

Our French countrymen are certainly not very general readers, yet the number of their newspapers is greater than is usually supposed, while in some branches of higher journalism they are somewhat ahead of ourselves. There are four French dailies in Montreal, four in Quebec, which is quite up to the Toronto scale. There are three papers in Three Rivers, two in St. Hyacinthe, two in St. John, on the Richelieu, and one in every little town of the Province. Furthermore, they have one monthly literary review, which is more than we can boast of, one illustrated weekly, three or four literary weeklies, and such popular periodicals as the *Soirées Canadiennes* where authors deposit their fugitive pieces. It will be allowed that this is not at all a bad showing. What detracts considerably from the character of many of these journals is their intensely personal style of polemics, but that appears to be in the habits of the people and they seem to enjoy it. On the other hand, it must be said that some of the writers on the French press rank among the best in the country. De Celles wields a vigorous pen and is master of a broad style. He has many of the qualities of Veuillot. Provencher is possessed of a grim humor and is a powerful writer withal. Pansereau left a profound trace during his career in journalism. Then there are Trudel, Bienvenu, Gelin, Beaupré, Demers and Tremblay in Montreal; Tarte, Desjardins, Tardivel, Bouchard, Huot, Lévesque, Langelier and one or two others in Quebec.

The French population may be set down, in round numbers, at a million. Of this number, taking the usual average of ten per cent., not more than 100,000 can be said to be educated, and of the latter—according to another estimate—only a fourth, or 25,000, form what is called the reading public. In view of these figures, the literary vitality of our French writers is a very noticeable fact, and deserves all the attention that we have endeavored to give it.

VII.

WANTS.

In this necessarily rapid review, and going over so many names, I have naturally chosen the best, and, as naturally my opinion is cast in the mould of praise. It does not follow, however, that I am insensible to certain deficiencies of French-Canadian education and literature. Of course I have no time even to touch upon these, but I may say generally that, if the present harvest is destined to be continued, a thorough cultivation of the soil will be necessary. A strong classical education will have to be insisted upon. A smattering of Latin and an utter ignorance of Greek, together with a mere elementary knowledge of the exact sciences, are not conducive to the evolution of solid intellectuality. Literature is a flower. There are single flowers and double flowers. The former are the off-shoots of nature; the latter are the creation of science allied to æsthetic tastes. I naturally have no mission to touch on the vexed question of the Laval University, but I am safe not to be gainsaid when I affirm that one real *universitas* in the good old scholastic sense is quite ample for the needs of a million people. The other colleges should be merely affiliations, not rivals, and they should ground their pupils thoroughly in the humanities. The intermediate or grammar schools should be much stronger than they are, supplying a need for that large class which circumstances debar from an university curriculum. I am happy to know that these views are concurred in by the best educators in the Province, and that a combined effort is being made by the Catholic Board of Public Instruction to bring about this consummation. If such should prove the case to the extent that I anticipate, the future of the literature of French Canada will be brighter than its present, and what is now a promising child may grow into a benign and exuberant giant.

VIII.

SOURCES OF LITERARY INSPIRATION.

The field, indeed, has been only partially cultivated. The primeval wood is just beginning to be cleared. The possibilities are immense and the sources of inspiration extraordinary. I have already alluded to the background of history—of daring, devotion and heroism such as few countries can boast of. Then there is our grand, our magnificent nature—the unpruned forests, the surging mountains, the roaring floods, the thunderous cataracts and the sublime sweep of billowy prairies rolling to the setting sun. The St. Lawrence has been and will be an unfailing source of inspiration to Canadians. There is no nobler river—girdling one-half of a continent. Rising in the great lakes, tumbling in foam at Niagara, murmuring around the cradles of the Thousand Islands, bearing the fleets of the world from the old Point à Callières at Montreal, throbbing with conscious pride at the foot of Cape Diamond, it preserves its wonderful identity amid infinite variety till it dashes into the sea at the break-water of Anticosti.

There is another mine of inspiration in the domestic and social life of the people. The *habitant* is a type in himself. The French village is like nothing else on this continent. If you take the male character, you have a range from the *coureur des bois* and the raftsmen to the village notary, and the omnipotently beneficent curé. If you take the female model, you have the incipient maiden, with the white veil of the first communion flowing from her

blonde hair, to the joyous factory girl decked out as a Dolly Warden, and the rustic Evangelist homeward from church returning with God's benediction upon her.

The climate of French Canada is hard; the winters are long, but there is literary inspiration even there. Indeed winter must and does enter largely into the framework of French-Canadian romance and song. We may take this picture as including all the elements. A hunter is out in pursuit of the wily moose; he tramps over miles of untrodden snow, from the first streak of dawn till the last gleam of sunlight lingers in the western sky. The beast is weary; he is weary. But the weaker yields to the stronger—*la raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure*—and the broad antlers are bowed in the submission of death. Dragging his trophy behind him, in a last effort of exhausted nature, the hunter turns his face homeward. The way is long and the snow is deep, but the faint heart buoyed itself in the hope of a reward from wife and children. A turn in the road, and from afar the squares of yellow light beam from the well-known window panes. The slender bridge is crossed, the pathway to the familiar threshold is traversed, the welcome door is opened—and all is over. Here is my Canadian picture—a hard day's work in the cold, cold world, and, at night, rest in the arms of love, at the warm fireside of home.

THE EGLANTINE.

The question is frequently asked, what is the Eglantine? The name is not one in common use in our time, and its significance can be best understood by reference to early writers. Its use is now confined mostly to poetry. Webster quotes what Nares has to say about it, as follows: "Milton has distinguished the Sweet-brier and the Eglantine,

Through the Sweet-brier, or the Vine,
Or the twisted Eglantine.

—L'Allegro.

Eglantine has sometimes been taken for the Honeysuckle, and it seems more than probable that Milton so understood it by his calling it "twisted." If not, he must have meant the Wild Rose. The reason for this last supposition is not stated, but some early writers have used the word in this sense, and it is now used in this way by the French. Alphonse Karr, in his "Voyage Around My Garden," in describing a sucker that has started up from the roots of a budded Rose tree, says, "Wait a year and it will become an Eglantine bush. Bruise its leaves, it exhales a Pin-apple odor peculiar to one species of Eglantine." Here its name is used as a common term for the Wild Rose, but evidently the "one species" is the Sweet-brier, and it is with reference to this particular plant that English writers have most used the word, Eglantine.

The Sweet-brier is, botanically, *Rosa rubiginosa*. It is a native of Great Britain and Europe, and in France is much employed as a stock plant for budding florists' varieties of Roses. It is a plant that usually grows about six feet high, but is inclined to climb, and with a little encouragement can be trained quite a height. The stem is armed with strong and hooked prickles, and also some slender and awl-shaped ones. The leaflets are doubly serrate, and the under side is downy and beset with russet glands that especially when bruised, exhale a pleasant fragrance. The flowers are small, pinkish, and mostly solitary, with a pear-shaped hip.

That its thorns are large and strong enough to be a protection to it there is sufficient mention. Herrick says,

From this bleeding hand of mine,
Take the sprig of Eglantine,
Which, though sweet unto your smell,
Yet the fretful Briar will tell.
He who plucks the sweets shall prove
Many thorns to be in love.

So Spenser says,

Through which the fragrant Eglantine did spread
His prickling arms, entangled with Roses red,
Which dainty odours round about them threw.

The same odour, in the following lines, contrasts the prickles with the fragrance of the leaves:

Sweet is the Rose, but grows upon a brier;
Sweet is the Juniper, but sharp is his bough;
Sweet is the Eglantine, but pricketh near;
Sweet is the Fir-bloom, but his branches rough;
Sweet is the Cypress, but his ruin is tough;
Sweet is the Nut, but bitter is his pill;
Sweet is the Broom flower, but yet sour enough;
And sweet is Moly, but his root is ill;

So every sweet with sour is tempered still,
That maketh it be coveted the more;
For easy things that may be got at will,
Most sort of men do set but little store.
Why then should I account of little pain,
That endless pleasure shall unto me gain?

The fragrance of the Sweet-brier is the quality that endears it. We can scent the odors as we read the following lines, from *Midsummer Night's Dream*:

I know a bank where the wild Thyme blows,
Where Oxlips and the nodding Violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with lush Woodbine,
With sweet Musk Roses, and with Eglantine.

But Shakespeare surpasses even this allusion to its fragrance in the simile, or shall we say hyperbole, contained in the following lines from *Cymbeline*:

Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale Primrose; nor
The sacred Harbottle, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of Eglantine, which not to slander,
Out-sweetened not thy breath.

In the following lines of Shenstone we feel ourselves transported at once into the midst of the loveliest country scenes in spring time:

Come, gentle air; and while the thickets bloom,
Convey the Jasmine's breath divine;
Convey the Woodbine's rich perfume,
Nor spare the sweet-leaved Eglantine.

Kents refers to the "Dew-sweet Eglantine," and Cowper says,

Grateful Eglantine regales the smell.

Scott, describing the scene in "the Trosach's wildest nook," where James Fitz-James lost his steed, gives us the following lines, and, perhaps, for their beauty, our readers may pardon us for quoting at more length than is really relevant.

Boon nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child;
Here, Eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and Hazel mingled there:
The Primrose pale, and Violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower.
Fox-glove and Nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain;
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray Birch and Aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the Ash and warrior Oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the Pine-tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung
Where scented the cliffs to meet on high,
His bows athwart the narrowed sky.

In the same poem are the lines,

The Wild Rose, Eglantine and Broom,
Wafted around their rich perfume.

The same writer not unfrequently mentions this plant.

Leaving the poets, we may say that the Sweet-brier has been cultivated in this country from an early time in its settlement, and in many places the plants are to be found growing wild, having spread by seeding. It is found in many of the best gardens, and will always be prized for itself and its associations.

VARIETIES.

The great representative of æstheticism has had his hair cut quite utterly short. This is an incident which has profoundly moved society. There must be something in it.

The Fisheries Exhibition has suggested various novelties in trinkets *à propos* of matters piscatorial. A gold net, in which a pretty mermaid has been caught, is a pleasant whim for a pin.

The Albert Exhibition, which is to be erected close to Battersea Park, was commenced recently, and will be finished in three months. The materials of the Dublin Exhibition was purchased for this undertaking.

DURING his sojourn at Hawarden Mr. Gladstone has done some hard work in felling trees. It is said that he has also made a convert to his amusement of the Earl of Belmore, a nephew by marriage, who has had some experience of lumber work, derived from a residence in Australia.

THERE has been an offer made to Miss Violet Cameron for a professional tour in the States—there was said to be a prospect of a honeymoon tour. Which is it to be? London would be grieved to lose her entirely, and would prefer its being a Yankee tour, if absence it must be.

THE novel sight of skating along the road was witnessed recently in the neighborhood of Lord's. The performers were on a kind of roller skate, but much larger. They went along at a good pace, but the natural query was what sort of a break could they put on in case of need?

AMONG the curious advertisements of the day, and they are odd enough sometimes to create amusement and excite keen curiosity, is this one: "The late head boy of a very excellent private school desires to recommend it, after being a pupil in it upwards of seven years.—Address," &c. No doubt a very forward boy.

MR. CAMERON, the special correspondent of the *Standard* in Madagascar, has been followed by two other correspondents of dailies—in fact, they have arrived, so we shall soon have news and interesting matter about the island which will set imaginations at work, and possibly tempt a few daring ones to turn their steps in that direction, as there is always something to be picked up in the island. Our Government will also be able to get information about Madagascar, of which it is very deficient.

ONE of the items that the "Savages" have proposed in order to win money for the Royal College of Music, is a fancy dress ball at the Albert Hall. But as the payers will in that case contribute the show and supply the entertainment, the gentle and benevolent Savages will have to do something more that is solely their own work. We believe, as we said last week, they will repeat the programme with which they entertained the Prince of Wales, and also add to it.

DR. MARY HOWARD, an American woman doctor in China recently attended the mother of Prince Li Hung Chang, and although she did not save her life, showed so much skill that she was called in to treat the wife of the great minister. From all parts of North China letters from the wives of mandarins and high officials entreat her to come to them or to "send other wise woman from America." Eastern women of rank die of obscure diseases rather than submit to operations performed by male surgeons.

A RECENTLY issued report shows that the output of coal in the United Kingdom of Great Britain, during the year 1882, amounted to 156,499,977 tons, which was an increase of nearly two and a half millions of tons over the output of the year preceding, although there were thirty-three fewer mines operated. There were 503,937 persons employed in and about the mines, of whom 4,652 were females. There were, during the year, 876 fatal accidents in the coal mines, by which the death of 1,126 persons was occasioned.

ONE feature of Ascension Day in the City was a preposterous custom known as beating the boundaries. A number of men and boys parade the City flourishing bundles of canes, neatly tied with blue ribbon. Their appearance is strongly suggestive of a certain useful vocation, and if they were to cry "Chairs to mend!" nobody would be surprised. This is one of those ridiculous usages on which the City champions so greatly pride themselves. The idea that Sir William Harcourt's embryonic Bill might suppress the boundary beaters fills every civic bosom with indignation.

MADAME TESSAUND's will perhaps ascend yet a step higher—it will certainly be removed ere long a few steps off. Great as has been its popularity and high its dignity in wax, greater popularity and higher dignity will be achieved in the new home which is being prepared near the Baker-street station. There will be much more room; indeed, the saloons will be extremely spacious, and, therefore, to the old attractions many more will be and must be added. It is to be hoped that increased space will be given to that pet of the public "the horrors," and more and original horrors will be found for the new room. There might be a room of terrors—a step in advance.

THE Aquarium seems likely to come into more frequent use for better entertainments than are usually to be found there. It is very likely indeed that the members of the Savage Club, when they give their entertainment, at the Prince of Wales's request, on behalf of the Royal Musical College, will make the Aquarium their temporary wigwag. This night is looked forward to with some anticipation. Bohemia in full dress will appear in force to amuse Belgravia, and the result is likely to be a large addition to the funds of the college. Every Savage who can do anything is to be called upon to do it; and on this particular evening there will be something like a fair at Westminster.

THE birthday of the new knight, "Sir Iolanthe Pinafore Patience," was celebrated in grand style on Sunday; the number (just missing the fatal one) sat down at his mansion in the Queen's Mansions to a most *recherché* repast of dainty dishes fit to set before two Royal Highnesses, the chief and the second in rank, the Lord Chamberlain, the future Liberal Premier, and some Ambassadors being of the party. During the performance there was a communication per telephone with the business manager in the Savoy Theatre, and the D'Oyly Carte representatives sang music appropriate to a birthday fête. This was not "the carte," but a surprise. Messages were sent back per telephone with wine of course.

VARIOUS incidents, more or less interesting in their character, are reported in connection with the visit paid by the Newhaven fisherfolk to London over the Fisheries Exhibition. While at Windsor Castle, for instance, Maggie Flucker, one of the matrons of the village, when near the Princess Beatrice, asked, "Who's yer mither, mem?" At the Mansion House, again, the Lord Mayor led off a dance with Jeanie Wilson—a damsel, probably, of the Christie Johnstone type—and afterwards danced an Irish jig with Sophia Main, another Newhaven beauty. It seems, however, that the travellers were somewhat disappointed with the presents they received in the great metropolis. One of the girls was gifted with "three water bottles," and the entire company were each presented with a "halfpenny copy of St. Luke's Gospel!"

SREPNIAK, in his "Underground Russia," thus describes a secret printing-office of the Nihilists: "I went over all the rooms in which the work was carried on. The mechanism was extremely simple. A few cases, with various kinds of type; a little cylinder, just cast, of a kind of gelatinous substance, closely resembling carpenter's glue, and somewhat pleasant to smell; a large, heavy cylinder, covered with cloth, which served as the press; some blackened brushes and sponges in a pan; two jars of printing ink. Everything was arranged in such a manner that it could be hidden in a quarter of an hour in a large clothes press standing in a corner. They explained to me the mechanism of the work, and smilingly told me of some little artifices which they employed to divert the suspicion of the *dvornik* who came every day with water, wood, etc. The system adopted was not that of not allowing him to enter, but precisely the reverse. Under various pretexts, they made him see the whole of the rooms as often as possible, having first removed everything which could excite suspicion. When these pretexts failed, others were invented. Being unable to find a plausible reason for him to enter the inner room, Mme. Kriloff one day went and told him there was a rat there which must be killed. The *dvornik* went, and certainly found nothing; but the trick was played. He had seen the whole of the rooms, and could bear testimony that there was absolutely nothing suspicious in them. Once a month, they invariably had people in to clean the floors of all the rooms."