

since your assuming power you had already asked the Crown for a dissolution and obtained it. Two dissolutions for the same Cabinet! The extraordinary exercise of the most valued of the Royal prerogatives granted twice to the same Administration within an interval of a few months: such was the first idea which presented itself to the mind of the Lieutenant-Governor! Immediately after your entry into office, you asked the Crown to dissolve Parliament, and you had a general election. You issued from the electoral struggle with a majority, according to you, with a minority according to your opponents. But in point of fact you were enabled to govern at first with the vote of the Speaker only, and subsequently with a majority varying from four to two votes; and, in fine, you have announced to-day to the representative of the Crown that you find yourself in the House, resulting from the elections asked for by yourself, in a minority of six votes, and you claim a new dissolution.

Is it in the public interest that the Province should be subjected so frequently to general elections? Is it in accord with the spirit of the constitution that Parliament should be dissolved so often? Is the renewal at such brief intervals of the popular representation of a nature to ensure the stability and the good working of our political institutions? To all these questions the Lieutenant-Governor deems it his duty to answer—No. The wise authority awarded to us by the constitution which we enjoy has decided that general elections for this Province should take place every four years, and this period is not so long that it should be still further shortened without reasons of extraordinary gravity. The Prime Minister understands the deep and prolonged agitation with which a general election plunges society at large, as well as the divisions and demoralization which follow it. Apart from these political and social considerations there are the financial considerations. A general election and the session which a dissolution at this moment would render inevitable would cost the country a hundred thousand dollars, and in the financial situation in which we are placed, this is an expenditure which deserves to be earnestly considered.

However, if there were reasons sufficiently grave and serious to transcend all other considerations, the Lieut.-Governor admits that a dissolution might be had recourse to. But do similar reasons exist in the present case? A dissolution can have but one object, and that is to maintain in power certain men or certain parties. There would not be in this a sufficient compensation for the sacrifices which the country would be called upon to make. The Lieutenant-Governor is quite prepared to admit that the views of his Ministers are of the highest character and that the struggles to which they have led have been inspired by the best of motives; but when it becomes necessary to divide duties and responsibilities, each one must look upon the matter from his stand-point and perform the task which his position allots him. Under the present circumstances, one of the reasons which might be brought forward in support of an appeal to the people would be the necessity of restoring harmony between the two branches of the Legislature. But this harmony is very nearly restored, and if there exists any other method than dissolution to complete the reconciliation of the Council with the Assembly, the Lieutenant-Governor considers that it is his duty to make use of it. The question for the Lieut.-Governor to decide is not whether the Government is to become the victim of what his advisers call an irresponsible body. So long as his Ministers possessed the confidence of the popular branch of the Legislature he considered them as the representatives of the will of the people and maintained them in their position contrary to the wish expressed by the Legislative Council. But now the majority which the Government had in the Legislative Assembly has become a minority. The two branches of the Legislature agree upon one of the most important points—viz., a change of Government, and it cannot be alleged that recourse must be had to extraordinary means to terminate a conflict which is in a way to be terminated by ordinary means. The necessity of restoring harmony in Parliament could not, therefore, justify a dissolution after the recent vote of the Legislative Assembly, a vote which you consider as one of want of confidence. But you say you do not think this vote expresses the opinion of the people of this Province. It is, however, the vote of the House of your choice, of the House elected under your auspices, under exceptionally favourable circumstances after a dissolution asked for by you. And you would solicit the people to renew an Assembly which you yourself caused to be elected eighteen months ago. The Lieutenant-Governor, taking into account these particular circumstances, cannot understand upon what basis rests the conviction which you manifest with respect to the result of new general elections. In fine, you declare that, in your opinion, the late events require that an immediate opportunity should be afforded to the people to pronounce upon the constitutional question raised by the action of the Council in regard to the Supplies. The Lieutenant-Governor sees no necessity for appealing to the people on this point. The absolute right of the Council—at least such is the impression of the Lieutenant-Governor—is contested by no one, so that there only remains to be discussed the question of opportuneness. Now the representatives of the people, elected scarcely eighteen months ago, expressed their opinion upon this question before the adjournment of the House; and the

fact that since that adjournment they have voted want of confidence in the Administration, does not reverse their previous verdict on the question at issue, and is not sufficient of itself to warrant a dissolution. It appears to the Lieut.-Governor that there could be no more impolitic act than to revive by an altogether extraordinary proceeding a difficulty settled; and an appeal to the people just now could bear no other meaning.

For all these reasons, deeply penetrated with the feelings of his responsibility towards the Crown which he represents and towards the people of this Province, the Lieutenant-Governor does not deem it his duty to make the use you ask him of the royal prerogative, having for its object a dissolution of the Parliament.

THEODORE ROBTAILLE.

SACRED CONCERT AT THE WESLEY CHURCH.

It is remarkable that while diverse forms of musical literature have been sufficiently cultivated by the people of Montreal, sacred concerts, properly so-called, have not attained to that prominence which either their merits or the popular taste have entitled them to. It is therefore pleasant to note an exception in the case of the sacred concert held last Thursday in the Wesley Church (Congregational) of this city. Not only was the programme devised with an eye to the production of the choicest ecclesiastical music, but the execution was such as to give that music its highest and most effectual interpretation. The audience was large, the beautiful temple being crowded to the door, testifying to the zeal and energy of the ladies and gentlemen who had charge of the sale of tickets. The chorus consisted of forty voices, a large total for this city, and comprised the choirs of Wesley Church and St. Andrew's Church, with a few members of other city choirs. The concert opened with that venerable old chorale, the 100th Psalm, which was sung in a very impressive manner. The gem of the evening was the singing of Rossini's *Inflammatus*, the chorus part of which was sung with great care and steadiness—a difficult task to accomplish without the assistance of a conductor. The solo portion was entrusted to Mrs. Leach, and as that lady was in good voice, it only remains to add that her performance was thoroughly artistic. Miss Mary Malby sustained her well-earned reputation by the handsome style in which she rendered "Hannah's Prayer" from the "Eli" of Sir Michael Costa. The other lady soloists were the Misses Scott, who made a deep impression by their excellent phrasing, and Mrs. McGarity, who sang with power and effect. Of the gentlemen soloists, Mr. Miller and Mr. Malby are both so well and favourably known to Montreal audiences that we need only say they sang efficiently, both being in good voice. Mr. Reid did himself justice in his solo, as also Mr. Pennington, who is possessed of a light, but very sweet tenor voice, and we must not forget Mr. Clapham, who sings as well as he plays the trumpet, and distinguished himself in the tenor solo part of the anthem "The Lord is my Strength." Mr. Madie, so well known and always so reliable, performed in an artistic manner two soli on the splendid organ of the church—one a fugue in G minor, and the other a prelude and fugue in E minor, both compositions of J. S. Bach. Mr. Popham, the organist of the church, delivered the overture of the Caliph of Bagdad, which was deservedly *encored*, and the grand Hallelujah Chorus, from Handel's Messiah. As was fitting, the Rev. Mr. Roy returned the thanks of the Committee to the ladies and gentlemen who assisted at the concert, after which a very pleasant hour was spent at the refreshment tables in the Lecture Hall of the church.

FRENCH POETS OF TO-DAY.

Among the younger poets of France is a notable group sometimes called Les Parnassiens. This title has arisen from the incident that they have been most of them contributors to the weekly publication, "Le Parnasse Contemporain." In this organ they set forth the doctrine of their school which was to some extent a protest against the established poetical orthodoxy of their country. They proclaimed that the subject of a poem is not everything; that emotion or utility is no irrefutable proof of beauty; that to weep or to teach are not enough to make a great poet. They sought to banish from poetry the sentimental common-places which had monopolized its fairest pages, and to restore to art its rightful sway. They recognized the fact that pity, tenderness, love must always remain great and sublime sources of inspiration; but must ever be inadequate until expressed by means of a perfect style, rhythm and rhyme; in one word, a perfect form. First among these disciples of the new school may be ranked

LEON DIERX.

He was born at Mauritius. He has published three volumes of verses: "Poèmes et Poésies," "Lèvres Closées" and "Les Paroles du Vaincu," united in one volume under the title "Poésies" (1864—1872.) Also a comedy produced with great success, "La Rencontre." He has just put forth a new volume of poems, entitled "Les Amants." Poetry is the natural function of his mind, and verse the only possible expression of his thoughts; the base realities around him are as things he sees not, or, if he sees them, it is

from a height that renders them vague, confused, with their ugliness toned down by distance; on the other hand, all that is lovely and pure, the innocence of maidens, the serenity of heroes, the proud sadness of the vanquished, are like the atmosphere his soul breathes serenely in, a realm of inner life which has the infinite softness of moon-haunted woodlands or azure inland seas. If human eyes could look into the mysterious land of thought, there might be seen passing through the twilight vistas of this poet's mind, pairs of white-robed visions hand in hand, with low-toned speech of regret or hope made rhythmic by the strokes of some distant bell borne mellowed across the mists of a valley.

Can any one be insensible to the penetrating harmony of the "Soir d'Octobre," deliciously cadenced as the winds of autumn—a poem in which the dreams and loves of the past flit before us, vanishing and returning in persistent rhythmical rotation? Yet it must be avowed that so profound an effort to render the dreamiest side of things by wrought-out tenderesses of harmony and expression, does not escape an occasional cloudiness of idea and indelicacy of phrase, and if these characteristics constitute, perhaps, an additional charm in "Le Soir d'Octobre," "Les Filasos," "Nuit de Juin" and "Les Remous," there are other poems in which they are less happily met with. Léon Dierx has long merited the reproach of not presenting poetic thoughts or images with sufficient incisiveness. Warned of this failing by his friends and by his own artistic consciousness, the author of "Lèvres Closées" deliberately combated his natural tendency, and to such efforts we owe a large number of pieces in which his inspiration, while losing nothing of the dreamy charm, which is its originality, gains in precision of utterance and robustness of form. There are few poems so perfectly conceived and executed as the following:—

LAZARUS.

At Jesus' voice dead Lazarus awoke;
Livid he stood a moment in the gloom;
Then, with the grave-clothes on him as a cloak,
He staggered forward from the open tomb.

Silent, alone, he walked into the town.
Crossing the common folk and common things,
In quest it seemed of some one he had known,
Silent, alone, in ceaseless wanderings.

Beneath the deadened pallor of his brow
His eyes no lightning gave; nor, with a glance—
As through Eternity that held him now
Drew the look inward—changed his countenance.

Sombre as madness, with uncertain feet
As a weak child's, he went, or like one dazed
In an uncertain air. Along the street
Folk parted as he came and stood amazed.

For knowing nothing of the common hum
Of earthly tones whose sense could no more reach
His wrapt awe-stricken soul, he passed them dumb,
With fearful thoughts to tell that found no speech.

Sometimes he shook with fever stretched and stirred
An eager hand as to address that throng;
But unseen fingers stayed the mystic word
Of some remote to-morrow on his tongue.

Then a great terror came on young and old
In Bethany: the horror of the eyes
Of him who wandered through their midst made cold
And stilled the stoutest hearts in drear surprise.

Ah, who shall tell this infinite unknown pain,
Rejected of the grave that keeps its dead,
Clad for the grave, sent living back again
To relive life and thine own steps retreat!

O bearer with sealed lips of all the lore
Men yearn to know but shrink from over-awed,
Could'st thou be human—feel the care once more
Fret in that heart where late the death-worm gnawed!

Scarce had death's darkness given thee back to-day,
Thou, passing spectral through the infernal crowds,
Caught by no griefs or joys along the way,
Thy life in some new gloom itself enshrouds.

Thy second life leaves nothing but the track
Of those returning footsteps, and a tale
Appalling on men's lips. Did Death reach back
With stronger grip a second time, or fail!

How often, when the shadows lengthening grow,
A vast Form in the distance, wert thou seen,
With lifted arms against day's dying glow,
Calling some slow death-angel!—or between

The grass-grown hillocks of the burial ground,
Threading toy way, heavy with speechless pain,
And envy of the dead, who, dying found
Peace in their graves and came no forth again!

This poem, in which novelty of subject is exempt from all strained singularity of treatment, every line, clear, strong and fine in quality, contributing to the impression of beauty aimed at through the whole, is not an exception in the range of Léon Dierx's work; similar originality of thought is found in "Le Rêve de la Mort," similar clearness of expression and imagery in "Le Rendez-vous," perhaps more of dreamy depth in "Mater Dolorosa;" and everywhere the same impressive harmony of word and rhythm.

AFTERNOONS WITH THE POETS.

Under the above title a Mr. C. D. Deshler gives to the world a volume that might with more propriety have been called "Something about Sonnets and Sonnet writers," for the book is absolutely confined to that particular style of composition. The work is supposed to be written by one who might be styled the listening participant in a dialogue, for the writer's own remarks which are at first little more than leading questions and spurs to his companion's powers of repartee, cease altogether on the last afternoon, and leave that latter personage in undisputed possession of the grassy rostrum from which he delivers a pleasant valedictory

discourse. The author and his friend the professor are enjoying the last walk of their summer vacation before returning, the former to the Stock Exchange and his financial speculations, and the latter, most probably, to his books and college lecture room.

The writer opens the way to the pleasant and interesting discourses that follow, by the random question, "What is your idea of a Sonnet?" which catches the professor somewhat unawares as he lies prone upon the turf, watching the curling smoke from his fragrant Havana. After some pleasant sprightly banter we have a short sketch of the Italian Sonnets and their authors, and the introduction into England of that form of verse by Wyatt and Surrey after which, on the succeeding afternoons, follows an account of the progress of the Sonnet down to the present day. The real value of the work consists in the number of Sonnets given as examples of the style of the Roman writers from the early period just mentioned to those who still adorn the literary and social world with their presence. Of course it has been quite impossible to do more than mention the names of many who contributed to this peculiar form of composition, much less than to give extracts from their works, but we are of opinion that the usefulness of the book would have been greatly enhanced had the citations from the older and more obscure poets been more extended, while giving fewer examples from whose works are upon every drawing-room table, and thus within easy reach of the general reader. As is it, however, the book is a very pleasing combination of conversational criticism and example that will doubtless stimulate many who have hitherto given but little attention to this branch of literature to a more lively interest in a form of poetry that will repay a closer study. Mr. Deshler deserves the hearty thanks of all unto whose hands his pleasant idle hour volume may fall. The book is from the presses of Harper Brothers, and is a beautiful specimen of the work for which that first of American houses is justly celebrated.

JEWISH POPULATION OF THE WORLD.

The 56th annual report for 1878 of the Berlin Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews has been lately published. There is no concealment of the fact that the visible results do not correspond with the wishes of the society. The receipts during the year amounted to only 16,731 marks (about £836), of which 11,951 marks (about £597) were the proceeds of a simultaneous collection on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity, in all the Protestant churches of the kingdom of Prussia. In the appendix, some interesting details are given respecting the distribution of the Jews all over the world. The total number of the Hebrew race to-day is about what it was in the days of King David—between six and seven millions. There are in Europe, according to the latest statistical information, about five millions; in Asia, 200,000; in Africa, over 80,000; in America, from a million to a million and a half. More than half of the European Jews (2,621,000) reside in Russia; 1,375,000 in Austria (of whom 575,000 are in the Polish Province of Galicia); 512,000 in Germany (61,000 in the Polish province of Posen); Roumania is credited with 274,000, and Turkey with 100,000. There are 70,000 in Holland, 50,000 in England, 49,000 in France, 35,000 in Italy; Spain and Portugal have between 2,000 and 4,000; 1,500 in Sweden, 25 in Norway. Nothing is said about Denmark or Switzerland. The number of Jewish residents in Berlin is given at 45,000 nearly as many as in the whole of France, and more than in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Scandinavian peninsula altogether. The majority of the African Jews live in the Province of Algiers. But they are to be found in Abyssinia, and all along the north coast, and even in the Saharan oases, frequently acting as intermediaries between the Mohammedans and Christians. Of the Asiatic Jews, 20,000 are assigned to India, and 25,000 to Palestine. The population of Jerusalem is given at 7,000 Mohammedans, 5,000 Christians, and 13,500 Jews; these last are classified as German, Spanish, or Arabic Jews. The report gives no details concerning America, except that in New York there are 30 synagogues.

A GENERAL EVIL.—It seems to be the common idea nowadays, when young girls have been "finished" at some high-class educational establishment, that they are then prepared to meet all the ups and downs of their future life. Their books are laid aside, their accomplishments neglected, and, sinking into mental apathy, they either engage in a round of unmeaning social observances, or perhaps, deprived of congenial society and not knowing how to employ the resources at their command, they become so utterly discontented that they are ready to resort to any desperate enterprise with hopes of relief. In fact, it is one of the common evils of to-day to forget that, when school-life is over, "the weal or woe of a generation to come" has commenced. This responsibility is seen in a girl's own hands, and it requires a large amount of practical knowledge, not picked up in the school-room, to fulfil the duties of life at this period. If girls become wives or mothers, this practical knowledge is necessary; if they remain single, they will be able, with its help, to contribute their mite to the sum of human knowledge; and, finally, if they let whatever their hands find to be done, discontent or ennui will never be their mental guests.