

AN INTERESTING ANTIQUARIAN SPECIMEN.

No scientific enterprise of our time has been productive of more interesting results than that known as the Egypt Exploration Fund, the headquarters of which are in England, but which has agencies elsewhere, and of which our fellow-citizen, Mr. H. R. Ives, has been appointed honorary secretary for Canada. Among its recent operations has been the unearthing of the remains of the once celebrated city and temple of Bubastis, the Pi-beseth of the Bible, now represented by some shapeless mounds in the vicinity of the important railway junction of Zagazig in Lower Egypt. Through the liberality of Mr. Ives, and the kind offices of the society in England, a portion of one of the granite slabs which lined the great festival hall of Bast, the goddess worshipped at this place, has been secured for the Peter Redpath Museum, and is represented in our illustration from a photograph. It forms an interesting example of Egyptian work of the palmy days of the Pharaoh who held the Hebrews in bondage, and of the art and religion of old Egypt.

The goddess Bast, or Pasht, was one of the most popular deities of Egypt from the earliest times till the advent of Christianity, and the city which occupied the important and central position now held by Zagazig contained her most famous temple, whence the city itself was known as Pi-Bast, the place or abode of Bast, a name which appears slightly modified in the Greek Bubastis and the Hebrew Pi-Beseth, and which remains in the name Tel Basta, or Mound of Bast, still given to the ruins.

Bast is sometimes regarded as an Egyptian Venus, but perhaps more properly she was a form of the Mother Goddess, the patroness of family affection, known to the Greeks and Romans as Artemis or Diana. She is represented in her temples by a female figure with the head of a cat, and such figures are very common in Egypt, sculptured on walls or represented in statues or statuettes of stone and bronze. Herodotus tells us that the temple of the goddess at Bubastis was one of the most beautiful and magnificent in the ancient world, and that crowds of devotees thronged from all parts of Egypt to its annual festivals, which were characterized by the utmost joy and hilarity, and probably by no little licence, especially in the later times.

The cat was the sacred animal of Bast, and thus the Egyptians not only regarded tabby with that affection which she still enjoys as a member of the domestic circle, but with a certain religious veneration as the emblem of the cat-headed goddess; and when the favourite cat died she was embalmed with as much care as if she had been a child, and deposited in the tombs provided for such sacred animals. Great numbers of these mummied cats exist in Egypt, and it is said that from one repository a shipload has been sent to England to be used as manure, regardless of the feelings of their long defunct owners.

The stone secured by Mr. Ives, though it weighs about a ton and is about three feet wide by two and a half high and one and a half thick, is only a fragment of one of the great blocks which lined the halls of the Egyptian temple. It is of red granite, and seems to have belonged to the side of a door or the corner of a projection. It is sculptured on two sides, on one of which it shows merely ornaments and portions of emblematic figures.* On the other it has the headdress below and feet above of two rows of figures of divinities, with a portion of the shield or "cartouche" of Rameses II., which would appear to assign it to the period of the Hebrew bondage, at which time it is known that considerable additions were made to the temple, which was near to the city of Rameses in Goshen and to the part of Egypt chiefly inhabited by the Israelites. We may thus suppose, if we care to indulge in conjecture, that the Hebrew slaves were actually employed in quarrying this stone or in

transporting it to its place, or possibly even in carving the deeply cut figures which cover it. Work on fortresses or "store cities," rather than on temples, is that specially referred to in the Bible narrative of the Egyptian bondage; but if the Hebrews were employed on the numerous temple buildings which we know were erected by their oppressor, this must have been an additional grievance and humiliation, as obliging them to work for idolatries which they detested. Whether or not we imagine such historical connections, the stone is a good example of the massive style of the old Egyptian architecture and of the excellent work of these ancient builders, and the public of Montreal is much indebted to Mr. Ives for his kind agency in securing such a specimen for this city.

The stone has been placed on a suitable pedestal in the hall of the museum, where it will be open to the inspection of all who desire to see it; and it is hoped that it may tend to induce a large number of our citizens to subscribe to this fund, which has done so much not only to illustrate Egyptian history but that of the earlier books of the Bible. Subscribers are entitled to the publications of the society, which already include volumes on the sites of Pithom, Zoan, Tahpanes, and other places mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as on the old Greek settlement at Naukratis. Interesting specimens from several of these places are already in the Peter Redpath Museum.

NORWAY HOUSE.

In view of the memories and reflections awakened in the minds of many of our readers by our recent engraving of this historic post, the following article will, we are sure, be read with interest:

Norway House! How many of your readers will have to think a moment before they can remember where it is, and yet it is one of the historic spots of Canada. Though but a Hudson's Bay post, it was the Chicago of the greater Canada, the immense domain now rapidly being peopled, and lying west of the Great Lakes—Manitoba and the North-West Territories. This was the distributing point for Red River district, Swan River district, English River district, Cumberland district, Saskatchewan River district, Athabasca River district, Norway House district, Lac la Pluie district. Here the brigades of boats met once a year and camped on the green in the foreground of the picture, each brigade vying with the other in its pomp and glory. The dance went on day and night until the word was given, when the boats were turned northward towards Hudson Bay, and the shores of the beautiful Nelson river echoed back the chansons of the light-hearted crews as they sailed across Playgreen Lake and entered on the long journey to meet the boat from England at York Factory.

Here were held the councils of the great company, and never again in the great North-West, with all its great future before it, will there be a more gallant, honourable or talented congregation of men than assembled year after year at the call of the Governor to meet him in council at Norway House.

Returning from York Factory, the cargoes were made up, and with song and adieu the light-hearted voyageurs left—some for the far McKenzie, some for the east by English River, some south to Fort Garry, some to the Swan River, touching the Prairies of the West—all eager for the return next year.

The chief factor in charge at present is Horace Belanger, J. P. for Kewadin, and a half brother of the late Letellier de St. Just. Mr. Belanger is the beau ideal of a Canadian Frenchman, whole-souled and loveable—a heart in him as big as his body, a perfect host, and always the door on the latch to a stranger, as is the custom of the gentlemen of "the company," but at the same time a keen trader, and always placing the company first. In the garden is a sundial, placed there by Sir John Franklin, and sacredly kept by the company. It seems that Sir John wintered at the "Pas" on the Saskatchewan; there he made a dial and marked it. Then he sent to England and had two more made there with his initials on, and the latitude and longitude also engraved on the lead. These he sent to Cumberland House and Norway House, respectively, and there they remain.

The garden at Norway House is of English pattern—rows of currant bushes on each side of the walks, the border of the walks shives and ribbon grass—and to see the immense quantities of ripe currants, the shives in flower, the lettuce, beets, carrots and other garden produce, as I saw them last July, one would never think you were out of the world and in a country called "Arctic." I know of no finer outing in America than a trip on Capt. Robinson's or Capt. Johnassen's boats around Lake Winnipeg, visiting the grand rapids of the Saskatchewan, the most beautiful rapids in America; the lovely Bercus River, in itself a dream of beauty; or the Thousand Islands and the beauty of the great and lesser Playgreen Lakes; the noble Nelson, the drain of the country from the Missouri and Mississippi to the Hudson Bay, and the old historical fort, Norway House, once the seat of government of one of the world's

"honourable" companies, and the gateway through which came the finest settlers the North-West ever will receive—the Selkirk settlers. In time to come, in the no longer lone land, to be able to trace your descent to those pioneers will be as great a patent of nobility as it is in England to trace to one who came over with the Conqueror. By the beautiful river the old fort stands, a slowly disappearing monument of an age but just passing, in the attic of whose main building is stored a ton or so of valuable historical papers at the mercy of a stray match, and no one to collect and preserve the records. Will the Norway House of the present pass away as have the brigades passed—into history, or rather into oblivion—or will some society gather what can be gathered of the past, and let the coming generations know the poetry, the romance, the grandeur and the courage of the pioneers of the greater Canada—the pavers of the way for the busy thousands flocking to replace the Redman and the buffalo?

R. LA TOUCHE TUPPER.

ALBANI IN ITALIAN OPERA.

A fresh triumph awaited the great Canadian cantatrice in the cradle of her genius on Monday and Wednesday evenings. When it was announced that she was to appear in Italian opera at the Academy of Music, our musical world naturally looked forward with eager expectancy to a treat so rare, and all the seats available were quickly disposed of. The opera of her *debut* in this new rôle to a Montreal audience was Verdi's "La Traviata," which, though not a favourite with some lovers of music, has the merit of being familiar to many, besides being, in its passion and peculiar melody, well adapted to the great singer. No expense had been spared by the Academy management to have the environment in unison with the renown of the company and its central attraction. Since the advent to Montreal of Madame Ristori, some twenty-three years ago, no such success had been achieved on our stage. The orchestra showed thorough mastery of its duties and everything went smoothly—Signor Sapio maintaining his reputation for leadership. The Canadian lady was in excellent voice, and her interpretation of the part of *Violetta* was admirable. Without particularizing, we may say that even the most critical of the audience were wrought to enthusiasm as they listened to her notes in the numbers of the famous opera. The "Home, Sweet Home," with which Madame Albani gratified her compatriots after its conclusion, was such as to excuse, if anything can excuse, the flattering imposition of an encore. To English music-lovers Donizetti's "Lucia di Lammermoor" is generally welcome, as much for the subject and its origin as for the wild sweetness of the music. As *Lucia*, Madame Albani eclipsed her revelation of Monday. The enthusiasm was still more intense, the only disappointed ones being those who had failed to secure tickets in time and had to go away unsatisfied.

MARY STUART'S CONTRACT OF MARRIAGE.

Among the noteworthy contents of the library of an English book-collector, recently sold in London, was the manuscript of Mary Stuart's contract of marriage with François II. signed by Aubespine, Bourdin (Secretary of State), and another. It contains nine pages folio and is summarized as follows:—

"Contract de mariage de François II., fils de Henri II., et de Catherine de Medicis, avec Marie Stuart, fille de Jacques V., roi d'Ecosse, et de Marie de Lorraine, Paris, 19 Avril, 1558. Marie Stuart est assistée de son aïeule Antoinette de Bourbon, duchesse douairière de Guise, de l'archevêque de Glasgow, de l'évêque des Orcades, de George comte de Rothes, de Gilbert comte de Casselles, du sire de Fleming, de Lord Seyton, etc. Le préambule résume l'histoire d'Ecosse sous la régence de Marie de Lorraine; la guerre de la France contre l'Angleterre de 1547 à 1550 y est rappelée. Marie de Lorraine, reconnaissante des services rendus à l'Ecosse par Henri II., ratifie le contrat de mariage passé à Edinbourg, le 7 Juillet, 1548, le douaire de Marie Stuart sera de 60,000l. et assigné pour moitié sur la Touraine et le Poitou. Et a été accordé que en cas que ladite royne d'Ecosse survive mon dit seigneur, elle pourra demourer en France ou retourner en son royaume avec ses serviteurs et officiers à son choix et option, et se marier comme elle verra bon estre par l'avis de ses estatz et si emportera ses deniers, vaisselle, bagues, joyaux, habillemens, meubles, précieux. Si elle à un fils, il sera à la fois roi de France et d'Ecosse; s'il lui naît une fille, elle sera reine d'Ecosse et ne pourra prendre mai qu'avec le consentement du roi de France; les témoins étaient Charles, duc d'Orléans (Charles IX.), Marguerite duchesse de Berry, puis de Savoie, le roi de Navarre, le card. de Lorraine, etc."

A HARE CAUGHT BY A LIMPET.

A correspondent of the *Standard* states that a limpet once captured a hare. This feat was accomplished at a point of the northern coast of Scotland on a dry warm day in summer. The limpet's shell was a little removed from the face of the lower portion of the rock, when a hare approached, and, observing the moist flesh of the mollusc, endeavoured to moisten its tongue by contact with the watery-looking morsel. Instantly the limpet closed on to the rock, pinning the hare fast by its tongue. A man at a short distance observed the whole incident, and, running forward, seized the hare, killed it, and took it home to his family.

*In so far as can be made out from their remains, these figures seem to have been a sitting divinity and a hand-plough, meaning "beloved of Ra," the sun-god, on the upper part, and below a reed and a bee, the emblems of Upper and Lower Egypt. Between them is a band of vertical bars, a favourite ornament with the Egyptians.