

MAGGIE OF LOUGH ERNE.

'Twas sweet to roam alone at eve
Along Lough Erne's lonely shore,
And watch the rising billows heave,
And listen to the breakers roar.
Yes, sweet thus lone it was to stray;
But sweeter far it was to me
To watch the shades of closing day,
And speed to meet my fair Maggie.

Dear, gentle maid of beauty rare,
Her charms sweet nature round her wove:
The flower was she of maidens fair;
The queen—the gentle queen—of love.
With every charm that wins the heart
She was bedecked by heaven's decree,
And beauty formed the roughest part
Of lovely, gentle, fair Maggie.

Her's was the heart that could inspire
A troubled soul, an aching breast:
Her's were the lips on which the fire
Of love and sweetness went to rest:
Her's was a voice of gentle tone,
Her breath as balm was sweet to me—
What joy were mine were she my own,
My lovely, gentle, fair Maggie!

How sweetly glow'd upon her cheek
The rose's hue when'er she spoke
Of love (for nought else could she speak,
For love her every word awoke).
And with a sigh I now recall
The tales she told so jestingly:
The heart dictated one and all
Within the breast of fair Maggie.

Far from the scenes where flew those hours,
In reveries of thought I roam
Among Lough Erne's water flowers,
In bulrush bowers near Maggie's home.
But when I find 'tis but a dream,
A phantom vain deceiving me,
And say, "things are not what they seem,"
And then I weep for fair Maggie.

And tho' I may in joy be shrined,
Yet from my heart shall never fade,
Nor ever vanish from my mind
The beauty of that blooming maid.
Long as the God whom I adore
The vital spark retains in me:
So long shall I love thee, *author*,
My own, my gentle, fair Maggie.

Montreal.

"DUNSTON."

RECENT CANADIAN LITERATURE.

The writer who may set himself the task of preparing a *précis* of Canadian Literature, for even the brief period of two years, will be surprised at the extent and richness of the ground he has now-a-days to go over. Time was when the soil was both poor and scant, and the herbage to be cropped from it was neither succulent nor nutritious; but the land has now been given many years of toil, and not a few writers have ploughed in their first crop to enrich it. We may yet be far from reaping great harvests, but that the soil yields fairly, and, by improved culture, may bring forth more abundantly, is the conviction of us all. Forcing, of course, is to be guarded against, but protection from the nipping frosts is equally important. A too eager expectancy may bring disappointment, but neglect and indifference have wrought their own evils. In the chilling atmosphere in which, for the most part, our writers have worked, that they have accomplished so much, and that the future is so full of promise is matter for surprise and congratulation. That so many in the face of difficulties and discouragements have been found to withstand the sovereignty of Mammon, and have devoted themselves to the intellectual life, shows how strong is the belief in the saving power of intelligence, and indicates what attractions are to be found in the pursuit of letters.

There is perhaps no circumstance more gratifying to those who from the watch-towers of patriotism are scanning the intellectual horizon of our young country to discern the coming men, than to find the number increasing of those who are taking up literature as a profession, and to note the still larger number that here and there in the community are fostering a love of culture, and are more or less actively giving it expression. With regard to the latter, the present writer has had exceptional opportunities of judging, and during a ten years' connection with our national magazine, no circumstance has impressed him so much as the increase of that class who are paying court to literature, and are doing excellent work in supplying articles for our periodical press. It may be said that the worth of this work is slight and of light weight as literature, but it is the stepping-stone from journalism to letters, and a necessary stage in the evolution of mind. In this view, Canadian literature owes no small debt to such periodicals as the *Revue Canadienne* and the *Canadian Monthly*, though recognition of it may not be more fervid than that given to foster-mothers in general. So far as the public are concerned, however, recognition of the contemporary value of this work is a duty, the more imperative because it is done without fee or reward. In the absence of the pecuniary stimulus to exertion, and in the face of the losses which authors and publishers have sustained in Canada, in endeavouring to catch the ear of the public, it is not surprising that the literary status of the country is as yet not a high one. What it might, and speedily would be, were literature more recognised as a profession, there is much to indicate, and nowhere is this more observable than in the pages of the periodicals we have referred to, where writers are represented, whose work, had it the inspiration which public recognition and its attendant pecuniary reward might supply, would quickly burgeon out into goodly proportions and secure for itself merited fame. But the real aid these magazines afford to the future literature of Canada is of itself little recognized; as quarries

where each writer is fashioning the stones to take their individual place in the future edifice of our literature, their service is well-nigh incalculable. And how greatly do they stimulate the thought and increase the intelligence of the community!

These are times of unusual mental conflict, and no man is a believer of the *ipse dixit* of another. The age is perhaps too critical, but its scepticism and analytic habit are an education in themselves. People are reading more, but they are also thinking more. In every department of research is this the case, and had we a school of competent criticism, and a few leaders of thought who would enter more sympathetically into the mental engrossments of the masses, the benefits of the thirst for reading would be enhanced, and a healthful direction given to the forces of the native intellect. The press, over the country, might be more helpful than it is: in the cities, at least, we might look for more intelligent reviewing and greater effort to do justice to our native writers. In one notable instance, that of the most prominent journal in the country, book reviewing is little else than a farce, and the aid given to the nascent literature of Canada is of the feeblest and least encouraging character. The absence of a high-class literary weekly, with a generous department of critical opinion, is equally disadvantageous. Nor is the influence of those who have enjoyed the training of a University much more helpful. The atmosphere of culture that exhales from our college halls cannot be said to be very penetrating. Education, undoubtedly, has made rapid strides, but the results, in the main, of a college training have not yet shown themselves in much original and creative work. The conventional professions, no doubt, have been enriched by the Universities, but the profession of letters has not been so aided. Other and more lucrative walks of life have absorbed the material, though, when wealth and leisure are attained, literature may recover its own. Could we have the system of fellowships and endowments for research which in connection with the Universities of the Old World furnish a certain stimulus to literary and scientific achievement, native interest in literature would doubtless increase, and public enthusiasm be more largely enlisted in the work of the schools.

But we need not write of our shortcomings with bitterness, still less with exaggeration. There is much that is encouraging, and a progress in intellectuality which is positive and substantial. In the broad average intelligence of our people there is much to do us credit; and there has been a marked gain in the taste for reading, and with it an increased reflective tendency and a creditable power of penetration. We have not to record great literary feats, but we have gained on the days of brochures and political pamphlets. Public interest in topics of discussion has perceptibly risen, and the range of thought is now wider and more acute. Insignificant matters, it is true, still largely occupy the public mind, and the newspapers continue to pander to frivolous tastes. But the constituency grows that demands a higher mental pabulum, and many of the journals are laudably meeting the want. For the appetite of the masses politics are still the food, but there is a growing disrelish of the more peddling kind, and a quickened interest in the higher matters of the State. The appreciation of statesmanlike qualities in those who serve the country is becoming more pronounced; and there is a flush of pride at the thought of those who ornament the bench. The cry for an educated ministry, and for greater pulpit power, is everywhere heard; and with the higher scholarship of the dominie his status is at last ascending. In the review of the intellectual progress of the country these are matters that count for something, and we hold them to be a gratifying feature of Canadian development.

Another and a practical evidence of the growing culture of the community, and its advancement in letters, is to be found in the expansion of Canadian publishing industries, and the ready enterprise with which the native book-houses take up ambitious literary projects. A single instance of this will occur to everyone in the spirited undertaking of the Art Publishing Company of Toronto, in preparing and launching, at enormous expense, their elaborate table-book "Picturesque Canada." This publication we have elsewhere spoken of as one that will mark a great artistic epoch in the intellectual progress of our people, which must have an immense influence upon the present and future of Canadian art and Canadian literature. At one stroke it has set Canada upon a lofty pinnacle of literary and artistic achievement, to whose brave heights she beckons other art enterprise, with equal strength of pinion, to soar and place an added chaplet on her head. With this magnificent example of the art of native book illustrating before them, anything is now possible of accomplishment to our publishers; and we are safe to look for a harvest of similar ventures, in other departments of labour, in the next years to come. Equally gratifying is it to note the number and variety of other literary undertakings which the past two years have brought to light. Projects more or less ambitious have been set on foot, and a positive amount of fulfilment reached, which is exceedingly encouraging to the quickened mental impulse of the people. The initiation of a series of reference books, such as the "Dominion Annual Register," is of itself an evidence of growth, not only in the material affairs of the nation, but in those activities of the literary

life which, in a progressive community, find exercise in the supplying of the repositories of information and record, of the utmost value in the present and future of the country. Of similar import is the publication of such works as Dr. Todd's "Parliamentary Government in the Colonies," Dr. Ryerson's "History of the Loyalists," Mr. Rattray's "The Scot in British America," Mr. Dent's "Canadian Portrait Gallery;" and his valuable record of "The Last Forty Years." Other undertakings of like character we might also speak of, which denote an awakened interest in the subject which has recently occupied Mr. Bourinot's facile pen, "The Intellectual Development of the Canadian People," and emphasize the fact that the passing years are creating annals in which future historians of the Dominion may find interesting material of research, and the coming poets worthy themes for their muse.

And what the poets themselves are doing, though the age is a material one, is not to be overlooked. Though much of their work lacks the strong fibre and fervour of imagination we would like to see it possess, there are artistic results and an emotional ardour and susceptibility to the beautiful wholly commendable. In the fineness of sensibility and frequent daintiness of expression, recent years have brought us a higher order of verse, which proves the growth of culture in the community and the presence of refining influences actively at work. What it most wants is that it should take its inspiration more largely from Canadian sources, treat more freely of the history and legends of the country, deck itself in the tints of our glorious land, and sing more of the songs of our woods and waters. The atmosphere of nationalism, indeed, is one that should more penetratively pervade our literature than it does. If it is ever to fire the heart of the nation, and to create a distinguishing type of national character, it must cease to be imitative, and find the materials of its art and occupation at home. It may borrow the literary forms of author-craft in the Old World, but its themes must be those of the New. Let us also import the high standard of old lands, by which to test our work, and to set a high ideal before our literary workmen; but having these, let the rest be original and creative. If with half a continent to draw upon, we remain servile to Old World models, we have inherited to little purpose the traditions of our race. But we have faith in the higher purpose of our writers, for a Canadian songstress, in lines prophetic, has already assured us of ambitions that are stirring hearts to claim a world's attention:

"Oh! Poet of our glorious land so fair,
Whose foot is at the door:
Even so my song shall melt into the air,
And die and be no more.

But thou shalt live part of the nation's life:
The world shall hear thy voice,
Singing above the noise of war and strife,
And therefore I rejoice!"

In this hope let us go forward, ever manifesting an ardent interest in, and giving heartiest support to, the intellectual life of Canada. Literary composition, admittedly, is not an easily acquired art, and there is need of all the aid and encouragement that can be given to it. Few as yet are born to wealth or leisure in the country, and they who write to live are the majority of those who please or instruct us. The literary work hitherto done by Canadians has been achieved through corroding care and amid the tumult of alien noises. Let that of coming coming writers have the aid of a more favourable environment. What the proposed Royal Society may do for our literature can scarcely be predicted. Our literary men will not look to it to relieve them from pecuniary pressure in their arduous labour; but it will justify its existence if it elicits public sympathy in its service and secures for the author the honour and reward of his work.

Further we record the literary achievements of the past two years, and, in commending the industry and ability of the writers, we would bespeak for their work a larger measure of public recognition, and a more generous and encouraging support.

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY.

The chief interest in Canadian history, it is almost trite now to say, has hitherto centered in the French régime, the heroic incidents of which Mr. Francis Parkman has anticipated Canadian writers in depicting, though his charming narratives, to which he is about to add the thrilling story of Wolfe and Montcalm, reconcile us to the thought that the period has found its first and best historian in an American. That the mine, however, has only just been opened, the reader of our early annals, who knows the wealth and variety of the materials which await industry and research to be brought to light, must be fully conscious; while to the novelist and dramatist the ground may be said to be as yet unbroken, if we except Mr. Kirby's *Le Chien d'Or*, a romance of the highest excellence, which is far too little known to the people of Canada. But of the later, and perhaps not less heroic, periods of the country's history, Canadian writers have in the main a monopoly. And here native literary activity, in a commendable degree, is now showing itself. "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war;" and the records of settlement in the Upper Province and the story of the struggling pioneers are finding historians to deal with them, and readers curious and interested to devour what they have written.

"History repeats itself," and the Canadian *littérateur* has in the story of the United Empire Loyalists a tale to tell, such as the American historian has had to narrate of the refugees from oppression who peopled the New England Colonies, and whose struggles in the then wilderness of the Atlantic seaboard find a parallel in the same war with nature in the case of their descendants in Ontario. Unfortunately, in Dr. Egerton Ryerson's *The Loyalists of America and the Times*, though it was the design of the now deceased writer that his work should be "an historical monument of the character and merits of the fathers and founders of my (his) native country," the author has occupied himself too much with re-telling the story of the settlement of Massachusetts and of the doings of the Puritan Fathers, and has not devoted that space to the incidents of settlement in Upper Canada which for our own people would have had an entrancing interest, and been the most acceptable contribution to our native history. Nevertheless, the work we first chronicle in this department has many claims upon Canadian readers, and the author's enthusiasm in his subject and years of industry in compiling his materials, though he has not made the best use of them, deservedly entitle his volumes to notice and commendation.

In Mr. Rattray's *The Scot in British North America*, we have a most important contribution to our native literature, in a department of exceptional interest to students of national life and character. The first two volumes of the work have appeared, and they contain a mine of information, respecting the political, material, social, and intellectual life of the country, as these features of its development have been influenced and operated upon by Scotchmen. No more vital inquiry could well have been taken up by a Canadian writer than this one of the national character. What its ingredients are, how they have come together, and in what manner they have fused, or are fusing themselves, into the national life of a people, are never failing questions of interest. In the case of Canada, as indeed of all countries of a composite colonization, the inquiry, moreover, is of vast importance, as the results of the analysis cannot but be of service in directing the future line of the country's progress, and in stimulating the development of those characteristics which conduce most to the success of its people. But, besides the question of the national idiosyncrasies, and the mental constitution of the Scot, which have ever been important factors in the world's work, there is the larger subject and more special inquiry which has occupied Mr. Rattray's pen—the report of Scotch colonization in various sections of the Dominion, the conspicuous part taken by Scotchmen in the early military affairs and later political administration of Canada, and the no less signal achievements of the race in the paths of industry and commerce. These are the themes to the consideration of which Mr. Rattray has brought eminent talents, an intimate acquaintance with the country's history, and a power of graphic writing which give a special charm to the author's work and commend it to every thoughtful and cultured Canadian. The two concluding volumes of Mr. Rattray's history, which are eagerly looked for, we are glad to learn are now in press. The publishers, we must add, deserve a word of commendation for their share in the production of the volumes so far issued.

In *The Canadian Portrait Gallery*, edited by Mr. J. C. Dent, we have a most creditable and successful attempt to illustrate Canadian history in the lives of its chief actors. Mr. Dent has cultivated the gift of biographical writing to a praiseworthy extent; and though he has been preceded in this field by others, he has won new and well-deserved laurels, and given to our literature another critical and discriminating account of the men who have left their impress upon Canadian history, or are still engaged in moulding or influencing its affairs. The range of Mr. Dent's volumes is extensive, and embraces the most prominent public men of the country, the facts of whose lives, and the share taken by them in the varied affairs of the nation, should be familiar to all Canadians. The biographies are full, painstaking, and, in most instances, impartial. They are interesting not only in the facts they supply in regard to the personal history of the subjects treated of, but for the light they throw upon political and national events, and the aid they afford to the student of the country's annals in comprehending the questions which from time to time have agitated the public mind. The coloured lithographic portraits, prefixed to the memoirs, are a further and serviceable aid to the exposition of character, and though the results are not always happy they are a fitting complement to the letterpress.

In the same author's *The Last Forty Years* Mr. Dent has essayed, with, we may say, unqualified success, the task of writing a picturesque history of Canada from the period of the Union of the Provinces in 1840. For those not possessed of the historic spirit, and who dislike to grope in the musty archives of earlier eras, Mr. Dent's new work will have a certain attraction. In the main, the period covered being a contemporary one, it will possess an interest which remote events usually fail to arouse; though the writer will have the drawback of having to contend with judgments already formed and a criticism which is more or less influenced by the predilections of the reader. Nevertheless, the author is acquitting himself well of his task, and, on the whole, commenting with judicious fairness on the events which have taken place within the memory of the present