

TO A HUMMING BIRD IN A GARDEN.

BLITHE playmate of the Summer time,
Admiringly I greet thee;
Born in old England's hazy clime,
I scarcely hoped to greet thee.

Com'st thou from forests of Peru,
Or from Brazil's Savannas,
Where flowers of every dazzling hue
Flaunt, gorgeous as Sultanas?

Thou scannest me with doubtful gaze,
Suspicious little stranger!
Fear not! thy burnished wings may blaze
Secure from harm or danger.

Now here, now there, thy flash is seen,
Like some stray sunbeam darting,
With scarce a second's space between
Its coming and departing.

Mate of the bird that lives sublime
In Pat's immortal blunder,
Spied in two places at a time,
Thou challegest our wonder.

Suspended by thy slender bill
Sweet blooms thou lovest to rifle;
The subtle perfumes they distil
Might well thy being stifle.

Surely the honey-dew of flowers
Is slightly alcoholic,
Or why through all these August hours
Dost thou pursue thy frolic?
Ste. Sophie, August, 1887.

What though thy throatlet never rings
With music, soft or stirring;
Still, like a spinning-wheel, thy wings
Lucessantly are whirling.

How dearly I would love to see
Thy tiny *cara sposa*,
As full of sensibility
As any coy mimosa!

They say when hunters track her nest,
Where two warm pearls are lying;
She boldly fights, though sore distressed,
And sends the brigands flying.

What dainty epithets thy tribes
Have won from men of science!
Pedantic and poetic scribes
For once are in alliance.

Crested Coquette and Azure Crown,
Sun Gem and Ruby-Throated;
With Flaming Topaz, Crimson Down,
Are names that may be quoted.

Such titles aim to paint the hues
That on the darlings glitter;
And were we for a week to muse,
We scarce could light on fitter.

Farewell, bright bird! I envy thee,
Gay, rainbow-tinted rover;
Would that my life, like thine, were free
From care till all is over!

GEO. MURRAY.

MONTREAL LETTER.

THE number of citizens from Montreal, who celebrated Dominion Day at Ste. Rose, hardly amounted to a million, though the inhabitants of the village, in all sincerity, would have had you believe the contrary. At any rate stations and trains were "very throng," to use an unsophistically self-satisfied old country gentleman's phrase, so "throng" that, as one may generally remark under such circumstances, the men thought the only way to keep the peace was to keep their places. Ste. Rose has a reputation for beauty not altogether unmerited. Here the wide, almost currentless river, stretches shimmering between the low-lying banks, where trees and shrubs stand lost in contemplation of their green beauty. On this sleepy stream can one boat and "chatouiller les poissons," if not to the content of ever wildly adventurous city clerks, at least to that of more skilled anglers. The village itself, like every other Canadian village, boasts a huge church, a huge convent, *Monsieur le Curé's* poetical little nook, and some broad, solemn streets, flanked on either side by playfully painted mole hills, in which the *habitant* eats his pea-soup, smokes his bad tobacco, and finally leaves behind him twelve or fifteen heirs to keep up traditions that were old fifty years ago.

Speaking with one who had made all matters agricultural the subject of deep study, and who was quite free from any national prejudices, I was told the French field-labourer worked as well, if not better, than the Englishman. It seemed incredible, especially when we contrasted Upper and Lower Canada. However, our visit to Ste. Rose and the surrounding country did much to confirm this information. The *habitant* is proud, but not practically ambitious; thrifty, but conservative; neat, but he will spend his four score and ten years in a house with unfinished gallery. This last characteristic seems his most fatal one. He always sticks at the gallery. You may direct such an individual, but he can't direct you, and madame, the wife, will live and die "the madonna of the washtub."

Two mortal hours were spent in Ste. Rose vainly striving by bribes and promises to hire some conveyance for a twelve miles' drive. These unenterprising, sluggish-minded, rut-walkers would rather have perished than make any unusual effort that they might gain the wherewithal to increase the meagre beauty of their domains. At length, one stout woman, pillow woman, discovered her seven children spoke so loudly, pride and conventionality were silenced (even the pleasures of Arcadia are not without price). In this, as in similar cases, pride and conventionality trampled, unblushing avarice and ruse took their place, consequently we found ourselves paying not only more than had been stipulated, but sharing the drive with the most hopeful members of the family of seven.

Before my departure I had occasion to interview this *mère de famille* in her little front parlour, with its rag carpet, its darkened windows, its stiff table and chairs, its post-committee meeting aspect.

"Yes, during the summer they had enough to do, but when winter came, after the men had drawn their wood, they smoked and played cards, played cards and smoked, for hours together. No, little reading was accomplished. The children went to school till they were thirteen or fourteen and then helped at home. O, no! (with a funny face), the French certainly did not much like the English."

Here madame's eldest son made his appearance after a prolonged toilette, abnormally clean, and smilingly miserable in "masher" collar and city-made suit. We had waited exactly one hour for this miniature driver.

After an excruciating journey over roads that jolted out of our uncontrollable lips more expletives than any city passenger railway had ever done, we came within sight of a company of bouyant lads and lasses, dancing, laughing, flirting, and otherwise celebrating Dominion Day. They were all "old country people," for thus the English and Scotch in these districts quaintly distinguish themselves from the *habitants*. Cap-

tivating memories of village *fêtes* flitted through our minds as we looked at the fresh faced girls in coquettish print gowns, the muscular men, honest, warm-hearted as the fields and woods about them. There seemed so much more genuine courtesy, so much more real grace among these healthy-hearted people than in the often pseudo society of city growth. They were amused when they laughed, hungry when they ate, happy when they danced, and the tardy ones brought no clumsily concocted excuses for their late arrival, but only said, smilingly: "Ah! we couldn't come any sooner, for, you see, we had the cows to milk." Would the town folk could always present so excellent an apology!

Between the villages of B—— and St. A—— two roads meet. They both end at the station. One, grass-grown and unfinished, is shorter by two miles than the other. This latter passes Monsieur le Curé's house and the church. The former was closed some years ago by Monsieur le Curé's order, notwithstanding that an old Scotch gentleman had given part of the land on which it would be made, thus doing the people of B—— a great service. "But why not have two roads—a roundabout and a direct one?" "Monsieur le Curé thinks otherwise," was the resigned reply. This explained as much to us as it will doubtless explain to you.

Like most reformers, the ladies and gentlemen attending the temperance convention here last week decided they would gain their case. There is to be no compromise, but "total prohibition of the liquor traffic." Let them prohibit. Every true-hearted citizen must cry, "Down with those hideous, mysterious bar-rooms into which from the sunny street the weak-minded youth and crack-brained old gentlemen slink like evil spirits."

But man can't live by prohibition alone. They may say compromise is death, yet no compromise seems as fatal. Have you read the Rev. Mr. Haweis' admirable article in *The Universal Review* for this month? An effort has been made therein to reconcile the flesh and the spirit. It appears we can't arrive at any state of consistent existence until such reconciliation takes place. Those who cry "no theatre, no wine," returning fiercely their enemies' glare, remind one forcibly of the American and Britisher meeting upon a narrow bridge in Switzerland. Neither would give way an inch. The Englishman sat him down and took out his *Times*. The American, seeing this, calmly remarked: "After you, sir."

LOUIS LLOYD.

THE NORTH-WEST FARMERS.

SOME farmers from Ontario and from near Milwaukee have, within a week, visited the Regina plain, and they opened their eyes with wonder at the crops. They said there was no such promise in their parts. When the writer was in Toronto, a leading merchant and manufacturer—a jeweller—said to him: "Things were depressed last year in Ontario. What should we have done but for the North-West? In Toronto we can hardly get a bill paid; Ottawa at stagnation point; London comes next. We are glad and surprised when we receive \$150 from an Ontario shopkeeper. But it is a common thing to receive a letter with \$500 from a customer in the North-West. We look, I can tell you, with great interest for our Western mail."

I intend to take farmers as I met them haphazard when making my first trip to see my friends. I will give facts—what I saw.

The lot of a North-West farmer is much misconceived. It is one that strenuous wholesome spirits might well desire. It is not a paradisaic life, as that life has been divinely suggested, or by less sacred prophets, dreamed of and sung. He has no apples, or oranges, or pomegranates, etc., etc.; but, if he be married, he and his wife divide their labours, much as, according to Milton, Adam and Eve divided theirs on that fatal morn, after which no innocent dawn ever lit on this afflicted world—with, however, an advantage on the side of the North-West farmer—for there is no tree of knowledge of good and evil, in fact, in seven cases out of ten no tree at all in his domain; nor yet the beguiling serpent plotting wiles. It is a clear free life; if not paradisaic, not wholly unlike that of the earlier gods. And there is generally an angel around his footsteps such as never greeted Adam in Paradise, a cherub sweeter of aspect than the fairest of those whose rainbow wings hovered over the ways of unfallen man.

The North-West farmer may be divided into two great classes—the married and unmarried—and then we might make sub-divisions, based on character, *ad libitum*. But at present we are concerned with the married farmer. I will take the first house I "struck" since my return to the North-West.

I had intended visiting some friends in the Qu'Appelle Valley, about twenty miles north-west of Pense, and was indeed advertised to speak at Two Rivers school-house on Thursday, the 21st of June; but on Monday, the eighteenth, rain fell in torrents, and never "let up" until the following Sunday—a week of rain which made the streets of Regina fearful to contemplate, and still more fearful to drive a wheel over—which has filled the creeks and coulees, made farmers jubilant, and all sanguine about this year's crop, and the future of the great North-West. Such a storm as that of Monday the 18th! I wish it were my cue to describe a North-West storm, and that I had the pen to do justice to its power, splendour and sublimity; the crooked bar of fire that stands out on the black sky and instantly is gone, while the thunder, peal on peal, goes crashing over the cloud-darkened prairie. Four times on Monday the 18th, twice on Tuesday, and once on the Wednesday, I had to "change everything," having got drenched, and never believing that in such weather and over trails hopelessly demoralized, any persons would drive to the Two Rivers school-house, we gave up the idea of keeping that appointment. If I had known the tryst would have been kept by others I should have dared the storm and ploughed the uninviting trail.