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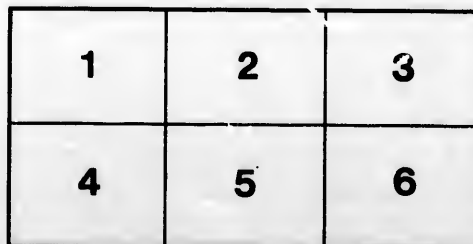
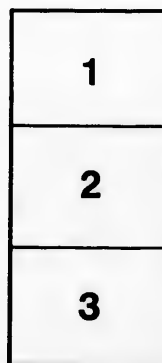
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THE SECRETARY OF THE ROYAL  
SOCIETY OF CANADA.  
A LITERARY FRAUD.

BY

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

**Price 10 Cents.**

OTTAWA, ONT., 1882.

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR JOHN DOUGLAS SUTHERLAND CAMPBELL,

MARQUIS OF LORNE, K.T., G.C.M.G.,

GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF CANADA.

*May it please Your Excellency :—*

I dedicate this pamphlet to Your Lordship because, as the highest representative of Her Majesty on this Continent your name could not be more appropriately used than in connection with a vindication of the "Queen's English."

Moreover Your Lordship is a literary man, and the son of a man, not the least of whose many titles to distinction is his literary activity. You would therefore naturally feel a strong jealousy for the honour of literature.

But there is yet a stronger reason why I dedicate this pamphlet to Your Excellency. One of the earliest steps taken when starting any society is to choose a secretary. If that step in the present case was taken without consulting Your Excellency, you have certainly grave cause to complain of your literary advisers ; if it was taken with the approval of Your Lordship, you must have been deceived ; in either case it is a duty to alarm your jealousy for the honour of Canada. I can conceive no greater insult to the intelligence of Canada than for one knowing the literary imbecility of Mr. Bourinot, to appoint him Honorary-Secretary to a Society which is meant to lead the van of literary progress. I know Your Excellency would shrink from anything that the most fastidious sensibility could construe as wounding to the self-respect of this young country—a great nation, my Lord, in the dawn of vigorous manhood.

As Your Lordship is aware we have in the Dominion of



Canada several Universities. We have an unrivalled educational system which brings a sound Common School education to the door of the poorest. We have in Toronto a great University whence every year a number of distinguished students go to all parts of the country. Some of the students of our Canadian Universities have gone over to Oxford and snatched away the most coveted honours. Until very lately we have had a magazine in which there appeared every month, for more than ten years, abundant evidence of literary ability. One of the greatest living masters of English speech has been in our midst for more than a dozen years, and has constantly published his opinions on literary and political subjects. As may be seen by glancing over the leading columns of the principal newspapers, there are a good many professional writers in the country who use their mother tongue not merely with correctness, but with vigour, and in some cases with elegance. The standard of literary excellence is not low in Canada, my Lord. In nearly every large town there are men of education, and in the leading cities there are some men of high culture. Your Excellency will understand how the intellect of Canada must regard a man not fit to be a common school teacher, setting up as a literary leader, and this apparently with the sanction of Your Excellency! I do not hesitate to say that if Your Lordship, aware of Mr. Bourinot's helpless incapacity to write his own tongue, should countenance his parading as a literary leader in the uniform of a Royal Society, started and fostered by you, the circumstance would make a painful impression which would long out-last Your Excellency's term of office.

While this pamphlet was passing through the press, persons—inspired by whom I did not stop to inquire—came to me and begged me not to publish it, saying that Mr. Bourinot had strong

friends, had under his thumb several newspapers to which he was in the habit of giving information, and finally that by publishing the pamphlet I should displease your Excellency. I replied that I did not care about Mr. Bourinot's power to injure me ; that I had a duty to Canada to perform ; that the matter was of vital importance to her best interests ; and that, as regarded your Excellency—to incur whose disfavour I should regard as a misfortune—I knew the manliness of your character too well to believe that you could wish to shield literary pretension from condign chastisement.

Finally it was said to me that Mr. Bourinot's pamphlet was an offering on the shrine of Canada, and that we should not look too closely at its faults. I replied I was commenting not on the pamphleteer, who was of no consequence, but on the Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society, and that the sacrifice seemed to me to be of about the same value as that which Diogenes of Sinope made to Diana. The philosopher found his sacrifice without going farther afield than his own person, which he kept in philosophical superiority to soap and water. I never heard that the goddess was particularly pleased with the votary, or the blood which stained her altar, and Canada can dispense with gifts which are calculated to degrade her in the eyes of the world.

I am, My Lord,

Your Excellency's obed't humble servant,

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN



## THE SECRETARY OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA.—A LITERARY FRAUD.

—••—  
BY NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.  
—••—

On going a few days ago into Mr. Durie's shop, I saw on the counter a pamphlet entitled "*Canada as a Home*." The subject is one which has always been full of interest for me. I glanced through the pamphlet. I found to my surprise in almost every sentence gross grammatical blunders; blunders such, that if they appeared in an emigration pamphlet, the author would not be allowed to again show his face in the Department of Agriculture. I turned to the title-page of "*Canada as a Home*" and read:

"By John George Bourinot, *the* Clerk of the Canadian House of Commons, Fellow of the Statistical Society of London and of the Royal Colonial Institute, Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society of Canada, &c."

I laughed, and found myself humming a line of Canning's which I parodied:

"Smudge's diamonds and his dirty shirt."

Here were these worthless decorations on the cover of a pamphlet in which there is not a line which does not contain offences against literary taste, and in which, I repeat, it is hard to find a sentence without grammatical blunders, for which a school-boy of eleven years of age would be disgraced. As one should expect, there is a looseness of thought corresponding to the imbecility of language.

On page 5 we read:—

"Quebec and Port Royal were in existence when the Puritan pioneers were toiling among the rocks of New England. But *ever since* Canada became a dependency of Great Britain, her progress has been more or less retarded by the fact of her close neighborhood to the American Republic."

Here it is implied that contiguity to the American Republic has been inimical to Canada's progress, only because she is a dependency of Great Britain. What does he mean? If Canada were a dependency of France would this contiguity not have operated in the same way?

On the same page we read

"A stranger to Canada and her resources would naturally suppose on revising the statistics of emigration in the past, that there must be some radical weakness in the political institutions of the Dominion, some illiberality in its

system of Government, or some insurmountable *obstacle arising from soil or climate*, or a *comparatively limited sphere of natural resources*, to account for the remarkable preference so systematically *shown* by the European world for the American States *when it comes* a question of leaving the old home for one beyond the sea."

As to the use of "obstacle" here—obstacle to what? We speak of a limited sphere of action—but not of natural resources.

*Shown* is the past participle and *when it comes* has certainly nothing to do with the past.

In the second sentence but one from the above, we read :

"Nor would it be difficult now-a-days to find in the utterances of some English statesmen and writers more encouragement for the United States, than for the Canadian Provinces, *who*, so far certainly, have shown no other aspiration than to work out their national destiny in the closest possible connection with the Empire."

The relative must agree with its antecedent in gender : what is the gender of "Provinces?"

Two sentences farther on we read :

"The development of the vast North-West Territory simultaneously with the agrarian difficulties and agricultural distress in Great Britain and Ireland, *have* had the very natural effect, &c."

*Development* is a singular noun, and *have* is the plural form of the verb. If Mr. Bourinot was ever taught the rule that the verb must agree with its nominative in number, the lesson evidently never got beyond the tweed suit in which his youthful limbs were encased.

On page 11, at the close of the paragraph, we read :—

"The speculator and man of enterprise learn from them, &c."

Speculator and man of enterprise mean one individual—the idea is one. Thus again we have a singular noun and a plural verb. If it should be said that two persons were meant, then we have a clumsy ellipsis. If two persons were meant, the article "the" should have been placed before "man of enterprise."

On page 14 we read :—

"Most sanguine hopes are entertained that the *very* recent visit of His Excellency the Governor-General, &c."

Now His Excellency made but one journey to the North-West. What is meant by "the *very* recent visit?" The article appeared in July, 1882. His Excellency's visit was made in 1881.

On page 17 we read :

"The large sums that Canada has been for years, or is now expending, have been directed towards strengthening Imperial interests on this continent"

*notably* the Intercolonial and Pacific Railways, which are certainly Imperial in their conception, and to which the British Government has given no substantial aid, except on one occasion, viz., when it gave *it* an Imperial guarantee.

To what does *notably* refer? He has been speaking of the expenditure of large sums. To what does the second "it" relate?

The noun to which "it" belongs must be the same as the antecedent of "which;" but "Railways," qualified by the adjectives Intercolonial and Pacific, is the antecedent of "which." Now in no way can "it" be made plural. The whole sentence shows the slipshod way Mr. Bourinot thinks.

A still more amusing sentence is found at the foot of page 19:—

"Nor must it be forgotten that Canada herself is *now* a *manufacturing country*, and her people are buying largely every year, as well as exporting, fine pianos, carriages, boots and shoes, paper, tweeds, and sugars, *besides other articles manufactured cheaply and well in their own country.*"

He states that Canada is a manufacturing country. He points out that the Canadian people are buying largely, pianos, &c., that they are also exporting these, *besides other articles manufactured cheaply and well in their own country.* Clearly, Mr. Bourinot, if he has not sat at the feet of Mr. Addison, has sat at the feet of Sarah Gamp. If he meant that in addition to the articles specified other manufacturing products are exported, all he had to write was, "and other articles." As it is, the tail of the sentence would lead to the inference that the articles specified are *not* manufactured in Canada. If that were intended, (this, of course, is not the case), how ridiculous the commencement of the sentence. But if the commencement of the sentence is to be saved from ridicule, the tail of it must remain absurd like the tails to the author's name.

It might be thought impossible to surpass this last flash of genius. But the sceptic who should cherish such a doubt would do scant justice to the exhaustless resources of Mr. Bourinot's talents for bad grammar and slobbering construction.

On page 21 there are two sentences—two!—there are four in which the reader will revel. They show us Mr. Bourinot *in excelsis*:—

"Twelve years ago, theatrical performances had to be held in buildings of a most inferior character—mere wooden "shanties" in some cases—but now all the cities and large towns possess one or more opera-houses, *handsome in appearance* and well adapted in every way to their object. Another illustration of the spirit of culture that is abroad in Canada, hitherto considered so prosaic and utilitarian a country, "so dreadfully new," is the establishment of art schools in the large centres, and of a Canadian Academy—the result of

the laudable desire of the Marquis of Lorne and the Princess Louise to stimulate a taste for art among the people; and it is a *very significant fact* that there are already *several cases of young men* who have embraced art as a profession, and have proceeded within a few months to the great schools of Europe to obtain that thorough artistic training which can *alone* be found among the master-pieces of modern and ancient painting and sculpture. *It is a significant fact*, which should be mentioned in this connection, that the value of the paintings and engravings of a good class annually brought into the country now amounts to over £100,000, all of which are imported free, with the view of affording as much encouragement as possible to so desirable an agency of culture. The foregoing facts are but a few among the evidences that can now be seen in Canada to prove the progress of art, literature and science in a country the greater portion of which, a half-century ago, *was a solitude of river and forest, with a population of less than a million.*"

Now what is meant by saying that Opera Houses are "*handsome in appearance.*" Handsome in appearance means that they are apparently handsome, and what is the meaning of saying a concrete object is apparently handsome? If it is handsome, it is handsome. I suppose Mr. Bourinot does not mean that the Opera Houses are like Mr. Bourinot, consummate frauds, handsome in appearance, but in reality ugly.

I shall have by and by to speak of the poverty of Mr. Bourinot's vocabulary. Note the cacophonous use of "*significant fact*" above. Perhaps you had better not. I wish you to reserve all your capacity of wonder for the last sentence. Try and take in the idea conveyed in the following words: "*a solitude of river and forest with a population of less than a million.*" ! ! !

When you have recovered from this you can note other rhetorical beauties.

Does the gentle reader think we shall find no more plums in this pudding? On page 22 our author writes:

"If there are any who wish to study the social characteristics of the Canadians, let them do something more than rush through the Dominion, and live *only* in hotels."

This word *only* makes him say the reverse of what he desires. He actually tells them that they must do something more than rush through the Dominion, and that they must live *only* in hotels, whereas what he desires to say, is that they must not live entirely in hotels, but must see something of that Canadian life which hotel society does not embrace.

I wish now to point out the extraordinary poverty of Mr. Bourinot's vocabulary. I will not take many cases. I will content myself with one. Take the verb "*to illustrate.*" This is used eleven times in the course of this short pamphlet, and the noun "*illustration*" three times,

Indeed Mr. Bourinot makes "illustrate" a maid of all work. A majority of farmers going west "illustrate" a spirit of restlessness (p. 11); the progress to be expected in the North-West—that is, something non-existent—may be illustrated by the history of Kansas (p. 13); and so on in nine other instances in which "illustrate" is sometimes used correctly, but more often infelicitously, if not ludicrously; as, for instance, on page 10 where we find a sentence commencing thus: "Others illustrate mortgages to the foreign loan companies." One has heard of illustrated magazines, missals, papers, novels, histories, but *illustrated mortgages*!! An illustrated mortgage would be as ludicrous as a dunce parading badges of membership of scientific and literary societies, badges known to the enlightened to be worthless, but which are supposed to convey to the vulgar the idea of literary distinction, badges which are therefore eagerly sought by men who are conscious they are not the thing they wish to appear to be.

The noun *illustration* is used with a like disgusting stupidity. For instance, on p. 26, we read:

"Since 1867 the Dominion *Parliament* have only been called upon to pass some six divorce bills for persons living in the two large provinces of Ontario and Quebec. Nor is it only in the older provinces that we may look for such illustrations of social happiness."

Here note Parliament governing a plural verb. But this by the way. What I desire to ask is: What are the "illustrations of social happiness"? The divorces? If not, what then?

Before passing on from "illustrate," let the reader turn to page 7:

"In the past the victory has been with the United States, and it must be admitted that the world has gained much by the success of the Republic in building up new States through the aid of European emigrants. Canadians themselves are proud of such brilliant *achievements*, and believe that *it illustrates the career of their own country in the immediate future*, if it has anything like fair play in the race on which it has entered."

To what does the first *it* refer? Clearly to achievements which is a plural noun. If to any other word, what botched writing! Note further, that the brilliant achievements of the States illustrate the career of Canada *in the future*. Thus twice in the course of a few pages something not yet come into existence is said to be "illustrated."

To illustrate is to pour light on, to clear away obscurity from, to bring to light, to purify something which exists, with the view of making it more vivid. I may say here that if the word "illustrate" were used



appropriately, its frequent appearance would not call for severe animadversion.

Mr Bourinot, in addition to the letters, he is now entitled to put after his name, may place there M. Q. E., *i e.*,—Murderer of the Queen's English. As he writes himself "*the* Clerk of the Canadian House of Commons" he could—for no one is ever likely to rival him as a writer of bad grammar and slovenly phrases—entitle himself "*the* murderer of the Queen's English."

This gentleman talks of culture. One would like to know what his idea of culture is. Does it include the power of thinking clearly? I suppose he rates himself as a man of culture. If he be it is clear that in order to be a man of culture it is not necessary even to write grammatically. There are men who can talk about culture without pronouncing a satire on themselves, and such men would certainly not rank as cultured a man who could not write his own tongue with precision. They would require more than correctness of expression. They would require perhaps not great original powers of thought, but certainly such powers of thought as by the study of great writers and exercise in dialectics, a man of fair talent may secure. Ought a man who flaunts his membership of learned societies as a parvenu prates about titled acquaintances, and the vulgar bedeck themselves with Lake George diamonds, be able to show some claims to culture? Ought the Secretary of a Royal Society have such powers as are described above? One should think so. Well, here we have doubtless the master effort of Mr. Bourinot's genius. It is the latest. It was produced originally in the pages of an English Review, which once stood high, but which under its present management has lost authority and position. Still it was a field which brought him face to face with the reading world. He would therefore have done his best. Now is there any evidence of power of thought in the pamphlet? There is absolutely none. It bears all the marks and tokens we should expect to find if it had been made up with scissors and paste from the emigration pamphlets. There is no literary flavour about it. There is no largeness of horizon—no breadth. I have done injustice to the emigration pamphlets. What is said above is meant to emphasize the fact that all the information in the article, "*Canada as a Home*" could be got from these pamphlets. In no emigration pamphlet I ever read was there such poverty of expression, nor did I ever find in them anything

to parallel the abject flunkysim, the whining prostration, the whimpering, crouching, beggarly attitude which this man takes up as fit to express the position of a young country of splendid possibilities and boundless resources. Mr. Bourinot writes expressly as a Canadian, and Canadians may feel proud at once of his noble advocacy of their claims, so well calculated to raise their self-respect, and of the idea of the literary men of Canada his writing will have given to Englishmen.

Let us glance for a moment at the evidence of precision of thought and felicity of phrase. See p. 8—

“Considerations of national sympathy for a people who have always been attached to the Empire and its institutions should *theoretically* influence Englishmen to throw the weight of their assistance in favour of Canada.”

*Practically* I suppose these considerations should have no weight.

On pages 8 and 9 we read :—

“Among the emigrants who come yearly into America there is always a proportion of persons with pecuniary means and social tendencies, who desire to live in the vicinity of the towns and older settlements, and who must be more or less prepossessed in favour of a country which offers them educational facilities not surpassed by any country *in some respects*, as well as many luxuries and comforts not attainable except by the rich in older lands. Then, as he looks around, he will soon learn that the public men of the country where he has made his home have perfected a system which enables a *group of people in every section* of the Dominion to educate their children. In this, as in all other respects, conducive to the happiness and prosperity of a people, we shall see that Canada compares most favourable with her powerful neighbours, notwithstanding that they have succeeded, *by their remarkable energy and enterprise, in leaving her far behind in the competition for the wealth and population of the old world.*”

In other parts of the pamphlet he talks as if it was all owing to England's *laches* that the United States got population and wealth. On the elegance of “in some respects” and of “a group of people in every section” it is unnecessary to comment.

At page 10 occurs the following sentence which would indicate that Mr. Bourinot sometimes passed from the feet of Mrs. Camp to gather flowers of eloquence at the plush knees of “Jeames” :—

“One may travel for days by the different lines of railway that intersect this noble province, and see on all sides *comfortable mansions* of stone or brick, and wide stretches of fields of wheat and other crops.”

I need hardly say no man of literary taste would apply the word “mansions” to the comfortable houses of our Ontario yeomanry.

On page 11 we find—

“The majority, however, illustrate that *spirit of restlessness* which is

peculiar to the American character, and send men year by year from New England and the older States, to found homes in the new territories—that very spirit which has built up Illinois and every great common wealth in the West.”

Here spirit which is a singular noun has a plural verb “send.”

On the same page:—

“If his judgment be good, and the country around his imaginary ‘Thebes or Athens’ be inviting, *the waves of population which perpetually flow westward, stop for a time at his ‘location’ and actually verify his dream.*”

Now it would be curious to have it explained to one *how waves of population which PERPETUALLY FLOW westward STOP for a time.*

Mr. Bourinot thinks with so much correctness, and his thoughts on “Canada as a Home” are so elevated and inspiring that he can write on page 13:—

“Already there are indications that the progress of the North-west will be more rapid than that of Ontario, *but all depends on the interest taken by England in its development.*”

The United States got population and wealth by energy. But in the case of Canada which has built mighty Public Works—as respects the progress of her North-west, all depends on the interest taken by England in its development.

Turn to page 15—we read:—

“At an early date in the history of Upper Canada, her public men were carried away by an ambition to make this river the great thoroughfare of the Western region to the ocean, and went into large expenditures for canals, *which the means of so young a country hardly justified.* After the Union of 1840 the same wise policy was carried out, and up to the present time some ten millions of pounds have been expended on the St. Lawrence system of navigation, so that the largest class of lake vessels may float from the upper lakes to the head of ocean navigation, without once breaking bulk. The new Welland Canal, now drawing to completion, is justly described by American writers: ‘*A Titanic work, by which Canadians hope to divert the carrying trade, not only from Buffalo, but even from New York, and to control the exports of the mighty West for more than half the year.*’”

Thus we see that a course which *the means of the country hardly justified* is in another sentence described as *a wise policy.*

The reader will be good enough to note that a country which has displayed all this energy is described as in a helpless condition in the face of a far easier task than building great canals, unless another country takes an interest in it.

On page 16 we read—

“It is said, on good authority, that the Northern Pacific Railway, now

that the United States are entered on a new era of commercial enterprise, will be vigorously carried to completion by 1883."

Here we have the verb *to be* with a neuter verb.

On page 18 occurs this charming bit of writing :—

"The writer drove to the village on a market day, and counted no less than twenty-seven comfortable 'buggies,' and numerous waggons, belonging to the farmers who settled in the forest a quarter of a century or less before, and had now come to sell their surplus produce to the dealers."

Was this the first time they had sold their produce? And *surplus produce* too? Do farmers farm only for their own table? Was the *surplus produce* on this occasion what remained after selling in some other market?

On page 25 :—

"NoStarRonte frauds have ever disgraced the political annals of Canada, and her public men have invariably preserved that reputation for integrity which is a distinguishing trait of English statesmen."

Reputation may be the consequence of a trait in a statesman, but you cannot say it is a trait.

Here we are again. Turn to page 28 :—

"They believe that the story which the Immigration Returns of this continent have told for so many years back will be henceforth one more flattering to the Empire, and that the increasing interest taken in Canada will soon bear rich fruit in the development of her territorial resources."

Thus the story which has been told is in some way to be doctored so as to be more flattering to the Empire.

Turn back to page 5 :—

"So distinguished a writer as Mr. Goldwin Smith since he has become more closely identified with Canada, has never ceased throwing his *douche* of cold water on Canadian aspirations, or advocating that 'Continental system' which, once carried out, would eventually make the Dominion a member of the American Union."

Our author evidently thinks that Mr. Goldwin Smith, before he became connected with Canada, expressed views on the Empire and Canada different from those he has promulgated since he took up his residence amongst us. His sin, if sin it were, seems to have consisted in trying to stimulate Canadian aspirations, in the direction of "national expansion," of which Mr. Bourinot approves. (*see page 27.*)

One word as to Mr. Bourinot's consistency. On page 3 we read :—

"The fact that during fifteen months ending on the 30th of September last, nearly nine hundred thousand immigrants, largely drawn from Great Britain and Ireland, arrived in the United States, can hardly be regarded with satis-

*faction by those Englishmen and Colonists who wish to see the waste places of the Empire filled up by an industrious population."*

Turn on page 6 :—

*"It is undoubtedly a matter of pride to Canadians that a kindred people should in the course of a century of national existence have made such remarkable material, as well as intellectual progress."*

Now look at page 7 :—

*"In the past the victory has been with the United States, and it must be admitted that the world has gained much by the success of the Republic in building up new States through the aid of European emigrants. Canadians themselves are proud of such brilliant achievements, and believe that it illustrates the career of their country in the immediate future, if it has anything like fair play in the race on which it has entered."*

Again on page 27 :—

*"A few words in conclusion as to the future of a country whose progress not only illustrates the energy but the social elevation of the people. The Confederation is only in its infancy, and yet it is proving its capacity for national expansion."*

But we saw above that all depends on the *interest England* may take in us. We have been told that the past history of the States indicates what the future of Canada is to be, and that the Confederation is proving its capacity for *national expansion*. National expansion, if it means anything, means rising to the force and dignity of a nation. Well on page 28 we read :—

*"Imperial connection is still the motive power in Canadian legislation ; and though changes may be demanded in years to come more commensurate with that higher position Canada must occupy in a not very distant future, yet there is every reason to believe that those changes can be made so as to give greater strength to the Empire, and at the same time open up a wider field to the ambition of the Canadian people. Perhaps the time may come when the Imperial State will find in the Federal system of the Canadian provinces a constitutional solution which will settle many national difficulties and give that unity to the Empire which it now certainly has not. Such a solution may be only the dream of enthusiasts ; and yet there are not a few men already, both in the parent State and its dependencies, whose aspirations take so patriotic a direction."*

Here we have Mr. Blake's hobby horse of Imperial Federation. If Imperial Federation were the desired ultimate destiny of the Empire, a Canadian *National Spirit* is the last thing that would be desirable. If a National Spirit becomes strong, active, pervasive, Canada will become a nation, and if she becomes a nation, she will have to work out her destiny as a nation.

And now to see Mr. Bourinot "fall flat" as Caliban says :

On page 29 our author cries :—

*"But it is in the 'living present' that Canada has now the deepest interest."*

*Her future mainly rests on the readiness with which the people of the parent State respond to her appeal in this crisis of her history.* It will indeed be disheartening to her if her fidelity to British connection should only be rewarded by the spectacle of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, Irishmen and Scotchmen yearly giving the preference to a country whose increasing greatness is being continually contrasted with Canadian weakness by the advocates of the Continental idea.

Poor Canada ! Poor Canadians ! if "*the Clerk*" of your House of Commons speak your ideas. Five millions of men with one of the richest countries in the world, and their future rests on something outside themselves !

Note, in passing, the use of "*now*" and "*living present*."

Here is a definition of the sense in which he uses the word *national* (p 7):—

"It is to such men Canada looks for sympathy and assistance in the national work in which she is now engaged ; for that work may well be called *national* which consists in developing the resources of an important dependency with no other or higher aspirations than to strengthen and draw closer, if possible, the bonds in connection between the parent State and the Dominion."

Now this is very like saying that that force may well be called centrifugal which is intensely centripetal.

What the writer means it is hard to say. All that is certain is that he cannot blow hot and cold, and that if he talks sense when he talks *imperialism*, he must talk nonsense when he talks *nationalism* and *vice versa*.

Mr. Bourinot is Honorary Secretary to the Royal Society of Canada. This Society it appears is divided into sections, and one of the sections is consecrated to literature. I suppose it is as a "literary man" that Mr. Bourinot is connected with this Society. Nothing could more clearly show the absurdity of a Society for the encouragement of literature than that a dunce should be its first Honorary Secretary. Young Canadians will work hard at College, they will give their days and nights to Addison and Macaulay, fired with the ambition to swim in the same tub with literary small-fry like Mr. Bourinot !

A Royal Society of Literature was once established in England. By the munificence of the King it was enabled to offer a prize of one hundred guineas for the best essay in prose, and fifty guineas for the best poem which should be transmitted to it. Did this Society bring forward a single man of genius ? The men who founded it were very

different men from those who stand as sponsors to the Royal Society of Canada. I make no remarks on the scientific branch of this Society. Scientific attainments may be measured as you would measure a yard of cloth. Not so artistic ability. I make no remarks on the scientific men who are connected with it as scientific men. But I say there is connected with it but four names of any respectability in literature, and the owner of one—a great name—must have allowed it to be used out of complaisance unless he has changed the opinions of a lifetime, and his vigour of thought has begun to decline, and of this last I see no evidence. I allude to Mr. Goldwin Smith, who is not likely, I think, to take much interest in such an institution.

The words which a great man applied to the Royal Society of Literature in England are doubly applicable here in Canada. Macaulay, speaking of the founders of the institution, said: "Their motives, I am willing to believe, were laudable." Then he adds: "But I feel, and it is the duty of every literary man to feel, a strong jealousy of their proceedings. *Their society can be innocent only while it continues to be despicable.* Should they ever possess the power to encourage merit, they must also possess the power to depress it. Which power will be more frequently exercised, let every one who has studied literary history, let every one who has studied human nature declare."

Macaulay, having shown that envy and faction insinuate themselves into all communities, but especially into literary academies, points out the chief reason why a literary academy must be a nuisance. The principles of literary criticism, though equally fixed with those on which scientific men proceed, are not equally recognized. "Men are rarely able to assign a reason for their approbation or dislike on questions of taste; and therefore they willingly submit to any guide who boldly asserts his claim to superior discernment. It is more difficult to ascertain and establish the merits of a poem than the powers of a machine or the benefits of a new remedy. *Hence it is in literature, that quackery is most easily puffed and excellence most easily decried.*"

Macaulay proceeds:—

"In some degree this argument applies to academies of the fine arts; and it is fully confirmed by all that I have ever heard of that institution which annually disfigures the walls of Somerset House with an acre of spoiled canvas. *But a literary tribunal is incomparably more dangerous.* Other societies, at least, have no tendency to call forth any opinions on those subjects which most agitate and inflame the minds of men. \* \* \* Literature

is and always must be inseparably blended with politics and theology; it is the great engine which moves the feelings of the people on the most momentous questions. It is therefore, impossible, that any society can be formed so impartial as to consider the literary character of an individual abstracted from the opinions which his writings inculcate. \* \* \* The consequences are evident. The honours and censures of this Star Chamber of the Muses will be awarded according to the prejudices of the particular sect or faction which may at the time predominate. Whigs would canvas against a Southey, Tories against a Byron. Those who might at first protest against such conduct as unjust would soon adopt it on the plea of retaliation; and the general good of literature, for which the Society was professedly instituted, would be forgotten in the stronger claims of political and religious partiality."

How true! But if true in England where party feeling is comparatively mild, how much more cogent is it here where party feeling pervades everything, and is so strong and bitter? Is it not a fact that some of the men who appeared as the first members of this Royal Society of Canada canvassed themselves into it? Is it not a fact that men complained to politicians that they were likely to be left out, that thereupon the politicians represented the matter in a certain quarter, and the complainants were duly enrolled as members of this right royal and right honourable body?

But let us hear Macaulay farther:—

"Yet even this is not the worst. Should the institution ever acquire any influence it will afford most pernicious facilities to every *malignant coward who may desire to blast a reputation which he envies*. It will furnish a secure ambushade behind which the Maroons of literature may take a certain and deadly aim. \* \* \* The advantages of an open and those of an anonymous attack would be combined; and the authority of avowal would be united to the security of concealment. \* \* \* Everything that is grovelling and venemous, everything that can hiss, and everything that can sting, would take sanctuary in the recesses of this new temple of wisdom."

I don't know whether Mr. Bourinot is envious or venemous, whether it is his nature to hiss or sting, but we have seen something of what he can do in the way of grovelling.

But Macaulay has more to say—

"The French academy was of all such associations the most widely and the most justly celebrated. It was founded by the greatest of ministers; it was patronized by successive Kings; it numbered in its lists most of the eminent French writers, yet what benefit has literature derived from its labours? What is its history but an uninterrupted record of servile compliances—of paltry artifices—of deadly quarrels—of perfidious friendships? Whether governed by the Court, by the Sorbonne, or by the Philosophers, it was always equally powerful for evil and equally impotent for good. I might speak of the attacks by which it attempted to depress the rising fame of Corneille—"

Macaulay then proceeds to give equally striking instances of its power for evil.

But if a Society composed of the foremost French writers—men



whose minds were stored with the thoughts of the great spirits of the past—men who wrote their own language with purity, force, and elegance, did harm—what may we not expect from a Society composed of men like the author of this pamphlet, who have hardly the merest smattering of literature, and who write their own tongue with the grammatical elegance of a scullion?

How is the Society of which Mr. Bourinot is Secretary, to promote the interests of literature? Will they give prizes? Who ever heard of a prize poem worth anything? Will they hold out to aspiring genius, the prospect of being stied with Mr. Bourinot and such as he?

And what about political influence? The Society will by and by want a grant. Under the sacred name of literature, is a Society to be formed which will infallibly become a donkey-engine of party?

We have seen that this Society can do no good to literature. I hope no grant will be given to it. If it is endowed, the money will be worse than lost, and the Canadian taxpayer will have the pleasure of knowing he has contributed to an institution where literary quacks may puff themselves, and betitle themselves, and belittle others, and dance to their hearts' content while the public pays the piper.

I cannot conclude without congratulating the Government on having passed a Civil Service Reform Bill, which requires some test to be applied to those seeking admiscion to the Service. Never again, I hope will a man so illiterate as Mr. Bourinot, a man who could not at this moment pass an examination for a third class clerkship, climb or crawl to the position of "*the Clerk of the Canadian House of Commons.*" It is not creditable to Canada. It is not creditable to the House of Commons. It is not creditable to the Civil Service. The position is not a very high one. But it is one too high for a literary charlatan.



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