

## PARIS LETTER.

and stand confessed as no better than he really is. People hear so much truth about themselves from their neighbours, and make so many humiliating and otherwise vexatious confessions to their neighbours that, to most of them, the place becomes hateful; hundreds leave it impelled solely by the desire to get away as far as possible from those whom, but a few days before, they were reckoning amongst their pleasantest acquaintances. In one or two cases a happy result is attained. An old bachelor is so charmed at the frankness with which a lady, no longer young, announces her age that he proposes forthwith and is accepted. The clergyman, who found so much difficulty in choosing a suitable mode of address for his congregation, is led to make some serious and profitable reflections; finally when the epidemic has passed away and the habit of truth is no longer compulsory, some adhere to it by choice, from a perception of its advantages. So much of humbug and falsehood has been destroyed in the course of a couple of weeks, that social and business relations rest afterwards on a much better foundation. Those who have not left the town have the advantage of breathing a purer atmosphere than they ever did before. Such, in outline, is Miss Vial's story, which, brief as it is, displays considerable power both of observation and expression. There is something in the quiet way in which she grasps and depicts a social situation that would do credit to a practised writer of fiction; and it will be a pity if she does not soon attempt some work in which her talent will have more scope.

The moral of the story is sufficiently obvious, and may even be said to be trite; but as we read the thought occurs to us whether it might not be possible, even as things are, to introduce a little more of sincerity and reality into our social intercourse. A gleam of hope seems to strike us, and it is precisely this gleam of hope, like a ray of sunlight across the pages, that causes Miss Vial's little book to differ from so many representations of the hollowness of social forms. What a blessing it would be, we cannot but think, to get right down to bed-rock with ourselves and with others? As it is at present, through fear of misunderstandings, we never really have understandings. But after all the heavens would not fall if A knew what B really thought of him or vice versa. Society is groaning to-day under the weight of a thousand tedious egotisms which the present system of universal complaisance has called into existence and upon which a few words of rugged truth would act like dynamite. Give a man a chance of taking a reasonable estimate of himself and the probability is that he will do so; but make it a social obligation to feed his vanity, as he makes it one to feed yours, and what is the result? If not a pair of fools, at least a pair of dwellers in a fools' paradise. It is a terrible thing to be perpetually on your best behaviour with anyone. If two persons are so constituted that neither can stand the natural unaffected ways and honest opinions of the other, the best thing they can do is to sever all relations. Let the explosion come and have done with it. We all have known some rare characters probably who, had they lived through the pestilence described by Miss Vial, would hardly have been aware of it, so little are they accustomed to economise truth or to veil their real sentiments. Whether a nature of this kind is compatible, in the present state of the world, with very quick sensibilities may perhaps be questioned; but if I were asked which the world stands more in need of, truth or sensibility, I should say truth. None of us, perhaps, would be rash enough to invoke such a visitation as occurred in Miss Vial's story; but if it came of itself what an amount of pestilent rubbish it would consume, what a mass of social hypocrisy! Then if people were compelled to be true with themselves as well as with others, to acknowledge to themselves their real thoughts, their real beliefs, their real motives, what a revelation would be brought home to many! As so sweeping a *catharsis* is not to be looked for, the next best thing is for us to make up our minds individually to live more open lives, to act from more avowable motives, and to give others the benefit, whether they always like it or not, of more sincerity in our daily intercourse. We need in our conversation more of Yea and Nay, and less of phrase-making and strategy. Tact is a very fine thing, but it is a poor substitute for honesty. There is one comforting thought, and that is, that the more truth we have the less "grim" will it become. Truth looks grim when it replaces some smirking lie. Under a regime of veracity things would begin to grow more beautiful as plants do in the light; and people would wonder, as they emerged more and more into the sunlight of truth, why they had ever bound themselves over to so much unwholesome reticence on the one hand and so much of forced and false admiration on the other, when, in the kindly constitution of things, there was so little real necessity for either.

W. D. LESUEUR.

Ottawa, August 11, 1890.

THE VIENNA IMPERIAL COURT ORCHESTRA.—It may be truly said that the dance music of the Strausses has never been played with such precision and such delightful sparkle as by this famous orchestra. The name of Strauss was sufficient to almost overcrowd the hall, and his reception and that of his artists was extremely cordial; and the applause which greeted the orchestra increased with every number. Performances at the Pavilion Sept. 17 and 18. Those who intend going in order to secure seats two days in advance of the general public should call at Messrs. Nordheimer's or Suckling and Sons', and place their names on the subscribers' lists. Brochures will be mailed applicants by Mr. Percival T. Greene, Manager Toronto Concerts.

JOAN OF ARC is at present the most prominent public character in the eyes of every political party; proof that to live in hearts we leave behind is not to die. From the right divine royalists, down to the no divine anarchists, all are one in their admiration for the Maid of Orleans. The white, the tricolour, the red, and even the black flags salute her memory with a dip. For the old royalists, she is a saint, and for the others, the type of pure patriotism, of womanly suffering, and of peasant nobleness of soul. Since years, she is registered at the Vatican for canonization; in every part of France, commencing with her home, where her life has been emblazoned by a deed of glory or an act of suffering, a statue, or a church commemorates each meteor-event. She has nearly exhausted song; but story and history find in her career a perennial source of interest, of study, and of fascination. Each new volume treating upon Joan of Arc is bought up with the greed of a hungered stomach. The mere enumeration of the books published about the Maid of Orleans would alone fill many bulky volumes. And this posthumous tribute or adoration is fully due to one of the purest, the most unselfish, and most ill-treated patriotic heroines recorded in the annals of universal history.

It was but natural that Joan, being a personage around whom unanimity of admiration is only disturbed by differences in the intensity of the homage rendered, should be indicated as the object of a common culte, where all political parties could find their ideal of national glory—for every country must have its idol, and affections cannot be strung on an abstraction. True Blue royalists honour the fête of Charlemagne every September; the Bonapartists form the festival of the Assumption, and the Republicans the anniversary of the Bastille. The head council of public instruction is at present discussing the fixation of an annual holiday to honour the memory of Joan of Arc. A leading writer proposes to select the intended day on the 17th of April, that being the anniversary of the date when the "English" in 1436 were expelled from the Bastille. But this would be giving excessive glory to an excessively small event—breaking butterflies on a wheel. The life-work and mission of Joan of Arc was to infuse faith in their success in the French soldiery, to expel the English who then ruled France, and, by uniting the Burgundian and Armagnac factions, bring about not only territorial but national unity; secure France for the French—a work she commenced by capturing Orleans and winning Patay in 1429, but that was only completed by the definite surrender of Calais by the Spaniards in 1598.

The fall of the Bastille—14th July, 1789—is a truly glorious date; but it divides Frenchmen. The evacuation of the Bastille, by the English and the French—the 17th April, 1436—is only a kind of Middle Ages incident in the Hundred years war. Henry V. of England, having married Catherine, the daughter of the lunatic king, Charles VI., the Parisians, or rather the Burgundians, consented to the fortresses of the Louvre, Vincennes, and the Bastille, being garrisoned by English troops. It was thus that Henry V. and Charles VI. entered Paris in 1418, in all the pomp and circumstance of royalty, the Parisians appearing in red toilettes to welcome them. The French Capulets and Montagues, having eighteen years later ceased their fratricidal struggles, they united, naturally, to expel that foreign body—the English. A traitor, Laillier, opened a gate to the commander of the army, Constable de Richemont, just as eighteen years previously, a traitor, Leclerc, had opened a gate to the Anglo-Burgundians.

The English and their French partisans, not more than 1,000 altogether, now rushed for the Bastille, where Lord Willoughby, of Erseby, was Governor. He knew that help from outside was hopeless; he had no provisions, and could not hold out against the French army and the citizens—the latter largely composed of refugee peasants. He capitulated, but received all the honours of war, and reaching the Seine at the Louvre, by the outskirts of the city, all embarked for Rouen. Small crowds hissed and howled them, which was better than to have been massacred had they marched through Paris. Citizens were delighted; they said: "It was in the nature of England to fight continually with her neighbours, which explained their having come to a bad end. Thank God, 70,000 of them have already died in France." It was the Corporation of Butchers that stood by the English to the last and their provost, later pardoned, embarked with them for Rouen.

When the English quit Paris two grand processions took place to thank God for their departure. All the members of the University of Paris marched, taper in hand, as penitence and atonement for their condemning poor Joan of Arc as a sorceress and a heretic, and so having her burned. The English did not leave Paris a moment too soon, as two years later, 1438, the city was visited by famine and plague; 45,000 persons died, and in the Hôtel Dieu alone 5,000 patients succumbed. Paris was then so desolated that the wolves at nightfall crept along the banks of the Seine to where the Louvre is now erected, and stealing in seized and strangled citizens in the bye-streets.

During the eighteen years that the Bastille was occupied, 1418-1436, by the English, it was never employed as a prison. The only individual confined there and for one year was Marshal de L'Isle Adam, that faction weathercock, whose speciality seemed to be betraying all parties alike. He was set at liberty by the Regent, the Duke of Bedford. However, the Bastille has historical relations

dear to English traditions. It had at one time for Governor Sir John Falstaff, who was appointed to that post by the Duke of Exeter, then in command of Paris. "Plump Jack" bound himself to keep for the defence of the Bastille and all the year round twenty men-at-arms and sixty archers, well mounted and equipped. Sir John was paid two shillings a day for himself, twelve pence for each man at arms, and six pence for each archer. In any fighting done Sir John was to hand over one-third of the spoils to King Henry, and to deliver up to his majesty all officers taken prisoner, the king granting a proportionate recompense.

On one occasion there was an *émeute* in Paris, and the Duke of Exeter was forced to seek shelter in the Bastille; he asked Falstaff how much grain, "horse-flesh" and other victuals he had in store. "Enough for six months." Then the rebels were fired upon with ordinance and arrows till routed. Sir John bitterly complained that he was never paid his outlay for provisioning the Bastille. He must have had loot—he was ready we know to "rob an exchequer"—as he had salt cellars in solid silver, and made after the model of the Bastille. There is no record when Falstaff resigned the governorship of the Bastille. After he left France he retired to Caistor, near Yarmouth, where he erected a splendid mansion, lived in great magnificence and there expired, 6th March, 1459, aged 80 years. Thus he did not die at Eastcheap, in Mrs. Quickly's house "babbling of green fields"; nor had she to lay more clothes on his feet to discover the latter to be "as cold as any stone." Some biographers of Sir John make no allusion to his Bastille governorship, and it is the Falstaff that Shakespeare drew, which will live after history dies.

At the present moment, when France is so much occupied with the hours of labour, it is a curious fact that the Duke of Bedford, when regent of France, not only regulated the hours of labour in factories but established the carpet trade at Beauvais, and the woollen trade at Rouen and Evreux—all three head centres to-day of these manufactures. The Duke also reformed the police of Paris, and suppressed the bribing of Justice.

The passing events in Argentina and Central America will have a painful reaction on France. These regions form the chief foreign markets for her products, though closely rivalled by England and the United States. The annual exports and imports of France to Argentina alone amount to 325,500,000 frs., of which 143,750,000 frs. represent imports. In the purchase of fine wines and artistic upholstery, the Argentines never higgled over prices; ladies' toilettes and the jewellery trade had only to produce something original as well as tasteful, when purses opened as a matter of course. That back-bone custom is lost for a time. And the "mildred" and boyard classes do not now exist to enable Parisians to replace the *estanciero* of the pampas. Since Brazilians have been converted to Republicanism as rapidly as was St. Paul to Christianity, they have ceased to be extravagant, and so Paris suffers as well as Dom Pedro. It is calculated that, during the 1889 Exhibition, Argentine visitors dropped sixty million frs. in hard gold in Paris. Then there is the McKinley Bill, striking at the 595 million frs. of exports and imports, representing the annual special commerce of France with the United States; or nearly five times "less" than the similar combined total of England's with Uncle Sam.

Z.

## PROVERBIAL BLINDNESS.

MERCIER'S organ, *L'Electeur*, in a recent article laments the backwardness of Canada as compared with the United States. It points out the prodigious growth of such cities as Lynn, Worcester, Lowell, Cambridge, Fall River, Grand Rapids, Minneapolis and St. Paul, likewise the material advancement of all. The cleanliness, public hygiene, beauty, magnificence of construction, commodities of all kinds, rapidity and facility of transport from one place to another are noticed and commented upon. In the minor as well as the larger cities the streets are clean, well paved, well lit and kept, while in villages comfort is seen in the elegance of the homesteads. They have their pretty cottages surrounded by lawns, just as New York and Chicago have their marble palaces. The unhappy people (*les pauvres gens*) of Canada scornfully call this worldliness; but experience proves that this worldliness does not interfere with the noble aspirations of the soul and intellect to judge from the number and gigantic sizes of their churches, universities, colleges, theatres and museums which we meet at every step. After speaking of other material progress it asks: How is it, then, that the American Republic, which after all is the younger sister of Canada, should surpass it by 100 years in material prosperity? Evidently there is something run off the track somewhere with us; we have taken the wrong track and our neighbours have taken the right one. They have National Protection and we have. This proves simply that Protection may be good for some, but is disastrous to others. Animadverting upon Protection as valueless and injurious to Canadians, the writer goes on to say: That the line 45 is no longer imaginary, it is painfully visible. On the one side, poverty and *trampling under foot* (*piétinement sur place*); on the other, fortune and progress.

There is nothing new in all this. Charlevoix, the historian of Canada, noted it so long ago as 1721: "There exists in New England an opulence which it would appear we do not know how to emulate; while, in New France, there is a poverty attempted to be hidden by an air of