

THE MONUMENT NATIONAL.

The French-Canadian ladies were quite enthusiastic in responding to Madame Grenier's request to give a helping hand to organize a festival for the benefit of the Monument National. At a meeting, which was held this week at the Cabinet de Lecture Paroissial, it was resolved that this festival would take place at Sohmer Park on the 24th of June. Madame Grenier will preside at the refreshment table and Madame Justice Jetté will act as treasurer. Madame Ouimet, wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons, will preside at the Tombola, Madame J. R. Thibaut and Madame C. A. Geoffrion will have charge of the flower table, Madame J. A. Laramée will dispense the ice cream, and Madame G. A. Hughes the cigars. The presiding ladies will be assisted by a number of young ladies.

SUCCI'S FAST.

The completion by Signor Succi of his self-imposed fast of forty days, regrettable as were its surroundings, is undoubtedly a remarkable feat. The penitential fasts of the Church in the Middle Ages, though sufficiently severe, yet permitted bread and water to be taken, with sometimes a refresher of dry cooked beans and small beer, and an occasional small fish in the evening; but we can recall no modern instance in which total abstinence from food has been, we were going to say indulged in, or at any rate practised, for so long a period without serious results. Most physiologists would, we think, before the fact have pronounced it impossible. The loss by the lungs, the skin, and the urine would have been considered to be too great for the nervous and circulatory systems to bear without the breaking down of some part of the machinery. Cases are on record where an animal has lived a much longer period without food—as, for example, the fat pig that fell over Dover Cliff and was picked up alive one hundred and sixty days after, being partially embedded in the debris; but here little motion was allowed, warmth was retained by the surrounding chalk, and life was sustained by the animal on its own fat. Dogs and wolves, again, are said to be able to sustain a complete fast for a month; but for a man to resist the depressing effects of a forty days' fast with nothing but water, which can hardly be called food, is certainly exceptional. Signor Succi is described as looking wan, thin, and sallow, and it is stated that he lost weight at the rate of about half pound a day during the latter days of his fast. The loss was no doubt in great part due to the elimination of carbon dioxide by the lungs and of watery vapour by the skin and lungs. His temperature was well maintained. His pulse varied, but was during the later days more frequent than natural. The room in which he lived was judiciously kept at a high temperature, and he did not exhaust his nervo-muscular apparatus by exercise. Perhaps the conclusion may be drawn from this experiment that a considerable proportion of our ordinary food is not applied to any useful purpose in the economy, but is converted in the intestinal canal into leucin, tyrosin, and other crystalloids, and that many of the inactive inhabitants of cities habitually eat more than is required to maintain their mental and bodily functions in the highest efficiency.—*Lancet*.

A FAMOUS VIOLIN.

The musical world will be interested to learn that the famous Alard Strad, known as the Messie has been added to the many magnificent specimens of the great master's work already owned in the United Kingdom. This violin, which is so perfect in condition and workmanship—it is dated 1716, and therefore belongs to the grand period of Stradivarius' work—as to deserve the epithet of "unique," must be familiar to English connoisseurs, who, in 1772, had abundant opportunity of studying it at the Exhibition of Musical Instruments at South Kensington, to which it was sent by its then owner, M. Vuillaume, the well known maker of Paris. The instrument, which is described in the catalogue of the Exhibition as being the only one which has come down to us in a condition of perfect preservation, was bought in 1760 by a distinguished Italian amateur, Count Cozio di Salabue, after whose death it was purchased in 1824 by the famous collector, Luigi Tarisio. Tarisio hid it away, refusing to let anyone see it till his death in 1854. A year later it was, together with many more instruments collected by Tarisio, purchased from his heirs by the late M. Vuillaume. Its condition of preservation was then such as to warrant the belief that it had scarcely been played upon during the whole 150 years of its existence. M. Vuillaume, who could not bring himself to part with the treasure, left it on his death to his son-in-law, M. Alard, the well-known French violinist, and the happy possessor of many rare and valuable instruments by the greatest makers. Now, as already stated, it is to be brought to England, the purchase having been concluded through a well-known Bond street firm; its ultimate destination being, we believe, to enrich the collection of a distinguished and wealthy amateur north of the Tweed. After the death of M. Alard, it passed into the hands of his son-in-law, M. Croue, who has sold it for £2000, the largest price ever paid, as yet, for a violin. It is intended to publish the interesting history of this violin, with illustrations reproducing the colour of the wonderful varnish.

THE AUTOMATIC PHOTOGRAPH COMPANY.

On account of an improvement in prices on the Stock Exchange comes a rush of new companies, the most noticeable of which is, perhaps, the Automatic Photograph Company. This company is formed to develop the latest phase of automatism, viz., put a penny in the slot, and wait forty-five seconds to be presented with your photograph. It hardly seems possible such a machine could work, but Mr. Isaac Joel, the inventor, says it will, and wishes to sell the patents thereof to the company for £60,000, of which £39,700 is to be in cash. If the machine will do perfectly all that is affirmed (on this we can offer no opinion) the Company should be great success owing to the novelty and cheapness of the new style of photograph. The cost of production of each photograph is ½d., so that the profit, added to the gain in selling frames and receiving advertisements on the photographs and machines, is estimated to give a return of over 30 per cent. on the capital.—*English paper*.

LA CROIX ROUGE.

Some years ago Mr. P. S. Murphy, of this city, published in the *Canadian Antiquarian* an interesting account of a relic of the Old Régime in Montreal, which, as it is probably new to many, and interesting to all, of our readers, we have thought it well to reproduce in this issue. Mr. Murphy's narrative runs as follows:

The "Red Cross" at the corner of Guy and Dorchester streets, Montreal, which for a century and a quarter has so prominently marked the burial place of Bélisle, the murderer, has long been an object of curious speculation. The popular story is that it marks the grave of a notorious highwayman, who robbed and murdered *habitants* returning from Montreal to St. Laurent and the back country by Dorchester street, which was at that time the only highway west of St. Lawrence street. This story is somewhat incorrect. Bélisle was not a highway robber; his crime was house-breaking and a double murder. He lived on Le Grand Chemin du Roi, now called Dorchester street, near the spot where the red cross stands. On the other side of the road, and a little higher up, Jean Favre and his wife, Marie-Anne Bastien, lived. Favre was reputed to be well off and to have money in his house. This excited the cupidity of Bélisle, who formed the project of robbing his neighbour, and, accordingly, one dark night broke into the house and fired his pistol at Favre, which, however, only wounding him, he stabbed him to death with a large hunting knife. Favre's wife rushed in to help her husband, and was met by Bélisle, who plunged the knife into her breast and then despatched her by a blow of a spade. Bélisle was suspected, and soon after arrested, tried and convicted.

The object of this paper is to set the public right about the legend of the "Red Cross," and to give its true history; also to show by the following copy of the "Requisitoire du Procureur du Roi," dated 6th June, 1752, that the terrible punishment of "breaking alive" (*rompre vif*) was then in force under the French régime in Canada. Bélisle was condemned to "torture ordinary and extraordinary," then to be broken alive on a scaffold erected in the market-place (the present Custom House Square) in this city.

This awful sentence was carried out to the letter, his body buried in Guy street, and the Red Cross erected to mark the spot, as fully described in the following document, referred to above, which is not only interesting, but historically valuable:

Extrait du Requisitoire du Procureur du Roi.

"Je requiers pour le Roi que Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle soit déclaré dument atteint et convaincu d'avoir de dessein prémédité assassiné le dit Jean Favre d'un coup de pistolet et de plusieurs coups de couteau, et d'avoir pareillement assassiné la dite Marie-Anne Bastien, l'épouse du dit Favre, à coups de bêche et de couteau et de leur avoir volé l'argent qui était dans leur maison; pour réparation de quoi il soit condamné avoir les bras, jambes, cuisses et reins rompus vifs sur un échafaud qui, pour cette effet, sera dressé en la place du marché de cette ville, à midi; ensuite sur une roue, la face tournée vers le ciel, pour y finir ses jours. Le dit Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle préalablement appliqué à la question ordinaire et extraordinaire; se fait, son corps mort porté par l'exécuteur de la haute justice sur le grand chemin qui est entre le maison où demeurait le dit accusé et celle qu'occupaient les dits défunts Favre et sa femme. Les biens du dit Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle acquis et confisqués au Roi, ou à qui il appartiendra sur iceux, ou à ceux non sujets à confiscation, préalablement pris la somme de trois cents livres d'amende, en cas que confiscation n'ait pas lieu au profit de Sa Majesté.

"Fait à Montréal le 6e Juin, 1752.

"(Signé),
"FOUCHER."

[Translation.]

Extract from the Requisition of the King's Attorney.

"I require for the King that Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle be arraigned and convicted of having wilfully and feloniously killed the said Jean Favre by a pistol shot and several stabs with a knife, and of having similarly killed the said Marie-Anne Bastien, wife of the said Favre, with a spade and a knife; and of having stolen the money that was in their house; for punishment of which that he be condemned to have his arms, legs, thighs and backbone broken

at noon, he alive, on a scaffold which shall be erected for that purpose in the market-place of this city; then, on a rack, his face turned towards the sky, he be left to die. The said Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle, being previously put to torture ordinary and extraordinary, his dead body shall be carried by the executioner to the highway which lies between the house lately occupied by the said accused and the house lately occupied by the said Jean Favre and his wife. The goods and chattels of the said Jean Baptiste Goyer dit Bélisle confiscated to the King, or for the benefit of those who may have a right to them, or of those not liable to confiscation, the sum of three hundred livres fine being previously set apart, in case that confiscation could not be made for the benefit of His Majesty.

"Done at Montreal this 6th June, 1752.

"(Signed),
"FOUCHER."

NOTE.—The writer was informed by the late Dr. Meilleur that a few years ago some descendants of the Bélisle family were living at Bord-à-Plouffe (near St. Martin). They were quiet, honest, inoffensive people, but a stigma was still attached to their name, as their relationship to the murderer of Favre and his wife was known to the *habitants* of that part of the country.

P.S.—The above history of the "Red Cross" was narrated to me some forty years ago, by the widow of Louis Haldimand, a nephew of General Haldimand, Governor of Canada. This lady was born in 1774 and heard the story from her mother, who lived near "la Place du Marché" (present Custom House Square) when the execution took place.

P. S. MURPHY.

SYDNEY.

It is a fair land, this new Australian continent, and well worthy to be inhabited by the energetic Anglo-Saxon race. The whole mountain system of New South Wales lies below the limit of perpetual snow. The grandeur of the scenery is not to be compared with that of the Alps or the Rocky Mountains. On the contrary, from the plains the mountains look rather insignificant; but once on them, and looking into the gorges below, clothed with verdure, or on the broad plains far beyond, you are struck with the magnificent scale on which Nature has worked in these solitudes. Over all is a mantle of blue haze, which makes the whole effect most striking, and has given to the range of hills visible from Sydney the appropriate name of the Blue Mountains. However, there is nothing equalling the view you get as you enter Sydney through Port Jackson. It is needless to say a word of Sydney harbour. It holds the first place among the harbours of the world for convenience of entrance, depth of water, and natural shipping facilities.

I am agreeably disappointed with Sydney. Its shops and public buildings and hotels are handsome, and its streets broader, than I had anticipated. I was frightened, I own, by what Mr. Froude has written about its mosquitoes. Perhaps mosquitoes do not like me; I am not sorry. Coming to Sydney by sea you feel, on the whole, that Eden cannot be far off. Nor is the climate so bad as some people fancy. In Naples, where so many English go, the summer is warmer and the winter much colder than at Sydney. The famed resorts on the Mediterranean seaboard, it is now confessed, bear no comparison with the Pacific slope of New South Wales, either for natural salubrity or the comparative mildness of the summer and winter; while the epidemics and pestilences which have devastated the regions of ancient civilization have never made their appearance on Australian shores. The Hawkesbury formation, over which the city of Sydney is built, provides it with an inexhaustible supply of sandstone of the highest quality for building purposes. The beauty of Sydney street architecture owes much to it, as it is a material admirably adapted for architectural effect, being of a pleasant colour, fine grain, and easily worked. For natural facilities for shipping Sydney stands unrivalled. The water deepens abruptly from the shores, so that the largest vessels may be berthed alongside the wharves and quays. The Sydneyites love their harbour, and well may they do so, for none fairer is to be found under the sun. "What do you think of our harbour?" is the first question asked a stranger. A tale is told of the captain of an English man-of-war which was at anchor here, that he was so tired of the question being constantly put that he had a blackboard hung over the side of his ship, on which he had chalked up, with a view to save trouble and prevent further inquiries: "We admire your harbour very much."—*J. E. Ritchie*.

The celebrated Sir William Gull, late physician to the Queen, whose loss all temperance people mourn, gave the following evidence before the House of Lords: "Alcohol interferes with the conveying of the food into the system, and the public ought to know that of all the diluents or solvents for the nutritious parts of food there is nothing like water. It carries into the system the nutrient in its purest form. I hardly know of any more potent cause of disease than alcohol; it causes diseased liver, which disorders the blood, causing diseased kidneys, heart, and nervous system, besides being a frequent source of crime of all kinds. A very large number of persons are dying day by day, poisoned by stimulants without it being known. Great injury is done to health by the use of alcohol in its various combinations (as wine, brandy, gin, rum, whiskey, or beer), even in so called moderate quantities."