

formity, or compromise." The prevailing tone of English opinion and practice is shown to be opposed to strong convictions on any subject, social, political, or religious. Enthusiasm has died out, and, instead of it, there is a spirit of narrow expediency. "The old hopes have grown pale; the old fears dim; strong sanctions are become weak; and once vibrant faiths very numb." The popular view is that "thoroughness is a mistake, and nailing your colours to the mast a bit of delusive heroics." The spirit of compromise prevails everywhere with its concomitant, "a shrinking deference to the *status quo*." The introductory chapter is devoted to a consideration of the causes that have engendered this loss of moral power. The second chapter is an examination of the popular notion that error is sometimes useful, against which Mr. Morley utters a vigorous protest. The earnestness and high moral purpose which pervade the essay are characteristic of the writer. Mr. Pater's paper on Wordsworth unfolds some of the peculiar merits of the poet and illustrates also some of his defects. "Sex in Mind and in Education" is from the pen of Dr. Maudsley, principally known to the public by his works on mental pathology. As might have been expected he views the subject from a physiological standpoint. He considers it impossible that, under the most favourable circumstances, the sexes can ever be upon an equality; and that the attempt to educate them according to a common plan would be highly injurious so far as the female sex is concerned. We quote a sentence or two. "So long as the differences of physical power and organization between men and women are what they are, it does not seem possible that they should have the same type of mental development. But while we see great reason to dissent from the opinions, and to distrust the enthusiasm, of those who would set before women the same aims as men, to be pursued by the same methods, it must be admitted that they are entitled to have all the mental culture and all the freedom necessary to the fullest development of their natures." Mr. Auckland Colvin has a paper on "The Indian Famine and the Press," illustrated by a map showing the suffering districts. He considers that the *Times* and other journals have magnified the calamity. Mr. Morrison concludes his view of the reign of Louis XIV. The two chapters taken together form a clear and vivid sketch of the "Great" Monarch's reign. The paper on "The Exodus of the Agricultural Labourers" of course relates to the emigration question. It bristles with statistics, but we think the writer is too sanguine. He talks of shipping off in one year one hundred thousand labourers, and is quite prepared to show where the money is to come from. Mr. Frederic Harrison confines his survey of "Public Affairs" this month

to continental affairs. He refers especially to Von Moltke's extraordinary speech on the Army Bill and Bismarck's rude rebuff to the Alsatian deputies, which he characterizes as a defiance to public morality. Mr. Harrison entertains the hope that the stout resistance given to the Army Bill is a sign that the days of bureaucratic government are numbered.

"LIFE IN THE BACKWOODS OF CANADA."

IN the *Atlantic Monthly* for March appeared a paper entitled "Life in the Backwoods of Canada," of much interest to Canadians, though the interest is, on the whole, a painful one. It is a sketch of the Canadian experiences of a family of settlers on the wild lands of Muskoka. The sketch is simply and graphically written, evidently not overwrought or exaggerated, and represents with vivid and painful truth the hardships, privations and sufferings of a settler's life in an uncleared, uncultivated country. These are certainly hardly greater than those depicted by Mrs. Moodie in her "Roughing it in the Bush;" but through this narrative there runs a sadder strain, less brightened by the sunshine that lights up even a backwoods life; for the story is written evidently from the heart of an exile, looking with home-sick eyes at a country as unlike as possible both to the home left behind and to the "new and happy land" which the emigrants had pictured to themselves beforehand.

The settlers were almost as unfitted as it was possible to be for the rough life they came to encounter. The writer of the sketch is the widow of an officer—English it would seem—though, having been resident for a considerable time in France, accustomed to all the refinements of the highest civilization. Her home was broken up by the Franco-German war, and the youngest son being already a settler in Muskoka, his eldest sister with her husband resolved to join him. After their departure, but without waiting to hear from them, the mother, eldest son and remaining daughter rather hastily and impulsively made up their minds to follow. Had they waited till they could have heard some more accurate accounts of the life they might expect, and until some preparations for their reception could be made by those who had gone before them, the record of their experiences might not have been painted in quite such sombre colours. But they came quite unprepared for the life of toil and hardship, and the utterly rough surroundings of the wilderness. The free grants of Muskoka had evidently appeared to their imagination as a pleasant rural retreat, where a happy Arcadian life might be led by refined and