

THINGS IN GENERAL.

THE N. P. AND LITERATURE.

The amount of hogwash that has been inflicted upon a long-suffering public, under the pretence of building up a native literature, and the mistaken kindness of editors in praising home production of inferior merit, has had the effect of disgusting people with this class of work. In fact, there is no more effectual way to kill off a book, even if it possesses real excellence, than to announce it as distinctively "Canadian." We shall have a literature worthy of the name some day, no doubt, but the way to foster it is not by making believe that all our geese are swans.—*Toronto Mail*.

What are poor Canadian youth to do under the N. P.? The organ tells us that Canadian authors produce nothing better than "hogwash," and yet if we order books worthy of the name from the first-class publishers of Edinburgh and London, they are subjected by the N. P. tariff to so many annoyances in the manner of levying the duty as to disgust all dealers. Not content with trebling the duty, the collector has now to take a set of scales along with him and weigh the books—for this is the mode in which the N. P. forms its estimate of the value!—*Exc.*

CURIOUS PROPOSALS.

When Lord Strangford sat down to criticise a book of travels by Miss Beaufort, he little dreamed that before long he would write to the young authoress: "I was thinking the other day about a communication from the Emperor Akbar to the King of Portugal, which contained a request for copies of the holy books of the Christians, and in which the following sentence occurs: 'In the world of humanity, which is the mirror and reflection of the world of God, there is nothing equal to love or comparable to human affection.' For many years I have known and felt this, though I never said it till to-day to any one. When you next write, please give me the possessive pronoun of the first person." Surely never was a declaration made in quainter fashion, saving perhaps by the Scotch beadle who led the manse house-maid to the church-yard and pointing with his finger, stammered: "My folk lie there, Mary; wad ye like to lie there?" Or the lugubriously humorous Irish lover who took his girl to see the family vault, and then and there asked her if she would like to lay her bones beside his bones!—*Chambers's Journal*.

POLITICAL RABIES.

Fox spoke of the younger Pitt and his colleagues as seeming "determined to push Great Britain to the verge of ruin." Speaking of the Chatham Administration—one so successful that, as has been truly said, opposite parties have pointed to it with applause, eager to claim its principles as their own—Lord Chesterfield moaned: "I am sure we are undone both at home and abroad; at home, by our increasing debt and expenses—abroad, by our ill-luck and incapacity. We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect." Horace Walpole declared: "It is time for England to slip her cables, and float away into some unknown ocean." The only difference between such utterances and those of Liberal statesmen of our day is that, in the old ones, invective never becomes mere unreasoning vituperation. It is by men's tone, and not by the mere sense of the words, that their position and motives must be judged. Professions of belief in the gravity of a national crisis are easily made. Self-persuasion of their sincerity is not difficult. But if their secret spring be pure and patriotic, its outflow must of necessity be dignified and impressive.

"Passion is reason, when it speaks from right."

But if it do so speak, though its language will certainly be strong, it will not be low-toned. Its weapons may be wielded vigorously, and may cut keenly, but will never be dipped in venom. Honest national indignation will deprecate as a weakening of its cause, all resort to vulgar and vituperate invective. When the heart of the people is truly roused, its indignation will not seek in the dirt for expression, but will rise high above the mean modes of factious attack and personal abuse. In ordinary times, when no great issues agitate the public mind, Earl Stanhope's remark, in his "History of England," may be accepted as true: "How sure a road to popularity has it always been, to tell us that we are the most wretched and ill-governed people upon the face of the earth!"—*Blackwood's Magazine*.

LEARNING IN CHINA.

The honour of learning is a religion by itself in this country. Learning is the glory of the throne. There are splendid libraries in the palace vast collections of books carefully catalogued, and selections for the Emperor's reference. One of his houses is a study where the young princes are educated scholars annually explain the sacred books before him; he is the chief examiner; for the doctor's degree, and confers his rank upon the senior wrangler. There is a printing office in his palace, and his poetry is sumptuously bound; and there is a hall in the "purple city" where sacrifice is offered to the tablets of learned men and to the Emperor's tutors. Learning is the key to the highest offices of state. In these temple grounds there is a sumptuous hall where the Emperor's said to explain the classics and expound the Sacred Edict, a series of ethical

apothegms which the greatest of their modern monarchs wrote for his people. It must be a striking scene—the throne, the brilliant yellow and green arches opposite, the maze of white marble balustrades, and the dignitaries of the empire kneeling upon circular stone slabs that mark their position, and filling up the grassy court with their gorgeous dresses. On either side of this hall the Nine Classics, carved on tall slabs of black slate, are found under wooden roofs. The lettering is only on one side, and for the sake of easy reading is divided into pages, of which there are six rows on a slab and seven pages in a row; and as there are fifty characters on a page, the number of letters on one stone must be two thousand one hundred; and though nearly one hundred and fifty years old, the cutting is fresh and as legible as the print of a book. Books are more abundant and the printing-press is busier than in any other heathen country. It is a work of merit for a man to write and publish and circulate a book at his own expense; and the frequent receptacles for printed matter, so that none may be trampled in the mud, show almost a reverence for type; yet there is little inspiration in their literature; it has produced no great work of imagination, no epic, no poet. There are novels, but it is said that they are written at the rate of one in a dynasty; there are broadsheets and advertisements, for men will often place their wrongs before their fellow citizens in placards on the walls, as they paint their satire upon fans; but there are no living books of the present, unless such as are now induced by contact with the West. The newsman takes round the yellow-covered *Peking Gazette*, the oldest, smallest, most official, and yet one of the most amusing papers in the world;* but there are only one or two and very recent newspapers in the proper sense of the word, and with an immense population capable of reading there is little read. It may be partly from the difficulty of a language which has over 40,000 characters, and keeps 15,000 in steady use, so that an artisan does not profess to know the technical words by any other calling than his own; it must be mainly from that want of stimulus to progress that mark the heathen religions of the East, and have imposed on the people long centuries of stagnation.—*Good Words*.

* It is said to be more than 500 years old, and the matter is supplied by the Government clerks to a publisher for their own emolument, so that while not official it is a ministerial organ.—*Rennie*.

A WRITER in a Louisville paper thus describes Miss Mary Anderson, the actress:—"Can you imagine some drifting cloud of evening crystallized in mystic limpidness into that image of the maker that we call humanity—pellucid, lit within with azure fire! It may suggest a dream of that vision of loveliness which I have seen, and which shattered one's soul to pieces. Tall, slender—but slender like one of those threads of steel that carry trains across Niagara—a step as graceful as the wildcat's; and that neck! aspiring as the Alexandrian shaft that lifted Pharos to light up the sea—commanding as the tower of ivory that looketh toward Damascus."

THE New York *World* is not complimentary to our gallant and distinguished Knights. It says: "The Knights have hard, unknighly luck. Poor old Sir Francis Hincks has been found guilty of making fraudulent returns of the affairs of the bank of which he was president. [The verdict has since been reversed]. Sir James Lukin Robinson, a baronet by the way, son of the late Sir J. B. Robinson, Chief Justice of Upper Canada, is a clerk in the Courts, with a small salary. Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper were concerned in the Pacific Scandal, Sir Samuel Tilley had the misfortune to run a drug store in his early days and the newspapers opposed to him always speak of him as Sir Bolus or Sir Cockle's Pills, while Sir W. P. Howland, a miller, is irreverently known as Sir Bran and Shorts."

THE Archbishop of York told the following story at the York Diocesan Conference a short time ago:—What happened in this diocese in one case was this—A living was bought and the presentation was sent down to him with a great number of papers. Amongst them was a letter which was opened like the rest, having apparently been sent with them, for his (the archbishop's) secretary to read. It was a very curious letter. It said—"Dear Dick: I have bought the living and paid for it. You go as quickly as possible and get instituted, before the thing is much talked about; and there is an end of it." (Laughter). He directed his secretary to ask an explanation of this very short letter. There was a pause of three weeks, and at the end of it a solicitor wrote back to beg that he might be furnished with the letter. In these latitudes, however, they did not part with original documents—(laughter). It was by a pure accident that this matter was found out, and, if the gentleman had burnt the letter instead of sending it, they would have known nothing about the plan. He prevented the transaction as a matter of course. The waiter in the York refreshment room, two days before the man was to be instituted, was the witness of that deed; and between two glasses of sherry the living was to be bought, and before the end of the week the man was to be in. That was the kind of action that brought scandal on the Church. (Applause). Yes, and on Christianity as well.