

England has produced during this century. It has been the means of founding uncounted co-operative enterprises in every quarter of Anglo-Saxondom. From early life a public speaker and debater, Mr. Holyoake penned a handbook of "Public Speaking and Debate," so sensible in its matter, so just and kindly in its spirit, so simple and natural in its style that it rose to wide popularity. Its New York reprinter, who sold thousands of the little book, issued it without the author's name, for had he not been concerned in sundry offensive radicalisms, political and theological. H.

New York, February 17, 1890.

MONTREAL LETTER.

AN enthusiastic celebration of the golden wedding of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence and Benefit Society was an event of the past week. Early mass was celebrated on Sunday by his Grace Archbishop Fabre, and an evening sermon was attended by an immense crowd of listeners. On Monday evening the Society and its friends repaired to the Queen's Hall. To the strains of "St. Patrick's Day" the president, members and guests of sister societies took their seats. The private box was occupied by the Vicar-General and a suite of clergy. Decorations of flags and flowers enlivened the otherwise unaesthetic hall. The chairman, the Hon. Edward Murphy, recently appointed to the Senate, sketched the movement made by our Irish fellow-citizens in temperance during the last half century. On February 23rd, 1840, the Rev. Father Phelan, S.S., afterwards promoted to the Bishopric of Kingston, preached an earnest sermon on the evils of intemperance. The old Recollet Church walls resounded to the reverend gentleman's eloquence, and after vespers several hundreds of his listeners knelt at the altar, accepted the pledge from his patriarchal hands, and received his blessing. Adjourning to the sacristy, they enrolled their names on the books of the new society, drew up a constitution, appointed officers, and called themselves the Irish Roman Catholic Temperance Association of Montreal. Two years before, Father Mathew, the apostle of temperance in Ireland, had set them the example. Every Sunday evening during the year they met, and in twelve months they numbered one thousand. To exclude *moderates*, they then called themselves the *Total Abstinence Society*, and their standard of admission was limited accordingly. The anniversary of 1842 showed three thousand members in a procession, with twenty thousand sympathetic spectators. With varying presidents the Society has grown, has participated in every movement for the achievement of the common end, and, associated with the name of Father Dowd, the successor to Father Phelan, is one of our most living powers in Montreal.

At a quarterly meeting of the General Hospital, the income for three months was reported as \$16,000, including legacies to the extent of \$6,000, in all an increase of \$1,000 over the same period of last year. Out of fifty-one deaths eleven were of *la grippe*, and five hundred and forty-one patients were admitted. The alterations in the Hospital building are completed, and the question of a School for Training Nurses is before the Board.

The Citizens' League is an organization to *enforce our laws*. I believe we are unique in civilized history in this respect. Imagine a body of our busy men in session discussing the best mode of compelling our policemen to do their duty. It was urged that as the police force receives only nine dollars per week and works thirteen hours per day, it cannot be expected to do its duty. Heavier penalties than fines for breach of law were advocated. Our Irish temperance friends are supporting the League, which has succeeded in reducing the number of licenses by thirty-nine; and various schemes were proposed to arouse public sentiment in order to make the authorities enforce the laws. Perhaps, after all, we may have good laws. Let us at least have that comfort.

In our Boys' Home an interesting meeting was held to receive the reports of the year. Mr. Charles Alexander is president of this worthy institution. One hundred and thirty-four boys have been admitted during the year, from two to three every week. Forty-seven were sent to boarding-houses, one to a farm, twenty-nine returned to friends, nine were expelled and thirty-two left. The sum of \$4,000 had been received from a lady, and \$2,000 as a bequest. The savings' bank report told its own boyish story of savings from two cents to eight dollars, and let no man despise the effort to lay by the two-cent piece. A generous friend of the boys is in the habit of adding ten per cent. to their savings, and the best boy of the year receives ten dollars.

A harbinger of summer is heard in the applications which the Board of Trade is receiving for wharf accommodation. It is stated that some of our lines will require forty per cent. more room. Dissatisfaction is expressed with the wharf facilities for shipping cattle, their exposure to the sun in some cases for several hours, and the horn-ing, crowding and trampling among rough cargo material like iron, being not the best thing to improve the condition of the arrival in the British market. The increasing cattle trade of Montreal renders this question one of urgent importance. To change the berth of the ship to a special cattle wharf would be costly and dangerous, and, not improbably, the harbour, the shippers and the exporters may have a hesitation in being the first to assume the expenditure of a change. Last year 85,000 head of cattle and 60,000 sheep were embarked at Montreal.

The annual Somerville Lectures' Course was opened on Thursday evening by Prof. S. Wesley Mills, M.D., in a lecture on "Foods, Without and Within." Dr. Mills is one of our original investigators, a bold and daring experimenter. In admitting our inability to prescribe for the fattening of man as we do for animals (other animals, and some of them of a higher commercial value), he explained the composition of a perfect food, its preparation, mastication and assimilation. Life is a story of pulling down by wear and tear, and of building up again by food and rest, and woe be to us if the balance of trade be on the wrong side—export instead of import.

The sum of \$36,000 has been subscribed to endow Fellows' Institute, the Grand Ligne Mission House, which was unfortunately burnt down a few months ago, leaving teachers and pupils hardly time to escape. Applications for admission amounted to 150, of which 82 were received.

The City Club, in its new building, has made the departure of supplying accommodation for ladies. We shall see just exactly how far they shall be expected to avail themselves of the privilege. Why a comfortable corner to take luncheon, with Axminster and morocco surroundings and reading-room attractions, should be regarded as the exclusive right of our brothers I cannot tell, any more than I can tell why they have the monopoly of the good things of life in billiards, snow-shoeing, curling, lacrosse and football. The Old Post Office building has been elegantly renovated for this fashionable Club, with dining-rooms, smoking, wine, laundry, cloak, and general comfort and festivity accommodation of the most epicurean description.

The Press Association of the Province of Quebec, having failed to invent a novelty, have fallen into the snare of the customary annual dinner. I should fancy that the gentlemen of intellect might have enough of that sort of thing to endure in the ordinary run of their profession. Their entertainment was graced by the presence of Mr. Wiman.

The Rev. W. S. Barnes delivered a lecture on "Browning's Theory and Poems of Art" before the Art Association. "Ellick," our high-class school for boys has completed the addition to its accommodation, and now proposes to erect a gymnasium and drill-hall, with more boarding-rooms, at a cost of \$7,500. The boys are in the height of delight over their prospective cadet uniform.

The plasterers no sooner leave us in one lurch, than the painters kindly add to our perplexities. They want \$2 per day as a minimum wage and must have it by April 1st. The masters have met and decided that their present contracts must be fulfilled first.

The gentlemen of the Thistle Curling Club held a reception in their Rink, graced by ladies, decorations and refreshments. A good match of the roaring game was played before the fair admirers.

Free Night Schools, fourteen of which were opened a few months ago and besieged with success, have scored a roll of 6,158. The ages of students run from 14 to 55. It is needless to add that they are for men. Women have not been excluded. They have simply been forgotten.

VILLE MARIE.

THE RAMBLER.

REMOVED by physical barriers only from Old World centres of life and thought, the reading public on this side of the Atlantic very naturally, if sadly and regretfully, begins to speculate upon Lord Tennyson's probable successor. Now that death has removed his great compeer Browning, and that Matthew Arnold, and other minor writers have also disappeared from earthly view, the charmed circle is smaller than it once was. Admirers of Robert Browning must often have dreamed and desired that without the present Laureate's precious span of life being shortened by one minute or second of time, for a little while, at least, the crown might have been worn by their special lord and master. Now—alas!—that may never be. And among these others destined by public opinion, to figure as probable candidates for the honour, only two or three appear, at least to colonial eyes, genuinely worthy of it. The name of Algernon Charles Swinburne will be, it is almost certain, the most intrinsically worthy, that of Sir Edwin Arnold the most popular. But, even between these two prominent names there is a great gulf fixed. Swinburne has excelled in bulk, in accumulating an enormous amount of wholly original work, in the creation of new forms and in the superior sweetness and marvellous complexity of his style, while it must frankly be stated, that, if his translations and adaptations be taken away, the original productions of Sir Edwin Arnold hardly seem to adequately replace those given to the world, either by Wordsworth or Tennyson. Many, many Victorian singers have trod the path to Parnassus, since the "old man eloquent" passed peacefully away, but with the great exception of Swinburne, among the many who will doubtless survive that old poet's successor, there is none to stand confessedly out from among his fellow-bards, in solemn consciousness of inspiring flashes of that "light which never was on sea or land." There are those who fain would prophesy that the old order changeth so far, that the Laurel itself will soon be a thing of the past. As the Crown has gradually shorn itself of jester, cap and bells, Lord of Misrule and other appendages of a foolish feudal age, so very possibly the title of Poet Laureate may collapse more speedily than we think, even upon the decease of our beloved Second Alfred.

And this for two reasons; one, the fact of the increasing ease and dexterity of composition, from which it follows that the world never held so many poets as at the present time, though there are very few really great ones. One recalls the Laureat meeting so graphically reported by poor Leigh Hunt, when—

—As each took his chair,
There burst a most beautiful wreath in his hair,
I can't tell 'em all but the groundwork was bay;
And Campbell in his, had some oak-leaves and may,
And Southey a palm-branch, and Moore had a vine,
And pepper-leaf Byron, surmounted with pine;
And mountain-ash Wordsworth, with groundsel and yew;
And Coleridge the rare petals four that endure
Their finder with magic; and lovely to tell,
They sparkled with drops from Apollo's own well.

As for the Morris'es, William has for so long abandoned public gaze, and Lewis has so little affected the latter that they are almost out of the running. Of all the excellent minor poets, Dowden, Aubrey De Vere, Henley, Oscar Wilde, and a myriad others, not one represents a sufficient amount of work done to warrant such recognition as the conferring of the coveted laurel. Yet there is among the so-called minor poets of our late Victorian days, one man whose work is far more deserving of wide and cultured recognition than at first sight many people suppose, and that is Austin Dobson.

It is very easy to dispose of Mr. Dobson as an "elegant versifier" and a "charming writer of *vers de société*," and in many other faint praise epithets, but upon close examination, it is wonderful what a scholar these exquisite poems of his reveal, what delicate imagery, what quaint turns of thought, what classic contours, and yet, what modern directness the very tiniest stanza displays. To my mind, he is as superior to Andrew Lang, to Henley, to Gosse, and to the American imitators, Scollard and Brander Matthews, and the rest, as in Leigh Hunt's time the nine laurelled brothers of his dream were, to—

The heart and impart men and such as suppose,
They write like the Virgils and Popes and Boileaus.

Mr. Dobson, however, lives the quietest of London lives, and the stolidity of Englishmen is well illustrated by the following little story. An American lady who knew her Dobson as well as her Longfellow, called upon a music publisher with a setting to one of the London lyricist's best known effusions. The London man of business accepted the song, and patronizingly commended the words, not recognizing in their author a popular man of genius. When told his name he remarked that there was a Mr. Dobson who had sat next him in church for some years but whom he did not know. "His name is Austin, too," said the publisher. On the lady's second visit she was informed that the two were one. "I had never heard that he wrote poetry," said the publisher, and it could plainly be seen that his church neighbour had gone down several steps in his estimation.

Amélie Rives' story in the February *Fortnightly* is surely an extraordinary item in that bundle of abstract indictments. It out-mallocks Mallock in domestic realism and therefore suits the taste of the very advanced thinkers who presumably read little fiction, but like that little—hot and well spiced. As a revelation of certain hitherto sacred phases of married life, "Was It a Crime," will rank with portions of "Anna Karenina," but every person who desires that literature shall make for reverence of such relations and for everything simple-minded and pure, will hardly welcome this short story of murder, rhapsody and despair.

"Have we any *Theosophists* in Canada?" writes a correspondent. Yes, plenty of them, only hardly so styled. An Esoteric Theosophist, properly speaking, develops more quickly in older countries than amongst us, yet barring the title, I can summon up several—Esoteric Theosophists. Once they were ardent Spiritualists; now they despise spiritualism and its attendant curiosities of séances dark and light. The home, the true home, of these people is in Thibet. It's a good way off, certainly, and few of them ever see it before they die, but after death—in Thibet—they will revisit the scene of a prior existence in the shape of hogs, or crocodiles, or even tapeworms.

The *Contemporary* for February contains a very exhaustive and quietly humorous paper upon some aspects of this modern craze after Buddhism, in the light of which Sir Edwin Arnold's creation of "Siddhartha," takes on a new complexion. The modern Buddha has been evolved from the Christian conception of educated Europeans, and according to Graham Sandberg, the author of the article, "the hero of this new and dilettanti religion is not the old Bhagavan and Shakyamuni of Indian conception, but a mystic hybrid, a modern ideal deity, or fanciful impossible Christ-Buddha, ingeniously compromised but never existent."

The best exposition of the Theosophists and their peculiar methods of convincing Society of the truth and splendour of their mission occurs, I think, in Besant's "Herr Paulus." The novel bears a strong family likeness to the "Comet of a Season," and Paulus is a good deal like Mr. Montana, but it is here and there not inferior to its author's best work. Indeed, the Theosophic novel is a feature of the age.

Mr. Felix Brant was the amiable Russian gentleman who visited Toronto not long ago and spoke at George Kennan's Lectures. I conversed with him on a few general topics, and was much impressed by his mournful