

[FOR THE POST AND TRUE WITNESS.]

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH.

The shadows hung heavy and dark over that old home of ours, with the ugly remnant of tangled vines and ivy that in summer time had been its chief ornament. Nature had fitted the spot for the abode of the solitary or ill-used of fortune. It was far from any human dwelling, approached by a long, dark funeral avenue of firs and pines, sequestered by a sudden turn of the road, from the unfrequented highway, and isolated still more, if possible, by a stone wall, running round three sides of the building, enclosing a brick-paved courtyard. I scarcely know who had been the founder of the house, or what strange freak had led him to erect such barriers against his kind. It was some remote connection of our people, and the legend of the place scarce spoke of him at all, but it waxed garrulous over strains of ghostly music, that between midnight and dawn was said to be distinctly audible. Apropos of this, it hinted, distinctly, of a brave defence in the Republican days, and of an officer in the old Continental blue and buff, who still occasionally brandished swords with unseen foes, and died, in appearance, as they had once died in reality, when the moon was at its full, its beams falling upon and throwing into relief his dead face.

mained unspoken. I had seen him that Christmas night standing beside his betrothed wife, whom it was the fashion then to describe, beautiful as the fabled Marguerite. They were so well matched, those two, she so graceful and composed, he so handsome and so confident. I never quite understood their love for each other, there was so much pride in it. Each was proud of the other, each felt the other's pre-eminence. If it had not been so, I know not what. I often wondered, how poverty, disgrace, loss of personal beauty or the like, would have operated in this alliance of charms and counter-charms; I wondered, but what avails it to wonder now! I glanced at my brother, he was very thoughtful, and I knew by the cloud on his brow, that he had gone back there to that Christmas, too, and lived its scenes over again, and looked with joy and triumph again on the face of that lovely one he had chosen, and who had chosen him. What a grief lies between them, poverty, ruin, loneliness, and they stand on either side of it, and at Christmas time, or when some idle memory stirs them, they gaze across it at each other, and smile, with such a smile as the phantoms of our dreams wear.

and Queen, decking them out in all the bravery of our combined wardrobes. Such a heaven as there was that night, exquisitely lovely in her brief authority, with heavily fringed eyes, the lashes curling upwards, with a graceful figure, turning half mirthfully, half tenderly to her king and suzerain lord. He was a King worthy of the Queen, glowing in his pride and happiness, smiling with careless and easy pride upon his vassals. O! King, King, between thee and me, thy liege brother and first subject, the beauty of that Queen has dug a fearful gulf. The malicious whisper that it is bridged over by another Queen and sovereign lady, but I will not have her called a Queen, even though I am, indeed, her slave, rather angel, fairy, or whatever the heart of man is pleased to call his lady love. I will not deny that such a one has cast a veil over my eyes, and that she is seeking even now to blind me, not more effectually, though more visibly for a game of blind man's buff.

NOTES FROM THE CAPITAL. [FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.] OTTAWA, Dec. 22, 1880. Both sides have been freely using their ammunition since the freeze opened, on the Pacific Railway question, and no doubt advantage will be taken of the adjournment by indefatigable members of enlightened constituencies to supplement the speeches made in Parliament by fervid appeals, in which the country will be represented as either about to enter on an era of unprecedented prosperity or tottering on the verge of ruin. Never was there such a demand for Hansard as at present. Members are eagerly taking advantage of the new system, by which a full report of each day's proceedings appears the following day at three o'clock, thus enabling them to mail their speeches within a day of their delivery; whereas, under the old contract system they were not published. Thousands of copies are ordered every day, and scattered broadcast over the country. Whether the Pacific Railway contract be the good thing for the country or the contrary that each party represents it to be, there can be no doubt that it will pass the House, and once passed, be out of the domain of theory, and into that of practical experience. As to the terms, their stringency cannot be denied, but the main question, after all, is: Could we do any better? The road will be built at a subsidy of \$25,000,000 cash, 25,000,000 acres of land, and the cost of the Lake Superior section, and the road from Kamloops to Port Moody. These, according to Sandford Fleming's estimates of 15th April, 1880, would cost as follows:—

THE RELIGIOUS DECREES. PARIS, Dec. 22.—In the Senate yesterday, Buffet, Orleansist, questioned the Government on the removal of crucifixes from the elementary schools in Paris by order of the Prefect of the Seine. The debate showed that the law gave the local authorities no discretion relative to the retention of such religious emblems, but the removal in a careless and irreverent manner. The Prefect explained that he punished those who so acted, and had himself received authorization from the Premier before he ordered the removal. The Prefect's speech produced a great uproar on the right, particularly his statement that the question was one merely of school furniture. The order of the day was proposed by De Rasiere, Republican, that the Senate, regretting the act which gave rise to discussion passes to the order of the day, which was passed by 150 to 45. Afterwards the order of the day, pure and simple, proposed by the Left, was rejected by 50 to 124. A milder censure on the Prefect's conduct was proposed by the Moderates, which was shelved by a similar majority. To-day the Prefect resigned. It is stated that Premier Ferry and Constance, Minister of the Interior, also declared they will resign.

ROUND THE WORLD. The Dominion census will be taken on April the 4th. Rev. Mr. Enright, the Ritualist, elects to remain in prison. Count Von Arnim has been granted six months respite owing to ill-health. The British Government do not depend on the loyalty of the Irish Constabulary. A consultation of Irish Nationalists has taken place in Paris, at which ex-Head Centre Stephens presided. Lord Beaconsfield has received 133 offers to translate "Endymion" into French—94 from ladies and 39 from gentlemen. The Rev. Father Ignatius has published a list of the miracles that are said to have recently occurred at Llanthony. "The white race is greatly overrated," said a speaker to a Boston meeting of negroes relative to the Cadet Whittaker case. Mr. Thomas Carlyle has just completed his eighty-fifth year. His friends show much anxiety about the state of his health. "Le Tresor," by M. Coppee, has been translated into German by M. Ernest Koppel for production on several stages in Germany. Bernhardt rode about Boston in a showy carriage drawn by four horses, and attracted as much attention as a circus procession. In response to the appeal of the Catholic Bishop of Richmond, Va., liquor dealers are signing a pledge not to sell liquor on Sundays. The St. James' Gazette asserts that Siberia is a far richer country than Canada, and enjoys a climate neither warmer in summer nor colder in winter. A thief at St. Louis was chased out upon the great bridge by a policeman, and, rather than be arrested, dropped ninety feet and was drowned. Jay Gould has given an order for two Atlantic cables to Liemans Bros., cable manufacturers, to be completed in July next and laid in working order in September. A Cincinnati man turned his blind daughter into the street, though amply able to support her, because she refused to commit suicide with the poison which he provided. W. Banet Le Van read a paper before the Franklin Institute, at Philadelphia, in which he held that ninety miles an hour was a safely attainable speed on straight and level railroads. The total population of Oregon is 171,767—males, 103,388; females, 71,379. Of these 163,087 are white and 11,680 colored. The latter includes 9,500 Chinese, 2 Japanese, and 1,679 Indians and half-breeds. There are two Irish settlers in the new Legislature of Buenos Ayres, which opened 7th ult.—Mr. Edward Murphy, of Las Heras, and the Ven. Dean Dillon, the founder and proprietor of the Southern Cross. During the farwell performance of Talbot at the Comedie Francaise the veteran artist received a golden crown of laurels from the orchestra, and was the object of the liveliest sympathy on the part of his companions and the public generally. London Times.—Mr. J. W. Mackey, the Prince of Bonanzas, has just arrived in Paris from California to rejoin his family, from whom he has been separated for three years. He is going on a prolonged tour in the East, after which he is expected to settle in New York. It is whispered in Vatican circles that Leo XIII. intends to resume quietly and by degrees the State ceremonies of the Pontifical Court as they were celebrated eleven years ago, even to going down into St. Peter's and reviving the splendid ceremonies in that famous basilica. M. Gambetta's speeches and political pleadings, the publication of which is announced, will form seven volumes and will be issued at intervals of two months. The first to appear on the 15th inst., will extend from the defence of the Baudin memorial, Nov. 14, 1873, to the fall of the empire. Many were the scares that happened during the siege of Cabul. The arrival of the relieving forces was anxiously looked for. "I see Phayre's advanced guard coming over the brow of that hill," said General —, looking through a field glass. "No, General," said an A.D.C., "they are only six donkeys!" A school girl saw a play performed at San Luis, Cal., in which the heroine died by poison, after suffering very much from unrequited love. The girl had an unhappy love affair of her own, and the performance on the stage impressed her so deeply that she bought arsenic on the way home, and committed suicide. A Chicago tenant informed the owner of the house he occupied that the drainage was defective, and demanded repairs, which were not made. His daughter was barely saved from death by diphtheria, and the physician declared that she was poisoned by sewer gas. A suit for \$5,000 damages has been brought against the landlord. A woman at Lodi, Pa., deliberately starved herself to death. The process required six weeks of total abstinence from food, though she drank sparingly of water. She had long been eccentric, and the death of her mother destroyed her reason. Thereupon she went to bed with the avowed intention of dying, and never ate again. "Nothing," says the M. J. Times, "nothing so clearly proves the genuineness of Ireland's grievances as the spread and success of the Land League. No amount of skill in organization on the part of its leaders could stir a people without wrongs to rise in mutiny against imaginary injustice." Will the Boston Herald please observe? Chicago's sewage flows into a river and thence into a canal. At Joliet, forty miles distant, the water of the canal is turned into new levels. A frozen surface converted the canal between Joliet and Chicago into an airtight conduit, and the water now runs into Joliet wholly unpurified. The fear of a pestilence has led the people to ask for legislative relief. About six miles west of Beowawe station, on the Central Pacific road, there is a true geyser on the side of a mountain, or rather forty feet from it. The one which throws the highest stream is only about an inch and a half in diameter, but at intervals of thirty minutes it casts up boiling water to a height of 25 feet. A lot of others gush up in the vicinity over about forty acres of ground. Epps's COCOA—GRATEFUL AND COMFORTING. "By a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well selected cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast tables with a delicately flavored beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle miasms are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—Civil Service Gazette. Solely of the Cocoa Manufacturers, JAMES EPPS & Co., Homeopathic Chemists, London, England. Also makers of Epps's CIRCULAR ESSENCE FOR AFTER-DINNER USE.

Upon one Christmas only, this chronicler of our past failed to touch, I understood, the dearest to him of all, its chronicle re-

All the Christmas tide we revelled in mirth and good fellowship, never leaving off until, when at Twelfth Night, we chose our King

and Queen, decking them out in all the bravery of our combined wardrobes. Such a heaven as there was that night, exquisitely lovely in her brief authority, with heavily fringed eyes, the lashes curling upwards, with a graceful figure, turning half mirthfully, half tenderly to her king and suzerain lord.

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PLANTAGANET, ONT. PLANTAGANET, Ont., Dec. 22.—The parties supposed to have been connected with the murder of Pierre Brunet in September last are now in custody. It will be remembered that at the inquest nothing was elicited to attach guilt to any person. About two months ago a young man from this village named David Prevost, who left the day after the old man's disappearance, returned home partially insane. He had been up the river in one of Messrs. J. B. Booth & Co.'s shanties, and had to leave in consequence of this. Getting no better he was committed to L'Orignal jail, and having confessed to some thefts was sentenced by the magistrate to four months' imprisonment. Suspicion was entertained that he was in some manner implicated with the murder, and he has been closely watched by those in charge of him. Yesterday morning he confessed to Constable Patello that he, in company with Damase Brunet, a son of the murdered man, had committed the deed. Prevost states that he met Damase in the village who broached the matter to him and induced him to go to the old man's house. This they did in broad daylight, and he (Prevost) choked the old man to death, Damase, the son, standing by. The old man lived alone and had come in from his work and changed his clothes, the day being very wet; this accounts for the light clothing on the body when found. Prevost then went to his brother's place about a mile distant and returned after dark with a horse and cart, took the body and threw it into a hole where it was found and Damase afterwards covered it with branches. Constables Costello and Wright came up from L'Orignal last night and arrested Damase Brunet.

THE FRACAS IN THE HOUSE AT WASHINGTON. New York, Dec. 22.—The Washington special to the World says that when Weaver called Sparks a liar in the House yesterday, his voice was as calm as though in ordinary conversation. After Sparks called him a scoundrel and a villain Weaver stood as though hesitating between inclination and a sense of propriety, then with much deliberation he stepped into the aisle, walked slowly down and turned at Blount's seat into the space in front of the Speaker's desk. He was then within three feet of Sparks. His face set and his manner showed nothing of hesitation. Sparks rose reached for a chair, and partially raised it. Suddenly Einstein threw his burly arms over Weaver's shoulder, while the Sergeant-at-Arms stepped in front of Weaver and caught one arm. Two or three members grasped the other arm, but Weaver threw them all off like children. Townsend placed his arms around Sparks, and several others surrounded and held him to his seat. The crowd then surged in between the two men. The confusion was deafening. Weaver and Sparks were removed ten feet apart and were struggling to break away, each eager seemingly for a settlement on the spot. While the noise was at its height Randall left his seat in Committee and rushed down the aisle to his desk, snatching a gavel from the exhausted hands of Calvert, he nearly split the desk with it. The lull finally came, and with it the Speaker shouted to the Sergeant-at-Arms to see that order was resumed. After the adjournment Weaver and Sparks kept their seats several minutes. Sparks was the first to leave and Weaver followed shortly afterwards. To-day, probably, both will be brought to bar of the House for contempt. The Times says considerable sympathy is expressed on all sides for Weaver, while no one defends his conduct. The feeling is general that Sparks is mainly responsible for the fracas. The Herald says: Undoubtedly, Weaver owes a very humble apology to the House, for his conduct was inexcusable.

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