

foundation, the trap-rock of the Laurentides. Utilitarians, who reasonably prefer a flat prairie of rich alluvial soil to all the mountain chains of the world, will say that all this Laurentide expanse, or the greater part of it, is a loss to the country—waste, irreclaimable land; that when it has been denuded of its forests—a miserable consummation fast approaching—it will be a howling wilderness. But even on this ground, I am ready to fight the battle of the Laurentides. We know as yet little or nothing of their mineral wealth. But already rich deposits of silver, copper, phosphate, asbestos, mica, and even gold, have been discovered and profitably worked. These treasures will come more and more to light as the woods disappear. Vast extents of hilly and mountainous country will become grazing grounds fully equal to those of Sweden and of the Highlands of Scotland, giving employment to tens of thousands of stalwart men—mountaineers are always this. If, in the course of ages, there be here as great a change of climate as there has been in Gaul since the time of Caesar, Laurentian hillsides may yet be covered with vineyards. This will not be in our time, however; but what now exists, what every one can see, if he pleases, is an unlimited hunting and fishing ground, a wooded and well-watered wilderness, where, at small cost, we can make long and pleasant excursions, where we can utterly forget the mire of the city, and the malice of man, where wounded hearts and fainting souls may find comfort, and where the illnesses of our civilised life may be cured.

There's iron in our northern hills,
Our pines are trees of healing.

Thus wrote the Quaker poet. He would have appreciated the Laurentides! Young men read "Stanley's Explorations" and similar books, and lament that Africa, Siberia, or Central Australia are so far away that they have no time nor means to enjoy an explorer's pleasures and toils. Let them choose any point they fancy on that part of our national railway, the Canada Pacific, where it passes through, or skirts the Laurentides; they can reach it in a few hours at small cost. Then, with gun and fishing rod, pocket compass, and other camping necessities, let them strike north. In many places they would not meet other dwellings than the wigwam of the Indian between their starting-point and the shores of the icy sea. There is surely room enough to satisfy any amateur explorer, without counting the possibilities of valuable discoveries.

If it was not for our terrible winters the Laurentide country would be a place to live and die in. But when polar tempests pile up their snowy winding sheets over lake, mountain, and valley, when life seems to have forsaken nature, when the silence of the wilderness is only broken by the hooting of the white owl and the long howls of the famished wolf, I grant that it is better to be indoors by the stove, and that a hot potato, just out of the pot, is better eating than frozen pemmican. With this exception, then, *Vive les Laurentides!* And may this very imperfect sketch rehabilitate them in some measure in the mind of their detractors.

Montreal.

C. A. DOUDIET.

NOTES OF A LITERARY PILGRIMAGE.

II.—BOSTON.

To thoroughly appreciate the American Athens, one should go there *via* New York. After the monotonously swift regularity of the elevated roads, there is something positively refreshing in the sublime indifference to considerations of either speed or schedule shown by the gaily painted horse-cars. The streets are of a sociable size and diverting sinuosity, and the people thronging them are not all apparently hastening to a fire. The buildings do not tower oppressively above you like the walls of a Colorado canyon; in fact, to try to condense what I am driving at into one word—Boston is so manageable a city as compared with New York, that the pilgrim, after a course of metropolitan sight-seeing, finds it sweetly restful to his soul—especially if you spell that word both ways.

The literary associations and attractions of Boston are of course incomparably richer than those of any other city on the Continent, and so long as Holmes, Lowell, Whittier, Howells, and Aldrich make it the centre of their work, this must continue to be so. Viewed from the purely literary standpoint, the *Atlantic Monthly* still holds an unquestioned supremacy among periodicals, and although the famous old *North American Review* moved some time ago to Gotham, it has so entirely lost its early character by the change, having degenerated from a review of the highest class into a sensational monthly newspaper, that the loss can be easily borne.

It is not only natural, but appropriate, that the literary pilgrim who has been so fortunate as to enjoy the privilege of an interview with the Autocrat should regard it as the chief event of very eventful days. He was found in his luxurious library, with its enchanting outlook upon the Back Bay, and having first by diplomatic enquiries, ascertained that his visitor neither had a volume of poems to be criticised, nor wicked intentions of printing what might transpire, in some daily paper (for the Lowell-Hawthorne affair has worked irreparable injury), Dr. Holmes settled back in one of his big arm-chairs for a good long chat. Although by his own confession (vide *Atlantic Monthly* for April), already some eight years beyond man's allotted term of years, his eye is not dim, and his natural force little abated, as indeed the prodigies of social toil undergone by him during his recent trip to Europe abundantly testify. An hour slipped by far more swiftly than the current of the Charles at the garden's foot, while the brightest man of two generations unlocked his stores of wit and wisdom, and it was only when it seemed as if even the genial patience of an Autocrat could not in propriety be further presumed upon that the pilgrim found resolution to take his leave.

A quiet dinner, followed by a long uninterrupted evening, gave abundant opportunity for studying the most popular novelist of the day in his

own home. Living in one of Beacon Street's bow-windowed mansions, a few doors away from Dr. Holmes, Mr. Howells has surrounded himself with so many evidences of an expansive bank account that, looking upon them, one is inclined to be sceptical as to the paucity of reward accorded by the muse to her high priests. The creator of Silas Lapham is a striking example of the union of strength and gentleness. The massive Napoleonic head, the broad shoulders, the sinewy, though not tall, frame, are those of an athlete, who might possibly with due training stand up before the impregnable Sullivan himself for a round or two; but the winning smile, the rich, soft voice, the easy graceful movements, belong only to the gentleman. From many points of view, Mr. Howells lives an ideal life, which must make him the envy of countless fellow-workers. Devoting the morning to his desk, the afternoon to his family and friends, the evening to his book-table when social demands permit, he, by a wise ordering of his time, manages to do a wonderful amount of work without having to deny himself much of life's enjoyment. Each year sees two complete novels come from his pen, in addition to the monthly essay on literature for *Harper's*, and other critical work, of which his recent book on some of the Italian poets is a specimen. His method is to work steadily rather than rapidly, and his persistent pegging away is filling a large corner of his library with books that bear his name upon the title page. It must be a source of great satisfaction to him to see some of his genius reappearing in his children. The eldest daughter has already touched the *Century* mark in poetry; while the younger gave to the world a couple of years ago a book upon the Old Masters which delighted everybody by the originality of its comments, and the quaintness of its sketches.

A poet without peer to-day for polished perfection of form, a teller of stories whose rare combining of wit and pathos makes them irresistibly attractive, an editor who has kept the famous old *Atlantic* thoroughly up to its own exalted plane, Thomas Bailey Aldrich divides with Howells the honour of chief place among the American authors of the present generation. He seems a much younger man than his rival, that is, if the two friends can rightly be called rivals, for his cheeks are as rosy as any school-boy's, and his hair is but slightly tinged with gray, while his handsome moustaches are trimmed to very artistic curves. His editorial sanctum, in the rear of Houghton and Mifflin's establishment, on Park Street, is rather difficult of access, and consequently all the better suited to his needs, as he is thereby spared many an interruption. It is furnished in a curiously plain, old-fashioned way, and looks out upon the old graveyard that comes in between Park Street Church and the Tremont House. The whole atmosphere is one of quiet and contemplation, as one would expect in the headquarters of the most classically cultured periodical now published.

Here again the pilgrim would love to linger a while, and repeat some of the interesting things told him by the author of "Prudence Palfrey" and "Baby Bell"; but that hateful word "space" rises up in sullen prohibition, and, moreover, downstairs, in comfortable quarters, Mr. Horace Scudder—who has done so much sound, strong, enduring work along so many different lines, and who, at present, besides acting as literary adviser to the firm, and editing several of their historical series, contributes three-fourths of the literary criticism to the *Atlantic*—has much to say about men and books that would be equally interesting; so there is no alternative but to keep silence and pass on.

An establishment that no literary visitor should fail to see is that of the *Youth's Companion*, for there is probably not a more perfectly appointed place of the kind in the world. Few of this famous periodical's 400,000 subscribers have any conception of the amount of pains and pelf that is spent in preparing for them the paper they love so dearly. There are editors by the half-dozen, each in his own cosy cabinet, readers by the score, before several of whom every manuscript passes in judgment before it is accepted or rejected, and clerks innumerable. The editor-in-chief, Mr. Hezekiah Butterworth, and his two leading assistants, Messrs. Clay and Rideing, have won wide reputations outside their sanctums in various lines of literary work, and as where there are so many to help, the portion of the burden falling upon each is comparatively slight, they still have full opportunity to do good work on their own account. Contributors are dealt with, not only in the most liberal, but the most just manner possible. While names, of course, count, they by no means rule, and new writers with something to say, and saying it well, are always welcome. No manuscript is sent back unread, and, as an illustration of their method, Mr. Rideing showed me a rejected MS., with the verdict of four different readers attached, they all agreeing in essential particulars; and yet when that intellectual product was returned to its author he no doubt felt confident that it had not been judged upon its merits, but rejected solely because he was not one of the favoured clique.

A visit to Boston is still incomplete that does not include attendance at one of the Monday lectures. These lectures constitute one of the most remarkable phases of the intellectual life of New England. Dealing with the most abstruse problems of philosophy, morals, and theology, and delivered at the curious hour of noon on Monday, they have for twelve years gathered together audiences that filled the immense auditorium of Tremont Temple; while, through the medium of newspaper and book, they have gone forth to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Colossal, both physically and intellectually, as Joseph Cook is on the platform, he is human enough in the privacy of his own study, and enters very heartily into the discussion of much less lofty themes than those which engage his attention in public. The future of the lectureship is a little uncertain at present, as New York is understood to desire it, for a season at all events. Whether its platform be in Boston or New York, however, matters comparatively little. So long as Joseph Cook speaks from it, it must be a power for good throughout the land.

J. MACDONALD OXLEY.