

happy faculty of adapting herself to circumstances. She is capable of keeping house in a one roomed prairie "shack," and of adding a lustre to the magnificence of the multi-millionaire. She has a pleasant voice, low-pitched and musical (Albani is a Canadian by birth), she can cook, she has been heard of at Girton and Bryn Mawr. She beats the best men at our universities and they rejoice to be vanquished. She has not been brought up to the notion of divorce as a possibility of marriage. As a sweetheart she is ideal, and when she marries she makes the best of wives and mothers. One Canadian girl has taken it into her head to write, and her work takes rank with the best of its kind anywhere. In Sara Jeannette Duncan, Canadian women have a representative of all that is brightest and soundest in their character.

It may be thought that there is no other side to the picture and that the present writer is an incurable chauvinist, incapable of seeing a fault in his country or his countrymen. Unfortunately there is another side. There is a real inferiority in our national life so great that it is difficult to speak of it without shame and confusion of face. The two chief causes for national humiliation are, the prevailing Philistinism and our politics. We have authors, but no Canadian publisher will take the risk of publishing their work. We have artists whose pictures pass the severe tribunal of the Salon, but they are not bought in Canada. Artists and writers must seek markets outside of their own country. When I speak of Canadian politics I do so not as a partizan but as an independent citizen who believes it to be his duty to keep himself free from the entanglements of faction and to throw his weight on the side of justice and right. When one hears political leaders of both sides speak of office as "a prize" which one side holds and the other snatches at, how can thoughtful man feel pride or hope? When one notices that in English politics one party is overthrown because it has made errors in judgment and that here the great difficulty is to find men honest enough to administer our affairs with the same care as a trustee is bound to administer the affairs of a private estate, it makes one ashamed of being a Canadian. Again, the tone of journalism is notoriously low. There are, perhaps, not more than three newspapers in Canada which even pretend to be just to the other side, that will report speeches or meetings of their opponents except in a manner grossly unfair. Our single literary journal has to make a most desperate struggle for existence, and one daily which showed great ability during its year or two of independence has been reabsorbed by the party to which it formerly belonged. These are only a few of the disheartening things, the ugly facts, which we must look in the face and decide what to do with them if our country is ever to be really great. But I would not end these rambling remarks with words of discouragement. I would rather leave with you the great message of Goethe,

"Wir heissen euch hoffen."
"We bid you hope."

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

Letters to the Editor.

BOYDELL'S ILLUSTRATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE.

SIR,—Since writing the article which appeared in your columns last week on these beautiful illustrations, I have had the opportunity of studying a copy of the American reprint of 1849, referred to—the copy in the Public Library at Buffalo, New York State, and I think it is of sufficient interest to speak of it in connection with the copy of the original English edition now in Toronto.

There is literally no comparison between the old and the new in value. Many of the prints in the latter are so distinctly different in the details of drawing, the expression given to the faces, the effects of light and shade, that had I not known it as fact, I should have hesitated to assert the prints were made from the same plates that had produced the old. The depth and softness which gives such richness to the original prints is entirely absent in the American reprint. The paper also is poor, and the binding of the two volumes, into which they are divided, is of a much cheaper and less durable material. The plates are not arranged in the same consecutive order, and altogether the two editions

are so unlike that while the original may well be worth a thousand dollars, I should consider the American reprint dear at one hundred.

MARY AGNES FITZGIBBON.

Toronto, 5th Sept., 1896.

KIPLING'S "BALLAD OF EAST AND WEST."

SIR,—I was pleased to find in your issue of 28th August some bright remarks anent a few of the poems of Rudyard Kipling, by Mr. J. Montgomery, B.A. But the reviewer seems to have made a very curious and incomprehensible mistake. Speaking of the "Ballad of East and West," Mr. Montgomery says, "it is about the son of an Arab chieftain and his pursuit of the border thief, Kamil." Now, how on earth could the former be an Arab chieftain or the son of one?

The line goes thus—

"Then up and spoke the Colonel's son, who led a troop of the Guides."

Does not Mr. Montgomery know that the Guides is one of the most famous native corps in our Indian Army? Its commissioned officers are British, of course (with perhaps a few *honorary* exceptions). The *Colonel's* son spoken of must have been an Englishman. What would have been the use in calling the poem "The Ballad of East and West," if both the heroes were *Eastern*? It is a most extraordinary mistake for Mr. Montgomery to have made; he seems to have missed the one and simple point in this ringing ballad.

AN ADMIRER OF KIPLING.

Toronto, 4th Sept., 1896.

Conversational English.

Percy F. Bicknell, in The Dial.

IS conversation becoming with us a lost art, and the correct use of its medium a thing of the past? This is a question calling for the serious consideration of educators of the young. Spelling and composition receive attention perhaps out of proportion to their relative importance; some of the methods of teaching the former—as, for example, the singing of the letters—being very peculiar, and demanding an undue share of the pupil's time. But neither in school nor at home are correct habits of speech inculcated. In no country in the world do the educated classes pay so little attention to correctness of accent, clearness of enunciation, and the observance of grammatical rules, as in our own. Even in New England, where, during the first half of the century, taking the whole population together, perhaps the best English in the world was spoken, there has been a sad degeneration.

The pulpit makes some pretence to the correct use of English, but even here colloquialisms are not rare. The writer recently heard a clergyman of some claims to culture and refinement, in the course of a sermon on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, exclaim with much fervour: "Oh, my brethren, what a blessed world this would be if only we were all plumb full of God!" Another preacher whom he frequently hears is addicted to deploring, in his exhortations to spiritual-mindedness, a too great desire to "keep up with the procession." The bar has long ago given up the attempt to furnish a model in the use of English. Not a few lawyers purposely make use of slang and faulty grammar in court, thinking thus more surely to hold the attention of the jury.

As has often been observed, Europeans pay more attention to their speech than we do, because in all leading European countries correct and refined utterance is an indispensable requisite for attaining good social position. Irish and Scotch barristers, seeking to make their mark at the English bar, take incredible pains to get rid of their native accent. Lord Campbell succeeded so far in this endeavour that he said his Scotch origin was finally discoverable only through two or three words which were always more than he could master; one of them was *solicitor*, which he always made *soleecitor*. In France, Germany, and Italy, as well as in England, among the educated classes the child's speech is watched as carefully as are his manners and morals. To the upper classes of society is assigned the care of their native tongue, and neglect in this matter is punished by loss of