

CORRESPONDENCE.

TAX EXEMPTION.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—I have read with much interest the article from the *London Spectator* of the 14th of November, copied in your last week's issue, on the subject of taxation. It has led me to make some enquiries as to the state of things in this regard in Toronto.

The total value of assessed property here is \$100,000,000, the total value of real estate exempted from taxation is \$15,879,000. How much of this total is ecclesiastical, how much educational, and how much Governmental can easily be ascertained through the different assessors, although it is not anywhere in print that I know of; but so far from every body in Toronto being equally interested in the exemptions, no two citizens of the place are. Why should I, who am a Presbyterian, be compelled to pay part of the just taxes of Trinity College? Why should all Toronto University, its land and its buildings, not only escape taxation but I be called upon to pay more taxes because they are exempt? Why should the Methodists have all Metropolitan Church and Square exempted and my taxes be raised accordingly.

The large amount of real estate held by Roman Catholic corporations is very valuable, and will be enormously so. Why should I swell it by paying a portion of its just taxation?

The Government holds large blocks of land in Toronto—notably the blocks where the Parliament Buildings, Government House and Upper Canada College are. There can be no reason why they should not pay their taxes.

The total amount required for city taxes last year was \$1,646,000, but every body has to pay so much more to make it up if the assessors omit to levy taxes on \$15,879,540 worth of property. This sum is about one-sixth of the total value of the assessable property in the city, and I pay one-sixth more every year than I would do if all property was assessed alike. There is no sense in the rule which is being acted upon. The immense expenditure made every year on city improvements, and on every thing which tends to swell the convenience and the comforts of those who dwell in Toronto, augments the value of all property, including that which pays nothing. It is true that exempted property belongs to many different churches and many different colleges and institutions, and there is a sort of rough "Scratch me, and I'll scratch you" aspect to it; but many thousands, and in fact the large majority, of tax-payers find no relief in this; they do not want to be compelled to contribute to the support or objects or wealth of any of these churches or corporations or their teachings, but when they contribute, to do so voluntarily and place their money where they judge best, and in the meantime to pay their own taxes only and let others pay theirs.

A CITIZEN OF TORONTO.

METHODS OF M'GILL.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

DEAR SIR,—I have to thank Prof. Clark Murray for his frank and manly offer to substantiate my statements by the publication of his share of the correspondence between him and McGill College. I beg now to inform him that it is unnecessary to do so, as Mr. George Hague has more substantially corroborated them by his pathetic silence.

MEDICUS.

POLEMICAL AND PROPAGANDIST NOVELS.

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—In Prof. Goldwin Smith's article on "Polemical and Propagandist Novels," which you reproduce from the *Independent* in last week's issue, the statement is made that "it certainly is difficult to find a copy of *Loss and Gain*." I certainly had no difficulty in obtaining my copy. It is published by Burns and Oates in the new and uniform edition of Cardinal Newman's works, and may be had of any Catholic bookseller. What is more, it is still widely read and admired, though the phases of Anglican life therein depicted are rapidly passing away.

Yours, etc., H. F. McINTOSH.

MISS ARDAGH'S "TANGLED ENDS."*

THE *Canadian Monthly*, though after a long and honourable career it had to meet the fate of most literary enterprises in Canada, was, it must be admitted, a good school for our young native writers. Many are the names, and Miss Ardagh's *nom de plume* is among them, one now meets with whose early literary efforts appeared in that national magazine. It is interesting to make acquaintance with the old pens again and to trace in later and more matured work the development of minds which in former days gave pleasure, partly in performance and partly in promise. The promise in Miss Ardagh's case has been more than fulfilled, as the present volume of tales attest; and its success, we can well understand, must not only be gratifying to the writer herself, but a source of pride to those who were connected with *The Monthly*, in which, as we have said, the author's earliest work appeared. Considering the indifferent encouragement given to native writers to pursue a literary life in Canada, it is a matter of surprise that the native writer remains in the field of active labour and that good and honest work continues to

* *Tangled Ends*. Tales by "Espérance" (Alice Maud Ardagh). Toronto: William Briggs.

be written. It is only another proof, of which we have not a few instances in Canada, of the devotion of gifted minds to intellectual pursuits, which no chilling indifference can wholly restrain, or, where the taste for it exists, succeed in weaning from the literary calling.

Miss Ardagh takes for a motto and the title of her booklet of tales the following lines:

Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And to do God's will with a happy heart
And hands that are ready and willing,
Than to break the delicate minute threads
Of our curious lives asunder,
And then blame God for *tangled ends*,
And sit, and grieve, and wonder.

The lines are a fitting prelude to the book, and indicate the spirit in which the two tales of which it is composed are written. That spirit is the spirit of resignation and of happily making the best of things; and though this quality, called into exercise by the chief characters in both stories, adds pathos to the incidents, it leaves behind a moral flavour sadly wanting in much even of the ambitious fiction of the time. It must not be inferred from this, however, that the author has written her stories with any set serious purpose or didactic intent. This does not appear to be the case, and the presence of the moral atmosphere is, in some degree accounted for in a hint we get in the author's preface, that the incidents in both tales are occurrences in actual life. The moral atmosphere is therefore, in part, at least, an exhalation from the characters portrayed in the tales, in whose lives inherent goodness is a rich and elevating quality.

The first of Miss Ardagh's two tales, "A Piece of Tannen," (*sic*)—why it is so called one scarcely discovers—is the more ambitious of the two; but it is the most sad and least pleasing. The plot is a simple one, but it presents the opportunity for a strong picture of the thralldom of love in the heart of a woman whose tenderness and constancy is ill-matched with the shallow-heartedness of her lover, who, when he has won the prize he so eagerly sought, tires of it, and turns away rather than feel the poverty of his own nature in the presence of one infinitely its superior, and who, despite the base desertion, loves on to the bitter and woful end. Were it not that we have had a hint, as we have said, that the story is a true one, we would question the art of introducing the loathsome disease, to which both characters in the story fall victims, and which proves fatal to the one who least merited a death so dire and distressing. The story is, however, told with exceeding pathos, and in language full of grace and simplicity.

The other tale, "Dora," is an idyll in prose, and though it, also, is full of pathos, it partakes of the gloom which envelopes the preceding tale. It is, however, charmingly and sympathetically written. The story is one of simple, domestic life, on a farm near Brantford, and narrates the loves of two brothers, who are twins, for one woman, who has grown up with the young men as a foster-sister and playmate of both, but who on developing into womanhood is sought in marriage by one of the brothers, both of whom are her lovers. The young woman, Dora, accepts the offer of marriage, apparently mistaking the one twin for the other. Very tenderly is the story told of the mental struggle which Dora has to suffer on learning of her mistake and in setting herself loyally to carry out the compact. How the story ends the reader must find out for himself; and its perusal, we venture to think, will afford him pleasure, subdued only by the quiet grace and simple pathos of the tale. "Tangled Ends" is a meritorious addition to native literature, in the department of minor fiction, and readers of the work, we feel sure, will not only give it welcome but look expectantly for more from the same source.

G.M.A.

A FOREIGN ESTIMATE OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

THE following is a portion of a paper in the *National Review* translated from the *Revue des deux Mondes*: No one who has visited Blenheim can ever forget that singular edifice, half temple, half palace; the ode in brick and stone to the glory of Marlborough, as emphatic, ostentatious, and heavy as all other odes of that day. The size of the house, built to the stature of a hero, or of one who deemed himself a hero, must have appeared excessive to those who, after him, inhabited, without filling it; worthy ducal mediocrities, dignified supers on that political stage on which the English aristocracy has played so many parts. Under this magnificent roof, Providence took five quarters of a century to create a man of mark, and then she willed that he should never become the master of Blenheim. Born on the 13th February, 1849, Lord Randolph Churchill is but the second son of the late Duke of Marlborough. To the elder he allotted the title, an immense fortune, and every form of pleasure. To the younger, a serious life, a modest income, and a rotten borough as inheritance and sole stake.

Lord Randolph distinguished himself at Eton by his zeal in attacking boys bigger than himself. This aggressive and combative humour followed him to the University. In the year in which the Franco-German war broke out, he took his B.A. degree. At twenty, many a duke's son would have rested on these laurels for the rest of his life. But this was only a beginning for Randolph Churchill. During the elections of 1874, after a certain amount of struggle, he took possession of his borough of Woodstock.

Let us follow the young member for Woodstock to Westminster. A Conservative majority, a little surprised to find itself there, has blithely invaded the ministerial

benches on the Speaker's right. These benches stand in the same relation to those of the Opposition as the sunny side to the shady side of Pall-Mall in winter. On the front bench is old Disraeli or, more familiarly, Dizzy, slightly bent, and in a somewhat languid attitude, with clear-cut features, a pale countenance, deeply furrowed and clean shaven like an actor's, with eyes closed by feline habit, so that one cannot tell whether he sleeps or watches; his wrinkled brow is adorned by a flat curl. Smile not at this curl, as historic as the *mèche* of Girardin; it is all that is left in 1874 of Byronism and the age of Dandies.

You would seek in vain for his illustrious rival on the bench opposite Disraeli. The skull of polished ivory, the seagull's eye, and the enigmatic grimace of Gladstone, have disappeared from the House, with the memorable green umbrella, and the huge, shapeless gloves, in which he was wont to plunge his hands. Everywhere you hear, even and especially at the Reform Club: "Gladstone is used up—Gladstone is done for—down with Gladstone!" The henchmen of an Alexander, whom they would fain bury alive, are pressing forward to the front bench; Lowe, Forster, Sir William Harcourt, and the Marquis of Hartington, the last of the Whigs, a *grand seigneur*, who deals with politics with an air of disgust and disdain, and who will be the chosen "leader," because he cares less for it than the others.

In reality, Gladstone is neither used up, nor done for. He is no longer "the people's William," and is not yet the "Grand Old Man." In less than six years he has almost achieved a revolution. He has suppressed the Church of England in Ireland, he has replaced open voting at elections by the ballot, he has inaugurated compulsory elementary education. After so many weighty reforms, coming one upon another, the country wants breathing time. There is tacit disapproval of Mr. Gladstone, because of the insignificance into which he has permitted the nation to fall, from the standpoint of European policy. The war of 1870 has revealed to England that, in the eyes of Berlin, she is but a secondary power, for certain neutralities are more fatal than a defeat. To re-conquer the lost prestige, even should it cost somewhat dear, is the mission confided to Dizzy by the English people.

In the left-hand corner, the furthest from the Speaker, the Irish members are huddled together. From these benches, new and threatening countenances proclaim that the golden days of Professor Butt's milk-and-water Home Rule are over for ever. That is where the clouds gather; thence will come the first storm, brewed by a little man in horn spectacles, called Biggar, who will provoke laughter; and later by a pale man with lips tightened by concentrated passion, whose name is Parnell, and who will provoke no laughter.

This is the spectacle provided for the entertainment of the youthful member for Woodstock, in his favourite corner on the second bench, behind Disraeli.

He made his first speech on the 22nd May, by way of protest against the creation of a military centre at Oxford. In replying to him, Sir William Harcourt congratulated him, according to custom, on the indications of talent displayed by his maiden effort; a commonplace compliment, designed, in the case of Lord Randolph, to be realized far beyond the foresight and desires of the eulogist. A few months later, the real Randolph Churchill suddenly revealed himself. It was on an evening devoted to the discussion of a Bill for the reorganization of local government. The discussion, following the lead of the right Honourable and Right Incapable * * * —but why designate him more specifically?—his real names are Administrative Routine and Ministerial Infatuation—maundered from nonsense to truism. When suddenly a young man was seen to rise to his feet, a combatant against what Carlyle would have called "nonentities and unrealities," who blithely and boyishly proceeded to demolish the poor, little law—so mean and so insidious, so ingenuous and so deceptive—which granted with one hand what it withheld with the other, its articles nullifying the principle that its preamble was intended to establish.

I have, said Lord Randolph, no objection to the President of the Local Government Board dealing with such questions as the salaries of inspectors of nuisances, but I do entertain the strongest possible objection to his coming down here, with all the appearance of a great lawgiver, to repair, according to his small ideas and in his little ways, breaches in the British Constitution.

This sound rating created a great impression, and a still greater scandal. Indiscipline was the rule in the ranks of the Liberals, with the Tories it was the exception. Loud was the outcry on the Treasury benches—Disraeli alone smiled: the young man reminded him of his own fine insolence of 1840. As to the Minister assailed, he had listened to the diatribe with folded hands and head well thrown back. He declared with dignity "that he had not felt himself attacked." Not attacked, poor man! Ministers sometimes say extraordinary things. From that day the parliamentary benches filled as if by enchantment whenever Lord Randolph opened his lips. But he took no advantage of a circumstance due rather to malign curiosity than to a more benevolent feeling. He was only to be heard at rare intervals. Could it be that family life or society absorbed the young member? I am informed by one of his friends that his silence and his frequent absence were rather to be ascribed to the precarious state of his health. He was oftener in Dublin with his father (then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) than in London.

In 1880, the general election sent Gladstone back to Westminster at the head of a formidable majority. England was not satisfied with her Conservative experiment. She had lost much of her prosperity and acquired but little prestige. The honour of retaining a fever-bed like Cyprus, and annexing a few Suez Canal bonds, did not counter-