

EPHEMERIDES.

The place of honour to a Canadian *littérateur*. I am proud and pleased to be able to consign in this column the record of the high distinction lately conferred in France upon M. Faucher de St. Maurice. At a recent meeting of the *Société des Gens de Lettres de France*, on motion of Paul Feval, the well-known novelist, seconded by Tony Revillon, a *chroniqueur* of fame, M. Faucher de St. Maurice was unanimously elected a member. This is the first time that so high an honour is conferred on a Canadian, though I trust it will not be the last. M. Faucher de St. Maurice is altogether worthy of the compliment, for the beauty of his writings, the purity of his style—a merit so much appreciated in France—and his devotion to that country, as evinced by his service in the French army in Mexico and elsewhere.

While penning the preceding paragraph, a thought has struck me which may be worth nothing, but which, like many other "airy nothings," might still find a local habitation and a name. I refer to a formation of a French Literary Society for the whole Province. The recent meeting at the Canadian Institute of Ottawa showed conclusively the alert spirit animating the French writers of the Dominion, and from what I see of a movement, which I have always followed with interest, there is more literary activity among our French countrymen now than there ever was. And the standard much higher. Spite of the strictures of my friend, M. Ernest Tremblay, it seems that French prose, especially, is being cultivated to-day in Canada with a degree of careful finish which is not so perceptible in the volumes of *Le Foyer Canadien*, for instance, lately put into my hands. These being the facts, the question recurs—whether it would not tend still further to develop this praiseworthy spirit to form and carry on vigorously a central organization.

M. CHATVEAU would be precisely the man to serve as a pivot or rallying point for such a society. He resides permanently in Montreal, which is half way between the other two centres—Quebec and Ottawa. He is now above and beyond party jealousies. Without being an old man, he has acquired that maturity of experience which could guide and control. His own literary standing is admired and acknowledged on all hands. His present position gives him both prestige and sufficient leisure. I commend the idea to him. If he succeeded, in the next few years, it would be a legacy worthy of being placed beside the educational and political services which he has rendered his country. I am certain that MM. Le Moine, Legendre, Montpetit, Faucher de St. Maurice, Fréchette, Lemay, Marmette, Turcotte and others, at Quebec, and MM. Taché, Drapeau, Lajoie, Sulte, Tassé, David, and others, at Ottawa, would be ready to co-operate with him in laying the foundation of such an institution. Coming simultaneously with the extension of Laval University over the Province, the movement would be very popular.

I HAVE just been reading an account of Wilkie Collins' inner literary life from which I cull only two points for this column. In delivering his opinion of English style he refers to Addison and Byron. Of the former he says that he was a neat but trivial writer, not in the least vigorous or dramatic; but the very reverse—analytical and painfully minute. His style bears about as much resemblance to good strong nervous English as silver filigree does to a bronze statue. He adds that he does not attempt the style of Addison "because it is not worth while." This is decidedly cool and refreshing. No one, that I know of, ever accused Wilkie Collins of being a stylist before, his sole merit being in the cunning of his constructive faculty. He writes good and idiomatic English, but there is no "character" in it, and I am inclined to suspect that if he did attempt the style of Addison, he would never reach it. The only two writers of our time who have attained the pure Addisonian standard are Irving and Thackeray, and the former will be remembered for nothing else. But if Mr. Collins is astray with regard to the great writer of Queen Anne's time, he is right in regard to Lord Byron, and he is the first who has said so well that Byron's letters are the best English that he knows of—perfect and clear, bright and strong. This is very true. Byron's prose style is perfect, and had he chosen, he could, like Goethe and Victor Hugo, have made as great a name in prose as he has made in verse.

It is remarkable how very few writers have excelled in both prose and verse. I have no time to-day to enter into particulars, and can only instance the case of Dickens. We have several of his poems on record, but they are all cramped and common-place. Perhaps the most popular is the one called the "Ivy Green" in "Pickwick," but its conventionality will strike the reader. I give it as an example:

Oh! a dainty plant is the ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old;
Of right choice food are his meals, I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim;
And the mouldering dust that years have made
Is a merry meal for him.
Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, then, he wears no wings,
And a staid old hen—his he,
How closely he twinneth how tight he clings,
To his friend the huge oak tree!

And silly he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously bugs and crawlth round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.
Creeping where grim death has been,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Whole ages have fled, and their works decayed,
And nations have scattered been;
But the stout old ivy shall never fade
From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant, in its lonely days,
Shall fatten upon the past:
For the stately building man can raise
Is the ivy's food at last.
Creeping on, where time has been,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

A. STEELE PENN.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON ON ST. JAMES STREET.

DRIVING CLUB—PROCESSION OF EQUIPAGES—A LIST OF SLEIGHS—REFLECTIONS.

In his last communication from Quebec, Kriss Kringle states that the inhabitants of the Ancient Capital boast of having the only Driving Club in the Dominion.

That is a mistake. There is a Driving Club in Montreal, which turns out periodically, as sketches in the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS can testify.

Furthermore, there is no other city in Canada which can vie with the metropolis in the variety, beauty and richness of its equipages.

I mean its winter equipages. In summer we display nothing distinctive.

London has its Rotten Row (what a name!); Paris, its Longchamps; Madrid, its Prado; Berlin, its Unter-den-linden; Vienna, its Prater; Rome, its Pincio; New York, its Harlem Road.

The Montreal drive is St. James street; from Victoria-square to the Place d'Armes.

Why? I am sure I cannot tell. The distance is short; there is very little beauty in the street. The two termini are the only points of interest—the one, the bronze statue of the Queen, too small for the breadth of the square, and dwarfed by the towering buildings around; the other, the grand pile of Notre Dame, the Corinthian portico of the Bank of Montreal, and the Ionic front of the Consolidated Bank.

The reason of the choice, I suspect, is that this is the best place to be seen, for within that narrow area is the heart of Montreal.

Stand on the Post Office corner, for instance, on a Saturday afternoon, between the hours of three and five. Of course, the weather must not be too cold. If there is a snow-storm, all the better. Stand there and look for yourself. The first curious object is the gathered crowd itself. Packed at your corner and at the three corners opposite. Scores standing on every stair and vantage ground available. Some even in the open windows. There is a Club House in the vicinity, and, of course, it is gorged with spectators of elegant leisure and glittering binocle.

Many only stare. Some enjoy heartily. Others growl and criticize. It is a microcosm where all the phases of humanity congregate and are displayed, and the flash of equipages through the uniform dark mass, with the music of the silver bells, give it just that suspicion of poetry which helps to idealize it a little. But only a very little.

Let us catalogue the sleighs as they pass.

First, a one-horse sleigh, with two solid men in it. The men talk business and never look around.

Then, another one-horse sleigh, with gentleman and lady. Gent looks at the crowd and never minds his companion.

Next, a two-horse sleigh. Papa drives with his eldest son beside him; mamma esconced behind, with three or four little turbaned heads peeping up around her. A sparrow's nest in the pines. Pretty.

A stunner. Skeleton sleigh, red as fire, and trotter black as a coal. A grand stepper, champing his bit, swinging his head loftily, anxious to be off and away on a mile stretch and three minutes to cover it. Man erect on his tiny seat, clad in bearskin, looking very important.

The dowager's sleigh. Sober black throughout; black wolf skin robe trailing its tufted tails in the snow. Immense horses, sure-footed and slow; well-fed coachman in such livery as winter will allow. My lady looks out grandly through her gold-framed folders, or waves her fur-tipped gauntlet as she speaks to middle-aged daughter, or daughter-in-law.

A murmur in the crowd. All bend forward. We see neither the horses nor the sleigh. All our eyes, even if we had twenty apiece, are for her alone. Languidly reclining on her cushions, coddled in downy robes, with seal-skin cap dashed to one side, à la *vivandière*, and an adorable unconsciousness on her features, she glides before us like an apparition.

"O, Nivoid of the Northland!" exclaims one poor sentimental fellow.

"It is Cleopatra!" says another.

"With ermine, instead of the gauzes of Corinthus," replies a third, more classically inclined.

What is this! An *habitant* with his old woman in a low curiole. They got caught in the procession and cannot get out of it. So they fall back in their seats and take it easy. After all, the old fellow is as much a man as any of them, and *la vicille*—well, she was not bad-looking once.

And the train moves on. The sleigh with two lovers in it; with two swells; with a whole family, and the youngest son, aged eight, holding the reins magnificently; sleighs with ugly

women and pretty women, the latter, of course, predominating; red sleighs, blue sleighs, green sleighs, black sleighs.

On and on and on. Gradually the white light deepens into shadow. The spectacle becomes indistinct. The lamps are being lighted. The hum of the streets deadens. The tinkling bells sound fainter. Two hours have passed and it is dark. The crowd feels that it is numbed and disperses.

"Call these hard times?" says one.

"Cod-fish aristocracy!" says another.

"A hollow masquerade!" says a third.

"An insult to the poor!" says a fourth.

Not so; not so. It was a good action. The rich were happy in being looked at. The poor were happy in looking at them. To me, the sight of a pretty woman and a fine horse is feast enough for one day. I shall come again next Saturday. Good-night.

MUFTI.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

QUERIES.

No 9.—In the United States the name for an elementary school-book is a "Primer." In England, especially in the interior counties, the same work is called a "Horn Book." Why is this thus? Ottawa. DEVON.

No. 10.—I troubled you some time ago with an inquiry into the origin of the Scotch term Hognanay, which a correspondent, "Sciulus," answered very learnedly in four different ways. Being as inquisitive as I am ignorant, I venture again to ask what the meaning is of another Scotch expression—Handsel Monday, as applied by the peasantry of Scotland to the first Monday of the year? FERGUS.

No. 12.—"Getting into a scrape" is an expression of every day occurrence, but its history is very obscure. Our dictionaries tell us that it comes from the Swedish *skrap*. But what, I ask, is the meaning of the Swedish word itself? Montreal. H. L.

No. 13.—Can any Kingstonian give me the signification of the old Indian name Catarqui, if it has any? X.

NOTES.

No. 14.—I send you, according to your request, the proverbs concerning February, as I did those relating to January. But it will appear that they do not all apply to Canada, where the month is always cold and dry.

In England they say:
February fill the dyke
Either with the black or white—
that is, with rain or snow, and they add:
If it be white, it's the better to like.

In Wales they say:
The Welshman would rather see his dam on her bier.
Than see a fair February.

In Scotland:
At the months of the year
Curse a fair February.

The French say:
Fevrier qui donne neige.
Bel été nous plegie.

Furthermore, referring to the 2nd of the month, or the Festival of Candlemas, we have:
Si sol splendescat, Maria purificante,
Major erit glacies post festum quam fuit ante.

Which has been translated as follows by some Scotchman:

If Candlemas Day be dry and fair,
The half of winter's to come and mair;
If Candlemas Day be wet and foul,
The half of winter's gone at Yule.

That is worth testing in Canada. As your paper appears exactly on that day, Saturday, the 2nd, we shall see.

Precisely with the same idea, the Germans have a proverb that the shepherd would rather see the wolf enter his stable on Candlemas Day than the sun.

BEAVER HALL.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

LIEUT. GOVERNOR TILLEY.—A memoir of this distinguished statesman will be found in another column, from the pen of an eloquent writer.

THE ENGINEERS' BANQUET.—The daily papers having given an account of the banquet of the Engineers, we supplement their information by a view of the banquet hall itself. There is no more efficient and popular officer than Major Kennedy, who was formerly an alderman of this city, where he rendered much service to his constituents and the public generally.

THE LAST SHOT AT PLEVNA.—This view represents the last efforts of Osman Pasha to break through the Russian lines and effect his escape. But for his wound, he would perhaps have been enabled to push his success further than he actually did.

CORNWALL ILLUSTRATED.—The matter connected with the Stormont Stock and Training Farm, and the horse "Midway," the property of Messrs. Bergin, is given on the same page with the engravings.

THE QUEBEC PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.—A description of these beautiful edifices appears separately in the present issue.

IRMIN AND INGOLD.—This splendid picture represents a scene in a novel of the German author, Gustav Freytag, where a devoted girl falls in despair over the prostrate body of her warrior lover. We have reproduced the picture, however, not for this incident, but on account of the power of the expression and the extreme beauty of the drawing.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY.—Last summer we gave a full description of this colossal work, when the designs were exhibited in New York by the sculptor, Bartholdi. It will be remembered that it is intended to stand on an island in New York harbour, and to serve the double purpose of a light-house and a Centennial commemoration. It is a gift from the French people to the United States, and is already far advanced toward completion.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

Victor Hugo has presented 500*l.* as a New Year's offering for distribution among the drivers and conductors of two lines of omnibuses by which he is frequently a passenger. He has never received so much for two lines.

Goods are arriving rapidly in the bonded stores for the Exhibition, and the work of installation is actively pursued. A gushing writer draws attention to the fact that, on New Year's eve, Venus never shone so brilliantly, the "reading" of the star meaning unquestionable success of our World's Fair.

Towards the end of last week a libretto was mysteriously left at the stage door of the Bouffes Parisiens for the manager by a man unknown. Up to the present, the name of the author has not been ascertained. M. Comte, finding the work excellent, sent it to M. Offenbach, now at Nice.

The members of the Comédie Française will have the satisfaction of dividing the sum of 19,200*fr.*, the amount of the profit on the performances of the year which has just closed. The Comédie Française is a republic, but the manager is appointed by the government. The profits are divided among the *sociétaires* exclusively. It is doubtful if the theatre has ever been as prosperous as under the direction of M. Emile Perrin.

Another of the curious old places in Paris has disappeared. A house in the Rue des Pontles has been taken down, which was the first restaurant of which any account exists in the capital. It was opened in 1755 by special licence of the lieutenant of police. Up to that period food was duly served up in the inns and hostleries. At the restaurant in question, when it was first opened, only *bouillon* was sold, a sort of prepared soup called "Restaurant Divin." Later on meals were served at this place.

The Shah of Persia, who was received with so much ceremony when he visited the Courts of Europe, is to make another tour this summer, arriving in Paris when the Exhibition will be in its full glory. This time the "King of Kings" will travel *incognito*. His Majesty has been preceded to Europe by his chief secretary, Mirza Ali Khan Moum Oul Mouli, who will arrange his itinerary. The envoy, who is thirty-five years of age, is distinguished as having collaborated with Mizra Hussein Khan Spisalar Azam in the establishment of the post office in Persia after the European model, and also mint. The Persian Sovereign is desirous of making himself further acquainted with European civilization.

A number of Japanese and Chinese, on their way to Paris, arrived at Marseilles last week by the *Andrée*. The Chinese, eighteen in number, are architects, sculptors, and painters, who have come to erect their palace at Troadero. One of them, Sun-Hsing-Keng, is one of the first architects and sculptors of the Celestial Empire. With them has arrived the Attaché of the Chinese Legation at Berlin, Ts'ien-Tehpei, and they were accompanied by M. Hlland, German interpreter. The Japanese are youths of from twelve to fifteen years of age, who have come to complete their education in France. They have been confided to the care of M. Dury, formerly Consul-General of the latter country in Japan, who in 1867 accompanied to France Mim-bou-Tayon, the young Taikou of that period.

CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

The *Canadian Illustrated News* has taken a new departure—the illustration and description of all the towns in the country. It is an enterprise in which we wish our contemporary the utmost success. Cornwall is the last place noticed.—*Kingston Whig*.

The *Canadian Illustrated News* for the current week contains sixteen views in and about Cornwall, with five columns of descriptive letter press containing a deal of information respecting the settlement and growth of the old town. Mr. E. C. Mathews, Main Street, has been appointed agent for the sale of the *News*. Orders for the Morrisburg number, which will be a fine one by all accounts, should be left with him at once, so that the publisher may be able to regulate the supply.—*Morrisburg Courier*.

This week's number of the *Canadian Illustrated News* is an excellent one. Besides illustrations of other subjects of interest, a page is devoted to the picturesque features of the town of Cornwall. This is the second of a series of illustrated articles descriptive of Canadian cities, towns and villages, with their leading manufacturing establishments. This effort to illustrate and describe the Dominion ought to be liberally rewarded by the increased patronage accorded to the *Illustrated News*, the only illustrated journal in Canada.—*Bellefleur Intelligencer*.