

LITERATURE.

HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO CANADA.

"Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada," Edited by Professor G. M. Wrong. Toronto: William Briggs.

PROFESSOR WRONG deserves credit for the conception of this publication and for the labour he has bestowed in gathering materials for it from all parts of Canada. The historical literature relating to Canada is growing at a rate that warrants the annual appearance of such a review, and I trust that he may receive sufficient encouragement to warrant its continuance. I write this brief notice to call the attention of our students of history to it, and to point out one or two little defects, arising probably from that air of editorial infallibility and omniscience which in a former age was assumed as a matter of course. Most of the signed articles are valuable, either as criticisms or genuine contributions to history; notably those by the Hon. David Mills, Professor Shortt, the Abbe Casgrain, Professor Clark, and George Stewart. The unsigned articles, for which the editor must be held responsible, are sometimes of less merit. For instance, the review of the eighth volume of Dr. Kingsford's History of Canada seems to be unfair, not only in at least one or two of its criticisms and in its parade of errors in names and dates, which are in many cases due to the proof-reader, but the cause assigned for the inaccuracies. "Unfortunately," says the reviewer, "hasty work almost inevitably results in faulty workmanship." It is impossible to accuse Dr. Kingsford justly of undue speed of production. He may be said to have given his whole life to his great work; and for the last ten years he has toiled, from 5 a.m. every day, at it and at nothing else. Writers of books are not immortal like Tithorus, nor even possessed of the longevity of Methusaleh. As they cannot encroach on eternity, they must have some regard to time. The reviewer, basing his judgment on American authorities, has formed a higher opinion of Prevost and of Procter as generals than has Dr. Kingsford. Naturally, people are prone to exalt those they have beaten, for they thus exalt themselves; but it will take more evidence than has been submitted yet to make Canadians willing to change their estimate of either General. But, as Dr. Kingsford must feel constrained to defend himself, I shall not discuss this or the other questions referred to in the review.

Again, in the notice of the beautiful Cabot Calendar, for which we owe most hearty thanks to Miss M. A. Fitzgibbon and Miss Sara Mickle, it is said that events are mentioned "only remotely connected with this country," and the one proof given is:

"May 23rd, Romanes died . . . the sole connection of Romanes with Canada being the accident that he was born there." It is somewhat comical to describe even the place of anyone's birth as an "accident." It is generally considered an important event. But the reviewer is surely ignorant of the facts of the case. Romanes' father was a Canadian clergyman, and afterwards a Professor in Queen's. His distinguished son was not only born in Canada but lived here, until his father's heirship to an inheritance in Britain caused the family to remove there; and he and his always spoke and felt concerning Canada as their old home. The same critic goes on to say, "Sir Fenwick Williams' exploit at Kars is another event dragged into the record." Why, General Williams was not only a Canadian by birth, but a Governor of his native Province of Nova Scotia, honoured by his countrymen for his distinguished services, and especially for the heroic defence of Kars against overwhelming odds, which attracted the attention of all Europe at the time. I shall never forget the intense interest felt in Halifax as the news came of sorties made or attacks repulsed. To have omitted all reference to such an "event" would have been unpardonable in the compilers of the Cabot Calendar.

I may give another instance of needless display of editorial omniscience from the notice entitled "Mr. Goldwin Smith and Principal Grant." The writer quotes from an article of mine in the *National Review* the following concerning the rebellion of 1837: "put down . . . without the aid of a single British soldier," and then adds his own comment within parenthesis, "this is of course not true of Lower Canada." It is considerate of him to warn his readers that something presumably said by me is not true; but had he quoted the two lines in my article on the subject there would have been no need of the warning. Here they are: "In 1837 sympathizers crowded across the frontiers of Upper Canada to aid rebels. We put them down without the aid of a single British soldier." The most careless reader cannot avoid seeing that I confined myself to Upper Canada and to exact truth, but that would not be the conclusion drawn by those readers of "The Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada," who had no access to the British Review in which my article appeared.

G. M. GRANT.

The portrait of Dr. Bell is an excellent likeness, and has met with praise from all who have seen it. The artist is a Torontonion.

The students' address to Dr. Bell was illuminated by Mr. W. Bruce, of Hamilton, who is unsurpassed in that kind of work.