

Canadian Bibliography.*

MR. GAGNON'S essay on Canadian Bibliography is a catalogue of a library containing printed books, manuscripts and prints relating to the history of Canada and adjacent countries, with bibliographic notes. Mr. Gagnon is an alderman of the city of Quebec who has been collecting books and all sorts of antiquities relating to the history of Canada for twenty years. He is said to have spent about \$20,000 on his collection, which is, perhaps, the largest of the kind in private hands in this country. To describe his book as a mere catalogue would be to do it a great injustice. It is an annotated catalogue. In an infinite number of cases Mr. Gagnon has added notes to the description of the book. In the seven hundred and ten pages of closely printed matter there are over five thousand separate publications noticed. The infinite labour and huge expense involved in getting up this work can only be explained by the theory that it is a labour of love. Mr. Gagnon furnishes his fellow bibliophiles with a preface which appeals to every collector or enthusiast of any description whatever. We will make no apology for translating some of his paragraphs, because they explain in the most satisfactory way the pleasures and the difficulties met with by any collector of books, but more especially by any collector of Canadian books. Mr. Gagnon says:

"When twenty years ago I commenced to make this collection of Canadian books, a description of which I to-day offer to the public, I did not suspect that there were so many writings relating to Canada or upon so many varied subjects. I then undertook the task without presumption, because I was not aware of its extent or importance. As I advanced in my researches I became more and more fascinated with this kind of labour, even to the extent of becoming passionately fond of it. I spared nothing; neither journeys, nor watchfulness, nor money, in order to give free course to my rage for collecting. Thus I have come to be able to make a collection both considerable and precious of autographs, manuscript documents, maps, plans, views, portraits and book plates relating to the history of Canada.

"I know by experience I have imposed upon myself a heavy task in undertaking this work and I know also that the difficulty is in doing it well. In fact the best bibliographies are imperfect. Volumes have been written on how to form catalogues, and the result has been only a difference of opinion on a very great number of points. I have made myself thoroughly familiar with two or three of the methods employed by different authorities, and I have made from them one particular kind which appears to me to have given a little satisfaction. In my eyes the best quality of a catalogue is to be easy of consultation. In preparing my work I have not lost sight of this most essential object."

With regard to the difficulties which Mr. Gagnon has met he speaks as follows, and any person who has studied the subject will agree with him:

"The collector of Canadian publications meets obstacles and difficulties absolutely unknown in the formation of any other collection. A book printed in Canada in the beginning of our century is often more difficult to find than a book printed in Europe by those who introduced printing there more than four hundred years ago. Our Canadian books have almost always been printed with few impressions. Besides, in addition, there have only been a small number of libraries and lovers of books to take steps for their preservation. Then, again, the great number of fires which have almost made Canada a place of celebrity, and which have contributed in a great degree to the loss of precious material. Have we not seen many times our Parliamentary Libraries, made at the cost of great sacrifice by enlightened men, destroyed in a few hours by this destructive element?

"These remarks are especially true of the innumerable pamphlets which have been printed in Canada. These are the more difficult to preserve because often they are composed only of a few sheets, in appearance of little value, yet it happens that pamphlets which say the least are often

the most precious. None of them ought to be disdained, because some day or other an investigator can find there useful facts. It is from these little sheets, five, ten or thirty pages, so easily to be lost, that historians are able to find a piece of information sought for elsewhere in vain and of great assistance to them. It is for this reason that I keep with a jealous care all my little pamphlets, among which there is a large number of the greatest rarity, and which have never been described before.

"This fact that certain Canadian publications have become very rare, some irrevocably lost, seems still more astonishing when we think that the introduction of printing into Canada only dates from the middle of the last century. In fact it is generally agreed that printing came here with the first number of the Quebec Gazette on the 21st June, 1776."†

These paragraphs which we have quoted from Mr. Gagnon's preface are no doubt correct. There have been previous attempts in the way of creating a permanent record of Canadian bibliography.

In 1867 Mr. H. J. Morgan published his "Bibliotheca Canadensis," or History of Canadian Literature, and in 1886 Dr. Kingsford published his "Canadian Archaeology." Mr. Morgan's work is referred to by Mr. Gagnon as having been consulted by him frequently. He points out that the main defect in Mr. Morgan's compilation is his want of information about French Canadian publications. Dr. Kingsford's Canadian Archaeology has more reference to Upper Canada, but Mr. Gagnon makes due acknowledgment for information received also from that authority.

In a printed statement furnished with the book, Mr. Gagnon says that he is preparing a list in chronological order of Canadian works, which the author has been unable to procure, but which are known to him and most of which have been destroyed. He intended to include this list as well as an alphabetical index of names in the present volume, but he finds that the book has grown to such a size that he will be obliged to issue these two additions as a separate appendix.

Viewed in any aspect, this book of Mr. Gagnon's is a remarkable production, and he deserves a great deal of credit and the most sincere thanks of every lover of Canadian literature. His devotion and self-sacrifice are exceedingly great and the results are very instructive, and we cannot imagine that the work that he has set himself to do could possibly have been better done.

Like all catalogues, or lists of any kind, it is more than possible that books have been omitted perhaps quite as important in some instances as those described, but, however this may be, it may safely be said, that hereafter no library in Canada of any pretensions, whether private or public, can afford to be without this work. Mr. Gagnon's Bibliography will always be a standard reference.

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The Religions of the World.*

THIS excellent work, which we before noticed, was originally published as one of a series of "Guild Text Books," and having already reached a sale of no less than twelve thousand, has been reissued in a more attractive, but still inexpensive form as the first volume of "The Guild Library." The author has not only revised it, but has added two most valuable chapters on "Israel" and "Jesus Christ."

Dr. Grant is well known as an exponent of the views of believing and reverent Biblical criticisms, as represented, by Drs. Driver and Sanday, and the chapter on "Israel" is a fine example of the exposition of the history of the people and the doctrines of the prophets based upon the most generally adopted results of criticism. As Dr. Sanday some years ago advised, Dr. Grant commences with the prophets and skillfully portrays the development of their teaching about God, and Israel's conception of its relation to Him; of Messianic prophecy with special reference to the prophecies of Isaiah; of the idea of vicarious sacrifice as ex-

* "Essai de Bibliographie Canadienne Inventaire d'une Bibliothèque comprenant imprimés, manuscrits, estampes, etc., relatifs à l'histoire du Canada et des pays adjacents avec des notes Bibliographiques." Par Philéas Gagnon. Québec: Imprimé pour l'Atueur. 1895.

† On this point see Mr. Gagnon's note on number 2780, page 381.

* "Religions of the World." By G. M. Grant, D.D., L.L.D., Principal Queen's University, Kingston, Canada. Twelfth thousand. Revised and enlarged. London: A. & C. Black. Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark.