those dreary pages of rugged typography, imprinted on smoky-brown paper, passes understanding. Up to a still more recent date, our Canadian schools were dependent upon the American publishers for many of their elementary school-books. The geographies, such as Morse's and Olney's, had been written apparently with the special purpose of glorifying the great Republic; and even the reprints of European histories were sent forth with a sting for us Britishers, in the shape of a one-sided narrative of the wars of the United States. Thus our youth left school entirely uninstructed in the geography of their country, and quite unconscious that it had a history with which Canadians ought to be familiar. By the enterprise of publishers in Montreal and Toronto this reproach has at length been taken away. Of the great advance made by the newspaper press we have not space to enlarge on the present occasion; but to the rapid growth of the book-selling and publishing trades, we must devote a few words. It is to be regretted that we have no record of the works which have issued from the press during the last thirty or forty years. A catalogue, or much better, a collection of them, would afford valuable material for our literary history. In the absence of either, we may safely assert that until within the last decade, the Canadian publishing trade had no existence worthy of the name. The pamphlets and treatises of former days fell still-born from the press. The reading public was too limited to warrant the risking of capital in so precarious a venture. With the exception of a few standard works of a religious character, our books, generally professional, with a dash of popular poetry, were invariably American reprints. Meanwhile, as wealth accumulated, opportunities for culture presented themselves to a larger number of those who, by taste or ability, were inclined to literary pursuits. Thence arose the intellectual life amongst us. The readers of to-day are not as those of past times. They are no longer contented with the dole which satisfied their predecessors half a generation ago. The range of study has grown wider, and taste is becoming critical, if not fastidious. There is an evident desire to keep up with the knowledge of the time, and although the *helluo librorum* has not yet made his appearance in Canada, there is a general demand for the latest and noblest fruits of contemporary intellect.

In this department of the Magazine, we propose to give a carefully prepared summary of current literature in so far as it is readily accessible to Canadian readers and likely to command their attention. Those works which appear to require more extended notice or to deserve a more formal introduction to the public, will find a place in our Book Reviews. These, together with the shorter references here, will afford a tolerably complete guide to the literature of the month. As we especially desire to stimulate and en-

courage active talent and enterprize, we intend to give prominence to works issuing from the Canadian press, and we shall feel obliged, if publishers will assist us in making our Canadian section as full and comprehensive as possible. The CANADIAN MONTHLY will be distinctively native in its tone and character, and therefore, we hope to receive the hearty co-operation of the friends of literature, all over the Dominion.

In attempting to take a general view of contemporary literature, we naturally give precedence to works bearing upon the subject of Religion. To make a judicious selection from the voluminous mass of publications in this department is, by no means, an easy task. The prevalence of the critical spirit in theology, as in other branches of science, has caused the production of a class of books reflecting the varied phases of individual or partizan opinion. Within a brief period, no less than eight treatises have appeared on the life and mission of our Saviour. Of these, the works of Dr. Pressensé and Mr. Beecher are worthy of note; although they cannot be called critical. The work of Dr. Lange is far more satisfactory in this respect, and will doubtless be accepted as the evangelical authority on this subject. In company with these, we may place the *Conferences of Père Lacordaire on God and on Jesus Christ*. In the former, the learned Dominican discusses the work of creation, and also the rational and moral nature of man; in the latter, three chapters are devoted to a refutation of rationalism. As, however, the father views religious questions from the rigid stand-point of his Church, and in the spirit of a mystic, his reasonings will scarcely convince any not already persuaded. "Human Power in the Divine Life," by the Rev. N. Bishop, is an attempt to reconcile philosophy and religion. The author's object, to use his own words, is to "aid those who, like myself, have been, for years, perplexed by expressions in theology which have no corresponding expressions in the philosophy of the human mind." Of works which have so far secured popular approval, as to attain the honour of a second edition, we may note—Dean Howson's "Companions to St. Paul;" Mr. Stanford's "Symbols of Christ;" and Mr. Dale's "Lectures on the Ten Commandments." M. Guizot has published a work entitled "Christianity in reference to Society and opinion;" but, as it has not yet reached us, we have no means of pronouncing upon its merits. Miss Charlotte Yonge's "Scripture Readings" are well adapted to family use. The series before us extends to the death of Moses, and includes some portions also of the book of Job. Critical difficulties are not discussed at length; but they are honestly stated, and solutions of them suggested. "Musings on the Christian Year," also, by Miss Yonge, with Sir J. T. Colendge's "Life of Keble," will be interesting to students of the most popular sacred poet of our time. Mr. Field's "Stones of the Temple, or Lessons from the Fabric and Furniture of the Church," is a contribution to art from the High Church party. The work, which is profusely illustrated, contains much that is valuable to those interested in sacred architecture. Passing to religious biography, we may simply mention Rev. Mr. Stephen's "Life of St. Chrysostom," with portrait, published by Mr. Murray. Tyerman's "Life of John Wesley," now in course of republication by Harper Brothers, is the first biography of the founder of the Methodist society, written by one whose entire sympathies are