

nationalities and sections of nationalities, creeds and sections of creeds, that exist to-day upon this continent, were melted down in the common crucible of American institutions into one single national type. Suppose this were accomplished, how long, think you, could we hold together territorially? As long as human nature is human nature (and the nature of the individual is the nature of the nation), so long will there be disputes between man and man, between people and people; and as long as there are disputes there will be fighting to settle them, whether with fisticuffs or Gatling guns. Now, such a coast-line as your great republic would possess could not be adequately defended against foreign attack, not though the whole population were to line up on the sea-shore to do it. A nation with so great an extent of land would be unwieldy, and union would but lead, I think, to ultimate dismemberment. However, I do not think that there is any great anxiety manifested on the part of the United States to annex Canada. I do not think they want us. Of course, in any country there are fanatics who think that the only way to build up a great nation is to widen its boundaries, and there are always professional politicians willing to cater to this morbid appetite. And it is these two classes who, in my humble opinion, alone sustain the annexation movement in the States. The vast majority of the people are satisfied with their country as it is, and desire to make it greater, not in extent, but in prosperity and fame.

My own view of Canada's future is that we are destined to enjoy independence with separation from Quebec. Time has shown only too clearly that there is no possibility of assimilation of the French and English elements in Canada: neither nation will unlearn its language or relinquish its religion in favour of the other. While Confederation lasts Quebec will always be a thorn in Canada's side, as a friend of mine tersely expressed it in conversation the other day. But if separated, and distinct in government as now in everything else, I can conceive no reason why French and English should not live side by side, in friendly neighbourhood. In this connection, too, I confess I fail to see the force of the final argument with which you endeavour to excuse your hope for annexation. Why should the independence of Canada give rise to "incessant feuds" with her neighbours? You surely would not accuse an enlightened nation of this ninth decade of the nineteenth century of the desire to causelessly aggress its weaker neighbours, simply because they are weak. For my part, I cannot see why any number of nations should not co-exist in amity on this continent.

I suppose you will say that I am as optimistic in this as pessimistic in my literary estimate of Canada. But I was not really pessimistic in the latter. I merely endeavoured to state facts as they are. The conclusion it is impossible to draw at present. However, I am not without hope for the future. Development is the fruit of time, and those historical and romantic associations whose lack I lamented may yet be formed and become a treasury of inspiration for the *illuminati* of the Golden Age of Canada. And the period of waiting may not be so very long. Across the line a hundred years contained within its limits the birth of a nation and the birth of a literature. The dawn of independence, when Canada will take her place among the nations, will herald the rise of a true national spirit, and the sowing of the seed which must eventually bear the fruit of genius.

Your remarks on the necessity of material prosperity I assent to partially, and expect to refer to them in a future letter. Meanwhile, let me know if I have convinced you, or at least led you to reconsider your annexationist policy.

Frankly yours,

G. F. A.

"GENTLEMAN DICK O' THE GREYS."*

That a Canadian book should run into a second edition is a somewhat surprising event now-a-days. But that a second edition of a book of poems should be called for is indeed remarkable, if not unprecedented. The fact that the first edition of Mr. Cockin's book: "Gentleman Dick O' the

Greys," within a few weeks of its original publication was entirely sold out, and that the publisher is now engaged in bringing out a second edition, must be gratifying to the author and to his publisher.

Mr. Cockin's book includes pieces of a grave and gay character, indiscriminately mixed together, probably in the order in which they first appeared in those magazines and papers to which the author has been a frequent contributor. Among them we notice two which appeared in THE VARSITY some years ago, to wit: "Lundfren's Vigil" and "The Happy Family." Readers of *The Week* and *Saturday Night* will recognize many of the others as familiar, whilst some of the pieces appear in the present volume for the first time.

Many of the serious and more dramatic poems remind one of George R. Sims and Clement Scott, and lend themselves admirably to public reading and recitation. Indeed, Mr. Cockin has furnished Canadian elocutionists with an admirable hand-book, and though the somewhat equivocal charge of writing a book with "a purpose" cannot, as far as we know, be brought against Mr. Cockin, the fact remains that the dramatic element is strongly present in many of his pieces; that these will be read and recited we can have no doubt.

It has been said by Stedman that poems written in the heroic vein will be found to be, as a rule, rather more rhetorical than poetical. This is true, no less of the poems of great writers than of minor poets. If this fault is to be noticed at all in the present volume, it is but just to say that it is not because it is peculiar to it alone, but because it seems to be the nemesis of all commemorative pieces, or of poems written for special occasions.

The author's love for his native country is apparent in such pieces as "St. Hilda's Bells," "Wharfdale," "Dulce Domum," "Chellow Dene" and "Heaton Rise." But while Mr. Cockin sings melodiously of England, he does not despise "local colouring," as witness: "To a Maple Leaf," "The Man in the Park," and "In the Ward of St. John the Divine," each of which bears the impress of the author's observation of phases of Canadian life.

The humorous element is well represented, and is not un-mixed with a quiet though not an unkind cynicism, which gives point and flavour to the numerous *bagatelles* scattered throughout the volume.

It is a poor and inadequate way of exhibiting the merits of a book to make random quotations from its pages. It is confessedly as unsatisfactory a way as that adopted by the pedant mentioned by Heraclitus, who, wishing to sell his house, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen of its architectural beauties to show to probable purchasers. For this reason we refrain from reproducing much that could be quoted with approbation, preferring that our literary public should read and select for themselves their own favourites. But it may not be out of place to indicate one or two which specially have pleased one who has read the volume through. These are: "Dulce Domum: a Legend of Winchester College," "Epitaph on an Early Settler," "Killed in the Straight," and "Ninety-Eight."

There are others deserving of mention, but it would only be fair to the author, as it certainly would prove entertaining to the reader, for those who wish to know which are the best pieces in Mr. Cockin's volume, to do as the writer has done: Get the book and read and enjoy it.

F. B. H.

The New England Publishing Co. have just issued "One Hundred Lessons in Composition," by W. H. Huston, of this city. The volume contains a large number of poetical exercises in composition and forms the sixth volume in a library of "Teachers' Help Manuals."

In a late number of a new magazine a comparison was made between the modes of work of men and women journalists. It is a mystery which few can fathom how Mrs. Frank Leslie manages her immense amount of work; still more so when we are told that she sits at her office desk from 9 until 3 o'clock dressed in a marvellous French gown which one would think more suitable for a period of very much less duration.

*Gentleman Dick O' the Greys and other Poems. By Hereward K. Cockin. Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson.