

## THE STATE OF NEW YORK.\*

THE history of the "Empire State" is full of interest to all who care either to make acquaintance with the development of modern European civilisation, or to study the progress of emigration and the settlement of new lands. In the latter aspect of the subject the earlier part of the present work will be found to possess a manifold interest, whilst the former aspect will be illustrated, in a measure, by the whole history, but more particularly by its later parts.

Although the British element has become predominant on this Western Continent, and does undoubtedly contribute the principal influences in the development of all the various States and Provinces, and of their institutions, we are apt to forget that there are and always have been various other influences at work which make themselves felt and seen in that whole result, which we might call American civilisation. Perhaps the peculiar "smartness," which is one of the characteristics of the modern American has resulted from the friction of various nationalities, and from the necessity, hence arising, for each race to understand, and therefore to study, other modes of thought than its own.

Probably most persons are aware of the general distribution of nationalities on this continent. We in Canada are not likely to forget the French occupation of the Lower Province. New England is known by all who have any interest in the history of England as the home of the Pilgrim Fathers. Virginia and Maryland in those names keep alive the remembrance of the days of Elizabeth and William and Mary; but we have reason to know that many fairly educated persons have very little notion of the importance of the original Dutch possession of the great city and State of New York. It was indeed a very strange thing, that in the days of all her history in which the Republic of the Netherlands was best able to hold her own with England, she should have surrendered her great possession, a circumstance which is rendered still more wonderful when the state of things in the colony itself, at the time of surrender, is considered.

The history of the original Dutch occupation, of the establishment of the authority of the United Provinces, of their conflicts with the original inhabitants, of the development of the liberties of the people in relation to their Governors and of the home Government, is told with sufficient fulness and in a very interesting manner by Mr. Roberts, on to the English occupation and supremacy.

There is a great deal in the early history of these settlements which is not very creditable to any of the emigrant people. The settlers often behaved very badly to the native populations; the governors or directors and the Home Government behaved very badly to the settlers. The Dutch Directors seem to have been peculiarly tyrannical, and we should be tempted to draw comparisons between the early history of New York and the late history of South Africa, were we not forced to remember that English colonists have not always behaved with perfect justice to the aborigines, nor English Governors to the emigrants.

It was in 1614 that the States General of Holland granted a charter to a company of Amsterdam merchants, "exclusively to visit and navigate to the newly discovered lands lying in America, between New France and Virginia, now named New Netherland, for four years." It was five years before this, in September, 1609, that the Englishman, Henry Hudson, then in the service of the Netherlands, had sailed up the "river of the mountains," which we now know as the Hudson. In 1621 the Dutch West India Company was chartered, and was clothed (in the astonishing fashion of the period) "with exclusive rights in the domains of the Dutch between the Tropic of Cancer and the Cape of Good Hope, in the West Indies, and on the coasts of America between Newfoundland and the Straits of Magellan." In 1624, Fort Orange was set upon the banks of the Hudson, and was the beginning of Albany, the present capital of the State of New York. In 1626, Fort Amsterdam was raised on the southern point of Manhattan Island, on the place which has long been known as The Battery.

Passing by the mischievous administration of Director Kieft, we note that Peter Stuyvesant landed at New Amsterdam (so New York was then designated) in the year 1647, and twenty years after, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Breda, 1667, the Dutch colony in America was finally ceded to the English. It was not, however, given up without a struggle on the part of the settlers. Greatly exceeding the English in numbers, with the assistance of a Dutch fleet they retook the fort in 1673; but by the Treaty of Westminster, in 1674, it came finally into the possession of the English.

With the exception of that part of the work which is dedicated to the history of the Revolution, the rest of it deals with matters of a less eventful nature; but not indeed of less interest. The story of the progress of popular rights, ending in the disruption of the connection with England, is of very deep interest, and so is the account of the progress of literature, education, and art, not to mention the war for the Union. We can very highly commend the manner in which Mr. Roberts makes us acquainted with the progress of this wonderful history, whose climax will be studied by generations yet unborn. His narrative is lucid and vivid, and his accuracy seems beyond question. It is indeed a very wonderful story of progress. "Since 1820," says Mr. Roberts, "the commonwealth has held the first rank in the Union in number of inhabitants. Then they were almost exactly one-seventh of the total Union, while in 1880 they were one-tenth [that is, 5,082,871]. In that year its valuation was one-seventh of the entire country, almost exactly equal to that of all New England.

These plain figures prove that never have so many inhabi-

tants been gathered in an equal period on 47,620 square miles elsewhere on earth; and a population of six million [greater than that of England in the middle of the eighteenth century] has nowhere developed a wider, more diversified, and more productive industry."

We cannot help adding that we much hope that the perusal of this work may lead many to acquaint themselves with the immortal Diedrich Knickerbocker, and his exquisite "History of New York."

## OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

SOCIETY VERSE BY AMERICAN WRITERS. New York: Benjamin and Bell; Toronto: Williamson and Company.

This collection is almost as complete, in regard to the list of authors represented, as one could desire. With the exception of Elgar Fawcett and Margaret Vandegrift and a few others, everybody is there that one knows of, and a great many of whom one has never heard before. The verse is nearly all gay and graceful, and nowhere sins against the canons of good taste, which is much in praise of such a collection. We should have liked a little more than one piece by Aldrich, but acknowledge that Bunner is fairly represented in three. Many of the *Century's* old contributors are here: Bessie Chandler, Helen Gray Cone, Robert Grant, Samuel Peck, and Clinton Scollard, with several other verse makers with whose rhymes the rest of the magazines have made us familiar. The conspicuous fault of the book is that its selections are taken with but one object apparently, to entertain the reader with the reflections of lovers. It is a harp of but a single string. True, the string is variously twanged, but even thus it grows monotonous. One of the few exceptions to this is to be found in Bessie Chandler's sparkling verses "To Mrs. Carlyle," which are well worth reproducing:—

I have read your glorious letters,  
Where you threw aside all fetters,  
Spoke your thoughts and mind out freely,  
In your own delightful style.  
And I fear my state's alarming,  
For these pages are so charming  
That my heart I lay before you—  
Take it, Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

And I sit here, thinking, thinking,  
How your life was one long winking  
At poor Thomas' faults and failings,  
And his undue share of bile.  
Won't you own, dear, just between us,  
That this living with a genius  
Isn't after all so pleasant—  
Is it, Jeannie Welsh Carlyle?

There was nothing so demeaning,  
In those frequent times of cleaning,  
When you scoured and scrubbed and hammered  
In such true housewifely style,  
And those charming teas and dinners,  
Graced by clever saints and sinners,  
Make me long to have been present  
With you, Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

How you fought with dogs and chickens,  
Playing children and the dickens  
Knows what else; you stilled all racket,  
That might Thomas' sleep beguile.  
How you wrestled with the taxes,  
How you ground T. Carlyle's axes,  
Making him the more dependent  
On you, Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

Through it all from every quarter  
Gleams, like sunshine on the water,  
Your quick sense of fun and humour  
And your bright, bewitching smile  
And I own I fairly revel  
In the way that you say "devil,"  
'Tis so terse, so very vigorous,  
So like Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

All the time, say, were you missing  
Just a little love and kissing—  
Silly things that help to lighten  
Many a weary, dreary while?  
Not a word you say to show it—  
We may guess, but never know it—  
You went quietly on without it,  
Loyal Jeannie Welsh Carlyle.

THE CREMATION OF THE DEAD. By Dr. Hugo Erichson. Detroit: D. O. Haynes and Company.

We are disposed to believe that in *The Cremation of the Dead* Dr. Hugo Erichson has said the final word in favour of that way of disposing of mortal remains. Dr. Erichson discusses the subject from an "aesthetic, sanitary, religious, historical, medico-legal, and economical standpoint," and there are few who would care for more exhaustive treatment of it. Some of his "standpoints" have been taken, it is reasonable to believe, chiefly to make the work a comprehensive treatise, and because they are commonly considered in handling the matter, the historical standpoint for instance. It can signify very little to us how the ancients disposed of their dead, in the disposition of ours; and the high classical civilisation which gives this argument its value might easily be drawn upon for more questionable examples. In this, as in his discussion of the question from its religious side, Dr. Erichson serves us with arguments that have a tiresome familiarity; but in the remaining chapters of the book much new data may be found, and a very forcible and faithful presentation of it. As it takes eight lines after the author's name to inform the public with what accredited authority he speaks, the reader will gather that Dr. Erichson is very much in love with his gruesome subject. Perusal of the book,

\* *American Commonwealths*: New York. The Planting and the Growth of the Empire State, by Ellis H. Roberts, in two volumes. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company. Toronto: Williamson and Company.