

OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

(From an Occasional Correspondent.)

LONDON, November 9th, 1871.

The two crews of Chambers and Winship are taking exercise every day on the Tyne. The boats for the great race have just been finished. Both crews are to row without coxswain. Betting is pretty brisk on the event. Sadler has put out a challenge to row any man in the world for £500 a side for the championship skiff row of the world. It is believed Chambers will take it. Kelly, it is thought, will not be able to scope with Sadler. Chambers is a strong and well-built man, whose strength has yet never been perfectly tested.

At the opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on Friday night, November 3rd, Earl Roseberry delivered an address on the "Union of England and Scotland," which was principally historical, and concluded thus:

"We have in our generation, if we would remain a generation at all, to effect that union of classes without which power is a phantom and freedom a farce. In these days the rich man and the poor gaze at each other across no impassable gulf—for neither is there in this world an Abraham's bosom of calm beatitude. A powerless monarchy, an isolated aristocracy, an intelligent and aspiring people, do not together form the conditions of constitutional stability. We have to restore a common pulse, a healthy beat to the heart of the commonwealth. It is a great work, the work of individuals as much as of statesmen, alien from none of us, rather pertinent to us all; each in his place can further it. Each one of us—merchant and clerk, master and servant, landlord and tenant, capitalist and artisan, minister and parishioner—we are all privileged to have a hand in this the most sublime work of all; to restore or create harmony betwixt man and man; to look, not for the differences which chance or necessity has placed between class and class, but for the common sympathies which underlie and connect all humanity. It is not monarchs or even statesmen that give to a country prosperity and power. France in 1789 had a virtuous monarch and able statesmen. But the different classes of the community had then been completely estranged, and the upper crust of society was shivered to dust by the volcano beneath. In this country the artificial barriers which separate class from class are high enough; but, thank God! they are not insuperable. Let us one and all prevent their becoming so. A great page records the bloodiest and prosperous history of the Scotch Union—a greater page lies vacant before us on which to inscribe a fairer union still."

I quote the following from a Newcastle paper:

"We understand that Mr. Douglas, the assistant Custom-House officer in Canada, who behaved with such promptitude and bravery on the occasion of the Fenian raid, the details of which we published a few days ago, is son of Mr. Douglas, Gas Works, Newcastle-on-Tyne."

A proposal is at present under consideration to pull down the classic Newgate jail in London, and remove it to the suburbs.

The women suffrage movement in England is making progress. A constant agitation is being kept up by the advanced or Radical politicians. It seems to be a general thing amongst Radicals and Republicans to espouse the cause of women suffrage. It is said Mr. Gladstone is very favourable to it. If this be a fact, the Premier will endeavour to carry his croquet in the House of Commons.

Another new social movement is under way, and I understand is supported by several Peers and M.P.'s. One important clause of the movement is emigration to our colonies. I give you the full text of the programme:

- 1st. The hours of labour reduced to eight per day.
- 2nd. Pew rents in national churches abolished, and the minister elected by the parishioners.
- 3rd. The reduction of the franchise in the counties to the borough franchise.
- 4th. The formation of a national association to encourage arbitration in trade disputes, and the formation of councils of conciliation in every manufacturing district.
- 5th. An association to be formed for encouraging emigration to our colonies.
- 6th. Leaseholds of land on entailed estates to be granted at a mere nominal rent for 75 years, renewable, for building purposes. The formation of villages, the affairs to be governed by trustees elected by all householders. Each person above 18 years of age to subscribe one penny weekly towards educational purposes. Co-operation to be applied by the community for the sale of all the necessaries of life, for manufacturers, farming, house-building, markets, &c. Nine-tenths of the inhabitants to have the power of refusing the sale of intoxicating liquors within their boundaries.
- 7th. The appointment of a Minister of Agriculture. Landowners to have the power of preserving game on land occupied and used by them only. The tenant farmer to have the power of preserving or destroying game on his farm.

I understand the 5th clause will be modified, and Canadian emigration supplanted. A feeling is rising amongst a number of our great men that Canada has been neglected. Australia is found to be too great a distance from England to entice our countrymen.

Mr. Disraeli has been the subject, probably, of more gossip and gross caricature than any other public man. He, however, never notices such things. At last, when political capital is tried to be made out of him, his solicitor sends the following characteristic letter to the papers:

"6, Victoria Street, Westminster Abbey, S.W.
"Oct. 19, 1871.

"SIR,—The attention of Mr. Disraeli has been called to an article headed 'Mr. Disraeli at Twenty-five,' which has been extensively copied into the London and country newspapers, and purports to be an extract from the Autobiography of Mr. John Timbs, which appeared in the October number of the *Leisure Hour*.

"Mr. Disraeli has rarely thought fit to notice any of the gossip circulated about himself, however absurd or inaccurate it may be; but in the present instance it is difficult to imagine that so many false statements could have been comprised within the limits of a single paragraph.

"1. Mr. Disraeli never to his knowledge entered the shop

of Messrs. March and Miller, publishers, Oxford Street, if, indeed, there be such publishers.

"2. Mr. Disraeli never in his life required or received any remuneration for anything he ever wrote, except for books bearing his name.

"3. Mr. Disraeli never wrote a work called a 'Key to Almack's,' or a 'Geographical and Historical Account of the Great World,' &c., nor ever heard of such works.

"4. Mr. Disraeli was never editor of the *Star Chamber*, or any other newspaper, journal, review, or magazine, or anything else.

"At the very period, 1830, when the autobiographer describes himself as often seeing Mr. Disraeli in Messrs. March and Miller's shop, Mr. Disraeli was in Greece, and did not return from his travels, as I personally well remember, until just previous to the General Election of 1831, when he returned to his father's residence, in Buckinghamshire, to stand for the borough of High Wycombe.

"I am to require that you will insert this authoritative contradiction in the earliest unprinted number of the *Leisure Hour*, and I am sure that you will regret that statements so utterly erroneous should have first appeared in a publication of such high character.

"I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
"PHILIP ROSK.

"To the Editor of the *Leisure Hour*."

We have lost the great and good Sir Roderick Murchison. Few men have held such a position in England as the late Baronet. Those who had the privilege of knowing him personally, can feel his loss.

It has been my privilege to be often in his company. I knew no one so gentle and wishful to disseminate knowledge to young men. No ostentation about him. Full of enthusiasm in geological lore. I well remember when on my return from a tour in Canada, how wishful he was to hear about the progress of that country. He looked on the loyalty of the Canadians with a parent's eye, and spoke hopefully of the future greatness of the "Greater Britain."

"The voice of hope shall never so dull our ear,
Nor passion's waves, tho' in their wildest mood,
That oft above the surge we should not hear
The solemn voices of the great and good."

R. E.

THE GRAND DUKE ALEXIS

His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Alexis Alexandrovitch, of Russia, now on a visit to this continent, was born on the 14th of January, 1850, and at the early age of two hours was created Colonel of the Ickatherinenburgh Infantry Regiment, an honour conferred at that age only on princes of the blood imperial. The magnificent cathedral of St. Isaac's, in the Russian capital, for years past had not been filled by a more brilliant throng than the one which attended the solemnities amid which the newly-born Grand Duke was baptized at the same font from which, for nearly a hundred years past, the holy water had been sprinkled on the forehead of his ancestors. The whole Imperial family, including the Emperor and Empress, and all the Grand Dukes, were present. Most of the foreign Courts were represented by Ministers attired in their robes of State, and the officers of the Imperial Life Guards were stationed at regular intervals in all parts of the vast building. After Alexis was removed from the baptismal font, the Emperor Nicholas kissed his little grandson fondly on the forehead, and then tenderly embraced his son, the Grand Duke hereditary, Alexander Nicholasewitch.

Early in March, 1853, the Czar died, heart-broken, surrounded by his weeping family, every member of which was devotedly attached to him. In the year 1856 the Grand Duke accompanied his parents to their coronation at Moscow, and was then, for the first time, presented to the assembled representatives of the vast Russian Empire. When his mother, the new Empress, a beautiful woman, yet with the traces of the sufferings she had undergone for years very marked in her features—appeared, surrounded by her children, and bearing little Alexis in her arms, there was such a joyous shout as has seldom welcomed the scion of an Imperial house. Upon the return of the Imperial family to St. Petersburg, the education of the young prince immediately commenced. Two ladies—Mme. de Bernard, a Frenchwoman, and Fraulein von Julithoff, the orphan daughter of a Courland nobleman—were installed as his governesses. He proved an apt and tractable scholar, and not very many months passed before he was able to read Russian, French and German, and was perfectly able to understand any conversation addressed to him in either of those languages.

In 1860 the Grand Duke accompanied his mother to Germany, and afterward went with her to Nice, where his eldest brother, the Czarowitch Nicholas, was lying dangerously ill. The Emperor Alexander, the Empress, the Grand Duke Alexis, and the affianced bride of the dying Grand Duke, the charming Princess Dagmar of Denmark, were all present at the deathbed.

In the year 1862 there occurred an event which exercised a decisive influence upon the mind and future of the young Grand Duke. He accompanied his uncle, the Grand Duke Constantine, who held the position of Grand Admiral of the Russian Navy, on a trip to the fortress of Swenborg. No sooner had the frigate on which the Imperial family made the excursion reached the open sea than a terrific gale arose, which lasted nearly eight hours. So far from being frightened at the fury of the storm, young Alexis behaved like an intrepid veteran, and, despite the urgent request of his uncle to go to his stateroom, he insisted upon remaining on deck until the storm had abated. This event made an indelible impression upon the young Grand Duke's mind, and when he returned to St. Petersburg he urgently petitioned his father to allow him to enter the naval service of his country and become a sailor. This request the Emperor Alexander deemed it impossible to grant, both on account of the delicate constitution of Alexis, and of an old tradition said to exist relative to the Imperial family of the Romanoffs, to the effect that no more than one of the princes of the Imperial blood could hold an active command in the Russian Navy. The Emperor consoled the boy, however, by appointing him inspector of the Russian men-of-war stationed in the seaports of Finland. It is true that this was merely an honorary position, but it was one which enabled young Alexis to pass a month of each year on board a man-of-war.

The following years in the life of Prince Alexis have not been distinguished by any noteworthy events, unless it be

that he was present in the year 1866 when the murderous attempt was made upon the life of his Imperial father, which excited so profound a sensation throughout the civilized world. Alexis stood on that memorable occasion close behind the Emperor.

On another occasion the Grand Duke was enjoying a boat-ride on Lake Onega. At a very short distance from his barge a young Russian nobleman was rowing his sister in a small skiff. The young noble appeared to be unskilful in the management of his oars, and in consequence his frail boat was capsized. Without a moment's hesitation the Grand Duke plunged into the water, and succeeded, not without great difficulty and at much personal peril, in rescuing the young girl. For this display of heroism he received a gold medal at the hands of his father, the Emperor, and always proudly wears the decoration on gala occasions as the noblest which decks his breast.

On receiving information that the Grand Duke intended visiting Montreal, His Worship the Mayor telegraphed to Admiral Possiet, praying to be informed of the movements of His Imperial Highness. On the 30th ult., His Worship received a reply from the Admiral, expressing his thanks for the interest manifested by the Mayor, and promising information later on. On the receipt of this information measures were immediately taken to provide for the reception of the Duke.

On Monday an adjourned meeting of the citizens of Montreal was held, according to notice, at noon, in the Corn Exchange. His Worship the Mayor, who occupied the chair, said that he had telegraphed to Admiral Possiet, stating the intention of the citizens to entertain the Grand Duke to a ball, if such a form of entertainment would be agreeable to him. He had received a reply that the Grand Duke was very grateful for the proffered entertainment, and would have much pleasure in accepting it. He had also received a reply from Mr. Catacazy, the late Russian Minister, stating that the Grand Duke would be here on the 11th instant, and stay till the 14th, when he would leave for Ottawa, to be the guest of the Governor-General. He had telegraphed to Mr. Catacazy that the ball would take place on the 13th instant, and the object of the present meeting was to appoint a committee to make arrangements for the ball. After a list comprising the names of a large number of citizens, who will form the general committee, had been read, it was moved by B. Mathews, Esq. and seconded by A. Wilson, Esq., that the following gentlemen be appointed as an Executive Committee to make arrangements for the ball, decide upon the price of tickets, &c.:—The Mayor, Sir Geo. Cartier, Sir Hugh Allan, Sir A. T. Galt, J. H. Joseph, E. A. Prentice, Andrew McCulloch, Romeo Stephens, L. Armstrong, W. Taché, T. Workman, Geo. E. Desbarats, W. D. Drummond, T. Davidson, James Stewart, D. A. Boyer, Jos. Hickson, B. Mathews and A. Wilson, with power to add to their number.

At four o'clock in the afternoon an informal meeting of the City Council was held, the Mayor in the chair. After some discussion as to the best manner of receiving the Grand Duke, the following gentlemen were appointed a committee to make all the arrangements necessary for the proper reception of the distinguished visitor. The Mayor, Alderman Rosdon, Alderman Bernard, Alderman Alexander, Councillor Bétournay, Councillor Stephens, Councillor Kay and Councillor Loranger. It is probable the Grand Duke will be met by a deputation from the City Council at the station on the arrival of the train, and an address presented to him. If at night, the firemen with torches will line the streets through which the Grand Duke and suite will pass to the St. Lawrence Hall. The Corporation will have carriages waiting at the station for the party. During the stay of the Grand Duke he will be shown about the city, and whatever is worthy brought to his notice. The Committee will have all arrangements perfect for his entertainment during his stay. Besides the ball, a grand entertainment will take place in the Skating Rink on one of the nights the Grand Duke and suite are in the city. The ball will, no doubt, take place in the St. Lawrence Hall, as it is the most convenient and comfortable place for an event of the kind.

[Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.]

REMINISCENCES OF BERMUDA.

DISCOVERY AND DESCRIPTION.

By Capt. E. M., R. E.

Bermuda, as a fortress, a colony, and a prison, has been occasionally brought to notice. A few years since these islands became the chief port of call for the steamers that ran the celebrated blockade of the "Southern Ports," and now they are being turned, under the auspices of the Royal Engineers, into a second Gibraltar, and many hundreds of soldiers are daily employed building forts, and otherwise rendering the islands impregnable.

The far-famed Bermudas or Somers' islands, resting "like Emerald gems" on the Atlantic, are situated in latitude 32° 2' and longitude 64° West—the former almost corresponding with that of Madeira—and are about 700 miles from Halifax, New York and the West Indies, the nearest land being Cape Hatteras in South Carolina, distant 580 miles. These islands are said to have been first discovered in 1527 by Joaz Bermudez, a Spaniard, but they were not inhabited until 1609, when Sir George Somers, thrown upon their shores by shipwreck, took possession of the little Archipelago in the name of James I. Sir George died there, bequeathing to the islands the legacy of his name, and the 365, which they are said to number, have ever since carefully preserved it, holding, however, a secondary place to that of the discoverer, by which the little, but wide-spread cluster is better known. To this day an inscription on a rock on the South shore, bears testimony to the visit of the shipwrecked knight. During the civil wars of Cromwell's protectorate, among the exiles that found their way there was Waller, the poet, who during his tranquil residence wrote a poetical description of the islands.

Although by reckoning every diminutive island, the group makes up 365, there are only seven of magnitude, united (with one exception) by bridges—viz., St. George, Long Bird, Hamilton, Somerset, Watford Boaz, Ireland, &c., extending from North-East to South-West, in the form of a shepherd's crook. The healthfulness and pleasantness of Bermuda in