

Denser and denser the darkness grew till the terrible lightning failed to disclose the form of him who stood nearest; louder and louder the thunder, till earth seemed all blackness and tumult, and even fear was benumbed and hell itself had been welcome. Heaven and earth seemed together in ruin unutterable blended, and death itself seemed destroyed, and life and time and remembrance. None have e'er measured in hours the length of the terrible conflict. Sunlight at length returning, a chosen band of the warriors, cautiously creeping out from their hiding places in caverns, saw the lake gone—in its stead gleamed the course of a silvery river—forests up-torn as if whirlwinds had lashed them with merciless fury. Great rocks studding the fields, torn from far distant mountains—Wah-Pet, defeated, retreating, had hurled them against his assailant—while to the northward a black cloud, often serried by lightning showed where the monster had hidden from Glooscap the godlike avenger. But he who worked the deliverance ne'er more was seen by the people; only against the dark north sky flashes his many-edged sword blade, guarding his people forever against the fierce wrath of the Beaver.

Frederickton, N.B., April 7, 1890.

CHARLES H. LUGRIN.

PARIS LETTER.

THE splendid though severe frosty weather, despite grumbings from a few, gives next to general satisfaction. All who can brave the open air, on regaining their homes, laugh at doctors, and scout the 293 patent medicines, professed incomparable as curatives of winter ills from colds to chilblains. And better, the bracing weather attracts one out, only do not stand to admire either dead nature, or to chat with a friend—keep moving. Those specialists who advocate an Alpine residence as a preventive against consumption will be able to study with advantage the vital statistics of the present winter. Koch had better look to his laurels. Wherever there is a pond or a lake, it is occupied by skaters, and by crowds looking on. Along the borders of the ponds are cressets of live coke, doubtless for the rheumatic, and before which babies in the arms are admitted free.

Not only has the intense cold been a salutary health reviver, but also a purse emptier, and at same time a purse filler. It induces people to go outside doors to shop, and, above all, to promenade through the very attractive fair along the Boulevards. This implies purchasing many of the pleasing things that catch the eye, and every shop or booth is a *multum in parvo*. The infallible barometers when business is brisk are the features of the trades-people. When these do not recall an undertaker, or a composition of sixpence in the pound, all's well. Good spirits on the part of dealers attract customers. President Carnot, accompanied by his military secretary, did the booth fair like any other ordinary mortal. The French can thus see their ruler at least once a year, as did their early ancestors their king, when the latter accepted their presents for his civil list, and in exchange promised peace. President Carnot declines gifts, and gives the assurances of peace gratis. Professor Huxley will be surprised to hear that "boothism" dominates at present every other ism in Paris, hypnotism not excepted. And the Salvation Army represents the generous multitude that purchases liberally from the impromptu stores along the foot-paths, and thus saves many a poor artisan and his family from dire misery by taking off his hands his stocks of home-made toys.

Art, like nature, has its due season. We like this annual return of an old custom, and welcome the opening year, as did the ancients, with dancing and music. Only its closet-skeleton consists of the terrible extra income tax levied for New Year gifts. Precedents are of no value; if so, the kissing of a relative after being shaved, and that was considered once a New Year's gift, would save your pocket. A branch of a tree, plucked in the sacred grove of Strennia, was the earliest form of gift; that simplicity exists in the form of offerings of chrysanthemums, oranges—with or without people's names on them—and fire-wood. In 1864, Mme. de Montespau made a present to Louis XIV. of a real *livre d'or*, where all the battles and sieges he won were chronicled in gold letters.

The booths that habitually line the Boulevards, from the closing days of the old to the opening days of the New Year, only date from 1789. Like all French institutions, the fair has had its ups and downs. Originally, it was founded to illustrate the new principle of equality, that the poor trader could, for at least a fortnight in the year, rank himself as a man and a brother, cheek by jowl with the upper crust John Gilpins. He can either hire a wooden hut or run one up himself with a pound of nails and a score of planks—the latter to be taken back at half price. The shanties are eight feet long and high, and five feet wide. To guard against fire, the huts must be three feet apart, ought not to touch the trees; nor can a booth sell the same class of goods as the shop facing it. Two of a trade never agree.

The fair extends over a distance of five miles; but its backbone runs from the Madeleine to the Bastille. It has been called the "Children's Paradise." Just think of five miles of varied toys! That's a real children's treat, and Cook might well organize excursions for little folks to revel in the joys. Foreigners never tire pilgrimaging the five-mile run; a good many notions and ideas are to be picked up, and new delights are constantly being placed on that market. Many of the tenants of these shanties live, move, and have their being in them. Out of admiration for their pluck, or sympathy for their hard lot in cold weather like the present, even the Harpagnons must loosen their purse-strings. Many of the tenants make their own toys during the long summer evenings.

But many also purchase toys from the wholesale manufacturer, and retail them at their own risk. To make up the money for this venture, everything that can be pledged at the pawn office will be. If the speculation fails, from

a damp, snowy, or wet holiday-tide, that means ruin and desolation; but if the weather be superb, as at present, the result will be a bonanza. The afternoon and the evening are the best hours of sale. There are about 900 booths erected from the Bastille to the Madeleine; two-thirds of these are on the left-hand side, that being the walking or fascinating part of the Boulevard. Round the Bastille, the fair terminates in the sale of oranges; perhaps this is a memento of the wholesale market for that fruit that was once held there, and of the habit citizens had of throwing oranges over the ramparts of the Bastille for the benefit of the poorer inmates.

The Marquis de Villette, husband of Voltaire's niece, *Belle et Bonne* presented a petition demanding the suppression of all *fêtes* because they only favoured hotel-keepers and dram shops. But it was the Revolution that suppressed the festivals, even that of New Year's Day itself, because the giving of presents recalled royalty, which was always receiving, though Lottin, the confectioner, retorted that his goods were all in the three colours. Toys, like bonbons, and the thousand little nothings that constitute what are known as *articles de Paris*, like dress, reflect the moment and live for the moment. Born in the morning they disappear in the evening.

Hence, the importance of symbolizing a reigning actuality. When Montgolfier invented his balloon, fashionables patronized gloves, having painted thereon in *gouache* scenes of balloon ascents, while fans, jewellery, bonbons, cane-knobs, etc., also recalled balloons. Palloy, the contractor for the demolition of the Bastille, had several toy souvenirs, for New Year's gifts, made out of the stones of the famous structure. At the present moment the toy novelty is the "Gouffé trunk," because that bailiff's remains were placed in a trunk after the murder. The toy is a small puzzle-tin trunk, with the request thereon painted in English, French and Spanish, the latter a tribute, doubtless, to Cuba for arresting Eyraud, the assassin, to "open the trunk." This is done by pressing the thumb-nail against the bottom of one of the side ends, when the end shoots out, and the bailiff appears.

At best the new are only the old toys. As Marie Antoinette remarked of fashions, the new is what has been. But the public not the less looks forward to the toy season, as it does to the Grand Prix or a Fourteenth of July review. This is due, not alone to witness the ingenuity of inventors, but the pleasure we feel in thinking of the joy that a novelty will light up in little faces. The windmill, with its four arms put in motion by pulling a string, is a toy only second in antiquity to that other, the human figure. The windmill sells by millions, and costs but two sous. It is the only toy that Germany cannot under-cut in sale. Two large firms in Paris make the windmill exclusively; all is made by the hand. One person shapes the wood, another puts pieces together, a third fixes the string, and a fourth lays on the paint.

Curious to say, the wooden sword and scabbard is exclusively a German product, because cheap. But the drum at three sous, and which is said to crack up patriotism in juveniles, is French. Not so with the leaden soldier; this is a German monopoly. Germany manufactures standing armies for empires, kingdoms and republics, and all these bloated armaments, too, in the uniform of each nation, English, French, Italian, etc.

At the rate of three sous per eight soldiers—cavalry, infantry or artillery—a nursing can secure quite a formidable army. This leaden *militaire* is eternal, and his passive obedience is of the most absolute kind. He falls out of the ranks without a murmur, and maintains his threatening attitude despite the menaces of the enemy. And the attitudes of the soldiers are so true to fact that they must have been designed by a Neuville, a Bellecourt, or a Detaille. If the spirit of national defence could be upheld by metallic soldiers as it is done by "wooden walls." They must be real architects and landscape gardeners that design those pretty farms and grounds at six sous with trees, and sheep sheltering beneath them; all watched by a shepherd's dog—the lineal descendant of the breed preserved in Noah's ark. Children prefer this rustic simplicity to the "grand castle" toy. In the latter case, mamma will likely tell her little one to wash its hands before touching the Château; similarly as some parents threaten to deprive baby of his mechanical horse if he mounts upon it. Give baby his wooden steed built on the lines of that of Troy; solid on its four wooden legs as a granny's stool that will put up with all the rider's caprices, that will support whip lashings without budging, and that will even allow its tail to be pulled away without a protest from either hind legs or teeth.

In 1840, when France was in a bubble against England on the Syrian question, the audience of the opera demanded that the orchestra should execute the *Marseillaise*. On refusal, the audience sang it without accompaniment. The Police Inspector vociferated: "The *Marseillaise* is not on the bills." "Nor are you either," retorted a god from above.

Z.

WOMAN'S mission on earth is something grand and noble, and she should be loved, respected and cared for by all mankind, for her natural disposition should be as God intended, that of love, affection and virtue. (For if she loves a man, she will give her right hand to please him; and if she hates him, she will give her right hand to avenge him.) Thus she lives in one extreme or the other, seldom bringing her judicatory thoughts to bear; and once outside her mission for which she was created, she is justly compared with a hell in the midst of humanity.—Dante.

F'RONEY.

THIRD PRIZE STORY. BY EMILY MCMANUS, ODESSA, ONT.

"F'RONEY! F'rony! Drat the girl! Where's she off to now? Might 'most as well have no one in the house," grumbled the woman. "F'rony, ain't you never goin' to put them children t' bed? And get along there yourself so 's't be up for berry-pickin' in the mornin'."

F'rony came slowly through the low doorway, a slight, supple figure, in short dark homespun skirt and waist. The rippling brown hair drawn smoothly back from the low brow, hung in a single thick braid. The dark oval face had great possibilities of beauty, but just now the mutinous curves of the mouth banished the dimples that would have showed in happy smiles, while the drooping lids half veiled dark sombre eyes.

"Oh! you've condescended to come at last, hev you?" the rasping, quarrelsome voice continued. "Well, jist stop your sulkin' and take th' children, and that lame brat t' bed."

The "lame brat" came in timidly, a certain shrinking hesitancy betokening ill-usage. He was but a child of eight or ten, perhaps, though the small drawn face was no index to the age. One leg, the left, hung withered and useless, so he swung himself painfully along by means of a crutch. His eyes were dark and bright like the girl's, but his hair was a strange contrast. Fair and silky, it hung about his shoulders, and clustered over his brow not unlike a nimbus. How often had Feronia likened it to the glory about the brow of the little child Jesus, as she had seen it in the picture of the "Madonna and Child," which hung in the Church of the Nativity, in the little French village below.

The child hobbled painfully along, keeping Feronia well between himself and the irate mistress of the house.

"Never mind, Dickey boy," Feronia whispered, stooping suddenly to him, "she dassen't touch you while I'm around," and picking him up, crutch and all, in her strong young arms, she ran up the winding stairway and deposited him on a bed in a shabby low room. Half-kneeling, half-reclining, her arms still encircling the boy, she raised a face, terrible in its dark intensity. "It can't last much longer," she said, still in that low, deep, vibrant whisper, "not much longer, Dickey boy! Jack *will* come, Jack *must* come soon now, and then no one will dare lay a finger roughly on you! No more knocks then, nor curses, nor food begrudged, Dickey, when Jack comes home! Just think of the toys, and books full of beautiful pictures, and oh Dickey! a chair that goes on wheels like the little boy's at the village! No more old crutches then, Dickey boy, when Jack comes home!" and the girl's face is positively beautiful now, lit up by hope and love, and a great overwhelming tenderness for the ill-used cripple clinging so trustingly to her.

"Won't you tell me all about it when you come back, F'rony?" he asks, as he feels her arms unloosening.

"Yes, yes," she answers, "but say your prayers while I am gone, and ask the good God to watch over Jack, night and day, and bring him back *soon, soon*."

It is a half-hour later that she finds Dick sitting up in bed, in the pale moonlight, quivering with excitement.

"F'rony! F'rony!" he calls, in a hoarse, cautious whisper, "Jack's a comin'! Jack's a comin'!"

Feronia is by his side in a moment.

"What is it Dickey? What is it?" she says. He draws her down to the low window by his bed, and points excitedly to where a man's figure is plainly outlined against the summer sky.

"I've watched him comin' along the road from 'way 'way down on the flats, and know it must be Jack."

Feronia is gazing with her heart in her eyes.

"Oh, it is! it must be!" she cried. "Who else would be comin' to the Heights at this hour? And look,"—excitedly—"he has lit a cigar. Do you not see the red spark? The men about here smoke only pipes."

There is a breathless pause in the low, moonlit room, but each can feel the other quivering.

"I'm going to him, Dickey," Feronia whispers. "I've got my shoes off. I can creep out of the window like I've often done, and swing myself down by a limb of the apple-tree."

She has the window wide open now.

"If only I could go too!" poor Dick sighs.

She kisses him tenderly. "Tis only for a little while, Dickey boy," she whispers, and creeps cautiously out, catches the swaying limb and swings lightly to the ground.

The house stood midway on a gentle slope that overlooked the banks of the Upper Ottawa, a full mile distant. An irregular garden hedged it in on three sides, while on the fourth was an open flat where the cows and sheep congregated in the evening. Beyond the garden a winding path stretched, curving down the slope as if irresolute, till it finally took a decided turn to the left, and so on along the river's edge to S. —, where the old stone church with its melodious chime, and the gaudy new post office were the chief points of interest. For the population was more or less a floating one where gangs of "shanty-men" in winter, and "river-drivers" in spring and summer outnumbered the residents ten to one. To the north of the house lay the "Heights" proper, a strange sombre background, its huge irregular masses crowned here and there with dense forests, and again a rocky peak standing out bleak and bare. There huckleberries abounded and it was in quest of these the household of Le Croix was to go on the morrow. Huckleberries had been plentiful there from