

THE "BLACK ROBES"

who had accompanied and preceded Champlain, began their evangelizing work, and set up the altar of the church in the wilderness. This intrusion of the "pale-faces" into the territory of the Wyandots was regarded first with curiosity, but subsequently welcomed, in the hope that their new-found friends would become their allies in the Huron raids upon the Iroquois. In a weak hour, to this Champlain consented; and for nearly a hundred and fifty years the colony of New France was to pay the bitter penalty. From carrying the Cross into the wilderness Champlain and his followers undertook to carry the arquebuse and the torch into the heart of the Iroquois confederacy; and joining his Huron friends he speedily appears among the appalled tribes of the "Five Nations" in glittering armor. This heedless foray cost him and his nation dear; and to the Huron tribe it brought ruin and desolation. What retribution fell upon the Wyandot in consequence of this raid, no pen can, in its full horrors, portray; and there is scarcely a chapter in history that offers to it an adequate parallel. For the space of a generation there arose an internecine strife so cruel that one's blood curdles to read its record. Alas! it was not a conflict confined to savages: its bloodiest work was wreaked upon the French. The poor Jesuit missionary was made the sport of fiends; and no death seemed too horrible to glut Iroquois lust of blood. On the errands of hell, season after season, came bands of the Five Nation Indians, and in their path through the forest marked "the pass by Toronto" with the scorches of Iroquois hate.

Meantime the missions the Jesuit had come to plant among the Hurons were consecrated with tears and watered with his life-blood. Through years of unparalleled toil, and with great agony of soul, the hopes of the Fathers were alternately raised and crushed. The blood of the martyrs, they say, would in their case also, prove the seed of the church. Alas, for the vanity of human expectations! Despite their amazing fortitude and unquenchable zeal, the hopes of the mission were doomed to destruction, and the heart of Faith was humbled in the dust. In a time of such peril to both priest and convert there was sore need of a Comforter.

THE COMFORTER CAME,

but in the form of the grim Iroquois exterminator, with his native tomahawk and the match-lock of the Dutch. In 1648 the merciful end drew near, and to the rigors of the following winter were added those of the stake and the torch. It is computed that within the space of thirty years the whole Huron nation, numbering some thirty thousand souls, save a small contingent that escaped for succor to Quebec, were ruthlessly exterminated.

A full score of years passed by, from the period of this New World "harrying of the north," till we again hear of French adventure in the heart of Ontario. With what devastation the region had been visited, the narratives of French exploration abundantly bear witness. On the maps of the period the ominous words *nation détruite*—"tribes exterminated"—repeatedly occur, and tell their sad tale of woe and desolation. But French empire was now taken up, not with carrying into the wilderness the standard of the Cross, but with bearing aloft the *scourge* of the crown. The annexation of territory and the extension of trade were now the aim of French chivalry, and in pursuit of its object it met the jarring hostility and ceaseless rivalry of Britain. Keen and prolonged was the contest for supremacy on the

continent of the New World, and we know how it ended. The story forms the most brilliant episode in Canadian history, and decks the nation's Walhalla with an aureola of fame.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

CANADIAN PLANT LIFE.*

No duty is more incumbent on Canadian journalism than to extend to the literature of the country a just but hearty recognition. It is, of course, easy to perform this service when the reviewer has before him a really meritorious publication. In the case of the present work, the production of a now venerable lady, who, with other members of her talented family, have done much to enrich the literature of Canada, the duty of making the book known to the public is at once a pride and a pleasure. It is a pride, because as Canadians we are glad to see not only the beauty of our fields and forests turned to pictorial account, but to see attention directed at the same time to their economic resources, and some effort made to bring the features of our Canadian plant life within the classification of popular science. It is a pleasure, because the work has been lovingly done; and in its literary, artistic, and mechanical aspects the book is worthy of Canada, and deserves encouraging support and a widespread circulation.

Some seventeen years ago the same hands gave us what was then an ambitious table-book on "Canadian Wild Flowers," from the press of Mr. John Lovell, of Montreal. This book has long been out of print; and the mechanical facilities of color-printing in Canada have now made possible the publication of a substitute for it in the present work, which we must at once say is no mere reproduction, but a far more extended and elaborate treatise, and one that takes up entirely new departments of the subject. This will at once be seen by a comparison of the contents of the two books. The early work described only thirty varieties of Canadian wild flowers. The present work includes and extends the notice of these thirty, and adds to the number one hundred and seventy additional. It further includes a popular account of some fifty varieties of Canadian ferns; an instructive treatise on our principal forest trees (some seventy varieties); and interesting descriptions of over eighty specimens of the flowering shrubs of Central Canada.

But not only is the scope of the new work extensive. Its literary, artistic, and mechanical features, as we have said, are excellent. Mrs. Traill's portion of the work aims at, and succeeds in giving, an account, in popular language, of the Flora of the country that must prove attractive to every Canadian. The subject, indeed, is fortunate in having this accomplished native author as its writer. As she tells us, her home since coming to this country, has for over fifty years been in the backwoods of Canada; and here, at Lakeside, in the neighborhood of Peterboro', she has been communing with Nature, and writing up its products and beauty with all the sympathy of a cultivated woman, and the charm and grace of an impassioned poet. In the volume there is a good deal that reminds one of the early literary style of her sister, Mrs. Susanna Moodie, whose work, "Roughing it in the Bush," is known not only throughout the country but out of it. It manifests the same ardent sensibilities; a like affection for the Old Land with a real, un-

*Studies of Plant Life in Canada; or, Gleanings from Forest, Lake and Plain. By Mrs. C. P. Traill. Lakeside, Ont. Illustrated with Chromo-Lithographs from drawings by Mrs. Colonel Chamberlain, Ottawa. Ottawa: A. S. Woodburn, Publisher. Toronto: Williamson & Co., 1885.

affected love for the New; is earnest, almost devotional in tone; and possesses the literary graces that mark the writings of another sister, Miss Agnes Strickland, the historian of the "Queens of England."

Mrs. Chamberlain's drawings, while they embellish the work, are also a real help, so far as they go, in elucidating the subject. The only regret is, that the illustrations are few in number. We should have liked to have seen our beautiful forms represented; and some wood cuts inserted in the text of the distinctive characteristics of our Canadian trees. But whatever its shortcomings the work as a whole is an important contribution to the literature of Canadian plant life; and must prove of value, not only to the student of botany, but to the farmer and the settler, and to all who have commerce in the woods.

To the latter the book must be of no little service, in extending acquaintance with the natural productions of the country, and in supplying the necessary information in regard to our native trees and plants, which is not easy to obtain in any accessible quarter. Educationally, it has also positive merits; and might be read with advantage by those who first make acquaintance with botany through the admirable native textbooks of Mr. Spotton, of Barrie. It is to be feared, however, that botany continues to be pretty much a lady's accomplishment, and is considered in the light of a purely ornamental study. The popular notion seems still to be, that it is a subject of dilettante learning, of interest only to the young people of both sexes, who take to it for the opportunity it affords of a stroll, *a deux*, in the woods, or of an idle pull among the listening pond-lilies of the river. If it has any other claims beyond those upon the "medico" and pharmacist, they are such as are attractive to Indians and old women, who love, on occasions of sickness or of grave hurt, to display their herbalist knowledge in a homely *Materia Medica*.

In regard, it is true, to some portions of her book—the sections on Native Ferns and wild flowers—it would seem that the author had no purpose in writing about them, other than that which leads to the cultivation of the observing faculties, the pleasure it gives to the eye, or that which stores up in the mind tender associations of days of childhood and love of country. But in this age of hard materialism, such a purpose is not to be lightly disregarded; for there are lessons of wisdom to be learned from the flower trodden under foot, as there are "sermons in stones, books in the running brooks, and good in everything." And not only on aesthetic, but on patriotic grounds, is there much to be said for the study of botany. "Mothers of Canada," such is the appeal of Mrs. Traill, "teach your children to know and love the wild flowers springing in their path, to love the soil in which God's hand has planted them, and in all their after wanderings through the world their hearts will turn with loving reverence to the land of their birth—to that country endeared to them by the remembrance of the wild flowers which they plucked in the happy days of their childhood."

Mrs. Traill's early and touching experience of Canada, in a ruder era than the present, gives her the right to speak with enthusiasm on the subject, and to advance its claims as a meliorating influence amidst scenes which, to the settler in the backwoods, are rough and unkindly. Here is an extract from her story:—

"The only habitations, beyond our own log cabin, at the date of which I write, were one shanty, and the log house of a dear, lamented, and valued brother. It may easily

be imagined that there were few objects of interest in the woods at that distant period of time—1832—or, as a poor Irish woman sorrowfully remarked, "Tis a lonesome place for the likes of us poor women folk; sure there isn't a hap'orth worth the lookin' at; there is no nothin', and it's hard to get the bit and the sup to ate and to drink." "Well, I was better off than poor Biddy Fagan, for I soon found beauties in my sylvan wanderings in the unknown trees and plants of the forest. These things became a great resource, and every flower and shrub and forest tree awakened an interest in my mind, so that I began to thirst for more intimate knowledge of them. They became like dear friends, soothing and cheering, by their sweet, unconscious influence, hours of loneliness, and days of sorrow and suffering."

But present day interest in the subject of Mrs. Traill's book is of a more practical character than that of diverting the mind in the rude conflict with the tyranny of nature. The public mind is now more concerned with the preservation, than with the destruction, of our forest wealth. People who live in cities, and who know little of the face of nature in her haunts, can have no idea to what extent Canada has been, and is being, denuded of her growing timber. Tracts of country that were once clad with beauty are now sterile wastes and the gaunt abode of desolation. To these dangers Mrs. Traill forcibly points; and her introductory remarks to the chapter on forest trees will bear well to be read and pondered by all who desire to see Canada retain her wealth in the products of the soil. Says our author: "The ultimate destruction of our native vegetable productions, including the valuable timber of our forests, which long series of years could not replace, is not the only change that arises from the clearing of a large portion of our woods. There is yet another and important result which will, in course of time, be felt as an evil—I refer to the drying up of the inland streams and smaller tributary waters. It needs but little observation, and is patent to the older settlers of the Dominion, that the creeks and rivulets which formerly flowed through their lands, are disappearing with the clearing away of the woods. The water-courses are grown up with hedges and coarse aquatic herbage, and the thirsty cattle now wander far afield in search of water, unless duly supplied by the farmer at the homestead, or driven, at the cost of much time, to springs and water-holes, which are kept open with difficulty during seasons of drought."

Fortunately, the Provincial Government is now fully alive to the evil; and efforts are being vigorously put forth, not only to stay the waste but to replenish the growth. In such enterprises as the late Agricultural Commission, and the active maintenance of that most useful institution, the Agricultural College, at Guelph, patriotic wisdom is doing what is possible to promote scientific agriculture in Canada, and to enable the community to utilize to the fullest the heritage we possess in the resources of the soil. In addition to these agencies, we wish it were possible to establish Government botanical and horticultural gardens, so as to create and extend public interest in that great source of a nation's wealth, its varied plant life, as well as to induce the masses to get back to agricultural pursuits, and to productive occupations in the fields and gardens of Canada. In regard to the small fruits of the country, there is no reason why berry and grape culture might not be made a much larger source of revenue than it is; and the same might be said of the larger fruits, the demand for which is ev-