

THE BAHAMA ISLANDS.

BY REV. WM. ENGLISH, FOR SEVERAL YEARS A RESIDENT MINISTER IN THESE ISLANDS.

The Bahama, or Lucayas Islands, as they have been generally denominated, form a cluster of islands situated on the east of the Gulf Stream off the coast of Florida, and to the north-east of the large islands of Cuba and Hayti. They number upwards of five hundred, but the greater part are mere bare rocks or barren sand banks, unknown and nameless. They are situated, taken in a collective view, between the 22nd and 27th degree of north latitude and between the 75th degree of west longitude from London. The principal islands of this group are New Providence, of which Nassau is the capital and the seat of government. Harbor Island, Eleuthera, Abaco, Great Bahama, St. Salvador, Exuma, Long Island, the Caicos, Inagua and the Turks Islands Residency.

These islands are somewhat irregularly scattered; but may in a general way be described as forming the bow of an arch constituting a breakwater to the islands of Cuba and St. Domingo or Hayti, intercepting the waves of the mighty north Atlantic and preventing them dashing with irresistible violence upon the shores of these islands. Some five channels, irregularly formed, and here and there besprinkled with hidden rocks, over whose surface the surf may occasionally be seen to break, or treacherous sand banks concealed from the view of the mariner... with two or three feet of water, make these channels very dangerous to navigate, and demand unceasing vigilance and well-trained skill. But notwithstanding all the skill and vigilance of the mariner, wrecks on these reefs, rocks, and islands are of frequent occurrence; some of them occasionally accompanied with a lamentable loss of life, and always with a sad waste of property, and during my residence on these islands afforded a means of employment and a source of income to hundreds and thousands of their inhabitants.

It might be supposed by those who look only at the surface of things, and not with philosophical and critical eyes, that such an assemblage of small islands was of no great matter or importance, and hardly deserved a passing notice. We beg to differ. Size does not necessarily imply importance. Bulk is not the only or the chief measure of value. Though small in themselves the Bahama Islands will ever occupy a prominent place in the history of the world. It was one of these that presented itself to the eye of Christopher Columbus when a new world was to reveal itself and disclose its glories to him as the reward of his faith, perseverance, and far-seeing sagacity, and here was that beacon waved which has since cheered and guided the Anglo-Saxon race in its onward march of freedom, science, prosperity and true religion. We have stood on the spot, where, in all probability, the feet of Columbus first stood; we have gazed upon the remains of a monument which it is supposed he erected, exactly answering to a similar one found near Cape Isabella in Hayti, which was undoubtedly reared by these Spanish adventurers.

Experience has also shown that from their situation, number, and the intricacy and dangerous character of the channels by which they are navigated, the Bahama Islands deserve also to be highly prized by a naval power like our own; as furnishing us a secure position from whence we could at any moment, in case of war, make a rapid descent upon the neighboring continent, Cuba, or South America. This was proved during the late American war, and we may be per-

mitted to quote the judgment of an eminent historian. "The Bahamas, (says Raynal) which on one side are separated from Florida only by a narrow channel, form on the other a long ridge, which terminates nearly at the point of Cuba. There are other islands which continue the chain as far as the middle of the northern coast of St. Domingo. Between these islands there are five passages for first-rate ships. They afford a good anchorage and safe retreat to their privateers, and command the narrow channel which divides them from Hayti. By this means most of the ships coming from that rich island, and from Cuba, must fall into the hands of the English."

Having lived on and visited most of the principal of these islands, we propose in TRUTH, in two or three subsequent letters, to give some account of their climate, inhabitants and employment. If no other end is secured, the information will at least enlarge the geographical and historical knowledge of our young readers.

A GLANCE AT THE SENATE.

BY J. E. COLLINS.

The hall at Ottawa, wherein the Senators sit to dispense justice, is a large, solemn chamber, sumptuously appointed and having in its air an ensemble something that is regal. It has likewise about it a suggestion of stilted obsolescence, although the orange figures in the rich carpeting give it somewhat of a semblance of latent ferocity. I suppose these figures may be taken as types of the Senators who quarrel. I need not say that the Senate is not treated seriously by anybody here, or in the country at large for that matter; and the person gazetted to one of its benches is looked upon, politically, as having been put to bed. Nobody ever visits the Chamber, unless when something ridiculous is being performed there; and consciousness of this fact was somewhat the reason why an embargo was put some weeks ago upon the visitations of irreverent members of the press.

The Roman Senators were old men, and when the barbarians burst into the Forum and saw them sitting with their long, flowing white beard and staff of office, they took them to be tutelary gods of Rome. Most of our Senators are old, too, but they have no the wisdom and dignity about their beards that their prototypes upon the banks of the Tiber exhibited. I am not aware of any way in which they have given proof that they have any right to exist. We are assured that their *raison d'être* is to restrain hasty legislation; but they are warped by the same party slavery that divides the House of Commons. The Chamber is by a large majority Conservative, and always as a narrow, sometimes as a violent, tribunal of party does it vote. It is a mere echo of the House of Commons, and its members remind one of the spiritual peers in England, who, when a Bishop is to be affronted, first fall upon their knees and ask Providence to direct them in their choice, and then stand up and invest the candidate named by the Prime Minister. It is even declared by competent observers that partyism in the Senate is more narrow, and more ferocious, than it is in the House of Commons.

But be all this as it may. If Canada wants the Senate, let her have it. She makes the Government wear a cocked hat, and she fires powder-guns when her Parliaments open. Why, then, should she not have a Senate? Nor is the Senate and the other forms mentioned all that she loves, and is, therefore, entitled to have. She

buckles a sword about her Sergeant-at-arms, though if he attempted to use it he would very likely do some mischief to himself, while if he did succeed in working harm to anybody, he would probably get the halter for his officiousness.

But reverend a nous monition. The Senate can now be said to be little else than a divorce court, but a divorce court without legal equipment or dignity. It has indeed been charged against our Senators that they dabble with keen delight in the tub whereto so many husbands and wives come to wash their soiled linen. I have myself witnessed some of the old gentlemen when engaged in cross-examination, and unless my eyes and understanding were at fault, they seemed to take the keenest delight in ferreting out the indelicate stories. I know that many will dissent from me when I say that it is a disgrace to have the divorcing function thrown upon the Senate, and that there should be a regular Divorce Court, such as those found in other Provinces of Canada. My disputant will say, "O, if you establish such a court it will make divorce easy; by handing the matter to the Senate it becomes difficult." But my answer is this: In every case where the petitioner shows good cause before the Senate for seeking divorce, a bill passes and he succeeds. That is exactly what would happen were the question in the hands of a court of law. We have abundant proof of this assertion when we compare the number of divorces obtained through the agency of the Senate with those effected through our regular Divorce Courts in other parts of Canada. Therefore, although the stripping of the Senate of this jurisdiction would be to rob its members of the chief delight of their old age, I repeat, in the interest of dignity, decency and justice, that a regular Divorce Court ought to be instituted.

ART EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

(A Lecture delivered before the Norfolk Teachers' Association.)

BY DR. MULVANY.

The industrial resources of Canada, like our population, are limited, and bear but a small proportion to those of the United States. But the industrial skill which Art education might train to make better and better use of these materials is absolutely without limit; it is quite feasible by adequate training so to develop it that Canadian manufactures should, in beauty of design and execution, surpass those of any part of this continent, or for that matter, of the world.

Hitherto this country has been deficient in skilled artistic labor. By this I mean the ability to design and draw a pattern. A few weeks ago a Toronto manufacturing jewelry firm received a large order for ornament medals in commemoration of the Montreal Carnival. The artistic work had to be done by other than Canadian hands. Several years ago when engaged in writing several of the parts of *Picturesque Canada*, I noticed that for the engraving, copying, and other artistic work, skilled labor had to be imported from the United States; Toronto labor could not "fill the bill." Now it is obvious that the absence of artistically trained laborers must take away from the value of every kind of manufacture, from the casting of a stove to the modelling of a gold ornament. It is this deficiency which the new Government Art Schools are meant to supply.

The Art School now established at the Education Department Building aims at a

thorough teaching of the science of drawing and designing. It begins with first principles, the geometrical laws of Perspective; it goes on to teach drawing "from the round," from statues, casts, and living models.

It then teaches drawing from memory and the reproduction in designs for ornamental work of natural objects, such as a flower or a leaf. Nothing less than this thorough process of training will impart the power of original designs so useful in every branch of manufacture.

Let anyone consider the process called art teaching as it is generally found in schools, convent-academies, and private art institutions, including the Toronto Art Academy as it was before the Education Department took it in hand and reconstructed it. To what does the result of that teaching amount at most? Merely to the power of copying a drawing on a plain surface. Who has not seen the outcome of the average young lady pupil's term of art lessons? A couple of drawings, but without suspicion of being "touched up" by the teachers; but even these are as *tour de force* accomplished once for all as a fact not to be repeated. Copying is the opposite and negative of art; it is to it as plagiarism is to literature; as death to life. The most elaborate and successful copy is but as the small dust of the balance compared with the poorest original design; the most faithful effort to embody in the work of our hands one of the least of the models in that world of beauty by which we are surrounded.

The Toronto Art School is intended to train teachers of elementary art for the public schools. Examinations will be held and diplomas granted which will entitle the holders so to teach. And branch art schools will be established to be accompanied, it is hoped by branch museums in connection with each Mechanics' Institute in the Province.

As an example of what may be done in this way, I point your attention to the Art Museum at the Education Department, Toronto. In order to gain any real benefit from a visit to that Museum, it is necessary to provide one. With a copy of the excellent catalogue lately published by Dr. May. Nothing is more common or more useless than merely to stroll through an art gallery without any intelligent knowledge of its contents. Dr. May's catalogue is in reality much more, than a mere catalogue; it is a critical guide to the history of painting; it traces from the beginning and illustrates from the excellent collection of the Art Museum, the historical development of painting, sculpture, engraving and the various decorative arts.

I ask the attention of the teachers to the fact that the institution of Art Schools is a practical benefit to themselves. When the little public of the school section sees a teacher able with a few bold strokes to produce a picture on the black board, of a flower or an animal, when they see that the same power is being communicated to their own boys and girls, they will realize more vividly than before the benefit of education. The eye is more easily impressed than the ear.

The teacher who can do this will receive an addition to the ordinary teacher's salary. And this is within the range of every intelligent person. In England experts in art training have ascertained that anyone capable of teaching pupils to write is also capable of teaching them to draw.

At the great exhibition in Hyde Park in 1851, it was found that English manufactures were inferior in artistic design and finish to those of France and Germany. In consequence, Art Schools were established by the Government, with the result of greatly improving every branch of industry of which artistic designs was a condition.

Canada is small compared with the United States, but it was in the small republic of Athens, and in the compass of a single century that all the arts were brought to perfection, owing to the encouragement given by the government under Pericles to art as a national undertaking.