

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 1883.

THE PROPOSED MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE IN CANADA.

THE British association has not yet ventured to hold its meetings in any part of the empire beyond the limits of the British Islands. It has, however, so far crossed the sea as several times to hold meetings in Ireland; and its sister-association of France has set it an example by holding a meeting in Algeria. The idea of such extension of its geographical range is not altogether new. Projects of an international meeting have at various times been discussed, both in Britain and the United States; and it is understood that the present governor-general of Canada, who has shown much interest in the scientific progress of the new dominion, has had correspondence with leading men of science in England, with the view of either bringing the association to Canada, or securing a representative delegation to meet with the recently established Royal society of Canada.

The project of a visit to Canada only assumed definite form at the meeting last summer in Southampton. A motion was proposed, we believe by Capt. Bedford Pym, in the general committee, that the association should meet in Canada in 1883. This was lost on a division; but it was understood by the promoters of the scheme that the unfavorable result was in part due to the fact that they were unable to produce a definite invitation from any Canadian city. After the decision to meet in Southport in 1883, they therefore felt at liberty to propose that the meeting of 1884 should be held in the city of Montreal; and this was carried. Unfortunately, however, there was no official communication of this resolution till after the close of the meeting of the American association in Montreal: otherwise some steps might have been taken toward a combined gathering in 1884.

As soon as the resolution of the association was definitely known in Montreal, a movement was made to respond in a fitting manner. After a preliminary meeting called by the

president of the board of trade, and at which there were representatives of the McGill university and of the Natural history society of Montreal, the mayor was requested to call a public meeting, which was large, influential, and enthusiastic, and which passed resolutions pledging the city to do all in its power to make the meeting successful; appointing, at the same time, a large committee of leading citizens to carry these resolutions into effect.

In so far as accommodations for the meeting is concerned, and funds for its expenses, there can be no doubt that Montreal can entertain the association as well as any of the British cities in which it ordinarily meets; and its geographical position and facilities for access, and for communication with all parts of Canada, the northern states, and the west, present many attractions; while there is reason to hope that a meeting of the British association in Montreal would be attended not only by all interested in science in Canada, but by large numbers of the scientific workers of the United States. The experience acquired last year in entertaining the American association will also afford very valuable guidance. It was felt, however, that the real difficulty lay in the transportation across the ocean of so large a body as the British association, or even of that scientific nucleus of it which constitutes its essential part. The matter was therefore brought under the notice of the dominion government with the view of securing aid toward the passage across the Atlantic; and it is understood that a grant will be made sufficiently large to insure free passages to the officers of the society, and some of its more important members, who will also be the guests of the city, and reduced rates in favor of all the members who may be able to attend. Letters and printed circulars, giving information as to these points, have been sent to Sir Alexander Galt, the high commissioner of the dominion in London, and to Professor Bonney, the secretary of the association. From one of these, signed by the chairman of the local committee, and by Dr. Hunt, as chairman of the committee of invitation, the following extracts are taken:—

"The city of Montreal, which has a population of about 150,000 souls, has twice entertained the American association for the advancement of science, — for the second time, in August, 1882, when an attendance of more than nine hundred members and associates was registered, — and the association, with its nine sections, found ample accommodation in the buildings of McGill university. . . . We have assurance that the government of the Dominion of Canada will make a liberal grant of money to defray the expenses of members of the British association in crossing the ocean, and that the various railroad and steamboat lines in Canada and in the United States will offer most liberal arrangements to our guests. The Grand Trunk railway will arrange for an excursion of members of the association to the Great Lakes and Chicago; while the Canadian Pacific railroad will give an excursion to the provinces of the north-west, as far as the Rocky Mountains. The city of Montreal, from its climate, its geographical position, and its ways of communication, offers many attractions alike to the traveller and the student. The large and important collections of the geological survey of Canada, gathered during the past forty years, are in the museum at Ottawa; and these, together with extensive collections contained in the museum of the Natural history society of Montreal, and in that of McGill university, furnish ample materials for the study of the natural history of Canada. . . .

"Members of the British association, in coming to Canada, may be assured of a most cordial welcome and generous hospitality, not only from the citizens of Montreal, where every facility will be furnished for their meeting, but from the people throughout the country. It is hoped by the invitation committee that these assurances, and the above statement of the advantages and facilities offered them, may secure a large attendance of the members of the British association at Montreal in 1884."

It is well known that considerable opposition has existed in England to the project of meeting in Montreal; and it is natural that many of the life-members and associates who cannot visit Canada should view it with disfavor: but it is believed that the leading members of the association are of a different opinion, and that the hearty action of the city of Montreal and the dominion government will do much to disarm such opposition as may manifest itself next summer at Southport, where the final decision must be made.

It is to be observed, that in the present year the meeting of the American association, at Minneapolis, is early (Aug. 17); while that of the British association, at Southport, which is, besides, in the immediate vicinity of Liverpool, is unusually late (Sept. 19). This will allow members of the American association to attend both meetings; and it is stated that the retiring president of the American association, and possibly others of its members, may

avail themselves of this privilege. This may possibly permit arrangements to be made which might substantially unite the meetings of the two associations in 1884, and so prepare for an international meeting in the future. If the meeting of the American association for 1884 can be fixed for some north-eastern city, sufficiently near to Montreal, and can be timed so as to occur a week before or after that of the British association, there can be no doubt that a great number of the members of the latter body would take advantage of the opportunity to enjoy the companionship of their American *confrères*; while, on the other hand, many of these would gladly spend a few days at the meeting of the British association. In this way it would seem that a greater benefit to science might result than even from an international meeting. There would be time for the complete transaction of the business of both associations. Neither would suffer, either pecuniarily or in the value of its proceedings; and there would be the best possible opportunity for interchange of ideas between the scientific men of the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. Nor is it unlikely that some scientific workers from the continent of Europe and elsewhere may be attracted by a combination so unusual. It may thus be hoped that the proposed meeting of the British association in Canada may not only be one of the most successful that this mother of associations has held, but may inaugurate an epoch of renewed activity and progress in the widely-spread scientific work of the two great associations of the English-speaking race.

MODEL OF THE GIANT OCTOPUS OF THE WEST COAST OF AMERICA.

WHILE working on the models of the large Newfoundland squid (*Architeuthis princeps*) for the Yale and Harvard museums, it was proposed that I should also model the large Octopus of the west coast of America. Nothing was done upon it, however, until the past winter, while preparations were making by the U. S. fish-commission for the International fishery exhibition in London. For this exhibition, Mr. William Palmer, one of the modelers of the National museum in Washington,