

I did not feel inclined to breakfast at half-past six o'clock, so remained where I was, feasting upon the beauties of nature. After half an hour's delay we moved off again down the valley, where the river soon changes its course and narrows into another rocky bed. It now roars and tumbles along more wildly than ever beside the line, here raised on a stone foundation several feet above the foaming waters, which dash angrily against its walls as if bent on their destruction. The track crosses and recrosses the river several times and penetrates through four or five tunnels before finally leaving the Kicking Horse Valley at Golden City, where it enters upon that of the Columbia, whose opening is several miles wide.

The city of auriferous name consists of about thirty log buildings, in the parlance of the country "shacks;" its aspect is not inviting, lying as it does on an extensive flat, with the Selkirk Range in the distance, a nobly redeeming feature in the landscape. After we leave Golden City the line follows the course of the Columbia River down the valley to Donald, sixty-seven miles distant, which we reached at half past nine o'clock, a. m. Here the mountains draw nearer together again. The town itself lies snugly nestled in one of the most perfect situations that could be imagined, with the Rocky Mountains bounding the valley on the east side and the Selkirks on the west, though the Columbia River forms actually its western limits. This, a deep rapid stream of curiously muddy green water about 600 feet wide, flows between high, steep banks; the left one rises in a wooded height of some 300 feet, from which the eye is carried up to the gray scarred peaks of the Selkirks, rising apparently out of the hills of green, streaked with snow in their rocky fastnesses and standing out in blue or purple distance, according to the time of day, against the sky beyond. The high bank of the Columbia spreads itself out in a dense second growth of balsam pines, through which clearings called fire breaks have been made to protect the town from the ravages of the flame fiend, and also to make room for the residences of several officials of the C. P. R. Co., the court house, the jail, my own home and that of Jude Vowells, the Gold Commissioner and Stipendiary Magistrate of the District,—which all occupy the high ground between the railway and the right bank of the river, and rejoice in the somewhat exclusive appellation of Quality Hill.

E. S.

#### NOTES FROM THE CONTINENT.

BAUDRILLART states the Vendean has neither the tenacity nor the savage instincts of the Brittany peasant. He is quiet, slow, taciturn, a positive, rather than a dreamer. The passions which provoked the civil wars at the period of the Revolution are to-day completely extinguished. Further, politics are viewed with coldness by the Vendean, who has become connected with modern society by the possession of land. The peasants are sensitive only on religious questions. Some ancient customs still exist in Vendée, such as presenting the vicar with a bushel of wheat at harvest time—a traditional tribute. The peasant is honest, economical, hospitable, and occasionally generous; he suspects himself rather than others. He is extremely temperate: not half a quart of fermented drink per head is consumed annually by the population.

This does not include wine, which is under half a pint daily per inhabitant. Vendée is the most abstemious department in France, and it is a rare sight to witness a woman drunk. The people, however, are not provident. Marriage is honoured, and families are very united; but the condition of the wife is inferior. She is not viewed higher than a servant, and the husband calls her familiarly his "creature." The number of children per family is small; education is not at all general, due chiefly to the scattered nature of the residences, the bad condition of the roads, and the scarcity of farm hands, which compel children to be kept at home to labour. This explains why so few boys are to be met with on board the local fishing vessels. The number of conscripts coming from Vendée who can neither read nor write is 40 per cent.

In matters of taste, every one has their ideal. Kola, in Russian Lapland, is an "Arctic Eden," according to M. Rabot, who lived seven years in the region of that capital. Kola contains only 800 inhabitants; but this is considered quite an urban agglomeration, as you must travel a few hundred miles to meet a similar density. The country is a vast desert; only the coast is occupied, and even this, by hamlets at fifty or seventy-five miles distance from each other. In the interior of the country only clans or nomadic tribes are to be encountered. Kola is important, not alone by its population, but from its situation on the cross-roads of Russian Lapland; these extend to the Frozen Ocean and the White Sea, over a peninsula equal in area to half the size of France.

Around Kola are forests of birch and pine, fringing the fjords; the later sparkling like silver, and receiving streams of water, rippling music

as they flow. The air is invigorating from the balsamic perfume of the forests and the saline vapours of the sea. The wooden houses are painted coquettishly, either white, with a blue border, or green. Towering above them is the inevitable onion cupola of the Greek Church. The houses consist of a cellar and a single story; the former is the winter, the latter the summer, residence, and the apartments have each an independent entrance, so that the corridor is a very respectable labyrinth.

The hundred houses composing the Kola capital are distributed over a large area, and the streets have the width of a boulevard. The sidewalks consist of planks, and at stated distances there are lamps, each surmounted with the Russian flag in zinc. The police—and they are everywhere in Russia—have nothing to do, save to roll their cigarettes, herd the cattle which browse in the streets, and suppress riots between the dogs. The latter are as numerous as in Constantinople, only in Kola the dogs are not scavengers, and in part replace horses—which are rare in the country—to transport wood and water. No case of hydrophobia has ever occurred among such dogs. M. Pasteur might explain this secret, and perhaps do away with inoculation.

There are no roads, strictly speaking, in Russian Lapland. In summer the rivers and the caravan tracks through the forests do that duty; and in winter the ice and snow. The sparse populations find it difficult to live; if their scanty harvest fails, famine is the consequence. Many people quit the villages in February, to return in autumn, and hire themselves out as labourers and fishermen on the shores of the Frozen Ocean, and even as far as Norway. This means travelling a distance of 700 miles to gain some 300 francs, and with that sum to purchase flour. The flour too has to be carried home on the owner's back, if he has no reindeer. The women are better porters than the men.

Travelling on the river is effected in the lightest and most primitive of skills; eddies and cataracts are frequent; the frail bark, however, is provided with a good keel, to enable voyagers to grip when upset in the river. In passing through the forest, every exposed part of the body must be covered with red cloth, to keep off the mosquitoes. In the course of an hour they can disfigure their victim so as to be completely unrecognizable. But then the insects rarely have the chance to meet a visitor. The mosquitoes are so numerous that one can trace his name on the cloud swarm as if they were sand. They will pursue you like death or a constable, and even into the middle of a lake.

In winter the soil is covered with snow, and in summer with white moss. Game is very plentiful, especially woodcocks; a dog barks at them, when they remain mesmerized till knocked over with a stick like barn-door fowl. There are bears, but they avoid man, and the only hunting accidents are those caused by sportsmen firing on each other. The neighbourhood of the White Sea during its summer of eight weeks recalls Italy and the Apennines. Kendalask is the prettiest village, lying on the edge of the "blue" White Sea, in a flood of light, and "with verdure clad." As round Kola, the hamlets are forty or fifty miles apart, and the people live in underground huts like moles, as in old Bulgaria. No one can stand upright in a hut, and it only accommodates six persons; the one entrance serves for chimney, window, and door. Inside are branches of birch—for furniture; a few skins thrown across these serve at night for beds.

The fireside in the centre is composed of a few rough stones; close by is a shelf containing the sacred image of St. Nicholas, before which all the family kneel and bless themselves after every meal.

Beside the hut is the trunk of an old tree, twelve feet high, and notched with steps; on the summit of the stump is a pigeon house combination, in which the flour, provisions, and Sunday apparel of skins are kept as the safest place against vermin. Good fishing abounds, and to cook the fish it is cut up into small morsels, boiled, then emptied on a plank, when each guest grabs what he pleases; the water in which it was cooked washes all down. The flesh of the reindeer is only eaten in winter: a poor person can have fifty deer, a rich man a thousand. They graze at large, and when one is wanted it is caught with a lasso. A reindeer is yoked or saddled like a horse, and will carry one hundred-weight at the rate of three miles an hour. Those nomadic Laplanders who live in the forests make all their implements out of the horn and bone of the reindeer, and in their mode of life correspond to the peoples of the epoch of the reindeer in more southern climes. The bark of the birch is made into buckets, bottles, and boots; it serves as a capital oil-cloth and match-wood. Similarly to the natives of Africa, these wandering Laps prize highly, and have a weakness for, gaudy colours and iron knick-knacks.

THE forcible motto which long headed the pages of the *Examiner* was supposed to have been selected by Leigh Hunt. It ran thus—

"Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few."