

Communications.

THE RAILWAY.

To the Editor of the Gleaner,

SIR.—I shall trouble you with another letter on railway matters, which now appears to be engrossing public attention to a very large extent; and although I do not intend to answer all the foul and false charges against the North, by many writers of the South, still, I hope you will permit me to compare the natural resources of the Northern and Southern sections of the Province, that strangers and others may draw their own conclusions. In doing so, I shall endeavour not to mislead, but to impart such information as will bear the scrutinizing test of impartial judges. It has been said by some of the writers of the south, "that the influence of a military clique in England, with an interested one in Nova Scotia, might perhaps deprive the Province of a railroad, and give it to the interminable rocks and wilds which compose the North Shore route." Whilst others endeavour to show that a railway would be quite as safe along the American frontier as at a distance of 150 miles by the northern route, for no part of the northern route is nearer the American frontier than the distance named, until you arrive at River de Loup, on the St. Lawrence. But clear and apart from anything touching a military point of view, and taking the railway up as a commercial project, and on that head I think I can show, that the south will bear no comparison with the north. Let me ask any commercial character, or any person understanding the principles of trade, to define the future prospects of a trade arising by the Valley of the St. John, further than the carrying trade passing through it or over it; all of which would apply, were it a barren waste. I am aware that these ideas may appear strange, and perhaps offensive to many of our southern statesmen and writers, and they will exultingly and triumphantly point to the great lumber trade of the upper St. John. Now, what does all that amount to? Virtually to about as much as a bucket of water poured into the great river St. John to raise a freshet. A mere "water trade" to anything approaching that of a railway traffic; and I thank the Reporter for the comparison. Does the people of St. John not know that the principal part of their lumber is got off the American Territory, at an exorbitant duty, and that they are wholly dependent on the whims and caprices of their over-reaching neighbours. And does any person at all acquainted with the lumber trade, not know that it is of that shadowy, fleeting nature, that a few short years must cause it to become extinct. And admitting that the lumber trade should be an object; then will the north compare favourably with the south; and I doubt not but the river Restigouche alone would turn out more lumber for milling purposes than could be found on the river St. John, clear of American territory. But we may be told that there are great mineral resources in the south, and likewise of its great agricultural capabilities. But are there no mineral resources in the north to equal that of the south? And as to agriculture; let agricultural reports, and a view of the harvest fields of the north, speak for themselves. Nay, further—any person who will take the trouble to consult Professor Johnson's Report, can satisfy their mind on that head, as to the quality of land in the north for agricultural purposes. But besides all this, the north has one inexhaustible treasure to overwhelm anything and everything that can be brought to bear against it from the south—and that is—its Fisheries. Commanding as it does one of the greatest fishing coasts known in the world, with harbours and bays all along the coast, suitable for all kinds of craft, to carry on a trade that may hereafter amount to millions of pounds yearly; and a large portion of which trade is at present wafted away to foreign countries, and which our friends of the south know nothing about. This trade, if properly cultivated, would prove of more intrinsic value than all the present trade of New Brunswick twice told. Let any person examine the Fish trade of other countries, and observe the value they set on such trade, and contrast their chances with the magnificent field open on the northern shores of New Brunswick and Canada, and then coolly and calmly sit down and fathom the future greatness that may be in store for the North American Colonies. Limited indeed must be the ideas of any writer or politician of what constitutes a railway traffic, when they set forth the traffic of St. John, the traffic of Fredericton; nay, if the present traffic of the whole Province was concentrated into a corner, to suppose that it would be any inducement for a great trunk line of railway to deviate out of its course 20 miles to obtain it all, it would scarce be an inducement in Britain, yet no inducement in the Colonies; for it should be borne in mind, and distinctly understood, that what will apply to old settled countries, will not apply to a young country full of natural resources, yet void of population.

Here the picture has to be reversed. Here the material exists for a great nation, and requires but the stimulant to cause it to arise like some magic tale. In old settled countries you see everything developed, and no chance for any mighty improvements. Why, the northern

NEW WORKS.

From the Quarterly Review.

ADMIRAL BLAKE.

Robert Blake, Admiral and General at Sea. Based on State and Family Papers. By Hepworth Dixon.

We heartily wish that the attention of our men of letters was more directed than it is to the ancient and valuable art of Biography.—There is no branch of literature which does more good or communicates more pleasure; for there is none that so completely appeals to the two passions which make literature popular—the love of knowledge—and the love of amusement. These have a joint gratification in a thoroughly good 'Life,' where some important section of the history of the world is dramatically embodied in one figure, and we are made to pass through great events, in good company, and almost with the emotions of a contemporary. Accordingly, one of the few classical authors who has domesticated himself among the moderns is the pleasant and garrulous Plutarch. He has managed to get letters of naturalization among us, and to escape the popular terror attached to the name of Greek. Probably, too, that incomparable biography, the 'Agricola,' is more read than any other work of Tacitus—though the general world, we fear, will have to wait long for a translation that shall do justice to its pregnant epigram and its brilliant colours. Every day we may see something analogous going on with respect to our native authors. Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets' is outliving his 'London,' while Boswell is tending to supplant the Doctor himself.—Southey's 'Nelson' bids fair to be read by generations almost ignorant of the name of his 'Thalaba.' Middleton's 'Cicero' is at least talked of yet, which is more than can be said for his essays on ecclesiastical history, or his controversies with Bentley. In short, a great many encouraging circumstances may be pointed out to the biographer; and if he does not find readers, it is in his case, more than in the case of the historian or poet, his own fault. The modern biographer, we fear, has many defects. He is almost invariably too long; he is deficient in perspective—in giving harmony to his proportions; he is negligent of reality, disinclined to conceive of past life as of something that once lived and breathed as surely and warmly as any thing we see now. But it must be admitted, after all, that his task is a hard one.—A great biographer ought to be at once philosopher and painter—to have a genius for science, and a genius for art. If he cannot duly measure his hero, his opinions are worthless; if he cannot duly describe him, he has lost his style.—The union is rare of that open, candid, loving nature which leads a man to a right choice of a subject, with the gravity of intellect and grace of art necessary to the execution of it. But a right study of the great models would vastly improve biography as it exists among us at present; and would at least prevent its being attempted by many who seem to take to it from an inspiration merely mechanical. One conspicuous feature of the present state of the art is what we may call its sign-post character. A biographer takes up soldier or poet, saint or king, without any reference to his peculiar qualifications for portraiture, as a poor Dick Tinto executes with equal indifference an Admiral Keppel, a Royal Oak, or a Saracen's Head.

Mr Hepworth Dixon, the author of the Life of the famous man before us, has got into the right track in spite of the confusion which prevails on the subject. He is what the Sunday Acts call a bona fide traveller to his goal. He likes the Commonwealth men, and the dominant ideas of the seventeenth century; and having drawn Penn, who was a child of that age, it was natural that he should proceed to draw Blake who was one of the heroes of it.—To be sure, Mr Dixon is not a sailor, and a nautical reviewer of a stern turn might be inclined to make him pay his footing afloat, according to the rough old custom in crossing the line. But if Blake himself, from a landsman of middle age, became a great seaman, why should not Mr Dixon become, in a similar way, a seaman's biographer? He has executed his work well,—with industry, with vigor, with kind manly sympathy. Remembering our obligations to him, we are unwilling to dwell on the points on which we differ. His style, once somewhat turgid, improves in his later works. His opinions are entitled to respect from their sincerity, though our sentiments on several points are not his. We cannot, for instance, be expected to believe of Charles the First, that 'origin was bad.' Such is not our way of thinking about the royal and noble blood of Europe. On the other hand, we respect as much as Mr Dixon, the great and good men produced among the Puritans. We acknowledge the benefits which accrued to the nation from the conflict between Charles and his Parliament, but we have an equally strong belief that it was a good thing for England, that much of what the country party aimed at, destroying survived its hostility. We have always admired the remark of Coleridge, that what makes the Civil War a pleasant object of study is that we can read of the struggle, and yet respect both sides. And this is one of several

characteristic of the movement which distinguishes it from the revolutions of later times, a distinction that must be carefully kept in mind when we argue in our days for the precedents of the seventeenth century.

There is one fact about the stirring old Cavalier and Roundhead days which makes them excellent material for the historical writer. It may seem fanciful, but it is certainly true, that poetry disappeared out of our politics with those events. They were the last of the romantic epochs,—the borderland between old feudal England and modern busy practical England. Compare the picture raised in the mind by the mention of the age of Charles with that of the age of Anne for example,—pleasant and clever as the latterage undoubtedly was. A certain elevation of view and generous force of mind marks the men of the earlier period,—the Falklands, the Pembroke, the Northhamptons, the Richmonds, or the Hampdens, the Blakes, the Vanes. The objects contended for are nobler and higher. The poetry they read is fresher, sweeter, more lyrical. We have Herrick and Suckling instead of Prior and Gay. The Anne men always come to the mind, associated with town life,—routs, drums, coffee, china, wit, and sarcasm, and scandal. Their wigs are prosaic compared with their grandfathers' love-locks; their cocked hats vulgar compared with the steeple-hats, past which bullets whistled at Marston Moor. Mention one such name as this last, and forthwith the memory of a reading man teems with mounted grange and galloping dragoons, buff-coat and bandolier. A file of muskets glitters behind the green hedge; a flag rises on the deserted tower. Quaint, pretty, clever, are the words suggested by the Queen Anne scene,—romantic, generous, picturesque, by the Commonwealth one. It would seem as if all systems made a grand display just before their termination. Old England had one gala day of it,—of Chivalry in her Cavaliers, of piety in her Roundheads,—before settling down to modern business, and transmitting her beliefs and sentiments into new forms. A line divides her public life, about the time that Oliver sunk into his grave. Beyond that line we see our ancestors tinged with a certain hue of romance, which we can scarcely claim for ourselves. We can enjoy a ballad about their doings, written by a Scott or a Browning, but poetry at present keeps remarkably clear of the 'business of the Session.' It is a difference like that between the old portraits of Vandyke, and the modern portraits of a gentleman, of which we have a yearly supply. A consciousness of this change is not to make us undervalue the real inherited worth, which lives now in plainer garments and does duller work; and romance and poetry exist for the individual for ever, be the changes in public life what they may. We are only pointing out a natural transition in its connection with literature; and we believe that Mr Dixon's book owes much to the fact, that a period like that of our Civil War is intrinsically favorable to biography from its romantic character.

Robert Blake, destined as General and Admiral to play such an important part in that period, was a Somersetshire man. He was of a good landed family there, said by a tradition in the branch still existing to have come originally from Northumberland. A speculative person might attribute his marked nautical genius to the blood of those old Danes who set sail from the Baltic, under the Raven, ages ago. What is certain, however, at present, is only that the Admiral's ancestor, Humphrey Blake, possessed the Manor of Tuxwell, in the Reign of Henry the Eighth. By a process, quite common among what old Fuller calls the 'middling-sized' gentry, the Blakes took to merchandise in Bridgewater, which town had the honour of producing the man who made them famous, about the end of August, 1598—the year before the birth of Cromwell. He was the eldest son of Humphrey Blake, gentleman and merchant, by Sarah Williams of Plansfield, co-heiress of a good knightly family of the county. It was precisely from this class—persons of gentle blood, yet average fortune and position—that the great men of Blake's party came.

(To be Continued.)

THE HEBREW.

The word Hebrew signifies Transjordanus, he that cometh from the other side, namely, of the river Euphrates, and is supposed to have been given to Abraham on his arrival in Canaan. The word Palestine signifies the Land of the Emigrant. How prophetically symbolic are the names Hebrew and Palestine! They both indicate that not one man alone was to be a wandering Jew, but that every Jew was condemned to be more or less an exile and a pilgrim.—Perpetually is the Israelite a man that cometh from the other side, far, far off, and every land that his foot toucheth is to him the Land of the Emigrant, where he hath no continuing place of abode. His doom is tragical: let us weep over it.—The Critic.

A "coffin," says an Irishman, "is the house a man lives in when he is dead."

Work as though thou wert to live ever; worship as though thou wert to die presently.

If thou wouldst live happily, ne'er trust to good fortune nor sink under bad.

steadily hazardous to step. As I walked on I heard the voice of Kate in expostulation.

"Do be careful, Alfred. Look at the gap just before you. Come down, I beg!"

I laughed, and prepared to spring across.

"Alfred," she exclaimed, "for my sake!"

But to show myself fearless in her eyes was my greatest incentive. I cleared the gap, triumphantly pursued my way on the wall, and skirted a projecting turret which hid me from her view. I continued till I had made the entire circuit of the building; then let myself down by a dilapidated arch, on the ledge of which I stood. I was examining the best means of further descent, when I heard the voices of my cousins. They had not been able to follow my windings, and were quite unaware that I was so near them. The descent was very difficult, and I was again obliged to halt. It was Eliza Jane's voice that I heard now. She seemed to be reading. When she paused there was an exclamation apparently of incredulity from Dorothea and Kate. I was compelled by my position to hear what they said.

"But here's the letter, with the American postmark on it," resumed Eliza Jane. "See, the stamp is not circular, like the London one, but oblong."

"Simpleton!" cried Kate with military sternness, "who would waste time upon the stamp of a letter when its news is so important?"

"Not so simple as she seems," remarked Dorothea tartly. "That air of trifling which permits her to make what advances she likes, and to retreat, if need be, on the plea of childishness, is capital diplomacy. I'm ashamed of you, Eliza Jane. You suspected it all along, and yet allowed me to—to be—that is, to run the risk of being—led away by my feelings; but I wasn't."

"No, my dear. I would insure your prudence against all risks from your heart at a very moderate premium."

"Thank you, Katherine Hewerdine. It becomes you to talk," retorted Dorothea. "You could not fail on your arrival here to see where his bias lay; the ground was pre-occupied, but you didn't scruple to invade it. Well, its a fine prize that you've captured. I didn't think it worth retaining; you're very welcome to it, cousin Kate."

"You similes are incoherent, Miss Wallis," replied Kate, "and your accusations absurd. You know well that I never flattered him, but told him frankly of his faults."

"Yes, at first, just to stimulate him, and to make your recent demonstrations more telling by contrast."

"Demonstrations! My dear love, you are really exposing your own tactics too freely. No, I'm not at all angry. There's a time of life, I admit, when a woman who will be married, *coute qui coute*, has neither an hour to spare nor a ruse to throw away."

Here Eliza Jane appeared as pacificator.—"Mamma, she said, had told her that matrimony was now out of the question."

"Of course," echoed Kate and Dorothea simultaneously.

"Then, why should we quarrel?" pursued Eliza Jane. "As mamma says, girls must be prudent and not let their chances escape; but, for my part, I always thought cousin Alfred too much in the clouds."

"Clouds indeed!" exclaimed Dorothea. "He hasn't a particle of fancy. He takes metaphor *au pied de la lettre*, and works as hard at a complement as if it were a sum in arithmetic."

"He has seen nothing of life," interposed Kate; "but there's the making of a very tolerable man in him, if he were well taken in hand."

Dorothea laughed sardonically. "I advise you to undertake the task; you're particularly well qualified for taming savages."

"Let me tell you, Dorothea," replied Kate, in a cold, measured tone, "there's more hope of a savage like cousin Alfred than of some more civilized products. He's vain, I grant, but good-natured; sentimental, but not insincere; often ridiculous from want of *savoir faire*, but never despicable from want of heart. How much more respectable, after all, than many persons who have had greater advantages! You know the class I mean, love; interested and avaricious to the core, but all warmth and candor on the surface; people who, by an artificial system, can force smiles as gardeners force winter flowers,—who, by a private method of hydraulics, can convert ice into tears at a moment's notice,—whose worldliness never lets them be led away by one genuine feeling, but whose vanity makes them as absurd as if they were the slaves of impulse."

Such, or to such import, were the words which cousin Kate addressed to cousin Dorothea. The latter, I think, winced a little, for her rejoinder was not immediate. At last she said, "You would have succeeded on the stage, dear."

(To be Continued.)

Why is an old chair with a new bottom like a paid bill? Because it is reseated!

Why can't a captain keep a memorandum of the weight of his anchor, instead of weighing it every time he leaves port?

Let friendship creep gently to an height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath.