

some of our papers are so devoid of honour, that the defamation of the country and attempts to ruin its credit are not of infrequent occurrence. No class of people have more opportunities for doing good, for elevating the tone of the people's life, for removing prejudices, and imparting wisdom and knowledge, than have journalists. But how many of them not only waste but abuse these opportunities? Provincialism, sectionalism, selfishness, is more encouraged than discouraged by a large portion of the press, more especially by that portion which happens for the time to be opposing the Government of the day.

But none of these evils are irremediable. Let us rise up and fight against them. We Canadians have much to inspire us with faith both in ourselves and in our country, and our need is that we should feel this, that it should take possession of our souls, that it should wax strong and become a living and active power amongst us. Belief in the endurance of our nationality, in the stability of our institutions, is steadily, if slowly, gaining ground. We are beginning to love our country, and to cherish our traditions. The notion of being swallowed up, of losing our identity by annexation to the United States is a notion that has ceased to be entertained by Canadians. A small minority of residents in some parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick may, for economic reasons, consider annexation a thing to be desired; but it is safe to say that this minority would dwindle down to numbers very small were the restrictions placed upon international trade less burdensome than they are. The political institutions of Americans have no fascination for Canadians. There are not wanting evidences to prove that our nationality, weak and imperfect though it be, is yet sufficiently strong and mature to be independent of Custom House support. It is independent, too, of any feeling we may have for the Americans themselves. When the author of "Greater Britain" visited our country twenty years ago, he remarked that Canadian loyalty to the British connection appeared to consist merely of hatred toward the United States—a very extreme view surely, but without not without some grains of truth. The inherited antipathy to the Americans is one of the characteristics of Canadians, and, though happily much less bitter than in days gone by, is yet in our more fashionable circles a characteristic still marked enough to be sometimes conspicuous and often amusing. But we all know there is oftentimes a sincere mutual admiration and affection between individual Canadians and Americans, instances of which will daily multiply as the social intercourse between the two peoples grows greater and greater. It is to be regretted that the American Congress has, in so many cases affecting the interests of Canada, pursued a course not altogether consistent with the justice and urbanity of so great a people. Its present attitude, for instance, is one not calculated to promote that friendliness of feeling so much to be desired between the Dominion and the Republic. Its action serves to keep alive that antipathy which all right-thinking and high-minded men on both sides of the line would gladly see die. It is unjust, however, to bring an indictment against a whole people; it is unjust to visit upon a whole people the sins of its Government, to judge a whole people by the utterances of blatant demagogues, or by the expressions of a press too much given to pandering to the taste of a large section of its population whose delight is in Fenianism, whose joy is in dynamite. If there is much to condemn amongst our neighbours, there is also much to admire, and we must remember that it is easier to condemn than to admire. Some years ago Lord Dufferin declared that "the Americans are wise enough to understand that it is infinitely to the advantage of the human race that the depressing monotony of political thought on the American continent should be varied and enlivened by the development of a political system akin to, yet diverse from their own, productive of a friendly emulation, and offering many points of contrast and comparison which they already feel they can study with advantage." Whether or not the Americans are gifted with the wisdom imputed to them by the eminent Earl, Canadians have made it manifest that they, at least, think it would be to the advantage of the human race that there should be such a country as Canada and such a people as Canadians.

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IN THE SPRING.—II.

THE beauty and joyousness of spring is not all expressed by the birds. The wild flowers of the woodlands and pastures are no less eloquent. While yet the snow is lying deep in the recesses of the forest and swamp, the outskirts of the woods and the grassy margins and fence corners of the cultivated fields are bright with flowery constellations.

One may derive an intense pleasure, simple and pure, from the observation of the order and progression of the blooming of the flowers. A subtle mystery involves the beginning of things, a charm that allures and delights the lover of nature. But he will need to begin his visits to the

forest very early in the season. Though nothing may have sprouted at his first coming, he will find a ramble at this time both pleasant and refreshing. On the edge of the woods the snow has melted into pools of water, which have already become the abode of innumerable frogs. Their plaintive pipings cease abruptly at his approach; for these wood frogs are very shy and mistrustful of the ways of men. The bare limbs of the trees and the dull gray of the fallen leaves are dreary enough, even though the sight is relieved here and there by the bright scarlet berries of the winter-green, half concealed beneath the rich glossy green leaves. But all the air is filled with the delicious woodsy odour of dead leaves, and the moist bark of trees, the faint, sweet scent of the fresh swelling buds, or the resinous fragrance of whispering pines.

When a week has passed, let the rambler visit again his favourite woods. The pools have nearly disappeared, and the ground is rapidly drying up. Then he becomes quickly sensible of some strange influence abroad. It stirs in the soil and the trees; it permeates his own being. A silent but mighty spell seems to have been laid upon all nature. A quiet ecstasy of expectation is upon him. At last he reaches a sunny spot on the sheltered side of a great elm, where only a week since nothing was to be seen but dead leaves; now he finds a little garden of beauty. The hepatica* and the claytonia are in full bloom, yellow violets are peeping out, and perhaps a trillium is just unfolding its single bud of garnet and green, or an adder-tongue droops its yellow lily.

Next week he may find, as well, the pure white flowers of the wood-anemone and the blood-root, and the pink-tinged and sweet-scented blossoms of the trailing arbutus or Mayflower. But the last flower is rarer in most localities than the others mentioned, and also shorter lived; and one may spend many hours in vain hunting for it. About the same time the woodbine begins to bloom, but its pale yellow flowers are seldom noticed.

The dandelion is among the earliest of our wild field flowers, and in the late autumn its last blossoms gleam among the falling snows. Last year the dandelion flowered in the sunny lawns of Toronto as early at least as the 3rd of May; frost-bitten and withered, the brave flower was still blooming on the 15th of November.

The dandelion has not been glorified in poetry and song, but it is not, therefore, the less beautiful. The violet, the lily, and the rose are not all of Nature's handiwork in flowers. Burns found the daisy beautiful; he did not make it so, and it may be that the poets have not seen all the flowers. Common the dandelion is, to be sure, but common also are the stars, and the splendour of the moonlight on the water, and the golden burst of the sunrise over the hills. We cannot afford to lose any portion of the beauty of nature because of its commonness; no one can find a higher beauty, many can possess no other. And then scarcity is not an element of beauty. The fault may be in ourselves; perhaps our eyes are dulled with so much seeing, since beauty abounds. The children at least, fresh and unprejudiced, appreciate the dandelion. After the dreary winter, boys and girls welcome with shouts of gladness the first yellow blossoms glowing in the grass. They adorn themselves with dandelions, they take them to their desks in the schoolroom, and they fill the parlour vases with them in their homes.

Few appreciate fully the exquisite grace of form and delicacy of colour in our spring wild flowers. Compared with them, the early flowers of the garden are gross and common-looking. "Consider the lilies of the field," said the Master ages ago, and there is still untold wisdom in the counsel. For in our highly cultivated varieties of flowers there is something missing—we scarcely know what—of the beauty and charm of the natural blossom. Jacqueminot roses and quadricoloured pansies have a certain gorgeous beauty in their colour and structure, but for sweet and simple loveliness there are people who prefer the briar rose of the roadside or the little blue violets of the shady pastures. Then the devotees of fashion and of a certain artificial style of art have very much doubted if indeed the wild flowers are more beautiful than the splendid array of "kings in their glory." Yet it is safe to say that the old assertion would bear the test of an actual comparison of the objects named. We have no monarchs in America to experiment with, but let us suppose that his serene and unspeakable highness of Turkey were to visit our country. We may with an effort imagine him reclining with all his magnificence of robes and jewels in a little woodland plot of wild flowers—on a shady green bank of hepaticas and anemones, if you will, and how coarse and cheap and mean-looking then the glory of Solomon becomes! The flowers cry out against the desecration, and we feel they are justified. Let us acknowledge forthwith that with all our skill in art and industry a forest flower confounds our greatest pretensions.

There is inspiration, too, in the wild flowers. That is a tender story of the African explorer, Mungo Park, despairing and exhausted, lying down to die on the banks of the lordly Niger, yet rising again inspired and cheered to nobler effort by the beauty of a little flower that chanced to be growing near his closing eyes. And to the jaded man of affairs of our modern days, weary to death with the din of towns and cities, and the dreary routine of daily life, there is no other such refreshing as he may obtain from a walk through field and forest, if he will but yield himself to the soothing influences of the beauty that surrounds him. Here is the true recreation and the beginning of a new life.

Many city people do not know what fine opportunities there are for the observation and enjoyment of wild flowers in their vicinity. Yet within a few minutes' walk of the tramways of most cities there are patches of woodland, and ravines and valleys, where our native flowers are to be found in great abundance and variety. But the amateur searcher must go with-

* We are indebted to our contributor for a fine specimen of the *Hepatica*, picked in the Rouge Valley, April 15th—the first wild flower of this season, we should suppose.—ED.