

Thus came to an end the celebration of the seventy seventh anniversary of Her Gracious Majesty, and may she long live to give us many more twenty-fourths. God save the Queen!

THE SEATS OF THE MIGHTY.

FOR some years past we Canadians have been like children, who, having a corner of garden given them for their very own, dig up their bulbs and roots every day or two in their impatience to see whether there are any signs of growth. Now and again we have discovered some signs and have broken out into a shrill chorus of delight at the presence of a Canadian Literature! Compared with English literature, or even American, ours is meagre enough, and if a native Canadian may safely say it, poor enough. But, looking out over the field of literary activity at the present time, things seem more hopeful for the future. We must remember, however, that in the life of the individual we do not expect more than promise in the child or youth, waiting for the fulfilment of the promise in the full vigour of the grown man. So with our young nationality. As a nation, or rather as part of a family making up a great nation, we are only in our childhood as yet. Indeed we have hardly begun to recognize the fact of our existence despite the twenty-nine years of Confederation. As time counts in the lives of nations, it was only the other day that the Dominion was born, and yet we talk most manfully of setting up in the world for ourselves in politics as well as in other things, forgetting that a partnership in an old and well-established concern is often better for a youngster than a new business. When once we have fairly settled for ourselves what the ideals are which we are to work toward, and when we have come to be something more than a mere collection of provinces, with conflicting and diverging interests, held together mainly by money considerations and an act of parliament, we may be capable of producing something worthy in the way of literature, given, of course, the necessary culture on the one hand and an appreciative taste for reading on the other.

What has just been said applies mainly to us who are of British descent, for it must never be forgotten that our French compatriots in Quebec have a considerable literature which surpasses ours not only in quantity, but in quality also. As is quite patent to any one who has eyes to see it, the French-Canadians, or, as they call themselves, the Canadians, do cherish national aspirations with all the warmth of their ardent natures and are constantly trying with all the perseverance and tenacity of purpose they are capable of to realize something of these aspirations. Add to this that the Frenchman on this side of the Atlantic, as well as on the other, is a stylist or nothing, and that in Canada he looks back to a past respectable as to time and glorious as to character, then we have some sort of explanation of the superiority of his literature as compared with our own.

But without carrying further the contrast between the literature of the one province and the other, suggested by the book before us, let us turn to "The Seats of the Mighty," the latest story of one of Trinity's sons, Mr. Gilbert Parker. To complete the title we should add—A Romance of Old Quebec. The time is the five or ten years immediately preceding the first battle of the Plains of Abraham, a good description of which is given together with an account of the advance of the English up the river, their taking up their position at the Falls of Montmorenci, the Isle of Orleans and Levis, their sailing past the citadel to Sillery, the discovery of the passage up the cliff from what is now Wolfe's Cove, the scaling of the same, and the surprisal of the French, who, thinking the city impregnable from that side, had left it almost undefended.

In the background we get a glimpse, but only a glimpse, of the gay social and military life of the time, which is painted with richness and wealth of colouring for us in Mr. Kirby's "The Golden Dog." The evil genius of the colony, Bigot, hovers over the scene with his attendant spirits, their baneful presence being felt, rather than seen, in the results of their lust, greed, dishonesty and duplicity. Thrice only does Bigot come out in full relief, once when he madly defies the hungry mob rioting over a burning granary in which the Grand Company stored up grain bought from the *habitants* at a fixed price and sold back to them at an exorbitant one; a second time when he causes the hero to sup with him and to receive an insult from Juste Duvarney, the brother of his lady love, and thus causes them to fight a duel; and finally at a ball at his own palace, the *Intendance*, in the course of which he and several other gentlemen withdraw from the ballroom to the *Chambre de la Joie*, to play at cards. Watching them are Voban, a barber, who bears Bigot a grudge because he had ruined his sweetheart, Mathilde, and Madame Cournal, Bigot's mistress, whose husband in his half maudlin condition seems to have a nicer sense of honour than in his sober moments when avarice blinds him to his wife's conduct, and at last plays the man in that he sets upon her lover. At this same game of cards appears Montcalm, but, so far as the main interest of the book is concerned, he, Wolfe, Saunders, and Vaudreuil are but of secondary importance, though they are all painted with due regard for historic truth, and the incapacity of the last-named is fully revealed.

The chief figures in the picture are Robert Moray, a Scotch-American, who had inherited a large fortune from his father and a friend of his father's, and had settled in Virginia, Tinoir Doltaire, a natural son of Louis le Bien-Aime and a favourite of Madame de la Pompadour, and Alixe Duvarney. Among the papers belonging to his friend, Sir John Godric, Moray found certain letters that compromised a lady of high rank and of great influence in France. Concerning these letters he had received strict charge from his dying friend, and he was, therefore, careful to keep them secret. But Madame de la Pompadour wanted them and sent Doltaire to America to get them by fair means or foul, so that she might ruin the lady who had written them. Doltaire failed to get them by fair means and proceeded to try the other way. In time Moray was sent as a hostage to Quebec with a promise that he should be exchanged at the first opportunity. Years went by and the promise was not kept. Finally, when Braddock was defeated and his papers seized, it was found that Moray had sent plans of French forts to him, and he was tried as a spy and was imprisoned for a long time in a dark dungeon of the citadel.

During the years of his detention as a hostage our hero had visited much at the house of the Seigneur Duvarney and had fallen in love with his elder daughter, Alixe, a young girl just verging upon womanhood, and wise beyond her years. Doltaire saw that Moray's love was returned and made up his mind to win Alixe from him. In this scheme he had race, religion, country, position, influence, and personal attractiveness all on his side, and besides, after he had taken his decision, Moray was constantly a prisoner. In spite of Doltaire's suit Alixe remained faithful to her unfortunate lover and even contrived to see him in his various prisons, for he did not remain in the citadel always, but was moved now to the common jail, now to the Chateau St. Louis. In this latter place, the Governor's residence, Moray and she were married, and on the day following the marriage he managed to escape from prison and the city, and joined the English army after an exciting trip down the St. Lawrence and back again. To get his wife and to prove to Wolfe that a means of entrance to the city from above