

— One of the first writers of this continent, the American historian Prescott, died at Boston last week. He was born in 1796 and would have been 63 years of age had he lived to the 4th day of May next. His grand father, William Prescott, commonly called Prescott of Pepperell, was the commander of the American insurgents at Bunker's Hill; his father, William Prescott was an eminent lawyer. The historian graduated at Harvard College, at the age of eighteen in 1814. From his earliest youth he manifested that taste for, and excellence in those literary pursuits, in which he was to win immortality for himself and elevate the character of his country. After making an extended tour in Europe, he devoted himself to those pursuits, writing for the North American Review on a large range of subjects. At the close of the year 1837 he published his history of Ferdinand and Isabella, in three volumes. It was most favorably received in Europe and in America; and was translated into various languages. At the close of 1843 he gave to the world also in three volumes a history of the conquest of Mexico, which was not less popular than its predecessor. A volume of critical and miscellaneous essays was published in 1845, and two years later, in the summer of 1847, the history of the conquest of Penna. was completed and published. For the greater part of the last twelve years he has been engaged in a history of the life and reign of Philip, the second King of Spain, a work which was destined vitally to be the history of the civilized world for nearly half a century. Two volumes of this work appeared in December 1855 and the third was issued but a few weeks since. Had it been completed, it would probably have extended to six volumes.

Prescott was made a member of the Royal Academy of Madrid, a Doctor of Laws of Oxford and a corresponding member of the Institute of France. He was a most affable and pleasant man to meet. The writer being introduced to him by an eminent member of the New York bar, made his acquaintance a short time before his departure for Europe, in 1850. One of the chief objects of his voyage, as he stated to us, was to obtain relief from an infirmity of the eyes, which threatened to become absolute cecity. He died of apoplexy, and was interred in the vaults of St. Paul's church. When we met him, we never thought by his appearance that he was any thing like the age which he must have arrived at, if the above information be correct.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS.

Annual Report to the Members of the Teachers' Association in connexion with McGill Normal School.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Committee of the Association beg to lay before you their second annual Report, being a brief statement of its affairs for the year ending 1st. Nov. 1858.

No changes of any importance have been made during the past year in the constitution, or Bye-Laws of the Association, except that which relates to the annual subscription of its members. The small sum of two shillings and six pence per annum your Committee found to be wholly insufficient to defray the expenses of the Association; although the outlays have been so curtailed that even the monthly meetings have not been advertised. This the Committee regretted very much, as the necessary publicity through the Montreal Papers, of their monthly meetings and conferences, giving the subject of the essays to be read by the members with the discussions and other matters, would, without doubt, have ensured a larger and more regular attendance. The Committee however, do not mean by this assertion to say that they have any great reason to complain of the attendance of members, as regards either numbers or regularity, there having been present at each monthly meeting during the year a number, the average of which somewhat exceeds that of the preceding year; but your Committee is, like those of most other Associations and Societies, anxious to see a large increase in the number of its members and their attendance at the meetings.

Your Committee renewed their application to Parliament at its last session for aid in purchasing a library; but their petition met with the same fate as that of the preceding year. The Committee would, however, earnestly recommend their successors in office, as well as the Association generally, to persevere in the good and useful work which they have commenced, as far as their limited means will allow, and there is no good reason to fear the result, though that result be far distant; for it is the province of the teacher, in a great measure, to mould the minds of the rising generation by infusing into them a more just appreciation of his labours, and convincing them that his claims on the public are as strong as those of any other class of the community; and of the necessity of aiding him in his laudable desire of acquiring knowledge, in order that he may be the better qualified to impart that information to the

youth of Canada, which will enable them to become good and useful members of society, and strive to make the country prosperous and happy. Much of this might be effected by placing within the reach of the public school teacher the means of mental improvement; and nothing will conduce more to that end than frequent conferences among themselves; lectures on subjects connected with education; discussion on methods of teaching, classification of schools, the most suitable books to be used, and other subjects of a practical character; and more particularly by the aid of a library, suitable to his wants and the peculiar employment in which he is engaged. The general library, to which many a teacher may have access, is not what he more particularly needs; it is one especially connected with his profession that would tend to his improvement as an instructor and a guide of the young. A library of this description would be much less expensive than a general one; but as teachers are less numerous than most other classes of society, and their means generally small, this boon, cannot be procured by their individual liberality or exertion. The Committee would, therefore, advise their successors again to memorialize the Government, at the approaching session, in a still more urgent manner for assistance in purchasing this indispensable article.

The Committee are glad of this opportunity of saying that their connexion with the McGill Normal School has been the means of extending the usefulness of the Association, the graduates of that institution having attended the monthly meetings in great numbers, for the purpose of listening to the essays read, and taking part in the discussions carried on by the members. They are also much pleased to state that two of the best Essays were read, one by a male and the other by a female student of the Normal School.

The papers read and discussed during the past year are as follow. —1st By Mr. Maxwell,—subject: "The Utility of Astronomy." 2nd. By Professor Hicks,—subject: "Infant Schools." 3rd. By Mr. Everett.—Subject: "The evils of Ignorance." 4th. By Miss Everett,—Subject: "Education." 5th. By Mr. Arnold.—Subject: "Teaching to Read." This last Paper was, by request, repeated the next month, when, M. Arnold brought a class of children from his school to illustrate his method of teaching this branch.

A profitable discussion followed the reading of all these papers; and it is confidently hoped that something has been done in this way to advance the cause of Education, by mutually assisting each other, by giving, in the form of Essays and discussions, our experience in the great and good work of forming the minds of the rising generation and fitting them for spheres of usefulness.

Your Committee, will in a short time, open a register, as a medium whereby Trustees of vacant schools may be brought into ready communication with teachers out of situations and *vice versa*. This they have always considered one of the main objects of the Association; but many obstacles have hitherto stood in the way to retard its accomplishment.

The Committee cannot conclude this report without alluding, with sincere regret, to the loss of one of the most useful and efficient members of the Association—the late Mr. Thos. Duncan. It is well known that the great interest which he always took in the welfare of the Association from the first day of its existence, tended materially to its establishment and support; and it is to be sincerely hoped that his example will be followed by many, as he was not only an able and energetic teacher, and a member of your Association, but a true christian; and as such, eminently fitted to discharge the duties of the profession which he followed for so many years.

Your Committee would take this opportunity, of stating that in their intercourse with the Education Office, on business connected with the Association, they have been treated with uniform kindness, respect and attention by the honorable, the Superintendent of Education, to whom the best thanks of the Association are due.

On the whole, your Committee conceive that the Association has every reason to be satisfied with the past year's work; for they cannot help thinking that it has, to some extent, been instrumental in advancing the cause of Education, by means of the Essays read and discussions carried on at its regular monthly meetings and conferences. The Association, therefore, has much reason to thank God for his divine blessing on its past labours in the important work in which it is engaged.

H. ARNOLD.
Cor. Secretary.

Montreal 22th January, 1859.