

MOTHER.

When she undid her hair at night,
About the time for lying down,
She came and knelt. I was so small
There in my bed, her curls did fall
All over me, light gold and brown.

I fell asleep amid her prayers.
Her fair young face (far off it seems),
Her girlish voice, her kisses sweet,
The patter of her busy feet,
Passed with me into charming dreams.

And when I woke at merry morn,
Through her gold hair I saw the sun
Flame strong, shine glad, and glorify
The great good world. Oh, ne'er can I
Forget her words—"My darling one!"

Ah! chequered years since then have crept
Past her and me, and we have known
Some sorrow and much tempered joy,
Far into manhood stands her boy,
And her gold hair snow-white is blown.

The world has changed by slow degrees,
And as old days recede, alas!
So much of trouble have the new,
Those rare far joys grow dim, seen through
Sad times as through a darkened glass.

But just this morning when I woke,
How lovingly my lips were kissed!
How chaste and clear the sunlight shone
On mother's hair, like gold-dust sown
Athwart thin clouds of silver mist!

LITERATURE AS A "PROFESSION."

Nothing is easier, in the estimation of many people than to make a book or to write successfully for the press. Impetuous people, and people who have failed at everything else, are especially convinced of their fitness for a "literary life." As soon as a woman is divorced from her husband, it suddenly dawns upon her that she has great literary ability. She argues herself into the belief that literature is an exceedingly profitable field, and forthwith she writes a novel founded on her own experience; or, if more sentimental, she puts her sorrows into sonnets, and sends them to the magazines. Men whose successes in life have not met their anticipations are also very prone to think that their failures are due to an excess of the literary faculty, and they, too, fall back upon the pen. We receive dozens of letters every week from persons who are anxious to write for a newspaper, although many of them admit that they have no experience whatever to qualify them for the post they are anxious to obtain.

If it were possible to see, in one comprehensive view, all the people who dabble in what for want of a better word we must call literature, there would be brought into the prospect a very motley crowd. There would be persons of all kinds, representing in their original callings every possible occupation—and in their lives every degree of failure. There would be scholars of the highest order, and many more whose ignorance is only equalled by their pretensions. The number who have voluntarily and by choice made pen-work their profession would be found to be comparatively small—and it is only they who would rightly measure their prospects. All the rest, and especially the most recent recruits, would be found to be building castles in the air; looking to the fortune that they think is sure to be theirs, sooner or later, whenever their transcendent ability shall have come to be acknowledged by the public. They never doubt that the time will come, for nothing is more evident to them than that they are fully equal, in the particular branch to which they have devoted themselves, to the brightest lights of the literary world. If deficient for the time in worldly means, they are amply compensated by a supply of the most extravagant hopes.

Such people are encouraged in their delusion—for delusion it is—by the statements that are published from time to time of the salaries of prominent journalists, and the profits of popular authors. Such a statement appeared a short time ago in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and it was calculated to raise the aspirations of all who have implicit faith in the superiority of their own pens. It was quoted largely; but with it the other side of the picture was not given. The fates or sufferings of such men as Cervantes, Otway, Johnson, Goldsmith, Butler, Campbell, Dryden, and others are readily forgotten. They are buried in the past; and yet, if we mistake not, there are many able men of letters at the present day who have fully experienced all the privations which they had to bear. It may be answered that when those men lived, literature was less appreciated, and the profits smaller. That is true; but the labourers were fewer too. A literary life lately closed has shown how little may still be the reward of hard and honest work. In the library of the British Museum there are, we believe, more than 140 volumes to which the name of John Timbs is prefixed as author, independently of his editorial labours. Mr. Timbs produced, during a long life of seventy-four years, some of the most valuable books of reference which have appeared. He was not a man who had drifted into authorship. He began his career as secretary to Sir R. Phillips, the publisher, and he made literature his profession. He was a man of untiring industry and very varied attainments, and he was endowed with a vast store of information upon men and things, as well as upon books. He had all the accomplishments necessary to a perfect master of the pen according to modern requirements. He not only understood the public wants, but he knew how to satisfy them. Few men have worked harder than he, or more conscientiously, and very few have done more to

bring, by their own unaided hands, more knowledge to the ready access of the public.

But John Timbs died poor—so poor that for some time before his death he was mainly dependent upon the generosity of friends for his support. A small pension was otherwise his only maintenance, and but for the kindness of Messrs. Bentley & Son, his former publishers, he might have shared a fate in this current year no better than some of the prominent authors of past centuries. Mr. Carlyle has said that literature as a trade is neither safe nor advisable, and we do not think it often proves much better when taken as a last resource. Thackeray pronounced it one of the greatest evils to be born with a literary taste. Charles Lamb declared that anything is better than to become a slave to the booksellers and to the reading public, and even in the "Arabian Nights" literary labours are pronounced worthless if intended as a means to buy bread. Miss Mitford wrote for "hard money," but avowed that she would rather scrub floors than suffer its penalties. Washington Irving, in a letter to a nephew, hoped that he was looking forward to something better than literature to found a reputation on. Southey said that the greatest mistake in life a man could commit was to follow literature for a livelihood. Within a comparatively recent period, Douglas Jerrold, Shirley Brooks, Mark Lemon, D. Morier Evans, and scores of others less generally known, have died almost in actual poverty. And yet they worked hard all their lives. And, if we thought it would be of much avail in deterring intending scribblers from the course they have chosen, we could multiply the lessons which these instances convey. The ranks of indifferent writers are full to repletion, and many people suffer annoyances in consequence. If all such writers could be convinced that their efforts cannot lead to the goal their imaginations foreshadow, they might possibly be diverted into some more useful path. But this is almost hopeless while their persistence depends, as it generally does, upon a too exalted notion of their own powers.

SYMPHONIC CONCERT.

A few days ago, on opening our morning mail, we found the following programme of a Symphonic Concert announced by Mr. William G. Vogt, of this city.

- PART I.
1. OUVERTURE—Don Juan.....Mozart
2. SONATA—G minor.....Schumann
MISS JEANNETTE VOGT.
3. BALLET MUSIC—Rosalinde.....Schubert
PART II.
4. SYMPHONIE—D major.....Haydn
5. POLONAISE—E b major.....Chopin
MISS JEANNETTE VOGT.
6. VALSE—Interpretation.....Strauss
7. TURKISH MARCH.....Mozart

The very sight of it pleased us. It was short, varied, not too ambitious, adapted to the average audience, and we determined to attend the concert. We did so, and had no occasion to regret it. Mr. Vogt, who returned a few months ago, from the Berlin Conservatory, where he studied music in all its phases, has spent the winter in efforts to form an orchestra. This he has succeeded in doing to a certain extent, and the concert of last Thursday was their first public appearance. The orchestra number twenty-seven instruments. Their execution is such as to give the hope that, at length, we are to have in Montreal, a musical combination of a first-rate character. Patience and practice will result in that homogeneity and assurance which are essential to perfect orchestral execution. Of the pieces on the programme, the best in performance was the Ballet Music from the *Rosalinde* of Schubert, wherein the effect of the bass was well marked. The Haydn Symphony was less regular and less under control. The Interpretation of Strauss was rendered with considerable vigor. The piano playing of Miss Vogt revealed a thorough mechanical knowledge of the instrument and much spontaneity of touch, especially in the Chopin Polonaise. Altogether, the concert was satisfactory and should encourage Mr. Vogt to persevere in his laudable efforts.

AN ANECDOTE OF THE PRESIDENT.

The Washington *Chronicle* says: "The wife of a defaulting officer called upon President Grant last December to implore the release of her husband from the Albany Penitentiary. She told the President that, crushing as the sorrow was to herself, she would try to bear it, but that every morning, without an exception, since her husband's incarceration her four little children had come to her bed-side with the tearful inquiry: 'Will dear papa come home to-day?' 'This plea of my children will, I know, ere long drive me into insanity. And now,' said she, 'my little ones have varied their agonizing questioning, with a pathos that is maddening, to—' 'Won't pa come home Christmas?' 'Madam, I will consult the Attorney-General and do whatever I can for your husband with his approval.' 'I know that will all be useless,' said the grief-stricken wife. His decision will only be adverse, and I may as well go home and tell my children at once that their papa can't come home, and give up in despair.' 'Wait a moment,' said the President, and sitting down he hastily penned a note to Attorney-General Williams, and nervously handing it to her, said, 'Go and tell your children that their papa shall come home Christmas!'"

CORRESPONDENCE.

LA BECQUEE.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS

SIR.—In reference to the beautiful engraving in your last Saturday's issue, you ask for the translation of the word *Becquee*. I venture to give you one, which is this: "*Billfull*." The word is applicable chiefly to birds, and figuratively may be used in such instances, as that shown in the picture—the pretty child having its wants supplied as the mother bird feeds her young.

In a popular French reading book, by De Fivas, there is a nice story called "*Les Deux Voisins*," in which the word occurs, and the vocabulary at the back of the book gives the translation which I have proposed.

Excuse the impertinence of a young Halifax girl, in venturing this suggestion to one who is familiar with the French society and language of the commercial capital of Canada.

Please acknowledge the receipt of this, from your constant reader.

BECKY.

Halifax, April 8th, 1875.

[Our fair correspondent is both witty, as her signature shows, and wise, as her translation proves. She need give no excuse for her letter, as communications from Halifax, the city of lovely maidens, are always welcome. We have received from Three Rivers, Toronto, Ottawa and Hampton, N. B., letters giving the same translation.]

EDITOR C. I. NEWS.

LITERARY CURIOSITIES.

The intended celebration this year of the five-hundredth anniversary of the death of Boccaccio, who would have been a lawyer had it not been—so he says—for a sight of Virgil's tomb, suggests a remarkable addition to the museum of literary curiosities. Poetry could ill afford to spare the

Clerk foredoomed his father's soul to groans,
Who pens a stanza when he should engross.

Petrarch was a law-student—and an idle one—at Bologna. Goldini, till he turned strolling player, was an advocate at Venice. Metastasio was for many years a diligent law student. Tasso and Ariosto both studied law at Padua. Politian was a doctor of law. Schiller was a law student for two years before taking to medicine. Goethe was sent to Leipzig, and Heine to Bonn, to study jurisprudence. Uhland was a practising advocate, and held a post in the Ministry of Justice at Stuttgart. Rückert was a law student at Jena. Mickiewicz, the greatest of Polish poets, belonged to a family of lawyers, Kacinczy, the Hungarian poet, and creator of his country's literature, studied law at Kaschau. Corneille was an advocate, and the son of an advocate. Voltaire was for a time in the office of a *procureur*. Chaucer was a student of the Inner Temple. Gower is thought to have studied law; it has been alleged that he was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. Nicholas Rowe studied for the bar. Cowper was articled to an attorney, called to the bar, and appointed a commissioner of bankrupts. Butler was clerk to a justice of the peace. The profession of Scott need not be stated. Moore was a student of the Middle Temple. Gray, until he graduated, intended himself for the bar. Campbell was in the office of a lawyer at Edinburgh. Longfellow, a lawyer's son, spent some years in the office of his father. The peculiarity of this list—which might be extended with little trouble—lies in the eminence of these six-and-twenty names it contains. If they were omitted from literary history, Italian and German poetry would be nowhere, France would be robbed of one of its greatest and most national poets, English poetry would lose its father, and in all respects be very appreciably poorer. If less classic names in poetical history are taken, such as Talfourd, Macaulay, Bryant, and Barry Cornwall, the list might be indefinitely extended; and if filial relationship to the legal profession be considered, as in the case of Wordsworth, the close connection between poetry and law will look such a matter of course that the few eminent exceptions will only tend to prove the rule. Milton was the son of a scrivener. There is no need to endorse the fancy that Shakespeare may have been a law clerk, or to suggest that Dante might have been influenced by a residence at the great legal university of Bologna. But there is another list strikingly to the purpose—the long roll of great lawyers who, like Cicero, Sir Thomas More, Lord Somers, Blackstone, and Sir William Jones, have found flirtation with the muses no impediment to their marriage with the law. It may be that this close connection of two seemingly irreconcilable pursuits is due to some rule of contrast; or is it that fiction, romance, and verbiage afford to poetry and law a common standing-ground?

WHO WAS IT?

A lady correspondent writes from Ottawa to the N. Y. *Daily Graphic*:—When James Parton, in his "*How New York City is Governed*," became Socratic or Philippic over the undignified conduct of the City Fathers, he was not aware of the doings here in Canada, and probably thought, like Pat, that "none but himself could be his parallel." He ought to drop in the House of Commons and see the way the honourable

gentlemen "cat-call" some things they don't like. Such a din of hisses, "ows," flapping of desks, jingling of keys, to drown the speaker's voice! It is perfectly deafening. Speaker Anglin is very dignified, and does all he can to quell the noise, but he does not succeed always. One little habit of the members, to cry down what they don't like, is to move around in their seats so as to make a horrible screeching, creaking noise. A few nights ago, when they were discussing the Insolvency bill, the Hon. —, from New Brunswick, rose to disagree; the Hon. — was rather—that is, he was slightly—I should say gloriously drunk, and he used some language that made Speaker Anglin jump to his feet and tell the Hon. Blank to desist. The Hon. Blank wouldn't and continued to talk. "Such conduct is unparliamentary and disgraceful, and unless the honorable gentleman apologizes I will give him into the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms," roared Speaker Anglin; but the inebriated member—if he'd "shpologishe," and the Speaker shouted angrily, "Sergeant-at-Arms!" With that Sir John A. Macdonald, whose desk was near his, caught him by the coat tails and jerked him down in his chair. This same worthy, who is a very young fellow, one night last winter, while arguing against a bill—he always votes against when he is drunk, and he is always drunk—wandered off his subject and began to say the Lord's Prayer. The uproariousness is worse than "Lannigan's Ball," but all these irregularities never find their way into the papers. You will readily understand why the Prohibitory Liquor law was not passed and is not popular. The Hon. Blank is not the only Government man that thinks "Man wants but little here below, but wants that little strong."

THREE FALLS.

The following anecdote is told respecting the first performance of "*Robert le Diable*," which took place in Paris the 21st of November, 1831. It appears that the illustrious master, with the modesty never possessed by men without talent, felt little confidence in the success of his opera. He called and consulted Mme. Lenormant, celebrated for predicting the future by means of cards. She foretold three *chutes* (falls or failures). Exceedingly anxious, the great man took every possible means to avert the danger, and distributed tickets among all the friends he had in Paris. The success of Robert was immense, and yet Mme. Lenormant's prophecy was verified. Mme. Dorus had a fall in the third act, and Mme. Taglioni had one in the ballet of the nuns, while Nourrit, in the last act, fell down the trap by which Bertram had disappeared.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

VERDI is preparing a grand funeral symphony for the translation of Donizetti's remains to the church of Bergamo.

A NEW opera by Johann Strauss, in three acts, entitled "*Cagliostro in Wien*," has just been produced in Vienna at the Theatre an der Wien, with great success.

AT the performance of "*Ahmed*" in the Grand Opera House, N. Y., one evening last week, one of the married lady assistants gave birth to a child behind the scenes while the tournament act was on, and the delighted father named him Ahmed on the spot.

MME. LUCCA has learned an important lesson from her American experiences in taxing managers for her services. The frugal Germans wine, but the fair prima donna is inexorable. She recently received three thousand marks for one performance in Brunswick, as Zelika, in "*L'Africaine*."

A PUBLISHER at Milan claims the copyright of Donizetti's works, although these have long since been public property. The French Society of Authors and Dramatic Composers intends to dispute this claim, which is antagonistic to French legislation and to the International Treaty with Italy.

MIDLE ELENA VARESI, a young Italian *prima donna*, about twenty-two years of age, and who, like Patti, comes from an artistic family, is about to appear in London. Her father was the famous baritone, Signor Varesi, for whom Verdi composed "*Rigoletto*." Middle Varesi's mother was also an artist of great reputation in Italy, and, as Signora Boccabadati, she was for many years the leading *prima donna* in the "land of song."

SCIENTIFIC.

PERSONS fed largely on oatmeal always have good teeth.

WHEN suffering from a cold, it will be found advantageous to put cotton wool in the ear.

IT is a general belief among sailors that a fall of rain will calm the surface of the sea. This belief gains support from some recent investigations by Prof. Osborne Reynolds. He demonstrates that the fall would tend to destroy some of the wave motion that is present in the water.

A FRENCH medical journal says that Nélaton was for many years accustomed to prescribe the external use of alcohol for the prevention of small abscesses or boils. It appears that the treatment is now becoming more general in France. As soon as the characteristic redness appears, with a point rising in the middle, the part should be rubbed thoroughly, and several times, with camphorated alcohol. A little camphorated olive oil should then be applied, and the affected place covered.

THE Prefecture of the Seine has at present under consideration a new invention in connection with the burial of the dead, namely: the substitution of cement coffins for those made of wood. The thickness of the shells will not exceed three-fourths of an inch, and they would cost about the same as very common material, and far less than oak. The corpses would, it is argued, be more perfectly preserved and for a longer period, and all mephitic exhalations would be prevented.