

THE House of Commons meets in a few days now. Mr. Mercier says that Mr. Edgar will be Speaker before a month passes. Poor Sir John!

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WE notice with pleasure that Messrs. Williamson & Co. have published the interesting lecture on the British *versus* the American System of National Government, which Mr. A. H. F. Lefroy read before the Toronto Branch of the Imperial Federation League last December.

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MR. LEFROY'S lecture was well worthy publication, and should, and no doubt will, have a wide circulation. The Annexationist will not like it, but then that doesn't matter very much.

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DR. BOURINOT, C.M.G., has recently published his admirable "Canadian Studies in Comparative Politics," which, together with Mr. Goldwin Smith's charmingly written but somewhat chilling book on "Canada and the Canadian Question," we will notice at length in our next number.

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ANOTHER book of great interest and importance, which will be reviewed in the May number of this journal, is "Socialism, New and Old," by Professor Graham, of Queen's College, Belfast, which Messrs. Appleton & Co. have lately published in their valuable International Scientific Series.

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DEDICATED to the children of Canada is an excellent collection of national and patriotic songs, published by Messrs. Suckling & Sons, of Toronto. This is the book which has excited the wrath of the Secularists and Annexationists, for the two-fold reason that the songs are eloquent of faith in God and faith in Canada. Copies of this book should be in every school in Canada, and not only in the schools but in the homes of all Canadians.

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It is whispered about that the Students intend giving afternoon tea in the Gymnasium to the members of the Corporation, on which occasion this interesting but hardly popular resort will be thrown open for inspection by the distinguished guests. The feelings of these gentlemen will, it is confidently expected, be so wrought upon by the striking scene, that orders for a new Gymnasium and all the necessary paraphernalia will be at once issued by the Corporation.

ALCESTIS.

(Continued from last month.)

WHILST the household of Admetus is given over to mourning and to the preparations for the burial, Herakles, on his way to Thrace to find the horses of Diomed, calls at the house and claims hospitality. It was a dreadful moment for Admetus to receive a guest, when his wife was lying dead in the house awaiting her burial. But the laws of hospitality are sacred, and Admetus cleverly disguising the cause of mourning, receives Herakles; not in the main building, but in a guest chamber shut off from the rest of the house, and out of the sight and sound of woe. "Were I to refuse him now," says Admetus in answer to the remonstrances of the Chorus, "my grief would be none the less, but I should be less hospitable."

So Herakles is taken into the house, and royally entertained, in ignorance of the sorrow that is breaking the heart of Admetus. In the meantime, Pheres, the aged father of

Admetus, comes to console his son on his bereavement, and to bring a tribute of flowers for the funeral. Admetus, however, does not welcome his father; but reproaches him for his selfishness in not dying instead of Alcestis. This is a very painful scene. As we read it, we can see some force in Admetus' position. If it was absolutely necessary for some one to die, it was obviously fitting that an old man at the verge of the grave should die rather than the young wife and mother, whose place and sphere were obviously by the side of her husband and amongst her young children. On the other hand, we cannot but see the point of view of Pheres. He had done his duty by his son. He had given him life, education, a position, there was no obligation upon him to give him a second lease of life. If selfishness came in, it did not lie with Pheres, but with Admetus, and the husband that allowed his wife to die for him had no business to scold his father, for acquiescing in the arrangement. It is a most painful scene we repeat, and we are very glad when it is finished.

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for some have entertained angels unawares." Admetus is destined to realize the truth of the Apostolic precept. In the next scene, the servant who has been in attendance upon Herakles comes in full of complaints, about the rudeness and greediness of his guest, and of the hard fate which had prevented him from taking a part in the funeral rites, and from bidding adieu to the dead body of his beloved mistress. "Am I not right," he exclaims, "to hate the stranger that has thus come in our sorrows?" when Herakles come in and abuses him for his sour looks and surly gestures. In the conversation which ensues, Herakles discovers the truth, that the woman of whose death Admetus had spoken to him was not, as he had supposed, some maidservant hired from without, but Alcestis herself, the self-devoted wife of his host.

I did indeed observe the tearful eye,
Bedewing cheek and face—But he spake false
And said it was a stranger that lay dead
Awaiting burial; and therefore I,
Though fearing grief did feast within the house
Of him thus grieving—and in wanton joy
Did wreath my head with this accursed wreath.
But thou—why didst thou ever keep from me,
The mighty woe that lies upon the house?
Where doth he bury her? Where is her tomb?

Then, with noble impetuosity, he rushes out from the stage, and though he does not indeed tell us whither he is going, yet Herakles, the generous-hearted righter of wrongs, of whom all ancient legend speaks, would not be true to his nature if he did not go upon some errand of mercy; and of this he gives us a hint. "Admetus," he says, "shall never regret the hospitality he has shown me."

In the meantime Admetus remains beyond the reach of consolation, and refusing to be comforted for the loss of his priceless wife.

After a while Herakles returns beaming with good humour, and leading a veiled woman whom he introduces to Admetus as a captive, whom he intends to present to him in the hopes that she will comfort him for his wife.

Admetus declines the gift—can we blame him?—the memory of Alcestis is too sacred, and no strange woman can take her place.

But Herakles insists, he leads the woman to Admetus, puts her hand into his, persuades him to lift the veil that covers her—and lo! it is no strange woman at all,—but Alcestis herself brought back from the dead.

Such was the reward that Herakles bestowed upon Admetus for his hospitality.

ARTHUR LLOYD.