

Montreal Affairs.

STREET-WIDENING; A RICH FIELD FOR PLUNDER; "THE BAND OF PAID SWEARERS"—NEFARIOUS SCHEMES OF UNPRINCIPLED ALDERMEN.—THE SAVING REMNANT IN THE CITY COUNCIL.—THE CITIZENS AROUSED BY EXPOSURE MADE BY THE CITY PRESS—JAMES MACDONALD OXLEY'S NEW BOOK, "THE BOY TRAMP," TO BE PUBLISHED BY W. & R. CHAMBERS NEXT YEAR—MR. ARTHUR WEIR CONGRATULATED BY THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN—A NEW CANADIAN NOVEL, "AN UNEXPECTED BRIDE," JUST PUBLISHED IN CHICAGO; IT IS WRITTEN BY MRS. J. B. HAMMOND, OF MONTREAL.—THE CHATEAUQUAY MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED IN OCTOBER BY THE GOVERNMENT.

THE expropriation methods of the city council for the last few years have offered speculators a rich field for plunder. The city inherited from the old days narrow streets which, as population grew, become inadequate for passenger and traffic requirements, and some twenty years ago an elaborate plan for the gradual widening of the principal thoroughfares was adopted. A few years ago, however, the city council branched out in wholesale street-widening. In some cases streets, miles in length, were widened, the necessary land and building being expropriated by the city. The value of the land was fixed by evidence, and the necessities of the real estate speculators, who bought property on the streets about to be widened in order to make something out of the expropriation, soon called into being "a band of paid swearers," to use the phrase invented by the city attorney, by whose aid fictitious values were given to properties. There were continual scandals in consequence. About two years ago the rapid increase of the city debt aroused the citizens; and by the combined efforts of a minority of the city council, the Board of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce (a French-Canadian organization), the Legislature forbade the city to increase its debt beyond the \$25,000,000 mark which has been almost reached. As this meant an end to expropriation proceedings, with the resulting good times for speculators, lawyers, and witnesses, a desperate but unavailing effort was made, at the last meeting of the Legislature, to secure a reversal of this legislation. The plan now adopted to force the Legislature to take off the brakes is to so increase the city's liabilities that it will either have to be allowed to borrow more money or default. Ald. Prefontaine, who is the leader of this wing of the council, with Ald. Hurteau as chief lieutenant, has been trying, for instance, to induce the city council to authorize the issuing of asphalt pavement contracts to the value of nearly a quarter of a million dollars, though there is no money available to pay for the work. The contractor is willing to wait because he knows that the city will have to pay ultimately, if not willingly, by action of the courts, since the city charter authorizes the sheriff, upon the council not paying its debts, to take possession of the City Hall and levy a sufficient rate to satisfy the creditors. The city debt is therefore a first mortgage on every foot of land and every building in the city; and if a liability is incurred it must be paid no matter what the Legislature may say.

But the most daring scheme has been revealed by the advertised list of annual expropriations for next year. By the homologated plan adopted twenty years ago it was provided that whenever a proprietor should build or rebuild, on one of the streets to be widened, he should be bound to conform himself to the new line. This, of course, left in front of the new building a strip of land which in many cases was of no use to him. In order that a man should not be deprived of the use of his property for years, without compensation, a provision was put in the charter, providing that these strips of land should be expropriated, at their actual value, every five years. But some years ago a clause was slipped in, during one of the periodic overhauls of the city charter, under which proprietors of vacant lots and of old buildings were enabled annually to compel the city to expropriate them simply by making a demand. Under this law the city has been flooded with demands. It took two pages of our newspapers to publish the notices, and the cost will be between two and three million dollars, half of which the city must pay. Among the properties which the city is asked to pay for are cut stone buildings, three stories high. One of our newspapers published a complete exposé of the scheme, and now that the public has been alarmed steps

will be taken to prevent the expropriations going through. They have to be ratified by the Superior Court which appoints the expropriation commissioners; and the court will be asked to refuse its approval on the ground that many of the applications for expropriations do not come under the annual expropriation law, as interpreted, until the present time, and as it should rationally be interpreted.

James Macdonald Oxley has sold the British copyright of his book, "The Boy Tramp," to W. and R. Chambers for a handsome sum. As the publications for the coming holiday season are now under way it will not be published until next year. Like most of Mr. Oxley's works it is Canadian in its setting. It recounts the adventures of boys who cross the continent by tramping along the Canadian Pacific Railway. Mr. Oxley gathered his "local colour" for this work two summers ago when he spent several weeks along the line of the railway. Mr. Oxley is just finishing another story of adventure for boys dealing with blockade running during the late civil war in the United States. Mr. Oxley having spent his youth in a Canadian seaport town had the opportunity of meeting men who had been engaged in this daring occupation, and many real incidents will be incorporated in the story.

Mr. Arthur Weir is in receipt of a letter from the Marquis of Dufferin congratulating him on the excellence of the ode read by him at the unveiling of the monument to Sir John Macdonald, at Ottawa, on Dominion Day. "The verses," the Marquis writes, "are excellent and I cannot help letting you know with what pleasure I have read them."

"The Unexpected Bride: The Story of an Old Fashioned Family" is the title of a Canadian novel published by Donohue, Henneberry & Co., Chicago. The author, "Constance McDonell," is Mrs. J. B. Hammond of this city. From its main title one expects something of the Mrs. Southworth order; but the sub-title accurately describes the work. It relates the fortunes of a Loyalist family, the scene being laid in one of the St. Lawrence counties. It is very well written and the story is interesting.

The monument erected by the Government to mark the site of the battlefield of Chateauquay will be unveiled in October. It has been completed for some time apart from the inscription which has yet to be placed upon it. The monument has been erected at Allan's Corner in the parish of Tres St. Sacrament of Ormstown, generally known as the Howick Parish of the County of Chateauquay. It is close to the river road, and not more than a hundred yards from the river itself. It marks the first line of the Canadian defence where de Salaberry's forces, protected by the brushwood abatis, beat back the American column. It consists of a plain four-sided shaft and pedestal of grey Stanstead granite, resting on a square base of the same stone, the whole being about thirty feet high. Around the shaft at about half its height is carved a wreath of laurel, and below this are the figures, "1812-14." One face of the pedestal has been smoothed, and there the inscription will be placed. These are the only ornamental portions of the monument. All else is plain, roughly dressed, grey granite; and no claim of graceful proportions or beauty of finish can be made on behalf of the work.

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Parisian Affairs.

THE SCHOOL-BOY SOLDIERS A FAILURE; OBLIGATORY MILITARY SERVICE UNDER DISCUSSION—PRINCE FERDINAND'S INTRIGUES RENDER HIM GENERALLY OBNOXIOUS—ADMIRATION EXPRESSED FOR LORD SALISBURY; THE FRENCH HAVE A HOLY DREAD LEST ENGLAND JOINS THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE AND THAT ANGLO-RUSSIAN COMPLICATIONS MAY DRAG THEM INTO A WAR—PERSISTENT BAD WEATHER IS SAID TO BE DAMAGING TO CROPS—THE CYCLE OF REJOICING IN GERMANY CAUSES PAIN TO FRENCHMEN—ANARCHY NOT YET DEAD; ASSASSINATION OF M. VILLEMIN AND THE OUTRAGE AT ANICHE—M. BOISSMADE'S VIEWS ON JAPAN—SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT DUBBED THE NEW ENGLISH CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER BY DEBATS.

ANOTHER fad less in France; the "school battalions" or "Scolos," that were organized some years ago, in a moment of "patriotic fever," have been definitely wound up. It was one of the engines destined for the "revenge;" its existence was ephemeral like all toys. Children at the breast could not be made warriors; there was nothing tangible in the creation. The "Scolos" captivated enthusiasm for a few