

Toronto's
Civic
Elections.

Mr. Fleming has been elected Mayor of Toronto by a majority of over seventeen hundred. It is difficult to see in what way either Liberals or Conservatives as such are interested in a Mayoralty election. But, however that may be, Conservatives appear to have voted for Mr. Shaw and Liberals for Mr. Fleming, and the Liberal candidate won. Besides the party vote, it is said that Mr. Fleming polled the women's vote, which appears to have been of considerable proportions. He also received the hearty and energetic support of the misguided people popularly known as aqueducters, and of those who favour sumptuary legislation with respect to wine and strong drink. Mr. Fleming has made many promises, the keeping of which will give him no time to waste. In all plans and schemes for the better government of Toronto he will have the support of

Montreal's
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THE WEEK.

Montreal is now but three weeks distant from the municipal elections. The only Mayoralty candidate as yet in the field is Alderman R. Wilson Smith, an exceedingly able man, to whom a strong French-Canadian following is rallying. The city, if it elects a good Council this year, may escape from the road to civic bankruptcy which it has been travelling for some time. The Legislature, at its last session, did the city some good turns. It relieved it of obligations for street widening and land expropriations into which it had been landed by the schemers in the Council to the extent of several million dollars; it refused to authorize any further addition to the civic debt, which is now quite up to the statutory limit; and it made very stringent regulations to prevent expenditures by committees in excess of expropriations. As for the accumulated deficit of three millions of dollars, it left the city to get out of this hole, which it had dug for itself, in the best way it could. With rigid economy and ordinary business ability in spending money, Montreal can easily right itself; and it is this feeling that makes the more thoughtful citizens recognize that now is the time, if ever, to break up the ring which has so long been in control at Montreal's City Hall and put in good men in their places. For this reason the elections will be hotly fought, with fair chances for a reform victory.

Mr. Goldwin
Smith.

From different parts of the Dominion we have received a number of letters expressing approval of the remarks we made on Mr. Goldwin Smith in our last number. Two writers only take exception to our remarks, but their position differs but little from our own in the main, as will be seen on turning to our correspondence columns. Want of space prevents us from publishing other letters. One correspondent calls our attention to Mr. Goldwin Smith's article in the New York Independent which we had already examined with pained surprise. In this article the distinguished Englishman says: "It is my settled conviction that the true policy would lead Great Britain to retire, territorially and politically from this hemisphere, to bless the union of all her offspring who dwell in it, and to be content to cultivate their good will, and enjoy the benefit of their trade." This is not the time nor is an American newspaper the place in which to give expression to such sentiments as these. We are grateful to Providence that these sentiments are confined to Mr. Goldwin Smith and that they are ever likely to be confined to him. The withdrawal of Great Britain from this hemisphere would be a calamity the extent of which none can measure or conceive. Her connection with the continent is its mainstay, its very salvation.

The New Poet Laureate.

WHEN Wordsworth died in 1850, there was no serious doubt as to who would be his successor; and in that same year Alfred Tennyson was appointed to the post which for forty-two years he adorned and glorified by the production of the great mass of his poetry—from "In Memoriam," published in the same year, to the "Death of Oenone," which appeared just before his death.

When Tennyson was taken from us rather more than three years ago, there were many who hoped that he might be the last occupant of the post, and that no other lesser name might have the title of Poet Laureate attached to it. As three years had passed by and the post remained vacant, it seemed likely that this wish would be gratified. We now learn, however, that the vacant place is filled, and filled by Mr. Alfred Austin. We fear—and we are sorry to say it—that this is largely a political appointment. We do not mean that Mr. Alfred Austin has not poetical gifts of a rather high character; but he certainly is not the first living English poet nor is he a poet who has at all succeeded in touching the heart, or even, to any considerable extent, in gaining the ear of the English-speaking peoples of the world.

We quite believe that a good many persons have read his "Human Tragedy," published more than thirty years ago (in 1862) and that more have read parts of it; and the same may be said of his "Savonarola" (1881) and of his "Gate of the Convent." But these books have no prospect whatever of becoming a part of English literature: and it is quite likely that, fifty or sixty years hence, when students come upon the name of Mr. Alfred Austin, as Tennyson's successor in the Laureateship, they will ask why he is there and what he wrote.

Of course there were difficulties in the way. Mr. Swinburne, for example, was impossible. No sovereign could well decorate a man who had suggested the assassination of another sovereign in vigorous verses. Mr. William Morris, a very considerable poet, has given up poetry for painting, and thus put himself out of the list. Mr. Lewis Morris (or is he Sir Lewis Morris?) has a wide popularity, but lacks distinction of thought and expression. But Mr. William Watson is a genuine poet [with whose genius Mr. Austin's can no more be compared than a raven with an eagle. There are, at least, two poets in Canada who have a great deal more of the real poetical afflatus than Mr. Austin—Mr. Roberts and Mr. Lampman.

Mr. Gladstone apparently shrunk from filling the place. Doubtless there were Liberals and Home Rulers who had written verses as least as good as those of the new Laureate. But Gladstone, although he liked very well to promote his friends, yet never appointed a bishop merely because he was a partisan, and apparently had the same feelings about a Poet Laureate. We are sorry that Lord Salisbury had not similar scruples. We fear there can be no doubt that the new Laureate owes his appointment more to his politics than his poetry.

Mr. Austin has been for many years, perhaps all his life, a "consistent" Conservative. He contested an English borough in the Conservative interest. He has been, for years, a contributor to the London Standard, the chief Conservative organ. He was correspondent at Rome to that paper during the Vatican Council in 1870 and immediately afterwards in the Franco-German war. In 1883 he became the editor of the National Review, so that he has served his party well. But we are rather sorry that he has been made Poet Laureate. We do not mean that he will bring any