

she soon returned victorious, with a bunch of the larger Wood-Sorrel in her hand, to exhibit the identity of its leaves, and its delicate white blossoms with their pinky-purple veins. By the time the other juveniles brought in the blue Vervain, pink Fireweed and tall yellow Mullein, the botanist thought it about time to go home and press his specimens.

Miss Carmichael met the scientists at the door, looking, of course, for the children and Uncle Thomas, who was never called by his Christian name, Ezekiel. Learning the nature of the work in hand, she volunteered the use of the breakfast-room table. The lawyer brought down his strap press, and, carefully placing oiled paper between the dried specimens and the semi-porous sheets that were to receive the new ones, proceeded to lay them out. The new specimens had all to be examined by the addition to the botanical party, their botanical and vulgar names to be recited to her, and, then, the arranging began. This was too monotonous work for the Captain, who carried the children off for a romp on the verandah. Marjorie stayed for a minute or so after they were gone, and then remembered that she had not given papa his morning button-hole. Coristine was clumsy with the flowers, owing to the gloves he said, so Miss Carmichael had to spread them out on the paper under his direction, and hold them in their place, while he carefully and gradually pressed another sheet over them. Of course his fingers could not help coming into contact with hers. "Confound those gloves!" he thought aloud.

"Mr. Coristine, if you are going to use such language, and to speak so ungratefully of Mr. Errol's gloves, which I put on your hands, I shall have to leave you to put up your specimens the best way you can."

"O Miss Carmichael, now, please let me off this once, and I'll never do it again. You know it's so hard working in gloves. Understand me as saying that botanically, in a Pickwickian sense as it were, and not really at all."

"You must not say that, either botanically or any other way."

"To hear the faintest whisper of your slightest command is to obey."

It was delicate work arranging these little Speedwells, and Gratiolas, the Wood-Sorrels, and the smaller Monkey-flower. Hands had to follow very close on one another, and heads to be bent to examine, and sometimes there was just a little brush of brown and golden hair that, strange to say, sent responsive tingles along the nerves, and warm flushes to cheek and brow. What a hopeless idiot he was not to have foreseen the possibility of this, and to have brought home twice the number of specimens! Alas! they were all in the press. But, a happy thought struck him: would Miss Carmichael care to look at the dried ones, some of which had kept their colour very well? Yes, she had a few minutes to spare. So, he brought chairs up to the table, and they sat down, side by side, and he told her all about the flowers and how he got them, and the poetry Wilks and he quoted over them. Then the specimens had to be critically examined, so as to let Miss Carmichael learn the distinctive characteristics of the various orders, and this brought the heads close together again, when suddenly their owners were started by the unexpected clang of the dinner gong. "Thank you so much, Mr. Coristine," said the lady, frankly; "you have given me a very pleasant half hour." The lawyer bowed his acknowledgment, but said, beneath his moustache: "Half an hour is it? I thought it was a lifetime rolled up in two minutes, no, one."

(To be continued.)

THE ARCHIC MAN—VII.

OTTAWA becomes unbearably hot during July and August. Even when coming back from the early morning walk, McKnom was fain to open his umbrella, a regular Mrs. Gamp of an article, cotton, crumpled, corpulent, which, when not shading his head, he carries under his left arm. The Senator has gone to the seaside, or to the Peace River, or, for ought known to the historic muse, to Jericho. One evening Madame Lalage proposed to McKnom that he should be her guest at the Arlington, in Cobourg, saying that Gwendolen and Irene and their respective husbands, Rectus and Helpsam, would meet us there. She added: "The Cobourg people are delightful; the air is cool, bracing, sleep-compelling; the walk on the pier in the evening as good as a stroll on a salt sea beach; the garden villas will please your æsthetic eye." Madame has great influence over that prophetic soul, and our guide, philosopher and friend in the highest things, she easily subordinates in matters purely mundane. He at once accepted the invitation. Another member of the party had a long standing engagement to visit some hospitable friends there.

The Arlington was filled with Americans, the ladies preponderating; nice, pleasant people, some of whom come to Cobourg from the farthest South; the young girls careering about on bicycles, expert jockeys; but the first great attraction of Cobourg is the people themselves; next the air; next the beautiful garden residences, with green level lawns and tall shade-throwing trees, pine, maple, elm, beach; next, lawn tennis, healthy to play, interesting to watch.

"Should not my dear Mr. McKnom," asked Madame Lalage, as we all strolled down to the pier, "the archic man, amuse himself?"

"Oui Madame," replied McKnom, "the wise archic man, *se'amuse*. He should attend to his health. In the language of the horseman, he must have plenty of grit, go, wind and bottom, else he never can do anything great. When he eats he should feel as an engine-driver when about to coal his engine. His object to get the maximum of power. He must eat, not to live, but to achieve, and he must have rest and exercise. Look at Gladstone in his 83rd year—if he had not played the woodman and plied his axe so well and so often he never could have got through this late trying campaign."

"Then," said Madame Lalage, "a truce now to philosophy and parliaments; peace to Plato and politics; we will amuse ourselves while here; we will drive, picnic, bathe, act charades, make nonsense verses, and give our perturbed spirits rest."

"With all my heart," said McKnom. Glaucus threw up his cap and said agreed! and Gwendolen flung a tennis-racket in the air, and, catching it as it came down, echoed "agreed." It would take up too much space to tell of the drives through wooded hills; impossible to recount the conversations; the glad laughter; the wit which caused it, if wit it was; the philosophy which even in the sunshine of a holiday haunted McKnom like that shadow which for the thoughtful eternity flings across the gayest passages of time. Helpsam and Rectus seemed different men, and boyish laughter flickered under gray hairs. Among the ladies whom we met and who shared in our holiday enterprises was one named Norah, tall, graceful, with hair of yellow gold; another named Anna, with tresses dark as a raven's wing, and brown eyes filled with electric fire—she also a good height, but not so tall as Miss Norah; both statuesque; and what with the grace of each and the contrast they made, one would have said, if to say so did not savour of irreverence—a capital team.

One afternoon we lunched with Messalla, whose garden would rival that of Lucullus—acres sloping to Lake Ontario, and profuse in every flower, and tree, and shrub which can afford delight to sense. Messalla, who is not like his namesake, a great soldier, but is like him an orator, a scholar and jurist, is very fond of children, and he insisted that two of his guests should take their little daughter of three and a-half years old with them, for he said children and flowers never look so nice as when they are together. The child has yellow hair and dark brown eyes, shaded with long jet black lashes—very remarkable and pretty.

When, as the reporters say, we had done full justice to the edibles, which reflected credit on everybody by the way they were provided and the way they were devoured, we strolled into the garden. "*Noctes cœneque deum*—nights and suppers of the gods indeed give me," said one of the party, "a lurch with sprightly men and sprightly women fair to see and debonaire."

"Oh! the climbing roses! the roses in the beds! the flowers which one can admire and scent but cannot name—everything speaking the skill and care of the gardener; and the sigh of the waves of the restless lake on the shore making music whose very sadness set off rather than discounted the gaiety and beauty of the scene and hour."

We all sat down on a wide semicircular seat, built for such a party as this. "In such a scene," said McKnom, "that great archic woman, Elizabeth, used to cap Latin verses with Burleigh and Raleigh."

Messalla quoted Horace, and Glaucus capped his verse, but that game belongs to the past. None of us could continue it, whereupon Helpsam proposed that one should make verses on the ladies.

One of the party, with presumptuous rashness, tried his hand on Miss Nora, but his reluctant muse would carry him no farther than

O dimpled beauty, with golden crown,
Happy is the man who wins.

One step farther the stubborn jade—like some baulky mule—would not go, so Helpsam said he would try, if Irene would not be angry, whereupon Mrs. Helpsam said: "I am like Lady Palmerston. She used to say, when anyone told her of her old lord's flirtations, that nothing gave her more pleasure than that her dear Pam should amuse himself. I say the same of my dear Sam."

We laughed, and a little bird on the tree overhead poured forth a note which seemed to say: "Very wise—you may as well—very wise, indeed, indeed." Miss Norah said she wanted a poem with her name in it, and we were all ready to bet that, after Flora, he would not get a rhyme for Norah, and Helpsam was equally sanguine he could get several rhymes for that name, which Moore in one of the most beautiful of his melodies has given to the ideal Irish girl—Norah Creena—whose dress floats free as mountain breezes, whose modest glances charm with an unexpected light, with which Lesbia had naught that could compare.

Glaucus said he would try his hand on Ella, the little three-year-old child who ran about among the flowers, herself, as Milton says of our great-grandmother Eve, the fairest flower. Though his ponderous, jealous spouse was not there, he was afraid to attempt a verse on an older subject. Rectus took up the little child in his arms, and spoke baby language with her, and she wishing to go to see the "waxies," he said: "Gwendolen, you won't be jealous of this little rival," and ran off with her and was lost among the trees.

"And who," said Miss Anna, "is to immortalize me?" McKnom said: "The great Arnold of Rugby used to write verses, and thought it humanizing; Gladstone writes

verse, and some of his translations of Tennyson into Latin are very good; the great Chief Justice Cockburn used to write verses, and his Latin translation of 'Gray's Elegy' would have evoked praise from Milton, or, better still, from Virgil; that serious philosopher, Goldwin Smith, has made some happy translations from Horace; Macaulay was a jurist, a historian, a statesman, an orator, a philosopher, but perhaps his poems, slight as they are, will outlive his history and the memory of his statesmanship. Dante, one of the five greatest poets of the world, was a diplomatist and a statesman; Chaucer, the fountain-head of English song, a man versed in public employment; Milton, Secretary to the Commonwealth and a great political force; Lord Lytton *père*, novelist, essayist, orator, statesman, poet, the greatest Colonial Secretary the Empire has had; Lord Lytton *fils*, successful Governor-General of India and a thorough diplomatist, the author of 'Lucile'; Canning, one of the greatest of English statesmen, an inveterate verse writer." On he went in this style until I thought he would tell us how Solon, the great law-giver of Athens, was a poet. He evidently felt it necessary to apologize for verse-making. At last he concluded, and said: "Miss Anna (doffing with an old-time courtly grace his straw hat),

Old though I am, for lady's love unfit,
The power of beauty I remember yet,

as Dryden says; in my young days I sometimes essayed to 'build the lofty rhyme,' and, if you will accept that little courtesy at my hands, I will be your laureate."

The young lady blushed, and said how delighted she would be. We all looked at each other in surprise. We had never seen McKnom in this mood before. But what cannot a bright, happy, beautiful girl effect?

Away went those knight errants of song, each to seek some leafy shade, for the muse is modest and will not be wooed in a crowd. While they were away, Messalla and the writer, to the disgust, it is to be feared, of the ladies, discussed protection and free trade, the position of Canada; Blake as an Imperial statesman.

"I never," said one of the party, no other than Dr. Facile, "understood Blake's conduct last election until he went over to be one of Justin McCarthy's following. That explains it. He had arranged with McCarthy to go into the Imperial Parliament as a home ruler at this election. It would never have done had he been a member of Parliament to forsake Canadian politics and his duty here, and join the home rulers in Ireland. He is fond of mystery and fond too of *finesse*. He, therefore, determined not to run in 1891. He also writes a letter which, whatever it meant, cut him away for the time from practical politics. He became a statesman out of business so far as Canada was concerned. He had a drive at Cartwright and indeed at our party, at his own party once, and at the Tories, and he was free."

"I believe," said Hale, "he meant annexation."

"He said he did not," replied Messalla, "and we must believe him."

It was clear, Messalla thought Blake did well to cut Canadian politics.

"He ought," said one, "to make a great impression on the Imperial Parliament, and without expressing an opinion as to his cause, I hope, for the honour of Canada, he will be a success."

"He may," said another, "have his head broken some day in Ireland."

"If they do that," laughed a third, "the man who defends the assaulter will undoubtedly plead that no man should venture into Irish politics with a skin and skull so thin—"

We laughed at this joke, and, ere we could continue the discussion, Glaucus, Helpsam and McKnom appeared.

Priority at Madame Lalage's suggestion was given to the philosopher who somewhat bashfully began: "Remember," he said, "this is an echo from other years, ere I gave my days and nights to Plato, ere these feet had trod the streets of Jerusalem and the shores of the Galilean lake."

Madame Lalage: "Peace to apologies. Appear in your true light now of a lover. I saw how much you enjoyed yourself in the democrat sitting near Anna as we drove on the Port Hope road."

McKnom was blushing through his wrinkled swarthy cheeks and looked greatly embarrassed.

"You had little eye for field or tree," continued Madame, "and little ear for anything I spoke back to you—for you know I was chaperone."

We all laughed.

McKnom: "Now, Madame Lalage, pray—pray—"

Madame Lalage: "Well, let us have the verses," and she beat the floor imperiously with her right foot.

McKnom, in a voice rich, modulant, expressive, read:—

That sad sweet soul surcharged with Grecian song
Declared "a thing of beauty is a joy forever,"
And now however space and time may sever,
Though life stretch out my years to span as long
As Gladstone's, you might make a heavy bet
This Cobourg visit and this Cobourg weather,
And that glad drive we two did have together,
I never, never can forget.

By those black eyes and by that hair of jet,
And by your sunny smile, dear maid! I swear,
And your frank bearing free as mountain air,
That form that with the marble may compare,
That tact full of Hibernian "comethers,"
I never, never can forget

The happy drive we two did have together.

McKnom was blushing; so was Miss Anna, who cried: "Oh! Mr. McKnom, it is just lovely! how nice of you!"