

unfortunate illustration of the extent to which a manager may presume upon accumulated success and invest it as a capital to play upon Colonial forbearance. Tawdry costumes, careless detail and monotonous economy did their best to prejudice Montreal against the opera. The *libretto* displays more attempt at a coherent tale than Mr. Gilbert has accustomed himself to supply to his admirers, and the story is related with a refreshing freedom from the alliteration and the supernatural in incident which now constitutes the Gilbertian style. The period is the sixteenth century, and the action is placed in Tower Green. The hero, Fairfax, is accused by a treacherous and half-witted uncle of having had dealings with his Satanic Majesty, and for these dealings he is condemned to die. The uncle will inherit the property of his nephew should the latter die unmarried, and he is not so utterly devoid of mother-wit as to ignore the advantage either of preventing a marriage or of securing a prior execution. The hero has a friend who resolves to spoil the uncle's little game, and between hope and fear the audience is kept on the rack till the block is actually brought on the stage and the grimly-masked executioner takes his place.

A strolling singer, the merry maiden, consents to marry the doomed Fairfax for one hundred crowns, much to the disgust of a most amusing jester who had made his own dainty little plan of matrimonial possession, but who comforts himself on reflecting that his love will be a widow within an hour of her bridal, and that then the face and the fortune will both be his. The jester and his merry maiden dance off their transient chagrin to a rollicking ditty, concluding that

Though as a general rule of life
I don't allow my promised wife,
My lovely bride that is to be,
To marry any one but me;
The circumstances
Of this case
May set such fancies
Out of place;
So if the fee is duly paid,
And he, in well-earned grave
Within the hour is duly laid,
Objection I will waive!

The wit of the jester, Jack Point, has more than a Shakespearean ring about it. "His Grace was paid £10,000 a year for being good; poor Jack Point was good—for nothing." "A joint of meat half-cooked? Why then, sir, what is *underdone* cannot be helped." "Kissing the kitchen wench under your very nose, sir? Under *her* very nose, sir, not under *yours*."

The maid, blindfolded, is married to Fairfax in his cell, and led out again; and, the first part of the scheme thus thwarted, the friend in need turns his resolve to save the life as well as the property of the hero from the uncle's grasp. As our hopes rise, difficulties increase, and the plot thickens. A substitute for Fairfax is to be introduced to the prison, and the most cleverly-amusing scenes of the whole opera are enacted in this effort. The jailor happens to be violently, but hopelessly in love with the sister of the young substitute, who has persisted in scorning and spurning the attentions of the lanky keeper of the keys. She now, however, enters into the spirit of the plot; affects a series of yielding coquetties, during which the keys are cajoled from her love-sick suitor, the substitute exchanges dress and place with the prisoners, and Fairfax, of course, effects his escape.

Sir A. Sullivan's part of the work is charming indeed, and is literally laden with the richest profusion of melody, trio, quartet, ballad, catch, and chorus. But music is like a picture. The more you bring to it, the more you take away from it. VILLE MARIE.

THE NORTH-WEST FARMER.

I HAVE given the readers of THE WEEK an account of Ontario farmers and of Englishmen who have become North-West farmers. There remain at least three classes I have not dealt with, Scotchmen, Irishmen, and Germans.

A little over twenty miles to the north-east of Regina there is a German settlement. A visit to it would be the most eloquent proof of the excellence of our Germans as settlers.

Good substantial houses built partly of lumber, and partly of earth, and a kind of cement. They are warm as a toast. All is neat and clean and tidy within. Great heaps of straw and stocks around the outhouses. The school house is a model of what a school house should be. On the 21st they had a meeting here, conducted almost entirely in German. Fine tall strong men, grave, and full of earnestness, they thoroughly appreciate the advantages of the wealthy soil and free institutions of the North-West.

To the west some eight miles is a Scotch settlement where you find thrift, energy and warm hospitality. The settlers here are well to do and making great progress. They have magnificent crops and their success in gardening has been remarkable. It would tire your readers to go into detail respecting cultivation and the yield per acre, for the experience of these settlers duplicates that of those Ontario farmers whose success I have already described.

On the occasion of my visit I was the guest of Mr. John Sheva, a very enterprising man, well known in Regina. His career in the North-West is wholly different from that of any farmers already mentioned. He comes from Roscommon. He is a man of education and possesses much of the humour said to be characteristic of his countrymen. He first settled in the odd quarter section on a Hudson Bay section, 26, within a mile and a half of Regina. Here

he farmed and paid special attention to raising pigs, taking at every fair prizes for black and white Berkshires. Some eight months ago he sold his farm, eighty acres at \$10,50 an acre and eighty at \$13 an acre. He thus got \$1,880 for what cost him \$10 for his homestead of 80 acres, and \$200 for his pre-emption of 80 acres, in all \$210, showing a clear profit of \$1,670, besides what he made out of it during five years of farming. He and his ten sons are now settled near each other, and between them have nearly 1000 acres of the finest land in the world, with plenty of timber. He has a team of oxen, two colts, four pigs, three cows, a team of horses and one fine grade stallion, and a filly, six months old.

The new house nestling among the trees is a commodious one. The coloured prints on the wall are all in good taste, amongst them being an admirable one of Rosa Bonheur's "Horse Fair." Seated, we discuss his new departure in going to live in the Bluffs, and having reviewed his stock, I ask him, "Have you a donkey about the establishment?" To this he replies, his eyes twinkling with fun and his hands playing with the dark rich growth on his chin: "They are more plentiful about this country with long beards than with long legs." Mr. Sheva was for some years Postmaster and Clerk of the Petty Sessions in the County of Roscommon. Having discussed the "Horse Fair" of Rosa Bonheur, I open the large album, and among the photographs I find not only mine host as he was twenty-six years ago, but the fine old homestead at Erris, near Rockingham, whence he hails; also Col. Tennyson, of Kilonan Castle, where Lord Kingston now resides, and Lady Louisa Tennyson, the sister of the Bishop of Qu'Appelle. I was much interested by a photograph of two Australian natives, sent him by his brother-in-law, the Rev. Richard Steven, of Melbourne. The gorilla type was very marked, and I thought the originals must have been very near in kinship to the missing link. Mrs. Sheva and the young ladies are as well educated and refined as the ladies of most country gentlemen's houses in the old land.

We went out to see the "chickens." In the fowl-house, in part a dug-out, surmounted by log walls and straw roof, were over one hundred hens, a couple of roosters and five turkeys, one being a gobbler which weighed eighteen pounds. So fine has been the weather, the hens are laying. A wag of my acquaintance assures me the mosquitoes are becoming troublesome. As we left the fowl-house Mr. Sheva pointed me to two collies, one of which "can do anything but speak." "We have," he added, in a fine rich Irish accent, "five cats of the rare tortoise-shell." Then he harked back to the fowl. "They are all thoroughbreds, either Wyandotts or Plymouth Rocks from the St. George's Poultry Yards, Fergus, Ontario." When we visited the stables I was much pleased to find all the horses pets. Miss Louisa Sheva, a young lady of sixteen, is the "horse-tamer" of the establishment. When an animal is unmanageable it is turned over to her. The stallion came out of the stable at call to be petted like a dog. And a fine broncho mare which I know myself (because she was owned by a gentleman in Regina) could not a few months ago be approached, proved to be as gentle as a lamb. A fine filly, six months' old, which lost her mother a few days after she was born, and which was reared by Miss Louisa on eggs and milk, frisked round us, came to the hand when called, followed us about, and finally, when we were driving towards the Scotch settlement, was with difficulty prevented following us.

We had dinner at 12.30. How do farmers in the North-West live? I have already given some idea of this. Let me now say, a more bountiful table I never want to sit down at than that which Mrs. Sheva spread for her family and her guests. The table cloth and napkins white as snow, the beef tender as a chicken, the pastry crisp and light, the tea—I am a judge of tea, and therefore avoid, when I can, taking any at "5 o'clock teas"—as good as I ever wish to drink. In fact, I never want anything better in the way of bed and board than I got from my hospitable friends.

I wish I could give you an idea of the cheerfulness and hope which pervades this household: Mr. Sheva and his two stalwart sons the picture of health, and looking forward to certain competence, perhaps wealth, at an early day; the mother of the house and the two young ladies full of pleasant gaiety. I had with me a splendid team of bronchos which would take you eighty miles a day. But I left them in Mr. Sheva's stables and entered his double-seated sleigh. Some of the party lay down behind as in a box; two young ladies, one on each side of me, and two came on with one of the boys in a jumper, to which the stallion was yoked. Thus we drove to the meeting in the German school-house. It was my first sleigh ride this year, the weather has been so mild we have no sleighing in Regina. But the trees in the bluffs have prevented the wind taking away the little snow that fell there. As we went along, the ladies and young men sang snatches from many a pleasant song.

On our way back from the meeting, though late, we called in at Knowsley Park to greet Mrs. Holden, and give her her husband safe and sound. Mr. Holden is from Lancashire, from near Lord Derby's place, and he humorously, and he is full of Lancashire wit, calls his place after that of Lord Derby. Mrs. Holden is an English lady, looking so young it was hard to believe she was the mother of the three young men who have taken homesteads around them. All have had a most successful crop, and have between them a considerable quantity of land.

As you go out on the trail to the Bluffs you always meet at least half-a-dozen teams of settlers coming in with wood; as many more with hay, and perhaps three or four

more teams with hay driven by Indians from Pie-a-Pot's Reserve, for the Indian has become a North-West farmer too, and is, more rapidly than could have been expected, learning to use the plough and the reaper.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

LESSONS FROM FRANCE.

IN the current number of the *Fortnightly Review* there is a very entertaining, a very instructive, a very admonitory article by M. Jules Simon, a member of the Academy, entitled "A Few Thoughts by a Patriarch about French Women." In it a serious subject is handled in that serious, yet sprightly, manner which seems to come naturally to Frenchmen. At least M. Simon treats it as a serious subject, a very serious subject. He points out the influence of what the late Mr. Matthew Arnold called the *Zeit-Geist*, the Time-Spirit, upon different classes of women, and the consequent reflex action (if I may be allowed the expression) of women upon men and upon the State. A single sentence will suffice to show the large view he takes: "Whatever faith and whatever veneration we still have in France we owe to our women."

But the article is not valuable only because it gives us what, from a writer like M. Jules Simon, we may take to be a very accurate and a very unbiassed account of the character and influence of French women. French women, as the patriarch himself hints, are not a distinct class, differing from the women of any other country. "Differences are disappearing," he says. "In the last century, climate, education, local customs and, above all, religion, brought about differences which have gone on fading away ever since. . . ." He is right. We are fast becoming cosmopolitan, our women, perhaps, faster than our men. Differences of nationality are after all superficial differences. The deeper parts of our characters and temperaments (and it is, in reality, with these that M. Simon deals: "You deal first with womanhood, afterwards with French women," he says), the deeper parts of our characters and temperaments, I say, are surely much the same throughout civilization, throughout Europe and America. "We do not live any longer to ourselves," to quote him again, "since Europe has invaded us. Europe—in which I include America, and I am not sure that America is not the larger half of Europe. . . ."

If he is right, then much that he has to say of his own countrywomen will be of use to us here in Canada. At all events we can make it to be of use, for we can, without much difficulty, strip his opinions and statements of what they owe to influences and circumstances peculiarly French and put in their places influences and circumstances peculiarly American or Canadian. Let me, then, quote without comment, or with little, some passages from M. Simon's article.

He regards his countrywomen class by class. Of "Society" he says, "Its most characteristic and most deplorable feature is the separation of the sexes. . . . We have brought them (women) into the drawing room; and once brought together there, we make them a low bow and leave them there and go off to argue and smoke in the tap room (*estaminet*). . . . We do dine together; this is something, a relic of the old times, the good old days gone by; and we meet a couple of hours later, exchange a few words, and separate. I assure you I am not in tune with this fashion. The French woman has been false to her duty and to her history; she ought to have been the first to resist such a fashion. . . . I accuse women of cowardice for not having declared war against the smoking room; I accuse the women of France of lack of patriotism. It is no use to tell me that the ball room is still with us; the ball room is miles below the drawing room."

From "Society" he goes to the middle classes, and what he says of them, I think, we may take very much to heart. "If I were asked to reckon up the qualities of our French middle-class woman," he says, "I should say that she is religious, and even has a tendency to be superstitious; that she is strictly moral and even a trifle austere, devoted to worldly gains, a good manager, splendidly faithful to her duties as a mother, though obeying rather blindly tradition and habit in preference to her own rights; finally, ignorant in political matters—a defect which could easily be overlooked if she were not so enthusiastic for or against individuals; scrupulously honest in her dealings, an earnest patriot; in a word superior to her husband. She has a larger heart, more enthusiasm, more intense devotion to her duties, a more impregnable common sense. . . . The fault of our middle-class women is that they are vain, even foolishly vain, and that their vanity includes all whom they love. They will not put up with any superiority; that is the disease of France; and further they insist upon showing themselves superior to others, which is an absurd contradiction, and ruinous alike to persons who are attacked by this lunacy and to the whole of society. The proof of this twist in their natures is to be seen in their ideas about education. They want their children to be well educated, which is admirable; but if they have under their nose a good primary school and a bad college, they select the college because it seems to them a higher grade. Their son might become an intelligent foreman, . . . but they keep him for seven years at college . . . in order to lift him out of his proper sphere and make him a bachelor of arts. . . . Trade and business are far more profitable. But there it is—the craze for a uniform, to be a somebody, to lord it over some one, to rise higher in the social scale than one's father." Thus much of the middle-class mother's aspirations for her son; those for her daughter M. Simon animadverts upon thus:—