

MONTREAL LETTER.

The holiday season is in full blast and the railway stations and wharves present very lively scenes on the departure of each train or boat. The mammas and their daughters are in a state of excitement to the last minute and constantly get in the way of the baggage trucks to the annoyance of the perspiring baggageman who becomes somewhat reckless with the property of the pleasure-seeking public. Rows of papas stand for the last few moments at the long row of windows listening, attentively of course, to the parting instructions of the long rows of mammas, while the girls talk to their friends at a speed of two hundred and fifty words a minute in the upper key and the station resounds with the mingled sounds of merry screeches and escaping steam. The train draws out; the red light on the tail end of the last car disappears around the bend, the station is still, and the numerous papas walk out into the street. The papas dine at the cafe, they exchange notes on household duties and—exist.

Through the munificence of Sir Donald Smith the friends of the Deep Sea Mission have obtained a handsome steam yacht for the work along the Labrador coast. The vessel is well adapted for what she has to do, and Dr. Greenfell, who has been working among the fishermen, is exceedingly well pleased and will take command of her himself. The yacht has been christened "Sir Donald" in honor of the great benefactor.

According to the assessment roll just published the properties exempt from taxation in Montreal in 1893 amounted to \$34,185,894, an increase of \$11,390,724 over the previous year. The Roman Catholic churches exempt from taxation are placed at \$2,770,800 and Protestant churches at \$2,309,300; Roman Catholic Benevolent Institutions at \$806,050 and Protestant Institutions at \$4,162,000. The corporation property exempt is assessed at \$10,463,010 and Government property at \$4,933,100. The total valuation of properties is over \$165,000,000. The exemptions amount to more than one-fifth of the whole.

Quite a large number of delegates from all parts of Canada attended the Prohibition Convention held here last week. The proceedings were of the usual character and "Prohibition" was the theme at all the public meetings. The most interesting feature of the Convention was the appearance of General Neal Dow, "the Father of Prohibition," and Miss Willard, "the uncrowned Queen of the Platform" at the first evening session in the Monument National. Their reception was enthusiastic and both made stirring addresses.

The recent attack upon the pool-room pest of this city resulted in a repulse for the lovers of law and order and the acquittal of the keepers of the betting places. The evidence was apparently very clear in favor of a conviction, but the jury, after being shut up all night, failed to agree. Judge Wurtel's remarks to the jury were rather of a warm character and he denounced the verdict in scathing terms as an outrage upon justice and a disgrace to the community. The pool-room fraternity, however, promised "not to do it again."

The business community was startled by the sudden death of Mr. James Burnett, President of the Stock Exchange, early in the week. His death will be deeply regretted, for he was a man of high character, ability, and strict impartiality and showed uni-

form courtesy and kindness to everyone he came in contact with. He was a Scotchman and fifty-two years of age.

For the first time since the Hackett riots the Orangemen of this city paraded on Sunday last with bands and regalia and marched to church. There was no trouble, although the police created some little excitement by their hurrying along in patrol wagons to the scene of march in response to an alarm sent in by the officers on the beat who thought that all would not go right. The Orangemen marched to church and marched back again without any interference, but a big sigh of relief went up from the heart of the timid citizen when the whole thing was over.

The exposure of the wholesale smuggling of Chinese into the United States via Canada has caused quite a sensation in this city, the headquarters of operations. The American is cute, but the Mongolian is one too many for him, and not only has he passed through the lines in large numbers, but he has utterly demoralized the United States customs department in this section of the country which will result in the lopping off of several official heads. The contraband article was passed through most ingeniously. The operator made many trips over the line, each time taking with him new arrivals which were represented as "partners," in business in New York, Philadelphia or Boston, as the case may be, and as having lived there sometime or other. Perjury was committed wholesale. The Chinamen were well coached before any attempt was made to pass them through as to how to answer to the usual questions of name, age, name of firm, its location and the gentleman's interest in the business. Any greenhorn could easily do that when brought before the examining officers, and all who came answered satisfactorily and were passed through. Later on, however, the examiner took it into his head to ask other than the stereotyped questions and several were refused admission, not being sufficiently coached to answer them. After this the Celestial was taken in hand and thoroughly schooled before any attempt was made to pass him. He was taught a little English, shown pictures of the principal buildings in the city to which he was going, the kind of buildings near his pretended place of business, the streets in the vicinity, and the street car routes so that he could be well posted and able to answer the questions of the examiners. They learned their lessons well and succeeded up to the present time in humbugging the custom authorities. There are several places in the city where these Chinamen are kept and schooled.

H.

THE POET OF SUMMER.

One of the difficulties with which native Canadian poets have always had to contend has been the vast public to which they have addressed themselves, and its scattered nature.

This public is the English-speaking people, and to call a section of that public Canadian, and another section American, and another section English, suggests a political and not a literary detail.

Similarly, to call Duncan Campbell Scott a Canadian poet, and Holmes an American poet, and Browning an English poet, would suggest a biographical item in the case of each, but by no means a natural subdivision of literature.

A nation's literature is not the collection of literary works produced by writers

born in that country, but the books which that nation reads. Geography and Politics and Biography are accidental, and have no significance in Art and Belles Lettres.

If anything so Scythian as success may be thought of in connection with the poet, and I have been led to infer that poets are all above the thought of success, it must be plain that for a Canadian poet to succeed, it will be necessary for him to succeed in English, which means success in New York and London, as well as in Toronto. Success in reality implies being read, and possibly purchased—but not being purchased, and possibly read.

Browning is certainly read as much in the United States as in England, and Lowell as much in England as in the United States.

The sections and the appendices of text books upon literature are generally accurate enough from a geographical standpoint, but rather meaningless from any other. The trick of penning up English, Scottish, American and Canadian poets in little herds by themselves, as if they had been particularly branded and had to stand together, has always seemed to me rather ludicrous. But this is not a heavy grievance to any one but the poet, and may be passed over by an indulgent and somewhat indifferent public.

There is perhaps no writer in the English language who brings to one's mind more vividly, and with more sweetness, the rich scents and colours of the summertime than Mr. Duncan Campbell Scott.

If Mr. Scott must be treated like a botanical species, it may be said that he has no Latin name, and that his geographical habitat is Ottawa, Canada. John Milton was born on Bread Street (or was it Milk Street?), London; but differences of time and place cannot hinder one from associating the two together.

Indeed, Mr. Scott's is the same poetry that the young Milton wrote at his father's country house in Buckinghamshire. The range is not very wide,

"*Du grace au douce,*"

as Boileau has put it. I have left off the remainder of the verse, for "*du plaisant au sévère*" is a habit of mind which belongs to a later period in a poet's life. Real humor has an element of tragedy in it and is only found in genius more matured. True satire is perhaps the highest form of poetry.

It is in a gentler mood that Mr. Scott brings us the breath of summer. The enchantment

And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.

He is almost entirely descriptive. There are some approaches to the greater lyric, but for the most part the level aimed at and kept is the pastoral. It is Canadian pastoral, furthermore, and his Northern countrymen will perhaps feel some of his poetry more strongly than the stranger. For example, this description of a scene by the river:

There were some girls, Baptiste,
Picking berries on the hillside,
Where the river curls, Baptiste,
You know,—on the still side:
One was down by the water.

As one compares Mr. Scott with McLachlan, or Sangster, one will notice differences in style on every page. The old and the new have gone to nature independently. The difference between their treatment of nature, to use an old illustration, is the difference that exists between the