

eye is charmed by the picture; a stretch of blue water for a foreground, a sinuous shore, dotted with little white cottages, the parish church with its spire dominating the lines of steep roofs. Back of the long thin line of modest homes rise the spacious barns, disproportionately large; beside the barn may be observed the home-made windmill, built by the thrifty husbandman. Behind river, house and barn lies a ribbon of farm a mile long, though but a few furlongs wide, sweeping up the swell of a hillside. Away to the south rise tree-clad slopes, resting under a sky that rivals the river in its purity.

Let us see our friends at even closer quarters than from a vessel's deck or through a field glass. Let it be by means of a drive in a bobblety-bobety cahech, drawn by a pony which, if it could not shrudge its shoulders and gesticulate, made up for it by a nervous vibration of muscle and limb and a speed that suggested breaking a record, if not a rib.

Through the narrow streets of old Quebec city we first sped, before crssing the Saint Charles river and striking the long white streak of Beauport road that leads to the Falls of Montmorency and the Church of Sainte Ann de Beauport. In quick succession were passed the two-wheeled hay wains, or market carts, with their blue-jeaned drivers, and such whip cracking as resounded along the entire way! Archaic stagecoaches stirred up clouds of dust, and the wayside children of the parish tossed smiles at one's eyes. Back from the road a few solitary manor-houses nodded in their seventeenth-century sleep, and within kneeling distance the symbols of Calvary receive their devotees, for the good folk of Quebec take time to pray.

The exploration of the southern shore of the Saint Lawrence by springless cart or stylish carriage, by caleche or planquette, forms yet another delightful experience because it takes one into the real habitant land. Along the winding way the unending dual lines of frame houses with whitewashed exteriors, green window frames, curious dormer windows, and roofs

turned to the eaves in graceful curves. The French-Canadian dearly loves a river, and, therefore, his houses will, where possible, cuddle close to its banks or dip their feet in the water. He loves a neighbor, too, with whom he can exercise his native fondness for speech, while the fumes of the native-grown tobacco shut out the sunlight. But if he is fond of the neighborliness and given to hospitality, he has a greater weakness for a horse race, and many a speeding contest did we witness, with the turnpike as an improvised derby course.

Sunday is visiting as well as worshipping day. After his religious duties are observed come the joys of social intercourse. Everything on wheels and every beast capable of holding a harness are brought into requisition, and as day deepens into dusk, something more than neighborly hobnobbing is indulged in, when Jeanne and Clarisse are evidently talking in a language that is not confined to the tongues of Gaul and Anglo-Saxon.

As we were bowled along from Riviere du Loup to Cacouna, from Saint Fabien to Bic, from Rimouski to Little Metis, glorious glimpses were had of the noble river, ever widening as it rolled toward the sea, the Laurentian hills receding or approaching.

In rolling off the miles of distance, no sooner does one lose sight of a lofty spire than another rises from some cliff or plateau. Fine churches they are that the great church has encouraged its churches to erect—massive stone structures built to last for more than one generation of worshippers. White and gold constitutes the favorite decorative scheme for the interiors. Judging by the crowds that fill the spacious auditoriums, Quebec is still faithful to the church, even though they have shown an increasing spirit of independence in placing their votes for political candidates. The fact that 500 saints are immortalized as place names in the province throws an interesting light on the prevailing faith of the people.

## A Song of Books

OF all the privileges we enjoy in this nineteenth century there is none, perhaps, for which we ought to be more thankful than for the easier access to books.

The debt we owe to books was well expressed by Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, author of "Philobiblon," published as long ago as 1473, and the earliest English treatise on the delights of literature: "These are the masters who instruct us without rods and ferrules, without hard words and anger, without clothes or money. If you approach them, they are not asleep; if investigating you interrogate them, they conceal nothing; if you mistake them, they never grumble: if you are ignorant, they cannot laugh at you."

This feeling that books are real friends is constantly present to all who love reading.

"He that loveth a book," says Isaac Barrow, "will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes."

Imagine, in the words of Aikin, "that we had it in our power to call up the shades of the greatest and wisest men that ever existed, and oblige them to converse with us on the most interesting topics—what an inestimable privilege should we think it—how superior to all common enjoyments! But in a well furnished library we, in fact, possess this power. We can question Xenophon and Caesar on their campaigns, make Demosthenes and Cicero plead before us, join in the audiences of Socrates and Plato, and receive demonstrations from Euclid and Newton. In books we have the choicest thoughts of the ablest men in their best dress."

"Books," says Jeremy Collier, "are a guide in youth and an entertainment for age. They support us under solitude, and keep us from being a burthen to ourselves. They help us to forget the crossness of men and things; compose our cares and our passions; and lay our disappointments asleep. When we are weary of the living, we may repair to the dead, who have nothing of peevishness, pride, or design in their conversation."

Macaulay, who had all that wealth and fame, rank and talents could give, yet, we are told, derived his greatest happiness from books. Sir G. Trevelyan, in his charming biography says that—"of the feelings which Macaulay entertained

towards the great minds of bygone ages it is not for any one except himself to speak. He has told us how his debt to them was incalculable; how they guided him to truth; how they filled his mind with noble and graceful images; how they stood by him in all vicissitudes—comforters in sorrow, nurses in sickness, companions in solitude, the old friends who are never seen with new faces; who are the same in wealth and in poverty, in glory and in obscurity. Great as were the honours and possessions which Macaulay acquired by his pen, all who knew him were well aware that the titles and rewards which he gained by his own works were as nothing in the balance as compared with the pleasure he derived from the works of others."

The love of reading which Gibbon declared he would not exchange for all the treasures of India was, in fact, with Macaulay "a main element of happiness in one of the happiest lives that it has ever fallen to the lot of the biographer to record."

"History," says Fuller, "maketh a young man to be old without either wrinkles or gray hair, privileging him with the experiences of age without either the infirmities or inconveniences thereof."

Books are now so cheap as to be within the reach of almost every one. This was not always so. It is quite a recent blessing. Mr. Ireland, to whose charming little "Book Lovers' Enchiridion," in common with every lover of reading, I am greatly indebted, tells us that when a boy he was so delighted with White's "Natural History of Selborne," that in order to possess a copy of his own he actually copied out the whole work.

Mary Lamb gives a pathetic description of a studious boy lingering at a bookstall:

"I saw a boy with eager eye  
Open a book upon a stall.  
And read as he'd devour it all;  
Which when the stall-man did espay,  
Soon to the boy I heard him call.  
'You, sir, you never buy a book,  
Therefore in one you shall not look.'  
The boy passed slowly on, and with a sigh,  
He wished he never had been taught to read,  
Then of the old churl's books he should have had  
no need."