

There are few of our public men early or recent for whom Mr. Rattray has not a kind word. We can now remember but two exceptions—Sir Charles Metcalfe and Sir Francis Head. These were, however, both naturally twist-headed, and thus by a law of their kind, they travelled in a peculiar spiral groove that utterly defied all human presentment or calculation. It is needless to add that when they again emerged to view the political *bore* was of the most remarkable character. When an armed insurrection was known by every one to be impending, Sir Francis Head sent away to the Lower Province all his regular troops! Herein Mr. Rattray finds a crucial proof of the Governor's *thoughtlessness and ignorance*. Why, it was an effort of deliberate wisdom, that is, such wisdom as the Governor commanded! It so happens that Captain Marryat was precisely at that time visiting Toronto, and in his Diary he brings out the interesting fact that the dismissal of the troops was deliberate—that Sir Francis argued himself and his naval friend into the conviction that the 'regulars' would be more secure from danger, if they were down in the Lower Province! Our national literature is to be congratulated on Mr. Rattray's historical contributions. Calm, impartial and skilfully composed, his volumes furnish, not only delightful reading, but permanent and valuable storehouses of careful research.

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*The Last Forty Years: Canada since the Union of 1841.* Parts I. and II. (pages 1—104.) By JOHN CHARLES DENT. Toronto: George Virtue, 1881.

The publication of this work, undertaken by an able and industrious writer for an enterprising local publisher, indicates that the retrospective and historic spirit has eagerly seized upon the popular mind, and that, in connection with other ambitious works recently projected by Toronto publishers, we are about to enter upon an era of publishing enterprise which must have an important influence upon Canadian literature. We trust that the authors and publishers concerned in these works will meet with hearty encouragement in the laudable and patriotic enterprise in which they are expending their money and their labour, and that their undertakings will

severally grow to a successful and well-remunerated completion.

The period intended to be covered by Mr. Dent in this work readily lends itself to just such treatment as he proposes, and is manifestly well-qualified, to give to it. The writer's plan seems to be that of grouping facts and events into chapters which typify and illustrate the formative movement of the successive periods in the country's growth, rather than to write the history of the time from year to year. Hence, as the prospectus sets out, the work will deal with such leading events in the political, social and religious life of 'Canada Since the Union' of the two old provinces as the following: 'The Inauguration of the Union under Lord Sydenham; the Struggle between Sir Charles Metcalfe and his Ministry, and the Final Establishment of Responsible Government; the Advent of the Railway Era; the Long and Hotly-waged Contest which ended in the Secularization of the Clergy Reserves and the Abolition of the Seigniorial Tenure; the Making and Subsequent Abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty with the United States; the Legislative Dead-Lock, and the Ensuing Movement which led to Confederation; the Amalgamation of the Maritime Provinces, Manitoba, the Great North-West, and British Columbia, with Canada; the Inception and subsequent History of the Canadian Pacific Railway Scheme; the Fisheries Question; the National Policy; and other prominent episodes in our modern history.' A review of these topics will present in miniature the leading features of the national life and its development in the past generation. To old and young alike, their presentation in historical form and chronological sequence cannot fail to be acceptable, particularly as the informational character of the work, and the effective manner of its treatment, evidently design it for popular use. With but the first two of fifteen parts before us, it is obviously impossible to review the book at any length, or to express with confidence a critical judgment upon its merits. So far, however, as the history proceeds, the writer, we should say, has acquitted himself with ability and judgment. The sketch of Lord Durham, which appears in the first instalment, is written with much care and sympathy, and with an evident desire to be impartial and dis-