

## MONTREAL LETTER.

foundation for Canada's coming greatness, naturally desires to see no change of base.

The Parliamentarians have had the last of their Saturday holidays, it is proclaimed, so that the legislator will hardly appear in such numbers after this, to pay his respects either to Lady Macdonald on Saturday afternoon, or to Madame Laurier on Saturday evening. The weekly reception at Earncliffe is an interesting feature of Ottawa's social life. The house itself, of gray stone, quaintly-gabled with dark red wood and standing back among the firs and maples, on the edge of the steep declivity of the river bank, has an individuality quite its own. A big good-natured mastiff, evidently accustomed to the approval of friends rather than foes, suns himself before the door, which admits one to a hall of the comfortable old-fashioned hospitable sort. At the end of this, looking out through the arms of the pines and the branches of the birches upon the racing Ottawa, is the drawing room, sunlit and full of pleasant things. Here Lady Macdonald's strong personality and ready sympathy with aims that are in any way outside the achievement of the commonplace, gather weekly a little company of Canadians—some of whom for one reason or another are sure to be eminently worth knowing. At five o'clock the stimulating urn comes in; and occasionally the Premier leaves the affairs of state long enough to cross the threshold of his wife's drawing room and chat with her visitors in the jocund fashion that brings, with his name, so ready a smile to the lips of his friends. I am bound to say that not many Liberal foes are to be seen within the portals of Earncliffe. It is not in the spirit of Canadian political parties to discuss even the weather without animosity.

The Session is not, however, without a social muster of the Opposition. It is held in the Grand Union Hotel, and when it is understood that Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie and Madame Laurier lend their joint patronage its success will go without further saying. Mrs. Mackenzie's popularity in Ottawa when her husband was at the helm of public affairs has clung to her through all the vicissitudes of the party; and this Saturday night re-union brings her gentle tactful qualities of the hostess into play as nothing less general in its character could. The gathering is very informal. The invaluable French members sing, the irrepressible scribes of the Opposition and independent "organs" make merry, the solemnest-visaged honourable gentleman of all the serious ranks to the Speaker's left goes hilariously in pursuit of innumerable cups of coffee. This departure, for it is a departure, is very enthusiastically supported by the Liberals, who feel the lack of the social opportunities enjoyed by the party in power. Their chieftains are nearly always present; even Sir Richard relaxes the austerities of the Parliamentary campaign to show himself occasionally a knight of the drawing-room also.

The Library's attractions have received the addition lately of a picture in oils, by Captain Rutherford, "The Surrender of Poundmaker." The canvas is placed on exhibition here, and it is understood that the artist wishes to sell it to the Government for the National Gallery. As an accurate representation of the scene, and a subject of no small historic interest, the picture should become the property of the Government; the propriety of hanging it in the National Gallery of Art is not quite the same thing, however. The picture has a number of virtues, and a number of defects; it is the work of a clever amateur, who saw what he painted. The captured chief is squatted in the midst of a semi-circle of braves, squaws, and Canadian officers, General Middleton sitting on a chair in the foreground. The Indian characteristics are well caught, the grouping spirited and interesting, and the rendering of the sky and prairie truthful. It would be difficult to say more, and unfair to say less in praise of the picture. These qualities are enough to give it a national interest, but are somewhat inadequate to make it a matter of national pride on its intrinsic merits.

The American Senate, in this connection, have recently passed a bill providing for the appointment of an Art Commission, to be composed of fifteen of the leading painters, sculptors, architects, and art critics in the country, whose judgment will facilitate the decisions of Committees of Congress harassed by the responsibility of spending \$10,000 a year, appropriated for art purchases, of advising grants for special purposes of this sort, and of inspecting plans for public buildings, designs for monuments, and so forth. The members of the Commission are to serve for nothing, their expenses being paid. The idea is borrowed from France, and seems a good one. We think we have testimony enough that the honourable gentlemen we send to represent us in Parliament should stick to their Parliamentary lasts, yet the wonder is that there should be so little. The average practical politician is not usually a *connoisseur* in anything but practical politics. That he makes no more blunders than he does in educating the artistic sense of the public is surprising. There is no reason, however, that he should make any; and we have quite enough knowledge and experience in art matters in Canada to render it practicable to follow our cousins' example in this matter. The idea moreover has the very appreciable virtue to Canadians, in view of the recent utterances of the Minister of Finance, of cheapness.

SARA J. DUNCAN.

BARON TAUCHNITZ desires the London *Athenæum* to say that, though Canada allows American reprints of English works to be imported, he has never deviated from his uniform rule of declining to execute orders coming from any British Colony.

ROBERT BROWNING is certainly a man of many nations. Through his four grandparents he can claim kindred with the Scotch, the Germans, the Creoles, and the English. The poet was educated at the University of London. Mr. Browning is said to look very like a successful merchant, or a bank president, a fact that causes great sorrow to his many admirers who would have him more dreamy and generally melancholy in appearance.

THEY had issued invitations for about three hundred persons more than the Molson Hall could comfortably hold, so that the circumstances under which Monday's convocation was witnessed by any one not installed some hours in advance, were scarcely conducive to very chivalrous enthusiasm. Theatrical crowds are bad, but if you have any desire to study humanity under its supremely selfish aspect, mingle your ill-suppressed comments with those of other unfortunate males when they find themselves surrounded by a mass of individuals instinct with motherly, sisterly, and grandmotherly affection, pride, and curiosity. "Humph! I should think there is need for woman's higher education," exclaimed my irate neighbour as he tried to catch a glimpse of the proceedings on the platform hidden hopelessly by thoughtless dames standing everywhere upon the benches.

Whether it was owing to the presence of their Excellencies, or to that of the lady students, we cannot determine, but every one remarked how much less poignant were the witticisms from undergraduates than in former years. The young gentlemen appeared very gallant, very loyal, and behaved altogether after a most exemplary fashion. Of course their fair sisters triumphed, and as they tripped up the hall, they were applauded to the echo. Nothing could have been a stronger protest against the opinion that higher education has the effect of eradicating those feminine weaknesses men are so anxious to keep alive, than the presence of the corsage bouquet adding lustre to the academic gown. You may judge how entirely the Oscaloosian performances in this city took possession of our minds, when I tell you a daily paper apologized to one of the men medallists for having over-looked his name.

Most prominent among the young ladies were Georgina Hunter, B.A., who won the Shakespeare gold medal for English language and literature, and Octavia G. Ritchie, B.A., the valedictorian.

Does anybody know what a University valedictory should be? Every one seemed pleased with Mr. Macallum's performance, in which were a great many words, happily strung together, with here and there long-sanctioned witticisms. Miss Ritchie gave us an account of the manner in which some eight young girls "got round" the wise men and the wealthy, who opened the doors of McGill to women four years ago. She then asked very feelingly when they would enjoy the privilege of attending medical lectures here, to which query several ill-advised individuals answered "never." Miss Ritchie's common sense and unaffected manner have been universally praised.

The address of the Principal, Sir William Dawson, was characterized by the refinement of sentiment and expression peculiar to him. Dr. Heneker, a newly-created LL.D., spoke for an unconscionably long time, and notwithstanding ironical encores and bravos, continued his march through the ages unperturbed. Lord Lansdowne's remarks were of course most happy. He found that the visitorship of McGill added great lustre to the Governor-Generalship. The lady students were pleasantly congratulated. There was an opportune allusion to the "unity of the great Empire," and how we should all bring our stone to help the building of it. Finally, His Excellency alluded to Lady Dufferin—whose name was greeted with frantic cheers,—and her work in India, hoping Lady Lansdowne [another explosion] would be able to carry it on.

After the benediction, "Trip Along, Sister Mary," was sung by the men as the girl graduates left the Hall.

At the University dinner, Prof. Murray's speech dealt, among other things, with the vexed and vexing question of co-education. The theme was again taken up by Dr. Anderson, Principal of the Prince of Wales' College, in Charlottetown, P.E.I. For nine years, it appears, have boys and girls met together in the same room, walked through the same corridor, and passed out of the same door at this model institution, without the slightest unpleasantness. In conversation afterwards with the Doctor, he informed me that loud were the prophecies of failure when he first introduced co-education among these islanders.

"I never make any rules, but simply put them upon their honour. The rough country lads are wonderfully refined by the presence of young girls in the class-room."

Dr. Anderson's twenty years' experience as a professor, apart from many better reasons, would give weight to his opinion. One can readily understand Prof. Shurman's enthusiastic words about him. He is an "ideal teacher" because his seemingly inexhaustible knowledge any one may taste of and welcome; "his heart's in his vocation"; and, best of all, he possesses a most enviable amount of liberality.

Of course as matters stand now, anything other than co-education at McGill seems ridiculous; but why not build a college for women like unto Wellesley near Boston? Surely an educational establishment resembling this admirable American one, where the girls can have their rooms, instead of living in a distracting boarding-house, and where library, gymnasium, and laboratory are for them alone, would satisfy all parties. I can imagine with what horror the students of either Harvard or Wellesley would look upon the intrusion of the opposite sex, yet the best specimen of a Harvard man shines very brilliantly in a drawing-room, and few women, I suppose, expect to surpass her who was once Miss Freeman.

The opening of the month of Mary was duly celebrated in the interesting old church, Notre Dame de Bon Secours, whose history begins with that of Montreal. I have before me a curious little manual for pilgrims to this sacred edifice. It gives over thirty-four pages of history, and a hundred and forty-four of prayers. From this volume you can learn that it was La Sœur Bourgeois who received from M. de Maisonneuve, governor of Montreal, in 1657, a grant of land on which to build a chapel where stands the present Bon-Secours. Two rich and virtuous gentlemen, accord-