

CORRESPONDENCE.

It is distinctly to be borne in mind that we do not by inserting letters convey any opinion favourable to their contents. We open our columns to all without leaning to any; and thus supply a channel for the publication of opinions of all shades, to be found in no other journal in Canada.

No notice whatever will be taken of anonymous letters, nor can we undertake to return those that are rejected.

Letters should be brief, and written on one side of the paper only. Those intended for insertion should be addressed to the Editor, 162 St. James Street, Montreal; those on matters of business to the Manager, at the same address.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

REV. SIR,—I am informed that Sir Hugh Allan has offered to erect a building suitable for a Music Hall, on the site of the old Queen's Hall, if any person or persons will guarantee him 10 per cent. per annum on his outlay, exclusive of the cost of the ground. If this information is correct, surely the offer is a reasonably good one.

The lot of land where until recently the so-called Crystal Palace stood would make a good site for a building of this kind.

I see by the public prints that Toronto will soon be in possession of a Hall costing \$35,000, exclusive of organ. Why is Montreal so much behind her Western neighbour?

Yours truly,

Montreal, 6th Nov., 1878.

CHORUS.

TORONTO MUNICIPAL MATTERS.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—A communication in your last issue from "Maple" has kept up the interest in Toronto municipal affairs already excited by your previous articles. I will not take up your space to criticise the Council, as a day of reckoning is at hand, and very few of the present Council will have a seat in the Council Chamber this day three months. It is different with the paid officials of the city. They are not elected by the ratepayers, and appear responsible to no one. The mode in which the city legal business is managed is a standing disgrace. The following are a few instances. Last June a by-law was submitted to the ratepayers in connection with the new Exhibition Buildings. It was so carelessly drawn up that the Council, after advertising it, submitted it to counsel, who declared it defective. It was therefore withdrawn. Our brilliant Solicitors again tried their hands at drawing up a by-law with like success. The legal profession picked holes in it. Citizens laughed at it, and the Council again took outside advice upon it. The consequence was that the city was put to the expense of advertising two abortive by-laws, and the fees for learning that they were defective. On the 18th June, Alderman Boustead called attention to the payment of \$182 for legal services to Mr. Fenton and Mr. Murdock, and asked why the City Solicitors had not done the work when they were paid for it. Under the head of Law Expenses for 1877, nine firms appear to have received fees from the city for advice or assistance, which the paid Solicitors were apparently incompetent to give, and amongst the nine is "J. W. Gale, services re Municipal Amendments, \$200." You will be surprised to learn that Mr. Gale is not a lawyer, but a shirt manufacturer. The City Solicitors also appear under the same heading to have received \$672 for sundry expenses in addition to their salary.

Yours, &c.,

TORONTONIAN.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPECTATOR:

SIR,—You have done good service to this city, Toronto, in admitting a series of letters in reference to the management of our municipal affairs, inasmuch as it has directed the attention of our corporation officials to the fact, that other cities are becoming acquainted with our condition, and are congratulating themselves that they are not as Toronto. Without making any reference what-ever to the personality of these officials, it is a fact that Toronto seems to be one of the heaviest taxed cities in the Dominion. The recklessness and waste, the mismanagement, or something worse, which has characterized the government of this city, has so deeply involved it in debt, and the rate of taxation is so burdensome that hundreds are anxious to leave the city and secure some other resting place, where the inevitable taxgatherer, would not be compelled to fleece them in the way that is done here.

In connection with the fact that the corporation has levied some 26 mills on the dollar for the present year, it may be stated that the assessors are valuing the property in many instances at a higher rate than could be obtained for it by the proprietors, many of whom would gladly sell at the valuation put upon it, but cannot realize in cash the sum imposed. It is generally supposed that this high valuation is made under instructions, but whether it is or not, the effect is the same, and the numerous appeals against the assessors' valuations show how much the pressure is felt by all classes of the community. Under these circumstances it might be naturally supposed that some steps ought to be taken to lessen the heavy burdens on the taxpayers, by a more careful management of affairs, and by a reduction of salaries, &c. In this respect, however, there are no signs of relief, and the action of the corporation in this matter contrasts unfavourably with the corporation in Montreal; for, while in your city a reduction of salaries has been made, in Toronto there has been an increase, and thus the burden has been perpetuated and made more oppressive.

It is true that Mr. Turner, the great financier of the city, is engaged upon a scheme of consolidation similar to the one which he succeeded in getting passed a few years ago, by which he proposes to reduce the charges on Sinking Fund account, to pay off (if owners will not exchange at a valuation) the six per cent. debentures and issue others bearing interest at five or even four per cent. (the latter he prefers himself), and thus get a momentary relief, in a manner which looks very much like taking advantage of the public creditor—at any rate it changes very materially the conditions on which these debentures were issued, and when the charges are taken into the account it is doubtful

whether even the city will receive much benefit from the change. This scheme has been before the public for some time, and while it meets the approval of many who are anxious to obtain some relief, and fancy Mr. Turner's scheme will secure it, others contend that very little will be obtained from it, and consider it at the best simply putting off payment to a future day, while the position of the public creditor will be changed and the credit of the city compromised. This scheme, or some modification of it, is likely to be adopted, and as members of the council are willing to accept any measure that would afford even temporary relief, they look to Mr. Turner to help them out of the difficulty; and as many of them do not pretend to understand the measure itself, they simply look on with open eyes, and shout with open mouth, and applaud. As you have been good enough to admit this series of letters in your paper (if it is not an intrusion on your space) some means will be taken to keep you informed in reference to Mr. Turner's measure, as well also as to the action of the Corporation upon that and other matters in which you may be interested.

SUFFERER.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

LORD DUFFERIN'S ADMINISTRATION. The History of the Administration of the Right Honourable Earl of Dufferin, late Governor-General of Canada. By William Leggo, of Ottawa, Barrister, &c. (Lovell Printing and Publishing Company, Montreal.)

CANADA UNDER THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE EARL OF DUFFERIN. By George Stewart, Jr. (Rose-Belford Publishing Co., Toronto.)

The unprecedented event in our Canadian literature of the simultaneous publication of two books necessarily so nearly similar as the above, is sufficient to call forth something more than an every-day notice; especially when we find that in both cases the author has done his work in such a meritorious manner as to demand our praise. It has perhaps never before happened in any colony that the administration of a Governor has been of sufficient importance to warrant the publication of such a record. The Earl of Dufferin was beyond all comparison the most popular of our Canadian Viceroy, and it is a fitting tribute to that popularity that these volumes have been given to the public so soon after his departure from amongst us. If it were only because they contain the text carefully revised by himself of the most important speeches which have secured for Lord Dufferin a brilliant reputation as an orator, they would claim the prompt attention and serious interest of all intelligent readers, but they also give us in the main a fair and reliable history of the politics and progress of the Dominion since 1872. On the 12th of June of that year Lord Dufferin, on his departure for this country to assume the Governorship, was entertained at a banquet by the people of Belfast, and in his speech on that occasion his Lordship struck the key-note of his whole Canadian policy. The six years which have elapsed since Lord Dufferin arrived in Canada have been marked by a wide extension of the borders of the Dominion, by remarkable alterations in the fortunes of political parties, by the Winnipeg and British Columbian episodes, by an unwonted depression in every branch of trade, by the Pacific Railroad troubles of 1873, and by the political reaction of 1877 and 1878. Here was abundant material for the historian, and for the most part, the work has been performed with judgment and with skill. Following Lords Lisgar and Monck, who certainly did not regard "the social duties of their station as imperative as their political functions," Lord Dufferin made wherever he went warm personal friends, as Mr. Stewart says "he brought back to Quebec the long-forgotten memories of the ancient régime, when the proud and courtly chivalry of France held sway within its confines." He set before himself on his first arrival amongst us a programme to which he faithfully adhered up to the day of his departure. He visited every part of every Province in the Dominion, and in this way made himself intimately acquainted with all its people, from the fishermen of Prince Edward Island to the miners of British Columbia. He was welcome to the Indians and pioneers of Algoma and the regions of Lake Superior, and one of the best of his admirable speeches was addressed to a handful of Icelanders in the far-off settlement of Gimli. During his visits the sedulous care with which he sought an intimate personal acquaintance with the Canadian educational system marked him as a very different man from any of those to whom England had before confided her American interests. Nor did our educational institutions alone meet with encouragement, but our athletic sports, and indeed all our efforts at self-improvement, received a fresh impulse. Into our characteristic winter sports the Viceroy himself entered heartily, and soon became a proficient in curling, snow-shoeing, skating, sleigh-riding and tobogganing. Once only during his term of office was there any incident which for a moment threatened to imperil Lord Dufferin's popularity or impair his usefulness,—viz., the appointment of the Commission to inquire into the Pacific Scandal; but both of the political parties will now admit that it is not necessary to apologize for anything done or forborne by him on that occasion. The fact that ere he left the country any animosities then excited had all been forgotten, and that both parties have now united in bearing testimony to his impartiality and patriotic zeal is the best proof that the Governor-General was as nearly right as he could be.

For the rest, what can we say? Which is the better book of the two, who can decide? Mr. Leggo, with the facile "pen of a ready writer," may have given us rather fuller details here and there; and Mr. Stewart has gracefully condensed, without sacrificing any of the value of his work—perhaps this would scarcely appear but for the fact of his volume being smaller. Of the Earl's speeches both authors furnish about the same, and both have had the same good fortune in his Lordship's good-will, as shown in the personal revision of the speeches. Necessarily, the two volumes differ so little that it would be extremely difficult to say which we prefer; and, seeing that they will stand for all time as works of reference, our honest advice is to secure both. Mr. Leggo's volume has for illustrations, steel engravings of the Earl and Countess of Dufferin, to the latter of whom the work is dedicated. Mr. Stewart's has for frontispiece a fine engraving of his Lordship, and he dedicates the history to Francis Parkman, who has so faithfully recorded our early Canadian history. Both volumes are well printed, and the ornate bindings are in good taste. We

WE MANUFACTURE ALL OUR STOCK, AND GUARANTEE EVERY ARTICLE TO BE AS REPRESENTED. REYNOLDS & VOLKEL, 427 NOTRE DAME STREET.