

of dramatic interest; it has had no episodes of stirring import, except the fruitless rebellion from 1836-7 which after all was little more than a faction fight in some Irish county. Our history for the past half century has been the record of material progress: the forest has echoed to the axe, and where the tall dark-green pine and spruce stood less than fifty years ago, now towns and cities arise and speak more eloquently than mere words of the achievements of the people. The lives of the owners of this noble domain, so lately reclaimed from the forest, may be less adventurous than those of the pioneers and explorers of whose exploits I have told you, but the results are of no insignificant character, as we may see when we look over the face of this Dominion and recognize all the evidences of its wealth and prosperity, as well as intellectual progress. Of the material condition of Canada, it is beyond the purpose of this paper to speak; but here I may now consider what we have done in the way of availing ourselves of the materials we possess for the creation of a Canadian literature.

#### OUR INTELLECTUAL PROGRESS.

So far British America has not produced very many men of great eminence in the pursuit of literature whose reputation has extended beyond the limits of the Dominion itself. In comparatively new countries like the Provinces, the men of action have chiefly been called into requisition. Forests must be cut down, cities must be built, the land and sea must pay their tribute to industry, before men have the leisure or ability to give attention to letters and the arts. Our life is so busy that few of us can give much time and contemplation to subjects of a purely literary character; and then the rewards which men can receive from commercial and industrial pursuits are so great and manifold in a country like this, only yet in the early stage of its development, that the class of professed men of letters, leaving out of the question the conductors of the periodical press, is necessarily very limited, and confined to persons of the learned professions. It is only when communities are rich and prosperous, when they have attained a certain age, that they

can expect to have a literature, in the extended sense of the term. When we look around us, and see the evidences of material and intellectual progress throughout Canada, we cannot but feel encouraged to believe that the time is fast approaching when our people will stimulate the genius of their own country, and we shall have a class of professed men of letters in the Dominion. British Americans have been engaged for the past hundred years in building up their country. They have raised the framework of a noble edifice, and now they should add a column here and a column there, and otherwise complete it, so that it will be pleasing to the eye and creditable to the builders. A man who settles in the midst of the forest is quite content for a while with the hut which he has hastily constructed out of the materials around him; but when years have passed by, and he has amassed wealth, when he has thousands of acres of rich corn-fields to show as the results of his energy and industry, his ambition is stimulated, and he builds a new residence and furnishes it in a style commensurate with his improved circumstances. So it should be with us in British America. We have surmounted our early difficulties, and built up for ourselves a country of whose wealth and vitality we have every reason to be proud; and now the time has come when we should improve our surroundings and cultivate the arts that refine and adorn.

#### AMERICAN LITERATURE.

A century ago the people of the United States, like ourselves, were without a literature of their own. Then they had as much as they could do to build up houses for themselves and future generations. Years passed by, the United States became a mighty nation; men of wealth and leisure increased in number, and the country gradually had a literature of its own. Cooper devoted his brilliant pen to a description of the struggles and difficulties of the early pioneers in the American wilderness, and gave to the world romances which have been read wherever the English language is spoken. Washington Irving wrote volumes which proved how deeply he had drunk from "the well of English