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*Nous travaillerons dans l'espérance.*

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## NATIONAL CHARACTER.

SECOND PRIZE ESSAY.—BY MISS BALLANTYNE.

TO live in a country such as ours, is a great advantage to the student of human nature, for the composite character of the population enables him to study the peculiarities of many nations every day of his life. It gives him all the facilities which natives of the old world must seek in travel, and it gives them greatly increased, for he can observe and compare at one time, and so not allow each new impression to partially efface the last.

“Human nature is very much the same all the world over,” we hear constantly asserted; and beyond doubt it is true. It is not strange, then, that among the endless permutations of likes, dislikes, vices, virtues, habits and so forth, that go to make up character, no two should be exactly alike?

Just as surprising as the fact that no two faces, though made up of the same set of features, are ever precisely the same.

The parallel between physical and mental resemblances goes further than this. In spite of all the changes which time, care, sickness and trouble may mark on our features from childhood to old age the individual stamp remains. And so with character. We do change, undoubtedly, day after day; we change

our opinion in small things and in great; we change by our own exertions, and we change against our will; familiarity lessens our reverence for some good things—removes from us something of the feeling of awe with which we regard them—while, on the other hand, it softens the feelings of abhorrence with which we regard things vile; each new friend, every new place, leaves a mark on our character; we either improve or retrograde—we never stand still, and yet, after all, we never lose the undefinable something by which we are known. The internal change which day after day and year after year produces is generally best known to ourselves. To others we are to a great extent the same.

So with families. While a family holds together we should expect to find, as we do, that their dispositions are very similar. But let the members be scattered to the four corners of the world, let them be subjected to as different influences as the world can afford, and yet enough of the original family peculiarity will remain to each to mark the kindred.

This resemblance, whatever it is—for it is as undefinable as the likeness of kindred faces often is—is apt to strike most forcibly on first acquaintance.

As with families, so with nations.