

RIDES AND RAMBLES AROUND MONTREAL.

BY JOHN SMITH, JUNE.

THE philosophic mind perceives or creates stores of enjoyment in the meanest things: its experience, clearly portrayed, cannot fail to charm and interest those who think deeply, as well as those who read with even a moderate degree of attention. Life's circle, however small, if carefully investigated, will be found to possess much of true heroism and often much of dignity; and I have, therefore, determined to record my own feelings and observations, for the benefit of the readers of the GARLAND, as well as for my own special gratification.

It cannot be doubted that the vicinity of Montreal, in its varied and beautiful scenery, affords much scope for enlightened observation, apart from the many thousand incidents that must force themselves upon the observation of a thoughtful person like myself; and I would fain hope that the public taste is not so much depraved as to turn with disgust from the graver reflections with which my sketches will be found to abound. At all events I will have the proud satisfaction of having done what I could, practically to illustrate the advantages of uniting philosophic, and, I hope, valuable, reflections with the lighter topics that will naturally be suggested by my subject.

It was on the bright sunny morning of Christmas day, 1846—a day sacred to religion and festive enjoyment—a day hailed throughout Christendom with the liveliest feelings of emotion and satisfaction,—that I arose from my bed, refreshed and vigorous from the repose which temperance, exercise, and early going to bed, never fail to produce. I dressed myself as I usually do, and descended from my chamber with a glow of satisfaction diffused through my whole frame, devoutly thankful, I trust, for the blessings which had crowned the departing year, and resolved to enjoy rationally, and as a good Christian, the pleasures of the season. I cannot say that I found the coffee very good that morning; it had been a little scorched in roasting, doubtless, but still it was drinkable; and I must say, for the credit of the house, the toast was excellent, as was also the butter with which it was buttered. Saluting the boarders with more

than my usual cordiality, and with those affectionate wishes which the season naturally inspires, I finished my breakfast,—a frugal, plain meal, but cheerful, and not passed without pleasant converse. Being aware that in my contemplated plans for the day,—plans which the genial beauty of the weather seemed to favour, as if nature had sympathised with them and with those who were to carry them into effect—that it was necessary, in this climate, to guard against the effects of cold, especially when exposed to the action of the wind, which rapidly extracts the latent heat from the body, and leaves it benumbed and cold, I put on a very thick waistcoat, a double-breasted coat, a loose overcoat, with a fur collar, and, taking up my fur gloves and stick, I sallied forth to meet my friend.

Although the hour was early, the street was already alive with passers on foot, and others, already started for the day's enjoyment away from the city. Happy season! that relieves the artisan from his daily toil, and furnishes to the poor of all classes a day on which they may enjoy themselves as they best can, without thinking of the next day's toil! Happy country! where nature furnishes a road on which all sorts of vehicles may glide with speed and safety, and with comfort too, if one can afford to dress for the weather—where the watery particles that float in the upper air, touched by the breath of winter, descend noiselessly to wrap the decayed face of nature in a mantle of white, covering all her deformities, and preserving the vital spark in the seeds that lie in the bosom of the earth! Thus ruminated I in the fullness of my heart, when, alas! without an instant's notice, up tripped my feet, and down came I on the slippery pavement, thinking, even while I was falling, what a pity it was that I had been so forgetful, or so careless—for I cannot really say to which failing to attribute the catastrophe—as not to prepare for an event, which cool reflection would have shewn to be not merely possible, but, I may say, probable, and highly probable, in the icy condition of the pavements. It is thus that we are taken by surprise. Little do we imagine, when we set out on the journey of life, of the