

Men and Matters in Ontario.

[From our own correspondent.]

TORONTO, October, 1890.

In the debating club, at the social gathering, on the street corners here in Toronto in these days we are all prophets. Many of us are evil in our prognostications, for we talk of fighting for Canada. We print it, we tell it to our children, and some of us believe that we may have to do it. We all know that we would do it if we had to; but why are we exciting ourselves about it? The rest of the country seems to be in its normal condition.

The celebration on Monday last in all the public schools of the province of the anniversary of the battle of Queenston Heights is a sign of the times. This is the first celebration of the kind in the history of the Dominion. It is in Toronto, and, in fact, throughout the whole of Ontario, that annexation talk, and its companion, the belittling of the Local Legislature a deputation consisting, among others, of Col. George T. Denison and representatives from the public and separate school boards of the city, waited upon Hon. George W. Ross, Minister of Education, to get his publicly expressed approval of this plan of celebration, not alone of Queenston Heights, but of all the battles in which Canada was stoutly defended against invasion. The Canadian flag was proposed to be hoisted above every school on such days, and the children were to be taken out to salute it, after which the memories of the day and incidents of the battle commemorated were to be explained to them by the teachers. Mr. Ross gave his hearty and ready approval. The idea has since then become popular, and it was thought well to make the initial celebration a most notable one—a top Sawyer so to speak. It was indeed essentially military in its features. Sir Adolphe Caron would have attended, but owing to a family bereavement, had to be in Quebec. The drilled corps of the school boys made a fine appearance on parade in the Queen's Park. They were reviewed and approved by the officers of the Toronto regiments, and won the admiration of their parents and the citizens at large. But the teachers were not left to talk to the pupils of the occasion. This was done by Col. George T. Denison, Col. Fred. C. Denison, Mr. H. R. R. Cockburn, M.P., Principal Grant, of Kingston, Rev. J. P. Lewis, and many others. The boys and girls grew very enthusiastic under the fire of oratory poured on them, and left no room for doubt that they love their land as warmly as land was ever loved.

Still another sign of the times is the new and original departure which is being made in the National Club. This is the decision of Mr. Barlow Cumberland, president of the club, to have a series of what are called "national evenings" during the winter. Such a thing never occurred to any Canadian club men before, and naturally it is creating a good deal of talk in Toronto. Comment all round seems, however, to be favourable. Mr. Cumberland is a Canadian to the marrow of his backbone, and he is being assisted and encouraged by Mr. W. R. Brock, of whose sentiments it is not necessary to say a word. His name is sufficient for all who know it. These "national evenings" will occur once a month, and the plan is that on each occasion the members of the club will listen to an essay on some Canadian national subject by some prominent Canadian. Very appropriately the first evening was on Monday, the anniversary of the battle of Queenston Heights, and Mr. Cumberland could not have chosen a better man for the occasion than the eloquent and gifted Principal Grant, of Queen's University, Kingston. Canada, her literature, her national aims, are near and dear subjects to the heart of Dr. Grant, and it was inspiring to all who heard him speak of them. Dr. Bourinot, the distinguished Clerk of the House of Commons, will be the speaker of the next evening. He will read a paper on a subject which is peculiarly his own—Canadian Government. Perhaps the third evening will be devoted to the poets, and although not yet decided, it is probable that Prof. C. G. D. Roberts and Mr. Archibald Lampman will be the bards to whose say or song, as the case may be, the members of the club will then listen. The National Club, by the way, was started about 20 years ago. It was founded by Mr. Goldwin Smith and a number of young enthusiasts of the time who belonged to the Canada First party. There were gifted men among them and boundless hopes. Mainly through the defection of Mr. Goldwin Smith the club lost its national character, and latterly, it was merely a quiet social sort of institution of its kind. But the new movement will put some of the old life into it again, and will awaken, too, some of the old members who have dropped away.

McMaster University has started on its career with bright prospects. The Baptists of Ontario are, generally speaking, a wealthy people, and they have always taken a noble pride in their denominational colleges. McMaster University is the tower of their educational structure, and they have reared it with the view of catching upon it all the sunlight which marked the opening of the arts course, laid particular emphasis on the freedom in teaching which the school has been well chosen. Dr. Rand, as chairman, is professor of science, of education, ethics, and civil polity; Dr. Albert H. Newman is professor of history; Dr. Calvin H. Goodspeed, professor in systematic theology and Christian evidence, is a graduate of the University of New Brunswick and also of Newton Seminary; Dr. Daniel M. Wel-

ton is professor of Hebrew and cognate languages; Prof. Trotter, who has relinquished the pastorate of the Bloor Street Baptist Church, takes the chair of homiletics, pastoral theology and church polity. There are several graduates of Toronto University—Mr. P. S. Campbell, B.A., professor of Latin and Greek languages and literatures; Mr. A. C. McKay, B.A., professor of mathematics and physics; Mr. M. S. Clarke, M.A., professor of modern languages and literature; and Mr. Thomas McKenzie, B.A., M.D., lecturer on biology.

The minds of Torontonians have partially settled upon the careful report furnished by Engineer John Kennedy, of Montreal, on the water works scare. Mr. Kennedy finds that the pumping plant had not become unfit for duty. The pumps, however, were leaky and could not supply sufficient water for the city's consumption. Two additional engines are required. No additional storage is necessary, Lake Ontario being really the reservoir on which Toronto must ultimately rely. Reservoirs in all cities are unavoidably receptacles for smoke and dirt. This last mentioned is the point from which the citizens take the greatest degree of comfort. For months the frightful idea was prevalent that the foul water of the bay was being used for domestic purposes. Now people are glad to be allowed to think that it may only be the reservoir, and they can put up with that after the dead horses have been exploded. Superintendent Hamilton claims to have known and stated time and time again all that Engineer Kennedy has discovered. The Superintendent feels bad over the whole matter, and, when the aldermen have coaxed him into a serene temper again, they may perhaps turn their attention to carrying out the practical suggestions of Mr. Kennedy. The real trouble with the Water Works Committee is that every member of it has his own convictions, and any number of experts' reports will not bring about a modification of even one of these.

Influence with aldermen in Toronto is a potent factor in delaying any schemes of proposed improvement which may be brought forward. A striking instance of this is the present matter of how the city shall be lighted. The Electric Light Company have their friends, and the Gas Company have their friends, and the result is that whether one system be better than the other or no, both will have to be used.

Prof. Ashley, who has been visiting England, brings with him as a present from Sir William Herschel to the Toronto University library, part of the library of the two Herschels, the astronomers. This collection contains some thousands of books on astronomical observations. Messrs. Parker, the Oxford publishers, make a gift of seventy volumes of their publications, including all the works in the Anglo-Catholic library—the writings of English churchmen in the 17th century. Dr. Jessop has also given a valuable donation of books.

Rev. J. Osborne Troop, Rector of St. Martin's Church, Montreal, preached to the students of Trinity in the college church on Sunday last. The address was pronounced a masterpiece.

The Hunt Club races on Saturday last were not a success, and no one was surprised there, as things turned out.

The crowd of Torontonians who accompanied their football team to the Ambitious City on Saturday last were badly used all round, and particularly in the result of the game.

The young orators of Toronto in the Conservative, Liberal, Legal and Prohibition societies, are opening their season with a flourish of trumpets.

Autograph Collecting.

In one of the quaint corners of old Paris, M. Etienne Chavaray, the great French autograph dealer, collector and expert, has his abode. Here he is generally to be found, always courteous and smiling, willing to show his treasures and explain his wares, unless, indeed, there should be a great sale on at the Hôtel Drouot, advertised as containing epistolary relics or documents relating to the great ones of this earth, or to those whose faded letters now fetch more apiece than did the MSS. of the work that made them immortal. M. Chavaray could tell many a strange and pathetic tale, if he cared to do so, of those who come to him with a view to business; friends, sweethearts, even sometimes the wives of great men, haggling, bargaining, or offering at any price, letters, *billets-doux*, and missives of all kinds never meant to meet the eyes of others than those to whom they were addressed in love or hate many a long year ago. Some few come on a very different errand; a son to beg that any paper bearing an honoured father's signature may be given back to his family at a fair price; a friend, fearful that the outspoken frankness of the dead may offend the living. All are listened to, and their business attended to, by M. Chavaray in person, who literally lives for his autographs, with his autographs, and by his autographs.

"I suppose that the autograph collector is a being of comparatively recent growth, M. Chavaray?"

"The individual who sends stamped envelopes to celebrities demanding their signatures in a 'your-money-or-your-life' kind of a way is certainly a modern innovation," replied M. Chavaray, smiling, "but we know that the old Roman poets and philosophers kept preciously the epistles sent them by their friends, and during the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries the Italian ladies of the Renaissance kept jewelled tablets on which their friends were asked to write a motto or verse."

"And here in France?"

"Well, fortunately, a well-known member of the Revolutionary Tribunal, Mathieu de Villenave, became an ardent collector and dealer in autographs, and saved many priceless documents and archives that would otherwise have been destroyed in '93. In the provinces treasures have perished, or have been devoted to unworthy uses. Imagine," continued M. Chavaray, sadly, "till quite lately the parchments and deeds found in the archives of Tours in Central France used to be employed to cover the tops of children's drums, or by the mayor's wife on her jam pots! Are you aware that in Metz the archives of the Duchy of Burgundy used to be employed to envelope the charges of the cannon? In fact our nation *n'a pas de chance* as regards rare historical documents. Some forty years ago, when the value of such things was first understood, the Government appointed a certain learned William Libri, inspector-general of museums and public libraries; he profited by this, and stole numberless documents, etc., which he sold privately to collectors and to other countries. It is to him," smiling, "that we owe the valuable historical pieces constantly reappearing in auctions and public sales."

"What sort of customers have you among autograph collectors?"

"All sorts. It used to be the fashion to simply collect autographs, now people go in for specialties. There is the amateur who only buys, begs, or steals the signatures of crowned heads; he is perhaps somewhat of a snob; the blue stocking begs for little notes, or, better still, bits of the MSS. of living and dead literary celebrities. Some go in for diplomatic and political characters. Actors, painters, great criminals, and 'actualities' all have their amateurs."

"And by actualities you mean?"

"He who yesterday was nothing, but whose name to day is in everybody's mouth. The autographs of such persons are at best but a bad speculation. Two years ago a little note signed in General Boulanger's slight, lady-like handwriting, fetched easily 50 francs; to-day I doubt whether it would find a purchaser for as many pence. But scraps of paper across which were written in still boyish characters 'Philippe d'Orléans' would still be worth more than their weight in gold."

"To what prices do good autographs run?"

"It is difficult to cite examples, so much depends on the length and interest of the letter, or the comparative rarity of some particular name in the market, etc., and upon the fashion of the moment; this last forms a very important element in the sale of autographs. A letter written in the Pompadour's own hand, bought for 17 francs a few years ago, now is worth 100 francs."

"And whose writing fetches the longest price?"

"The signature of Christopher Columbus can always find a buyer at 4,000 francs, the one letter existing in Titian's handwriting fetched 4,000 francs, and an epistle of Raphael's to some fair dame 1,500 francs. Molière never seems to have written a letter; his signature alone is worth 1,000 francs. The one letter written by Corneille which was ever in the trade was sold to Mr. Alfred Morrison, the great English collector, for the sum of 4,000 francs. The signature alone fetches 1,000 francs. The value of any particular letter varies exceedingly; thus Napoleon I.'s last letter to the Empress Marie Louise was sold for 4,000 francs, yet one of his ordinary letters can be bought for 500 francs. Royal autographs always command a certain price. Henry IV. and Louis XIV. signatures are worth almost 1,000 francs."

"And the autographs of modern celebrities?"

"Well, to begin at home, among political men Gambetta's signature and letters rarely pass into the trade, and are valuable in consequence, a good letter fetching as much as 400 francs. In literature, Alfred de Musset and Stendhal fetch 50 francs to 80 francs apiece; Baudelaire, who wrote few letters, 105 francs; Victor Hugo, who was always dashing off little notes to his friends and enemies, 20 francs to 50 francs. Among our contemporary writers, Zola's autograph is just now the fashion, and fetches in consequence 20 francs to 50 francs. Fifteen pages of one of his MSS. were sold for 140 francs quite lately. Daudet is rarely asked for in the trade. Among modern painters, a letter from Meissonier is worth 25 francs, and Millet's signature 30 francs. Theatrical autographs generally command good prices; letters written by the stars of the Théâtre Français—Lemaître, Mounet Lully, Mdle. Reichemberg, etc., are quoted at prices varying from 30 francs to 60 francs. Patti and Nilsson are worth about 20 francs apiece. A note from the charming American, Mary Anderson, was lately sold for 30 francs."

"And do you find that foreign celebrities are much asked for in Paris?"

"Certainly, and in some cases large prices given for them. An autograph of Oliver Cromwell fetches 700 francs. Here," continued M. Chavaray, opening a drawer docketed "Angleterre," "are a few letters which may interest you. This from Roger Bacon is worth 150 francs, a note from Swift 300 francs, a long letter of Pope's 200 francs, but his signature alone is only worth 20 francs. The poet Burns commands 300 francs, Shelley 500 francs, Byron 250 francs, Walter Scott 30 francs to 75 francs, Carlyle and Thackeray are each worth 100 francs, Dickens only 25 francs to 40 francs. Among great foreign politicians Prince Bismarck, who writes rarely and briefly, is worth 100 francs; Mr. Gladstone apparently writes graciously and often, his letters only fetch 20 francs; the late Cavour is worth 30 francs to 40 francs. Genuine signatures of Admiral Nelson and the Duke of Wellington always find purchasers at 100 francs."—*Pull Malt Gazette.*