

THE LATE HON. LUTHER H. HOLTON.

"And Nicanor lie dead in his harness."

Death is a common-place—a common-place, however, of eternal interest. The shadow of death is near the writer as he pens these lines; for during the last few hours one gifted in intellect and talent has passed from amongst us, and thereby another friend has become to him a memory. How the beat of the heart slackens when one thinks of the man of yesterday being the dust of to-day! one to whom the to-morrows of aspirations, plans, endeavours, labours, endurance, come no more; to whom the hopes, the aims, the loves, the charities of yesterday are as if they were not. "In the midst of life we are in death," and in the midst of death we are in life! and we know not which sand-grain in the glass of time shall fix our fate forever, for we are of those

"Things which are made to fade and fall away
When they have blossomed but a few short hours."

Change is the law of life, and the last great change is death—mysterious death, whose viewless might is everywhere.

I am led into this train of thought by the awfully sudden death of our esteemed friend and fellow-citizen the Hon. Luther H. Holton. It was with much pain throughout this city that the terrible news from Ottawa was read which told us of the sudden snatching away of one of Canada's greatest statesmen.

Mr. Holton had passed a long life in Montreal, having filled many important positions in society, always with honour to himself and advantage to the public. He was by nature a politician; and from his return to Parliament as one of the members for Montreal in 1854 to the hour of his death, he had borne a prominent part in the struggles of the times, having also filled with honour several offices in the Government. During his entire political career no shadow ever passed over the fair fame of our deceased friend. One of his oldest political friends is able to record:—

"No politician was ever more consistent than Mr. Holton. He had on many occasions to see those who had been co-operating with him abandon their principles and accept the Tory shilling; but with him there was no shadow of turning."

Mr. Holton was a man of very generous impulses, and if he had any defect it was greatly reduced by his sterling honesty of purpose, which made him scorn to dissemble his real feelings, and equally refuse to accept any post or duty, except with the understanding that he was to do his duty in it. His statesmanship was of the practical working order, in which industry effects more than diplomacy, and well-disciplined common sense than showy talent. He was painstaking, and sedulous for the public weal.

He had a fertile mind and a subtle reasoning faculty; he was exceedingly transparent and straightforward, ever impatient to realize his convictions. He stood above the midmost men in their own walks, and was especially remarkable for his manageable power over every faculty of his mind and every item of his knowledge. Ever alert, self-possessed, clear in judgment, work-enjoying, and with a mind always open to the latest light.

He was a man who in wise cheerfulness, geniality and frankness, freshened the whole moral atmosphere around him. He was sincerity itself in the perfect candour of his nature, and yet charitable in his judgment of others. He was most unostentatious, though he had in himself stores of information; he was literally a living Parliamentary encyclopædia, which was continually applied to the immediate state of things; many are those who are indebted to his researches, for he ungrudgingly imparted what he had laboriously acquired.

Only sixty-three years of life among the stir and labour of men! and then when the need for his life seemed greatest, to be called hence in an hour when all seemed serene and fair; in the midst of the hopes of useful years to come, there came forth the great invisible hand that gave the fatal stroke.

How hearty was his greeting, and how constantly alive his intellect and his humour! His ready thoughtfulness and his steady friendship made him not less valued than his amazing acquisitions, his untiring industry, his manifold genius, and his successful achievements. Death has taken him away after sixty-three years of toilsome progress and endeavour. On Canada's memory he has left his imprint, his faithful performance of duty is his monument, and his reputation is safe, for he was always a friend to the people, of whom he was a choice specimen.

In Mr. Holton a great name passes into the annals of Canada, it is a part of the history of the country; his perseverance, manly fortitude and power of self-assertion, enabled him to accomplish things which other, less resolute and less persevering men have failed in achieving. It was not the privilege of the writer of this tribute to the worth of our deceased statesman, to enjoy his intimate friendship, but enough is known to record that Canada in future years will mark the fourteenth of March as a sad day in her annals, for on that day Luther Hamilton Holton died.

H. M.

FINE ARTS AT THE CAPITAL.

The Exhibition of Pictures, Sculptures, Drawings, Designs, *et cetera*, which has been collected under the auspices of the Canadian Academy of Arts, and formally opened at Ottawa by His Excellency the Marquis of Lorne on Saturday the 6th instant, deserves a passing comment. Believing that the SPECTATOR has been, now is, and, I hope, ever will be, "the abstract and brief chronicle of the time" in the matter of "things" of more than general interest, I pen these few lines.

Not being present at the inaugural opening, I shall content myself with re-echoing some of the pertinent remarks made by His Excellency, the President, and the Vice-President of the new Academy.

The Marquis of Lorne said: "It is impossible to agree with the remark that we have no material in Canada for our present purposes" (the founding a School of Art), "when we see so many excellent works on these walls, and if some do not come up to the standard we may set ourselves, what is this but an additional argument for the creation of some body which shall act as an educator in this manner."

After a ramble through the various rooms in which the pictures are exhibited, I am bound to confess my astonishment at the wonderful progress Canadian art has made during the last decade, and I am warranted in saying that with the "*technique*," the talent, the genius displayed in some of the works, the artists, if not cramped by external circumstances, and if opportunities are given them for putting forth their powers, by the Government and the wealthy, their imaginations will move in a higher region of art, and, possibly, in a region of beauty, sublimity, and truth.

Among the Loan Collection are some fine pictures, which must have a tendency not only to educate the mind and eye of the Canadian artist, but the mind and eye of the public, so that the latter may be the better able to pass judgment wisely and with understanding upon the works of our "Canadian Academicians." This education of the mind and eye the Art Association of Montreal has laboured to make more general, feeling certain that with an increased knowledge of art, an increased demand for our local artists' works will arise if the artists will only carefully use, or I may say read, the book given us by Nature—the book wants laborious study, and their art wants continual practice, aided by a lively imagination. There is a world of beauty and grandeur in the book of Nature which is spread out before our artists in Canada, and judging from the Ottawa Exhibition, it has been read by them. If I may be allowed to vocabularize the language of Nature, using the following terms and words:—Air; atmosphere; bright skies; clouds, fantastic in shape, brilliant in colour, whether illumined by sunset or sunrise; fog; mist; snow; lakes; rivers; torrents; cascades; lofty cliffs; foaming cataracts; mountains; rocks; vales; forest trees (the beautiful elm, the luxuriant larch, the weeping birch, the stately pine, the dark cypress); birds; and flowers; such have been put into language by Jacobi, O'Brien, Edson, Sandham, Fraser, Creswell, Fowler and others. This vocabulary, though not put into such glowing passages, such harmonious styles, such breadth of effect, and with such energy of character as are displayed in the pencillings of the old and new masters,—Salvator Rosa, Poussin, Cuyp, Ruysdael, Claude Lorraine, Hobbina and Weenix; Constable, Turner, Wilson, Pyne, Stanfield, Creswick and Lance, yet there is a sufficient technical knowledge of the art of construction, and a dawn of genius manifested in these essays which deserve "gentle criticism."

The art material is in the hands, and the spirit of art is within the hearts of these new Canadian Academicians, and though there is, at present, a wide gulf which separates our newly born Academy from its elder sisters in Europe, and though it may—naturally enough—occupy an inferior position in painting, sculpture, and architecture, yet every school must have its beginning.—In the beginning, the Garden of Eden was not on this earth.

Though the road to the Temple of Fame may be attended with difficulties, and its way be long and painful before our architects will rival the works of Bramante or Palladio; Wren or Barry; or our sculptors those of Phidias or Praxiteles; Canova or Flaxman; or our painters those of Correggio or Titian; Reynolds or Lawrence; to say nothing of the master pieces of Greek, Roman, and Italian architecture, sculpture and painting which yet continue to excite the wonder of the student, yet, let them not despair. The works of Greece Rome and Italy we must not expect to see rivalled in this country unless there arise such men as Pericles, the Medicis, and Pope Leo X. In their day the wealthy sought the artist, and encouragement was given to the pursuit of art. The Architect, the Sculptor and the Painter had minds and hearts to speak to, they could enjoy communion of thought with men exalted above the petty cares and troubles of life, whose imagination moved in a higher and purer region, no wonder that, under such circumstances, the artists were enabled to grow and ripen into maturity.

It is a good thing to know that H. R. H. The Princess Louise has her whole heart and soul on the objects of the Canadian Academy, and that she is resolved to help forward and promote any and every good work connected with its programme viz:—the formation of a National Gallery. It is also a good thing to know that His Excellency takes such a deep interest in the