

THE POSITION OF LITERATURE.

Previous to his departure from London for Canada, Professor Goldwin Smith attended the "Booksellers' Trade Dinner," given under the auspices of the Booksellers' Provident Institution. In acknowledging the toast "literature," the Professor remarked that as a denizen of the New World he could stand comparatively unabashed before the lords of literature in this world, now that they at least had an international copyright. Commercial monopoly, however, still insisted that "to have copyright you shall print in the United States." However, there was an international copyright—to the immense benefit of America. Before they had international copyright, American literature was in thralldom to that of the Old World, because the American publisher found it much better to pirate the works of the authors of the Old World than to pay for those of native authors. In Canada they were still in rather a bad situation, because their market was small. It was divided into four, and was not very rich, and they could not copyright without printing on the other side of the line. Not only in the United States, but everywhere there seemed to be a sort of lull in the history of what was properly called literature. He meant by literature that which was not science, but that which dealt in a cultured way with the interests and emotions of humanity. Science, depending on the pure reason, and to a certain extent historical research and philosophical speculation, advanced with even step, independently of the general movements of humanity. He supposed that the same thing might be said of journalism. That, also, was a creation of the pure intellect. Literature, properly speaking, depended a great deal on the moods of a nation. There were successive outbursts of English literature—at the time of Chaucer, with the Reformation and the great struggle with Spain, at the time of the English Civil War, in the reign of Anne, with the glories of Blenheim and Ramillies, and, again, with the stirrings of the national heart by the French Revolution and with the patriotic resistance to Napoleon. Now there was a certain lull for a time; but it would pass over, and then they would have another great development of national literature. They heard people lament that the great masters of style were gone, that we had no such masters as Macaulay, Carlyle, and Ruskin. After all, not the worst of styles was the style which was no style at all. Looking to literature proper, in poetry they had not yet found their Poet Laureate. In the drama they could not expect more tragedy, because feeling had gone inwards into the recesses

of the heart. But there were plenty of subjects still for drama. Of novels there was no lack. They had replaced the drama, and were the drama of our time. He could not help mildly protesting against theological and political novels. It seemed to him that to introduce theology and politics to eke out what, perhaps, would be a vapid love story was a sin against art and against truth. Blessed be the memory of Sir Walter Scott, who gave them first-rate tales, tales that really exalted the feelings and purified the affections, but who never propagated anything, whose simple object was to make them happier and nobler and better. But this was the reign of science. There was a passage in the life of Darwin in which he declared that he could take no interest in Shakespeare or poetry of any kind. He would say to them, keep your balance. In an age lacking in science, cultivate science; in a scientific age, cultivate literature and the humanities. It might be that the day of literature was over, that the final reign of science had come, that they had passed the youth of the world. If that was so, he could only say that he was glad he was 70 years old.

BRITISH COLUMBIA MINES.

Joseph J. Pierson, who has been in Montreal for some weeks on behalf of the British Columbia Government, on business connected with the C. P. R., during a conversation with a *Gazette* reporter in regard to gold mining in British Columbia said:

I may just say that having recently visited all the principal parts of the province on official business, I have been struck with the active appearance of things, and my impression is that the next twelve months will witness immense activity in gold mining, especially with regard to placer workings by means of hydraulic and dredging appliances. I had a letter a day or two ago in which it was stated that nearly the whole of the bed of the Fraser River has been located on, leased from Lytton to Quesnelle mouth, and a great part of the Quesnelle River is also leased. I think about 300 miles of river bed must now be taken up and several dredges are being put to work. I fear they will have many difficulties to cope with, especially in the Fraser. The stream is deep and strong, and gold being so exceedingly slippery, as many of us know, even in its coiled state, and my fear is that as the dredges begin to disturb the gravel the gold being so much heavier than anything else will slip to the bottom, and some of it will thus escape the "bucket" or "sucker." The hydraulic system must commend itself to all; in fact, small workings have already demonstrated the greater certainty of this. One place I visited at Quesnelle Forks, Dancing Bill Creek, which has been worked by Chinamen for several years, who are known to have taken out \$120,000 or \$130,000, and the

plant used was a very small Monitor with a water supply for working only two and a half hours a day, this with other ground on the south fork of Quesnelle river has been taken over by the Cariboo Hydraulic Mining Co., and is to be vigorously developed, and many miles of ditches have been made to bring the water to the Quesnelle Forks Canal and Hydraulic Mining Co., and has been found to bring a large volume of water from Cariboo Lake, where there is practically an endless supply, commanding probably greater hydrostatic pressure than it would be possible otherwise or elsewhere to get to work the very valuable auriferous grounds of that part of the famed Cariboo district. They also hold about 800 acres of specially selected ground suitable for hydraulic working by the largest hydraulic plant. The Victoria Hydraulic Mining Company hold about 900 acres, and are laying themselves out for doing good work during the coming season. Several smaller interests are being developed, and prospects are everywhere good, in many instances ranging from 50 cents to \$5 and \$6 the cubic yard, and when it is known that 6 cents to 8 cents a cubic yard will pay for working, once the water is on, what the golden harvest is likely to be is difficult to estimate. Although this notable district has already produced nearly \$60,000,000 from purely surface workings, it is the firm belief of men skilled in such matters that, with good plant and an ample supply of water, the past may be regarded as a mere unit as compared with what is still to be unearthed. I am glad to see the Government of British Columbia is alive and abreast of the times in voting money for roads, bridges, etc., to aid and encourage, in the absence of railway facilities to these districts.

A practical test of the bed of the south fork of Quesnelle River was made a few months ago by a gentleman, who sent up an experienced miner along with an expert diver equipped with an ordinary diving gear, and although their operations were interfered with by a freshet, yet they demonstrated the fact of that river bed being rich in the precious metal. I have seen a sample of the gold, and am told that their efforts yielded an average in sundry parts of the river of from 25 cents to \$1 the bucketful of gravel brought up from the bottom, and they did not reach bedrock, where the richest finds should be.

I omitted to mention that the Slough Creek Company, who have been doing a great deal of work during the last year, and although I have heard that they anticipated great things, yet I don't know the results. An English syndicate in the neighborhood of Williams' Creek are pushing actively, and again on Bridge River splendid prospects are given, and in the vicinity of Lilest large areas have been located and some work is going on. Whilst there, I tried my unskilled hand by digging a shovel in at random, and on that shovelful of gravel I got several colors of gold; and then there is the Horsefly district, a little south of Quesnelle Lake, which is being monopolized by the Horsefly Hydraulic Mining Co., who are spending large sums of money in collecting water to carry out their scheme, which is a large one, and prospects are unquestionably good.