

of France abroad, as an omnipotent agency for propagating the political and material interests of France. M. de Mahy is a Republican also of that school.

The Oaks Day at Chantilly proved a great deception for the betting world, as, contrary to the straightest tips, the worst mare won. Those who ran down for the sake of the journey and the walk in the forest, paid dear for their pleasure; on that day there was a down-pour of rain, which made agricultural hearts beat with joy. The betting evil is extending more and more; by making it an official institution the government, through the "Totalisers," has got rid of swindlers, but this security that bets will be safe when placed, and paid if winning, only develops the passion for gambling the more.

Nearly every one is familiar with the details of the private life of Leon Tolstol. There is nothing really extraordinary about it beyond the fact that Tolstol is a very rich landowner, who, instead of living like a Dives, exists as a moujik or Russian peasant. He takes a bath every morning at five o'clock in his tub, then sips a cup of strong coffee, writes for a few hours, enjoys a nap before his first dinner, then takes part in agricultural or trade work, either on his own account or to assist a neighbour. He is a vegetarian, a hydropot, and an anti-tobacco man. He wears immense boots, not greased or blacked, but tarred like a ship's bottom; he wears no stockings, hay does duty for these. He does not undress and turn into bed, but passes the night in a long arm chair, as troopers would do on the ground. One is prepared for Tolstol supplying all his own wants, but it was a little new to learn that he made his own butter and cheese. Admirers ought to present him with a creamer and an electric churn—the latter is common in Chicago.

It is said that all good young men in Paris are botanists, tranquil and sentimental as was Jean Jacques Rousseau. Perhaps after photographers, the most numerous parties of young men who go into the country on Sundays, are the botanists. Ladies are permitted to join, and the chief of the excursion is a professor of botany. The railway companies grant tickets at single fares—a good innovation to note. An authorized little guide book is published, recommending in all the suburbs round the city, a restaurant or hotel, at which to repose and refresh the inner man; the proprietors of these establishments make a reduction of prices on presentation of the railway ticket, or a card of society membership. If a photo club be encountered, it must "snap the botanists instantaneously." Z.

The prize of bravery is contested by at least three competitors, the bull-dog, the falcon, and the fighting-cock, but there is no reasonable doubt that the South American capuchin-monkey can claim the championship of cowardice; the mere sight of an inanimate object is enough to frighten him into a fit of extravagant jumps and contortions. Timidity would hardly be an adequate word; if his conduct in captivity can be accepted as a test of his mental constitution, the Cebus capucinus seems to pass his life in a delirium of abject terror, with rare and short equanimous intervals.

CHAUCER.

With May-day in his blood thro' all the year,
The same that gives the skylark stronger wing,
And brings the hawthorn to its blossoming,
What wonder we that wondrous voice still hear?
Yet praise is due, and love, and rev'rence dear,
To him—the city clerk—the sylvan king,
And now behold this flower—a little thing—
We fetch to watch it wither on his bier!
While "smale fowles maken melodie" and while
The daisy fair, that threw o'er him her spell,
Looks up to heaven with her old-time smile,
The human tongue, taught by the heart, must tell
The thirsting world, of this pellucid well
Of Saxon speech that Time may not defile.
Plover Mills, Ont. ROBERT ELLIOT.

PRAIRIE HOMES ON THE FRONTIER.

A prairie summer landscape is made up of grass and sky. Rolling ground there is in places, and bluffs near the rivers. You may see a tree in a hundred mile ride, but probably you will not. In July, wild roses bloom in the grass, and other flowers are not rare, earlier and later. But these you do not note in a general view. Here there, all about, is the grass only, and above is the sky, that is all.

It was chiefly from this lack of any picturesque surrounding of hills and trees, that the homes of the prairie settlers seemed to us at first so bleak and desolate. The houses are small, and are set down in the middle of immensity, without so much as currant bush near them. There are no outbuildings worth speaking of, and no fence about the dwelling. There is no yard or garden, no fields or lanes, no boundaries or limits anywhere.

With us in the older lands, a definite environment of some kind seems to enter into our idea of home. We think that a dwelling house without it must be a dreary place to live in. We need something outside the house around which associations may cluster, and memories may cling. Perhaps it may be but the old wood-shed and pump of the Eastern States and Provinces, a willow tree, or a lilac bush, or a moss covered fence with a rickety gate and path leading up to the door. Such are the scenes that artists love to paint; such are the home pictures that most of us have hung in the chambers of memory.

But one sees nothing of all this on the prairie—not even the pump. The wells are shallow, and the water is raised by plunging a bucket from the hand, and drawing it up with a rope, or by a rude contrivance of a rope and pulley. As the people have no wood, they of course, have no shed to put it in. There is nothing to keep in or out, so there are no fences and no gates. And there is no path to the door because the inmates approach the house directly from all points of the compass, and leave it with the same free irregularity.

So with our minds full of Eastern prejudices, we had almost given ourselves up to pessimistic views of Western homes and Western civilization generally. But longer observation brought knowledge and

wisdom. We found as high humanity and as noble, living here as in the regions of the East.

After all it seems that our home attachments are not so much to places as to the people who live in them, on account of the experiences we have undergone together there. It is all a matter of association of ideas. The place that witnesses the joys and sorrows of our childhood, and the tender affections of family life is forever consecrated. The house may be a humble one, and its surroundings may be commonplace to others. What matter? To us at least, there is a glory there that continually draws back the eyes of memory in after years.

There seems to be, then, quite as much attachment to the home place, and as much unity and affection in the family among the Western farmers, as in the East. The primal instincts of humanity hold full sway in prairie dwellings, and the comparative isolation of position helps to confine and concentrate the family life. When the nearest neighbour lives from one to ten miles away, general social intercourse is necessarily restricted, and the members of the family are thrown in more upon themselves and upon each other.

At the outset a prairie settler encounters a great hardship in the scarcity, and consequent high price of all kinds of building timber. For a dwelling house he must be for some years content, at the best, with a small, poorly built, and unplastered frame structure. This he will have sheeted—if he can afford the luxury—both on the inside and outside with heavy paper. As paper is not a good conductor of heat or cold, this sheeting when properly put on, affords considerable protection against cold weather. The outside sheeting has been soaked in a preparation of coal tar, and is, therefore, waterproof also. This gives such houses, at a little distance, the somewhat strange appearance of having been painted black.

Besides the dwelling houses, the only other frame building usually seen on the frontier prairie farm, is the granary, and, in exceptional cases, the horse stable. But the stables both for horses and cattle, generally consist of a very rough framework of cottonwood poles, over and about which, hay and straw is piled to the depth of three or four feet. When carefully built these stables are quite warm and answer the purpose very well.

Many of the settlers are too poor to build dwelling houses of boards, and so are forced to provide other means of shelter. Of these, the simplest is the "dug-out," which is but a modern survival of the primitive cave-dwellings of our earliest ancestors. The dug-out is a hole in the ground, made rectangular in shape and with a roof over it, and a door at one end. The side of a hill is the most suitable place to make a dug-out, but where there are no hills, the settler must make the best shift he can on the level prairie. I once saw a dug-out used as a school. There was no floor in it except the smooth, hard earth. The teacher's place was marked by a plain little table and a cheap chair. The children sat on rough, home-made benches. They had no desks, but kept their books on the floor, under the benches. The room was lighted by one little window at the same end as the door.

Sod houses are very common in the West. The walls of these houses are made