

SEPT. 8, 1882.

What is a Gentleman?

What is a gentleman? Is it a thing decked with a scarf-pin, a chain, and a ring? Sporting in eyeglasses, a top, and a smile; Talking of races, of concerts and balls; Evening assemblies and art in an oval; Spinning himself at "Homes" and bazaars; Whistling mazurkas and smoking cigars.

What is a gentleman? Say is it one Boasting of conquests and of his done. One who unobtrusively glories to speak Things which should call up a blush on his cheek.

What is a gentleman? Is it not one Honesty eating the bread he has won; Walking in uprightness, fearing his God, Leaving no stain on the carpet he may be on; Prizing sincerity far above gold; Seeking not to be seen to be in trade; Striving to be silent when he should speak.

What is a gentleman? Say is it birth Makes a man noble or adds to his worth? Is there a family tree to be had? Seek out the man who has God for his guide, Nothing to tremble at, and no one to hide; Be he a noble or be he in trade, This is the Gentleman Nature has made.

THE LEPEERS OF TRACADIE.

A Day in the Lazaretto in Northeast New Brunswick.

This exceedingly interesting description of the self-sacrificing of Catholic religious is taken from the Sun, of Aug. 13.

Miramichi is a little town in the north-eastern New Brunswick, about half way between New York and Greenland. Over half a century ago one Gardner, a Scotchman, and a resident of the town, saw a fawn-colored spot on his wife's forehead. Anon there were ominous swellings at the corners of her eyes. Then the tendons of her fingers began to stiffen and contract until her hands resembled birds' claws.

On his return to Miramichi Dr. Mackey found the scourge eating into the little community like a cancer. Prompt action was necessary. Mrs. Gardner's fingers had dropped off at the joints, her skin was in a dry and flaky. Her eyesight was gone, and she exhibited unmistakable symptoms of elephantiasis. The young physician sounded the alarm. The interest of the oldest practitioners was aroused. One or two scoffed at the idea of leprosy, and asserted that the disease would yield to remedies employed. Their experiments, however, verified the young doctor's discovery, and the community was thoroughly startled.

The Provincial Parliament was spurred to action under the personal appeals of the members from Miramichi. A bill establishing a lazaretto was passed. Shelldrake Island, dotting a bay on the northeast coast of the Province, was the spot selected. It was an isolated island, off all lines of travel. Here buildings were erected, with barred windows. A strict search for all tainted with leprosy was made, and they were confined on this island. Scores of the unfortunate wretches were captured. The lazaretto was under the charge of two men, who seemed to be destitute of all feeling. No care was given the lepers. They were left to starve, and to cultivate the thin soil and by fishing. They were neither bathed nor dressed. Clean underclothing was distributed three a year. The most abject and squalid never removed their clothing, but drew their clean shirts over their old ones at each distribution. The sexes were not separated. The lazaretto was a virtual prison for life. It was the horror like unnumbered sheep. It was the horror of the adjacent parishes. Occasionally a poor wretch escaped, and appealed to those outside for protection. Every face was turned from him. He dejected and wretched. Even the while telling fence that he leaped against. If he pitiful story was contaminated. If he drank from a spring the spring was poisoned. If a cup of milk was given him the cup was broken as soon as drained. A walking upstree, freighting the atmosphere with its poison, would not have been regarded with more horror. He was either

recaptured or driven back to the lazaretto by hunger. Worse than all this, lepers, in whom the seeds of the disease were fructifying, were concealed by friends and relatives. The lazaretto was regarded as more of a prison than an hospital. A commitment disgraced a family far more than a commitment to the penitentiary. Fathers and mothers endangered themselves and their families in the effort to shield a favorite son or daughter. It was a disgrace to be hidden, and not to be made public. A discovery of leprosy tainted every relative. The children could not make eligible marriages, and the family was shunned.

The lazaretto was removed to Tracadie, on the bay of that name, about 1849. Here the treatment of the unfortunate was a little better, but there was an utter lack of cleanliness until fourteen years ago, when the Sisters of Mercy took sole charge. They found the inmates dying in filth and misery. They inaugurated new treatment. They tore out the iron bars from the windows. The lepers were bathed each day, and their ulcers were carefully dressed. The bandages were washed, and the cloths of the unfortunates were kept scrupulously neat and clean. They were allowed the freedom of the grounds. The sexes were separated. Rations of tobacco were given to the men. A sailboat was bought, and parties of the lepers were allowed to go sailing and fishing. Nor was the body alone entertained. The Sisters administered to the mind. The lepers no longer brooded day and night over their unfortunate condition. Some of their number played the violin and they danced to its music. A sure death was thus robbed of some of its terrors. When the Provinces were confederated in the Dominion of Canada, the lazaretto passed under the control of the Federal Government. The sisters, however, remained in charge, receiving a miserable pittance from the Government for their labors.

The rigor of the law was softened by Father Joseph A. Babineau, Pastor of the little Catholic church at Tracadie. When cases of leprosy were reported he visited the afflicted and prepared their minds for the inevitable. They usually entered the lazaretto with resignation, and submitted to their fate without a murmur. Where the good Father's efforts failed, the strong arm of the law was invoked, and the culprit was seized like criminals and imprisoned for life. Their discontent was softened by the kindness of the Sisters, and they dropped into the grave hopeful of a better fate in the world to come.

visited Tracadie on Sunday, July 26. The Hon. Arthur D. Williams, of New York, accompanied me. The first day we spent in a thriving village on the curved railroad from Halifax to Quebec. The road was a bee-line and as level as a prairie. It was shaded by stunted spruce-trees. We passed straggling settlements of French Canadians and Indians. At times the atmosphere was laden with the lobster canneries on the beach. This is used as a compost, for the soil is thin and poor. Where the spruces were cut away there were magnificent views of the ocean and of bays leading to prolific salmon and trout streams. It was mid-day when we reached Tracadie. On the night before we repeatedly awoke residents on the route, and asked for a pail to water his horses. It was always given with the greatest pleasure. The conversation was in French. There is no hotel at Tracadie. Through the kindness of Mr. John Young, its richest inhabitant, we were given a lunch and lodging. At sunrise next morning the little bell of the primitive Roman Catholic chapel fronting the broad bay announced early Mass. High Mass was celebrated at half-past ten. By ten o'clock the dusty roads were filled with French Canadians on their way to church. A few came in rickety wagons, but most of them were on foot. They swept their eyes, and their faces were red with paint. Some had arisen with the dawn and walked ten and twelve miles. One man on crutches lived seven miles away. It was a hot day, and the air was filled with mosquitoes and sand-flies. The devotees seated themselves on a long broken pile of split-wood near the house of the priest, and awaited the tap of the bell. The little cemetery allotted to the lepers lies in the shade of the unpainted church. It is overgrown with shrubby and brambles. A large, weather-beaten cross stands in the centre, stretching its arms over the unmarked graves of the unfortunate. A white and a fish-house stand 200 yards to the north, and beyond them the squatty buildings and domer windows of the lazaretto are seen. We knocked at the door of the parsonage. The rustic gazed at us inquiringly. Father Babineau was in the vestry dressing for Mass. He was summoned by an attendant, and gave us a gracious reception. His glittering face, recalled the features of Judge Carleton. With extreme courtesy, he accompanied us to the lazaretto, leaving his assistant, Father Nugent, a jolly-faced Irishman, to chant Mass. As we crossed a rustic foot-bridge near the lazaretto we heard the plaintive notes of a violin. The melody was sad notes of a violin and a flute. The family cries of "Manna, manna" and "The Boat Song" and "Annie Laurie." The musician was a leper, whiling away the weary hours.

We ascended the porch. Passing into the entry we stood before a door with a wicket. The words, "TOUT PASSE!" were above the door. Father Babineau rang the bell. A second afterward the white face of a Sister of Mercy appeared at the open wicket. The Father spoke to her in French and she opened the door. We were ushered into a reception-room under the motto, "PERSONNE N'ENTRE ICI S'IL NE VIENT AIMER JESUS CHRIST."

Sister St. John, matron of the lazaretto, is a pleasant-faced woman, 36 years old. She came from the Hotel Dieu, in Montreal. Fourteen years among the lepers have familiarized her with their manners, customs, and feelings. She has been the recipient of many a sad story. She knows the families of all the inmates, and probably has a more thorough knowledge of the nature and character of the disease than the physician who receives

\$300 a year from the Government for an annual visit. She has charge of the cabinet of drugs, and as a fair knowledge of medical jurisprudence. As there is no doctor within fifty miles of the institution, the Tracadiens and the inhabitants of outlying settlements come to her for medical advice. Prescriptions for the poor are filled without charge. She knows the families tainted with the disease, and traces accurately the relationship between the afflicted. The same strain of blood appears to flow in the veins of all. A majority of the lepers were born in Tracadie. They all came from within a circle of seventy miles. Under Sister St. John's supervision an accurate record of the inmates has been kept. There is no prior record on file. Since 1868 the Sister's record shows that fifty-eight out of ninety have died. There are now twenty-six in the institution. This number is larger than at any time within fourteen years. The average life, after appearance of the disease, is from ten to fifteen years. Some die within three or four years, and there is now a woman in the institution who has been suffering over fifty years. She was an inmate of the lazaretto on Shelldrake Island forty years ago. While there the disease disappeared, and it was supposed that she had been cured. She returned to her home in Tracadie, married, and had children. Twenty years afterward the tell-tale spots again appeared, and she was returned to the lazaretto. She is still living, handless and almost sightless. A daughter, twenty years old, whose fingers are drawn up like the claws of a dead bird, has inherited the scourge from the mother, and is now in the institution. Singular as it may seem, the lepers are subject to attacks of ordinary diseases. There have been deaths from jaundice and typhus fever. In some cases the skin is dry and cracked, and in others it is covered with ulcers. Those afflicted with ulcers live the longest. Damp weather has a damaging effect. The patients are feverish, and complain of rheumatic pains. They have fits of drowsiness, and sleep for hours daily. In Winter and Summer they invariably improve. None have died within fourteen months.

They are peculiarly sensitive. We are warned against using the word leprosy within their hearing. They speak of it as the "disease." Each patient apparently has an impression that there may be some mistake in his case, and he is suffering from some other complaint. At times a strong temptation to suicide seems to be upon them. A strong tea has removed the fawn-colored spots, but as soon as the system becomes accustomed to the tea the spots return. Three years ago the hearts of all the lepers throbbed with joy. A nostrum, called Fowley's Humor Cure, was administered, and in six weeks the spots were all gone. The cure, however, was only temporary, and the scourge reappeared with more violence than ever.

Cases have occurred where those afflicted with leprosy left the country before they were sent to the asylum. Two of these were the spots appeared upon the face of a man belonging to well-known families. Determined to avoid the lazaretto, the girl went to Shediac and was employed as household servant. Hearing of her flight, Father Babineau wrote to Shediac. He had observed indications of leprosy on her face, and she was immediately returned to the lazaretto. One died in that city in a private family, where she had been engaged as a chambermaid. Father Babineau, however, was not satisfied with the report, and he went to Providence. After a long talk he convinced her to return to the lazaretto. She did so, and died within a few days.

The good Father relates the particulars of a case of leprosy in a man two years married. There were the usual fore-runners of the disease. The Father visited the man's residence and talked with the wife about it. The husband insisted that wife about it. His wife coincided with the priest in private. Satisfied, however, that the husband was tainted, the wife left him. He remained in the house alone. Not long afterward, seeing the priest approaching, he took to the woods. Father Babineau overtook him and returned him to the lazaretto. He was threatened with the rigor of the law. The conversation lasted two or three hours, and the husband was finally induced to enter the lazaretto.

Not long ago the disease broke out on the body of a fisherman, who for twenty years had lived alone in a hut on the Bay of Tracadie. When the priest asked him to enter the lazaretto, his only objection was a fear that he might become lonesome. He is now in the hospital pining for the companionship of Nature. A more distressing case occurred two months ago. The doctor's spots appeared on the mother of four little children. The priest repeatedly talked with her, and she was finally induced to part with her husband and enter the living tomb. Her parting with her children was very affecting, and to this day the father's ears hear and sweet, a blending of the "Canadian Boat Song" and "Annie Laurie." The musician was a leper, whiling away the weary hours.

The disease is said to be contagious, but we could learn of no well authenticated case of contagion. None of the Sisters have shown the least symptoms of leprosy, although two have waited upon the patients for fourteen years. They take the greatest precaution against it. There is only one case on record of a husband and only one case on record of a husband and wife who were confined in the institution at the same time. They were cousins. Wives who have had children by leprosy husbands have married on the death of their husbands. Some of the children of the first husband were infected, and the disease did not appear until the third generation. Then it broke out on the body of a man of herculean strength. The native families of French descent seem to be satisfied that it is contagious. They gaze at the lazaretto from the outside, and very few pay it a visit.

The victims of the disease are at first visited by their near relatives, but as the seasons roll on the visits are less frequent, and at last cease altogether. Husbands forget their wives, mothers forget their

children, and vice versa. Not long ago a poor boy of 19 broke out of the lazaretto at night, and walked twenty-five miles to see his mother. He remained home a few hours, and returned with a less aching heart. The lepers all express a willingness to work, but many of them are unable to do so. The Sisters are allowed only a pittance to feed them. They have meat on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, and fish on Friday. Seldom, if ever, do they see fresh beef. They abhor mutton and veal. Fresh pork is the meat most coveted. Three of the lepers play the violin, and each appears to be ambitious to excel the others. When the weather is dry, those who are able frequently dance from morning until night. Those who enter the institution complain of a drowsy feeling, and sleep days and nights, hours at a stretch. The lungs become affected. The hair falls from the eyebrows. The voice is husky. In some cases there is a loss of all feeling in the hands and arms. A girl rested her wrist on a red-hot stove, and was seriously burned, without the least sensation. Cats are times seen skin scenes to be filled with filth. Then it cracks open the bone and gradually shrivels away. When the liver and lungs become seriously affected, the patient wastes away with all the symptoms of consumption. He dies by suffocation.

All have separate beds. The men are kept on the main floor, and the women on the floor above. Rarely do they see each other. There is a little room on each floor where the Sisters officiate as wardens. There is not a man about the establishment who is not a leper. The Sisters are allowed a washerwoman and a servant boy. Aside from this they do all the work in the dormitories. The beds are arranged by side like beds in a hospital. Old-fashioned quilts cover the iron bedsteads. The floors are scrubbed once a day. Everything is scrupulously neat. Each dormitory contains an oratory, where the afflicted say their prayers on retiring and arising. The walls are covered with pictures of saints and religious mottoes in the French language. Here is a specimen:

TOUR IN MOMENT DE SACRIFICE
UNE ETERNITE DE JOUISSANCE

There is no specified dress for either the male or female leper, and unaccustomed eyes could not distinguish some of them from ordinary persons. As we entered the male ward ten of the unfortunates were arising from dinner. It was a plain board table, destitute of cloth and napkins, and furnished with tin plates, cups, and spoons. On an iron cot within ten feet of the table sat a pitiful object. His flesh looked like a piece of parchment, and he had been in bed over a year. Although but 15 years old he looked like a man of 70. Nothing in the wards on Blackwell's Island equals this scene; yet the Sisters said that the patient was much better than he had been. As we entered a man clad in a blue woollen shirt turned his face from us, and moved into the sunlight through the open door. Poor fellow, his misfortunes were his own, and he sought no sympathy from the outside world. He was Michael Dugas, a leper, and he had been in bed over a year. 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