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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Nov. 7th, 1874.

POSITION OF THE DOMINION.

It may not be uninteresting in the first number of the new series of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS to give a few facts in reference to the position of the Dominion of Canada in relation to its place among the nations, judged by its area and resources. The development of these since the era of Confederation has been so rapid as to surprise even the most sanguine, and a consideration of the facts of the actual position leads us to the conviction that we have but entered upon the first step of the career of progress. In 1866-7 the total trade of Canada was \$94,791,866, and then we spoke of rapid progress; in 1872-3, it was \$217,197,096; that is, it has increased nearly threefold in six years! And every interest in the country has followed the increase of trade. Our special purpose, however, is not to dwell on these figures, but to show the area of the Dominion and point out some of its resources stated by Provinces. The following are official figures:

	Square Miles.
Nova Scotia.....	21,731
New Brunswick.....	27,322
Quebec.....	193,355
Ontario.....	107,780
Manitoba.....	14,340
North West Territory.....	2,750,000
British Columbia.....	220,000
Prince Edward Island.....	12,173
	3,346,681

We may state for comparison that the area of the whole continent of Europe is only 3,900,000 square miles. Thus Canada approaches it in size. The area of the United States, without Alaska, is 2,933,588 square miles, that of Alaska is 577,390 square miles. Canada is, therefore, much larger than the United States, without Alaska, and very nearly the same size with that territory included. But it may be said that the Canadian territory goes up to the Arctic Ocean, and that a large portion of it is not habitable. This is true; but after the traveller passes the 100th degree of West Longitude in the United States, that is very little west of the Valley of the Missouri, he finds, with the exception of a few cases, one of the most hopeless deserts under the sun; and going South, beyond Virginia, he goes out of the region of northern grasses and northern pastures, and exchanges the condition of northern husbandry for those of

the tropics; exchanges, moreover, climatic conditions to which the inhabitants of Northern Europe have been accustomed for those of the torrid zone which they will find oppressive; and which, according to one able American writer, Dr. Draper, will, in course of time, effect physiological changes in the races of men, in fact, make new varieties. Recent explorations have shown that Canada possesses vast areas of habitable land in her North West, which are just beginning to be opened up for settlement, at the time that the occupation of the U. S. prairie lands is approaching the limits of the American desert. We believe it is established that those immense areas in our North West, possess climatic, agricultural and other conditions, that will lead to rapid settlement in the immediate future. It is our purpose in a future number of this journal to point out some of these.

SCHOOL BOOKS.

This may be a homely, but it is an all important subject. The Provincial Teachers' Association which met at Granby last week, treated it at full length, and they acted right in doing so. Much if not all that was said on the subject we heartily endorse, precisely because it corroborates the remarks we made a few weeks ago on the embryonic and elementary state of Canadian literature. Every building depends on its foundation. Not only its strength, but its gracefulness, which is an ornament of strength, are subservient to the pillars on which it rests. Without education, there can be no culture; and without suitable school books, there can be no education. Yet our own experience shows that school books are difficult to procure. Every nation must have its own. In the primer, the geography, the history, the reader, there must breathe a flavour of nationality. Even the arithmetic should be national, in that it teaches primarily the current monies, the weights and measures, and the routine of commercial transactions in vogue in the country. The school-book should be limited in range, yet complete within its range. It should be graduated and progressive. It should be severely correct in language, and authoritative in statement. It should be thoroughly well printed. Its illustrations should be the best woods, pleasing to the eye, striking to the fancy, an index to the memory, not the daubs with which we have hitherto been generally favoured. In the beginning of our systematized school instruction, class books were derived from foreign sources. These were gradually discarded as insufficient, if not mischievous. Then we resorted to native compilations which answered pretty well for a time, but which, under the growing needs of the country, are now found totally inadequate. Native publishers have not had the means, nor the market, to produce a really first-rate article. Native writers have not had the time, nor the remuneration, to devote themselves entirely to the work. To write a school-book demands both perfect knowledge of the subject in hand, and large experience of the class of children for whom the book is intended. The composition thereof demands time and study. It cannot be dashed off like a novel or a newspaper article. It is, therefore, small wonder that teachers, as a rule, have not devoted their attention to this species of work.

Much was said, at the late Convention, of the Ontario series of school-books. It was declared by several teachers that they did not meet the wants of this Province. Judge DUNKIN went so far as to say that "we do not want our children to be looking South all the time, nor westward to Ontario. We should have Quebec books and sentiments." Perhaps this statement is overdrawn. Considering the relative paucity of the Protestant minority in this Province, there must necessarily be, as Mr. SAMUEL DAWSON remarked, "great difficulty in introducing school-books of our own," and the same gentleman added, "the cost of books depends on the number of them that can be sold." It were

perhaps more judicious to say that we want, not Ontario, nor Quebec, but Dominion books, which, whether published at Toronto or Montreal, shall, each in its way, teach a Dominion, Canadian, national spirit. Suppose each of the thirty-eight States of the Union insisted on having its own school books, would not both the quality and effect of the teaching suffer by the exclusiveness?

It was also properly observed by some of the teachers that the duties and powers of the Council of Public Instruction in this Province are somewhat peculiar. They can exclude whatever books they choose from the school, but when once they give their sanction to any work, they cannot rescind that sanction. This is clearly an unprogressive condition of things, and accounts for many of the antiquated, worthless books still used in our class rooms. Perhaps it may be no harm to suggest some improvement on this system, now that a new Superintendent of Education has just assumed office.

We can hardly agree with Principal HICKS that it does not much matter what kinds of books are used, so long as there are really good teachers to interpret them. A good teacher may correct the faults or supply the deficiencies of a poor text book, but he cannot counteract its evil influences. The book has a silent mission distinct from the verbal instruction of the teacher. It is studied at home, perused at odd hours, and, in the case of a diligent student, may be so assimilated to the mental constitution, as to be beyond the influence of the teacher. If it is true, as all of us have at some time experienced, that one half of education consists in eradicating the other half, the necessity of unexceptionable school books must be admitted.

THE LECTURE SEASON.

With the advent of the long winter evenings, different forms of amusement are naturally resorted to. These differ according to the circumstances of every community. In large cities like Montreal and Toronto, there are special advantages to be enjoyed, though even in these partial restriction has forcibly to be practised. Gradually and quite visibly the æsthetic taste is making progress among their inhabitants. Yet the lack of population and of suitable accommodation prevents them from patronizing the highest development of art, such as painting, the legitimate drama, and the opera. The consequence is that they must fall back on less expensive entertainments, and among these public lectures are the most popular. Lectures have been properly termed an American institution. They are not cultivated the same way in England, and on the Continent they are unknown outside of the class-room. We remember a French professor of great renown expressing his astonishment at what he saw and heard during a lecture which he attended in one of the large cities of the United States. He was struck with the abstruse character of the subject discussed, with the grave decorum of the audience, with the infrequency of the applause, and with the evident satisfaction of the people on leaving the hall. We remember that some seven or eight years ago, lectures had become a rage of fashion in the United States. They were overdone, of course, and after a couple of winters they died out. Year before last, they revived under the stimulus of foreign authors who brought with them wherever they went the irresistible incentive of curiosity. The result was a flattering success. People crowded to see, if not to hear, the mystical MASSEY, the spiritual McDONALD, the robust KINGSLEY, the romantic COLLINS and the gifted BELLEW. Canada caught the fever, and our principal cities had the advantage of beholding and listening to all these celebrities. There is no denying the benefit derived from this novel species of intercourse.

The example thus set is worthy of being continued. We understand that owing to circumstances, the managers of these lectures in Montreal, lost money by them

last winter. We know not how the case may have been elsewhere, but it is to be hoped that no discouragement will be indulged in, and that in our large cities, at least, a series of public lectures will be given this winter. To further this consumption, we would venture upon one suggestion. Let some of our own men step upon the platform. There are in Canada scores of able men of letters and science thoroughly competent to interest an audience by the treatment of their special subjects of study. The advantage of securing their services would be two-fold. It would be an encouragement to the men themselves, and would give an unmistakable impulse to the march of Canadian science and literature. That we have sore need of such a stimulus is granted on all sides. Our young writers, our journalists, our professors want a free field to work in. They have been pent up and trammelled too long. They are anxious to show their countrymen what they can do, if properly encouraged. What could be more interesting than a series of lectures on the most romantic episodes of Canadian history, by a Canadian writer, before a Canadian audience? Why should not one of our poets be called upon to discourse upon Canadian poetry? Why might not one of our novelists read publicly a tale of Canadian character and incident? We have several ladies who are distinguished in the paths of literature. Why not invite one or two of them to entertain their countrymen and countrywomen with the creations of their genius? The scheme which we advocate would be comparatively inexpensive and is well worth a trial. Where is the literary society or college association that is willing to take the lead in the matter?

LITERATURE AND ART.

ONE OF SHAKESPEARE'S SHORT COMINGS.

It is little short of fool-hardihood to allege that the bard of Avon uttered or could have uttered a faulty note. National pride leads the average Englishman, with a persistency conforming in fixed ratio to his ignorance to arrogate to himself credit for every honourable and distinguished achievement of a fellow-countryman, and to resent as a personal affront any attempt, however reasonable and proper, to deduct the fancied merits of those in the shadow of whose excellence he lives. To affirm that the Iron Duke was inferior as a military tactician to his immortal antagonist; that Chantry was not the peer of Canova or Thorvaldsen, or that Bacon, Newton or Faraday is not exempt from successful rivalry through all time, is looked upon as an outrage not to be justified by any appeal to facts and authorities. But Shakespeare's reputation is most carefully entrenched by popular prejudice,—so fully entrenched that it is the extreme of hardihood, the forlornest of forlorn hopes, to assail it even in the interests of truth. The writer who ventures to assert that Shakespeare's genius was not universal must needs look for rough treatment. What must one expect who hazards the assertion that Shakespeare has utterly failed in the department of the play wright's art in which the highest power of the true artist might be shown? This is the unthankful task to which we now address ourselves.

Into the holy of holies of the human soul this high priest of humanity never ventured, or if he did in contemplation, he never put in words the marvels he found therein. He was familiar with all the approaches to it; he lingered long, wonderingly, lovingly in its vestibule, but if he passed with in his pen has given no hint of it.

Shakespeare has given us no idea of maternal affection. Launce's dog, objectionable as the creature is, does fuller justice to the canine race than any one of Shakespeare's characters does to woman in her highest development.

Before entering upon the proof, or rather the illustration of this statement,