

Transvaal. The small fractional increase in the French population is wholly due to the natality courage of the foreigner. It cannot then be the interest of France to accelerate the decay of her people.

Z.

### At Street Corners.

THE idea has often occurred to me that the national societies in Toronto, numerous as they are, have a grand opportunity for popularizing the history, traditions and literature of the countries they represent. Thus, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare ought to be recited, described and expounded in the Sons of England Lodges until all the members obtain a familiarity with these prime authors. Likewise should the old castles, the old abbeys, the old regalities, towns, cities and historic families and topography furnish material for many essays and lectures, while the battles, ancient habits, wise sayings and antiquities generally should supply food for instruction and entertainment such as would prove useful and elevating. Ireland and Scotland, Germany, and even France and Italy have their representative societies, the members of which ought to do similar good service. It is true that the members of the national societies dine together once a year, and hold annual concerts, but the other features named are practically ignored. In this busy age such easy studies as my suggestions would imply would be a good antidote to the rush and bustle after gold, which is the curse, as it is the characteristic, of our day.

I was set a-thinking in this way recently by the programmes of the Gaelic Society, of Toronto, two of whose meetings it was my pleasure to attend. The first was devoted to an Ossianic programme, consisting of six papers of ten minutes duration each, dealing with various phases of Ossianic poetry, such as the authenticity of the poems, their mythology, their heroes and heroines, battle scenes, etc., a veritable study of an ancient literature not accessible except through the medium of translation to the English reader. There were songs and musical selections sandwiched between, and after a two hours' intellectual and artistic treat the floor was cleared and young and old joined in the antique dances of old Scotland until the midnight hour had arrived.

The next meeting to which I was attracted was, if possible, a better one from the educating standpoint. This time there were three papers devoted to Celtic art. First came one on the ancient melodies of the Gael, with illustrations by voice and bagpipes. It was by a young lady, as were also the other two papers, and displayed an acquaintance with the subject, and an ability to write which were of a high degree of excellence. The second paper dealt with the engravings on metal preserved in personal ornaments. It was a highly technical piece of description, in every respect admirable. The third, and last, was a paper on "Ancient Celtic Pottery and Sculpture." For both papers illustrations by lime-light views were provided and thrown on the screen by a good lantern. The whole affair came as a revelation to the audience. Few present had been aware of the wealth of art the old Celts possessed, but before the proceedings of the evening were over there were few of them who did not agree with Grant Allen as to the prevalence and far-reaching influence of the Celtic element in European Art, modern and ancient. And a feature, as suggestive as it was striking, was that the young ladies undertook to write their papers as the beginning of a study by themselves of the subjects assigned to them. It gives me pleasure to commend the course thus inaugurated by the president of the Gaelic Society to the other national societies of the city. It will pay. The national feeling will be deepened, broadened and preserved for noble and useful work in the dear land of our adoption.

There was a tyro who went to a certain expert and said unto him: "I am thinking of buying me a wheel, tell me now of thy experience which is the best in the market." And the expert said unto the tyro, "Come with me; I will show a jim dandy," and he took the tyro into a woodshed and shewed him his own wheel. And the expert said unto the tyro, "Behold now since the world began never was there such a wheel as this. It flieth faster than the sand storm before the desert wind; the antelope hath not a more graceful shape, nor the lord of all the elephants greater

strength, and for lightness the thistle down upon the meadow is not a circumstance. And behold now I will sell thee this my king of wheels for half what it cost me last year."

And the tyro marvelled greatly and communed with himself what manner of game this might be. And he said: "Oh, expert, how may this thing be? If thy words be true and this wheel all that thou sayest, why should'st thou part with it for so small a sum; expound I pray thee." Then the expert beat his bosom and said: "Oh, tyro, thou art yet a man without experience and knowest not of the folly that falleth upon us experts. Behold three days ago this wheel was all that I could desire and my soul rejoiced in its beauty and strength, but now is my heart turned away from its perfection and the sight of it is like the taste of bitter fruit in my mouth. For I have learned that there is a wheel which exceedeth this in lightness by three ounces, and my soul yearneth greatly after it. Therefore will I give thee this one for the price I have named, that I may buy that which I lust after." And the tyro marvelled at his words and bought the wheel and it was a joy unto him. And the expert likewise bought the wheel which his soul lusted after and in two days it crumpled up and cast him against a telegraph pole so that his brains, of which he had but little, ran out upon the sidewalk. So he died and went to his own place and it was written of by the scribes to be a warning to all men that they should not seek after lightness to their own destruction.

In his office of secretary of the recent horse show Mr. Stewart Houston worked appropriately, that is, he worked like a horse. The ability to do this in addition to being able to work like a "gentleman and scholar" is one to be coveted, and Mr. Houston has received numerous congratulations from his friends on the success of the venture with which he had so much to do.

I was very glad to see that Mr. E. Wyly Grier's portrait of the Hon. Edward Blake, M.P., had been hung in a good place in the Royal Academy exhibition in London. The very mention of that annual show takes me back to the metropolis in the season. I can fancy just how it looks in Hyde Park. "O, to be in England now," wrote Robert Browning in Italy. "O, to be in England now," I echo in Canada.

DIOGENES.

### Canadian Books for Canadian Libraries.

OF recent years there has been a gratifying increase in the demand for the best works of Canadian writers in college and other libraries, though there is yet a great indifference manifested by many. A publishing house in this city, who have made a commendable effort to push the sales of Canadian books, whether of their own issue or published by others, received an order from a leading Nova Scotia college recently for a number of Canadian books, the professor who gave the order accompanying it with the following words:—"I am much interested in the patriotic tone of your letter. You may like to know that the reason we have not ordered Canadian poets is that we have them already. These books are for 'the Canadian Corner' of our library, which is for books by Canadian authors, or about Canada, or with the Canadian imprint. It was the idea of the students themselves; and one of their societies, the 'Philomathic,' having about twenty dollars to spend, decided to buy Canadian books, and asked me to make a selection. And this is in a Province that is supposed to be in favour of repeal."

A "Canadian Corner" for the library is a good idea—one that other colleges and public libraries may adopt with advantage. There is plenty of "good stuff" to draw from: Dawson, Chapman, Wilson, MacIlwraith, Mrs. Traill, Gosse, in the field of science; Kingsford, Bourinot, Macmullen, Dent, Stewart, Withrow, Gow, Mrs. Edgar, the two Beggs, Read, Mary Agnes FitzGibbon, in history; Lampman, Roberts, the two Scotts, Campbell, Rogers, Lighthall, Mrs. Harrison ("Seranus"), Dewar, Bliss Carmen, Mrs. Curzon, Stuart Livingston, Mair, Edgar, Pauline Johnson, and a score of other clever poets; Grant Allen, Mrs. Cotes (nee Sara Jeannette Duncan), Gilbert Parker, Miss Dougall with reputation world-wide in the realm of fiction; J. Macdonald Oxley, Egerton R. Young, Roberts, with stories of stirring adventure for boys, and a host of other writers whose names