

# The Dominion Illustrated.

\$4.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

THE DOMINION ILLUSTRATED PUBLISHING COMPANY (Limited), Publishers.

GEORGE E. DESBARATS, MANAGER,  
73 St. James Street, Montreal.

GEORGE E. MACRAE, WESTERN AGENT,  
36 King Street East, Toronto.

J. H. BROWNLEE, BRANDON,  
Agent for Manitoba and the North West Provinces.

London (England) Agency:

JOHN HADDON & CO.,

3 & 4 Boulevard Street, Fleet Street, E.C.  
SOLE AGENTS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

28th DECEMBER, 1889.



The progress of a people is exemplified, not merely in the opening up and settlement of new areas, in the expansion of business, in the establishment of factories and the prosperity of the industrial class, but also in the spread of education, the development of a taste for study, the widening love of knowledge, and the cultivation, in the fullest sense, of the intellectual, moral and æsthetic faculties. No person who has carefully watched the progress of Canada in recent years can fail to have taken note of our triumphs in these directions. There is not one of our cities or important towns that has not its societies for mutual improvement under various names, some with special objects, such as the study of science, of history, of literature or of art, others for the investigation of political and economic problems, and others, again, of a general character, which includes many or all of these objects. One of the most hopeful of the attempts of this kind that have been started in this city, is the union of the two societies to whose work reference has more than once been made in these columns—the Society for Historical Studies and the Society of Canadian Literature. The former was established a few years ago by Mr. Thomas Macdougall, its first, Mr. W. J. White, its present, president, the late Mr. R. A. Ramsay and a few other earnest students, with the design of creating a more fruitful interest in Canadian history. It has proved a success, and is now well organized, with a zealous secretary, Mr. J. P. Edwards, and a considerable membership. The other society was projected by Mr. W. D. Lighthall early last year, and, from the first, attracted a large number of willing workers. In the beginning of the present winter it was thought well to unite the two bodies in such a way as would leave their respective organizations intact. The course of papers for the season, so arranged that each society supplies an essayist each alternate evening, has just been printed under the supervision of Mr. G. S. Wilson, secretary of the Society of Canadian Literature. Two of them have already been read at well attended meetings—the first on the 7th inst., by Mr. Mott, on "Montreal," the second, on Saturday last, by Mr. Lighthall, whose theme was "The first Canadian Novel." We are glad to see that the list comprises ladies.

In connection with such societies, and more especially such of them as are devoted largely to debating, a useful little manual, of the series of "Economic Tracts," has just been issued in a revised form. It is entitled "Questions for Debate in politics and economics, with subjects for essays and terms for definition." It contains an introduction by Mr. George Iles, to whose courtesy we

are indebted for our copy, from which we take the following suggestion: "When a debating club is small, it is a good plan for the chairman to ask every one present to say something. This limits the time which can be taken up by the talkative, and draws out the reticent, who may have contributions better worth having. In fixing upon subjects for debate, it is advisable whenever possible to give them connection: for example, a series of debates on taxation might turn on its relations to land, commerce and the extension of governmental functions. The bane of a debating club is apt to be the time consumed in operating the machinery of elections and so on. To obviate this, the executive committee should be charged with every task of which the club meetings may properly be relieved, and elections should be restricted to a few meetings each season." The terms for definition, subjects for essays and questions for debate are well chosen, and cover a broad range in the department of research with which the tracts of the series deal.

In this practical age, there is in some quarters a tendency to specialize education, even in school, as far as possible with reference to the profession, business or occupation to which the pupil intends to devote his life. There are still educationists, however, who hold that the best equipment for the work of life, even when it is in the walks of commerce or industry, is that of the old standard liberal education. This is the view that Mr. Davin, M. P., with his usual vigour and eloquence, has adopted in a lecture delivered at the opening of Lansdowne College, Portage La Prairie, on the 11th of last month. The essay, which is dedicated to Mr. Gladstone, who, in the author's opinion, furnishes the best living example of his theory, is entitled "Culture and Practical Power." It furnishes an abundance of instances of scholars who have been successful in public life, in commerce, in the professions, and wherever the highest type of practical efficiency has been called for. Mr. Davin maintains that it is a departure from the orthodoxy of common sense to suppose that the higher a man's qualifications, knowledge and ideals, the lower would be his usefulness at whatever task his hand might find to do. In the main the men who have distinguished themselves in every sphere of higher endeavour have been educated men. If they were not so, they laboured under disadvantages which those so situated could not fail to regret. There have been frequently instances of men whose natural ability won them high positions deploring their lack of superior acquirements, but we never heard of any one, however successful, regretting that he had to bear a burden of superfluous knowledge. Greek, for instance, is very often pronounced *ex cathedra* a supernumerary and utterly useless accomplishment. But we never heard of any one blaming it for standing in the way of his advancement. Neither Greek nor Latin, however, is the whole of education, and Mr. Davin uses culture in a much wider sense. The day is gone by when the strong arm swayed the destinies of men. It is the strong head that rules to-day. Whatever increases its strength, without weakening the physical or moral powers (and these two are included in the broadest culture), is good and to be desired. It is the man of business, indeed, who most needs culture as a diversion from the strain of toil and care, as well as for the due development and balance of all his faculties. Mr. Davin's lecture touches the right key and is sure to do good.

## THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

It is one of the moral drawbacks of the electric telegraph, as a means for the rapid transmission of all kinds of news, that it causes in the general mind an unhappy confusion as to the relative importance of events. The daily occurrences of which (apart from professional or business exigencies) the accounts are most eagerly read, belong very largely to the class of subjects whose discussion is least edifying. Only a small proportion of the whole budget of news is calculated to furnish grounds for a fair estimate of human progress. Reports of accidents, crimes, trials, political meetings, elections, sporting matters, alleged utterances of public men, failures, riots, scandals and other phases of the life, thought and movement of mankind all over the world, do certainly supply data for the history of the time. It may be said, indeed, that in this *olla podrida* of far-fetched gossip, we have the very essence and flavour of what is good, bad and indifferent in the whole round world served up to us every morning. The organization that gives us this daily feast of novelty is assuredly admirable. We have become so used to the regular discharge of its functions that we have ceased to wonder at it. A century ago the most advanced science would have promptly pronounced it impossible—a utopian dream. To us it is a commonplace reality. The very profusion of news tends to deprive it of interest and value. We read it as a matter of course, and, as a matter of course, forget it. It is, moreover, what is simply sensational that occupies most space, and, therefore, what is really memorable is very often passed over or dismissed with a hasty glance. Let any ordinary reader try to recall some of the events that have been most bruited abroad during the past year and he will acknowledge that our attention from day to day is, far too frequently, squandered on the mere casual by-play and incidental side issues in the great drama of life. Often what is most significant in thought, word and deed, secures no notice at all, or, at best, but a glance or whispered comment. This does not happen because the agencies that procure us our news do not lay before us an ample variety. Their nets are close and far-reaching, and it is a small item floating on the great stream of time that escapes capture. But in the display of headings preference is given to the sensational, however worthless or ephemeral it may be in its bearings on the world's development. The sensations of the year—those happenings that, for the time being, monopolize attention—are not necessarily, therefore, the events most worthy of remembrance as affecting the destiny of our race.

Nevertheless, whatever deeply stirs the public mind has for that very reason a significance as a test of the triumph or failure of civilization, and thus the nine days' wonders of any period are landmarks by which its progress may be measured. To be sure, all that excites popular feeling is not valueless. A great battle, a great political crisis, an earthquake or other disaster, occasioning loss of life and destruction of property, the death of some famous personage, or some scientific discovery likely to revolutionize certain departments of industry—these and other such events are of general interest to the class that reads and thinks, and are at the same time more or less sensational. But to be able to judge with some degree of accuracy whether, in a certain period—the year ending, for instance—the world has, on the whole, im-