

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CANADA.

The issue of a catalogue by the Board of Management of the Toronto Free Library—to the merits of which reference is made elsewhere—may justify some account of the development of that useful class of institutions throughout the Dominion. The number of them at present is, perhaps, greater than some of our readers are aware. Of libraries wholly or partially free to the public there are altogether not far from a hundred. In some cases, however, the privilege of admission is accompanied by conditions which to most persons would be practically exclusive. In a larger proportion there is comparatively little difficulty in obtaining access to the shelves for consultation. Of libraries entirely or virtually free to the public there are about a dozen. It is more than a hundred years since the first effort was made in our older cities to provide books for the use of earnest students. As to Halifax pertains the honour of introducing the printing press into British North America, so also to that Maritime capital must be conceded the first attempt to establish a library for common use. The same city was fortunate in having the foundations of its Law Library laid about the end of last century, by the gift of a collection of professional works from Sir Thomas Strange. An extant letter from Chief Justice Smith to his wife, dated from Quebec, in December, 1786, makes mention of a good library as existing in that city, besides many private ones. Mr. J. M. LeMoine, who reproduces the letter in his "Picturesque Quebec," adds in a note that the Quebec Library Association was founded by Lord Dorchester in 1779. The Fraser Institute of this city may be (in part, at least) traced back, *mutato nomine*, to the year 1796. In that year a joint stock association of 120 shares at \$50 each was created for the purpose of forming what was called the Montreal Library. The collection, which had reached the figure of 8,000 volumes half a century ago, had many vicissitudes, which it would take too long to recount. Suffice it to say that the Montreal Library was finally merged into the Mercantile Library Association, which at one time gave promise of a permanent independent existence. Its books now form part of the library of the Fraser Institute. The Institut Canadien, which was destined to contribute towards the equipment of the same establishment, was founded in 1844, and was the first enterprise of the kind initiated by the French-Canadian section of the community. Prince Napoleon presented its library with books valued at \$2,000.

Libraries were early connected with the various legislatures of the provinces. That of Upper Canada was destroyed or dispersed during the occupation of York (Toronto) by the Americans in 1813; and in 1816 the sum of \$4,000 was voted on behalf of its partial restoration. The fact that during the same session the sum of \$15,000 was voted to Governor Gore for the purchase of plate furnished occasion for some sharp comments. At the union of 1841 the libraries of both "the Canadas" were amalgamated. The catalogue compiled in 1857-58, in two bulky volumes, shows that ten years before Confederation it had attained respectable proportions. After being known, for some twenty years, as the Library of Parliament, it is now designated the National Library—a name which its 130,000 volumes may be held to justify. The Legislative Libraries of

the various provinces may at present be estimated as follows: Ontario, over 40,000; Nova Scotia, about 28,000; New Brunswick, 12,000; Manitoba, from 12,000 to 15,000. The Legislative Library of Quebec is just being reconstituted, having been destroyed by fire a few years ago. Those of Charlottetown and Victoria are only at the incipient stage.

The most important collections after the National Library at Ottawa are those of our great universities. Laval heads the list, with 100,000; McGill comes next with about 37,000; Montreal College has over 30,000; University of Toronto, about 30,000; the Colleges of Nicolet, St. Hyacinthe, Ste. Anne de la Pocatière, have from 14,000 to 16,500 volumes each. Queen's University has over 16,000 volumes. Several other houses of education have over 10,000. The Educational Department of Ontario, Toronto, has more than 20,000 volumes on its shelves. Of literary and scientific institutions the palm is due to the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, which has between 19,000 and 20,000 volumes. The Historical and Scientific Society of Winnipeg has succeeded in a few years of energetic life in amassing nearly 12,000 volumes. Of the special libraries—devoted to law, geology, natural history, agriculture—there are several of importance. Halifax, St. John, N.B., Portland, N.B., Toronto, Berlin, Ont., St. Thomas, Ont., and several other places have more or less flourishing free public libraries. To some of these we shall refer more fully in a future issue.

## A WELCOME GIFT.

It is our good fortune this week to illustrate—by engraving of some of its leading features—a gift on which Montreal has reason to felicitate itself. Our readers are not unaware of the practical way in which Mr. R. B. Angus has manifested his interest in our Art Gallery and Association. His donation to the institution of the choicest pictures in his own collection was announced, some weeks ago, to the delight of art lovers in this community. The addition thus made to the Gallery comprises the "Crown of Flowers," by Bouguereau; the "Harvest Field" of Wyatt Eaton; Lansyer's "La Rosée"; "Le ketour des Crevetières," by E. L. Vernier; "The Huntsman," by Kowalsky, and "In the Woods," by Bliss Baker. These works of art by some of the best painters of the day are a welcome enrichment of a collection which, we hope, will one day be worthy of a great city like Montreal. Bouguereau has not only earned fame, but trained some of the best known artists of the present generation. As to Harlamoff's merit, there cannot be two opinions, though judgments may differ as to the details of his work. Lansyer, Vendean by birth, is a pupil of Viollet-le Duc and of d'Harpignies. Justice has not always been done him, but what appreciation he has won has come with authority. Vernier and Kowalsky excel in their chosen provinces. The pictures of these artists, which, through Mr. Angus's munificence, are now the property of the Art Association, are examples of their happiest style. The same may be said of the pictures of Bliss Baker and Wyatt Eaton, on whom we have a special claim. The gift is, in fact, representative not only of different styles and subjects, but of both the old world and the new. Not without reason did the Art Association (through Mr. Hugh McLennan), bestow on Mr. Angus the highest honour within its faculty—

that of Patron or Benefactor. What higher title could be given to him who loves and serves his fellow men? And in what way could that love and service be more fruitfully manifested than by placing within reach of the public objects of beauty that appeal to the higher sentiments and emotions?

## REMBRANDT'S DRAWINGS.

Little by little the modern photographic processes are bringing within reach of everybody a multitude of artistic treasures, that have, till now, been known only to a few. We lately noticed a volume of reproduction of Italian drawings in the British Museum; and now we have the first instalment of a venture, which is even more meritorious, because it is the work of private energy—chiefly the energy of Dr. Lippmann, of the Print Room, Berlin. This is a volume of "phototypes" after drawings by Rembrandt, and it includes fifty of them. The intention of the editor is to reproduce the principal drawings in four or five of the most important collections—the Print Rooms at Berlin, and at the British Museum, and the private cabinets of Mr. Seymour Haden and Mr. Haseltine. The undertaking is an excellent one; the method of reproduction employed is wonderfully effective; and the cost, considering the excellence of the work, is very low. There is a richness and mellowness in the phototypes which entirely separate them from the ordinary results of photographic "processes." One has, in fact, to put them by the side of the original drawings, and to examine them very closely before one can perceive any difference whatever.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the value, both for the student of the history of art and for the artist, of the drawings of the great masters. Their importance was understood by English amateurs—though not by the Government—long before Sir Thomas Lawrence made his famous collection; it was understood in France a century earlier, when Crozat collected drawings and Watteau copied them. By this time we have come to the conclusion that there is nothing so illustrative of a painter's style and progress as his drawings. They are often, as in Raphael's case, the key of his history. In Rembrandt's, they are not so, since they are very seldom studies for his pictures; as brilliant and rapid sketches, and from their relation to his etchings. In a few cases, those reproduced here have a more personal interest, as in the curious "Portrait of the Artist," and in the beautiful silver-point of Saskia, his wife, with the autograph inscription which states that it was done "when she was 21 years old, on the third day after our betrothal, June 8, 1633. But in most cases the drawings must be considered simply from the artistic side as vivid and vigorous transcripts of whatever incidents may have momentarily struck the artist, or as studies, of landscape at once masterly and delicate, or, sometimes, as exercises in composition. — *London Times*.

THE WOMEN OF CONNEMARA.—The women of Connemara, says an Irish letter, are picturesque in attire and shapely in form to a remarkable degree. Their limbs are long and graceful. They are erect and spirited in carriage, and the immense black braideens, or cloaks, with which all shortcomings in clothing are shrouded, fall in truly classic folds about them. Bare-limbed, as the men, at all seasons, you will not infrequently catch glimpses of legs as exquisitely moulded as those of the Venus of Cos; while the most voluptuous types of Southern Europe, or languorous, tropical Cuba, furnish no more perfect examples of tapering, dimpled arms, beautifully formed shoulders, and full but lengthened neck with dove-like double curve. The broad, large faces are still superbly oval. The chin has strength, the full, shapely mouth is red and tenderly, expressively curved; the regular teeth are charming in pearl-white glint and dazzle; the nose is large, well cut, with thin, sensitive nostrils; the eyes, under long, heavy lashes, look straight and honestly at you out of clear, large depths of gray or blue; the eyebrows are marvels of nature's pencilling; the forehead is wide and fair, and such heads of hair crown all, that, were they unloosed, the Connemara women could stand clad in lustrous black, immeasurably surpassing her sloe-black braideen. Not a thread is on them besides the Connemara flannel. It is spun from the wool of the mountain sheep.