

Trinity University Review

A Journal of Literature, University Thought, and Events.

VOL. IX.

TRINITY UNIVERSITY, TORONTO, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, 1896.

Nos. 9-10.

Trinity University Review.

Published in twelve monthly issues by Convocation and the Undergraduates in Arts and Medicine of Trinity University.

Subscription: One Dollar per annum, payable in advance. Single numbers, fifteen cents. Copies may be obtained from Messrs. Rowsell & Hutchison, 76 King St. East, and Messrs. Vannevar & Co., 440 Yonge St.

Rates for advertising can be obtained on application to the Manager. All subscriptions, remittances and business communications to be addressed to

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Editorial Topics.

DU MAURIER.

THE meteor-like rapidity with which the author of "Peter Ibbetson" rose to the pinnacle of fame as an author must always be a remarkable event in the history of letters. We know him as an artist, an artist with a light satiric vein and keen observation to aid his art and to give him the genius with which he so successfully filled his position on "Punch." And yet we venture to think that it will be for his literary labours that the world will recall his name and assign to him a niche in the temple of fame. But whether to "Trilby," that phenomenal book, or to "The Martian," now being served to us piecemeal, Du Maurier will owe his fame, it is far too soon to venture an opinion, even if we felt disposed to do so. How even to consider "Trilby," in what category to place it, as containing widening and expanding power—"a covert protest against prevalent English and American puritanism," as says Grant Allen, or as a mirror of life and opinion in this nineteenth century of ours reflected through the mind of an observant sensitive nature, the recent Trilby mania has not subsided long enough to allow us to decide. As yet we have but few stories of Du Maurier, sidelights on his personality, but such as they are they create a desire for more. We will not, we think, have a second "Trilby" or another Du Maurier for a long time.

RETROSPECT.

THE Parliament of 1896 has completed its work and the members have trooped home laden with the spoils. These have not been extensive or varied and consist merely of the sessional allowance, but the peculiarity of the triumphal march is seen in the arm-in-arm friendship of the lion and the lamb. And yet, not the millennium, truly! Rather, "a famous victory," a triumph of endurance, of patient waiting, not wearisome, or arduous, but pleasant, cheerful, even gay, and crowned with victory and the victors' spoils. A strange victory, too, not of the mighty, the

noble, the renowned, but of the weak, the mercenary, the obscure; won without the shedding of blood and shared by all. And the vanquished do not appear; and there would seem to be no loss. But was there no loss? Parliament has completed its work. And still we must ask: What has been its work? The wholesale dismissal of public servants, the seeming settlement of the fatal School Question *out of Parliament*—there let it remain!—the exchange of Premierships for Portfolios are all facts which we can see, standpoints from which we can see farther. But the country is not satisfied with this. It looks for action, and that tending mainly in one direction. Canada would trade; but *how*, she has not so clearly indicated; and yet Canada would trade soon, but not too soon. The country almost throughout its whole extent demands a tariff, and its Boards of Trade insist on six months' notice as though they were an imperative landlord. But what has been Parliament's work? Have the ministers of the crown been learning the ministerial alphabet, and next session shall we see them spelling? Have the "wholesale dismissals" rid the Civil Service of the recreants and the drones? Then we can wait; but not too long. And the longer we wait the more we expect; and we expect much already.

THE CAN-ADIAN FLAG.

ARE we never to have an end to the controversy as to the form and colour of our Canadian flag? It seemed, in one of our local weeklies not long ago, that this burning question had reached its climax, had waned and had finally died out, but here again it intrudes itself upon us and we are confronted with new designs, new arrangements, and new ideas which one or another thinks suitable to fittingly represent Our Canadian Nationality. We might better look to our nationality itself and give it some critical and thoughtful consideration, observe its tendencies and further its progress. To look abroad for a moment at the history of nations reveals two facts, at least, to the most casual observer. The one is the appropriateness of the designs of the banners of the great nations—the exact and clear manner in which they set forth the evolutionary status of each nation. The second is that these symbols, appropriate and forceful as they are, were not the creations of pen-driving designers, but came into existence as the effectual expression of the genius of the nation in a time of turmoil and struggle, and record with unmistakable clearness an immense stride on the highway of national progress. In France the white banner of the Bourbons with its *fleurs de lys* ceased to exist when the kingdom was no longer pure or beautiful. Its day of symbolical usefulness was over. After it we saw raised the Tri-color of the Republic, the expression in material substance of the vocalised Marseillaise. The stars and stripes of the American Republic arose contemporaneous with the greatest achievement in the Republic's national evolution, and to day swings proudly on the breeze a constant undeniable record of a glorious victory won in a bitter struggle. Nor is this all. Every star which is added to the number already on the canton bespeaks an historical event worthy of note, and calls to our attention a people not yet done with progress. Here, then, we have two flags—it would not be difficult to name more—symbolical of great events. They have arisen with the nationality of the people they represent. They mark an