

OUR TABLE.

THE BRITISH PROVINCES IN NORTH AMERICA—BY
A. S. BUCKINGHAM.

MR. BUCKINGHAM is well known in this region, as a traveller of no inconsiderable note; and many of our readers have, doubtless, perused his book on the subject of America, with much gratification to themselves. He possesses a happy facility of clothing his thoughts in language, and a quick and discerning eye to perceive whatever is worthy of note or comment in the countries through which he passes. His works, up to the present time, have been much admired and read, and will continue still to have many readers and admirers.

The work now under notice has not reached "Our Table," but we have met with several reviews of, and many extracts from it, all of which afford evidence that it will sustain the reputation of its author. The subject of it, to Canadians, will make it a desirable book, to read, as we all, of course, have a natural desire to see what well-informed and unprejudiced men have to say about our country, our habits, our prospects, and our hopes. Among the reviews which we have met with, several have contained the extract which we here subjoin. The extract is descriptive of an astonishing and tremendous storm, with which, within the recollection of the older inhabitants, our good city of Montreal was visited:—

"It was on the morning of Sunday, the 7th of November, that the sunrise of a pink colour, seen through the hazy atmosphere, and with a greenish tinge on all the clouds that were visible; this was succeeded by a dense mass of black clouds, from whence descended heavy rains, depositing on the earth large quantities of a substance that had the appearance and smell of common soot. On Tuesday the 9th, the same phenomenon was repeated, but with more intensity. The rising sun was of a deep orange colour; the clouds in the heavens were some green and others of a pitchy blackness; the sun then alternated between a blood red and a deep brown colour, and at noon it was so dark, that candles were obliged to be lighted in all the houses. All the brute animals appeared to be struck with terror, and uttered their fears in mournful cries, as they hurried to such places of shelter as were within their reach. At three o'clock it was as dark as night, and out of the pitchy clouds proceeded lightnings more vivid, and thunders more loud, than had ever before been heard, causing the floors of the houses to tremble to such a degree, as to throw those who were seated or standing off their feet. After this, torrents of rain fell, bringing masses of the same sooty substance as before; a short period of light followed, and after this, at four o'clock, it was as dark as ever. The ball at the top of the Roman Catholic Church was next seen enveloped in flames—the fire-alarm was given by all the bells in the city, and the cry of 'fire' was repeated in every street. The populace rushed to the open square, near the church, called the 'Place d'Armes,' and every one seemed impressed with a belief that some great convulsion of nature was about to take place, or

that the last day was at hand. The iron cross, which was sustained by the ball on fire, soon fell on the pavement with a loud crash, broken into many pieces; the rain again descended in torrents, blacker than before, and as the water flowed like ink through the streets and gutters, it carried along on its surface a foam like that produced by the violent action of the sea. The night was darker than ever, and the fate of the buried cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii seemed to be awaiting the town of Montreal! Fortunately, however, the following day was light and serene, though it required some time to tranquillize the fears which those singular, and hitherto unexplained appearances had very naturally engendered. It is said that many of the towns east and west of this, as far indeed as Kingston on the one hand, and Quebec on the other, had witnessed somewhat of these appearances, but they were nowhere exhibited with so much intensity as at Montreal.

The above is rather an exaggerated picture, of what was in reality a frightful storm; but at this distance of time some exaggeration may be expected. Mr. Buckingham, doubtless, gave the story as it was told him, though a slight additional colouring may have been given by himself. Such errors, however, are not very important, and will not diminish either the interest or value of the book, which, from what we have seen of it, we are of opinion, may be safely recommended to every reader.

DOINGS IN CHINA—BY LIEUTENANT MURRAY.

THE events which, within the last few years, have occurred in the Celestial Empire, have afforded a fruitful theme for those who, having sought "the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth," desire to add the literary chaplet to their warlike laurels. Among these the gallant Lieutenant whose book is now under consideration, has not been the least successful. His personal narrative—for such, in reality, it is—extends over but a brief period of time, it is true, for he did not become an actor on the scene, until after the recapture of Chusan, in 1841, and he appears to have closed his warlike career with the peace of Nankin, in 1842. But during that time he saw his share of service, and encountered many "moving incidents by blood and field," which were well worthy of a place in his amusing diary. His observations, indeed, were more limited in their nature than is agreeable, his position making it necessary for him to confine himself within the sphere of his own regiment, the Eighteenth or Royal Irish, which did good service during the war, for the Queen of the Ocean Isles, and occupied a prominent part in all the military "Doings in China." As affording glimpses not readily met with elsewhere, into the every-day life of the strange people about whom he writes, we think Lieutenant Murray's book possesses strong claims upon the reading public, and we are mistaken if it does not become a popular one.