

THE FIRST CANADIAN NOVEL.

(Memorandum of a Reading at the Society of Canadian Literature.)

The first novel composed in Canada was "The History of Emily Montague," written by Mrs. Frances Brooke, the wife of an army chaplain of the garrison at Quebec, soon after the Conquest. Published in four small volumes, it bears date of issue at London in 1784, while internal evidence shows it to have been written from 1766 to 1769, and the dedication is dated the latter year. The copy belonging to Mr. J. P. Edwards, of Montreal,—the only copy I have seen—bears the book-plate of Lord Bathurst, and is a neatly printed little book bound in fine calf covers. It was a "society novel" of the day. As usual with such, it is very slim as literature. The authoress, Mrs. Brooke, was born in 1745. She was the daughter of a clergyman named Moore, and the title-page informs us she published another novel entitled "Lady Julia Mandeville." In 1789 she died. The dates show that she lived about forty-four years, and began "Emily Montague" when twenty-one. It is written in the style of a flighty girl, a worshipper of wealth and fashion, put in the form of a great number of letters addressed by the different characters to one another. The first letter is dated at Cowes, England, in 1766, by the hero, Edward Rivers, a half-pay officer, to his friend, Colonel Temple, a man of leisure, in which he announces an intention of going to Canada to found and colonize an estate. This Rivers afterwards proceeds to do, but spends his time instead chiefly at Montreal and Quebec, moralizing and making love to Emily, the heroine, a most sentimental and ridiculous paragon, whom he first meets at a ball in an officer's country-house near Montreal. Emily discovers that she does not love one Sir Edward Clayton, a conceited baronet to whom she was till then engaged. She rejects Clayton. She cannot, however, marry Rivers, because he has only his Colonel's half-pay and the prospect of an estate of about £400 a year, then occupied by his mother. He, on his part, will not press her to "descend from her station," and to walk where she has been brought up to a carriage and pair! In this consists the whole agony of the situation, which is protracted over the four volumes! Meanwhile the parties go to innumerable balls, express reams of sentimentality, avoid one another, and flee separately to England, there to meet in the fourth volume. The problem is solved as follows: Mrs. Rivers is got out of the way by the lucky death of a distant relative who leaves her exactly £400 a year, thus enabling her to turn over the little estate to her dutiful son. He then becomes inwardly persuaded that it is possible to live in the country on £400 and his half-pay, and succeeds in getting Emily to make the sacrifice in heroic independence of "society." When they have arrived at this wondrous climax of magnanimity their virtue is rewarded by the appearance of another rich relative, an Anglo-Indian, Colonel Wilmot, who, arriving on the scene, turns out to be the father of Emily, endows the pair with his blessing and unlimited means, gives them a town residence, enlarges their country-house, and establishes them in a position such that they are "to follow no other rule except inclination." Happy denouement!

Considered otherwise than as a novel, the book, however, has much interest. It reflects something of the atmosphere of an obscure and most interesting period. At its commencement—for the letters evidently bear some truth of date—the country had been secured to Britain only three years, the brilliant group of the heroes of Quebec were in their day of triumph, and one of them, James Murray, Wolfe's righthand man, was military Governor. Shortly afterwards, the gallant Sir Guy Carleton, who was later to earn the title of "founder and saviour of Canada," took up the Government, and to him the book is dedicated. Under Carleton, a vigorous and intelligent policy, resulting in the Quebec Act, and founded upon a careful consideration of the country and its people, was commenced. In "Emily Montague" there are, besides some references to the life and amusements of the garrisons, letters and passages devoted

to descriptions of the French, and to recommendations of a policy which several respectful phrases indicate was the personal policy of Carleton himself, thus reflected through this young authoress, of his social group. Canada is represented as being a country of wild and magnificent spectacles. Mrs. Brooke grows enthusiastic over the loneliness of the mountainous shores in the Gulf, the Falls of Montmorenci, the views about Quebec and Sillery, and the drive from Quebec to Montreal. She visits and describes camps of Indians; makes her remarks on the laziness, the ease, the ignorance and the strength of the peasantry, and the sprightliness of their women—like shepherdesses of romance; on the different communities of nuns, and on the condition of the *seigneurs*. Regarded as containing these valuable elements, and when it is remembered that the Novel was an institution not over twenty-five years old, (for Samuel Richardson published "Pamela" in 1741), and that the three great works of the "father of the modern novel" himself were all very long, sentimental, and in the epistolary form, Mrs. Brooke and the first Canadian story will not be hardly treated by an impartial tribunal.

WILFRID CHATEAUCLAIR.

FRUITION.

O, the fair, fair, far-off someday
When these stormy waves shall cease,
And my heart now dashed upon them
All becalmed shall rest at peace!
Haste, glad day, that I thy rance
Yet may see before the the tomb
Looming dimly in the distance
Shall enclose me in its gloom.

Buds of hope that now I nurture
Still that droop, with all my care.
In the fair, fair, far-off sunlight
Will be radiantly fair.
Doubts that cloud, and fears that torment
Like the winds upon the sea
In that fair, fair, far-off someday,
Shall disperse, and I be free.

In that day, there lies the keeping
Of the things I fain would know.
Let it not to me reveal them.
And I ready am to go.
But in rapt imagination
Have I tasted of their bliss,
And the fair, fair, far-off someday
I have dimly felt in this.

—ACTS.

VILLANELLE.

As o'er the keys your fingers fly,
O dark-eyed maiden musical,
You weave a web of melody.

A web that ever grows, whereby
My heart to thee is held in thrall,
As o'er the keys your fingers fly.

As mighty Thebes rose toward the sky,
To music sweet grew house and hall,
You weave a web of melody.

And in the woof and warp you ply
My noblest thoughts and passions all,
As o'er the keys your fingers fly.

The song of thought makes perfectly
The full chord with your notes that fall
And weave a web of melody.

A willing captive I in thrall
That know my soft bonds ne'er shall fall,
As o'er the keys your fingers fly
You weave a web of melody.

Ottawa.

J. E. MACPHERSON.

"La Reponse" is the title of a grand concert fantasia for the piano, just published by Messrs. Pond & Co. of New York. We understand this piece is the composition of a young lady composer of Ottawa who has written considerable pianoforte music under the nom de plume of E. Marie Thoss, all of which has been published by Messrs. Pond & Co., the proprietors of the copyright. This young lady has lately had the honour of meriting the following complimentary critique from the pen of the distinguished German composer Albert Berg. "It has given me great pleasure to go over the 'suite' composed by Marie Thoss. The musical conceptions in this work are certainly of a high order, and display much originality—a thing that is scarce now-a-days, even with the best standard writers. I compliment Marie Thoss in all sincerity upon this work."

New fire screens have a frame of white wood with gilt tracing, now so much used for many small pieces of furniture, with a large circular screen suspended in the middle, made of transparent bolting cloth beautifully painted.



SMITH: Look here, Brown, we'll soon decide the matter; let's ask the waiter. Waiter are tomatoes a fruit or a vegetable? Waiter; Neither, Sir, tomatoes is a hextra!

SYMPATHY.—He: The poodle? Why, he's dead, don't you know? She: Oh, how sad! How did it happen? He: I was driving to Tuxedo and the horse bolted. Poor Toby was killed, but I escaped— She: What a pity.

The following sentence is said to have been pronounced by a Scotch Judge:—"Ye did not only kill and murder the man, and thereby take away his life; but ye did push, thrust, protrude, or impel the lethal weapon through the band of his regimental trousers, which were the property of his Majesty!"

HIS IDEA OF SUCCESS.—"Well Tommy, how are you getting on at school?" Tommy (aged 8): First rate. I ain't doing as well as some of the other boys, though. I can stand on my head, but I have to put my feet against the fence. I want to do it without being near the fence at all, and I guess I can after awhile.

CHILDREN'S WIT.—Willie's mother was busy sewing when he entered the room and he hid himself without being noticed. His four-year-old brother came softly into the room and said: "Mamma, did 'oo see Vivvy?" "No, dear." "'Oo hear nobody go pit-a-pat, pit-pat?" "No." He toddled into the next room, when with a rush Master Will was gone, and then the searcher announced, with quivering lip, to his mother: "I dess 'oo ears is sleepy."

When Harvard celebrated its two-hundredth birthday fifty-three years ago, Dr. Holmes wrote a poem for the occasion, in which he humourously asked:

"Who was in the Catalogue
When college was begun?
Two nephews of the President
And the Professor's son
(They turned a little Indian by,
As brown as any bun)."

But they wouldn't do that to-day, for Harvard no longer draws the colour line, having just elected Clement Garrett Morgan, a coloured man, class orator.

On a Sunday not long since Dr. Lyman Abbott of Plymouth Church, in the following vein of rich humour said:—"I can enter the bowels of the earth," says Science, "and gather up and utilize the vast resources for man's comfort that have lain dormant and undiscovered since the world began." We thank thee for that, Science. "I can bridle the electricity that flashes through the skies, and make it minister to the uses of civilization." We thank thee for that, Science. "I can run railroad trains from Maine to California at the rate of fifty miles an hour." We thank thee for that, Science. "I can explore the heavens and calculate the movements of the celestial bodies to a nicety." We thank thee for that, Science. "I can reach under the ocean from continent to continent, and annihilate time and space." We thank thee for it, Science. "I can collect and distribute the news of the world in a single night, and at your breakfast table you can read it in your newspaper." But can you make the papers tell the truth, Science? "No," says Science, sorrowfully, "no power on earth, visible or invisible, can make the papers tell the truth."

NOMS DE PLUME OF AUTHORS.

"Old Si," Samuel W. Small.
"Bill Nye," William E. Nye.
"M. Quad," Charles B. Lewis.
"Bill Arp," Charles H. Smith.
"Max Adler," Charles H. Clark.
"John Paul," Charles H. Webb.
"Peter Plymley," Sidney Smith.
"Peter Parley," H. C. Goodrich.
"Ned Buntline," Colonel Judson.
"Josh Billings," Henry W. Shaw.
"Spoopendyke," Stanley Huntley.
"Gath," George Alfred Townsend.
"Howadji," George William Curtis.
"Fanny Fern," Sarah Payson Willis.
"Eli Perkins," Melville D. Landon.
"Peleg Wales," William A. Croffut.
"Ik Marvel," Donald Grant Mitchell.
"Brick Pomeroy," M. M. Pomeroy.
"Mark Twain," Samuel L. Clemens.
"Nym Crinkle," Andrew C. Wheeler.
"Petroleum V. Nasby," D. R. Locke.
"Miles O'Reilly," Charles G. Halpin.
"Uncle Remus," Joel Chandler Harris.
"Josiah Allen's Wife," Marietta Holley.
"Hosea Biglow," James Russell Lowell.
"Fat Contributor," A. Miner Griswold.
"Hawkeye Man," Robert J. Burdette.
"Major Jack Downing," Seba R. Smith.
"John Phoenix," Capt. George H. Derby.
"Orpheus C. Kerr," Robert H. Newell.
"Artemus Ward," Charles Farrar Browne.
"Mrs. Partington," Benjamin P. Shillaber.
"James Yellowplush," William M. Thackeray.
"Grandfather Licksingle," Robert W. Criswell.
"O. K. Pilander Doesticks," Mortimer Thompson.