

Canadian Art, as represented in our Exhibitions, suffers like other Canadian productions of the highest class from narrowness of area. A Province is attempting to do and to support that which can only be done or supported by a nation. Canada is a political expression. For the purposes of art, as for those of literature, commerce and society, the country is really Ontario with the British part of Montreal. The Maritime Provinces are completely cut off from us by Quebec. That there should be many artists within such a space is impossible, it is only wonderful that there are so many as there are. The same thing may be said with regard to literary men and enterprises, as some of us know to our cost. It is not a reason against doing what we can, but it is a reason for moderating our expectations and not criticizing what is really little more than a Provincial Exhibition as though it contained the Art of a nation. Would any single State of the Union, saving perhaps Massachusetts, which is now an old country, or New York, which is immensely wealthy or populous, produce a better show than we have seen at Toronto? Probably not.

IGNORAMUS.

### "GONE TO TEXAS."\*

THIS unpretending book consists of letters written home from the wilds of Texas by three educated young Englishmen of reduced fortunes, nephews of the distinguished Editor, who supplies an explanatory preface. In this preface the reasons are briefly related which led these young men, one after the other, to make up their minds rather to struggle for an independent competence by roughing it as ranchmen in the Far West than to rest content with the easier but less certain prospects of prosperity open to them in England, while the letters themselves describe with delightful detail and refreshing simplicity the hardships endured and progress achieved within a period of five years, at the same time giving much information of value to intending immigrants concerning the conditions of Texan life. The plain unvarnished truth about that life, one may conclude, is to be found in these ingenuous pages, as it but too rarely is in the glowing accounts of interested colonizations agencies, and any young Canadian seriously revolving the now proverbial advice to "go west" would do well to study these letters before doing so. He will then know what are the real difficulties to expect, and how much courage is required to grapple with them; and so be in a better position to judge if he has grit enough to bear the strain. To the general reader the book will probably be chiefly interesting for the wholesome glimpses of character which it unconsciously affords. One cannot fail to be very strongly impressed, for instance, by the heartiness of these young men. They write about their harsh experiences in such a way as to make the harshness almost disappear. It is the hearty, sanguine spirit rising large and high, and dwarfing its adverse surrounding. Shirking no toil, not even the coarsest, shrinking from no inconvenience or deprivation, they yet manage to be always bright and full of a boyish but most enviable contempt for circumstances. No wonder they succeeded at last, as, comparatively speaking, they did; for surely theirs is the spirit which ever leads to success, smoothing the way thereto meanwhile. All a matter of the temperament? Perhaps not so much so as we are apt to suppose. Doubtless it is a thing to be cultivated, dyspepsia notwithstanding. The experiment is worth trying, anyhow. Then there is the filial and domestic loyalty of these self-exiled youths. Most of these letters were written to their father, many to other members of the family, and some even to a grandmother! A very healthy sign, this. How many lads who take themselves away from home to "seek their fortune" do the like? How many are careful to keep up a constant correspondence with the warm ingle they have left, much less to lay before a parent's eye the frequent, faithful record of their daily doings? Do we need in these selfish days to pray more earnestly against any calamity than that of the weakening of the natural ties? Another thing which comes out very agreeably in these letters is the fact that the gentleman still contrived to survive in the cowboy. Gentlemen by birth and education, and with many of the tastes and accomplishments of cultivated life, these young Englishmen could adapt themselves to their surroundings and yet suffer from them, apparently, no social or moral hurt. They were not snobs, still less could they become boors. As soon as they could they got their books around them, and in odds and ends of time one was faithful to his fiddle, another to his pencil, brushes, and palette, and a third to his science and photography. Such men are the saving salt of new communities. What strikes one most, perhaps, is the manly unconventionalism of this interesting trio. They had none of the current false and effeminate notions of respectability. They saw that the openings in England for young men of their class were

quite insufficient, that the learned professions were overstocked and the ordinary avenues to advancement gorged: "Every gate was thronged with suitors, all the markets overflowed." They saw, and made their choice; deeming it, in their simple manliness, more respectable to wrest a sufficiency from mother earth in the untried fields of the New World than to risk genteel penury in the practically worn-out ones of the Old. Their example may well point a lesson for Canadian youth. Canada, in its cities at least, is old enough to have become not a little conventional, as it would seem. Our young men must at all costs be "respectable"—that, if nothing else—which means, for the most part, that their dainty hands must be kept unsoiled; and so, while vast virgin tracts of Canada are waiting to be tilled and to yield an ample return to the honest hands that will till them, semi-starving doctors and lawyers are too many in our midst, and dandified but impecunious bank-clerks a multitude which no man can number.

R. A. B.

### SCIENTIFIC JOTTINGS.

THE scientific event of the month in Canada has been of course the fourth annual meeting of the Royal Society, which was held at Ottawa from the 26th to the 29th of May last, with an average attendance of Fellows. His Excellency the Governor-General presided at the formal opening on the first afternoon, when the President, Dr. T. Sterry Hunt, in an eloquent address, amongst other things dwelt at length on the advantages to be derived both by science and commerce from the Hudson's Bay Expedition; on the action of the Society's Committee on Tidal observations appointed at the British Association meeting; in drawing the attention of the Government to this important practical question, with good prospects of obtaining substantial aid; and on the necessity for a scientific study of our economic fishes, on the basis of the fish commissions of other countries; besides alluding to the scientific advantages to be gained by the establishment of the botanic garden and arboretum at Montreal for the encouragement of "silviculture." Dr. Daniel Wilson, the Vice-President, in the course of his address, claimed that as the Society included in its scope the study of archaeology, ethnology and philology, the materials whence scientific results were to be deduced in these branches in Canada must be collected now or never, for the remnants of our aborigines, with their traditions and native arts, were fast passing away or being absorbed, while the language of that old France, long anterior to the Regency, which survives in Quebec in a modified form, is replete with interest to the philologist. His Excellency, in replying to a vote of thanks, while disclaiming any scientific knowledge, considered that in the last volume of their Proceedings two subjects of the utmost importance to Canada received deserved prominence—the ethnology of our native races, and historical criticism of our own country. He particularly referred to the necessity for a renewal of our forests as a subject deserving of the most earnest investigation. Three new Fellows were elected in the department of biological science, all comparatively young men: Mr. James Fletcher, of Ottawa, Professor Penhallow, of McGill, and Dr. Burgess, of London. The first-named, as honorary entomologist to the Dominion Department of Agriculture, has lately published a short preliminary report, rather suggesting the directions in which such an appointment may be useful in future years than attempting to give a full or systematic account of work done. It is satisfactory, however, to learn from it that insect pests were less numerous than usual last year, and that the midge, which played havoc with the clover crop, may be conquered by the simple expedient of pasturing the fields until the middle of June, so as to delay the critical stage of seeding to the interval between the first and second broods of midges.

LIEUTENANT GORDON sailed from Halifax on the 27th May with the *Alert* to relieve the six Hudson's Bay observing stations located last year, and to re-establish five of them for another season. The *Alert* is particularly well-fitted for the work before her, and an early start has been made for the purpose of practically ascertaining the earliest date at which the Bay can be entered. Lieutenant Gordon recommended this course, suggesting that the stations should first be relieved, or, if the ice prevented this, that the ship should push on and investigate once for all the condition of the ice in the Strait and Bay in the early part of the season. If the stations could be relieved, an effort should be made to reach Churchill by the opening of navigation there—about the middle of June; then a running survey should be made on the east coast, and some deep-sea dredging and sounding done. This would allow the ship to reach the Strait again by the middle of August, when any spare time could be employed in surveying it more accurately; or, as an alternative, the fishing, especially the whaling in Rowe's Welcome, which is becoming of some importance, might be investigated with a view to proper regulation of the trade. He also proposes to ascertain, definitely, if possible, whether there is, as has been asserted, a waterway between the Bay of Hope's Advance in Ungava Bay and Mosquito Bay, a channel into the "Mediterranean of Canada" which, if it existed, might be free from the heavy Arctic ice that comes down into Hudson's Strait from Fox Channel. Dr. R. Bell again accompanies the Expedition in the interests of the Geological Survey, and a gentleman has also gone to watch the interests of one of the projected railways from Winnipeg to Hudson's Bay.

THE first installation of the Edison electric light in Quebec City is now in operation at the cartridge factory there, a plant of seventy-five incandescent lamps of sixteen candle-power each supplying light for the whole

\*"Gone to Texas: Letters From Our Boys." Edited by Thomas Hughes. New York: Macmillan and Co.