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Free Public Libraries.

A paper, by MR. HENRY S. NOURSE, in the October *New England Magazine*, on "The Public Libraries of Massachusetts," treats of a subject which, though apparently a foreign one, is yet of great interest to our people. The student, or literary aspirant, in most Canadian cities, is heavily handicapped by the absence of any good collection of books from which he can draw the aid necessary for his work. While Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton can alone, in this country, offer these advantages to their citizens, we see in the State of Massachusetts no less than 248 public libraries, embracing in their location a great variety of municipal life, ranging from small villages up to the great city from which the state draws so much of its life. In the shelves of these collections about two-and-a-half million volumes are available, besides a vast number of pamphlets; the population of the state is about 2,250,000, so we see about 110 books to every 100 souls in the state—all freely open to the public. Assuming Canadian Parliamentary libraries as open to the general reader—an assumption tenable only in the most limited degree—we cannot count up half a million volumes as existing throughout Canada in public libraries, civic and legislative combined; being in round figures about 10 books to every 100 of the population. The comparison is one at which everyone should blush who is sincerely desirous of our national advancement. That the progress and rank of a country is not dependent on the literary facilities it can offer its people is quite true—luckily for us; but it is also true that the nations which are to-day in the front rank—which lead the world in civilization, in wealth, and in all that tends to the highest development of our race—are those which provide liberally for the mental and literary training of their people; in the knowledge that acquaintance with the great minds of the past and of the present tends to that emulation and vigour whose existence are potent factors in national growth. Patriotism itself, the noblest virtue that exists, is fed and nourished by the study of literature and by the general interest in literary matters that invariably follow free and general use of the writings of the leaders of thought throughout the world. The dollar becomes less of a universal god; interest in

the great civilising movements of the day, in new ideas on history, science and government, and in events which affect the welfare of their country, assumes more prominence in the people's thoughts; and their ideas and actions are not so completely dominated by that personal selfishness which has always gone hand-in-hand with ignorance.

The Increase of Our Literary Facilities.

What are the prospects in the Dominion for granting increased facilities to our people in this way? Judging from the gain that has been made in a few years, they are not unfavourable. Since Confederation the national libraries have made great progress, notably that at Ottawa; while in Toronto and Hamilton the establishment and maintenance of free public libraries have been undertaken by a direct tax on the citizens. The results of this have been of great value; Toronto has now a really excellent library, especially rich in works on Canada's early history, and daily adding to its lists the best books published in the English language. Hamilton's collection, although commenced but a year or two ago, is rapidly growing, and bids fair to proportionately equal that of its eastern neighbour. In Montreal, the nucleus of a good library has been formed, but, through lack of funds, little or nothing is at present being done to add new publications. The Archives collection of documents and books has been established at Ottawa, resulting in the annual issue of a volume of historical lore which is unequalled—both in quantity and rich quality—by any government publication in the world. College libraries have grown slowly but surely—that of McGill being an exception, it having advanced with unusual rapidity, thanks to the generosity of its friends. Best of all, it is now an admitted fact that next year will see the beginning of a magnificent new library in connection with the university which will accommodate 200,000 volumes. For this building McGill will be indebted to MR. PETER REDPATH, who has already, for many years, aided materially in the growth of the college library. It is to be earnestly hoped that the benefits of the new institution will not be confined to the students and graduates of the university, but will, to a certain degree, be open to the use of the citizens of Montreal generally.

All that has been done towards the growth of public libraries is, however, but very little in comparison to what should be the record in this direction. A new line of action is essential if any great increase of library facilities is wanted. So far as Montreal is concerned, petitions should be prepared for presentation to the City Council in favour of the levying of a special tax—be it ever so small—on all householders, the proceeds to be devoted solely to the creation and maintenance of a public free library on a modern and progressive system. Until this is done, the commercial metropolis must in this respect rank away behind both Toronto and Hamilton. For the country at large, an Act is wanted similar to that inaugurated recently by the Massachusetts State Legislature, by which a commission was created whose duty is "to promote the establishment and efficiency of free public libraries." The members receive no remuneration for their services, the only cost to the State being \$500 for clerical assistance. A similar committee could easily be appointed here by the Dominion Government, and their report could be made the basis for legislative action tending to encourage the establishment of free libraries throughout Canada.

Our Christmas Number.

To avoid any misunderstanding we beg to notify our subscribers that the Christmas number is an extra one, and is sent only when specially ordered. The price is fifty cents, and we would recommend that early orders be placed.



VICTORIA SCOTSMEN.

Our engraving on page 409 is of a group of members of the Sir William Wallace Society and Scotland Pipers' Association, taken on the occasion of their first picnic held at the Caledonia Grounds, Victoria, on 29th August last. The outing was an unqualified success, so much so that the management have every encouragement to make the affair an annual one. The band of H.M.S. "Warspite" was in attendance and gave some excellent music. The special feature of the day was the Scottish games, the programme covering no less than thirty of these picturesque events. Intoxicating liquor was strictly prohibited from the ground. As a whole the two young societies have reason to feel proud of their first appearance in public. They have established a reputation for hospitality that will in future ensure success and even larger crowds than they had on this Saturday. Genuine Scotch heather was worn by the whole society, something unprecedented by any Scotch society in America, which shows the adaptability of the climate to be the nearest approach to that of Great Britain.

BELCEIL MOUNTAIN, P.Q.

The scene represented in our engraving is one of singular beauty. The Richelieu river is in the foreground, spanned by the G.T.R. bridge, which is notable as the scene of a terrible railway accident a quarter of a century ago. In the background is the bold and beautiful Belceil Mountain, with the pleasant village of St. Hilaire at its feet.

SCENE ON THE PARLIAMENT GROUNDS, OTTAWA.

Apart from the splendid views obtained from almost any position upon them, the Parliament grounds at Ottawa are themselves an attractive resort. The engraving elsewhere shown gives a view of a pretty corner to the left of the main buildings a glimpse of which is also presented. The cannon resting on the sward there were brought from the Crimea.

QUEENSTON HEIGHTS.

In a recent issue we gave views of the old and present monuments to General Sir Isaac Brock on Queenston Heights. In the present number we supplement these with illustrations of the Village of Queenston as it now appears, showing the monument on the heights in the distance; and a view of the stone erected on the spot where Brock fell. This stone was placed and formally made public on the occasion of the visit to Canada of H. R. H. the Prince of Wales in 1860.

England and Her Colonies.

She stands, a thousand-wintered tree,
By countless morns impearled;
Her broad roots coil beneath the sea,
Her branches sweep the world;
Her seeds, by careless winds conveyed,
Clothe the remotest strand
With forests from her scatterings made
New nations fostered in her shade,
And linking land with land.

O, ye by wandering tempest sown
Neath every alien star,
Forget not whence the breath was blown
That wafted you afar!
For ye are still her ancient seed,
On younger soil let fall—
Children of Britain's island-breed,
To whom the Mother in her need
Perchance may one day call.

—WILLIAM WATSON in *Illustrated London News*.