

derives its strength in the Old World, the empire can only hope for permanency, from the benefits it confers on the nation. It should be left to that test, to stand or fall as the case may be.

This is but one phase of the Mexican question. If the Americans, instead of expelling Maximilian and restoring the Republic, should annex the country, as they have already annexed more than one half of what was once the Mexican territory, the social and political consequences to the Union of such a step offer a wide field for reflection. An attack, too, on the ally and protégé of Napoleon would involve a war with France—if not with England—and whoever might prove victor in the strife, so far as the retention or acquisition of Mexico is concerned, the contest would assuredly be most disastrous to all the belligerents in its effects on their commerce and otherwise. We must, however, defer the discussion of these and other points having relation to them for a future occasion.

HISTORY OF THE U. S. CAVALRY.*

TO write history is one of the most difficult tasks man can impose upon himself, and one which requires talent of a peculiar nature in order to make it attractive as well to future generations as that in which it is written.

As no good artist paints a house or castle without its surrounding scenery, its woods and streams, its lawn and the sky above it, while at the same time he brings forward as the most prominent the object of his picture, so no good historian can leave out matter which is intimately connected with, and must give effect to his subject. With a due amount of descriptive powers, he must be able to condense and at the same time clothe his relations in language such as will be interesting to a general public, not forgetting the maxim "let justice be done though the heavens should fall." We confess our inability to discern in Albert G. Brackett's History of the U. S. Cavalry, many of the talents requisite to a good historian, nor has he paid much attention to the maxim we have quoted, but seems to have written more what suited himself, and what he was able by a little twisting to make agreeable to his own notions, and left out many incidents which it was impossible to make agreeable to himself, turn or twist as he might.

The battle of Stony Creek, he tells us, "was a singular affair, and reflected no great credit either upon our troops or the enemy," and that the British were driven off, after losing about 250 men—whereas we know that General Vincent, fearing to reveal his small numbers, having only about half the number of the United States army engaged, retired after capturing their two generals, Chandler and Winder, with a number of officers and men and four pieces of artillery.

We are informed that at the battle of Chipewa, Lundy's Lane, &c, the cavalry did good service, but we should have been pleased to have heard wherein their good service consisted.

According to Brackett, at Chrysler's Farm the cavalry were prevented from holding some of their guns which they had rescued, "on account of superior numbers;" thus making it appear that the British had the greatest force on the field, the truth being that Col. Morrison with 800 men defeated 3,000 Americans, including the Dragoons, under General Wilkinson.

Not a word is mentioned about the battle of Chateauguay, where 2,000 cavalry and infantry under Hampton, and 1,500 under Purdy, were repulsed by 300 or 400 Canadian Militia under Col. De Salaberry.

In the whole book we have not a good description of a cavalry charge, but we have repeated over and over again such sentences as the following: "The cavalry at So-and-so did good service," or "This was a most splendid affair," the effects of which were that so many were

* History of the U. S. Cavalry. By Albert G. Brackett. Dawson Bros., Montreal.

breveted generals, colonels, majors, &c., &c.; and we have the startling announcement that a certain regiment of Dragoons "made many an enemy quail on many a field." Had the author even in this style continued to give us correct accounts, the book might have been of some use as a reference. But he has not done so. Yet while engagements of some importance are omitted, others of the most trivial nature are mentioned; so that in order to be consistent, we are surprised he did not relate how a troop of cavalry under Corporal, now General, Scott, dashed into the water on the shores of Virginia, and captured one of His Majesty's ship Leopard's boats filled with vegetables, manned by four sailors, and in charge of a midshipman, afterwards Captain Fox. This omission may, however, be accounted for by the fact that the capture was disapproved of by the Virginia Legislature, and the provisions and vegetables given up.

Too much space is occupied in attempts to describe individual character, Indian life, what the lands produce, corn, peapkins, beans, or melons, the proper method of grooming, feeding, or shoeing horses; space which ought, we think, to have been employed in giving us more detailed accounts of battles in which cavalry have been engaged, showing us the parts they took, and what particular services they rendered in the different engagements.

In page 160 occurs the following sentence: "The cavalry got—God knows where—the cavalry hat familiar to theatre goers as that worn by Fra Diavola." Now to say the least of it, this is bad taste, if not a positive breach of the third commandment. Surely we have too much irreverence and profanity uttered by men in their moments of passion and in frivolous conversation without having it introduced by authors in their moments of calm reason into books which are to feed the mind.

A well written history of cavalry is a most interesting work, and there have been deeds performed by the United States cavalry well worthy of historical record; so that we think it almost a pity Mr. Brackett has published his book, as it may deter others who might have given us an interesting and instructive history of their cavalry, the United States having amongst her sons many able writers.

Altogether the book is more like extracts from an Army Gazette, and would have been better styled "Sketches of United States Cavalry," say, perhaps to be read by the 227 regiments mentioned at the end of the book; but, as we think, even they might be more profitably employed and more interested in reading other books, the author would do well to take Lord Dundreary's advice, "Take his book into the room, and read it to himself."

MONTREAL.

FEW cities on this continent present a greater number of objects interesting to the traveller and the stranger, than are contained within the limits of the commercial metropolis of Canada. Whether we have respect to the stateliness and solidity of its architectural ornaments, its great mechanical wonders, or the natural beauty and picturesqueness of its situation, Montreal is almost without a rival—at least in the New World.

A thorough and reliable Guide has long been felt as a desideratum by the visitor. To meet this want, Mr. John Langford has published a well arranged and compendious "Guide to the City of Montreal," now before us. This little work contains an interesting sketch of the history of Montreal from the advent of Jacques Cartier in 1535 to the present day; a description of every public building and object of interest in the city, together with numerous illustrations. We commend to our citizens generally the author's observations upon the dilapidated condition of Nelson's Monument, which he properly characterizes as a disgrace to every British resident. Our volunteers will probably thank him for the hint which he has thrown out under the heading "Exhibition Building."

Mr. Langford's style is, perhaps, too lofty for the matter of fact subject of which he treats.

** The Stranger's Illustrated Guide to the City of Montreal. By John Langford. Published by D. Ross.

The illustrations are, many of them, old and but poorly executed.

"POEMS."*

IN this little work we find about forty poems—a few good ones, but the harmony of the verses not always strictly adhered to, and the style occasionally descends below mediocrity. One little poem which opens well, is spoiled by the use of a vulgarism. The opening lines are:

"Thou art passing away! I have watched thy life fade,
Like the hues of the sunlight just blending with shade.

In the next verse these lines occur,

"And sometimes I've thought thou wert only sent
As a specimen sample (!) of what they have there."

The author is not very accurate in his use of the subjunctive mood.

Five verses commence with "I wish I was (!) a poet; I would tune my artless lay." A poem of some depth of feeling is given near the end of the book. It is entitled "A Dream in a Dream." The opening verse reads well:

"It was a tranquil summer eve, the soft stars smiled in heaven,
O'er earth there slept a silence—a deep, unbroken silence,
As if nature paused to listen to the minstrelsy of even."

"The Martyr's Record," in blank verse, is an account of the persecutions of the early Christians in Rome. Nero had some hundreds of them confined in a dungeon to be stoned to death. Among the number was an old patriot, a great favourite at court, who had long held his opinion in silence, and passed unsuspected, until asked one day, at a convivial gathering of the courtiers, to drink to the god Bacchus, whereupon he stepped back from the board and stood in moody silence, while Nero, incensed at the conduct of his favourite, asked its meaning. An avowal of Christianity followed on the part of the old man, and a stubborn refusal to have anything to do with Bacchus. Nero had him straightway removed to the dungeon, where he and hundreds of others died of starvation—martyrs to their faith. The piece is instructive, as showing the fortitude with which the early Christians were gifted, and the tenacity with which they held their religious convictions—even unto death.

MYSTERIES OF EXCHANGE.

TO many who are daily operating in exchange, the principles which govern it are a sealed book. In fact the student has but few aids provided him by which to penetrate the mysteries which surround the subject, for neither our arithmetics nor exchange books throw any light upon it. We have before us a neatly printed sheet replete with information, very valuable to the mercantile man. It contains accurately calculated interest, currency, and exchange tables, together with rules for determining the gold value of, and discount upon, greenbacks; explanations respecting postage rates and the Canadian bill-stamp tariff, &c. There is also a column of letter-press, devoted to exchange and the operations which govern it, a careful study of which will divest "old" and "new par" of the mysteries which surround them. The sheet is compiled by Mr. Thomas Holt, published by Middleton & Dawson, Quebec, and may be obtained of Messrs. Dawson Brothers, Montreal.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

CHANCE FOR CANADIANS.

THE Berlin Society for the Study of Modern Languages announces two prizes to be given next year for the best papers on the following theses:—First, the influence of Shakespeare on the Development of the English Language, giving an account of the state of poetic language in England during the literary period immediately preceding that of Shakespeare, proofs of

* "Poems." By S. P. Iceland. Montreal: Dawson Brothers.

† British American Commercial Sheet Tables, published by Middleton & Dawson, Quebec.