



TORONTO, 22nd May, 1891.

I learn from an English newspaper of an unusual honour lately conferred on poetry and poets, or—as is more fittingly said in this connection—on poetesses. It is the execution in brass *repoussi* of a memorial poem to the late Canon Sir Gore Ouseley, written by Miss Sarah Anne Stowe, of Hereford, and placed in Hereford Cathedral by the Dean and Chapter. The tablet is 86 in. long by 26 in. wide, affording a remarkable departure from the usual style of mural entablature.

How far the poem itself departs from, or resembles, the usual kind of memorial verse, we have not been given the opportunity of judging; to our regret, I am sure I may say, for there is no doubt that a poem so distinguished must have within it the poet's best utterance—noble thoughts nobly expressed.

The Ontario Society of Artists opened their annual exhibition in the Art Gallery this week, and, I am sorry to say, have followed the lead of the Royal Academy exhibition in employing an orchestra. There is something utterly repulsive, to my own taste, in this bolstering up of one art by another, so that I cannot do otherwise than condemn it, all the artists of the city to the contrary—if they are so—notwithstanding. The present is said to be the "finest exhibition of pictures ever seen in Toronto," and if it be so, the employment of meretricious attractions is less excusable than ever. I have not yet had an opportunity of seeing the pictures, and shall refer to them in my next letter.

The Toronto Art Students' League has issued invitations to a view of "sketches forming part of the winner's work of the members." The exhibition covers four days, beginning to-day, and as I know the conscientious methods of study pursued by such of the exhibitors as I am acquainted with, the results I am sure will be satisfactory. Most, if not all, the members have to earn their living by what is called "commercial work," furnishing us with the artistic bank cheques, commercial stationery, show cards, calendars, lithographs and engravings of every sort that beautify our commercial life, as well as the numerous illustrations that enliven our newspapers and advertisement sheets, and of which we think so little, yet all of which require special training of the eye and hand, and a knowledge of pure art. This last the Art Students' League organized itself to obtain, employing its own models and emulating in every way the best work of London and New York. My invitation is prettily emblazoned with an etching of blue and white violets.

Quite a little breeze has sprung up over the action of the newly appointed health officer for Toronto, Dr. Allen, in discharging *all* the employes of the department and re-engaging only such as he thought best fitted to carry out his intentions. Hitherto the aldermen have been the medium of approach to civic employment, but Dr. Allen thinks it a bad and annoying system, full of holes and leakages in the matter of efficiency.

The City Engineer, Mr. Jennings, also objects to being 'approached' by aldermen in the matter of selection of employes, and it seems to be an initial plank in the platform of the new ownership of the Street Railway that the aldermen shall have no say in the same matter, so that it looks as if aldermanic influence had received its death blow, and that the 'right man in the right place' idea had come to stay.

The bad grace with which the Hon. Frank Smith gave over his valuable franchise to the city was more laughable than annoying, though it certainly partook of the latter characteristic also, particularly to the public, who supposed that after so large a bite of the taxes had been given to the legal settlement of the matter that settlement would be for good, and not form the subject of further litigation, much less be used as a means of forcing a premium upon their

own expenditure out of their pockets. Many citizens positively refused to pay the required five cents, tickets having been refused them, and there was no power could have forced them to do it. Even the drivers refusing to drive would only have resulted in the citizens taking the driving into their own hands, which would have cost more lawyer's fees all round.

The public looks to see that the men, drivers, conductors and others, get their rights in the matter of shorter hours and just pay. Exposed as they are to the severest weather, it is felt that twelve hours, particularly in winter, is an unconscionable time for a man to be standing on an open platform, holding reins, and, in the case of the abominable bobtail car, giving change and selling tickets, as well as being responsible for the conduct of his car.

Surely there is no need for striking where both parties to a contract intend to do what is just and right! it is high time these collisions of labour were looked upon as disgraces to the offender, who is not always the employer nor always the employed.

The Church of England Woman's Auxiliary to Missions have been holding excellent meetings in St. James' school house. On Thursday afternoon, at four o'clock, a gathering of the juvenile branches was held. These number twenty-three, and are doing useful work, as well as growing up with a proper understanding of the claims and needs of missionary work.

Professor Lloyd, of Trinity College, who has lived in Japan, gave a very interesting address on that country and its spiritual needs, but expressed a fear for the future of the church there, owing to a feeling of antagonism to foreigners which had lately shown itself. The W. M. A. M. has undertaken the support of Miss Sherlock, a lady who is preparing herself as a missionary to Japan. Dr. Kirkby, lately Archdeacon of Moosomin, spoke in encouraging terms of the work in the North-West.

The second of the yearly concerts given by the Public School Children, under the leadership of Professor Cringan, their instructor in music, will take place in the Mutual Street Rink to night. Seven hundred young voices will unite in choruses, and there are also several trios and part songs on the programme. Calisthenics, under Captain Thompson, and an orchestra from the band of the Royal Grenadiers will form part of the entertainment. To-day is called Floral Day in public school records, and in accordance with the idea the rink is beautifully wreathed and decorated with flowers, among which the "old flag" is prominently displayed, no foreign flag finding a place there.

The great steel conduit that is to supply the city with pure water—that is, water from the depths of the lake, instead of the shallows of the bay—has been taken over from the contractors by the city; but it is held, and not without reason, by many, that a leakage of five-eighths of one per cent. of the water thus conducted is too large to be as satisfactory as the City Council appear to deem it. Why there should be a leak at all in a new steel pipe is a pertinent enquiry.

The W. C. T. U. of the district of Toronto have brought Miss Bertha Wright, of Ottawa, to conduct a week of Evangelistic meetings for them. The evening meetings are to be held in Mission Hall, so that the poor can be reached.

S. A. CURZON

In Study and Camp.

In one of my reflective moments, while the fumes of blue tobacco smoke were curling upwards from my faithful pipe, like the columns that rise from the camp fire on a lonely lake shore, it occurred to me that I might please myself, and perhaps a chance reader, by jottings of a philosophical or descriptive nature, relating to study life and out-door pilgrimages that I have known. I have little doubt that the articles will smell more of the lamp than the pine, and it is just possible that I may ramble so much that the reader will get no more about study or wood lore than the audience of Artemus Ward did of the "Babes in the Wood," which was the title of one of his most laughable lectures. After over an hour of rambling talk, that humourist would say, "I now come to my subject, 'The Babes in the Wood.'" [Then, looking at his watch with surprise], "But I find I have exceeded my time, and will merely remark that, so

far as I know, they were very good babies; they were as good as ordinary babies."

I trust that the reader will follow me with the same patience with which Jim Smiley, *not* the Rev. Leonidas, would follow a straddle bug. "He would follow that straddle bug to Mexico, but what he would find out where he was bound for and how long he was on the road." My straddle bug course may be the result of thinking upside down (which most of us do with out knowing it until we put pen to paper) or it may be a poetical symbol of devious forest paths, and consequently highly to be commended in an article of this nature.

I fancy I hear some venerable Nimrod jeer at me, a book-worm, for imagining that I could do aught of justice to nature. Go to thy Izaak Walton, thou scoffer, or consider that the great Darwin confounded the pigeon fanciers with his knowledge. Have I not shot my bird as well as thou, and lain, surrounded by an arsenal, up yonder gleaming Gatineau, in oat fields, on the edge of the disconsolate forest, in wait for a bear; who never left the spot—because he never came! Come to my den and thou shalt share my flask and my fish story, of which already are many editions exhausted.

The man who is truly literary is keenly alive to the influence and beauty of nature, and may perhaps more forcibly express the sentiments engendered by solitude and woodland glooms than the generally unromantic toiler in such sylvan scenes. What would I not give with "Birch and Paddle,"

"Mid task and toil, a space
To dream on nature's face,"

With my friend Professor Roberts, or sit with Bliss Carman (which should have been *Carmen*) while

"Through crests of the hoarse tide swing
Clove sheer the sweep of her bow;
There was loosed the ice-roaring of spring
From the jaws of her prow,—
Of the long Red Swan full-wing,
The long Red Swan full-wing;"

to say nothing of spending a "Morning on the Lièvres" with Lampman, and journeying on "The St. Lawrence and Saguenay,"—only methinks Sangster had a more delightful companion than ever I could hope to prove.

Of a truth, I believe the creed of certain German philosophers that the universe exists only in our minds (no slang intended) is largely true, and that we put into nature almost all that we take out again. Do you suppose that all the beauty crystallized in humming birds' names arose through the bird alone, of which that preceptor of my youth and friend of my manhood, George Murray, has written so charmingly,—

"What dainty epithets thy tribes
Have won from men of science!
Pedantic (!) and poetic scribes
For once are in alliance."

The exclamation mark is my own, for I am not going to admit that men of science, of which I once hoped to be a distinguished light, are pedantic. The more one knows, the humbler one grows.

As an example that some men who live at the lodge gates of Nature have never seen the true beauty of her palace as it is revealed to men of more studious bent, I will adduce the following statement of fact:

I was once standing upon the rear platform of the Canadian Pacific train for Ottawa, enjoying to the full the beautiful prospect of the Grand River at sunset, when a roughly dressed man, whom I took to be a farmer, remarked at my elbow: "Isn't that a beautiful sight?" "Here," thought I, "is a man after my own heart, a horny-handed son of toil, who is quick to realize the beauties of nature;" and I turned to open a conversation with him, when he "stuck a fact into me like a stiletto." "Yes," he continued, "I never seen a finer field of potatoes than them is." His eyes had never got past those potatoes to the shimmering gold and silver of the Ottawa, with its island gems and olive banks beyond!

Observation on a small scale and reading on a more extensive scale have led me to believe that the more cultured the man the more capable is he of being a savage. An eminent physician once said to me, "we are all veneered," and the man of intellect is like a thermometer, capable of a great rise or a great fall, and often, like that instrument, wholly influenced by the atmosphere in which he finds himself. Did not Keats, poor fellow, who, however, was more angel than devil, largely sow the seeds of his death malady, for he was not "snuffed out by an article," not being of candle but rather of electric light power? Burns and Byron, and even erratic Shelley, the atheist, who worshipped God under the name of Truth, have pointed a moral and adorned a tale before this, and I will pass them over as