

THE ANCIENT CAPITAL.

MAIDEN SPEECHES.—MONTREAL JUNCTION.—THE LIEUT.-GOVERNOR.—BILLS.—THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE.—CIVIL SERVICE.—PARLIAMENTARY AMENITIES.

The maiden speeches of members are generally crucial tests. Such was the case, this year, with the proposer and seconder of the Address. The former, who spoke in French, commenced well, and his sentiments were happy and correctly expressed, but his nervousness overcame him, and the end of his speech was rather broken. The latter commenced by stating that he was an independent member, while the very act of seconding the Address pledged him as a Government supporter. His speech afterwards consisted merely of a repetition of the Address, but, unhappily, his nervousness also overcame him, and he nearly broke down. How easy it appears to one in the Gallery, to make a speech on the floor of the House, but how difficult a thing it becomes when the critical moment arrives! Two or three members have told me that they then saw nobody, indeed saw nothing from the time they rose to their feet till they sat down; and even yesterday, the seconder of the Address in the Council told me he had spoken on numerous occasions in public, and especially at election meetings, but when he contemplated rising to his feet amidst the awful quiet of the Legislative Council, he actually shook with sheer nervousness, and therefore wrote his speech beforehand and read it in the House, and still he felt nervous. Even a well-known member of the Toronto Press, who is a member of the Ottawa House, said that, accustomed as he was, from sitting in the Reporter's Gallery for many years, to the House, its members and its whole routine, yet when he rose to make his maiden speech his sensations were exactly as I have described.

The first business of importance has been the introduction of a Bill by the Leader of the House, which will do away with the nuisance of each municipality, when it wishes to become a Town, being obliged to come to Parliament for an Act of Incorporation. In addition, and this is very important to many of your readers, in answer to Mr. Taillon, the Leader of the House stated that it was the intention of the Government that the Junction Depot of the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railroad for Montreal would be built within the limits of the Eastern Division of your city, and I am officially informed it is not their intention to build it just within the limits, so as to keep within the letter of their contract, but some distance within. The exact spot I know not, but I have no doubt it will be placed as conveniently as possible for the citizens of Montreal.

A paper of your city, lately, contained some notes from Quebec, written, it is believed, by a member of the Civil Service in this Capital, which have excited some rather lively conversation amongst members of the House and also of the Government, owing to the unfounded and utterly false statements with regard to the mental condition of the Lieutenant-Governor of this Province. It is barely necessary to contradict the statements, but as considerable indignation is felt on the subject, I do so on the very best of authority. The real reason why His Honor was not present at the opening of the House was that his medical advisers considered he was too weak to undergo the very wearisome and, to men of his age, exhausting ceremonies necessary on such occasions, especially after so severe an illness as that from which, I am happy to say, he is now rapidly recovering.

According to new rules, every Bill should be sent to the Clerk of the House in both languages, and then it will be printed at \$2.00 a page which, as the Leader of the House said, is a dollar a page less than last year. I am sorry to say some people will send their Bills in one language only, therefore time is occupied in translating them which would otherwise be occupied in passing them. I state this, as it may be information to someone who is sending down a Bill.

I have noticed in the correspondence to a number of the country papers, as well as to one of your evening papers, a determined attack on the Attorney-General, who is Leader of the Lower House. They complain that he is irritable and excited, and one paper blames him for endeavouring to imitate the late Sir George Cartier in his manner of addressing the House, because while speaking he occasionally turns his back to the Opposition. The Attorney-General is the most hard-working man in the Ministry, and certainly one of the most conscientious statesmen in the Province. His position is no sinecure, as, though he is supported by a large majority, yet even a small Opposition can be very annoying, and he has all the more reason to be watchful and careful when that small Opposition is led by such able men as Messrs. Joly, Marchand and Bachand. There is no denying that at times Mr. Angers is a little excited, or rather I should say was, but during the past few days he has been as cool and collected as the Leader of the House should be. The Hon. Mr. Angers is always a gentleman.

The Resolutions of the Hon. Mr. Chapleau and those of the Hon. Mr. Angers, relating to the Civil Service of Quebec and providing for their superannuation, have passed through Committee and the Bills founded on them introduced. The former fixes the salary of the Deputy Heads of Departments at \$2,400 per annum, they commencing at \$2,000. The Clerks are divided into five classes, and commence at the following salaries: 1st class, \$1,500; 2nd class, \$1,200;

3rd class, \$1,000; 4th class, \$800; 5th class, \$600. Each class will increase at the rate of \$50 per annum, till they reach the maximum of \$200 a year more than at what they commenced. Messengers commence at \$400 and increase \$40 per annum, till they reach \$600. The above are the interesting and important particulars of the Hon. Mr. Chapleau's Resolutions.

How pleasant a thing it is to see a friendly feeling existing between the two chiefs of the House. This afternoon, just at the opening of the sitting, I saw the Hon. Mr. Angers walk across to where Mr. Joly was sitting, with a paper in his hand; the latter immediately rose, bowed with his usual grace and politeness, and offered Mr. Angers a seat beside him. They then amicably discussed the contents of the paper and parted as they met. C. W. M.

A PRIZE FOR ELOQUENCE.

In my opinion, no surer way exists to stimulate literary merit in the Dominion, than the mode so successfully and so generously resorted to by the enlightened statesman and scholar now holding the reins of Government in Canada: the Dufferin medals. It is with pleasure we notice that his praiseworthy example is being followed by private individuals in the city of Quebec.

Last year the Canadian Institute announced "Un Concours d'Eloquence," to take place this fall, subject: "COLUMBUS," the laureate to receive a medal munificently presented by one of its founders, Théophile Ledroit, Esq., merchant. Hon. P.J.O. Chauveau, in his inaugural address on the occasion, while complimenting the Institut on this progressive movement, pointed out two precedents of this kind, in the early portion of the century, and in running over the files of the *Quebec Mercury*, for 1809, I find the following advertisement, which I think worth while rescuing from oblivion.

J. M. L.

Quebec, 10th Nov., 1876.

"Quebec Mercury, 17 April, 1809."

"THE LITERARY SOCIETY OF QUEBEC will give a silver medal to the person who will produce the best verses, in the English, French or Latin languages, on the birth of His Majesty George III.

"The verses accompanied with a letter containing the name of the author and sealed with his seal, to be forwarded, under cover, by the 20th May next, post-paid, addressed as follows: "To Mr. Louis Plamondon, Secretary to the Literary Society, Quebec."

"As the Society wishes to know the name of the successful candidate, the letters containing the signatures of the authors of the other verses will be returned to the person reclaiming them, upon his giving satisfactory information of the seal and writing being his.

"The prize will be given to the person to whom it is adjudged, either to himself, or by his attorney, on SATURDAY, the 3rd June, at two o'clock, in a public sitting of the Society.

"By order of the President,

"LOUIS PLAMONDON,
Secretary."

"Quebec, April 5th, 1809."

VARIETIES.

A NEW ORNAMENT.—An antique bell, recently found in the excavations of the Esquiline, one of the seven hills of Rome, was sold to a French antiquarian in that city. This bell was worn by ladies round the neck in the reign of King Tullius (before the era of the Roman Emperors) as a charm. On the bell is an engraved inscription in Greek:

"TOICOM MACIN*
ATTOTET AΓMAI*"

which signifies

"God preserve us from the evil eye."

The Princess Margherita (Crown Princess of Italy) on hearing of this little treasure trove, expressed a great desire to see it, and was so pleased with its appearance that she ordered her Jeweller to execute a number of necklaces and earrings, copying the bell as the design. These she presented to each of the *dames de Cour*.

BALZAC.—Balzac's correspondence from the age of twenty till within two months of his death has been published in Paris. Most of the letters are to his sister, and the last epistle—to Théophile Gauthier—was dictated to Madame de Balzac, the novelist having only strength to sign his name and add the words, "I can neither read nor write." Balzac's hours for work were generally from one o'clock in the morning till eight, he would then have a short sleep, go out driving or visiting, dine early, and go to bed at six or seven in the evening. At other times he would work from midnight till noon, or from seven in the evening till seven the next morning. Balzac never read over his manuscripts till in proof, and the proof sheets always had enormous margins, which were soon covered with close writing, a short story being thus extended to a lengthy novel. These additions and corrections cost him a large part of his income.

BUSY MINISTERS.—Lord Beaconsfield has had three days' holiday at Birmingham, and all the rest of the recess has been spent either in London or at Hughenden, with a secretary travelling backwards and forwards every day. Lord Derby has not been out of town for a single day. He is at the Foreign Office eight, ten, and twelve hours a day. You may see him striding through

the Park every morning from St. James's-square to Downing-street, and from that time till eight or nine o'clock at night he is reading or writing telegrams, is closeted with Ambassadors hour after hour, or is penning dispatches to the Porte, to St. Petersburg, or Vienna. Yet the man who submits, in this way, to all this drudgery and imprisonment is a man with an income of £150,000 a year, with splendid estates, with all that can make life pleasant, and an intense love of country life! It is exactly the same all round.

ONE-SIDED DEVELOPMENT.—The habit of using the right hand in preference to the left among those peoples whose monuments date from the remotest antiquity appears to be a universal fact, and this is accounted for by the anatomical mechanism of the human body. It is known that the right lung, liver-lobe, and limbs exceed in size those of the left side, involving, of course, a greater amount of tissue structure and a larger supply of nerves and blood-vessels for their nutrition. A person walking in a dense fog figures with his feet the segment of a circle, and, if he is right-handed, he takes a direction to the left, because the right leg naturally takes a longer stride. The left side of the brain is larger than the right, and, as it appears that the power of verbal articulation in the right handed is confined to a certain convolution on the left side, the conclusion is arrived at that, in speaking and thinking, the left side of the brain is used, this being the result of dextral education.

AN INTERESTING MANUSCRIPT.—The National Library of Paris has just made the acquisition of a very precious manuscript by Denis Papin, the illustrious philosopher who originally discovered the use which might be made of steam as a motive power. The manuscript is entitled "A Treatise on Painless Operations." In it the author describes the different means which may be used to lull the sensibility of patients and to spare them the pain of operations. It is known that Papin, disgusted at the shackles which were placed on his researches in medicine, gave himself up to philosophical pursuits. The manuscript in question was written in 1681. Papin, when leaving Germany to return to France, gave it to an old friend, Dr. Bremer, who alone had sustained him by his encouragement and appreciation. This manuscript finally fell into the hands of Pador Lahn, a schoolmaster in the environs of Marburg, who has lately died. His heir has sold it to the National Library for a considerable price.

CARLYLE.—Mr. Carlyle receives his visitors in the little house where he has dwelt ever since coming to London, No. 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, near the famous hospital founded by Nell Gwynne, and not far from where Sir Thomas Moore lived—Henry VIII.'s great chancellor. The street is old and dingy and unattractive, but it is close to the Thames and to a magnificent bridge, and to most charming views from every side. Mr. Carlyle's house is small, plain and unpretentious on the outside, but full of manifold charm within. The afternoon sun streams in through three small windows in the drawing-room, the patriarch sitting in a capacious arm-chair in front of the fireplace and a glowing fire, for London is in a fog and the day is cool. There are book-shelves on either side of the fireplace. On the shelves is a complete set of Ruskin's works. Emerson and some other of the American writers also hold a conspicuous rank in Carlyle's library. Carlyle is now very feeble through age, but his memory is still marvellous, and the flow of his talk is unabated.

CARLYLE ON DARWIN.—I have known three generations of the Darwins, grandfather, father, and son; atheists all. The brother of the present famous naturalist, a quiet man, who lives not far from here, told me that among his grandfather's effects he found a seal engraven with this legend: "Omnia ex conchis," everything from a clam shell! I saw the naturalist not many months ago; told him that I had read his "Origin of the Species," and other books; that he had by no means satisfied me that men were descended from monkeys, but had gone far toward persuading me that he and his so-called scientific brethren had brought the present generation of Englishmen very near to monkeys. A good sort of man is this Darwin, and well meaning, but with very little intellect. Ah, it is a sad and terrible thing to see nigh a whole generation of men and women professing to be cultivated, looking around in a purblind fashion and finding no God in this universe. I suppose it is a reaction from the reign of cant and hollow pretence, professing to believe what in fact they do not believe.

METZ.—The Messines seldom leave their houses. They live amongst themselves and for themselves. Their houses resemble little castles, of which they keep garrison. There they can speak openly and comfort each other. The principles of honour and fidelity are so strong in this city that the Messines will never imitate the example of the German barterers and pedlars. It is now more than five years Metz has lived under the foreign rule, and she, the *invicta*, has not yet thrown off the marble mask she assumed the day she was taken by force and treason. When the troops march past the blinds are down; while the bands are playing the shutters are put to. The Messines who remained in the town are mostly old people or children, who have nothing to fear from the recruiting law. The female population, which was 48,000, is now reduced to 18,000, and the number is daily increasing of those who leave the

land of desolation and mourning. There are now 3,500 apartments to let. The Rue Serpenoise, the finest of the town, is placarded with bills for letting or selling houses and hotels. A great number of shops are closed, and the trade of the German shopkeepers is insignificant.

A LOOK AT HAMERTON.—The writer of an interesting article on "Philip Gilbert Hamerton," in the November International Review, says that "his general appearance is singularly attractive. In person he is well formed and athletic, with a noble head, regular features, a clear and penetrating eye, and a fine beard, which is worn full. The type of his features is decidedly American rather than English, and his countenance is strongly suggestive of that of George Macdonald, if, indeed, it cannot be said to resemble the latter." His habits of life are spoken of as "quiet and regular in the extreme. He generally employs the early hours of the morning in literary composition, and reserves several of the best and lightest hours of the day clear for practical art. Toward evening he has another literary sitting, after which he dines with his family. He has wisely given up all literary work at night. Once in a while, for the sake of recreation, he takes a run to Paris, or London, or Switzerland, but even these visits are turned to good account, and amid exercise he picks up a good many grains of knowledge. His republican sympathies are very strong, and he has watched the political events of Europe and America with profound interest, and a strong faith in the growth of liberal principles and institutions." He is now engaged in writing a "Life of Turner," which will be published early next year.

ECKMANN.—This great novelist, who is not married, is an exile, without near relations. He had a grandniece at Strasbourg, who has married a German. Broken down by this sorrow, he wandered for a long time on the borders of his dear native land, the door of which is shut to him as to so many others. Before the war he had settled in the pretty valley of the Zinsel, to live after the fashion of the Ami Fritz. He is the best liver in the world; he adores the good wines of Alsace, sauerkraut, ham, the crayfish of the Zorn, the beer of Strasbourg, and he gladly loses himself in the clouds that rise from his pipe. What he loves, perhaps, still better, is shooting in the woods, long expeditions in the mountains, and discussions without end with a small group of friends. "A most worthy man, in truth, this Eckmann, and a droll fellow, too. He had decayed teeth, which gave him pain from time to time. So he had them all taken out at one sitting, and now, with a set of gums, as fresh and rosy as an infant of six months old, he munches the most solid of food and the softest of crusts. With his cheeks a little hollow, his fat chin, his long moustaches, and his bourgeois country dress, he looks like a colonel on half pay. After having long wandered like a tormented spirit near the lost paradise of Alsace-Lorraine, he has settled in the neighborhood of Saint Die, in the Vosges, with worthy friends who are connections of his.

A ROW IN THE LORDS.—Lord Albemarle says in his Recollections: "I was witness to a curious scene in the House of Lords on the 25th of April, 1853, and as a very imperfect account of it is given in Hansard, I offer my version. The debate was on the Clergy reserves in the Canada bill. The Bishop of Oxford, Dr. Wilberforce, in making some quotation, smiled. This gave offence to Lord Derby. The Bishop admitted the smile, but denied any intention thereby of imputing anything offensive.

Lord Derby—I accept at once the explanation that has been offered by the Right Reverend Prelate, but when he tells me that it is impossible for him to say anything offensive, because he has a smiling face, he will forgive me if I quote in his presence from a well-known writer, without intending in the least to apply the words to him:—

"A man may smile and smile and be a villain."

Lord Clarendon (in a voice of thunder)—"Oh, oh! oh!"

Lord Derby—What noble peer is it whose nerves are so delicate as to be wounded by a hackneyed quotation?

Lord Clarendon—I am that peer, and protest against any noble lord applying, even in the language of poetry, the epithet of villain to any member in the House, most of all the use of such an expression by a lay peer towards a right reverend prelate.

Peacemakers rose on both sides of the House. The reporters had left the gallery, the House was proceeding to a division. Lord Clarendon poured out a glass of water and drank it off. Lord Derby at the same time filled another bumper of water and called out across the table, "Your good health, Clarendon," and so the affair ended.

Lord Derby was probably not aware that the same quotation from "Hamlet" had more than fifty years before produced a similar scene in the House of Commons. My authority was the late Sir Robert Adair, who was present. The contending parties were Tierney and Pitt, who had fought a duel a short time before. Tierney was addressing the House. Pitt smiled contemptuously, upon which Tierney said, "The right honorable gentleman smiled, but need I remind him that a man may smile and smile" here he paused. "Take the fellow a message from me," cried Pitt to one of his followers, but before the bearer of the hostile mission could reach the opposition benches Tierney added, "and yet he a minister." So the affair ended in a laugh instead of a duel.