

general throughout the country, employers should be able to perpetuate its effect by placing such inducements before young men as would retain them in their service. If "Protection" will not admit of their doing this, then it is not a National Policy.

In short, my humble opinion is that, if Canada continues to be sapped of her life-blood, the employers must bear the responsibility of the loss incurred, and, as such, have the remedy largely in their own hands by substituting *actual* for *professed* patriotism.

Chicago, August, 1884.

J. M.

AN EXOTIC.

FRIENDSHIP is an exotic. Once 'twas found
On earthly soil. It chanced in heaven one day,
Beneath the "Tree of Life," an angel lay
Where healing fruits were strewn upon the ground.
Down to this earth there fell, where human tears
Watered and nourished it, one tiny seed
Which sprang to life, a beauteous flower indeed,
With fragrance borrowed from celestial spheres.
One culled the flower to wear upon her breast;
But at her feet its snow-white petals fell:
She found too soon it would not bear the test,
So near a beating heart it could not dwell;
The frost-breath of reserve no shield might prove—
The flower was Friendship, but the fruitage Love!

Johnstown, N. Y.

J. OLIVER SMITH.

A CONVERSION.

[From the French of Thomas Bentzen.]

"It is a letter for his reverence," said the urchin in wooden shoes, who had stopped at the threshold of the vicarage.

The servant, at work on some scrubbing in her kitchen, wiped her hands, all white with lather, to take the fold of paper held out to her. "His reverence is in the act of reading his breviary," she said. "Must he be disturbed? Is an answer wanted?"

"I don't know at all," said the child, in reply; "I was just told to wait."

She motioned to him to enter and sit down, whilst, with a footstep heavy with age, she turned towards the garden—the garden, if such it could be called, of a parish priest, with its little, straight, box-bordered paths, designed as a walk for calm reflection, and its high walls, that shut it off from every outside distraction, only allowing a view of the top of the highest cross in the neighbouring churchyard. Yews with black foliage marked an angle of each blooming flower bed, which was everywhere alternated with a square patch of vegetables—the whole cultivated by the Vicar himself, who was not afraid to draw up his cassock that he might dig and water by way of recreation. Upon the sunny border-wall of the old well, all smothered in ivy, a well-fed cat was rolling itself up and mingling its blissful paws with the gentle humming of the bees. Beneath an arbour, at the back of which a statue of the virgin stood out white against the shadow, the Vicar had taken shelter from the too fierce rays of the August sun, which, from a cloudless sky, fell around in a rain of fire.

With a slightly bronzed forehead and a finely chiselled face, leaning against the wall of verdure, his finger run between the leaves of a book he was meditating. For five years already, young as he looked, this same hour regularly found him absorbed in the contemplation of the daily duties of his ministry, thinking of the good that still remained to be done, ever dissatisfied with himself, although he was lavishing without account his time, strength, and the little money that he possessed. The circle in which his unwearied activity moved was very restricted; this energetic soul suffered therefrom, though he would hardly own that to himself. His inclination would have led him to the life of a missionary, or of an army chaplain; there was something of the soldier in him—a decided taste for heroic adventures; but the father of Vicar Fulgentius, a humble vinedresser, had given his son to God only on the condition of not losing sight of him altogether, and of leaving him to risk the fewest dangers possible. Yet this country priest, checked by filial obedience in a lofty impulse, had by no means given up his early dreams as to the future. He returned to them in spite of himself while toiling on, without much success, at catechising the scamps of the village. His secret grief was the discovery that he had succeeded only in imposing on those around him the bare letter of religion. Men and women hardly ever missed attending mass; yet, with the greater number, this seeming devoutness was merely routine: it did not cure this one of avarice, nor that one of drunkenness; it did not prevent marriage from being often a needful amends. To awaken enthusiasm for virtue at the bottom of these dense natures would have been impossible. The inhabitants of Arc-sur-Loire vegetated from birth to grave: hard bargainers, their curiosity confined to the best way of hoarding their crowns, quick to envy their neighbours' crop, with their faces bent towards the earth, which they ransacked to seize all it could give them, without ever searching farther; in short, neither better nor worse than all peasants, having indeed over many of them this superiority, that they knew how to read. The young priest had not yet made one of the conquests that his ambition promised itself. Both the evil and the good around him were wanting in magnitude. The sheep of this flock had a uniform insignificant physiognomy. No tortured consciences, no fruitful repentances, no generous aspirations—they dragged themselves step by step along the common rut, their thoughts engaged by nought else than the constant con-

cern for their daily bread. And elsewhere there were heathen to convert, sinners to save.

Alone of his kind, Vicar Fulgentius stood up in the midst of surrounding vulgarities as an oak uplifts itself above the puny brushwood which would stifle it. Indeed this comparison to a noble oak would come unsought to the mind, in presence of the physical and moral solidity disclosed in him by the features, the figure, the accent, all the combined qualities of a peculiarly striking personality. He had none of the too shy ways that the ecclesiastic upon setting out in life nearly always brings with him from the seminary: his steel gray eyes turned upon women a frank look untroubled by any timidity. If anyone had given him to understand that certain of the opposite sex noticed the noble bearing of his reverence, the sunny smile that at times chased away the usually thoughtful expression of his regular features, or the bushy locks, black and curly, in which his minute tonsure lay buried, he would have betrayed, by a short and careless word, the secret disdain that the priest absolutely disengaged from the good things of this life ever feels for the treacherous sex in its weakness, for the perpetual stumbling-block of holy resolutions, a disdain, doubtless veiled and softened by charity, but all the deeper when it has no tinge of fear. The temptations of Vicar Fulgentius came from a higher level; urging him towards the distant and perilous toils of apostleship. He would a hundred times rather have suffered martyrdom than go on with the dull task imposed on him by the present hour.

"Your Reverence!" said, at two paces off, the old servant Ursula. He did not hear. Wrapped in thought, he was just then telling himself that little by little, to his ruin, he would descend in some sort to the level of his spiritual charges. What for example had he had to do that day, whilst all the thoughts of his flock were turned to the important question of bringing in the corn before the storm burst? To arrange on his part some petty matters of temporal business—of perquisites—which to him were peculiarly hateful. He shrugged his shoulders, and once more took up his breviary.

"Your Reverence—a letter!" repeated Ursula, making her way this time right under the arbour.

"A letter?"

The postman's time had long gone by; and correspondence in writing had never been in vogue between the parishioners of Arc-sur-Loire and their pastor.

"Hand it here!" said he, full of surprise. Something uncommon was happening, something that was out of the everyday course of things.

"Is it possible they want me at La Prée?"

"At La Prée!" exclaimed Ursula like an echo. "At the house of those heretics! There's an event! What next, I wonder?"

"I must know. Say that I'll come, as they wish. Or rather, no: don't let the messenger go off alone! I am ready."

He rose in some agitation, crossed the garden with great strides though at the same time reading the letter over again—two lines in a hesitating hand which gave him no information, except that a sick and unhappy person wanted to see him without delay.

It was enough, for that matter. Vicar Fulgentius took up his hat and stick, and followed the lead of the peasant boy who had come for him; whilst Ursula, standing outside the door of the vicarage, pursued him with her eyes along the dusty road until he was lost to view.

"What do they want with him, I wonder?" she asked herself with vague alarm.

CHAPTER II.

LA PRÉE, a considerable estate lying at the remote end of the parish within a rich belt of cornfields and vineyards, is the last stronghold that Protestantism, once powerful in this province, still preserves in Arc-sur-Loire. The name of its owners, a name which doubtless was originally a significant nickname, recalls the old times of the first nocturnal preachings and of the popular belief in an elf that protected them. The family of Le Huguet had dwelt in the country from generation to generation since that distant epoch in an isolation easy to be explained in the time of wars and persecutions, but strange indeed at the present day, when the equality of forms of worship is proclaimed both in law and in fact. This isolation, which did not debar them from the public esteem nor from that sort of consideration for a superior order of men which is determined by a larger or smaller supply of money, was owing beyond doubt to the quite exceptional physiognomy of the nest of Huguenots in question, who had for so long been shut up apart in their ancient habits and hereditary memories. Not that the Le Huguets made a display of the faith which they were alone in preserving; they were nearly thought to be without religion, since they frequented no church. A great distance separated them from the chief town of the province, and nowhere else would they have found a minister of their worship; accordingly they confined themselves to getting one to step in at the rare solemnities of life—marriage, baptism or burial, dispensing for the rest of the time with every external observance.

Yet the master of La Prée, although he never went to the *prêche*, would have suffered, like his ancestors, the stake or banishment rather than deny the beliefs to which he clung by a hard instinct as to the blood in his veins. He was his own priest: he read regularly every evening some verses out of the Bible, in an old yellow-leaved edition, worn at every page, which bore the date of 1588. This Bible represented the sacred relic, the altar for gathering round, the foundation stone of the house, in which everything seemed to feel the effects of its presence; for never did shell and its contents differ more greatly from the shells that surrounded it. The other farms, from the poorest to the richest, had among themselves the look of one family—with their enclosure of thorns, the disorder—often picturesque—of their yard blocked up with manure, farm imple-