

A MISTAKEN NOTION.

The proverbial selfishness of the human race is frequently referred to by preachers and public speakers, but we question whether selfishness is quite such a strongly marked characteristic as some would have us believe. True, we do meet among our fellow-men those who seem to have no interest in anything in which they themselves are not personally concerned, but we believe these to be the exceptions, not the rule. If selfishness be so deeply fixed in our breasts, why is it that most of us have a keen relish and satisfaction in hearing of the good fortune of others; and, why is it that our sympathy is evoked upon receiving news of misfortune or disaster having happened to those with whom we have no personal acquaintance. Not long since a clergyman remarked to us that he was delighted to read of the continued prosperity of our gold mines, adding, that he trusted the hardy miners as well as the proprietors would reap a rich reward for their labors. This feeling of gratification in the success of others is, we claim, very general, and those who doubt this should more narrowly observe that which is daily transpiring in the locality in which they live.

If mankind is so selfish, why is it that we experience such unmingled pleasure upon hearing that the labors of the farmer have been crowned with success, and that the yield of crops is up to or above the average. In the same way we are interested in observing or reading of the development of our industries; and although we may not personally ever engage in industrial pursuits or manufacturing enterprises, it is a satisfaction to know that labor is being provided for hundreds of willing workers who might otherwise be idle; and that through employment the families of our mechanics and artisans are being supplied with that which is indispensable to existence.

Ask the professional man, the man engaged in business, or the educationist, why it is that the success of others in the race of life almost invariably gives him pleasure, and he will tell you frankly, that a true humanitarian is without jealousy, and that the good luck which falls to the lot of others is the best news that he can hear.

Selfish we may be in petty affairs, but in matters which affect mankind in general, we take a broader and more philanthropic view. The universality of selfishness is a mistaken notion, and the preaching of it only tends to make us more exclusive and more indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others, than we are naturally inclined to be.

CANADA'S SCANTY LITERATURE.

The extreme scantiness of important Canadian contributions to literature has often been made a subject of reproach by our southern neighbors, who have a happy faculty of discovering the short-comings of "the colonies." In this instance, we are forced to acknowledge the justness of the charge. Any writer on general literature could treat of the Canadian branch of the subject in a very few pages, and most of these pages would be apologetical in their tone. It would be urged, for example, that Canada is still in that intensely active, money-making stage, when every man's energies are bent upon the industrial, to the neglect of the artistic. True it is that a nation generally passes through a youth of excessive physical activity, before its mental powers are fully called into play. But Canada has surely reached the period when a life of literary ease is a possibility.

The magazine controls the careers of most literary men of the present day. The majority write for immediate publication, and the magazine is the only fixed and sure means of reaching a large number of readers. Poems, novels, even scientific works are generally published first in the magazines and afterwards collected and reprinted. Literary men prefer definite rates of remuneration per column to the risky sales of the book-seller. Hence the magazine offers almost the only natural way of disposing of a literary production.

We in Canada have virtually no magazines. A few periodicals there are which supply the public with something better than the paragraphs of the ordinary newspaper, but it is seldom that they secure a really important and ably written contribution, for the simple reason that they cannot offer sufficient pecuniary inducements to secure the services of talented writers.

The success of a magazine depends on the ability of the public to appreciate and pay for superior writing, the existence of literary men who can furnish it, and the possession of an editor who can discern literary merit. No one who is at all acquainted with Canadian journalism as it now exists will doubt that all these three elements are present in Canada. Surely the time has come for a literary movement which will reveal hidden talent and develop that which is known.

OUR SOUTHERN SHORE.

There is no part of Nova Scotia which is as little known to the people of our Province as is our Southern shore, and yet it offers to the tourist and sportsman a field in which health and enjoyment can be secured, without an unlimited demand upon the purse. The old historic town of Shelburne is the shire town of the county, it is far removed from the noise of the locomotive whistle and the busy hum of industrial life, but the town is the centre and only outlet, of that fine agricultural district which lies in the northern part of the county. This section, for fertility of soil and suitability of climate, has its counterpart in the well-known farming districts in northern Queens. At present the inhabitants are sadly in need of good carriage roads, the road to Shelburne being the only one available. A visitor to the recent exhibition of agricultural products held in the new building at Shelburne, assures us that the exhibit was in every way highly creditable to the eastern section of the county, and that with improved methods of agricul-

ture the products of northern Shelburne should take a first place in any general provincial exhibition. The lakes and streams are in season filled with fine fish, and game of all kinds abounds in the forests. Sportsmen with rod or gun can here get an outing such as is to be had in few other places.

The settlers are always hospitable and kind, and willingly undertake to act as guides to moosehunters or fishermen. The town, which is situated on the shores of a deep inlet, is about twenty miles distant from the best agricultural portions of the county. Its markets are well supplied with produce of all kinds, and its hotels, although small, are cleanly and comfortable. With railway facilities Shelburne would soon become one of the most flourishing ports upon our southern shore, but its prospects of obtaining these are at present far from bright.

TRADE THEORIES.

The export trade of the United States for the fiscal year, ending June 30th, 1886, shows a decided falling off, as compared with the value of the exports for the year previous. True, the bulk of the material exported during the past year was greater than that of the preceding year, but owing to the tremendous fall in prices of staple products, minerals, and manufactures, the returns make a comparatively sorry showing.

The value of the exports of sugar, cattle, copper, and whiskey, drop from \$40,000,000 in 1884-85, to \$28,000,000 in 1885-86, being a direct loss of \$12,000,000, to say nothing of the additional loss sustained by the increased exports of these four articles, which brought the total up to the sum named. But if these figures are discouraging, the returns of the exports of wheat and flour are still more deplorable. The corner in the former product which was effected by the New York and Chicago ring, had the effect of holding back wheat at a time when markets could have been obtained for it in Europe. But the selling price of the ring was far in advance of European quotations, and before the corner was broken market prices in Europe had dropped to a still lower figure, and American grain was sacrificed in consequence. Financiers and economists who have been wont to regard the export and import trade of a country as a true index of the prosperity of the country, are obliged to acknowledge that the present condition of the world's trade has completely upset the theories to which they have in the past so tenaciously clung. We might illustrate the changed condition of affairs by a case such as the following:—In 1884, a man in New York exported 20 tons of products, valued at \$800; in 1885, he increased his business, exporting 25 tons, value \$750. It is in this way that the business of a country may increase, while the trade returns and the individual receipts of the exporters may show a decrease.

LOSS BY FIRE.

In the event of loss of property by fire, the individual owner, if his property be insured, receives a certain amount as an indemnification, and this to the unthinking mind fully compensates for the destruction which the fire has caused, practically making the loss no loss at all. Leaving aside the question of personal inconvenience, business disarrangement, and the throwing out of work of employees, which is indirectly a serious loss to a community, it must be remembered that the insurance or indemnification which the holder of the burned property receives, is paid for by the policy-holders of the company in which the insurance was effected, and that this is a direct tax upon the industries of a country. It is quite evident that if fires did not occur, wealth would be accumulated more rapidly. It is also apparent that insurance companies are not charitable institutions for distributing cash equivalents to those unfortunates who have suffered loss by fire, but that they are money-making organizations; established, it is true, for the protection of individual property-holders, but, nevertheless, established for the sole purpose of realizing the dividends which are earned in the business. Fire Insurance Companies have their legitimate field for usefulness, but their number, and the ever increasing amounts paid out by them as indemnifications for loss, should make thoughtful men consider whether this constant waste of material wealth and expenditure of capital is unavoidable. In the United States, the direct loss from fire, during 1885, amounted to upwards of \$100,000,000, and the country, at the close of the year, was to that extent poorer than it would have been, had the fires not taken place. The New York *Forum* estimates that the cost of keeping up city fire departments, and fire water service, and the indirect loss resulting from the destruction of factories and mills in which large numbers of men and women had been profitably employed, is at least \$200,000,000 per annum, which, added to the sum paid out by the insurance companies, makes the yearly aggregate loss on account of fires about \$300,000,000. According to this estimate, we in Canada lose annually about \$25,000,000 from the same causes. If this amount, or even half of it, could be saved to the country, it would make a great difference in our material advancement. Legislatures, as a rule, consider fire insurance and fire prevention as outside of the field of practical politics. But we think a question which involves millions is worthy the consideration of those who are sent to represent the people's interests.

Think of it, in this nineteenth century, in this age of peace societies and peaceful arbitrations, the cost of maintaining the armies and navies of Europe represents the interest at 4 per cent upon fifteen thousand millions of dollars, and this expenditure is increasing annually. All the great European powers look upon a great war as inevitable; and should it come, it will mortgage the industry of the people for the next quarter of a century.