

THE SCRAP BOOK.

QUEBEC, AS SEEN BY A BRITISH SAVANT.

AMONG the recent visitors attracted to Canada by the meeting of the British Association at Montreal was Professor Struthers, M.D., of Marischal College, Aberdeen. The next meeting of the Association is to be held in the City on the Dee; and a special interest is accordingly felt there in the reception given to the British savants by their Canadian hosts. Dr. Struthers was accordingly invited by the Aberdeen Philosophical Society to report his observations on Canadian science. In doing so the Universities of Quebec and Ontario, as schools of letters and science, naturally came under review, along with the geological survey of the Dominion, and Ottawa Museum. We are tempted to select, as most interesting to our readers, the record of the impressions formed by a Scottish scientific observer on visiting the venerable city of Quebec and its ancient University:—

"Quebec presents a striking contrast to Montreal. In the older part the streets, narrow and ill-paved, or paved with wood, many of the houses of wood, irregular and overhanging, reminding one of the imitation of old London in the recent Health Exhibition; the chief language French, and the general aspect suggesting, if not decay, at least stand-still, while the rest of Canada progressed. The University, Laval University, suggests various reflections to the British visitor. It is under the 'supreme direction,' in 'doctrine, discipline, faith, and morals,' of the Bishops of the Province of Quebec, under the presidency of the Archbishop, who is also 'apostolic chancellor,' and the latter functionary 'has the right of veto on all the rules and nominations.' The buildings, though not new or elegant, would do, as far as rooms for collections are concerned, but the walk through them is depressing. The melancholy condition, as well as the deficiency of some of the science collections, might be passed in silence were it not for the ridiculously boastful description of them in the pamphlet catalogue which the visitor (admission one shilling) receives. The two museums of the Medical School, for instance, about which the less said the better, are characterized as 'very complete.' The kind of collection for which that apostolic University seems to have mainly gone in is that kind of anthropology represented by the portraits of monks, saints, and the like. It is a relief to escape alike from the old streets and from the University to the lofty terrace on the Citadel, which commands a magnificent view of river, rock and mountain, reminding one of the scenery of the Scottish lakes. The fortifications are of great strength, and the place is full of historic interest. Among other objects the monument of General Wolfe meets the eye. The view from the great fortified rock, or mountain, is to the tourist the redeeming feature of Quebec. The general reflection occurs here that Britain, when it took Canada, made a mistake in far-seeing statesmanship in not enacting that, after a time, English should be the official language. Canada is now, and is still more to be in the future, a great essentially English-speaking country. The existence officially of two languages—the French still predominating in the Province of Quebec, together with the ecclesiastical system with which it is identified—stands in the way of progress, and is a source of much embarrassment, which will continue until the new western Provinces have grown by the tide of British emigration now setting towards them."

MADAME DE STAEL AND HER BONSMOTS.

MOORE in his lately published "Life of Sheridan," has recorded the laborious care with which he prepared his *bons-mots*. Madame de Staël condescended to do the same. The first time I ever saw her was at dinner at Lord Liverpool's at Coombe Wood. Sir James Mackintosh was to have been her guide, and they lost their way, and went to Addiscombe and some other places by mistake, and when they got at last to Coombe Wood they were again bewildered, and obliged to get out and walk in the dark, and through the mire up the road through the wood. They arrived consequently two hours too late and strange draggled figures, she exclaiming by way of apology, "Coombe par ci, Coombe par là; nous avons été par tous les Coombes de l'Angleterre." During dinner she talked incessantly but admirably, but several of her apparently spontaneous *mots* were borrowed or prepared. For instance, speaking of the relative states of England and the Continent at that period, the high notion we had formed of the danger to the world from Buonaparte's despotism, and the high opinion the Continent had formed of the riches, strength, and spirit of England, she insisted that these opinions were both just, and added with an elegant *élan*, "Les étrangers sont la postérité contemporaine." This striking expression I have since found in the journal of Camille Desmoulins.

The conversation turned on the Count of Berlin, and Lord Liverpool asked if M. de Ségur, then ambassador there, was related to the old family of Ségur, of whom his lordship mentioned one whom he had known. She answered laughingly that they were related "du côté des syllabes," meaning that they were *not* related, though their names were the same. Lord Liverpool did not see what she meant, and repeated his inquiry in the form of asking whether they were of the same family. She replied with great readiness, "Milord, ils sont du même alphabet." Nothing could appear more extemporaneous than this double jest, yet it must have been prepared, for every one now knows that the M. Ségur of Berlin was one of the old Ségurs, and he was in fact the very man that Lord Liverpool was inquiring about. Madame de Staël had the phrase *cut and dry*, as the expression is, ready to be used on any of the occasions, then very frequent, when strangers inquired if such or such of Buonaparte's chamberlains or diplomatists were of the old stock whose names they bore;

and the phrase of "du même alphabet" I have since seen somewhere in print.

She was ugly and not of an intellectual ugliness. Her features were coarse, and the ordinary expression rather vulgar; she had an ugly mouth, and one or two irregularly prominent teeth, which perhaps gave her countenance an habitual gaiety. Her eye, was full, dark, and expressive; and when she declaimed, which was almost whenever she spoke, she looked eloquent, and one forgot that she was plain. On the whole, she was singularly unfeminine, and if in conversation one forgot she was ugly, one forgot also that she was a woman.—From the Correspondence and Diaries of John Wilson Croker.

A BUDGET OF ANECDOTES FROM CROKER'S NOTE-BOOK.

ONE day an officer came very late to dinner at Talleyrand's, an unusual negligence in France where everybody is exact. He made a kind of impertinent apology, alleging that he had been delayed by a *péquin*, the nick-name which French soldiers give civilians. M. Talleyrand, himself a *péquin*, asked what a *péquin* was; "Nous appelons péquin," replied the Hector, "tout ce qui n'est pas militaire." "Ah! ah!" replied Talleyrand, "c'est comme nous, nous appelons militaire tout ce qui n'est pas civile." This joke is even better in English than in French.

I MUST tell you an anecdote of old Talleyrand. Murray wanted an autograph to engrave. S. E. benignantly consented, and taking a long sheet of paper, wrote his name. You guess where—at the very extreme top of the page, so close that the French lady, who wrote with a feather from the humming-bird's wing, and dried it with the dust of the butterfly's wing, could not have squeezed in an I. O. U.

LADY HOLLAND was saying yesterday to her assembled coterie, "Why should not Lord Holland be Secretary for Foreign affairs—why not as well as Lord Lansdowne for the Home Department?" Little Lord John Russell is said to have replied, in his quiet way, "Why, they say, Ma'am, that you open all Lord Holland's letters, and the Foreign Ministers might not like that!"

EVERY one knows the story of a gentleman's asking Lord North who "that frightful woman was?" and his lordship's answering, that is my wife. The other, to repair his blunder, said I did not mean *her*, but that monster next to her. "Oh," said Lord North, "that monster is my daughter." With this story Frederick Robinson, in his usual absent enthusiastic way, was one day entertaining a lady whom he sat next to at dinner, and lo! the lady was Lady Charlotte Lindsay—the monster in question.

THERE is an inscription on the great Spanish mortar in the park in no very classical Latin. Part of the ornaments on the carriage are dog's heads; why *dogs' heads*? "to account for the Latin," said Jekyll.

MR. PEPPER, a gentleman well-known in the Irish sporting world, asked Lord Norbury to suggest a name for a very fine hunter of his; Lord Norbury, himself a good sportsman, who knew that Mr. Pepper had had a fall or two, advised him to call the horse "*Peppercaster*."

MR. O'CONNELL, whose arrest by the civil power as he was proceeding to meet Mr. Peel was supposed to be quite involuntary on his part, was soon after arguing a law point in the Common Pleas, and happened to use the phrase, "I fear, my Lords, I do not make myself understood." "Go on, go on, Mr. O'Connell," replied Lord Norbury, "no one is more easily apprehended."

THE PERIODICALS.

A CAREFULLY compiled biographical sketch of Wyclif forms the opening article of the January *Harper's Magazine*. It is from the pen of A. W. Ward, and is illustrated by drawings from old prints by H. M. Paget. Seymour Hayden contributes a most interesting paper on "The Revival of Mezzotint as an Engraver's Art," and elucidates his ideas by six pictures executed by him in one afternoon on Whatman paper blackened over with charcoal—an experimental substitute for mezzotint copper-plates. Mr. Hayden recommends a return to the art of mezzotint in its purer forms, though he fully recognizes the difficulties of his proposal, since the same objections still exist as contributed to the decline of mezzotint—"fine art recommends itself to the few; the commercial instinct addresses itself to the many." The essay on "The Town Meeting," by John Fiske, is a capital explanation of the origin and real meaning of a New England form of municipal government which the writer claims to be an inheritance from pre-historic Aryan antiquity. In a richly illustrated article entitled "A Pair of Shoes" Howard Mudge Newhall gives a graphic description of the multifarious processes of boot and shoe-making. The illustrations accompanying the second part of "She Stoops to Conquer" are marvels of the engraver's art. The fiction of the number includes a complete story by Sarah Orme Jewett, and the opening chapters of serials by Constance Fennimore Woolson and an anonymous writer. Barnet Phillips has a travel paper, there is some admirable poetry, and the editor's "Easy Chair," "Literary Record," "Historical Record," and "Drawer" departments are amongst the most attractive features of this popular and excellent magazine.

THE holiday *Outing* greets the new year with a feast of jollity and good-cheer. "The Wheelman's Vision" starts in symbolically with an appropriate poem. Mr. Arthur Gilman goes "After the British on a Tricycle" in a sort of historical-humorous fashion, and his paper is effectively illustrated by Edmund H. Garrett. Maurice Thompson's exquisite "Tangle-Leaf Papers" are continued. John Boyle O'Reilly writes enthusiastically of his summer's voyage "Down the Susquehanna in a Canoe." Edith M. Thomas contributes a charming poetical conceit. Albert H. Maunsell illustrates his own paper on "A Municipal Regatta in Boston Harbour." Ruth Hall has a bright little poem, "Only a Girl." There is a very clever story by Edward B. Getz,