

THE FIRST PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT IN MONTREAL.

BY ALFRED SANDHAM.

The military success, which had put nearly the whole of Canada into the possession of the Americans, terminated with the fall of Montgomery under the walls of Quebec. General Arnold, on whom the command devolved, sat down resolutely before the capital in the depth of winter, and with the small remnant of his troops kept his ground until spring. Meanwhile General Wooster quietly rested in undisputed possession of Montreal. On the departure of Wooster for Quebec, (April 1st, 1776,) Col. Hazen assumed command. In a letter addressed to General Schuyler, the Colonel refers to the friendly disposition manifested by the Canadians when Montgomery first penetrated into the country, but that they could no longer be looked upon as friends. This change he ascribed to the fact that the clergy had been neglected and "in some instances ill used." He closes with the following: "You may remember, sir, in a conversation with you at Albany, I urged the necessity of sending immediately to Canada able Generals, a respectable army, a Committee of Congress, a suitable supply of hard cash, and a Printer."

"When the news reached Congress that the assault upon Quebec had failed; that Montgomery had been left dead on the snowy heights, and Arnold borne wounded from the field; that cold, hunger, and small-pox were wasting the army, that discipline was forgotten, and the people indifferent or inimical, the Congress resorted to the expedient of appointing three Commissioners to go to Montreal, confer with Arnold, and arrange a plan for the rectification of Canadian affairs." Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase and Charles Carroll, were selected for this mission. Mr. John Carroll, a Catholic Clergyman, (afterwards Archbishop of Baltimore), was also invited to accompany them. He had been educated in France, and it was supposed that this circumstance, added to his religious profession and character, would enable him to exercise an influence with the clergy in Canada. The Commissioners were clothed with extraordinary powers. "They were authorized to receive Canada into the union of Colonies, and organize the government on the republican system. They were empowered to suspend military officers, decide disputes between the civil and military authorities, vote at councils of war, draw upon Congress to the amount of one hundred thousand dollars, raise additional troops, and issue military commissions," in short, whatever authority Congress itself could be supposed to exercise over Canada, was conferred upon the three Commissioners. Chiefly, however, they were charged to convince, conciliate, and win the Canadians by appeals to their reason and interest; in aid of which they were to take measures for establishing a newspaper to be conducted by a friend of Congress." To carry into operation this portion of their instructions, they secured the services of a French Printer named Mesplets, who was engaged, with a promise that all his expenses should be paid. The party left Philadelphia about the 20th of March, 1776, but did not reach Montreal until the 29th of April. They were "received by General Arnold in the most polite and friendly manner, conducted to Head Quarters, where a genteel company of ladies and gentlemen had assembled to welcome them. They supped with Arnold, and after supper were conducted by the General to their lodgings,—the house of Mr. Thomas Walker,—the best built, and perhaps the best furnished in Montreal." The next day the Commissioners sat at a Council of War, (of which Arnold was the President), held in the Government building. At this council was told the dismal truth with regard to the affairs of Congress in Canada. Canada was lost, and the first despatch of the Commissioners informed Congress that their credit in Canada was not merely impaired, but destroyed. Perceiving the hopelessness of the position, Franklin left Montreal on the 11th May, and on the following day was joined by Mr. J. Carroll at St. Johns. They reached Philadelphia early in June. The account presented by Franklin to Congress of money expended on this journey, showed that he had advanced the sum of \$1,220, of which \$560 was to be charged to General Arnold, and \$124 to Chas. Carroll. The beds and outfit of the party cost \$164. The whole expense incurred by Franklin and J. Carroll was \$372. On the 29th of May, Chase and Chas. Carroll left Montreal to attend a Council of War at Chambly, where it was determined that the army should retreat out of Canada. On the 30th the Commissioners left Chambly for St. Johns, from whence they proceeded on their journey homeward, thus ending the efforts put forth by the Congress to maintain a footing in Canada.

The dispatches of the Commissioners do not contain any special reference to the services rendered by Mesplets; but it is certain that the numerous and in some instances lengthy addresses to the Canadian people were printed by him.

When Franklin and his companions left Canada, Mesplets decided to establish himself in Montreal, and he entered into partnership with a person named Berger. Their office was situated on what is now known as Custom House Square, then designated the "Market Place," and from this office was sent forth the first book printed in Montreal, entitled "Règlement de la Conférence de l'Adoration perpétuelle." The partnership was afterwards dissolved, Mesplets continuing the business; and shortly after he commenced the publication of a newspaper "La Gazette de Montréal," the first newspaper published in the city, and the second in Canada, thus securing for himself the honour of being the pioneer in book and newspaper publishing in Montreal.

Having thus traced the circumstances which led to the introduction of the Art of Printing into Montreal, the following brief history of the ancient building in which the Commissioners held their councils, and from which were issued their official proclamations, may prove interesting.

The building now familiarly known as the "Old Government House," but formerly as "Le Vieux Château," was erected by Claude de Ramezay, Governor of Montreal, and father of De Ramezay who signed the capitulation of Quebec. The building was erected about the year 1702. In 1721 it was visited by Charlevoix, and its situation is indicated on a plan dated 1723, now in the Seminary at Montreal. After the death of De Ramezay in 1724, the Château remained in the possession of his heirs until 1745, when it was purchased by the "Compagnie des Indes," who converted it into their principal entrepot of fur traffic with the Indians. Shortly after the capitulation of Montreal, it was purchased by Baron Grant, who in time disposed of it to the Government (prior to 27th April, 1762,) when it was chosen as the official residence of the Governor, and was thus restored to its original use.

In 1775 Brigadier General Wooster made it his headquarters, as did also his successor Benedict Arnold, and within its

walls were held several Councils of War. About the year 1784 it was purchased by Baron St. Léger, who made it his residence for some time, after which it was occasionally occupied by the Governors who resided in Montreal. From 1837 to 1841, the Special Council established in Montreal, occupied the building, and after the city became the permanent seat of Government, from 1843 to the fall of 1849, this and the adjacent buildings were used for the offices of the Executive. From that date until December 1856, they were used as a Court House and Registrar's Office, during the construction of the new Court House. It was thereafter taken possession of as the head quarters of the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, and continued to be used for that purpose until 1868 when it was handed over for the use of the "Jacques Cartier Normal School."—*Canadian Antiq.*

ACTRESSES WHO HAVE PERFORMED SHAKSPEARE'S MALE CHARACTERS.

It is a curious fact that all of Shakspeare's heroines, from Juliet to Beatrice, were originally acted by boys, or men whose beauty of face and person bore traces of effeminacy. At the time his plays were produced women were unknown upon the stage, unless, perhaps, in France, where more license was given for the actors to do as they pleased, and, consequently, more judgment evinced in giving the plays an appropriate interpretation, which men in female parts certainly could not do decently. But with the introduction of women to the stage public opinion underwent a complete change, and the "boy actresses," in a remarkably short time, found their occupation gone, and more than that, for their feminine rivals not only usurped their profession, but have time and again assumed the characters originally intended for "lordly man" to act. Many of the old comedy writers have thus found impersonators of their male characters, especially those of a youthful and gallant description, in a quarter they least expected and never intended, and the "women actors" have in several cases invested the masculine parts they have assumed with a dash and spirit which not only gained them the applause of discreet critics, but captivated the hearts of the more susceptible of their own sex. Peg Woffington is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of the latter quality of attractiveness, as stage traditions point to several cases in which her Sir Harry Wildair and Lothario won the admiration and affections of those of her own sex. We do not find, however, that the male characters of Shakspeare, except those similar to Sebastian, in *Twelfth Night*, were attempted by the female sex until the assumption, by a Mrs. Webb, at Covent Garden Theatre, London, in 1788, of the character of Falstaff. The only remarkable thing about this performance, which has been handed down in dramatic history, is not her interpretation of the jovial old Knight, but the fact that her natural corpulency was such that she was enabled to fill the clothing of the redoubtable hero without any of that padding generally so necessary an auxiliary with those who assume the part. Mrs. Glover, the celebrated English actress, on one occasion acted Hamlet, which in fact has found many female impersonators, including Mrs. Shaw, Mrs. Crampton and Mrs. Marriott, well known actresses in their day on the New York stage. "Romeo" has also found many feminine impersonators, among them being Charlotte Cushman, Mrs. Shaw, and Mrs. Colman Pope, all of whom have performed the character in this city. The more vigorous characters, however, have been but rarely essayed, for beyond a certain point, woman's strength is inadequate to the personation of a man's force of character and depth of passion. Even in such parts, however, Shakspeare has received female interpretation, for we find that early in the present century a Mrs. Battersby acted the character of "Macbeth" for her benefit at the old Park Theatre; that a Mrs. Baldwin, in 1823, acted Marc Anthony in *Julius Caesar*; and more recently Miss Cushman performed Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII.* with considerable ability. Now comes another actress, Mrs. Macready, emulous of gaining the metropolitan endorsement of her unique impersonation of Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice*. She has taken the Academy of Music for a week, commencing on Monday next, and will then essay the part, which is one many a fine actor has failed to delineate with success. The lady, however, has received the unrestricted praise of country critics, and there can be no doubt whatever but that her impersonation is remarkable in other respects than the fact that it is a woman playing a man's part. *Nous verrons.*—*N. Y. Telegram.*

SUGGESTIVE TITLES.

Mr. Dickens' titles seem to be quite without equal for expressiveness of the true character of the works to which they belong. There is hardly one title in the whole list that is not intrinsically laughable, grotesque—a caricature of a name. The whole nomenclature of Mr. Dickens' novels seems designed with a special view to drollery. The names mostly consist of sounds so combined as to tickle us, whether by association with formal ideas, or by a mere vague grotesqueness; and this state of things is the natural and proper concomitant of the universal laughter business, so extensively carried on in the incidents, situations, and turns of thought and phrase. The "Pickwick Papers," "Nicholas Nickleby," "Martin Chuzzlewit," "David Copperfield," "Dombey and Son," "Little Dorrit," "Barnaby Rudge," are all indubitably funny titles, some more so, some less; but, laughable though they be, they are all as distinctly natural growths from the books that bear them as are the titles of George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë—just as distinctly the spontaneous expression of the caricaturist's mind as theirs are of the earnest, though by no means sombre realist's mind. If we knew nothing of the inside of Dickens' books, we should expect humour and wit and much grotesqueness just as confidently from such a name as Pickwick as we should expect weird, massive, relentless force from such a name as that affixed by Charlotte Brontë's sister to one of the most powerful and disagreeable books of the present century—"Wuthering Heights;" a tale which rivets us to the bracing and exhilarating scene of its action, astounds us at the author's sheer force of head and hand, and goes far to disgust us with her taste. How different the pithy suggestive labels of these our women artists, or the equally suggestive and appropriate grotesques of Mr. Dickens, from the ponderous, dismal, maxims order of titles affected by Mr. Charles Reade. A sermon is a dreary thing at most times and in most places; but a sermon on the back of a novel—a sermon, too, that may, like most others, be too easily turned into ridicule, is calamitous indeed. "It is Never too Late to Mend!" How much too vague and provocative!—*Tinsley's Mag.*

Our Illustrations.

THE WIMBLEDON PRIZE CUPS.

The Rajah of Kolapoor's Challenge Prize consists of two cups of a very quaint design and decidedly Hindoo character. Strictly speaking, they are vases, studded all over with small convex shields. Immediately below the necks there are lion's heads of a conventioned pattern, to which are attached heavy chains and solid gold balls. The vases are sixteen inches in height, and are silver gilt.

This cup was given by the Rajah, and the National Rifle Association added £100 thereto. To be competed for annually at Wimbledon by one team from the Mother Country and one from each of the Provinces of India, or from each Colony, to be held for the year by the team making the highest aggregate score.

The Merchants' Prize is a cup with base, stem, and cover. The base is of a moulded pattern, and where it unites to the stem of the cup there are heads of lions and moose, emblems of England and America. The cup is ornamented on the two sides in silver relief, representing on one side a modern rifle contest at Wimbledon, and on the other an ancient archery meeting in the woods. The two representations are separated by the royal arms and the arms of the City of London, executed in enamel. At the lip is a band, ornamented with maple leaves and a beaver, broken on two sides with crossed rifles, and the accoutrements of a rifleman. The cover is curved, and terminates in a finial about four inches in height, of oak leaves, with an acorn at the apex. The whole is wrought in silver and silver-gilt. The design is exceedingly beautiful, and the conception is admirably carried out in fine workmanship.

This cup was presented to the Canadian volunteers on their first visit to the Rifle Association Meeting at Wimbledon, as a token of good fellowship, by a few merchants of London. To be competed for by representatives of the different Provinces, under the auspices of the Dominion of Canada Rifle Association.

Our illustration is after a photograph by Topley, of Ottawa.

The subjoined correspondence speaks for itself:

(Copy.)

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Ottawa, Oct. 30, 1872.

Sir,—I am directed by His Excellency the Governor-General to forward to you a copy of a letter from Sir B. Frere of the India Office, enclosing a letter from His Highness the Rajah of Kolapoor, containing an expression of His Highness' gratification on receiving the intelligence that the challenge cup presented by him for competition at the National Rifle Association Meeting at Wimbledon had been won by volunteers from the Dominion of Canada. I have to request that you will take the necessary steps to inform the members of the Dominion Rifle Association of the contents of His Highness' letter, and at the same time to express how much pleasure it affords His Excellency the Governor-General to be the means of forwarding a communication arising from a circumstance which reflects so great credit on the volunteers of the Dominion.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
(Signed), H. C. FLETCHER,
Governor's Secretary.

C. S. GZOWSKI, Esq.,
President Dominion Rifle Association.

(Copy.)

INDIA OFFICE,
London, October 14th, 1872.

My Lord,—I have been requested by Col. George Sligo Anderson, the Resident at the Court of His Highness the Rajah of Kolapoor, to forward to your Excellency the accompanying letter from the Rajah, expressing His Highness' gratification at the prize for rifle shooting, which was given by the late Rajah, having been won by the Canadian competitors at Wimbledon.

I have, &c.,
(Signed), H. W. FRERE,

His Excellency, The Right Honourable EARL DUFFERIN, K.P.

The Rajah's letter which follows, though somewhat novel, is valuable as expressive of goodwill, and friendship towards the British Empire. It reads thus:—

(Copy.)

(TRANSLATED SUBSTANCE OF A KHUREETOR.)

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Dufferin,
K. P., Governor-General of Canada.

From Shreeman Maharaj Shiwa Chuttraputtee Sahib Sirkir Kurveer.

After compliments—When my father, the late Rajaram Chuttraputtee Maharaj, was in England, he, from a feeling of friendship for the English nation, and to encourage the practice of rifle shooting, established a prize to be annually contended for at Wimbledon. I have heard that the prize thus established was this year won by Canadians, and therefore address your Lordship to express the satisfaction felt by their Highnesses the Ranees and myself, that the name of my father, which is so well known in India and England, should in this way come to be known in H. M.'s the Queen's trans-Atlantic possessions, and beg your Excellency to convey our congratulations to the successful marksmen. I trust that your Excellency will by frequent correspondence keep up friendship between us.

Chundr 9 Rujub, corresponding with 13th September, 1872.

GALT, ONT.

Galt is a place of considerable importance in the peninsular region lying west of Toronto. It has a population of some 7,000 souls, and is a busy seat of growing industry and commerce. The Grand River intersects the town. The fine structure on the left of the view is the Presbyterian Church, recently erected at a cost of some \$30,000, and distinctly illustrates the predominance of the Scottish element in the town and neighbourhood. The square tower in the distance is that of the Town Hall, immediately below which is Main Street, the principal business avenue. Just beyond the Presbyterian Church is the chief hotel, in front of which stands the Crimean gun. The view is taken from the little hill on which rises the unpretending English Church.