

## MONTREAL LETTER.

SUNDAY the thirteenth instant was a red-letter day in the calendar of a Church which suffers from no great poverty of red-letter days. The fact that it was the feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, and also that of the patron saint of His Grace Archbishop Fabre, lent to the ceremonies of the occasion less of pomp and solemnity than the fact that a special service of Thanksgiving was to be held to commemorate the amalgamation of the two Catholic Schools of Medicine, Laval and Victoria. An imposing procession of bishops, clergy, professors and students followed His Grace from the Seminary to the Church of Notre Dame, and took their appointed seats in presence of an enormous multitude of spectators. His Grace ascended the throne of state; High Mass was performed; sermons and addresses were delivered, whose burden was the new constitution recently granted for Montreal by His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII.; and the expected attitude of the faithful was clearly announced. A formal declaration of Roman Catholic principles and doctrines with their relation and application to science was read, His Grace signifying his allegiance to it by reverently placing his lips upon the paper. The Professors in turn then followed the holy example of the Archbishop, and the sacred benediction of the Church was breathed upon the united schools.

In the schools, however, all had not gone so smoothly. The Papal decree which bade the schools be united had omitted to add the word *fused*. The arrangements for the inauguration of the union of the two Faculties had but fanned the embers of opposition, and although the ceremony was graced by the presence of the Archbishop, Abbés, Superiors, and officials of high and low degree, the flame insisted upon flickering into active combustion. In spite of the episcopal blessing, and notwithstanding a few venerable tears in the eyes of His Grace, the students of Victoria rose in the midst of the proceedings, and with unflattering shouts and unruly song marched out of the hall, cheering for their own *Alma Mater*. Next day as a Laval professor made for his class-room in Victoria he was met by a representative of the students who asked him to desist from his intention. The gentleman showed no immediate acquiescence in the request of the students, and the representative of the sons of *Æsculapius* then warned him that the students within were armed with weapons which should most certainly convert them into sons of Mars. Thereupon the professor produced from an interior pocket of his mantle of learning what is popularly known as a "seven-shooter," and added to the threat of the revolver the assurance that it, too, should most certainly be put to a practical test if the circumstances should demand, or even justify it. Entering his class-room, the learned gentleman proceeded to his desk, and, amidst the most terrific shouting and rhythmic accompaniment of heavy boots, delivered himself, if not of his lecture, at least of his intention to lecture.

In the evening the Staff of Laval held a conference on the situation, at which it was agreed to request the Staff of Victoria to take such steps as should control their students and reconcile them to a more peaceful attitude. In the Victoria class-rooms the students demanded of their professors an explanation of the arrangement entered into between the two Schools. The information given was couched in words of advice to stand up for their privileges and vindicate their rights by petition. Lecture rooms were barricaded. Professors were accosted with hisses, hootings, and other insulting and threatening demeanour. Students smoked, sang, beat the dust out of the learned floors, and unanimously declined to be present at High Mass when the blessing of Heaven was invoked upon the auspicious amalgamation. The students of Laval met in righteous disgust, and passed a resolution requesting that they might have their lectures in their own quarters. The two Faculties held a midnight conference, and agreed that the joint Secretaries should attend, and inscribe the names of all students willing to be enrolled in the register of Laval University as composed of the two amalgamated schools, and decided that only such students as should provide themselves with authority for admission were to be permitted to enter the halls. A small number enrolled their names, and the Faculties, proceeding upon the assumption that non-enrollment was actual withdrawal from the University, charged the janitors of the College to be guided accordingly.

The majority of the students, resolving that they would accept no card of admission which bore the stamp of Laval, marched in a body to the college, struck terror into the hearts of all opposing janitors, and declared themselves masters of the situation. Lectures of Laval professors were declined with thanks. Those from Victorians were received with cheers. An announcement from the Vice-Rector that the lectures would be resumed in the old quarters of Laval brought the public interest to white heat. At the appointed hour the first lecturers, instead of appearing at the old quarters, proceeded to Victoria where the students were assembled, justifying their action upon the persuasion that their character would be infringed by their lecturing outside their own walls. An official explanation made to the students reminded them that the Victoria School had always declared its readiness to unite with Laval provided its own charter were preserved, and as the present arrangement secured all that the Victorians had fought for, and as the Montreal Laval is practically independent of the one in Quebec, it was now the duty of the professors and students of Victoria to accept the union.

Meetings and counter-meetings have been held, faculties, professors, and students are equally exercised. A short delay has been granted for a study of the situation, and it is confidently expected that all obstacles to complete union, if not to perfect fusion, may be overcome. The new university cannot be self-supporting, and it remains to be seen which of the Catholic corporations will come to its aid, and, of course, to its control. The probability lies between the Sulpicians and the Jesuits, with, perhaps, a turn in favour of the former on account of its superior wealth.

VILLE MARIE.

## PERDITA.

"If a maiden's fame be lost  
Mother, will the fear it cost,  
And the sorrow and the pain,  
Buy her honour back again?"  
"Ah no, my dear,  
Not here, not here!"

"Will no penance she can do  
Make her spirit white all through,  
With the purity she had  
Ere her sinning made her sad?"  
"Ah no, my dear,  
Not here, not here!"

"In the earth-mould at her side  
Will not death her sorrow hide,  
'Till the children lisp her name  
And the world forget her shame?"  
"Ah no, my dear,  
Not here, not here!"

"If she sorrow till she die  
Will the angels pass her by,  
Mother, mother, have I none  
Who will think the deed undone?"  
"Ah yes, my dear,  
One here, one here!"

F. G. SCOTT.

## A NOTABLE HYMNIST.

THERE has recently passed away at his quiet country home in Nova Scotia, full of years and honours, if not of more tangible rewards, a man in many respects one of the most remarkable this country has produced. It seems only fitting that some mention should be made in these columns of one whose position in our literature was as unique as his personality was striking and distinct. In my school-boy days I was wont to attend many missionary meetings, not because I felt any profound personal interest in such religious functions, but because my mother desired my services as escort. As a rule, they seemed in my crude judgment a rather dull form of entertainment. There were occasional bright cases, however, when I felt rewarded for the performance of filial duty by something more than the sweet satisfaction one is supposed always to derive from being virtuous. Of such a gratification I was made sure, if among those upon the platform I observed a form and face that could hardly fail to attract attention anywhere. The form was tall and spare, but sinewy and vigorous, while the marked stoop of the broad shoulders spoke unmistakably of long vigils at the student's desk. The face was that of one who had lived and toiled through three-score years at least, until the abundant hair was whitening fast and the furrows were ploughed in deep. From behind gold-bowed glasses two brilliant eyes looked keenly about them, and the mobile, expressive lips moved often, as though impatient to deliver their message. When the time to speak came there was no hesitation, no long-drawn introduction, but a sudden rush of words that commanded your attention at once, and thenceforward there was no fear of its wandering from the speaker. Shrewd mother-wit, unhackneyed pathos, unforced eloquence, profound erudition, thrilling dramatic fervour, these were the qualities that made Silas T. Rand, the Mic-mac missionary of Nova Scotia, an ever-welcome figure at the missionary meeting.

A few lines of biography will help to a better understanding of this remarkable man. Born in a log cabin in the year 1810, the fifth in a double family of twenty-two children, his father a poor farmer, his mother dead when he was but two years old, the early outlook could hardly have seemed more unpromising. Yet there were moments of hope. The mother had been a woman of extraordinary mental vigour, and, considering her circumstances, of surprising general intelligence. She had eagerly devoured all the best literature to which she could gain access. Pope, Young, Gray, Milton, Addison, Steele and Johnson were well known to her. She had even tried her hand at poetry, and shrunk not from essaying the stately hexameter. These tastes and talents were transmitted to her boy, and soon as he could read his passion for books was insatiable. The cross-roads school is his only source of education until he reaches manhood, but he makes the most of it, and studies hard at night, although the day is full of toilsome tasks. At twenty-three he begins the study of Latin at the Wolfville Academy, but can only spare one month for it, and has to resume the mason's hammer and trowel he had so lately laid aside. That is his last experience of schooling. Thenceforward he is self-taught. But just consider his record. Having discovered that he could master Latin without a teacher, he determined to attack

other languages. In one week from the day that he took up the Syriac alphabet he could with little difficulty translate the New Testament in that difficult tongue. His next victory was over Hebrew. Then followed, in astonishing succession, Greek, both ancient and modern, French, German, Italian, Spanish and others to the number of thirteen in all. Moreover, this knowledge was no mere superficial smattering. It was critical and thorough, as the acceptance of articles in the French language by leading Paris periodicals abundantly proves.

But his greatest achievement in this direction remains yet to be mentioned. His heart was moved by the spiritual destitution of the Mic-mac Indians of Nova Scotia. Mainly at his own risk and expense he went among them as a missionary some forty years ago. Not only did he seek to save their souls from perdition, but to rescue their language from oblivion. Enduring every possible form of privation, persevering in the face of every imaginable obstacle, he toiled away with the zeal of a Judson for souls and of a John Eliot for words. The success of the spiritual side of his work can hardly be measured here, but of the philological side there is sufficient evidence in a collection of no less than 40,000 Mic-mac words, from which a dictionary is now being prepared and printed at the cost of the Government of Canada.

Remarkable as this record is it does not exhaust Dr. Rand's (for the universities conferred upon him both D.D. and LL.D.) achievements. There is another phase yet, and it is of this I desire to write more particularly. Latin was his first love, and it remained his favourite tongue. Of mediæval Latin hymnology he made a thorough study. About twenty years ago he made his first attempt at translating hymns into Latin, beginning with Lyte's beautiful "Abide with me," which he sought to render into the measure of classical hexameter. "Then," to quote his own words, "I studied the hymnology of the earlier and middle ages of the Christian Church. I learned the reasons why the writers of Gospel hymns deserted the old heathen masters of song. New hopes, new thoughts and aspirations could not be shackled by the arbitrary and unnatural restraints of heathen classics. The new wine could not be confined in the old, worn-out bottles. It burst the bottles without being itself lost, but gaining much by the change. Charmed as I had always been by the majesty and splendour of the Latin tongue, I was enraptured on reading it when it rolled forth the music and the melody of Jehovah's praise. Claiming to be somewhat of a poet, and having seen attempts at the translation of some of our beautiful evangelical hymns into Latin, according to the rules of English prosody, I made several attempts of the same kind. The exercise affording me much pleasure, and receiving commendation from those whose judgment I had cause to esteem, I have continued the work from time to time as opportunities could be obtained, occasionally sending one to the press, until my present collection amounts to over a hundred."

This collection, put forth in a tiny brown-covered volume entitled "Hymni Recentes Latini: Translationes et Originales," and published by S. Selden, Halifax, Nova Scotia, is now before me, and I shall try my best to convey some idea of the richness of its contents, albeit its appearance is so modest. To take first that hymn which he tells us was his first essay, viz.: "Abide With Me." His version in classical hexameter form begins thus:

Mecum habita, Domine! ultima labitur hora diei:  
Quam tenebras condensantur! Tu mecum habitato!  
Deficiunt adjutores; atque omnia grata;  
Tu, qui non spernes inopes, O mecum habitato!

The version after the method of modern prosody runs much more easily, and commends itself more quickly to the ear on that account, although the quality of the work is the same. This is the first verse:

Maneto mecum, vespere properat,  
Maneto Domine, tenebrescat:  
Absint auxilia, et dulcia;  
Tu, Soter inopum, O mecum sta!

It will be noticed in this second version, as also in the other examples that follow, that in both rhyme and rhythm there is an unfailing correspondence between the original and the translation, so that one may sing the Latin words to the same music as the English. Here is "Nearer, my God, to Thee":

Propius, O Deus mi, propius ad Te.  
Etiam si crux erit quae tollat me:  
Canam continue—  
Mi Deus, prope Te;  
Propius, O Deus mi, propius ad Te.

It is of course impossible in an article of this kind to do more than present a few brief illustrations of the doctor's work, but so faithful, spirited and musical is his rendering of Newman's incomparable "Lead kindly light," that I cannot refrain from giving it in full:

Per tenebras, O care Lux, me duc,  
Dirige me;  
Procul ab domo sum, O tu illuc  
Me conduce.  
Tu pedes tene, nollem videre,  
Quae procul sint; gradatim duce me.  
Olim non fui sic; non vellem tum  
Ut duceret;  
Vellem eligere propositum  
Nunc Ductor es;  
Amavi lucem tum, et, improbus,  
Speravi te; nunc esto Dominus.  
Huc me conducebas, ad terminum  
Me diriges;  
Per paludes, per saxa, fluvium  
In splendores.  
Et mane angelos quos deligo,  
Videbo? licet nunc non video.

A peculiar interest attaches to the version of "Rock of Ages," because of the circumstances connected with it.