

WHERE THE STALEY MAPLES GROW IN FAIR CANADA.

Where the stately maples grow, in fair Canada,
Where the fresh clear water flows, in fair Canada,
Where the western breezes blow,
And bright cheeks like roses glow,
Lives the fairest maid I know, in fair Canada.

In the summer time so fine, in fair Canada,
'Neath the lovely spreading vine, in fair Canada,
When the rose and columbine
Their pure fragrance sweet combine,
She consented to be mine, in fair Canada.

Though the sky was clear and blue, in fair Canada,
And the swallows upward flew, in fair Canada;
Her bright eyes seemed wet with dew,
As she said—be kind and true
Unto her who loves but you, in fair Canada.

While green grows the maple tree, in fair Canada,
While clear streams meander free, in fair Canada,
While my feet can tread the lea,
And my native hills I see,
I'll be true my love to thee and fair Canada.

J. HENDERSON.

St. Hypollite street, Montreal.

MEISSONNIER AT HOME.

Meissonnier, when in Paris, lives near the Parc Monceau. It would be more than even his reputation is worth to live anywhere else. All the great artists settle there; the sign of their progress in their profession is to build a palace in this quarter. The frontage of Meissonnier is at the top of the Boulevard des Capucines, just at the beginning of the avenue de Villiers. Dumas and Sarah Bernhard are his neighbours, for all the artistic talents house in the same region. Each artist naturally builds in his own favorite style, and we have some wonderful structures to relieve the monotony of the paradise of M. Haussmann. One has derived his inspiration from Moorish Spain, another from Switzerland or Italy. Meissonnier's house is Italian renaissance. There is little to see outside beyond a large expanse of masonry, as neatly joined as a piece of cabinet work; but within you have the terraces and the arcades which form such charming back-grounds in the pictures of the Italian school. It is the Italian renaissance, adapted, of course, to modern French needs.

The owner has chosen a style which admits but sparingly of ornament, and which depends chiefly for its effect on the purity of unbroken line. But where the ornament comes in he has taken care to have it of the best. He has been his own designer. For the years during which the house has been in progress he has worked as an architect as well as a painter. Not a bit of the decoration in galleries, staircases and rooms but has been done from his own designs. It is a fact, but since men cannot live without a weakness, we may congratulate him on his choice. He has kept rigorously to the laws of his design. You pass from the courtyard to the studio, through a pillared hall, and up a staircase rich in carved panelling, for in the interior the style admits of somewhat greater luxuriance. Then you come to the prime wonder of the house—its immense studio. There are two ateliers; but the larger one, for some reason best known to the painter, serves as a kind of ante-chamber to the smaller. The latter is a retreat to which Meissonnier, who is one of the shyest of men, escapes from the world. It is difficult to give an idea of the amplitude of the great one without going into measurements; but certainly it would hold the deliberate assembly of a small state. Here again a rich panelling runs around the walls; and the place looks too fine for daily work. Meissonnier is understood to be reserving it for his large picture; for he means to paint a large picture of which something will be said by-and-by. Perhaps this much-talked-of project is a mere blind to relieve him of the importunities of friends who estimate canvases by the size of their frames. Considering the scale on which he usually paints, one of the cupboards of this apartment might serve him for a work-room. From the smaller studio we may pass out into the open air by a gallery which forms the roof of the arcade, and make the round of the premises to the coach-house and stables, all in perfect keeping of style. Even the back stairs are, in their way, exquisite specimens of early Italian work.

And this is but one of Meissonnier's homes. He has another at Poissy, a rural market whence Paris was fed in the old days. Here he lives in the summer time with his son, who is now out of the world of art, for his neighbour. There are two studios at Poissy, one at the top of the house, the other adjoining the stables, for use in inclement weather. At Poissy Meissonnier is something more than an artist—a municipal ruler, and he is believed to aspire to the high office of mayor. He missed it on one occasion by an unfortunate dispute with his colleagues. Whatever he may have been at one period of his life, he is now understood to be a very good republican. But there are men living who believe they have seen him in the cocked hat and green embroidery of some office of honour under the empire. They may be mistaken. He made quite a gallant stand against the authors of the "sixteenth of May," when their restrictions on the freedom of the press threatened to deprive him of his daily paper. The salon at Poissy has those quaint little square windows which so often figure in the backgrounds of his pictures. He built the country-house as he built the house in town, and he fitted it up with artistic luxuriance, designing most of the furniture himself, notably the silver services of the table. Each place has cost him something in

millions. The bill for the house in Paris has been augmented by his resolution to have all the work of the very best. He takes a peculiar pride in the thoroughness of the mechanical part of it. The stones are beautifully fitted and joined, and the building has scarcely settled an inch since the foundations were laid. This is a costly pleasure, or, say, an ingenious device for getting rid of superfluities of fortune. Without Poissy and Paris poor Meissonnier might be troubled by too rapidly accumulating millions. It is estimated that he has at least two millions in the shape of unfinished commissions in his studio at this present time.

Meissonnier goes out very little, and why should he do otherwise, having these pretty homes? A game of billiards under his own roof on a table which is just as early Italian as the rest in his favorite diversion. He has an un-failing resource against ennui in the society of his son, whom he adores, and in occasional visits to his married daughter. The younger Meissonnier is not only his son but his chosen companion and dearest friend. The elder's housekeeping habits are in part due to a natural timidity. A French writer who went to him the other day for the first biography which has ever appeared was astonished at his reluctance to furnish any details of his life. He seemed to dread to be looked at by the public. "You might have thought," said the writer, "I was 'investigating' him for some serious or shameful offence."

Meissonnier followed the Italian campaign under Napoleon III. to get materials for illustration, which he afterwards used with such effect in his picture of Solferino, and when this last and fatal struggle broke out he set forth with the army that was finally shut up at Metz. He shared the light heart of M. Olivier until the Germans began to gather round Bazaine, and then his friends began to fear he would have to share the captivity of the army. The officers saw the full extent of the danger and implored him to remove from a situation to which he was bound by no obligation of duty. So Meissonnier stole out of Metz, found his way to Paris and served through the remainder of the war as a volunteer. He has every appearance of a man who has seen such rough service. He is as short as the average French linesman, but very broad. There is nothing of the typical genius about his outer man. He has but to sit opposite to a looking-glass to have an excellent model of a professor of gymnastics or a fencing-master growing old. He has a round, full face, plenty of color in his cheeks and a bright eye, so animated in its expression that it makes you entirely forget the effect of his gray hair and beard. Intellectually and physically he would seem to be still in his prime. A friend who is modeling a statuette of him, which stands in the studio, has admirably caught this effect of wiry robustness which is the note of the figure. He has put him in the short pilot-jacket in which he usually works and has planted him very firmly on his legs. He has seized, in fact, the expression of a face, and this is one of the rarest things in portrait art.

The great picture for which the studio was nominally built is to be a revenge on the Germans and a sort of consolation for France. It is to be allegorical, therefore quite out of Meissonnier's line. May he never finish it, never even begin it! There is to be a bruised and bleeding France lying helpless with her shattered sword in her hand, and with the corpse of Regnault, the painter-soldier, on her breast. Above them hovers a Prussian eagle, hardly distinguishable in hateful attributes from the birds of night of the aviary of witchcraft. This sort of thing is unworthy of Meissonnier. No man could do it better; but, then, why do it at all? Such pictures have been turned out by fifties since the war, and they have always left the public cold. Meissonnier's best revenge on Prussia is to go on painting in his old style; but probably this one is unconsciously designed as a revenge on the critics quite as much as a revenge on Germany. It is to be of colossal dimensions; and the critics have hitherto said that Meissonnier cannot distinguish himself on any canvas much larger than his thumb-nail. It is their last ditch, and that is no doubt what makes him so anxious to storm it. They have been talking in that way about him all along; and one by one he has confounded them by doing the very things they have said he could never attempt.

He thinks that certain epochs of custom and manners produce their characteristic human form—have their effect, in fact, on the very structure of the frame, and that to reproduce them fairly you must look for men of our day in whom nature has continued the anatomical tradition. Having found such a subject, Meissonnier costumes him, tells him what he wants him to do—either to play at chess, or to read a book, or to work at a painting—and then lets him choose his attitude for himself. The sitter receives the subject as a kind of commission, and he has to pose for it according to his own device. The master watches him in every attitude and stops him when he thinks that he has found the one he wants. He does not place the man he lets the man place himself. Then he fixes the attitude in his sketch-book and from the sketch-book models the figure in wax, correcting the first crude idea, of course, all the time. From the model in wax he draws the figure on his canvas, and from model, sketch and original altogether he finally elaborates his finished work. No temptation can induce him to let a thing go with which he is not satisfied. This may seem like a common-place of praise, but it is not so; because in our days of luxurious professional living the best men are often tempted to keep

the pot boiling with scamped work. The scenes illustrative of Meissonnier's thoroughness are sometimes very curious. You may have a crowd of amateurs and dealers in the studio, bidding almost like men in an auction-room for the work as it stands unfinished on the easel. "You will let me have that." "No; you promised it to me." Meissonnier lets them talk on; and presently, perhaps, he takes up a pallet-knife and effaces, with one scrape, the principal figure. There is a cry of horror, and the artist has this collateral benefit from the sacrifice, that he is soon left alone to recommence the struggle for perfection.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY.

The first thing at Newstead which took me completely by surprise, for no accounts that I have seen led me to expect it, was to find that the whole country for many miles around is now nothing more or less than a colliery district. There is a colliery at Hucknall, and a large mining population is growing up around the place where Byron is buried. The church once stood in the midst of green, smiling meadows; now it is surrounded by pits, tramways and tall chimneys pouring out heavy volumes of smoke. There is another colliery at Annesley, the former home of Miss Chaworth, and to sum up all there is one at Newstead itself, not very far from the old abbey, but still not actually visible when you look out at the windows or walk in the garden. Byron, as we all know, never wanted to be buried in a church at all, but what would have been his disgust could he have foreseen that he was destined to lie amid a grimy colliery population, in the midst of coal mines, brick-works and factories. But though these things may vex a poetic soul, they bring wealth to the neighborhood, and Byron himself might have reconciled himself to the unromantic surroundings of his "old, old monastery" if he could have made the discovery which I shall presently describe.

Five miles from Mansfield, on the Nottingham road, there stands a fine old oak tree, with broad and spreading branches, just in front of some lodge gates. This tree is almost the sole relic of the ancient woods which were cut down and sold in 1793 by the fifth Lord Byron, from whom the poet inherited the estate—"the wicked lord," as he was called for many years after his death, nor has the appellation died out even at the present day among the country people round about. Within the lodge gates the road runs through large numbers of spruce-firs, dark and sombre, and gradually passes into an undulating park, and presently winds round to the left and brings the visitor to the front of the abbey, with its glorious east window and ancient cloisters—the window described by Byron himself in that noble verse:

"A mighty window, hollow in the centre,
Shorn of its glass of thousand colorings,
Through which the deepened glories once could enter,
Streaming from off the sun-like seraph wings,
Now yawns all desolate; now loud, now fainter,
The gale sweeps through its fretwork, and oft sings
The owl his anthem, where the silenced choir
Lies with their hallicujahs quenched like fire."

I could not, by the way, avoid feeling all through the day of my visit how much better Byron had described Newstead than any other writer since his time—I do not mean more poetically, but more accurately, so that we get a truer idea of the place from his account of it than can be gathered from the pages of all subsequent writers put together, in the same way, travellers in Switzerland and many parts of Italy will find few more faithful or more interesting guides than "Childe Harold."

The present entrance-hall of Newstead is part of the old crypt of the monastery, and is now filled with stuffed animals and birds shot by Mr. Webb in various parts of the world, for Mr. Webb appears to have been a mighty hunter in his earlier days. On the floor I noticed two large blocks of coal with dates written upon them. It was explained to me that these were samples of the "black diamonds" which have been found under Newstead during the last few years, luckily for the present owner of the estate. Col. Wildman, who bought it of Byron, ruined himself over the property, and was obliged to sell it for less than a third of what it had cost him. Mr. Webb will practically get the whole estate for nothing and a handsome yearly revenue into the bargain, for he has already made enough profit out of the coal beneath Newstead to pay for the purchase of it. A seam of four feet nine inches in depth has been found on the estate, and it would take generations to work it out. If the "wicked lord" had only hit upon this discovery or the great poet himself for that matter! Either of them would soon have made the money fly.

At the top of a narrow stone staircase on the left of the hall is Byron's old bed-room, adjoining his dressing-room, with the furniture which he used left quite unchanged. There on the walls is the portrait of his servant, Joe Murray, a bluff and hearty-looking fellow, smoking a long pipe; there also is the pugilist Jackson, in a long-tail blue coat, and got up in "go-to-meeting" clothes, but looking in spite of them every inch a "bruiser." Byron's bedstead, toilet service, shaving glass and other articles are where he left them, and close by is the "ghost's room," where his page slept. These rooms have been described time after time, and I shall do no more than refer briefly to them, with special reference to any changes that have been made during recent years. The library is never shown to strangers, but I was kindly per-

mitted to see it. It is a long, low room over the cloisters of the abbey, and opens on to a balcony, from where there is a beautiful look-out over the green space within the ruined chapel. Here the east window has a very noble appearance, and Boatswain's grave is also in sight, and many fine trees, among them a grand cedar. This is altogether a charming nook. From the library I went through various bed-rooms, among others the one in which Edward III. is said to have slept while on his way to the North, "while yet the church was Rome's." I remarked in this room a fine old carved bedstead, with the date 1533 upon it. In the day-rooms now used by the family there are the Byron relics, described by Irving and others, together with some more recent additions, the most interesting of which is perhaps the cap worn by Livingstone on his last journey—old, weather-beaten, mended with twine, and telling in itself a touching story of hardship and suffering. The African attendants of Livingstone in his last illness were entertained at Newstead by Mr. Webb and Mr. Stanley with them. A tree planted by Livingstone is in the grounds and another by Mr. Stanley. The oak planted by Byron on one side of the lawn is now a fine large tree, but it is decidedly a disfigurement to the lawn, and no wonder that both Col. Wildman and Mr. Webb have repeatedly talked of cutting it down.

Lord Byron's dining-room was also the old dining-room of the Abbots of Newstead, and here I noticed two little Chippendale sideboards and cellarets which belonged to the poet and are still used. I observed also a date on the drawing-room ceiling which no one seems to have mentioned—"March 28, 1633." In the cloisters there is a dark, underground, vault-like space in which the dead of the monastery used to be placed until the graves were ready to receive them. This was chosen by Byron as an excellent place for a plunge-bath, and he went there every day. It is a spot from which most people would shrink back with a kind of horror. The ghost of a monk was said to have been seen from time to time pacing up and down these cloisters, and his presence always foreboded evil to the lord of Newstead. This superstition has not entirely died out, although the owners of houses like Newstead do not like to talk about such things. It is a fact, however, that there are people living who are willing to testify that they have seen the spectral monk in the cloisters. I, for my part, can with a clear conscience testify that I did not.

Strange, however, are the influences of old beliefs and legends in houses of this kind. I was recently over a venerable castle in which the housekeeper assured me she had repeatedly seen ghosts and thought "nothing of it." Assuredly a more ghost-like place I never saw, nor could all the power of imagination depict one. Let me tell you a little incident. At Newstead there used to be a part of a human skull set in silver as a drinking cup. This was one of the freaks of Lord Byron, and the cup used to stand upon a table in the drawing-room for some years after his death. It was the skull of a monk, dug up in the garden. It soon became whispered that while that skull remained above ground the possessor of Newstead, whoever he might be, would have no heir, that good fortune would forsake him, and eventually the estate would pass from his hands. With Lord Byron, we know how events fell out. Col. Wildman, his old school-fellow, bought the estate, and he lived to see his son die, his fortune melt away, and Newstead go to another. It would be scarcely decorous to go into any details concerning the history of the present possessors, but it may be said that at first the strange fatality seemed destined to be repeated, when at length the skull was buried, it is said in the old chapel, but no one knows for certain except Mr. Webb himself. Not very long afterwards immense riches in the shape of coal were found lying under the very ground at Newstead, and there is no fear that the owner of the estate will have no one to succeed him. This is very curious, and there are people who would be disposed to say that it is something more.

The present lawn of the house was once the burial ground of the monks, and the gardener informed me that there were many skeletons beneath. It is here that the celebrated monument to Boatswain, the Newfoundland dog, was erected and still exists. Directly below it is a large vault, all bricked in and lined and ready for the reception of a body. This was the place chosen by Byron for his grave. It is not Boatswain's grave as all accounts had led me to believe and as is commonly supposed. The gardener assured me that no remains of a dog have been found in the vault, and he justly pointed out that the inscription written by Byron does not say that the dog is buried there—it simply says—"Near this spot," &c. The inscription was put up on the monument, but ample space was left for the insertion of the poet's name. It appears, therefore, to be a complete mistake to suppose that Byron ever wished to be buried with his dog, and with regard to the spot he selected it should be remembered that it was in consecrated ground, as he reminded the lawyers who objected to the clause in his will giving directions for his funeral.

The pond in which the monks used to keep supplies of fish remains untouched, and there is still a popular belief that great and mysterious treasures lie at the bottom of it. Hard by are the leaden statues brought from Italy by the "old Lord" and still known as the "old Lord's devils." If a workman is ever employed in or about the house now the first question he is