

## ART NOTES.

The report of the Art Association of Montreal for the year ending December the 17th, 1884, is published. The following digest of its more important features will be of interest: Two exhibitions were held during the year—one being the annual exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy, which was opened by His Excellency the Marquis of Lansdowne in April. The collection consisted of ninety-four oil, and eighty-three water-colour paintings, with fifteen architectural drawings. The good effect of European training on the work of Canadian artists was noticeable. The number of visitors was two thousand six hundred and twenty-one. The experiment of evening exhibitions was a failure, the receipts not even covering the expenses. In May an exhibition of the work of pupils of the art classes was held, two hundred and fifty drawings being on view. Increased accommodation has been afforded to the pupils of these classes and the list of pupils has increased; the numbers are not, however, given. Mr. Robert Harris, R.C.A., is the head master. The Hon. Robert MacKay, the President of the Association, and Mr. Harris, contributed each a lecture during the season, the subjects being, respectively, "A Century of Painters of the Venetian School," and "Some Early Florentine Painters." No additions were made to the Gibb Gallery, either by gift or purchase during the year. The Reading Room, devoted to art literature, is an important and successful feature of the institution, and an endeavour is being made to form a Fine Art Library. It has been found necessary to abandon the scheme of an "Art Union," the object of which was to place before the public, by means of etchings, the works of Canadian artists. The receipts have barely covered the expenses. The general financial position of the Association is not satisfactory, its ordinary income not having sufficed for the past three or four years to meet its ordinary expenditure. The formation of a sustentation fund is in view. The total number of members for the past year was 445. The number of visitors to the Picture Gallery was 16,948, of whom 2,896 paid for admission.

The Council again urge the desirability of the remission of the existing customs duties levied on works by artists of acknowledged merit. They observe: "A high tariff, of a necessity, acts as a powerful deterrent to the infusion of an artistic spirit in any community," an opinion in which only the blindest and most wilful ignorance of the needs of art-life will fail to concur.

In these days of photogravure, and the absolute reproduction of an artist's work which at little cost it places in everyone's hands, it is little to be wondered at that line engraving has been growing more and more an extinct art. There are still, however, some masters left, and in the engraving of Alma Tadema's "The Parting Kiss," just completed by M. Auguste Blanchard after two years' labour, there is evidence of good and careful work, though the means of exact comparison afforded by a photogravure of the same painting now in the market will make the critics captious. The picture represents the good-bye of a Roman mother to her daughter, preparatory to an afternoon drive to the circus: too slight a motive, perhaps, for such an amount of ambitious canvas. M. Blanchard has already produced engravings after Meissonier and Holman Hunt, besides others from Alma Tadema, notably "The Vintage Festival." He is now going to work on "The Oleander," Alma Tadema's picture of 1883.

AFTER having successfully etched Mr. John Collier's fine portrait of Darwin, M. Flameng has reproduced its companion by the same hand, a portrait of Professor Huxley, the father-in-law of the artist.

A LARGE etching of Westminster Abbey has just been produced by M. Delauney, being an external view of the north transept, the nave and towers. Its character is said to be somewhat theatrical. This is an important addition to the long list of cathedrals and other famous buildings upon which the etcher's art has of late been exercised. Oxford, Cambridge, and Old London have been happy hunting-grounds for M. Brunet, Debaines, Mr. Farraux and Mr. Ernest George, while the "Rouen Cathedral" of M. Lhermitte promises to be a well-known work, as are already Axel Haig's plates of Chartres and Mont St. Michel.

A LARGE photogravure, coloured by hand, after Major Giles' picture of "The Charge of the 10th Hussars at El-Teb," in which the painter was engaged, has been published, ministering in lesser degree to the martial sentiment of the day, which M. De Neuville and Mrs. Butler (Miss Thompson) have so ably served.

THE advocates for the formation in London of a Gallery of British Art, suggest as an admirable site the Thames Embankment between the Temple and Blackfriars Bridge. Here they consider should be erected a sober and useful Jacobean or Caroline building, having a maximum of wall space and the minimum of architectural display, and to it should be brought the British pictures from the National Gallery, and best of the South Kensington collection. Then, starting beyond the days of Hogarth, there should be secured specimens of the works of Stone and Dobson, and of the naturalized foreign painters who flourished under the later Stuarts, and so down to these present days of grace. How noble, interesting and valuable a collection this would be requires no showing. The wonder is that its formation was not thought of and carried out years ago.

Poor Bastien Lepage's last work, unfinished, is now on view in London: a garret scene of a small boy sharing supper with two hungry friends—a cat and a kitten, a triad such as the artist loved to paint. The new gallery contains also some three hundred and forty-five pictures, figure and landscape subjects painted by M. Van Beers, a Belgian, and one of the most successful young painters of the day, but one whose brilliant talent is too frequently degraded by uncleanly use.

SOME very sensible remarks were recently made by Sir Frederick Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, upon the subject of decentralization. This he considered of great importance in Art, as in other forms of intellectual development in which individuality has to play a leading part. He cited the influence of the independence of the Italian States each of the other, as producing aesthetic expressions of Art wholly personal and individual to themselves, and also the marked and unmistakable distinction between the Art work of the Scotch and the English painters, distinctive characteristics being shown by the Scotch Art because it is sincere, and like all sincere art, mirrors the temper and moods of the man whose utterance it is. The thought so expressed by Sir Frederick Leighton has found words on this side of the Atlantic, and American artists have been urged to allow themselves to be imbued with the special characteristics of a locality, its scenery, its people, its phases of thought and feeling, and its distinctive life. It is true, however, that whatever enchanting divergencies from the normal may hereafter arise, all things must have a beginning, and here in Canada we want first to learn how to draw and paint and how to see and think and feel as artists. There is a good deal of solid hard work to be got through, even for our best men, before any very strong yearning will come upon the public for "individuality" in their products. This is merely a question of time, however, and the distinctively Canadian artist will some day be developed and his work identified.

FOR ten years, between 1881 and 1882, Mr. Walter Smith, brought over from South Kensington for the purpose, was Director of Art Education for the State of Massachusetts. He has now returned to England as Art Director of the New Technical College at Bradford. He was examined before the Royal Commission on Technical Education, whose report is just published. His evidence is of a highly interesting nature and will no doubt be considered by our own Minister of Education in formulating those schemes for Art training in Ontario upon which he is engaged. Mr. Smith's American experiences, which have resulted in the establishment of art schools all over the United States, and the adoption of his system as he states in the training of over 6,000,000 children, lead him to find grave defects in the theory and practice of the great English institution. He says that, whereas a few years ago America asked England for help in her Art education, she now has nothing to learn from England, but something instead to teach her. His view has been, he states, "to destroy specialism in drawing, and to make it an elementary subject of instruction." His scheme of teaching is opposite to that of his own mother school; he discards outline as a point of commencement and makes his pupils "begin with colours and light and shade from objects." Mr. Smith mentioned in his evidence that he had prepared a scheme of Art training for the Dominion of Canada.

DELTA.

## HERE AND THERE.

THERE are at the present moment two private bills under the consideration of a Committee of the Ontario Legislature, upon the fate of which the future of Niagara Falls greatly depends. The first is entitled "An Act to Incorporate the Niagara Falls Restoration and Improvement Company," and prays that Sir Alexander Campbell, Sir A. T. Galt, Hon. Sir W. P. Howland, Hon. G. W. Allan, Hon. W. McMaster, R. Harcourt, Esq., M.P.P., J. D. Edgar, Esq., M.P., J. M. Gibson, Esq., M.P.P., W. O. Buchanan, Esq., and many other well-known gentlemen, be incorporated. The object set forth in the preamble is "to take steps to restore to some extent the scenery round the Niagara Falls to its natural condition, and to preserve the same from further deterioration." To this end it is proposed to acquire lands in the vicinity for a public park, and to construct tramways, railways, and other conveniences for travellers. All "unsightly structures" would be removed; hotels would be retained and maintained; ferry and other boats and steamers would be purchased; and many improvements inaugurated—the plans and tariffs in all cases to be submitted to Parliament. The general public grounds would be free for the use of all. The Bill provides that access to the Falls at all points should be free and open to the world for ever. This Bill it is understood the Mowat Government approved, and hopes were entertained that within a few days it might become law. The second bill, which has come as a surprise, is "An Act to Incorporate the Niagara Falls Railway Company." By it, it is proposed to construct a railway from the Horse-shoe Falls to Queenston Heights, under the bank of the river—a scheme which an American contemporary calls an act of vandalism. Lands would require to be expropriated for the purposes of the line, stations, park, etc., but the projectors expressly guard themselves against any limitations of tariffs except in the case of the journey from Queenston to Niagara Falls, for which the fare is fixed at one dollar. (The promoters of the first-named bill propose to carry passengers over the same distance on a miniature steam tramway which would not disfigure the scenery, for twenty-five cents.) To this bill are appended the names of J. M. Gibson, M.P.P., R. Harcourt, M.P.P., J. T. Brundage, A. G. Hill, and T. C. Livingston. It is somewhat remarkable that the two first-named gentlemen have identified themselves with both companies, whose objects appear to be in direct conflict. There can be no question by which scheme the public would most benefit, and it is to be hoped that the Government will continue to countenance the national project of saving Niagara, more especially as our neighbours are making energetic efforts in that direction—having now a bill before the New York State Legislature asking a money appropriation for the construction of a public park on the American side of the famous Falls.