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Contributors and Correspondents

FRANCE.

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DEAR SIR,—I proposed, in a note accompanying my former letter, to write you from the Continent of Europe, and now I proceed to fulfill my promise. I do not propose to give you an account of my travels, but simply to state such facts and circumstances as struck myself, and may furnish me with an opportunity of making such remarks as may interest and instruct your readers.

One of the first things which strikes a Canadian, in proceeding from Havre to Paris, is the long rows of pollards in the gardens and fields. A tree with its head cut off, and the stem rendered more gnarled and ugly by the frequent lopping off of its branches, is a very unsightly object, and I concluded that there must be some practical object in treating the trees in this manner, but what that was did not at first occur to me, and it was not till passing through the forest of St. Germain that the truth flashed upon me. There I saw bunches of small branches, cut to a regular length and tied up, besides piles of miserable, small cordwood, such as a Canadian would think fit only for kindling the fire. These pollards, then, are cultivated for the fagots, of which they furnish a crop every two or three years. France has a dry, genial climate, else such firewood as I saw would be of little avail, and during the month or two of really cold weather which they have in that country they must suffer a good deal from cold, as wood is scarce and dear, and the houses not provided with double doors and windows, so that if we Canadians have a sterner climate, we have in our grand forests abundant means of sheltering ourselves from its severity.

The Valley of the Seine is an exceedingly fertile, beautiful, and interesting country. I traveled along its course, from its embouchure at Havre till it becomes a brook in the magnificent country of the Cote d'Or, and was charmed with the beauty of the scenery and wealth of resources, which are everywhere apparent. From denudations on the hillsides I could see that the country has on a sort of marly chalk, with limestone often appearing, which accounts for the fertility of the soil, and its admirable adaptation to fruit trees, and especially the vine. I saw no indications of high scientific culture, and yet the land is, in most places, clean, and carefully laboured. But there is the want of the grand cornfields, which are the glory of Britain and Canada, and the pasture lands and green slopes, adorned with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. I have no doubt that the sub-division of France among some seven millions of proprietors is the cause of this. The holdings of most of the proprietors are consequently small, and in many places, over a large extent of country, there is an utter want of fences. Hence not a cow is to be seen grazing in the fields at this season, though you may often see cows, as well as oxen, drawing in the waggon or plough, and two or three sheep feeding in some places which the plough cannot reach, and led with a rope by an old woman or girl. I presume that the cattle are chiefly fed in the stall, or yard, except among the mountains, as on the Alps here, where they are sent out in summer to pasture at large. There appears to be no want of individual effort among the French farmers, but there does appear to be a want of that skill which would enable them to turn their labor to the best account.

Normandy is a superb country, and I am not surprised that our old Norman kings were exceedingly partial to it, irrespective of its being their native country. To a Lower Canadian it is specially interesting, as being the land from which the early settlers of Canada, including Jacques Cartier, came. Here you may still see the type of the Lower Canada cart, and the finest specimens of what we call the Canadian horse—the Percheron horse of Normandy. I saw a pair of them once in an omnibus in Paris, not only perfect specimens of the Norman horse, but admirable specimens of the horse itself. Everywhere throughout the grand country, so rich in natural resources, one sees evidences of an old civilization. This is specially evident in the cities and towns, where specimens of antique architecture are everywhere to be seen. The old Cathedral of Rouen is eminently worthy of a visit. It is of great size and enormous height. There are two aisles on each side of the nave, which is about 90 feet high. These are all vaulted, and the enormous piers which support the gabled arches, you can easily suppose, occupy a large amount of space. There is plenty of stained glass in the windows, many side chapels, pictures, tombs and statues, and among them a reclining figure of Richard

Cœur de Lion. But what is the use of all this? For the preaching of the Gospel, which ought to constitute the most important part of the Christian Service, it is very ill adapted; but for sacerdotal processions, and the nourishing of a sort of superstitious awe, the form of the Gothic Cathedral is admirably adapted, and for this probably it was mainly intended. There is another church in Rouen, that of St. Orien, superior to the cathedral in size and beauty, and only inferior to it in wealth of antique and historic monuments.

Of Paris I can hardly venture to speak but this remark I may hazard, that it is only in regard to its palaces and public monuments that it is superior to all other cities, and these, I think, are unrivalled. And one thing ought to be gratefully mentioned, to the honor of the French nation, the perfect freedom with which strangers are permitted to visit its magnificent palaces, grand museums, picture galleries, and botanical and zoological gardens. All persons have free access to these magnificent places, where so much may be learned, and so much enjoyment obtained. Fortunately, only a very small part of the Louvre, and that the least important, suffered from the savagery of the Communists, but the blackened walls of the Tuilleries, in its immediate neighborhood, still present a terrible monument of their fierce vandalism. It is curious to observe the words, *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*, painted in large letters on many parts of the Louvre, and, indeed, on most of the public buildings, and even the churches of Paris. And the present authorities have acted wisely in letting them alone; but they are a shadow, and no more. France, in its present state, is unfit for rational liberty. The salt was driven out of the land by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and French society has ever since been festering in a state of moral corruption. An intelligent Paris pastor remarked to me that "France is Atheist." This may be true of the large cities, but I do not think it applies to the rural population, who are still, to a large extent, under the influence of the priests. No country has ever had more ardent aspirations after liberty than France, and none has suffered more in its efforts to obtain it. You see tokens of this everywhere. On the coins of the old Republic you may see the same favorite inscription, *Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*, and three figures, intended to represent these ideas, and on the coins of the present Republic, struck in 1872, you may see the same legend and the same figures. But though liberty may be obtained, and fraternity flourish, equality can never continue among men; and they who dream about it show that they neither understand what true liberty is, nor how it is to be obtained and retained among men.

The first church which I visited in Paris was that of St. Germain L'Auxerrois, in the neighbourhood of the Louvre. It was from the belfry of this church that the signal was sounded, and responded to from the Palais Royal, for the commencement of the massacre, on the eve of St. Bartholomew, 24th August, 1572. The bells of this church tolled during the whole of that terrible night. It was the scene of a great riot in 1831, when everything within it was destroyed by an infuriated mob; but though it was repaired, and reopened for public worship in 1837, nothing can wash away from Popery and the French Monarchy the stain of the guilt connected with that church. I examined more or less carefully the churches of St. Eustache, Notre Dame, the Madeleine, and the Pantheon, all magnificent buildings, and illustrious as works of art. Of Notre Dame I would say that, though its sculptured front is rich and elegant, and its proportions grand and imposing, it is never to be compared to York Minster for sublimity; and for grandeur of conception and simple elegance of beauty, it is vastly inferior to St. Paul's, of London. As to the Pantheon, it is a handsome building, the reproduction, I suppose, of some Greek or Roman temple. A strange name for a Christian Church this, and yet not so inappropriate, where the worship of the Saints constitutes so large a portion of the service. I twice visited the Church of the Madeleine, certainly one of the most beautiful specimens of modern architecture. I use the word beautiful advisedly; for I do not think there is anything sublime in the general conception, or imposing in the general appearance, of the building, but it is infinitely beautiful, and the details are perfection. It was begun as a Christian Church in 1764, but the building was suspended by the revolution of 1789; Napoleon, however, had it finished, as a temple of glory, whilst Louis XVIII. had it restored in 1815 to its original destination. Time will not permit me to describe its magnificent Corinthian colonades, or exquisite statues of the Saints, in niches along the outside walls. I cannot,

however, omit noticing its magnificent bronze doors, thirty-three feet in height, by sixteen and a-half in width, with figures in bas-relief, illustrating the Ten Commandments. The illustration of the Tenth Commandment is very grand, truly sublime. The subject is Elijah denouncing Ahab and Jezebel for the coveting of Naboth's vineyard and the subsequent murder of its owner. The figure of the prophet standing on a high rack, with outstretched arm, denouncing the doom of the guilty pair, is solemn and impressive. Ahab himself, standing below, appears conscience-smitten, whilst even the hardened Jezebel looks cowed. I believe the whole would well repay a careful study, but it would require a ladder to examine them.

What! I often thought when examining these grand productions of human genius, what is the use of all this vast expense of thought and money, of labor and skill? What has all this done for France? The people asked for bread, and the priests and rulers gave them a stone. Yes, there was a time when the people of France hungered for the bread of life, and they gave them magnificent stones. But this stone food could not satisfy the longings of an immortal soul. It did not enlighten their understandings, or enlarge their knowledge, or improve their morals, or humble and soften their hearts. It simply amused them, and then stilled their longings for the bread of life. By and by they were reduced to a state of spiritual apathy, and at last stimulated to infidelity and madness.

There is one church which I visited with more pleasure, and in which I worshipped on Sabbath. I mean that usually called Taubout, from a street of that name in the neighbourhood of which it is. It is one of the oldest Protestant places of worship in Paris, and on the day on which I was there service was ably conducted by Pastor Fisch. I was much affected by the singing of one of the hymns, which spoke of the dissolution of Zion, when I thought of what the grand French Protestant Church once was, to which we owe so much, and contrasted that with what it has now become. And again, another hymn struck me much, which spoke of the people asking bread, and they gave them fetters. This church, though not full, was respectably filled, and the worship conducted much as among ourselves. The minister wore neither gown nor bands. Mr. Fisch belongs to the "Union des Eglises Evangeliques," which is doing a good work in spreading the Gospel in France.

Instead of making superficial remarks on the country through which I passed rapidly from Paris to Aix les Bains, I think it better to reserve the space which you may allow me for that place, where I have now remained a month, and about which, consequently, I am able to say something from personal observation. Aix is a beautiful little town, situated in a lovely mountain valley, bounded on the east and west by outlying spurs of the Alps. It is eight miles from Chambéry, the old capital of Savoy, which stands at the head of the valley, just where the chain of the high Alps begins. This valley lies 800 feet above the level of the sea, and is sheltered from almost every wind, so that it presents one of the finest localities for delicate persons. Lake Bourget runs for ten miles along the base of the mountain which bounds it on the west—Cat mountain, as it is called—and over the shoulder of which Hannibal is supposed to have led his army. Aix has been celebrated for its Thermal Springs since the time of the Romans, by whom they were called *Aque Gratianae*. There is still a Roman arch here, in pretty good preservation, a temple of Diana, now utilized for public offices, and a museum. It is difficult to say of this building what is really ancient, and what modernized. My own impression is, that nothing but the crypt is in its original condition.

There are two springs, both impregnated with sulphur, and one of them containing a good deal of alum. This latter issues from the earth, at a temperature of 116 Fahrenheit, and the other at a temperature of 118, and both together discharge more than 1,000 gallons of water per minute. The bathing establishment connected with these springs is very extensive, and one of the most perfect in Europe. The whole is under the direction and control of Government, and there is a large staff of well-educated medical men connected with it. Here are baths of every kind and size, from the simple douche to the swimming bath. There is one down stairs, in what is called "Division d'enfer," which I occasionally visit, but in which I have never ventured to indulge in the luxury of a bath. The sulphurous vapor which issues forth when the door is opened is, enough for me. But I believe that, if judiciously taken, it would be invaluable in rheumatic complaints. Most of the baths are very large. Conceiv-

a room eleven feet square, all of stone. The bath, with the exception of a ledge of stone about a foot broad, is the floor, and to that you descend by three stone steps. The depth may be a foot and a-half. And when this is filled with warm water, you can easily conceive how heated the atmosphere becomes. In some cases, the bath is not filled, and then the patient sits on a stool, and gets simply the douche; but in most cases it is filled, and after continuing fifteen or twenty minutes, or half an hour, as the case may be, the *doucheur*, or, in the case of ladies, *la doucheuse*, commences rubbing, and nibbling, and shampooing, and moving the affected joints. In some cases there are two *doucheurs*, or *doucheuses*. After all this manipulation the ladies are wrapped up like a mummy in a blanket, placed in a sedan chair, and carried to their lodgings, where they are lifted into a bed, and allowed to remain half an hour in that condition, when they are relieved from their packing, and remain at least another half hour in bed, to encourage perspiration. As an evidence of the estimation in which these baths are held, it may be mentioned that last season they were visited by upwards of 11,000 persons.

The people of this town and neighbourhood are quiet, orderly, and obliging, and with the exception of a few mechanics in the town, they are chiefly employed in agriculture. The bottom lands of the valley are, to a large extent, used as meadows, and irrigated with success. Where the land is high, patches of rye, wheat and potatoes may be seen. There are no large farms, and the properties seem too small to admit of the best modes of cultivation. Manure is often carried into the fields in baskets resting on the shoulders, to which two long sticks are attached, by which the carrier holds, and this operation is often performed by women. One day I saw two men and a woman, with two oxen and two cows, all engaged in directing and drawing one plough. There is no want of industry among the people, but their labor is, in many cases, ill-directed. The fields are clean and well-wrought, but from the unskillful methods employed, the amount of labor required would never do in Canada.

The vine is extensively cultivated on the rising grounds. On the uplands the plants are cut down every year, to a height of about a foot or eighteen inches from the ground. In many instances, hardly any of the new wood is left. These stumps are divided generally into two or three stems, about half the thickness of a man's wrist, and the whole plant is thickly covered with moss, which serves, I presume, to protect it from the cold. Sometimes, on each division of the stump, a piece of new wood, about an inch long and with one eye, is left. A month ago nothing was to be seen but these black, dead-looking stumps. On examining them closely, however, a week after, I saw the buds beginning to burst, and now the shoots are from two to six inches long; and in many instances the embryo bunch of grapes, or *raisin*, is distinctly formed. These vines are left to take their chance in winter, and though the cold is often severe, and with no covering of snow, they seem to take no harm. The latitude of this place is about the same as that of Montreal, but then the valley is 800 feet above sea level, and some of the vineyards must ascend 100 feet above that.

On the lower grounds vines are trained on posts connected with fencing wire; but these are laid down on the earth in winter, and covered with earth a foot thick. In the more Southern parts of Canada I do not see why the vine might not be successfully cultivated in the same manner. But it may be questioned whether this would be any advantage. It is often said, that in wine-producing countries there is little drunkenness. This is a mistake. Last week here, on the occasion of the drawing of conscripts for the Commune, there was drinking enough. I was awakened early in the morning by vociferous singing, and on looking out, saw six young men huddled together, and singing along the street at the top of their voices. And throughout the day, young men, in small groups, might be seen, singing, too, roaming about the streets.

The people here are, I suppose, the descendants of the very man whom the old Dukos of Savoy employed to hunt down the Waldenses, and obstruct the progress of the truth at Geneva. They, however, were not the most culpable parties. They were what the priests had made them, and did their bidding; and though naturally amiable and more humanized now, they are still very much what the priests have made them. And most diligent these priests are in training the children, week-day and Sabbath. One requires to live in a place like this to see what Popery really is. On Sabbath there is service enough going on in the church from five in the morning till

after mid-day; but at the principal hours of service there are stalls near the church-door, and beside its very walls, for the sale of shoes and drapery, small wares and seeds. I have seen shops enough open in London on Sabbath, and mechanics pursuing their vocation in the streets of Paris, on that day, but never till I came here did I see stalls set up near the church-door, and buying and selling going on without, while the service was going on within. Oh for one with a scourge of small cords to drive these sellers away from the courts of the temple.

Here, as in other Roman Catholic countries, the Blessed Virgin is a principal object of idolatrous veneration among the people. Here she has obtained a new title. They have named her Our Lady of the Waters, and an elegant shrine has been erected to her honor on the roadside above the town. Protected by this shrine is a gilded figure of the Virgin and Child, and on each side are suspended crutches and sticks—the votive offerings of persons cured by the healing waters. The readers of Horace will remember an allusion to something similar in one of his odes—the votive offerings of persons preserved from shipwreck, hung up in the temple of Neptune.

The prophet Ezekiel had to dig through the wall before he could see the worst forms of idolatry about the temple of Jerusalem, but here there is no concealment. The worst evils of Popery are exposed, in the most public places, to the sight of all. The day before yesterday, I visited Chambéry, and by the public way, on a hillside above the town, there is a spot enclosed by an iron railing, and there, in the centre, is a statue of our Saviour taken down from the Cross, the body supported on a woman's lap. On either side of this central group is a figure, probably meant to represent the Apostle John and Mary Magdalene; and on each side of these figures are stones with little crosses upon them, resembling ordinary upright tombstones, with the following inscription in French. On the first the inscription, translated into English, reads thus: "His Holiness, Pope Pius IX., by a brief dated 18th May, 1866, has accorded in perpetuity, to the faithful of both sexes, 300 days of indulgence, every time that they shall recite, with a contrite heart, before this cross, 5 pater, 6 aves, and 5 gloria pater, with power to apply this indulgence to the souls in purgatory."

"Holy Mary Magdalen, pray for us."

The inscription on the second is as follows: "His Eminence, Monseigneur Alexis Billot, Cardinal Archbishop of Chambéry, in blessing this cross, and the statues which surround it, on Sabbath, 6th August, 1865, has accorded in perpetuity to all the faithful 100 days of indulgence, every time that they shall recite devoutly before it, one pater, one ave, and one act of contrition, with power to apply this indulgence to the souls in purgatory."

"Holy John the Apostle, pray for us."

These inscriptions afford an illustration of the intellectual condition to which Popery, wherever it has its own way, will reduce any people. Let us be thankful for the privileges which we enjoy, and not only endeavor to transmit unimpaired to posterity the precious privilege of religious liberty and intelligence, which our fathers purchased with their blood; but let us endeavor to enlighten those who are in darkness, and communicate to them the same blessings which we enjoy. No doubt these are grand public works, the fruits of a long-continued civilization, in Europe; but they have had 2,000 years to do their work, whilst Upper Canada has not had much more than 60 to do hers. And when I think of what has been done, in that short period of a nation's history, I cannot but admire the energy and skill of the people who have accomplished so much in so short a time. And if the young men who are to soon take the place of their fathers be animated by the same spirit, and exert the same persevering industry, and enjoy the same blessing of Almighty God, what may not be accomplished in another 60 years? It is my earnest prayer, that all the people, in their several spheres, may faithfully do their duty to their God, to their country, and to themselves; and if so, we may reasonably hope that Canada will achieve greater things than Europe has yet done, and become one of the happiest and most influential countries in the world.

W. B. C.

Aix Les Bains, Savoy, France,
April 30, 1874.

You cannot tell the size of a flower by the size of its seed. Nay, a grain of mustard seed "is indeed the least of all seeds, but when it is sown it is the greatest among herbs. The secret lies in that mysterious gift of growing.—Edward Garrett.