

At Street Corners.

ONE of the anomalies of this city is discovered by a journey to the top story of the Canadian Institute. There, in a room that is but little visited, is one of the finest ethnological collections in the world. It comprises Indian relics gathered from all points in Ontario and from places far beyond Ontario's boundaries. There are fragments of ancient pottery and priceless whole specimens of pottery. There is a splendid collection of Indian pipes, Indian weapons, Indian tools. There is a unique collection of Aztec remains.

This collection is the work of years of loving research on the part of Mr. David Boyle, one of the best known ethnologists of the continent; a man who is in correspondence with the foremost ethnological scholars of the world. He has toiled in season and out of season to make this collection what it is. Considering its value from an historical point of view it ought, as a matter of course, to be set out in cases in a proper museum. If it were it would be an attraction that people would come miles to see; that would give interest to this city and raise it in the eyes of the world. It is such a collection as Paris, London, New York, Philadelphia or Chicago would be delighted to possess.

The anomaly is that there is not enough public spirit on the part of the city of Toronto to take hold of it. There is not a member of the Ontario Government who would lift a finger to keep this unparalleled set of relics from going to destruction by fire, or from being lost by carelessness. The Canadian Institute recognizes its value and has spent some money in making the collection, but it has not sufficient funds to place it where it ought to be in a properly appointed museum.

Surely these illustrations of the past history of Canada are worthy of preservation. Some day when the fire bells ring and the top story of the Canadian Institute is seen in flames, we shall all come to the conclusion that if ever there were fools in the world we are they for suffering a collection which, for variety and excellence, will really compare with anything of the kind in the world to be so badly housed.

A friend of mine had been living comfortably in his rented house for more than a year when he was confronted the other day by a peremptory demand for taxes due by the landlord and amounting to a sum equal to several months' rent. This same landlord had always taken particular care to collect the rent promptly, but had given my friend no inkling of the fact that he was short of money and could not pay his taxes. When told of the circumstances he simply said he had no money.

My friend was contemplating removing his residence. He now saw that unless he went on living in the house he would have no chance of recouping himself, supposing he paid these taxes that the landlord owed. While he was thinking what was the best thing for him to do, "lo and behold," a bailiff was put in the house and signified his intention of sending for an express wagon and carting off my friend's furniture if the taxes were not at once paid. And on investigation my friend found that there were other dues for ground-rent for which his furniture was liable to be seized. The abominable injustice of the situation is manifest. It would appear that unless we, who live in rented houses, make constant enquiries as to whether city taxes are paid by our landlords we are liable to an instant demand for perhaps hundreds of dollars that we never owed.

The street-corners are cleaner now than they were, so that it is a little pleasanter to linger about when a friend heaves in sight and has a word or two to say. The only people I try to avoid are the quidnuncs who have nothing to do but exist, who have a comfortable income, and who come down town every day just to see "what's on" and to bore busy people.

These people are always trying to get some sensation into their jelly-fish personality by drawing on your stock of vitality. They say "Well! what's the best word?" and immediately compose themselves for a long gossip. They are wandering stars, slow-bellies, excrescences on busy life. They never did anything for me and if they want conversation let them go and get it with those of their own sort. I like to see old buffers talking to each other, but they

should know better than to seek to cast their flabby tentacles around live and busy men.

Mrs. Langtry's portrait as plastered around the city on walls and boards seems to be an admirable presentation of the characteristics of that much talked of woman. But I have seen many washerwomen whose faces were far pleasanter to the discerning eye. Why don't we plaster drawings of these on our vacant spaces? I stand up for the good old hardworking washerwomen.

Adieu for a time to posturing aestheticism and the senseless cant of art. Philistinism is a thousand times better, bad as Philistinism is. But do not let us lose sight, in our panic, of the art that is pure, and honest, and sane, and consolatory. Let us send hysterical whims to Hades and cherish only the healthy and virile.

DIAGENES.

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Letters to the Editor.

THE COPYRIGHT QUESTION.

To the Editor of The Week :

SIR,—Hitherto we have had only expressions of opinion from publishers and politicians in the hunt for votes, and the vital point at issue has been completely ignored.

It is not a question whether a wrong has been done to Canada by not allowing her to legislate as to copyright, nor whether United States publishers are to be allowed to flood the Canadian market with British authors' works printed in the United States, but the crucial question is, whether the authors, engravers, printers, sculptors and photographers of the country are to be deprived of the vast benefits of the Berne Convention at the bidding of a few clamorous publishers. When a cause is bad, false issues are always raised. It does not matter one iota to the public where the books are printed and bound, provided they are cheap and good, and it must be conceded that we can get a cheaper and better class of work from Europe and the United States.

Last year I had the privilege of paying Canadian publishers about \$1,100 for a limited issue of a work on the Patent Law of Canada, some of which has been sold in European countries, as well as in the United States, and my attention has been drawn to copyright matters, both as a lawyer and in my daily practice as a Solicitor of Patents, and my firm, Ridout & Maybee, is even now procuring Canadian and European copyrights for a client for a work of universal interest; so I claim to be better posted generally than the public who are ignorant of the rights which are being thrown away to obtain this mongrel Act of 1889, by the passing of which our membership in the Berne Convention is severed, and our privileges destroyed. By simply obtaining a Canadian copyright the protection of the courts, without further registration, is obtained throughout the United Kingdom and all its Colonies and possessions, also in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Luxembourg and other places. In the recent case of Harfstengel v. Baines & Co., 1895, I.A.C., p. 20, "The Empire Theatre Living Picture Case," the right of suit in British Courts was conceded to a German copyright holder, although no registration had taken place under the British Copyright Act. The only condition precedent to obtaining copyright in the foregoing countries is that the formalities prescribed by law in the "Country of Origin" must be complied with—ten years are allowed within which translation may be made, and authorized translations are protected the same as original works.

By the British Act of 1842, copyright was obtainable covering all the Colonies, etc., provided the work was first (or simultaneously) published in the United Kingdom, and it was immaterial whether it was printed in the United Kingdom or whether it was written by a British subject or not; this has ever since been the policy of British statesmen who aimed at the benefit of the masses and the encouragement of art and literature in the country; printers and publishers could not dictate the policy of the Government to suit themselves as unfortunately has been the case both in the United States and Canada. Why should Canada at the bidding of publishers, printers and a portion of a noisy press pursue a policy of isolation and make this country take a step backward of fifty years towards the Dark Ages to pander to a few who will never benefit much by the Act of 1889, if it ever should become law. There have been International Copyright Acts in the United Kingdom, 1844,