

IN MEMORIAM.

THE HONOURABLE ALEXANDER MACKENZIE.

Integer Vitæ Scelerisque Purus. Hor. Lib. I, Ode 21.

OF Scottish birth and racy of the soil
 In speech and shrewd intelligence—he rose,
 By honest toil of skilful hand and brain,
 To the chief place in his adopted land ;
 Where, holding fast by his unswerving faith
 In equal rights and laws for rich and poor.
 Ordained by rulers of the people's choice—
 And strict frugality, the surest source
 Of public wealth—by many courtesy
 To each and all, he won the deep respect
 Of friends and generous foes ; nor lost it when
 His power passed to bolder hands, nor when
 His patriot record closed—in death he slept,
 And o'er MACKENZIE'S GRAVE a sorrowing people wept.
 W.

OTTAWA LETTER.

safely followed only by a stronger nation in dealing with a weaker. The payment of the indemnity demanded by the Italian Government will raise the reputation of the United States for fair dealing. It is pleasing to believe that this course has been dictated by a sense of justice, rather than by a less exalted motive. It would no doubt have been still more frank and praiseworthy had Mr. Blaine, or the President, had the moral courage to admit freely that the reparation was really due according to every principle of international equity, whatever might be the lack of provision in the constitution and the laws for meeting such an emergency, instead of claiming credit for the payment as an act of grace, as seems now to be done. As, however, the Italian authorities seem to have been satisfied with the acknowledgment and the manner in which it has been made, others need not, we suppose, complain. It is satisfactory to all lovers of peace and good feeling among the nations to know that this incident is so well ended and that good feeling is being restored between the two peoples concerned. It is probable that, in accordance with the President's recommendation, legislation will be had to render such a plea unavailable in any future case of the kind. In any event, a precedent has now been made which no future administration will care to ignore.

WHY is it that the advocates of radical reform in the spelling of English make so little progress in securing the adoption of a simpler and more natural method? It can hardly be denied that they have the best of the argument, in the somewhat rare cases in which serious argument is attempted in support of the present illogical and often whimsical forms. The defence has sometimes been based on the obliteration of etymological clues which would be the effect of the adoption of a purely phonetic system, and this is perhaps the argument which is generally most relied on by opponents of change. It is one which appeals more powerfully than any other to the scholarly classes. But it is easy to show that the present orthography of our English words is in very many cases utterly unreliable and often positively misleading as a guide to their derivation, a fact which seriously weakens, though it does not by any means destroy, the force of the etymological plea. In fact, in the eyes of those who attach great importance to derivation, not only as a guide to exact definition and usage, but as a valuable aid in historical research, the objection above noted would indicate the necessity of a spelling reform of a radically different kind, with a view to the correction of the mistakes which have resulted from the ignorance of early writers and lexicographers. There are of course various other objections with which the advocates of phonetic spelling are from time to time confronted, such as the effect which the change they propose would have in rendering the literature of to-day and preceding centuries as unreadable as if written in an unknown tongue, to succeeding generations. But we do not remember to have seen stated—though very likely this is because we have not read extensively in regard to the controversy—what seems to us to be without doubt the chief, though perhaps undefined, obstacle to the adoption of the reform. Is it not the fact that to readers the conception conveyed by the written word is formed through the medium of the eye rather than the ear, and so is associated with the form rather than the sound of the printed word? The weight of etymology as well as logic may be on the side of *rime*, *iland*, etc. But none the less the mind which has become accustomed to associate the ideas for which the printed symbols stand with the forms *rhyme*, *island*, etc., will not, without a distinct and troublesome effort, learn to connect those ideas with the former as it now does without conscious effort with the latter. The arguments of the spelling reformers seem to be generally based on the assumption that the chief use of the written forms is to represent the sounds of the spoken language, whereas it is doubtful whether the practised reader translates the symbols into sounds at all. To him the written or printed character becomes the sign, not of a sound, but of an idea. This may constitute a selfish and quite insufficient reason for opposing a change which has so much to be said in its favour, but it none the less may explain the fact that the majority so doggedly adhere to the old system. Even a scholar finds it a formidable task to read understandingly an article written according to any of the phonetic methods. May he not be excused if he shrinks from the task of having to learn his native language over again, so far as its use in reading and writing is concerned? The reform will no doubt come in time, but like all linguistic changes, it will be by slow and almost imperceptible degrees.

OTTAWA was unusually quiet in a parliamentary sense last week. The Easter recess corresponds to what in olden times was called the truce of God, when two contending armies, during a certain religious season enjoined by Mother Church, were ordered to refrain from warfare. And now a further adjournment until Thursday has been decided upon out of respect to the memory of the late Mr. Mackenzie, and in order that those members who can may attend the funeral. When the House met to-day (Tuesday) after the very first preliminaries, Sir John Thompson arose and made a pleasing, though not effusive, allusion to the dead ex-Premier. He said, he was a man who, by reason of his achievements and the important position which he occupied in connection with public affairs of the Dominion of Canada, had won for himself the esteem of all classes in the land. On behalf of those politically associated with him (Sir John) he was sure he could say that, on account of the great services Mr. Mackenzie had rendered, as well as the noble qualities he represented, his loss was as deeply felt by them as by those across the floor of the House.

Naturally, much was expected from Mr. Laurier, and although his remarks were brief, and spoken with suppressed feelings, the visitors in the galleries were not disappointed. The leader of the Opposition began by comparing, in no invidious manner, the respective deaths, as political events, of the late Sir John Macdonald and of his long-time opponent, just gone to his rest. It was Sir John Macdonald's good luck to fall at his post, to die in harness. In the very gaze of the public eye, he was called from the field of practical strife to eternal rest. Then the speaker dwelt upon the long years during which Mr. Mackenzie was so afflicted as to be practically dead, and reached a high pitch of pathetic eloquence when he said it was, "in the middle of the day, which is to Christians the symbol of victory over death, that the long imprisoned soul was released from its shackles and he now lives forever." "Mr. Mackenzie," continued the speaker, "was not of the stern, cold, ungracious nature, that many people supposed. On the contrary, he was endowed with a quaint humour peculiar to his race, and he fully enjoyed and appreciated the unrestraint of intimate life." Mr. Mills followed, pointing out the indefatigable perseverance and wonderfully retentive memory possessed by the deceased statesman, and then the House adjourned.

Before the recess, and since my last letter, there were two matters of particular interest to the House and to the country at large. One was of a constitutional nature, while the other is of special moment to the gentlemen of the legal calling. Sir John Thompson moved that the House afford the necessary authority for providing that the evidence of the parties accused before the respective enquiring committees last year be procured for the trials which were to have commenced at the Assizes to-day. By this resolution it is provided that all clerks and short-hand writers shall be enabled to give evidence as to the admissions made by the accused at the meetings of these committees. Mr. Mills, who is great on objections to Government proposals, feared that the resolution would tend to render enquiry or investigation into abuses abortive in all time to come. However, the motion was agreed to. Everyone was looking forward to these trials to come off this week, but, on application of Mr. S. H. Blake, the presiding judge has granted an adjournment till the autumn assizes. Mr. Blake has promised that all the books required for the purposes of the trial will then be on hand. Much is dependent in those trials on the evidence of Mr. Perley, the late chief Engineer of Public Works. He is a very sick man, and has suffered terribly since the investigations began, mind and body being alike afflicted. The doctors now say he is mending, and will be the better prepared to tell what he has to tell in the latter part of the summer than he now is.

Sir John Thompson explained the Bill which he has introduced respecting the criminal law, showing that the Bill aimed at a codification of both common law and statutory law, and, while it did not aim at completely superceding the common law, it did aim at completely superceding the statutory law relating to crimes. It will be interesting to those who are in the habit of attending criminal cases as jurors or spectators to learn that if this Bill becomes law we will hear no more

of the familiar phrase, "with malice aforethought." This change will be made on the ground, well taken, that the general public attach a very different meaning to the word "malice" from that which is given it in criminal law. Another very important change in legal phraseology proposed by the Bill is the substitution of the word "theft" for the word "larceny." Of course these are two of the most apparent provisions of the Bill and are particularly interesting as tending to show the inconvenience of a difference in language in courts of law from that used in the ordinary business of life.

The active militia of Canada is coming in for some well-deserved criticism. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that it is the management of this department which is receiving the most censure. Sir Adolph Caron does not appear to have covered himself with glory as a soldier, and the shuffle, which puts Mr. McKenzie Bowell at the head of the militia, is hailed with pleasure by all interested in the military force. Major-General Herbert's report was very out-spoken, plain and altogether soldier-like, and will take much better throughout the country than the silly flattery to which our ill-disciplined militia officers have become too well used. General Herbert speaks highly of the material from which soldiers may be moulded, but implies that the developing apparatus is clumsy and impracticable. He makes several new suggestions that have already won for him commendation from members on both sides of the House. The Royal Military College, Kingston, met with severe handling when the item was discussed in committee, and there were some very practical suggestions made by many of those who participated. Mr. Bowell promises to thoroughly look into the management of this institution.

The latest rumour regarding the Caron charges is that full opportunity for investigation will be allowed the Opposition. Upon the result of this and upon the nature of the Redistribution Bill the length of the session depends.

T. C. L. K.

A LOSS TO CANADIAN SCHOLARSHIP.

Great men have been among us ; hands that penned
 And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none.

SO Wordsworth wrote of England, and so, in a lesser sense, may we say of Canada. But how has Canada treated such men? We had a Hatch among us, who had to go home in order to be thought great. We had a Fraser and a Gibson, of whom we had but a small opinion, till England's metropolis gave them a standing. Well was it for Candlish's fame that he resisted the call to Ancaster, and for Huxley's that he did not accept the invitation of the University of Toronto. Canada has been the slaughter-house of learning and genius. How many, throughout the Dominion, knew the Rev. George Coull, M.A., the intimate of Dr. Norman MacLeod's study, the fellow-rambler with Hyde Clarke in Asia Minor, the co-worker with Wood of Ephesus, the greatest Hebraist, the profoundest Grecian, the most accomplished linguist, the simplest-hearted, kindest man-child in all Canada? They can be counted on your fingers, and even these never appreciated the man at his true value. Born in Banffshire in 1827, Lord Mount Stephen and Sir Donald Smith, whose fortunes have been so different, knew him well. His uncle sent him to the Grammar School at Aberdeen, and, such was his progress, that, between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, he entered the University of King's College, where he paid his own way with prize money. While an all-round scholar, excellent in classics, his chief proficiency was in Oriental languages. The Rev. Duncan Anderson, formerly of Levis, Quebec, poet and ornithologist, and the friend of the Marquis of Lorne, when Governor-General, tells how Coull took the first prize, and he, the second ; and others relate that Professor Scott used to say of the young Orientalist : "You will be my successor, sir." In 1850, having completed his studies, he became tutor in the family of Mitchell, of Thanestown, and in 1857 was ordained by the Church of Scotland as missionary to Smyrna, a post for which his great linguistic attainments eminently qualified him.

Mr. Coull's eleven years in Smyrna constituted the most eventful epoch in his life. His tall, spare figure, crowned with an intellectual face, set with almost dreamy eyes, yet radiant with a kindly smile, was well known in the ancient city of Homer. Every Saturday he preached in Judæo Spanish to the Hebrews, like St. Paul of old ; and, on Sundays, the sailors and English residents listened to his words of wisdom. During the rest of the week he superintended the Jewish school, which he had established under Mr. Späth, and the Greek under Mr. Kynegos, truly a man of many labours. The Asiatic cholera broke out, and people were dying in hundreds, after two or three hours' sickness. Mr. Coull sent his wife and children away to a village, three miles from the plague-infected city, but himself remained at his post, like a true soldier of the cross. None of his friends, not even his wife, knew what he was doing, while he and the brave Irish Dr. Mackeath for months stayed there, going about constantly, nursing and caring for the sick and the dying. Even when the great death passed away, he took no rest. While, on account of the excessive heat, all business was suspended, and everyone else was simply resting, he was out visiting the bazaars, because then he could talk to the Jews in their leisure hours, the apostolic man ! And yet he found leisure for work of a more purely intellectual kind. Greek,