

THE METRIC SYSTEM.

The opponents of the Metric System seem to be possessed with the very enthusiasm of resistance to its adoption. Within a fortnight we have received three different batches of literature combatting the system, two of them by post from the United States and one conveyed to us by a Toronto manufacturer. First came Mr. Dale's latest protest—incorporating much from this gentleman's pen in what we printed last year—six different leaflets reprinted from various papers; Herbert Spencer's brochure, being a reprint of his letters to the "Times"; "Plain Facts," a pamphlet issued by the American National Association of Manufacturers; "Plain Opinions," another pamphlet from the same source; four foolscap pages, typewritten, from Napoleon the Great (that is, the sentiments are Napoleon's); "The Metric Fallacy," a lecture at Cornell by Frederick Halsey, who is an American authority on the subject; and lastly a 230-page book entitled "The Metric Fallacy," of which, however, the last 100 pages bear at the top of the page the sub-title, "The Metric Failure," so determined are its authors, S. S. Dale and Fred. A. Halsey, so full of threatenings and slaughter, that the system shall have no chance of sympathy or even life. Prefaced to these last hundred pages, which relate mainly to the textile trade, is a quotation from Sartor Resartus reminding us that:—

"All that men have thought, dreamed, done, and been, is included in the one pregnant subject of *clothes*."

This, indeed, is one of the most interesting parts of the book, abounding, as it does, in Shakespearian quotations and strong, almost bitter, language. We do not wonder at his bitterness, however, when it is proposed that the adoption of the system shall be compulsory. A brief history of the Metric System is given, viz., that it was a creature of the aristocracy and the established church, that it had its origin in the royal household of Louis XVI. of France; that the scientists who designed it, clever as they were in the study, were as densely ignorant of the practical affairs of every-day life, that the chief of them was a visionary. And their conclusion is that, page 137: "The changing of established standards is impossible." Page 226, that: "The trend throughout the world is toward the supremacy of the English language and the English yard—pound." This portion we perceive is written by Mr. Dale. This book is the most cogent collection of argument against the Metric System that we have seen. It now behooves the Boards of Trade the world over who have pronounced in favor of it, and the many professors and writers, from Lord Kelvin to Simon Newcombe, who have used pleas showing its desirability, to furbish up their armour. Germans scientists and manufacturers are probably among the most persistent and able of the advocates of the Metric System, which has powerful friends in the British Islands. But many American engineers, manufacturers and writers demur entirely to its necessity and even question its relative convenience. The book is published by the D. Van Nostrand Company, 27 Warren Street, New York, and is an excellent dollar's worth.

AUTOMOBILES.

The present month has witnessed the most extensive displays of automobiles and their accessories ever known in Canada. There were two in Toronto in rapid succession, first in the Granite Rink on Church Street, next in the Mutual Street Rink, which building and adjoining land have, indeed, been purchased for the purposes of a garage. Now there is an automobile show going on at the Arena in Montreal. The Toronto exhibitions were not, it must be admitted, patronized by the public to an extent commensurate with their real industrial interest, nor with the pains taken by partitioning those immense buildings and decorating them handsomely with flags, bunting, and carpeting. The Montreal exhibition, we are glad to learn, is better patronized, for some five thousand persons passed through the Arena on Saturday night.

The earliest of these three shows was most largely devoted to exhibiting machines of Canadian and American manufacture: products of the Canada Cycle & Motor Co., whose works are at Toronto Junction, and the Oldsmobile Company at St. Catharines, dividing attention with the Pope, the Pierce, the Rambler, the Royal Tourist, the Marion, the Packard, the Peerless, the Winton, the Thomas, the Ford, the Stevens-Duryea, and other United States products. It may be remarked here that the output of Detroit alone for a single year is placed at over \$4,000,000. In the second exhibition were to be seen lines of European product of greater power and larger size—and consequently of greater expensiveness—than we have been accustomed to in Canada, though both American and Canadian were on view. A word ought to be said in favor of the really handsome decorations of the place, the whole 200 feet by 100 interior being canopied with white and yellow and a continuous row of electric lights extending all the way around what used to be the Caledonian Rink. In all three cases bands of music filled the air at times.

It is no easy matter to decorate the Montreal Arena, which huge place is made use of for circus purposes, for an occasional kermesse or skating carnival. Green carpets and a dainty color scheme of hangings have now made the bare building attractive, however, and there were no barriers to prevent spectators wandering about among the exhibits. About thirty manufacturers, we are told, were represented. Accessories were not wanting, nor marine electric motors or gasoline launches. In accessories, about everything desired could be found from tool kits to searchlights. There were all sorts of portable jacks, batteries, coils, sparking plugs, tires, and thousands of things necessary and luxurious. Horns, horrid horns, were numerous and noisy, while garments for motoring and caps for the pastime were in evidence. Motor cycles were there, too.

Runabouts, speeders, delivery vans, touring cars, electric surreys, red, grey, green, or black, were all about. Much interest was shown in Montreal, perhaps especially in the French and Belgian machines, expensive as they are, for there is a distinctive finish and style to the French built car. There are some fine looking autos, made in England and Scotland which will not need to dread a test in the matter of appearance. The British and French Motor Car Company show handsome European cars, including DeDion, Bouton, Panhard, French; Daimler, Swift, English; Argyle, Scotch; and Minerva, Belgium. The Dominion Motor Car Company has a line of Maxwell cars, American make; and Argyle, a Scotch built car of grace and strength. The Canadian Automobile Company is showing Darracq, Cadillac, and Oldsmobile cars. The first name is a well-known French car.

Toronto, Hamilton, London, and the level portions of Ontario contiguous to them present an excellent field for the use of automobiles, whether for touring or—when our good roads movement is more generally advanced—for light freight delivery purposes. It may be expected, therefore, that the use of these convenient machines will grow. Montreal and Quebec are more hilly, it is true, but there are delightful drives in the suburbs of both. Then the North-West! what fields for exploiting them. While Canadians are better walkers than their American neighbors, and are less lazily prone to drive behind either horses or chauffeurs, it will not be long before they, too, will buy automobiles by the thousand. And, when they do, they will be likely to buy Canadian makes more largely than the splendid machines from the older countries, which commend themselves perhaps more to persons of long purses and aristocratic tastes.

—The Board of Trade at Lethbridge, Alberta, held their annual meeting on Wednesday last week, and elected the following officers:—President, C. F. P. Conybeare; vice-president, E. U. Rylands; executive committee, Messrs. Oliver, Freeman, Young, Nourse, Barford and Sick; ex-officio members, the mayor of Lethbridge and the member of the legislative assembly. F. H. Barnes was re-appointed secretary-treasurer.