

The Canadian Historical Exhibition of 1897: A Question.

A DEPUTATION from the Local Executive Committee of the Canadian Historical Exhibition waited upon the Board of Control at the City Hall on Friday last for the purpose of placing before them the project for holding a Historical Exhibition in Toronto in 1897, and of asking the aid of the City Council to that end. The deputation was received cordially and listened to courteously and dismissed with a promise that the Board would take the matter into their consideration.

Reports of the manner in which the project was laid before the members of the City Council present by the chairman of the Committee, Mr. O. A. Howland, the Rev. Father Ryan, and Mr. David Boyle, have appeared in the daily papers at more or less length. In none of them, however, has the key note of the position been sufficiently emphasized, if we may be allowed to say so without offence.

The case stands thus: A committee formed principally of men from the universities and professional class, have formulated a scheme for holding an Exhibition in Toronto in 1897, one which, by its exhibits, will illustrate the history of Canada and of British Maritime enterprise from the day of the landfall of John Cabot, in 1497, to 1897. They have ascertained through correspondence with other universities, historical societies, both at home and abroad, the British Imperial League, and other organizations, as well as from private collectors of historic records and relics, what prospects there are of bringing together exhibits of sufficient interest and value to warrant the enterprise. They have met with a favorable response from all. Their correspondence, meetings held, and missionary efforts in this direction have roused a desire upon the part of Dominion and Continental organizations to hold their annual conventions in Toronto in 1897, that they may also attend an Exhibition which promises to be something out of the ordinary, in fact, unique. An Act has been passed by the Provincial Legislature to authorize the committee to issue debentures at four per cent. for a given sum, and to give them the use of buildings, already erected, and the right to collect entrance fees, etc., in order to provide the necessary funds and accommodation. The sum is a comparatively small one. The outlay is expected to return a reasonable profit and the intention is to devote such profits to the establishment of a permanent museum of a Provincial character in Toronto. The authority to issue these debentures is of no practical value, unless the municipality, the Province and Dominion will guarantee a proportion. The city being the one to benefit materially is naturally the first to whom application is made. Unless some united and immediate action is taken, the time being so short, and so much to be done, it will be impossible to accomplish anything worth attempting. Such is one side of the question. The other is: Montreal, while wishing to hold an exhibition of her own, though of a somewhat different character, has through her historical societies and other associations generously promised her aid to the Committee. These societies and associations are willing to do everything in their power to make the Exhibition in Toronto a success, and of national significance, but, failing Toronto, would welcome it to their own city.

The question then remains, will Toronto, with the advantages it possesses of geographical position, climate, accommodation, scenery and desire to attract visitors, lose the opportunity offered her of holding an exhibition which, from its character, will attract thousands? Will she refuse to

reap the result of the gratuitous labour of a committee who at the present time see the need of some such measure or enterprise to place the past history, future possibilities and present standing of Canada as a nation, Toronto as a capital city, before Canadians, the continent, and the world at large?

Will Toronto, through lack of public spirit, judgment to extend beyond the present moment, forethought or a just appreciation of the importance of such an exhibition let it go to Montreal for a better reception and thus lose the opportunity given it of proving Toronto what it should be, "the meeting place of the nations;" by small economy now lose a permanent benefit that will return an ever-increasing percentage upon the present outlay?

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Romance.

It chanced upon a memorable night,
Within the circle of a lamplight's gleam,
A boy devoured a book,—ah, book supreme!—
And in its pages found a new delight:
A wonder-woven land of Fancy bright,
That grew, and evermore to grow did seem,
Till the old world he knew was but a dream,—
The common, precious, and the darkness light.

All climes and shapes, Romance, are one to thee,
The herald flow'r of spring, last fruit of fall,
The songs of birds, the four winds' mystery,
The whispering of the leaves, the sirens' call,
Past, present, future, sky and land and sea,—
The glamour of thy spell is over all!

KEPPELL STRANGE.

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Shakespeare's Shylock and the Shylocks of To-day.

THE great interest which attaches to the Jewish question in this, our own time, naturally makes "The Merchant of Venice" a more than ever interesting play. The question, what Shakespeare meant in depicting the Jew as he did, becomes the modern question,—what is the Jew, what has made him what he is, and what shall we do with him? The revival of the anti-Semite feeling is, as Mr. Lecky long ago pointed out, one of the most marked and ominous features of this century. By other writers the persecution of the Jews is excused as not only justifiable, but as the only policy which governments, acting in the interest of self-preservation, can well pursue. The remedy proposed for their improvement is that of M. Leroy-Beaulieu, namely, that the Jew should be derabbinized and denaturalized, that is, that he should renounce the Talmud, the tribal parts of the Mosaic law, and circumcision. If the Jew cannot return to Palestine, he should be made to forget it, to give his heart to the land of his birth and mingle with humanity.

As an example of a different attitude, that assumed by Mr. Lecky may be referred to. It was suggested by Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu's work, "Israel among the Nations." The persecution of the Jews unites, as the latter author says, three of the most powerful elements that can move mankind—the spirit of religious intolerance, the spirit of exclusive nationality, and the jealousy which springs from trade or mercantile persecution.

Mr. Lecky, in supplementing or criticizing M. Leroy-Beaulieu, makes some thoughtful and interesting comments on certain racial peculiarities of the Jews, and finds a philosophical explanation for most of these. For instance, the servility and deception which are qualities commonly found in Jews have been developed by the long course of persecution. Not being able to protect themselves by force, they naturally resorted to subterfuge and fraud. It is no wonder that in time self-respect became almost lost in a people long exposed to insult and contempt. "Slavish conditions"—to quote one of Mr. Lecky's sentences—"produced, as they always do, slavish characteristics, and, as is always the case, those characteristics did not at once disappear when the conditions that produced them had altered."

The point to which Mr. Leroy-Beaulieu draws attention in explaining the lack of a fine sense of honor among Jews