

to the accumulation of valuable materials illustrative of the historic past, as the library of Laval University can testify. The edition of Champlain's works, by the Abbé Laverdière, for some years librarian of Laval, is a most creditable example of critical acumen and typographical skill. In the same field there is much yet to be explored by the zealous antiquarian who has the patience to delve among the accumulations of matter that are hidden in Canadian and European archives. This is a work, however, which can be best done by the State; and it is satisfactory to know that something has been attempted of late years in this direction by the Canadian Government—the collection of the Haldimand papers, for instance. But we are still far behind our American neighbours in this respect, as their State libraries abundantly prove.

The Canadian ballad was only known for years by the favourite verses written by the poet Moore, which, however musical, have no real semblance to the veritable ballads with which the voyageurs have for centuries kept time as they pushed over the lakes and rivers of Canada and the Northwest. Dr. Larue and M. Ernest Gagnon have given us a compilation of this interesting feature of French Canadian literature, which is hardly yet familiar to the English population of Canada.

Other French Canadian names occur to the writer, but it is impossible to do justice to them in this necessarily limited review. 'Les Legendes,' of the Abbé Casgrain, 'Les Pionniers de l'Ouest,' of M. Joseph Tassé, and the works of M. Faucher de St. Maurice, are among other illustrations of the national spirit that animates French Canadian writers, and makes them deservedly popular among their compatriots.

If we now turn to the literary progress of the English-speaking people of Canada, we see some evidences of intellectual activity from an early time

in the history of these colonies. During the two decades immediately preceding the Union of 1840, there was a cultured society in all the larger centres of intelligence. Social circles which could boast of the presence of Mr. John Galt, author of 'Laurie Todd,' and other works of note in their day, of Mr. and Mrs. Jameson, who lived some years in Toronto, of the Stricklands, of Judge Haliburton, of learned divines, astute lawyers and politicians, and clever journalists, could not have been altogether behind older communities. From one of the magazines, published in 1824, we learn that there were some libraries in the large towns of Quebec, Montreal, York, Kingston, and Halifax; that belonging to the Parliament at Quebec being the most complete in standard works. Montreal, as far back as 1823, had several book stores, and a public library of 8,000 volumes, containing many valuable works, and, independent of this, there were two circulating libraries, the property of booksellers, both of which were tolerably well supplied with new books.* In this respect Montreal possessed for years decided advantages over York, for Mrs. Jameson tells us that when she arrived there ten years later, that town contained only one book-store, in which drugs and other articles were also sold. Indeed, Mr. W. Lyon Mackenzie commenced life in Canada in the book and drug business with Mr. James Lesslie, the profits of the books going to the latter, and the profits of the drugs to the former. Subsequently, Mr. Mackenzie established a circulating library at Dundas, in connection with drugs, hardware, jewellery, and other miscellaneous wares, it being evidently impossible, in those days, to live by books alone.† By 1836,

* Talbot's Canada, Vol. I., p. 77. But it appears that there was a circulating library at Quebec as far back as 1779, with 2,000 volumes; it was maintained till 1809, when its books were transferred to the Literary and Historical Society.

† Lindsey's Life, pp. 36-7.