

THE BUILDERS OF CANADA.

THE title of this interesting book is enough to give one an idea as to its purpose, and also to fill one with great expectations, which a perusal of the book will only tend to confirm. Mr. Marquis is a Queen's boy and is still remembered around the halls as much for his prowess on the Rugby field as for his literary ability. A large number of the sketches are from his pen. There are contributions from nine other writers; and of these one name in which Kingstonians are interested is that of Agnes Maule Machar. Many of the students have had occasion to enjoy the hospitality of Miss Machar's home, and it is to her sketches we turn first, more naturally so, as the first two chapters in the book are contributed by her.

But first of all let us quote from the preface the principles which have governed the selection of names to be included in this book, as it is manifestly impossible to include the names of all the prominent men who have figured in Canadian history. "In the case of such a prominent soldier as Montcalm," the publishers tell us, "so much of his life is woven into the story of Wolfe that it was deemed unnecessary to devote a separate sketch to him." However, interesting and vivid as is Mr. Marquis's sketch of Wolfe, very little is told of Montcalm except that he defended Quebec gallantly and with consummate skill, with the one exception which caused the fall of that citadel, his attack on Wolfe's position on the "Plains of Abraham" when he should have remained behind the walls. Of Montcalm's life and character little is given.

"Again," we are told, "in dealing with men of a more recent age, it was

thought best to consider only those men who have played their part in the history of the Dominion as a whole, and, therefore, such prominent Canadians as Principal Grant, Sir Daniel Wilson, Sir William Dawson and others have been omitted." It would, perhaps, have been more correct to say that these names are omitted because their field extends beyond the Dominion. They are men who have left on Canadian life an impress of culture and manhood, and to that extent are they "Builders of Canada." But they would have done as much for any nationality into which they might have been born; they have not given to Canada any distinctively Canadian feature; and they have therefore been omitted. "It was deemed advisable to include all the Premiers of the Dominion, for, although several of them were men of comparatively slight importance, their position and the questions that were associated with their names make them, as it were, national figures."

Having seen the scope of the book, let us turn to its contents. We have not the time to read the thirty-three sketches given, much as we would like to do so, but we can glance at a few. The first two sketches are about Jacques Cartier and Samuel de Champlain. The style is simple and vivid. The salient feature of the lives of these men are given, and an occasional remark shows an appreciation of the historic value of certain events, which, in themselves, might appear unimportant. But the chief characteristic of Miss Machar's sketches is the appreciation and vivid description of nature. We cannot refrain from quoting a paragraph.