

1874.

THE CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

The month of December of this year closes the eighth volume of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS, under the most favourable auspices. The paper has not only retained the success which it enjoyed from its inception, but it has gone on adding to its popularity, and, at the beginning of a new year, finds itself with a large and

STEADILY INCREASING CIRCULATION.

This state of things is so far satisfactory that we have been encouraged to introduce new and important improvements both in the management and editorial composition of the paper. Henceforward, particular attention will be given to

REGULAR DELIVERY,

so that newsdealers in all parts of the Dominion will be punctually served, and readers may rely upon having their paper in good time, every week. Experience shows that, while this country is well provided with a daily press, there is an ample field for the development of weekly family papers, which shall embrace, besides the usual amount of literary matter, a comprehensive account of the current events of the day. It is our ambition to take rank with the best weekly papers of Britain and the United States, in both ability and influence, and our new arrangements to compass this end are complete. Our political course will be, as usual, independent and non-partisan.

LITERATURE,

in its lightest and most attractive phases, such as serials, short stories, sketches, and poetry, will receive unremitting attention; and an immense variety of miscellaneous matter will be furnished in every issue.

The specific character of the paper will be maintained in the department of

ILLUSTRATIONS.

We have every facility for producing them in a style that defies competition. Besides the pictorial representation of interesting incidents all over the world, we shall continue our gallery of PORTRAITS of male and female celebrities. Occasionally an ART-PICTURE from one of the masters will be produced, and the periodical FASHION PLATE will appear at appropriate seasons. It is intended also to make a specialty of

CARTOONS,

setting off leading events of the day. These will be finished in a style of high art, and, from their historical interest, will form a collection worth preserving.

In addition, then, to a summary of current events, political intelligence, religious news, literary, scientific, and artistic progress, the readers of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS will have a weekly series of pictures and sketches so disposed as to promote, in the highest degree, the great desideratum of art culture.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1873.

In presenting our readers with the Christmas number of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS we take the occasion of thanking them for the past support and encouragement they have given us and of renewing our promises for the future. In our programme printed above will be found the principal features we are desirous of giving to the NEWS. No pains will be spared to make it a bright and readable paper and a welcome guest in the home circle. With this number we close our eighth volume, hoping in a ninth to renew our relations with our present readers and make many new acquaintances. To all our patrons we wish the merriest of Christmases and the happiest of New Years.

THE FLANEUR.

It is no use lamenting the decay of the old customs which our jolly forefathers observed at Christmas-tide. Times change and men change with them. Besides, it is a serious question whether we do not enjoy ourselves at this season just as much as our ancestors did. Even if the element of uproar and roystering is taken in, I believe we make as good a show as any of the old revellers of ten centuries ago.

But there is one practice I should like to see revived and that is the yule or Christmas candle. This was a candle of monstrous size which shed its light on the festive-board during the evening, and served as an accompaniment to the yule log. It is stated that, in the battery of St. John's college, Oxford, an ancient candle socket of stone still remains, adorned with the figure of the Holy Lamb. It was formerly used for holding the Christmas candle which, during the twelve nights of the Christmas festival, was burned on the high table, at supper.

The French Canadians have a queer practice on Christmas Eve, which I fancy very much just at present, but which, possibly, I should relish less if I were an old pater-familias with a bevy of pretty daughters on my hands. Under the plea of gathering alms for the poor of the parish, the young bucks go from house to house, in various fantastic disguises and sing what is popularly known as *la gniollais*.

The opening strophe is very modest:

Ron soir, le maître et la maîtresse
Et tous les gens de la maison,
Oyez la voix de la détresse
Dans cette tant triste saison,
Et pi, et vi, ch. eh.
Veuillez bien m'donner
Votre fille aînée
A embrasser!

Now, there is certainly some wit in a custom like this and it ought, by all means to be retained.

The idea of the midnight mass is full of poetry. Men of all creeds are touched by it. And the old mediæval chants which accompany it have the ring of the true heart's devotion. *O Filii et filie* is simple and quaint as a nursery song. The *Adeste fideles* ranks in pathos and sublimity with the *Dies Ire* and the *Stabat Mater*. And yet the English have managed to vulgarize it by making it a funeral march, played on flutes at the burial of soldiers. And, still worse, the German students use it as a drinking song, to the words of one of Horace's odes. At that midnight hour, the tradition was that all animals, both wild and domestic, got down upon their knees to adore their new born Saviour, and the cock crew and thence continuously till dawn, in order to scare away all manner of evil spirits. Shakspeare refers to this beautifully, in *Hamlet*:

"It faded on the crowing of the cock.
Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes,
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit can walk abroad:
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch's bath powder charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

Out with your socks to-night, little beauties! Let them be long and deep. To-morrow, you will find them filled with good things. No matter who brings them. Don't be inquisitive. Leave that virtue to your mammas. Only be sure that the toys and the sweets will be there. In Germany, it is *Kruschkinkle* (a corruption of *Christ-Kindlein*, or the Infant Christ); in Saxon times it was *Pelznichol*, or Nicholas with the fur, and in France, it is simply *L'Enfant Jesus*, with that sweet face which Sanzio or Guido Reni have given him.

Did you never hear of the game of Snap-dragon. It was played on Christmas Eve, all through Britain, not more than a century ago.

Here he comes with flaming bow,
Don't he mean to take his toll,
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

Take care you don't take too much,
Be not greedy in your clutch,
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

With his blue and snapping tongue
Many of you will be strong,
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

For he snaps at all that comes
Snatching at his feast of plums,
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

But old Christmas makes him come,
Though he looks so feeble and tum!
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

Don't 'ee fear him, be but bold,
Out he goes, his flames are cold,
Snap! Snap! Dragon!

The Christmas Carol! what music in the very name. What sweet memories are attached to it from the days of Chaucer down to those of Charles Dickens. It is associated with the tinkling of sheep bells, the song of the shepherds and the hymning of the planets as they revolved around the magical star of Bethlehem. Our literature is full of these carols. Let me close my paper with only a few verses taken from Herrick:

"Tell us, thou clear and heavenly tongue,
Where is the babe that lately sprung?
Lies he the lily-bank among?"

Or say, if this new Birth of ours
Sleeps hid within an ark of flowers,
Spangled with dew light; thou canst clear
All doubts, and manifest the where.

Declare to us, bright star, if we shall seek
Him in the morn'g's blushing cheek,
Or search the beils of angels through,
To find him out?"

ALMAVIVA.

NEW BOOKS.

In a former number we drew attention to the issue by Messrs. Harper & Bros., of a new edition of Wilkie Collins' works. As Mr. Collins is now in this country, the opportunity will doubtless be seized by many to obtain copies of his charming books. In addition to the two volumes already mentioned, "The Woman in White," and "Poor Miss Finch," two more, "Basil," and "The Dead Secret," have appeared. The volumes of this edition appear monthly. They are printed in large type on fine white paper, are neatly and plentifully illustrated, and are uniformly bound in green cloth with gold lettering. The four numbers now published would make a handsome and appropriate present.

The list of Christmas books would not be complete without something from Miss Alcott. Aunt Jo has won her way into so many hearts and homes by her good humour, her kindly spirit, and her plain but winning manner, that her silence at the festive season would be looked upon as little short of a public calamity. This year her many admirers are fortunately not doomed to be disappointed. The third of the Scrap-Bag Series has made its appearance, in the form of a set of pretty tales for children, told with all the sparkling vivacity which stamps this author's works. There is a story about a little boy who while his mother, a lady of the G. adgrind species, was purchasing some heavy books for his especial benefit, stole round to the bookseller and asked him if he had not any works for bad little boys who didn't like heavy books. For small people who are, or ought to be, of this little boy's opinion respecting heavy books, Aunt Jo was specially invented. People who are not already acquainted with this excellent lady and are fond of seeing children enjoy themselves, will do well not to let the festive season pass by without introducing her to their households.

Among the prominent foreign divines who attended the meetings of the Evangelical Alliance, at New York, in October last, was Dr. Christlieb, Professor of Theology and University Preacher, at Bonn, whose paper on the Best Methods of Counteracting Modern Infidelity—which appeared at the time in the *Tribune*, made a great impression. Messrs. Harper & Bros. have since reproduced this paper in book form. In this number we content ourselves with a mere allusion to the volume, reserving a more extended notice for a future occasion.

H. H. has acquired an enviable reputation as a writer, and her studies of travel contain many a gem of rare merit. Not satisfied, however, with her success in that branch of art, she has imitated the example of Bayard Taylor and Howells, and devoted herself to the cultivation of the muse. The volume before us contains a very large number of short poems, many of which have already appeared in the *Magazines*. Their general character is unquestionably above mediocrity, while several of the compositions are of rare merit and more than sufficient to justify Helen Hunt in her ambition to rank among the minor poets of America. "Amreeta Wine" is one of those to which we may refer. "Enone" is treated with a sculptor's skill. Our rule in looking over a new volume of verse is to search for a new thought, or a well turned sentiment, which betrays at least a little originality of treatment. Without some such, in the present plethora of verse, no book is worth reading. We find such in the following short poem:

COMING ACROSS.

Every sail is full set to the sky
And the sea blaze with light,
And the moon mid her Virgins glides in
As St. Ursula might:
And the throb of the pulse never stops,
In the heart of the ship,
As her murmurs of water and fire
She drags down at a slip.
Yet I never can think, as I lie,
And so wearily toss,
That by saint, or by star, or by ship,
I am coming across;

But by light which I know in dear eyes
That are bent on the sea,
And the touch I remember of hands,
That are waiting for me,
By the light of the eye, I could come,
If the stars should all fail;
And I think, if the ship should go down,
That the hands would prevail,
Ah! my darlings, you never will know,
How I pined in the loss
Of you all, and how breathless and glad
I am coming across.

A really thoughtfully constructed high class Christmas story is a sufficient rarity. The appearance of such an infrequent bird will therefore be hailed with delight by readers of all classes. We have given a careful perusal to Mr. Hale's new book and we are happy to be able to say that the anticipations raised by the name of the author have been very completely realized. "In His Name" is a story of the twelfth century, the scene of which is laid at Lyons and the neighbourhood. The plot is simple enough. A Florentine doctor, one of the initiates of the society of the Poor Men of Lyons, is called in to attend a merchant's daughter who has been poisoned. He finds the case beyond his skill and sends for his old master Jean of Lugio, a proscribed and excommunicated priest of reforming tendencies, who in spite of the difficulties that beset him on every side succeeds in making his way from his hiding place in the mountains to the city, and in restoring the dying child to its mother. The main interest of the story lies in the repeated mishaps that threaten to delay the messengers sent for him and his own coming, all of which are happily averted by the use of the watchwords of the Poor Men of Lyons, viz., "For the love of Christ" and "In His Name." The characters are skillfully drawn; the persecuted but brave, hardy, God-fearing priest; bluff, coarse Montferland, and his gentle wife Lady Alix; pretty Felice whose illness changes her father's hard-fistedness and hard-heartedness into generosity

* Basil. A Novel. By Wilkie Collins. 12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. pp. 336. \$1.50.

The Dead Secret. A Novel. By Wilkie Collins. 12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. pp. 359. \$1.50.

† Aunt Jo's Scrap-bag. Cupid and Chow-Chow, &c. By Louisa M. Alcott. Author of "Little Men," &c. 18mo. Cloth. Illustrated. pp. 202. \$1.00.

‡ The Best Methods of Counteracting Modern Infidelity. By Theodor Christlieb, Ph. D., D.D., 12mo. Cloth. Portrait. pp. 89. New York: Harper & Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros.

§ Verses. By H. H. Square 18mo. Cloth. red edges. pp. 191. \$1.25. Boston: Roberts Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros.

¶ In His Name. A Christmas Story. By E. E. Hale. 8mo. Paper. pp. 87. Boston: Roberts Bros. Montreal: Dawson Bros.