

by a violent and changeable Press for shortcomings not his own, and joined to allies whose co-operation he could not command, he refrained from defending himself, and even from explanations, lest the cause should suffer. There is little doubt that Lord Raglan broke his heart because he could not perform the impossibilities that were expected of him. Such a man as this, so pure, so noble, cannot be said to occupy a conspicuous place among the men of this reign. If the words of the old ballad, put into King Henry's mouth upon hearing that Percy had fallen,

I trust I have within my realme,
Five hundred as good as hee,

had been used by our Queen upon hearing of his death, no one would have deemed her boastful. It seems almost invidious to single out a man great in ability as well as in character—John Lawrence. Striking as was the opportunity that enabled him to preserve the Empire he was afterwards called upon to rule, and, well as he did all things, his figure does not stand out in bold relief; he seems only one of many in the annals of the reign. Doubtless the path of duty is still the way to glory, and it is an exceeding joy to find it so well trodden. We walk in the footsteps of giants—Blake and Nelson—Marlborough and Wolfe—Shakespeare and Milton—Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton: imperfect, perhaps, the best of them at their best; but more than they have done, what can heroism or human genius hope to do? Achievements that would once have filled the world with sounds of praise have to bear comparison with theirs, and any standard almost as high is accepted as a matter of course, until now a Sir Galahad would not be remarkable by reason of his purity, nor an Admirable Crichton for his talents.

A highly trained, enterprising Press, has made itself an essential part of our civilisation. By its light we read present history and "survey mankind from China to Peru" at least once a day. Our thirst is for news as well as for intelligence, and the supply almost equals the demand. The never-tiring journalist to oblige us too often turns his lantern upon strictly private concerns, and too seldom with the avowed object of the cynic of old. As a result of this activity, we find the record crowded with petty wrongs and trifles, and it is not always easy to catch the true perspective of men or events. Material improvements are solid and obvious, and these are in no danger of being forgotten or underrated. There may be danger in our valuing them too much on their own account. In that suffering is prevented or lessened, and comfort and liberty increased, their good is unalloyed. For much else our joy is quite as great: that temperance has asserted itself as the rule of reputable life; that patriotism has been strong enough to induce the youth of the nation in large numbers voluntarily to submit to military discipline, with so modest a motto as "Defence, not Defiance;" that the two greatest Powers in the world, after winning their high place among the imperial races of history largely by the sword, should submit grave international disputes to the arbitration of jurists,—triumphs, such as these, gild the era with abiding glory.

The name of the Queen of the great mother of free nations has been heard in all lands, and is respected wherever known. It would be flattery to say that the epithet of "Great" should follow it; but we believe that in the long list of her predecessors there is no worthier one. We believe that a better title could be riveted to it, and that she would be fittingly described as Victoria the Good. The source of our honour and the fountain of justice, she has honoured herself by scrupulously obeying the laws she has enforced. Socially, where her monarchy is absolute, she has chosen only what was good, and has steadily frowned upon all that was not. In this department she has been personally a factor in our upward course. She has ever pointed to better things, and led the way; and above the strife of contending factions and the sound of much that is evil, a still small voice can be sometimes heard whispering to all who care to listen, that the good time, when righteousness and peace shall meet together and rule the world, is a little nearer. The glad music that heralds its coming is heard less faintly than of yore. The term "Utopia," given by hopeful men for ages to the happy golden time that is to be, is almost obsolete. The vision and the fact are about to be united; the new era is even now beginning.

Out of the dark the circling sphere,
Is rounding onward to the light;
We see not yet the full day here,
We do see the paling night.

Look backward, how much has been won;
Look round, how much is yet to win,
The watches of the night are done,
The watches of the day begin.

One little isle is still the polar star of civilisation, but upon all who live beneath the same flag there is imposed the grave and glorious task of

maintaining its honour. Devotion to the Crown as the symbol of the unity of the race, and its magnificent and awful cause, is the best foundation we can stand upon. Strong in that devotion, we can meet with confidence, not only the storms in front—these have long been robbed of their terrors—but the more dangerous breezes from behind. Imperial Federation, Commercial Union, Provincial Rights, and all other questions take their lesser place, to be dealt with or let alone, without fear of friction. Sordid thoughts are brushed aside, and we rise to the consciousness that we are one, not only in origin, but in destiny; that the Empire won by the genius and consecrated by the blood of those who went before us is a common heritage. The cardinal principle of our religion—the brotherhood of man—rules our lives; and whosoever says that justice shall continue blind and that truth must prevail, speaks for all of us.

As the Queen is ours, so we and ours are hers. We wish her health and strength long to reign; and as the boon is beyond even an united empire's power to grant, we say:

Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven
Before, behind thee, and on every hand
Enwheel thee round.

Toronto.

W. H. Cross.

LETTERS IN CANADA.

It is not my intention to write a review of Mr. Charles F. Richardson's suggestive work on American Literature, though the book is so well done that an appreciative notice in THE WEEK might induce admirers of robust writing to take up the History and read it. Mr. Richardson discusses the growth and development of American thought from earliest times to the present day in a bold and impartial manner, and though he shatters some of our idols, almost beyond the point of recognition, still one feels that he is just on the whole, and his estimates of the spirit and performance of American Authorship are made with candour and good judgment. After Duyckinck, who does not criticise at all, and Tyler's somewhat dry exposition of the letters of the Colonial period, which wearies without interesting the reader, unless he be an antiquary, it is refreshing to get a volume of honest criticism respecting a literature about which so much in the way of unqualified praise has been said on the other side of the line. There is one point in Mr. Richardson's first volume, however, which may be noted in passing. He emphasises the fact that, in a measure, American literature is an offshoot of English literature, and he further advances the idea that no language and literature except the English has ever put forth an offshoot in another country—that is, a new literary development, having the form and characteristics which belong to the parent stem, yet growing under essentially different and peculiar conditions. This is an extremely interesting statement, but it is open to modification. In the Province of Quebec, we have precisely the same condition of things, only the language is French and not English. French-Canada had no literature at all up to half a century ago. The people read books, but they were the works of French priests and travellers, poets, and romancers. French letters in Canada were developed altogether under the reign of Victoria, but the literary spirit has been derived from France. Here we have British subjects, living together, and speaking a foreign language in a British Colony, growing up side by side with Englishmen, and yet inheriting their literary taste from an ancestry which crossed the ocean two hundred years ago. Few French-Canadians can read Shakespeare with any delight, and their appreciation of modern British authors is but slight. Men like Frechette and Routhier and Faucher de St. Maurice cultivate purity of style, and their work is often good enough to find acceptance in the pages of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—the model which is for ever before their eyes. None of the French-Canadian writers are as original as they might be, though a French Academician thought that in Frechette he detected signs of something in his manner with which he was quite unfamiliar. He described it as something French, and yet not wholly French. Frechette partially relieved him of his doubt by suggesting that the unknown quantity in his work might be Canadian. But we have very few French-Canadian writers who are so distinctively French-Canadian as Frechette. He has gone to France to live, I hear. If he carries out his present intention, he may soon lose the very charm which enriches his work to-day. But time must determine whether change of residence and of sky in his case will prove a gain or a loss to his strength as a poet.

In fifty years' time, the men and women of French-Canada have accomplished a great deal for their nationality and language. They have really succeeded in creating and fostering a literature among themselves which is by no means despicable. Every department of letters has been cultivated, though in the field of romance the product has been small and