

he grows perfunctory as she grows indifferent. In the case of mighty brains, where genius comes into play, and the female role is that of help meet *par excellence*, all this is right, natural and works for good. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield and his wife, Richard Wagner and the daughter of Liszt—the Cosima first of Von Bülow, now the Madame Wagner of Baireuth—these names come of themselves to the mind, but they are the glittering exceptions.

Of course, this sensitiveness on the part of men is confined to the gentler types. Yet even Bill Sykes, you may remember, was proud of Nancy's belief in him. If she had dared to criticise his prowess for one moment, where had she been? And as you come down into the rank and file of life, you will find that most men, gentle or not, are content to have wives who reflect themselves. They would be vaguely troubled, uneasy, suspicious, if they discerned that the women knew more than they did, that is, of general subjects, business matters and the human sciences.

One cannot but admire the mien and address of the Heir to the Crown as signally displayed at such a ceremony as the opening of the great Forth Bridge. There has always been a manliness about the Prince of Wales, which long ago, even in earlier and wilder days, (*pace* the newspapers), won the liking of all classes, but this frankness and directness has borne surprisingly excellent fruit within the last ten years. The day was a most inclement one, as "all in the wild March morning" the Prince and his suite proceeded to the scene of England's latest and, some say, greatest engineering achievement. The wind blew so strongly that the Prince with the utmost difficulty ascended that portion of the colossal bridge in which he was pleased to insert the last of eight million rivets. The guests included M. Eiffel, who was heard to confess that the bridge fairly put his noted erection of last year in the shade. The whole occasion was one of great interest, and it is to be hoped that his Royal Highness has not incurred too serious and prolonged exposure to the rough weather, his health not being any too secure at present.

One phase of the Forth Bridge is significant. Had it been projected and built in France or the United States, it would have been doubtless called after the engineer in chief, whose name would thus have gone down grandly to posterity. The *Pont Foulair* would have furnished a pendant for the *Tour Eiffel*. As it is, the modest Briton, Mr. James Fowler, assisted by Mr. Benjamin Baker and Mr. Arroll, is made a baronet and then disappears instantly from view. Sir James Fowler—let us not forget the name of probably the greatest English engineer living.

Should the Heir apparent become King while he is yet a comparatively young man, he will be the first Englishman who has sat on the throne since Elizabeth—she being the last Englishman worthy the name. The Stuarts were not Englishmen. What virtues they may have had were not English virtues, and assuredly their vices were not English vices. William III. was not an Englishman. Neither was Anne. And it is certain none of the Georges were, while the reign of the "Sailor King" scarcely lasted long enough to entitle him to any very prominent place in history. Therefore Albert Edward should have an unusual opportunity for glory. Cromwell will stand in his light a little, perhaps, but the modern frankness and charm of the living Prince will soon obliterate visions of the dead Commoner.

The projected bridge over the St. Lawrence (bridges are in the air just now) is not meeting with great success in Ottawa, nor in Montreal either. But the most visionary scheme recently presented to Canadians has been that of the Labrador Railway. Think of it! A line of railway is depicted as extending north-east from the Sault to the western extremity of Hamilton Inlet. No doubt it may be built in the future, but if you look at that part of the map to-day you will shiver at the very thought. Even the glowing utterances of a member for Regina would fail to present this railway in anything like picturesque detail to a cold and sleepy House. As it was, I understand somebody's pleasantries about the herds of buffalo that were waiting for the appreciative Nimrods of the south to come and kill them were not received affably by the promoters of the scheme.

Of course, the "Canuck" was played to poor houses. No very important personages witnessed the impersonation. Poor McKee Rankin! I suppose, nay, I know he expected at least a little ripple of interest in the production in Toronto, Canada, of "Jean Baptiste Cadeaux, an old French-Canadian *habitant*, a character new to the stage," and he was doomed to disappointment. They are a useless, wretched lot, those *habitants*, whether on the stage or off. You could not expect a city absorbed in the study of equal rights to go and witness a play turning upon the changing fortunes of so miserable, priest-ridden, perverted, illiterate and good-for-nothing a specimen as Jean Baptiste, whatever his surname may be.

As a matter of fact, *nous autres*, who are not so stiffly constituted, went and enjoyed the little play very heartily. The character-study of Cadeaux was a good piece of work. The actor's rock ahead would be the stage Frenchman of such contemporaneous stars as Felix Morris and others.

But here he showed that he had studied and watched the Franco-Canadian at home, and managed to retail shades of accent, feeling and expression which stamped the character as genuine. I will go further and say that in the emotional parts, McKee Rankin scored a distinct and remarkable success, for his emotion was under control, natural and never mawkish. The construction of the piece may be faulty, and it resembles in many points the "Old Homestead," but it presents several pretty domestic pictures, the best and truest of which portrays the cheery, simple, generous old French-Canadian as the life and centre. As in fiction, so in the drama, the *habitant* is an important factor for the future.

AN INNOCENT PLAGIARIST.

IT was in Paris, and I, Carteret Vaughan, was a young "medico," having for companions some of the most skilful young fellows in that city of skilful men. Of these however I shall not say much. My story is of Gontran, who was perhaps as talented a fellow as ever wore a natural white wig at twenty-three years of age. He was agreeable too, and I did not have so much of his company as I wished.

It was after dissecting hours one night, that the "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin" came between us and Gontran asked me to come to his chambers for a talk before bed-time. Confidences passed. Each was in a phase of reflection over the past and dreamy forgetfulness of the present and future; home tales were told and incidents retailed which had been better, perhaps, not discussed. Perhaps it was the weather, perhaps a rarely occurring turn of mind that loosed our tongues. It was I who introduced the subject of literature. Others of our clique had been urging Gontran to take the editorial chair of the *Revue*, a small paper published by the medical students in the interest of themselves, each other, and the world at large. Gontran had steadily refused and I asked him for the reasons he had not seemed inclined to give. A noise in the courtyard seemed to attract his attention and he went to the window. Almost immediately, however, he came back. "To you," said he, "and to no other under heaven who does not already know my pitiful tale, will I explain." Of course I at once assured him that his confidence would not be misplaced and he continued:

"It is about ten years since I commenced writing for the press. I was very young, only thirteen or fourteen years old, and at school in London, so it will not surprise you to learn that my early productions were worthless to the editors whom I deluged with my works. However, I persevered and at last happened to strike a chord in the heart of a metropolitan editor, with a neat verse, touching upon some timely topic. Encouraged by a small check he sent me I now wrote more than ever. Manuscripts still came back, but there were also acceptances here and there for some short article. Not much fame attended my efforts. My stories were printed anonymously and my poems appeared unsigned as I wished my name only to be connected with my best work, which, I hoped would be a consummation of the near future. When I could write what I considered to be the best article of my lifetime, I would sign my name to it and acquire a reputation, thought I.

"So, about five years ago, I had been a successful writer, in a more or less degree for a year and a half. I had left school and now devoted my time to studying in the great public libraries, where I also did a great deal of writing. It was in one of these libraries on the ninth of May, 1850 that the chain of circumstances began to form which gave me that repugnance to literature which forbids me to take a position even as editor of our *Revue*. I was poring over an old manuscript, faded, and worn at all sides, and wondering for what reason it had been so long saved, when I was struck by an interlineation, evidently made long after the original was written. It was in different hand-writing, also, and, as I remember, the words were these: 'Confer "Songs of Days," page 13; vol. 908., — Library.' When I had deciphered this I wondered what connection there could be between the musty sheets and the book, and finally made my way to the librarian to see if the volume could be obtained. He could not find the work for some time, but after a vigorous hunt through the shelves allotted to the less called-for books, he fished it out, a small volume bound in old leather, and yellow-paged with age. Thanking the guardian for his courtesy I went again to my seat and consulted the reference noted. It seemed to throw a little light on an abstruse phrase, and helped me in making out a portion lower down.

"The 'Songs of Days' were poems, at least they claimed to be. The book looked as if it had been published for private circulation, and it was only a half-hearted interest that moved me to give more than a rapid glance at other pages than the one which contained the reference. On one of the pages, however, I noticed a curious-looking verse and on studying it out, found it to be in a most brilliant form, with the charm of the *Ballade* and a system approaching that of the *Sestina*. The writer had not polished it, nor had he graced the vehicle with good diction, but the rhythm was fair and the poem charmed me. I was delighted with the new form and gloated over it for, perhaps, an hour; and then, picking up my portfolio, I made a neat copy. I returned the book and went back to the manuscript I had been reading, but I could think of nothing except the new form. I had, until now, prided myself upon knowing the mediæval and modern forms of

verse pretty well but I had never seen this one, nor could I remember one of more beauty and grace than this. A theme had been lingering in my mind for some days past, and this form, I thought, was a vehicle which would well carry my lines. I tried several lines. Admirable! I could not have chosen a more suitable form, and ere I left the library that afternoon I had my poem finished and ready for publication. On reaching the house of my guardian I went at once to the study and enclosed the poem to a friendly editor, asking him to publish my name with the verses, as I believed I had written what ought to prove a most popular production.

"The letter was posted and dinner was discussed, after which I tried to bury myself in a novel. All useless. I walked up and down. A telegram was brought to me telling of the sickness of an aged and wealthy aunt, and urging me to come. I had "expectations" and it would have been poor grace not to go and ease the good old lady in her last hours. So off to Mentone I packed in as little time as possible, and I may truthfully say that in the twelve days following no thought of that marvellous verse entered my mind. On my desk, when I returned from following my good aunt to the grave, I found a collection of accumulated mail matter, letters in one pile, periodicals and other publications in another.

"The first letter I opened was addressed in an unfamiliar hand, and I was astounded by its contents. I have since mislaid it; but it accused me of plagiarism, in very mild terms indeed, but, nevertheless, of plagiarism! I did not know the name signed to the communication. Was it an attempt to blackmail me? For a few seconds I wondered what the thing meant. Then I looked hurriedly through the pile of periodicals for the weekly literary sheet to which I had sent the poem. I was willing to sign. It was strange, indeed, if the poem had been printed so soon as the accuser intimated it had been. Yet, there it was, on the page devoted to original poetry; and there was also a very flattering introduction which gave me no little pleasure, and which, I felt sure, would give me a footing in the upper literary circles.

"But there was something strange about the poetry. A horrible thought fixed me for a moment to the spot, and I fairly ran to the table on which lay my portfolio. As I am a living man," said Gontran at this juncture, "I never had such an experience in my life. For, on looking through my portfolio, I found that I had accidentally posted to the editor the verses from the 'Songs of Days,' and had retained my own poem. I turned pale and crimson alternately. I know not what I thought save that I was a plagiarist, however innocently I had become such. It is enough to say that, what with the experiences of the past fortnight, and this new shock, my brain was unsettled, and for weeks I tossed in the delirium of a brain fever. Dimly I seem to remember dreaming horrible things. Of a gaunt spectre who kept repeating, 'You thief! you who steal another's rhymes;' and of great shapes that pointed scornfully at me, muttering, 'Wretched thief! plagiarist!' Even when the doctor came I mistook him several times for a wrathful editor accusing me of copying untold numbers of poems, and giving them as my own.

"Thus for a long time I dreamed, with few lucid intervals, and the middle of August had come before I was sufficiently convalescent to see any visitor or to begin to enjoy life in any way. I looked over the cards of a few friends who had called to ascertain how my health had been improving, and was scarcely surprised to see that of my accusing friend amongst them. 'If this man calls,' said I to a servant, 'be sure to invite him to wait for me as I wish to see him.' It was about a week later, a week of rapid improvement in health, and of curiosity as to what the literary cult were saying of my plagiarism, that I was handed the man's card and was told that he waited.

"A kindly-looking man, with an extremely bookish appearance, was seated in the parlour. He seemed to regard me with suspicion, but said he regretted my illness. At once I brought the conversation to the real subject of his visit. 'Is the literary world talking about the—the—plagiarism?' I asked. 'No!' said he. 'Not a rumour has reached them of the fact that the poem is not original. Indeed, they speak very highly of the production.' 'But you will pardon me if I enquire how you know the poem to be a plagiarism?' 'Assuredly. About fifteen years ago in reading over some manuscripts at one of the city libraries I happened upon a passage which reminded me of a similar phrase in a book at my home. Eventually I gave the book to the librarian, and marked upon the old manuscript the page and name of the book as a reference. I believe the book to be the only copy extant of a very small edition, and it was in this book that what your editor calls the marvellous production of a young genius first appeared. The way of the plagiaristic transgressor is generally much harder than it has been or is likely to be in your case.'

"I did not wish to hear more of this, and at once showed him the verses I had suited to the unique form found in the old book, and explained my mistake. 'You do not judge me so harshly, now!' I exclaimed, and he answered, 'No! I trust you will excuse my intrusion when you consider the circumstances. My mind had alternated between exposing you publicly and merely warning you against a repetition, as I was in this case the sole guardian of the honour belonging to a dead man.' 'It will be useless to say more about repetition,' I said, 'I could not write now even under the most tempting circumstances. Since I discovered my mistake, even through my fever, and since, I have had an extreme repugnance to