

above him and dashed his heavy sea boot full in his face. Jimmy uttered a low moan of agony, but blinded, bleeding and half dizzy, he still clung tenaciously to the yard. It was a terrible struggle for life. The wind stifled him so that he could not cry out, and even had he been able to, who would have heard him? Not even the men at the other end of the yard. The wind fairly shrieked through the rigging and the seas broke against the vessel with a deafening roar. The masts bent like whalebone, and the yards and cordage creaked and moaned like creatures in pain as the ship plunged headlong, then reared, then rolled from side to side, until the yards seemed about to dip into the surf. The moment was rendered more intense by the enforced silence of the men and the awe-inspiring night which enwrapped them. There was no scuffle, no cursing, no prayers for mercy, or vows of vengeance. It was a horrible silence amid an elemental pandemonium.

Another clap of thunder—a smashing kick from Williams' boot—succeeded by a flash that lit up the heavens. Only one man remained on the yard—Jimmy had fallen into the whirling abyss of blackness below. The roll was taken at eight bells, and Jimmy was reported missing. An entry in the skipper's log, that on the night of the — inst., a seaman, who shipped as "James Smith" was blown off the yard, was the sole epitaph of our queer hand. It is the epitaph of thousands every year whose fate is known only to God.

About a year afterwards Williams was condemned to be hanged for killing a man in a drunken brawl in Melbourne, and the night before his execution he made a statement, giving the history of the attempted mutiny and confessing to the murder of "Jimmy Ducks." I learned the story subsequently from the bos'un, who appeared as a witness in the trial.

W. BLACKBURN HARTE.

Syringa.

Beneath me are soft green grasses,
Nature's own cushioned bed;
I lie and hear the whisper
Of winds in the trees o'erhead.
I lie and watch the sunlight
Play on thy pear-shaped leaves
O luscious, perfumed syringa,
White as a soul that grieves.
Thou knowest thy fair June beauty,
O snow-like, glorious flower,
The sensuous depth of sweetness,
The weight of thy perfume's power.
I fain would gather thy blossoms
And cover myself from sight—
With thousands of waxen petals
Hide me from day and light.
Were death but now my portion,
Nor love could respite gain,
I, choosing the death to suffer,
To mingle bliss with pain,—
Would lie on a couch of blossoms
Away from the warmth of day,
Strewing my fair death-closet
With bud, and green, and spray.
Thy branches, O sweet syringa,
Should be stripped of thy gorgeous bloom,
Thy blossoms cover my body,
Thy beauty become my tomb.
This heavy scent, thy breathing,
With sweet satiety
Should lull my fevered senses
And make it bliss to die.
First the delicious odour
Filling the slender space,
And then a drowsiness growing
Ever, and creeping apace
Over the heart and the eyelids,
Numbing the soul and sense;
The languorous pulses pausing
As the air becomes more dense;
Deeper the hush 'neath the blossoms—
There where the shadows creep;
Then one faint sigh in the silence,
And the long and dreamless sleep.

What are these idle dreamings
Born of the wind's soft breath?
The tomb contains no beauty,—
And the worst of ills is death.

Sweet life, sweet youth, sweet loving!
I hold you here and say
I dread no dark to-morrow,
I know no sad to-day.

Away with drear forebodings!
These arms, outstretching, prove
I know no death but parting,
I know no life but Love.

SOPHIE M. ALMON.

The Closing Years of the Old Régime.

In 1736 (according to M. Intendant Hocquart) the population of the colony was about 40,000, of whom 10,000 are returned as fit to bear arms. The Canadians, he says, are tall, well made, and of a vigorous constitution. The artisans are industrious and the *habitants* skilful with the axe. They make the most of their own tools and implements of husbandry; build their own houses and barns, and several of them can weave, making great webs of stuff that they call druggat, which they use for clothing themselves and their families. So much for their good qualities. But they are also, according to M. Hocquart, vain,* fond of being noticed and sensitive to rebuke. Strange to say, it is the country people whom he thus characterizes. The townspeople are less faulty. They are attached to their religion and there are few incorrigibles; but they think too much of themselves, and this failing prevents them from succeeding, as they might do, in the arts, agriculture and commerce. The long winter, with little occupation, also tends to make the men lazy. But they are addicted to the chase, to navigation, to voyages, and have not the coarse and rustic air of the French peasant. Though naturally hard to manage, they become more tractable when their honour is appealed to, but the spirit of subordination is sadly lacking, the fault, in part, of deficient firmness on the part of former governments. This is said, it seems, with reference to the militia, whose moral and physical qualities and training were to be severely tested sooner than M. Hocquart imagined. The Intendant then gives an account of the products, commerce and industries of the country. Wheat is the chief crop. The country furnishes more than what meets the needs of the inhabitants, and the surplus is exported. In good years 80,000 bushels in flour and biscuits are sent out of the country, but 1737 was a bad year. The lands of Quebec are not all equally good, some of them being hilly, but those of Montreal are level. The experiment of fall wheat had been made, but was considered risky on account of frosts. Oats, pease, barley and rye, as well as flax, hemp and tobacco were all grown to some extent. There were as yet few orchards. More attention to the culture of tobacco is recommended. The beaver was retreating northward, but still plentiful at the Company's posts—Tadoussac, Teniscaming, etc. The English were charged with enticing the Indians with brandy, but it was also acknowledged that they gave a better price for the skins. The Three Rivers iron mines are mentioned, as are also the copper mines of Lake Superior. The ship-building industry at Quebec was growing in favour. Thirty nations of Indians were described as occupying the continent of Canada.

Another *mémoire*, dated twenty years later (1758) and attributed to M. Querdisien Trémis, is written with spirit and force but is not cheerful reading, as it gives a most gloomy picture of the state of the country and scathing charges of malfeasance and dishonesty against the functionaries of the time. The population is set down at 80,000, of whom 15,000 were able to bear arms. The state of misery to which the country is represented as having been brought mainly by corrupt administration is so intolerable that if the document had been prepared expressly to show that the time had come when Canada must shake off the paralyzing grasp of Louis XV. and his agents, it could not have been more pertinent or more vigorously worded. Canada had to pass through some severe trials under the new régime, but none of them can be compared with the careless wretchedness set forth with unconscious pathos in this prosaic state paper. Well might the elder Papineau contrast the freedom of British institutions, even such as they were before the expiry of the 18th century, with the tyranny and rapacity of such men as Intendant Bigot.†

The recital of M. Trémis may well lead us to believe, with Abbé Ferland and M. LeMoine, that there was more than indifference in the manner in which Canada was allowed to pass from the hands of France. It was the interest of the infamous Bigot coterie to conceal their own malfeasance under the common ruin, just as the scoundrel will burn the house whose inmates he has murdered, in order to hide the traces of his crime.‡

When M. Trémis' *mémoire* was penned, there was no obvious reason to fear that the system of rule which it so damagingly accused was near its termination. Montcalm had won a victory over one of the finest British forces that ever offered battle to foe on this continent. Wolfe was engaged in a work of retaliation unworthy of his genius and character. But in the book of fate the knell had sounded, and the brave and chivalrous Montcalm was soon to lie dying and helpless, leaving to the care of de Ramezay the honour of France, the safety of the army and the defence of Canada.

*It is singular that Kalm, the Swedish naturalist, on his visit to Quebec in 1749, made just the same reflection, not on the *habitants*, but on the ladies of Quebec. The same distinguished tourist, who brought the observant eye of science to bear upon more than herbs and minerals, speaking generally, says that the women of Canada are handsome, virtuous and well-bred, with an *abandon* that is charming in its innocence. As housewives he found them superior to those of the English colonies. More than once he contrasts the refinement of the Canadian ladies with the coarseness of the Dutch and English. But he thinks the Canadian ladies give too much time to their toilet. He marks a difference between the ladies of Quebec and those of Montreal. The former is a veritable Frenchwoman by education and manners—the latter is a large share of Indian pride with Indian lack of culture. But they, as well as the fair Quebecois, err through fondness for dress—(*Voyage de Kalm en Amérique, analyse et traduit par W. Marchand*).

†The *Mémoires* quoted from are those included in the *Collection de Mémoires et de Relations sur l'histoire ancienne du Canada*, published by the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, 1840.

‡*Album du Touriste*, pp. 53 and 97.

As at the capture of Quebec by Kirk in 1629, so at the conquest of 1760, only a comparatively small number of the people abandoned their country. The words of M. Sulte, relating to both occasions, are applicable in this place: "Those who remained in the country constituted the stable portion of the population, that is, the *habitants*. It is false to say that Canada was at that time (1629) abandoned. That primary germ of Canadian families deserves neither the indifference nor the oblivion of historians. For it was they who refused to despair of their adopted country, and their development was proof against every attempt to arrest it. A hundred and fifty years later the Canadians were in the same situation, and then, too, they had the courage to remain Canadians. Such is our history. We have become anchored in the soil in spite of the ebb and flow of European influences. In 1629, of less than a hundred persons then in the colony, more than a third was composed of *habitants*, and they remained faithful to their post, undeterred by ill fortune."

Is Fair Hair Becoming Extinct?

In forming opinions as to whether fair-haired persons are less numerous in a particular locality now than formerly, the element of age has to be considered. A person who has spent his childhood in a fair-haired district, and visits it again after a lapse of years may easily imagine that the number of fair-haired persons is fewer than formerly, merely on account of the class of persons from whom he draws the inference being more adult than those of whom he has recollections formerly. Upon the rate at which hair darkens from childhood to adult age we have some valuable observations, which show that the hair of light complexioned male children darkens from 55 per cent. during the first five years of life to 33 per cent. at forty-five years, and dark hair with light eyes is found to increase in about the same ratio. Darkening of the female hair and eyes with age takes place to a much less extent than among males. It would appear, therefore, that in estimating the increase or diminution of fair haired persons in a particular district, observations on females are much more trustworthy than on males, from the fact that they are much less liable to variations; but, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the colour of a woman's hair is more liable to alter according to the tint which is considered the most fashionable at a particular time. Besides the blending of fair-haired races with the dark stocks, there are other elements which Dr. Beddoe has shown may account for the diminution of fair hair in England, and these should not be overlooked. He considers that the xanthous temperament is less able to withstand the insanitary conditions existing in the crowded populations of our great cities than the melanotic, and that in this way the law of natural selection operates against its increase. Again, as a large majority of women live and die unmarried and childless, it is probable, in his opinion, that the physical qualities of the race may be to a small extent moulded by the action of conjugal as well as natural selection. In support of this he has given statistics showing that of 737 women, only 55.5 per cent. of those with fair hair were married, against 79 per cent. with black hair; while 37 per cent. with fair hair were unmarried against 18 per cent. with black. On classifying those with red, fair and brown hair as "blonde," and those with dark brown and black hair as "dark," we have 359 of the former and 361 of the latter. Of the blondes he found 60 per cent. were married to 70.5 of the dark, and 32 per cent. of the former were unmarried to 21.5 of the latter. If during several generations this preference among the male sex for wives with dark hair should continue, it is reasonable to suppose it would exert an influence decidedly adverse to the increase of fair-haired persons being maintained. On various grounds, therefore, it would seem as if the fair hair so much beloved by poets and artists is doomed to be encroached upon and even replaced by that of darker hue. The rate at which this is taking place is probably very slow, from the fact that nature is most conservative in her changes. —*British Medical Journal*.

Max O'Rell on Woman.

Between French and American women he observes many resemblances, particularly that suppleness of mind which enables one of the masses to fit herself speedily for a position in the classes. "In England," he says, "it is just the contrary. Of course good society is good society everywhere. The ladies of the English aristocracy are perfect queens; but the Englishwoman who was not born a lady, will seldom become a lady, and I believe this is why *mésalliances* are more scarce in England than they are in America, and especially France. I could name many Englishmen, standing at the head of their professions, who cannot produce their wives in society because these women have not been able to raise themselves to the level of their husband's station in life. The Englishwoman has no faculty for fitting herself for a higher position than the one she was born in; like the rabbit, she will always taste of the cabbage she fed on. I am bound to add that this is perhaps a quality, and proves the truthfulness of her character. In France, he says, men and women go through life on equal terms; in England the man (generally) thinks himself a much superior being; in Germany it is the same; "in America, I should feel inclined to believe that a woman looks down upon a man with a certain amount of contempt."