

praiseworthy direction. Under such circumstances it is well that the women of Canada are showing that public spirit and sagacity which the men have hitherto failed to show. It seems to me that the National Council is already giving us abundant reason for its existence—for, of course, there are always some who prefer to make no onward movement and doubt its necessity—and is showing an amount of vitality that should tell the men that their reign of masterly inactivity in many matters of social and intellectual improvement is seriously threatened.

Of course, when we advocate a free library we are met by the objection that it means the taxation of the people for the reading of novels, many of them most injurious to the mind, and leading to a great waste of time which ought to be devoted to studies of a more profitable character. I am quite sure that no one who looks at the mass of rubbish which is yearly circulated by English and American publishers—and which Canadians are also anxious to control by the Copyright Act, still hung up in the Colonial office—but must feel that there is much force in the objection. It does not certainly say much for modern culture when one of the most popular novels is "Dodo," which shows very little literary skill and simply exposes the intense frivolity and utter heartlessness of an English woman of fashion—thank heaven, none of the characteristics of an English mother, whose sons have made England great, and whose daughters have elevated her virtue! Even "Trilby," which is in many respects a book of fine finish, gentle humour and exquisite pathos—a book on the very borders of genius—brings up a question of the purity of thought among our women, young and old, since all go into raptures over the heroine and her lovers—a charming, dear creation assuredly, but not a model for the maidens of Canada. We have often heard it said that women are very cruel and obdurate where the frailty of their sex is concerned, but now we may believe after the approval of "Trilby" that women at last are charitable—at least on paper. However, whilst no doubt the mass of light literature is wretched in the extreme, it is consoling to think that we have "Marcella" and "The Manxman" to prove that powerful conceptions of human life have not yet entirely disappeared since the days when there were giants indeed in the world of letters. If Dickens and Thackeray had written nothing else than "David Copperfield" and "The Tale of Two Cities," "The Newcomes" and "Henry Esmond," they would still merit the thanks of Englishmen and their readers the world over. As long, then, as we have the works of Walter Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Elliot, Ward, Oliphant and others of note, to delight and instruct the world, I do not think we may fear the establishment of free libraries. After all a free library is an inducement to men and women to spend their time more profitably than is possible in places where one does not exist. Light literature wearies after a while and the mind must in most cases turn to the more invigorating and healthy books that every well-furnished library has on its shelves. When I think that even the women are in many places—actually in Toronto—devoting their afternoons to card parties, I think it is time we had a National Council to point out other methods of refreshing the intellect than euchre and poker in daylight.

The Royal Colonial Institute, which has done such good service for the Empire since its foundation in 1868, has issued, in royal octavo, a handsome catalogue of its library which cannot fail to be of much use to Englishmen and the numerous persons in London who require information from time to time on colonial questions. It is compiled in such a manner as to show the full titles of the works upon each colony in the order of publication, together with an index of authors and contents, which makes it historical as well as illustrative in its character. The book is divided into sections in which the literature of every colony is so arranged that the works upon any special subject connected with its history, government, trade and development, may be followed from its foundation to the present time. For instance, if we wish for information upon a particular subject, we need only refer to the headings on Colonial Botany and Flora, Imperial Federation, Emigration, Transactions of Societies, West Indies, Voyages and Circumnavigation, and so on. In order further to increase the utility of the catalogue for purposes of reference, the contents of all the chief collections of voyages, such as Hakluyt, Purchas, and articles from encyclopædias, periodicals, and proceedings of learned societies, are placed

under the colonies to which they refer. Canadian authors are fairly well represented in this well-stocked library. In the fifty large octavo pages the titles of their works take up, we see the names of Robert Bell, J. G. Bourinot, G. Bryce, Aeneas Dawson, G. W. Dawson, Sir J. W. Dawson, G. T. Denison, S. Fleming, N. F. Davin, S. E. Dawson, E. Gilpin, G. M. Grant, T. C. Haliburton ("Sam Slick"), A. Harvey, Sir F. Hincks, J. Howe, J. Hannay, J. M. Lemoine, Lady Macdonald, J. Macoun, A. Morris, G. Parker, G. Patterson, D. B. Read, C. G. D. Roberts, H. Scadding, J. Schultz, G. Stewart, Sir D. Wilson, and a few others who have contributed pamphlets and works of less note. Canadian authors and others would do good service by sending copies of books to a library which is most useful to all the colonial dependencies, and the students of their history and resources. Mr. Boosé, the librarian, who has compiled this catalogue with so much industry and intelligence, is an earnest student of colonial questions, always ready to assist those who require to make researches in this library.

The previous paragraph recalls the fact that the Royal Society of Canada is also doing useful work in the same direction. In the twelfth volume of the Transactions, which will soon be ready for distribution—an unusually large volume of nearly eight hundred quarto pages, with many illustrations—there will appear a bibliography of the members of the society. This compilation will be exceptionally valuable since it will cover the scientific and literary work of men like Sir J. W. Dawson, Abbé Casgrain, Evan McColl, Abbé Gosselin, W. Kirby, Mgr. Tanguay, Abbé Verreau, H. Hale, Rev. Moses Harvey, Rev. G. Patterson, Dr. Kingsford, S. Fleming, Mgr. Hamel, Abbé Laflamme, Dr. Selwyn, Rev. Dr. Williamson, Dr. G. Lawson, and some others who have been earnest workers in the world of science and literature for the past forty years. In addition to the bibliography of these older workers, there are some seventy and more names of the younger literary and scientific men of Canada. Practically the collection covers the most important scientific and literary work that has been done in Canada for the most active period, so far, of its intellectual development. As the work includes all important articles that have been written by Canadian authors in periodicals, as well as pamphlets and books, it will be seen that it is a most important contribution to bibliographical literature, and invaluable as a work of reference.

According as the volumes of Mr. Larned's "History for Ready Reference and Topical Reading" have appeared, the writer has expressed his opinion in THE WEEK of its usefulness; and though he is compelled to find fault with some omissions in the fourth volume now before him he must not be understood as in any sense depreciating the general merit of a compilation, worthy of a place in every well equipped library alongside of Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History of America." It would seem, however, that even Mr. Larned, who has exceptional facilities as chief librarian of a large public library in Buffalo to gain easy access to Canadian sources of information, has fallen into the not uncommon habit of some American and English writers of underrating the importance of full and accurate information on Canadian matters. For instance, if we turn to Prince Edward Island we find that there are exactly ten lines devoted to an extract from an English author, Professor Munro, who scissored a constitutional history of Canada with very little intelligence. Yet Rhode Island, which may be compared, in many respects, to this prosperous little Canadian province, receives fifteen pages of notice—very properly so—but it is no compensation for the almost entire ignoring of a Canadian island of which we would like some late and definite information from the most recent writers. Why so little space should be given to this Canadian Province, and a page and a third to Norumbega—an entirely antiquarian subject—it is difficult to say, unless, indeed, the scissors and the books on that subject were handy at that moment. Even Norumbega would have more interest had the compiler given us a mention of the fact that there is still on the eastern Atlantic coast of Cape Breton an obvious survival of the mysterious past of America in the names of Lorambec or Norambec, which, for centuries, were given to two inlets or harbours near the famous port of Louisbourg, though now they have been corrupted to Loran, intended for Lorraine, from an ignorant belief that they are relics of the French dominion. Under the head of Acadia, however, we find a