

Zeno, Socrates, Epicurus, are remembered to-day because they spoke of issues which every age could appreciate. The civil wars and broils in Florence were never deemed by Dante of sufficient import to distract his attention from that inspired vision which he has bequeathed to all nations and all ages.

The author who aspires to be read through the mists of the ages must write in letters of fire. The work of Canadian authors will not be less honourable in the eyes of posterity if it be found that instead of bending their eyes to the dust they turned them to the universal stars. If kings and politicians have taken upon themselves the responsibility of dividing the race into clans and nations, the author is under no compulsion to confine his thought to the boundaries which their folly has prescribed. Genius should not be an accessory to the crime of nationality. The Romans chained the slave Epictetus, but they could not chain the philosopher. It is the peculiar function of genius to create from its mind an ideal universe whose only citizen is man. While the politicians of the various nations are howling their national anthems, or dancing a frantic war dance to music of tradition, the poets and the philosophers stand as old Plato stood in god-like grandeur beneath vaults of the universe listening to the music of the spheres, and feeling that even the world itself is too narrow a home for that imprisoned soul whose thoughts are as wide as the infinite and as deep as God.

There are problems in art, in psychology and in sociology which the average Canadian author never touches on. It is idle to assert a deficiency of subjects. There are mysteries of mind, of conduct and of nature to be revealed. The miracle of life is yet to be explained, and the oracle of being asks from the thinkers of this country, as it has asked of all others, an answer to the question, "from whence and whither?" Science and literature are closely correlated, and must soon go on their journey to the depths hand in hand. There are promethean depths as yet unsounded in every department of thought. There are oracles still unread, there are oceans yet unsounded, there are cities yet unbuilt. Indeed, when we compare the things unknown with the things we know, and see the supreme mystery that encompasses us on every side, and how the esoteric shrouds the exoteric like the night prevailing over the day, we cannot but think that we are indeed upon the surface of a world, and the past voices that have spoken, grand as they were, were but the lisps of an infant who some day shall rise to manhood and rend aside the veil of ether, and in no wavering voice demand an answer to the question "Why." Within the depths of the human mind there linger anthems which the gods might chant, songs of such subtle music that seraphs might becomingly sing them. The greatest songs are yet unsung, the wisest sayings are yet unsaid. Far below the seen rests the mighty unseen, and behind the spoken are the unspoken things. Beethoven recorded the most subtle chords of music as yet revealed to man, but these only seem like the echoes, faint and feeble, of some mighty choir whose wildest and grandest melodies are yet unheard. Mozart and Handel each caught and recorded marvellous melodies which, glorious as they are, yet seem like only the overture of an opera, whose most glorious anthems are yet unsung. Spinoza, Fichte and Schelling passed through the portico of the infinite, but seemed to drop their pens before recording the things beyond. Bohme, Swedenborg and Blavatsky, borne on the wings of a subtle mysticism, seem to have penetrated into that occult universe where the causes sit in state, and yet the light they have given us seems merely a feeble candle, which burns feebly and nervously in the midst of a dense, dark inscrutable universe. Tyndell, Crooks and Tesla, having indicated the identity of the forces in ether have paused for a moment to tell us that they are only beginning to learn. Herbert Spencer, in the very inception of his philosophy speaks of a great "unknown." Political Economy for two centuries has been seeking a remedy for social discontent, and in its latest utterance tells us that it has sought in vain.

Meanwhile the authors of Canada are discussing the Fenian Raid. They tell in thrilling tones of the genesis of the 'squaw and the decline and fall of the papoose. They expatiate in glowing periods on the criminality of Sunday street cars. The columns of an Ottawa journal were recently occupied by a prolonged discussion between two aspiring Canadian writers, on the correct and proper spelling of the word "honour," and another great man, "the mightiest Roman of them all," with a genius as unique as it is rare, with a fervid patriotism that would put a Regulus to shame, and an erudition which is unrivalled and profound, discusses the heroic achievements of the York pioneers.

Even assuming that the history of Canada were prolific of those incidents which form a fitting theme for genius, and display in activity the more subtle qualities of the mind, it does not follow that the Canadian author should reject the whole of the world for a part, or confine his studies of human nature to its manifestations in one particular district. It must also be borne in mind that the work of the author is not purely historical. The most important departments of human thought are those whose greatest development may be looked for in the future. There are depths below depths and heights above heights. The realms of nature are yet unread. Even to those authors who do not aspire to deal with the more subtle problems of the universe, or to go beyond the world in which they dwell, there is ample material for thought and

authorship in the great social and economic issues of the day. The evils of land monopoly, of unequal division of wealth, of poverty, of vice, of crime, of superstition, all form a fitting subject for the pen as well as for the voice. Ten million poverty-stricken people on this continent alone cry in agonized tones to the men of thought as well as of action to consecrate their powers to the destruction of monopoly, the organization of industry and the emancipation of the masses. Surely when the rifle is beginning to speak on the question of labour and capital, the pen should not be silent, and surely when these great and weighty issues, issues of life and of death, issues of time and eternity, are awaiting a solution, the authors of Canada have not far to seek to find a sterner and worthier subject for their genius than the decline of the bison, or the beauty of Muskoka lakes.

A nation is made honourable by the honour of its men, and its greatness is measured by the capacities of its people. Had the authors of Athens never arisen above the barriers of nationality, Athens would be forgotten to-day. If the authors of Canada content themselves with the discussion of local issues, obscurity will be their reward. It behooves them to turn their eyes from the shallows to the depths, to recognize the fact that national divisions in no sense represent mental distinctions, and to lend that genius which they possess in no less degree than any other people or era, to the elucidation of those profound problems of race and intellect and society which form the common heritage of every people. Let it be said of this Canada of ours that it produced men whose minds were broad, whose aspirations were lofty and who standing on this spot of mother earth looked higher than the walls that men have built and saw inspired visions in the skies. Let it be said that wide as their country is their minds are wider, that while Canadians in name they are god-like in nature, and are elevated by the power of an aspiration which nationality can never cripple and tradition can never stain.

But if on the other hand the authors of this country continue to cower behind the walls of nationality, to tune their souls to the harmonies of the party machine, and to mumble in the dialect of a tribe instead of speaking the language of humanity, we cannot but think it altogether fitting and proper that their reward should be proportioned to their ambition and their work be paid for in a coin as visionary as the feudal phantoms they adore.

ETHELBERT F. H. CROSS.

STAINED WINDOWS.

IN minster aisles, when rosy dusk invades
The mute companionship of marble men,
I love to dream and conjure to my ken,
Warm moods, while down Ionian facades
Rain dappled shreds of indigo brocades,
White surplices and stoles carnelian,
Hot saffron mitres, cowls and coifs sienn—
As fine archaic fashioning pervades.
These chrome-impressioned ether globes through which
Sun-freshets flood, suggest a simile
Of fancy dight with several pigments rich—
Art essences—romance and poesy—
The ever-freshening looms of thought unroll,
Eternal, from that sun of suns—the soul!

JOS. NEVIN DOYLE.

THE CRITIC.

TWO books, in character different as the poles, and alike only in the stimulating nature of their contents, were recently recommended to my notice; and as it is not every day that one lights upon a book with stimulating contents, perhaps a service may be done by handing on as well as may be some of the stimulus. One was a little yellow-coloured edition of M. Camille Flammarion's "Rêves Etoilés." M. Flammarion is perhaps the most sensational astronomer alive; Richard A. Proctor was staid beside him. That is to say, he intermingles with his astronomical knowledge romances of a highly sensational kind. And indeed these Dreams were no exception, as such titles as "Georges Spero," "Idée d'une Communication entre les Mondes," "Ame vêtue d'Air," sufficiently showed. However, it was not the sensation that was the stimulus, rather it was the huge astronomical facts and theories with which the author delighted to dazzle his reader; such, for example, as the immensity of the universe, its unimaginable duration in time—both anterior and posterior to our own, the vastness of the forces at work and the infinite multiplicity of its manifestations, the problem of the origin and end of organic life—especially that perplexing problem that, according to rigid physical laws, all organic life (on our planet at least) must some day come to a dead stop, the "wherefore" of the struggle of life, if life is to end in sheer nihilism, the apparently necessary connection between what we call "mind" and "matter," the question of the possibility of a continuance of mind without matter when terrestrial matter becomes dead and inert, and the sun itself is a dark, cold, rolling mass. One can more than lose one's self in such riddles; in fact, as M. Flammarion says, one cannot think of them without some degree of fear, and without acquiescing in our ignorance to solve them: *Je ne puis songer sans terreur à l'innombrable quantité d'êtres qui ont vécu sur tous les mondes aujourd'hui disparus, à tous les esprits supérieurs qui ont pensé,*

qui ont agi, qui ont guidé les humanités dans la voie du progrès, de la lumière et de la liberté . . . sans me demander ce qu'ils sont devenus. Il est très facile de répondre qu'il n'en reste rien, qu'ils sont morts comme ils étaient nés, que tout est poussière et retourne à la poussière; c'est la une réponse facile mais peu satisfaisante. Certes, je n'ai pas la naïve prétention de résoudre le grand mystère.

The other was a curious little book, quite recently published, and called "Mathematical Recreations and Problems of Past and Present Times," by W. W. Rouse Ball. But it was only in the concluding chapters of this that there were any large and speculative physical conceptions, analogous to those in "Rêves Etoilés;" those, namely, entitled "Hyper-space" and "The Constitution of Matter." In the former may be found one of the clearest and simplest expositions of the theories that have been advanced concerning the possibility of the existence of space of more than three dimensions. One extremely novel idea, first propounded by C. H. Hinton, is here mentioned to the effect that "the birth, growth, life and death of animals may be explained. . . as the passage of finite four-dimensional bodies through our three-dimensional space." The analogical reasoning by which this is reached is as simple as it is ingenious: "If a finite solid was passed slowly through flatland, the inhabitants would be conscious only of that part of it which was in their plane. Thus they would see the shape of the object gradually change and ultimately vanish. In the same way, if a body of four dimensions was passed through our space, we should be conscious of it only as a solid body (namely, the section of the body by our space) whose form and appearance gradually changed and perhaps ultimately vanished."

Such speculations lead to thoughts as puzzling as do M. Flammarion's large generalizations. For example, what a puerile and inadequate conception of the cosmos is this which the world has got hold of when regarded in the light of these theories of time and space. To most people the universe consists of what is called "matter" of some sixty-five component elemental sorts, existing in time of one and space of three dimensions, the whole mixed up with an utterly unknown thing denominated "force" and regulated by a still less known thing called "law." Where is there any *locus standi* for such conception if we grant that matter is a mere phenomenon that time and space are mere modes of thought, that "force" is an unintelligible figment of the mind, and the most firmly established "law" nothing but an incomplete induction? In very truth neither science nor mathematics can rede for us the riddle of the universe.

It is interesting to note how in some points mathematics verges upon the fringe of metaphysics. It is interesting also to note that not a few metaphysicians were at the same time eminent in mathematics: Sir William Hamilton is a salient example; Descartes too is as well known for his purely metaphysical dictum, *cogito ergo sum*, as for the mathematical "axes" called by his name; Spinoza's "Ethics" are in form entirely mathematical, being composed of theorems with enunciations, hypotheses, proofs, lemmas, and corollaries as elaborate as Euclid; the late esteemed Professor of Metaphysics at University College, too, was well known to be an enthusiastic and learned mathematician—as witness his published and accepted solution of quadratic equations of the fifth power; and to these names may be perhaps added those of J. B. Stallo and W. Kingdon Clifford.

Science and mathematics have for so long, so far at all events as the general reader is concerned, confined themselves to relatively rigid and narrow limits, that it is highly refreshing to find easily accessible and easily intelligible books dealing in a popular manner with subjects which, though within their respective spheres, yet touch larger, if perhaps less "exact," realms of thought; and for really stimulating reading the two books here mentioned, despite their dissimilarity, may be heartily commended.

ART NOTES.

THE Royal Academy of 1892 has come to an end, writes an English correspondent, and now the pictures are sinking through the floor to the basement, and the news-vendor at the top of the lane that bounds Burlington House has removed his papers to allow the carts laden with canvases to pass out into Piccadilly. For better or worse the exhibition is over, and, Pan not being dead as some have said, the landscape men are all away in the country. The Hogarth Club is closed for cleaning; the Arts is silent, and portrait painters are praying to be forgiven for the sin of telling their rich acquaintances that they were good-looking enough to have their portraits painted. . . Many of the pictures will go to the provincial autumn exhibitions, where further chances of selling will be vouchsafed to them—where perhaps they will be bought for the permanent collection—a very satisfactory fate. From a hasty glance at the well-thumbed catalogue of sales that lies on a table in the Academy vestibule, it appears that rather more than 150 oil-pictures out of 1,044 have found purchasers, the aggregate price being hardly more than, if as much as, was paid for Raphael's "Crucifixion" at the Dudley sale. A good many small pictures have sold at prices from ten to thirty guineas, but thousand guinea cheques have been few and far between this season. . . Among the high-priced pictures against