

of a good and loving man free from guile and filled with an honest desire to spread happiness into the lives of men; but there was another side of life even in the quiet of a Scottish rural parish, and it is this that Galt sought to give in "The Provost." Wisely did Galt view this other side of life by presenting in "The Provost" a man not bad, yet one well nourished in the worldly things of life. "The Provost" is not scrupulous in his methods to obtain his ends, yet in no particular is he a dishonest man. He is a wily, sleek fellow, with an eye to the main chance controlled by the native caution of his race, so that his desires never get the mastery of him. Cool, deliberate, and selfish he represents the sordid character of the epoch. The conversion of the provost to the principle of consulting public opinion in latter acts of office, and his confession of the principles of corruption in the old school is a pleasant piece of political strategy that is not strange even in these days of the newer school. More sincere and practical, however, is the bargain with the Rev. Mr. Pittle to marry Mrs. Pawkie's cousin, as felicitous a piece of jobbery as a parish politician could devise:

"Mr. Pittle," said I, as soon as I was in and the door closed.

"I'm come to you as a friend. Both Mrs. Pawkie and me have long discerned that ye have had a look more than common towards our friend, Miss Lizy, and we think it our duty to enquire your intents, before matters gang to greater length."

He looked a little dumfounded at this salutation, and was at a loss for an answer, so I continued—

"If your designs be honourable, and no doubt they are, now's your time; strike while the iron's hot. By the death of the doctor, the kirk's vacant, the town council have the patronage; and if you marry Miss Lizy, my interest shall not be slack in helping you into the poopit."

"In short out of what passed that night, on the Monday following, Mr. Pittle and Miss Lizy were married; and by my dexterity together with the able help I had in Bailie McLucere he was in due season placed and settled in the parish."

This venial compact is perhaps the most open abuse of authority recorded of Provost Pawkie and as his reign in the parish was long it is not likely that he transgressed more than is common to those who seek to serve their native village.

Galt has written no more impressive and touching scene than the chapter entitled "The Windy Yule." As a sombre and realistic picture, depicting the fury of a storm at sea with the anxious faces of the wives and children of the sailors attempting to peer through the deep mist of fog and rain for a sight of returning ships it stands in the first rank. The provost in relating it says:—

"It happened that, for a time, there had been contrary winds, against which no vessel could enter the port, and the ships, whereof I have been speaking, were all lying together at anchor in the bay, waiting a change of weather. These five vessels were owned among ourselves, and their crews consisted of fathers and sons belonging to the place, so that, by reason of interest and affection a more than ordinary concern was felt for them; for the sea was so rough that no boat could live in it to go near them, and we had our fears that the men on board would be very ill off. Nothing however occurred but this natural anxiety, till the Saturday, which was Yule. In the morning the weather was blasty and sleety, waxing more and more tempestuous till about mid-day, when the wind checked suddenly round from the nor-east to the sou-west, and blew a gale as if the prince of the powers of the air was doing his utmost to work mischief. The rain blattered, the windows clattered, the shop shutters flapped, pigs from the lum-heads came rattly down like thunder claps, and the clouds were dismal with cloud and carry. Yet, for all that there was in the streets a stir and a busy visitation between neighbors, and every one went to their high windows to look at the five poor barks that were warsling against the strong arm of the elements of the storm and the ocean."

"Still the lift gloomed and the wind roared, and it was as doleful a sight as ever was seen in any town afflicted with a calamity to see the sailors' wives, with their red cloaks about their heads, followed by their hirping and disconsolate bairns, going one after another to the kirkyard to look at the vessels, where their helpless bread-winners were battling with the tempest. My heart was really sorrowful and full, of sore anxiety to think of what might happen to the town, whereof so many were in peril, and to whom no human magistracy could extend the arm of protection. Seeing no abatement of the wrath of heaven, that howled and roared around us, I put on my big coat, and taking my staff in my hand, having tied down my hat with a silk handkerchief, towards gloaming I walked like to the kirkyard, where I beheld such an assemblage of sorrow, as few men in situation have ever been put to the trial to witness.

"In the lea of the kirk many hundreds of the town were gathered together; but there was no discourse among them. The major part were sailors' wives and weans, and at every new thud of the blast, a sob rose, and the mothers drew their bairns closer in about them, as if they saw the visible hand of a foe raised to smite them.

"But of all the piteous objects there, on that doleful evening

none troubled my thoughts more than three motherless children that belonged to the mate of one of the vessels in jeopardy. He was an Englishman that had been settled some years in the town, where his family had neither kith nor kin; and his wife having died about a month before, the bairns of whom the eldest was but nine or so, were friendless enough, though both my gude-wife and other well-disposed ladies, paid them all manner of attention till their father would come home. The three poor little things, knowing that he was in one of the ships, had been often out and anxious, and they were then sitting under the lea of a headstone, near their mother's grave, chattering and creeping closer and closer at every squall. Never was such an orphan-like sight seen."

This touching picture has all the vividness of the actual flashed upon it in the strong and homely story of the untutored provost. It is a fact worthy of notice that Galt suits his language to the narrator. In the *Annals* there is much nicety in choice of words and the construction of the sentences are in keeping with the educational advantages of the minister, but in *The Provost* words and grammatical construction are made subservient to the strong Doric of the soil.

HOWARD J. DUNCAN.

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In the Days of the Canada Company.*

READERS of THE WEEK will no doubt remember a series of articles on the Huron Tract which appeared in our columns about a year ago. The articles, apart from their literary merit, were remarkable for the extensive and accurate knowledge they showed of an out-of-the-way subject, and one which only tireless patience and unrelenting energy could ever have worked up. These were but tempting tid-bits from the work now before us. It has an able introduction by Principal Grant, and in general appearance is as fine a piece of bookmaking as one could desire.

Although the title, and the figures "1825-1850," on the cover, might make the reader anticipate a historical work of the dry-as-dust type, no such objectionable treatment is found within. At historical fulness and sequence the writers make no attempt. In their preface they suggest the character of the work. "There is," they say, "no attempt made at historical writing; that will be a matter for the future, after condensation of many similar works. If, in the meantime, it provides pleasant reading for those interested in the story of the 'Huron Tract,' the wish and aim of the authors are gratified and justified."

Despite this modest disclaimer of the historian's aims, the student of history will find the book a mine of wealth. No pains have been spared: from cover to cover the book is full of interesting detail, of historical information, of local colour, that show that study, questioning, travel—travel through the forests and villages of the west have all aided in making the work a success.

The opening chapter is an able piece of literary work. The authors have not limited themselves to provincial ideas. Before beginning their study they have brought themselves thoroughly into touch with "The Spirit of the Times." With a rapid, sure hand they have sketched in a few paragraphs the spirit of unrest, of turmoil, of hope, of work, that filled the world at the time of the establishment of the great company whose history is here so vividly portrayed.

Some of the sentences in the opening chapter are so good that we cannot refrain from quoting them, so that the reader may judge for himself of the literary merit of the work:

"The air, too, was alive with scientific discovery; the railroad, the steamship, the photograph were about to be given to the world, which was half wondering, half credulous, soon to be wholly believing."

"And in spite of all this progress, Canning and Castlereagh, and others less famous, were fighting duels, or pretending they were ready to do so. Canada was remote from the new birth, but even she felt the quickening; for Britain was about to send a new class of emigrants to jolt over her corduroys, and thread bridle paths through her woods."

After this striking introduction, the authors plunge us into the midst of their subject, and very fittingly give us an insight into the life of that magnificently picturesque figure,

* "In the Days of the Canada Company: The Story of the Settlement of the Huron Tract, and a View of the Social Life of the Period 1825-1850. By Robina and Kathleen Macfarlane Lizars, with an introduction by G. M. Grant, D.D., Principal, Queen's University, Kingston. Toronto: Wm. Briggs. Montreal: C. W. Coates. Halifax: S. F. Huestis. \$2.00.