

become politically united with them. So that if we merged our literary productions with theirs, the whole would be classed as American Literature, *i. e.*, the Literature of the people of the United States. And thus the identity of their works being lost, no credit would accrue to Canadian authors as a class. The inhabitants of the United States style themselves "*Americans*," as if they were the only people living in North America, or even on the whole continent. Europeans also fall into this mistake very readily, and more than once credit has been given to the United States when it was rather due to Canada.

Our history, too, has had its effect in developing our manners and customs, so that they do not much resemble those of the United States. Even if we were to become politically united with them, yet, we should probably differ from them in many respects for perhaps a century.

Neither, on the other hand, should the literary productions of Canadians be classed under the head of *English or British* literature, as in this case also their identity would be lost.

It is useless to argue that Milton, Shakespeare and Bacon belong to us as much as to England. It is true, that as members of the Anglo-Saxon race we lay claim to them in common with the inhabitants of England. But as Canadians we cannot share their glory. As well might the French Canadians of the Province of Quebec claim relationship with Fenelon or Racine. "Borrowed plumes" are not desirable. Mr. Roberts struck the right chord when, in his poem, "Canada," he asked,

"How long the trust in greatness *not thine own*?"

I feel confident that whatever may be the political destiny of Canada, whether Annexation, Imperial Federation, or Independence, still it will be advisable to preserve a distinctively national literature.

It is also worthy of note that one-third of our population is of French descent, and therefore has little sympathy with the opinions of the people of the United States or of England.

And I must here remark that, up to the present time, the literary attainments of the French Canadians far exceed those of the English-speaking people of Canada—I mean as regards their contributions to our National Literature.

Especially have our compatriots distinguished themselves in the historical department of our literature. Parkman derived much of his information regarding the early history of Canada and the United States from the "Jesuit Relations" of the 17th century, which history occupies about the same position with reference to Canadian history as the "Saxon Chronicle" occupies with respect to early English annals.

Gameau, Casgrain and Lemoine contributed much to our historical literature.

Frechette is acknowledged to be our greatest poet, and his genius has been acknowledged by the French Academy.

Lesperance has written one of our best novels, *i. e.*, "The Bastonnais."

I might mention many other names, but space fails me.

Now the works of all these would be lost to Canada, if our Literature were merged with that of the United States.

I think, too, it is high time that we had a good Canadian magazine. We have sufficient literary ability in this Dominion to support an institution of this sort. And such a magazine would be popular beyond our borders, if conducted in a *national*, as opposed to (what I may call) a *provincial* spirit.

Let it be understood that there is as much literary ability in Quebec as in Ontario; and be it remembered that the Maritime Provinces have given us a Sir William Dawson and a Haliburton.

I write this as a Canadian; and I trust that all true Canadians will endorse what I say. I have no special preference for any province of Canada. We are One.

JOHN B. PYKE.

MR. JOHN KING'S "OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY."*

When Mr. J. C. Dent announced his intention of writing the first true, unprejudiced, and non-partisan history of the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837, all interested in the history

* *The Other Side of the Story.* Being some reviews criticizing "The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion," also the Letters in the Mackenzie-Rolph Controversy, and a Critique on "The New Story." By John King, Barrister. Toronto: James Murray & Co.

of the development of the Canadian Constitution entertained hopes of seeing something valuable added to our stock of information with regard to that stormy and interesting period. Some new information has indeed been added, and some new light thrown upon dark events; but the promised history cannot be said by its most ardent admirers to justify expectations. It has little of the historical in it. The qualities which we look for as most indispensable in a historian,—freedom from prejudice, impartial and thorough research, and judicial calmness,—Mr. Dent has shown himself to be sadly lacking in, from the beginning to the end of his two bulky volumes on "The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion." While a vivid picture is painted in glowing language, increased in attractiveness by the added graces of rhetorical beauties and of abundance and aptness of quotations, and by a smooth and pleasing literary style, that picture cannot claim general recognition as an embodiment of truth. Mr. Dent is in his work more of an advocate than a judge; indeed, he may be said to be almost entirely the former. His apparent object, through the whole of his extensive work, has been the glorification of Dr. John Rolph at the expense of those in connection with whom he must always be considered, and in comparison or contrast with whom he must be measured and his worth estimated. Up to the present time the opinion has prevailed in this Province that the real head of the movement of 1837 was William Lyon Mackenzie, and that it is to him, more than to any one else, that was owing the hastening of the reform of those abuses against which he so long and so persistently fought; and this, notwithstanding an avowal of Mackenzie's many weaknesses—such weaknesses as arose from a too hasty temperament, a lack of calculation of chances, and an impatience in attention to results. On the other hand, the position almost universally given to Dr. Rolph is that of a man seeking throughout his political career the favor of all political parties, and trusted by none. This was the estimate of his co-temporaries, and it has since been but little modified. To do away with it entirely would be a difficult task, involving, it must be said, a falsification of historical records, and an abandonment of recognized truth. But this task Mr. Dent undertakes, and his plan of accomplishing it is to elevate his hero by the vilification of those who fought both with and against him,—if Dr. Rolph can be said to have fought at all,—in the struggle for freedom. The result must be recognized to be a radically false portraiture of Dr. Rolph himself, of Wm. Lyon Mackenzie, of Bishop Strachan, of Chief Justice Robinson, and of almost every prominent figure of the period with which the story deals. It is with the object of pointing out the departures from historical accuracy indulged in for the purpose of carrying out such a plan, that Mr. King has published his pamphlet; and Mr. King has, in our opinion, succeeded in showing that Mr. Dent's book is entitled to little confidence wherever the character of his hero comes upon the stage. This is something accomplished; and, in the interests of historical truth, it was necessary. We need not notice the abundance of personalities and the continual repetitions that appear in the criticism, nor the literary style, which on almost every page sacrifices elegance to force of diction. Such things can be overlooked or forgotten by the student of history, just as we can accept the truth of the writer's answers to Mr. Dent's work, while recognizing what in the latter is of historical or literary value. Mr. King, we cannot but think, errs on one side, as Mr. Dent errs on the other, but not so markedly. Dr. Rolph was not utterly vile nor utterly a hypocrite, nor was Mackenzie at all times, nor at any one time entirely, heroic. There is something to be said on both sides, but Mr. Dent has the hardest side to handle, and, unlike his critic, he has so far found it necessary to belie the facts of history. And it must be remembered, in considering the faults of Mr. King's pamphlet, that it was written under that provocation which deliberate misrepresentation always brings to one in possession of the facts misrepresented. Estimating the "Story" and the "Critique" by the light which they throw upon the times and events dealt with, it is enough to say, for the present, that to read the former without the supplementary correction of the latter, would be, to one forming his opinion with regard to those events and the men who were concerned in them, to accept an imperfect opinion without an available and adequate corrective.

W. F. W. C.