

We have still some precious lessons to receive from the Germans and Russians. The former never afford you the ghost of a chance to speak their tongue, if they have anything yet to acquire in yours, and their unwearying zeal in obtaining information about you and your country is truly admirable. The latter, on the other hand, seem to have been launched in the world with all desired and desirable knowledge. A strange medley this race, and the study of its characteristics of infinite interest. The Russian spirit reminds one of those enigmatical summer evenings, sultry and black, when lightning-flashes play amid the clouds. With the grace of the French, towards whom, by the way, their sympathies incline, they have the passionate nature of the East, and a warmth and geniality of manner peculiarly their own. In their minds the *naïveté* of a child may often be found in almost amusing contrast with ideas of no mean calibre; depth of feeling seldom fails to grow into exaggerated sentiment. The sound of their language is expressive; but there is a melancholy, not to say sulky, ring about it. To illustrate the Russian character, a pretty story is told of how in a *concours* of village poets the prize was not won by the brightest, wittiest poems, but by the saddest.

However, we are scarcely describing Switzerland and the Swiss; yet nevertheless no small portion of the inhabitants of the former. Montreux, or rather the whole district of Vernex-Montreux, including Clarens, Glion, and other villages bordering on the lake and on the hillsides, is famous for its wine. Vineyards occupy every available space, filling the terraces that rise, tier above tier, up the steep incline from the water's edge. The last few weeks have been for the peasants a time of equal work and enjoyment, to *vendangeurs* proving by far the most pleasant of their duties, and looked forward to through the year as rather a *fête* than otherwise. At Clarens on Friday a very charming scene was to be witnessed. The final day of the vintage had come, and among the young men and maidens in the vineyard hilarity was at its height, notwithstanding their feeling a little abashed by the presence of crowds of strangers contemplating their performances, one of which was prettily unique. It seems the ever-thrifty "patrons," to ensure the gleaners as meagre a reward as possible, have decreed that any youth may claim the privilege of kissing the fair damsel whom a bunch of grapes escapes; but if the former is the delinquent, he shall have a good thump—*un bon coup de poing*. Needless to say, the forfeits paid were by no means small in number.

Work over, the vintagers formed in procession, singing lustily as they followed the flower-crowned "brantes" into which the grapes had been placed, and upon which—the brantes of course—a few of the merriest sat, drawn in state by their gaily bedecked horses.

In every season must this land be lovely, but I doubt if at any other time than the present it could be more gorgeously beautiful. The wood-clad hills of Glion are literally ablaze with vivid colour, and the old gray walls by the roadsides half disappear under a covering of graceful, blood-red vine leaves. The delicate mists fall and rise as the flimsy curtains in a transformation scene, and the tiny clouds wander among the great white mountains, like disconsolate spirits. Surrounded by all this mysterious grandeur, Chillon stands cruel and grave, callous alike to the dimpling wavelets at its feet, and the poor sunbeams imprisoned for a space within its walls, deploring only its ignoble fate—a show—and sighing bitterly for the return of the dark, savage days. In the dungeon of Bonivard we discover with pleasure the names of Byron, Georges Sand, Eugene Sue, and Dumas carved on the massive stone pillars; and, disfiguring every other portion of the chateau, we mark with infinite disgust the autographs of a million nonentities. Before entering this dungeon the cell is shown in which the condemned passed his last night—on a bed hewn out of the solid rock—and adjoining the one in which the prisoners were hanged, the original pole serving this purpose still existing. High above these melancholy haunts we find the dining room and kitchen, the bedroom occupied by the Dukes of Savoy, the Hall of Justice, and the "Question" chamber, all of which look out upon the lake into depths of five hundred feet, or up towards heights of thousands. At present confined in Chillon are military prisoners only.

A very popular rendezvous in Montreux is the kursale, a sort of casino, where gaming is carried on in a very innocent way. A theatre in which a fair orchestra plays every afternoon, a restaurant, and reading-room, add to its attractions.

The *Journal de Genève*, perhaps the best paper in Switzerland, shows one what very calm, common-sense things can be said in French after all. A quiet sarcasm, not uncommon with the Swiss, pervades its articles, and especially is it to be remarked in the professor-like fashion it treats present European affairs in general, and Russian and Bulgarian ones in particular.

Montreux, Oct. 25, 1886.

L. L.

## SONNET—FALLING LEAVES.

SCARLET and gold and gray and brown ye fall,  
Old leaves of autumn, beautiful and bright,  
As though a stolen colour from the light  
Were seized by each and woven for a pall.  
The naked trees seem wonderfully tall,  
Whose branches all were hidden from my sight,  
When I did wander in the summer night  
With her who then to me was all in all.  
Has Death bedeck'd you with a mocking joy,  
As o'er her marble face it placed a flush—  
The sweet illusion of love's earliest blush—  
Creating beauty only to destroy?  
Old leaves must fall and fade where'er they lie;  
Old love, though one be dead, can never die.

Paris, Ont.

E. G. GARTHWAITE.

## AUTUMN POETS.

IN defence of my title I feel it only right to say that, if a person who writes verses about spring is a spring poet, then one who writes verses about autumn must be an autumn poet. That spring poets do exist is a fact of which we are frequently and depressingly reminded. Not that any number of little rippling roundelays are capable of inflicting serious injury upon the ordinary newspaper subscriber, for he seldom reads them, but the writer whose column of jests he always reads fails not to make so many melancholy comments upon the prevalence of spring poets, and the superfluity of their wares, that the reader is forced to see how persecuted the country is by people who will persist in making themselves the subject of endless and nearly witless jokes.

A rapture in the coming of spring, so great that it overflows all decent bounds, and finds relief only in rhymed and moderately musical expression, is, of course, absurd, and the weakling who is guilty of it equally so, but at least he has the merit of cheerfulness. He never makes "dreary" rhyme with "weary," and "drear" with "sere," and "sighing" with "dying," as the autumn poet is prone to do. This singer of the later season is six months older than his vernal—not to say verdant—brother, and he is sad, and sceptical, and sophisticated. He has lived through the burden and heat of the day, and knows that the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth. To him

The melancholy days have come, the saddest of the year.

He walks abroad in the dull-lighted days, that are neither summerlike nor wintry, and mourns the falling leaves, that render the sad heavens more clearly visible. The autumn flowers, that lately flamed on every roadside and meadow, have been extinguished by long, melancholy rains. The late dandelion's "penny-worth of sunshine" is like the forced smile on a mourner's face. Death and decay surround him. His very heart faints, and his

Whole soul grieves  
At the moist, rich smell of the rotting leaves.

His pleasure in the last wild rose is sicklied o'er with apprehensive pain:

O late and sweet, too sweet, too late!  
What nightingale will sing to thee?  
The empty nest, the shivering tree,  
The dead leaves by the garden gate,  
And cawing crows for thee will wait,  
O sweet and late!

Passing from flowerless garden to rain-swept woodland marks no surcease of sorrow, for there is

Death in the wood!  
Death, and a sense of decay:  
Death, and a horror that creeps with the blood,  
And stiffens the limbs like clay.

But grief that is picturesque carries with it its own consolation. Better that the poets should threaten to break our hearts than that they should fail to touch them. Pathos can scarcely be other than touching, and the following lines, with their evanescent gleams of gladness, and their ever-present sense of tears, seem to me the very embodiment of the pathetic:

When thistle-blows do lightly float  
About the pasture height,  
And shrills the hawk a parting note,  
And creeps the frost at night;  
Then, hilly ho! though singing so,  
And whistle as I may,  
There comes again the old heart-pain,  
Through all the livelong day.

In high wind creaks the leafless tree,  
And nods the fading fern;  
The knolls are dun as snow-clouds be,  
And cold the sun does burn.