

As soon as this brook escapes the shade of the trees it is bordered by grand bull-rushes, with unusually heavy cat-tails, and here and there a late purple iris—the purple flag or *fleur de lys*.

By the brook, too, grows the tall red valerian, regarded as a most potent remedy for various ailments, once by men and even yet by cats.

But we have no more time at present for flowers. We must hurry on to our Indian village, which we find some ten miles off, round a little wooden church devoted to the reclaimed Melicetes. Little knots are standing about, and a flag is floating half-mast high. Evidently some considerable personage is dead. We learn that the old chief, Francis Toomah, is lying in the church awaiting interment. After our kind-hearted guide has given a coin to each of the queer little papooses I steal in, and am confronted by a pathetic sight, not without its touch of the grotesque. The dead chief's coffin is wrapped in a coarse kind of black lining tied round it with ropes, and from one corner of the coffin, drip, drip, drip, on the floor splashes a ghastly fluid—dissolving blood. On one end stands an old pewter candlestick, with a stump of a dip guttering on its spike, and round the chapel stand six withered boughs of willow—the old Shakespearean willow—willow in mourning for the departed chief of a race of departed glory. The church itself has a pretty, fresh, white altar, with flowers. But through the flowers comes a fetid smell. To earth quickly with this poor dead shell of a dying species!

The sun is shining brightly now. Out into it, we hasten down to the broad, sparkling St. John, which has been our companion, with its sheen and whisper, all through this delicious drive. We cross on a ferry boat, driven by the oldest of Old-World contrivances—a horizontal horse treadmill.

The horse stands in a hole, and as he struggles forward to get out of it, the wheel recedes from under his feet and drives the shallow paddles. The two animals in this boat are patient enough to be managed by a negro boy and a little child. The big boy, with true negro laziness, collects the fares, and the little child steers, and eventually we are over. The negro directs us to turn off by the schoolhouse. We ask him how we are to know it. He says it looks like a dirty schoolhouse, and we feel that we understand him. We are not very certain of our way, but we do not care. It is so lovely. First it lies through the wood, like a bit of the New Forest—chequered light and shade on mossy turf; then we pass by a dirty schoolhouse (a Daniel! a Daniel!), when, to our delight, we see, for the first time, the glorious Canada lilies—like strayed revellers of tiger lilies, orange spotted with crimson, with their upright stems and graceful hanging bells reminding one of the columbine, the belfry of the fairies. These are down on the meadows that once were the bed of the river; and a boat lying among them high and dry, a hundred yards from the water, reminds us that the haughty St. John reconquers its ancient realm from time to time.

Now we climb again beside the railway, and find the hedge here snowy with elder flowers; there, glowing with the cones of the sumach, one can call them nothing but red-hot. We lose our way a few times of course, and come in two hours behind time. What of that? Our lungs are full of ozone

and our eyes have feasted on flowers. And as we crawl at the pace the law enjoins under horrible penalties over the curious half-mile-long wooden bridge which links Fredericton to St. Marys, we feel as if we had made a good meal of our day.

We had begun well, floating with a sensation of swimming in Mr. Carman's birch-bark canoe. Mr. Carman loves his canoe as King William the Conqueror loved the red deer, and dips his paddle with the hand of an artist and the satisfaction of a poet. What a dream it was to glide up the picturesque Nashwaak—our canoeist, six feet three in his stockings, towering in the stern, with fair hair bared to the wind and sun, now poling, now paddling with swift, deft strokes, now running up into some little natural cove to pluck a frond of the exquisite Canadian polypody, or the sagittaria, that queer plant whose leaves are arrow-heads, with barbs like Dundreary whiskers.

We cannot go far because the river is choked with King Gibson's huge rafts of deals, but it is a novelty to land on one of them and walk up the river, leaping from raft to raft. And we stopped before we leapt once too often.

Professor Roberts, the poet, was New Brunswick bred as well as Mr. Carman, and so was a man better known over there than either of them—Mr. Gilbert Parker; and the two first had for a headmaster Mr. G. R. Parkin, who is known all over the world as the exponent of Imperial Federation.

At Fredericton Bliss Carman took us to his home, and we learned the secret of much of the pathos which is so marked a note in his poetry, for his father, a brilliant lawyer who rose to be Attorney-General of the Province, died young, leaving Mr. Carman under the necessity of fighting the world for a living, and the ideal little home at Fredericton has often to stand empty. The home his father left him in the capital of New Brunswick is a dear old wooden cottage—cottage in the Colonies does not imply size, but style of architecture—with a wealth of creepers, and a garden run wild. When we were there the principal feature of the garden was an *emeritus* birch-bark canoe, which had carried him many a mile in voyages, half exploration, half picnic, up the mysterious and enchanting back waters of the great river. Now, alas! her stitches—she was a real Melicete canoe, sewn together with sinews—yawned, and she stood sadly in need of caulking with the resinous preparation they use. The house was entirely unoccupied. I doubt if it was even securely locked, the *prisca virtus* prevailing in that smiling land—if anywhere in the world.—Douglas Sladen, in the *Literary World*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH CANADIAN LITERATURE?"

To the Editor of the Week:

Sir,—Some one who is qualified to speak on behalf of Canadian literature should reply to the communication from Mr. Goldwin Smith on this subject, which appeared in the last number of THE WEEK. Meantime, if a journalist who has carefully observed during the past fifteen years, the gradual growth of Canadian literature, may offer an opinion, it would be that such pessimistic views must defeat their own purpose.

Those of us who were born and bred in Canada and who are ardently attached to our native country, may be accused of an optimism which a competent critic can easily dissect and expose—on paper—but in the end the

steadfast faith and undaunted courage of Canadians must conquer in the domain of literature as they are bound to do in other channels of energy. Canada, as it stands, is only a nation of yesterday. It is, for a time, necessarily overshadowed by the United States, which has a hundred years of history behind it, some of it very vivid and inspiring history. But as indifference amongst Canadians is being replaced by a community of feeling, as ignorance of the country and its possibilities gives way to knowledge and appreciation, so must events produce a distinctively national literature. It may not have earned that name yet, but once admit that we have "a fair list of authors" who have won a name in the literary world of Great Britain and the United States, and the inference may justly be drawn that the outlook is promising, not discouraging.

The practical difficulty is, of course, a real one and may not fairly be ignored. Our best writers often find it more advantageous to publish in a wider field. Many of their contributions undoubtedly appear in either a foreign periodical or in those of the Mother Country. The accumulated wealth of Great Britain and the United States is lavished on the magazines of the day to an extent which makes Canadian competition extremely difficult. But these facts all touch present commercial considerations, which cannot last forever, and do not, in the main, affect the real question at issue. If every literary hope or political principle were to be reduced to a basis of dollars and cents, then the gloom of those who regard without one gleam of confidence the prospects of a Canadian literature, would be well founded. The commercial instinct affects but does not control the impulses of any nation. If we are to believe the past, the highest literary work has not always been the best paid. You must look to other things for a true solution of the question. Are we to have a national literature? Is this country worthy of the love and admiration of its people; do its career and development afford them scope for great achievements; do its natural beauties and resources rise above the commonplace; has its history inspired them to great thoughts and nobler aspirations, and can confidence in the nation's future be maintained? Canadians, for the most part, answer Yes to these questions. Even in these days they have produced men like a Dawson, a Roberts, a Grant, a Lesperance, a Lampman or a Mair, whom they are not ashamed to name in any literary company. The literature of to-day has not so many geniuses that Canadians need cower before them. Having reached this stage of intellectual growth they are hardly prepared, as a nation striving after a national literature, to give up the ghost. They are doubtless less prepared to bear with equanimity, the scepticism of the critic and the lack of fame which necessarily attaches to a young country. There is hardly a Canadian writer who would not value a kindly word of encouragement from a man of letters like Mr. Goldwin Smith. It is a pity that they must continue to do their best without it.

Yours, etc.,
CANADIAN.

SHAKESPEARE.

To the Editor of The Week:

Sir,—Your good nature, good taste and good sense, of which you have much, will, I know, grant me a palm's breadth of space in your columns to further immortalize the immortal,—if that is not an Irishism. I hold much of the writings of Shakespeare to be inspired—at least equally so with the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament. Which latter the Church of England doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine. There are many others who hold the same opinion among your readers, and doubtless the following correspondence will refresh and please them. I wrote to the Rev. Prof. William Clark, of Trinity College, Toronto, and to the Rev. Prof. J. Clark Murray, of McGill College, Montreal, respecting the proper punctuation, etc., of a certain "inspired" passage in the poet's works, and from