

bore you. So I must content myself with saying that Miss Austen finds no place behind these glass doors (you will recollect Charlotte Brontë's curious dislike of Miss Austen's work, and Macaulay's enthusiastic love for it) though Miss Edgeworth who, to me, is unreadable is here in a grand gown of gold and brown. Personally I cannot imagine a much greater loss than never to have known *Emma* and her friends, never to have visited Weymouth with *Frank* and his demure fiancée, strolled with *Lydia* and *Wickham* along the High street of that Garrison town, or gone to the Bath balls with the owners of *Northanger Abbey*. The principal collector of this library died in '56, yet no first editions of the early Dickens or Thackerays were bought: Perhaps she (for the owner was a lady) could not, like Howells, suffer the mannerisms of the one or the confidential attitude of the other. That the books a man possesses will tell you his character every one knows ("no one is a hypocrite in his pleasures" is a Johnsonian proverb) and it is easy to read this lady's from her's. Given much poetry, many essays and memoirs, a little history, a score of sermons, and some good novels beginning with Richardson and Scott, there is left nothing to desire—beyond perhaps a few works of humour, of travel, of imagination. But it is very rare, they tell me, to find a woman who knows wit when she hears it, who cares a fig for foreign countries, for the Princess Badoura and her sisters, or for stories like Hawthorne's *Transformation*: though here one has no right to complain in the face of so many evidences of a sound and cultivated intelligence.

In consequence of the death of the Emperor of Germany, some of the Oxford commemoration services were abandoned, to the grief of the visitors; still, much was left of every description. The grey city in its green settings, with its peculiar tranquil, old-time atmosphere, is another world to the ordinary Londoner, who lingers on the threshold of these wonderful quadrangles, and chapels, halls and libraries (where one feels uncommonly small and ignorant), and gazes with dazed wonder at the thousand points of interest that present themselves to the most superficial person. One should see, I am sure, two or three of the simple sights first, gradually to accustom oneself to the greater wonders. It is as well, I think, to stand for a few minutes in front of Sir Joshua's exquisite windows in New College Chapel (designed by the President, executed in Schia by Ferri), and watch the attitude of Charity with her children, the graceful flowing lines in the figure of Hope, the expression of Fortitude. Some will tell you that these ladies do not worthily represent the cardinal virtues. For most of them Mrs. Gwatkin stood (years after she told Nagdon she had sat to Sir Joshua for this piece) smiling in the Leicester Fields studio with feathers on her head, or clasping a baby in her arms. There is nothing heroic in the composition—indeed the end virtue on either side remind one not a little of Angelica Kauffman's goddesses—but the feeling and charm and refinement are so great one forgives the inequality, the occasional lack of strength. Then there are Johnson's rooms in Pembroke College, up the narrow oak stairs to the second floor over the archway, where you can look out of the window from which he threw the famous shoes, and can listen to traditions of his unsatisfactory career here, and how he left after three years without taking his degree. Down in the Hall they have the old wooden desk on which his wrote his Dictionary with Tetty by his side, and if you open it you will find an impression from his seal, a stern Roman head. Sir Thomas Browne, Pym, Camden, Beaumont, the dramatist, Shenstone, were once students here, and Whitefield (whose tabernacle is still in Tottenham Court Road, looking as it did when Theo and George Warrington drove past it in the chariot) and Blackstone; but I don't know if any of their lodgings are identified; visitors only ask to see Johnston's. I was told there is the bust of the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy* against a pillar in Christ Church, which no one who loves Burton will miss, and there are pictures in the magnificent Christ Church Hall (we have been here before with George III. and his court on the day when Lady Charlotte Bertie went out backwards with a sprained ankle, and the maids of honour and eque-ries were starved) portraits by all the great men from Holbein to Millais which alone are worth a journey to see. John Inglesant, Lady Isabella and young Lady Fentham turn into Trinity Chapel as we pass, and Charles II. comes down the street toward us, surrounded by his spaniels, scaring the wraith of his grave-visaged father. In the quiet quadrangles you meet at every turn the heroes of real life or of fiction with whom the name of Oxford is connected. As Dickens wandered through the City Churches without knowing the date of their erection or the histories of their parsons, so it is best to loiter through these enchanted spots, till, by degrees, the Spirit of the town teaches one insensibly all one is fit to learn.

WALTER POWELL.

PROFESSOR DOWDEN, in his admirable contrast of Tennyson and Browning, has made it clear, that while the Laureate sees life on the orderly and institutional side, Browning sees it on its spontaneous and inspirational side. The one seeks the explanation of the mysteries which surround him, and the processes by which life is unfolded in the slow, large movement of law; the other goes straight to the centre whence the energy of life flows. Society is much to Browning, not because it teaches great truths, but because it reveals the force and direction of individual impulse. Tennyson continually moves away from the individual emotion and experience to that wider movement in which it shall mix and lose itself; the fragment of a life gaining dignity and completeness by blending with the whole. Browning, on the other hand, by virtue of the immense importance he attaches to personality, is continually striving to discover in the individual the potency and direction of the general movement. Every life is a revelation to him; every life is a channel through which a new force pours into the world.—*Andover Review*.

## MONTREAL LETTER.

Now that the clôture annuelle makes our sundry places of amusement even more demure in appearance than they are during the season, and Crawley mansions everywhere have been placed under tinker supervision, it is very delightful to find an habitation which one may visit weekly, daily, always sure of welcome, and, what seems more delightful still, which one cares to visit. Need I tell you such must, perforce, be a library? We can quite understand the chink of the "white bits," as he pays his orchestra chair makes the gentleman of yesterday at once not only reconciled, but pleased, though some crack-brained prima-donna should venture up far giddier heights than his sweet-voiced daughter, and the much maligned street-piano put to shame the accompanist. But if you are not a gentleman of yesterday, that the Fraser Institute is free, will in nowise lessen your appreciation of its many attractions, and they are many, too many perhaps.

In 1870 one Mr. Hugh Fraser, having amassed enough money to make it worth while to question whether a public institution or collateral heirs would perpetuate his name and memory the more flatteringly, naturally decided the city had better be put in his debt. Unfortunately, however the collateral heirs (as collateral heirs always do) differed very widely from this opinion, and, bringing the case before the court, fought tooth and claw during some fourteen years to get poor Mr. Hugh's fortune. But the deceased's executors entrusted with the grateful task of providing "a free public library, museum, and gallery, to be open to all honest and respectable persons whosoever, of every rank in life without distinction, and without fee or reward of any kind," must obviously gain their case, inasmuch as the testator had died unmarried, and feeling, doubtless, he owed his fellowcitizens certainly no less than his relations. In 1885 the *Fraser Institute* was opened, but the seemingly interminable litigation had woefully decreased its financial resources, and this, of course, necessitated an appeal to the generosity of Montrealers. Sometimes we wonder whether a man turns benefactor for the sake of his name or his nation. Twenty stipulations are made; the people tacitly dissent; experienced heads could imagine far more profitable ways of spending the money; but it is a gift, and as such must be gratefully and submissively accepted, much in the same spirit, the small girl takes everything and anything the brother of larger growth feels prepared to bestow upon her. This talk appears ungrateful enough, yet why hoodwink ourselves and the world? Why receive without argument, what a suggestion might make really profitable?

In the city of Montreal we have two public libraries, neither of which is at all worthy our standing. The *Mechanics' Institute* I suppose, fulfills more or less adequately the end to which it was established, an end, as its name implies, not difficult of fulfillment. But with the *Fraser Institute*, the case is different. Mr. Fraser dreamed a Free Library, Museum, and Gallery of Art—in other words the country-shop affair most of our institutions are. Nobody doubts we have at present in the *Fraser* "a commencement more important and more extensive than that of some other institutions of a similar class, which now stand among the finest literary, scientific and artistic institutions in the world," but from melancholy precedents everybody has reason to ask if it will prove more than a commencement. Our Art Gallery has existed some years I believe, can we boast any valuable work beside Millet's Little Shepherdess? And the Natural History Society, a fossilized, gray, glum, patient, old institution, haunted by mummies, and on Sunday mornings very often by the disaffected. Such, scientifically and artistically speaking, is our situation. With the books of the Institut Canadien, and those of the Mercantile Library the *Fraser Institute* possessed the nucleus of an admirable collection.

15,000 volumes was no mean beginning. Now the Book Club in connection with it, and many generous donors, supply hundreds more every year. From one point of view you see we have reason to entertain very great expectations. But alas! art and ornithology will intrude themselves. That fatal division of force which everybody is crying out against, manifests itself here by huge cases of stuffed birds, and thirty-eight paintings, one would long to see exchanged for as many modern literary works of which the *Fraser Institute* stands sorely in need. Once let people know they must give books or money, and only books or money, and let the institution direct every effort to the filling of shelves and not glass cases, and Montreal shall possess—no, not a British museum, ambitious citizens, but a far better library than if the public be allowed to pay its donations in stuffed foxes, skulls, and questionable art.

The "welcome!" that meets you printed on the great big door-mat of the *Fraser Institute*, is repeated through the cosy reading-rooms, reserved respectively for ladies and gentlemen, in the pleasant faces of the super-humanly patient lady assistants, by the genial autocrat, the librarian. Since warm days have arrived, many of the Institute's most constant frequenters prefer to follow their *dolce far niente* existence, snoozing on the promenade by the river, but let autumn come, and you will see these "honest and respectable persons" all back in their places at the farthest end of the well heated room, generally fingering weekly periodicals as if they were of vellum, while contemplating the mysterious signs they contain with simple, savage awe. Of course the *Fraser Institute* can boast a contingent of frowzy-haired, spectacled scholars, ardent youths, and large-brained boys as well; while horribly earnest college girls, and the old lady who reads every where on earth but at home, are its frequent visitors.

Mr. Boodle, the librarian, has worked hard and with brilliant success. Apart from the principal room containing all the books on general subjects, some very rare old editions of French romances, and the magnificently bound volumes Prince Jerome Bonaparte gave the Institut Canadien, another room is lined entirely with law books, a third with diverse pamph-