

"O why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

Like a swift-fleeting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,

A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,

He passes from life to his rest in the grave."

The insignificance of mortal man *saute aux yeux*, as the French say, when we reflect that ultimately we shall fill some contracted spot in a graveyard, and likely to lie there as unremembered by the living, as the leaves that flutter to rest upon our tombs.

In the case of many of the characters whom the narrator has in his mind's eye, they gave the onlooker the feeling that they must have wandered from the pages of old authors and journals of a century and more ago. He has often found himself longing for the gift of portraiture which permitted of clever limners like Gaverni and Boz to seize and reflect typical personages, such as one saw here daily last century, strolling in the streets of "ye Ancient City," or in the homes, of both French and British. These were of all kinds, sane and unbalanced, some grotesque, irrepressible and care-free, others blended with touches of pathos, or simplicity, or compounded of good and evil, each and every one of them making their own appeal. Most were doubtless of types that have kept repeating themselves century after century, and likely to continue re-incarnating themselves in perpetuity. Many of them more pleasant to meet than to live with, however.

In the following sketches the characters have been placed in the setting and background in which they were found. They may, therefore, be considered as side-lights upon the life,

the habits and customs of the old days. Such descriptions do not always adapt themselves to compact summaries, but call for running commentaries, which shall be resorted to. And for the sake of brevity, often the substance of remarks and conversations shall be given, rather than the exact, original phrasing. In almost every instance names have been omitted and occasionally a little mystification employed, to avoid too easy recognition of the people limned, and to spare the susceptibilities of touchy, surviving relatives and friends.

In the gallery of complex, variegated and excentric types I am about to open for the entertainment of the "Telegraph's" Christmas readers, the first that I wish to draw their attention to is that of a lazy, idle, shiftless, good-for-nothing fellow, about eighty odd years old, who lived upon what he could obtain from the charitably inclined. He knew well how to chant the song of the woes and afflictions of the worthy and distressed poor. His only actual claim upon the consideration of the public was the fact that he had served under Colonel de Salaberry during the war of 1812, and notably at Chateauguay. Owing to the fact that he had been at one time a servant of Joseph Francois Perreault, my father's grand-parent, he claimed that he was entitled to the assistance and protection of my parent. And he was humored in that supposition! Like the British pauper that London 'Punch' speaks of, he considered that the public owed him a living: "Ain't their dooty? Don't we own them?" He acted as if he had a vested interest in the continuance of public charity. After my father's demise I continued giving this undeserving wretch cast-off clothing and an occasional twenty-five cent piece, for the sake of one whom I held

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