

of about half an hour's duration. After leaving the bridge and driving through the city the party turned along the river road, and the driving being brisk the picturesque cottage marking the descent to the whirlpool rapids was soon reached. The party evinced the liveliest interest and pleasure at the beautiful view, and after the gentlemen had purchased a number of pipes, resumed their seats in the sleighs and returned to the bridge, over which they walked. On the Canadian side they again took seats in the sleighs and drove to the hotel, where they took lunch. About one o'clock they viewed the water fall from the base of Table Rock. The party were all furnished with ice-creepers and pressed forward, the Princess immediately after the guide, to the edge of the ice cones. A large crowd was assembled on the bank at the top of the staircase, and saluted as the party passed. Afterwards they drove across the new Suspension Bridge, and after spending considerable time in Prospect Park and Goat Island, returned to the hotel about six o'clock. On Friday, the Vice-Regal party returned by special train to Ottawa.

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT ON THE VICTORIA EMBANKMENT.—The trial of the Jablockhoff system of electric lighting upon the Thames Embankment has proved beyond all possibility of dispute its practicability and efficiency, but the all-important question of cost must remain unsettled until the report of the experiments is issued at the end of the three months. There are twenty lamps, the light from which is moderated by means of opalescent glass globes. They are placed about 120 feet apart along the river-side parapet, some of the old gas-posts serving as standards for them, and from each lamp the electric conductor, consisting of seven strands of fine copper wire, surrounded by two coats of insulating material, is carried down the pipe, and thence along the subway to the engine-house, from which the farthest light is 730 yards distant. The engine, which works at the rate of 140 strokes a minute, turning the magnets of the Gramme machine at the rate of 600 revolutions per minute, is one of twenty horse-power, supplied by Messrs. Ransome, Sims and Head, of Ipswich. On the first night of the trial only ten lamps were used, but the whole number are now nightly in operation, and the general effect is most satisfactory. The light is strong and clear, the entire roadway of the Embankment being brilliantly illuminated, and the rays extending on the other side far across the river itself, whilst the intervening gas jets only serve as foils to set off the beauty and brilliancy of their new rivals. Large print can be easily read at a distance of fifty feet, whilst the smaller kinds used in newspapers are distinctly legible at thirty. The electric light in itself is absolutely colourless, the reddish tinge observable when this system is employed resulting from the plaster of Paris used in the construction of the "candle."

CHAMPAGNE AND ITS MANUFACTURE.—The most superficial observer cannot but fail to remark how the appearance of champagne on the dinner-table causes pleasurable emotions to be reflected on the countenances of host and guests. It is generally at this moment that all restraint disappears from the conversation, and that from witty brains shoot forth brilliant flashes engendered by the sparkling froth and the inspiring fire of that nectar so justly called the King of Joy.

Nowadays, in the Old as well as in the New World, champagne forms part and parcel of all banquets and crowns all festive occasions. 'Tis the charming bouquet that presides at those ceremonies which draw and knit closer together the bonds of friendship and that stimulates patriotic virtues. But with champagne it is the case as with many other products; people give way to its seductive attractions without enquiring into its origin and remain whilom ignorant of the means by which it is transformed, from a thick and troubled juice, such as it is after leaving the vine, into that limpid liquid, compared to which the purest crystal sometimes appears dim.

The greatest establishment for the manufacture of champagne, the one which now enjoys public favour in Europe for the quality of its production and which has obtained first prize medals at the Philadelphia and Paris Exhibitions, is, it would appear, that of Messieurs E. Mercier & Cie, at Epernay, Eastern France.

This establishment is in an admirable situation. Placed at the foot of the finest hillsides of the Marne, in the centre of the most renowned vineyards, it possesses gigantic cellars hewn out into the chalky rock without support of any masonry and extending under the mountain in lengthy tunnels. These subterranean passages, several miles in length, are subdivided into a large number of galleries crossed and united by principal arteries lined with rails. Owing to this arrangement the waggons of the Eastern Railroad Company penetrate into all parts of this labyrinth whence they carry away millions of bottles.

It is rarely given to enjoy so grandiose a sight. All that has been written up to this date on the most extraordinary caves, gives but an imperfect idea of these cellars, which strangers, passing through the country, never fail to visit. One may judge of their extent when it is stated that their surface is over two square miles.

The cool and even temperature which reigns constantly in all parts of these subterranean passages, is one of the causes which in no small degree contribute to give to the champagne

"Mercier" that even head, that degree of maturity and that subtle aroma so appreciated by gourmets.

The establishment comprises vast sheds wherein are filled, corked and wired over 40,000 bottles a day. It is there that is to be seen that immense cask, the largest in the Champagne District, holding the contents of 75,000 bottles and on the head of which ten or twelve people could sit down to table. This leviathan (as it is called) was manufactured in the establishment itself out of sculptured oak and was exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in the tasting pavilion.

The real champagne vintage has but one birthplace, viz., that part of the Department of La Marne which is in the neighbourhood of Epernay and Reims.

This wine, which is imported into all the countries of the world and whose reputation is universal, owes the great *finesse* of its taste, the freshness and the particular bouquet characterizing it and distinguishing it from all other wines, to the particular nature of the soil and to the mode of culture practised in Champagne.

About one-fourth of the vineyards are planted with white vines and the remaining three-fourths with black vines; both are employed in the manufacture of white wine, the juice of the black grapes being separated immediately after picking from the skins and stones which alone produce the reddish tint when allowed to ferment with the liquid portion of the grape; sometimes, however, in good and early seasons, when the black grapes have obtained a high degree of maturity, the wine made therefrom has a reddish tint which is then a proof of high quality.

The wine made from black grapes has more body, viscosity and bouquet than that made from the white grapes; but, on the other hand, this latter has more *finesse* and more sap and is more prone to make the wine sparkling.

The following are the principal operations which have to be undergone by the sparkling wines of Champagne: the harvesting is done with the greatest care; the grapes are cut with precaution from the stem, selected, skinned and then crushed in the wine-press every day. The three first pressings when taken from the wine-press give the choice vine (*de cuvée*) the fourth pressing (*vin de tailles* or *de suite*) is employed for the manufacture of wines of inferior quality and the rest of the liquid is used to make the wine for the vintners and coopers.

On issuing from the wine-press, the wine is put into casks where it begins to ferment after a few days and this fermentation stops only when the first frosts set in; the clear wine is then drawn off from the dregs which have accumulated at the bottom of the casks, and one then proceeds with the blending, which consists in mixing together, in huge hogsheads, the wines of different growths and notably the wines made from white grapes with those made from black grapes; for that purpose are chosen those which blend best together, whose bouquet and tint best agree, improve one another and tend to make one another mutually perfect. This mixture of wines of various growths takes the name of vintages which are serially numbered or else distinguished by the name of the district whose production has entered more largely into their manufacture, and as in each vineyard there are vines of various selection, it is possible to have, under the same name, some of very different qualities, which depends upon the exposure of the soil, of the nature of the slope and the greater or lesser care exercised in the cultivating and harvesting; but the quality varies more especially according to the years.

The bottling takes place towards the time when the hot weather sets in, generally about May. Two or three months after the bottles have been filled and corked, the sparkling froth begins to develop; when the froth becomes rather strong and that the bottles begin to fly into pieces, they are lowered into cold subterranean cellars, where they must remain at least three to four months before they have attained the maturity at which they are fit for being sent away.

When a vintage has remained in the cellar long enough to have acquired all the requisite qualities, the bottles are placed *sur pointe*, i. e., neck downwards on racks, and during a month or two each bottle must be shook and moved daily, a sharp and rotatory motion being applied to it so as to cause all the deposit which has formed itself in the bottles during the developing of the froth to settle upon the cork, and this operation is only complete when the sediment has all sunk on to the cork.

Through the developing of the fermentation in the bottles, the natural saccharine matter of the wine has transformed itself partly into alcohol and partly into froth (carbonic acid gas). In this state, the best wine is not agreeable to drink and it is necessary to add to it a sweet liqueur made of pure canly sugar, melted in old wine of the first choice kept for that purpose, in order to give back to the sparkling wine the sugar which has been eaten through the developing of the growth.

The following is the *modus operandi*: after the sediment has entirely settled on the cork, the bottle is held neck downwards by one of the operatives, who draws the cork which comes out bringing the sediment with it. The *vacuum* thus created is filled with the sweet liqueur; according to the quality of it put into the wine, the wine becomes dry or sweet in conformity with the demands of various countries; the bottle is then carefully recorked and wired and is ready for packing.

Our readers are indebted for the interesting information we have placed before them to the members of the large Canadian firm of importers, A. GIBERTON & CIE., whose warehouses and sample-rooms are in the new Nuns' Block, DeBresoles street, off St. Sulpice street, and who during a recent sojourn in Europe have had the good fortune of gaining the confidence of Messieurs E. Mercier & Cie., and of being appointed their representatives in Canada.

THE QUEBEC SKATING CLUB.

On Tuesday evening last the members of the Quebec Skating Club and their friends had a gala time on the occasion of the second annual carnival held at the new Rink, Grande Allée.

A view of the interior of the building and report thereon at the time of last year's carnival have been given to our readers, so that further comment on the Rink and its accessories is superfluous. Suffice it that nearly three hundred ladies and gentlemen appeared in costume on the ice on Tuesday last, garbed in the multitudinous and variegated dresses appertaining to many climes and grades of nationalities. Nearly fifteen hundred spectators, culled from Quebec's highest *ton*, witnessed the interesting display and "rare show," and, by their protracted visit, notwithstanding the cold inseparable from an icy substance, evinced the greatest satisfaction in the performance of the skaters. The Rink was beautifully decorated with the flags of all nations and no nations (not No Nation Indians), the Dominion, Province and City of Quebec Arms; while thousands of gas jets enhanced the brilliancy of the scene. Mr. E. Holliwel, the indefatigable Secretary-Treasurer of the Club, deserves every praise for the excellent arrangements made for the comfort of spectators, who expressed themselves frequently as being highly gratified. The "B" Battery Band furnished excellent music and the mazy dance was freely indulged in. The belle of the ball was chosen out of many by various admirers, and it were hard to know to whom to award the palm, when all looked well. An Ethiopian character claimed the title and, in his speciality, was immense. But we do not go to Africa for our belles. Quebec ladies, whether blonde or brunette, will hold their own against all comers for beauty—until it be proved they should take a back seat. The carnival was a complete success and did not conclude until a late hour.

BURNS' FESTIVAL.

CALEDONIAN SOCIETY'S CONCERT.

On Friday, 24th ult., a concert was given in the Mechanics' Hall to commemorate Burns' birthday. Several interesting addresses were delivered, and songs were sung by Mrs. Thrower, Miss Annie Edwards, and others. Mr. Hamilton Corbett, the Scotch humorist and singer, was received with loud applause, and contributed largely to the amusement of those present. His drollery is inimitable, and he is possessed of a good and flexible voice; whether singing a comic song or a pathetic one, he is alike at home. Mr. Corbett gave two concerts, at which he sang a medley of songs of Burns and of the Jacobite period, as well as some English ones. We have seldom heard a better rendering of "The Village Blacksmith." Mr. Corbett can certainly claim first rank among concert singers.

ECHOES FROM LONDON.

THE Junior Naval and Military Club at Marlborough-gate is to be re-established, with the title of the Beaconsfield Club.

A GENTLEMAN addressed to himself a letter in Hebrew characters, and posted it. The letter was delivered in due course, the English translation being written in one corner for the guidance of the postman. This is an agreeable tribute to the erudition of the Post Office.

A NUMBER of the friends of Lord Dufferin, who greatly admired the statue of him in Montreal, have ordered a duplicate of the sculptor, Mr. Joseph Milmore, to be placed in London. The statue will be in bronze, 8 feet high, and will be mounted on a pedestal of Scotch granite, 20 feet in height. Who ever heard of this in Montreal?

AMONG other causes to which the increased mortality of the winter season may be attributed is the unwholesomeness of places of public worship. In many of these buildings there is no attempt whatever at ventilation; and the warming arrangements, when they exist, are as a rule defective, and wholly insufficient to neutralize the effects of damp and cold draughts of air that exercise so pernicious and often so deadly an effect on invalids, aged persons, and young children.

THE origin of the British nation has often supplied ethnologists with matter for discussion. Most of us are content with accepting the fact that we are a mixed race, or, in the words of the Laureate, "Saxon and Norman and Dane are we;" but some curious individuals have carried their researches further, and have arrived at the conclusion that we are of Israelitish origin. Associations for diffusing information on this subject have been formed in Bristol and Sheffield

and other places. A course of lectures is being delivered in London, and an association to be called the Metropolitan Anglo-Israel Association has been inaugurated.

THE French are making a handsome thing out of the low prices of English shares. They have money in abundance, and have bought up at terribly-depressed prices the stocks our people have had to sacrifice, and these same stocks, as they well know, we shall buy of them back again before May next at an enormous rise. The loss to us and the gain to our fortunate neighbours will amount to a startling sum. Fancy France, the conquered and ruined country, that had to pay Germany two hundred millions sterling a few years ago, being to-day in a position to play such a part as this, while we are groaning under hardships and distress! 'Tis passing strange, to say the least of it.

THE electric lamps on the Thames Embankment are being more absolutely tested than they have hitherto been. Until now they have been used only side by side with the ordinary gas-lights, and although the contrast was all in their favour, their capacity to supersede gas entirely was not shown. Now, however, the gas lamps are not lighted at all where the electric lamps are, and, notwithstanding the as yet unsurmounted difficulty of the light waxing and waning, the electric illumination is very powerful and very agreeable to the public using the Embankment. The number of tradesmen putting an electric light in their windows is increasing rapidly, and this will have a tendency to compel the adoption of the same means of lighting the streets.

It is said that before long the people of England will be startled by a new development of the Ministerial policy in the East. The scheme of introducing a large number of English colonists into Asia Minor has been suggested by the English Government, and is now the subject of negotiation with the Porte. The Ministry has discovered that not only the institutions, but the people of Asia Minor want reform, and the plan appears to be to scatter throughout the country a sprinkling of English colonists, who would act as models and guides to the native population. There will be no difficulty in obtaining land for a large number of English agriculturists, and the idea seems to be that the introduction of a foreign element among the people of Asia Minor will give them new life and the much-needed spirit of enterprise. Such a scheme, undertaken by private enterprise, with the sanction of the Turkish Government, would not be open to any objection, and it might be attended with considerable benefit.

LITERARY.

TENNYSON is writing a poem on the death of the Princess Alice.

B. L. FARJEON has written a new novel, "The Widow Cherry." It can be swallowed in two bites.

It has been suggested that the chapter mottoes in George Eliot's later works are principally her husband's running commentary on her work.

LOUIS BLANC thinks there will be a universal republic in this world soon, and only two languages spoken, English for commerce and French for literature.

A WRITER in the London *Spectator* says plainly that "Mr. Cook's style, which decidedly rises sometimes to the 'highfalutin', is much against him with English readers."

AN American edition of Gladstone's essays is announced by Charles Scribner's Sons. "Gleanings of Past Years," is the title of the forthcoming small volumes, five in number.

CHARLES G. LELAND ("Hans Breitman") has just completed for a London magazine a short novel, entitled "Ebenezzer," in which all the characters are American negroes.

It is rumored that Mr. Tom Taylor is about to retire from the editorship of *Punch*, and that Mr. F. C. Burnand will probably succeed him.

BOSTON had a Carnival of Authors in Music Hall on the 2nd inst. They had a Tennyson booth, a Bryant booth, a Goethe booth, and so on in numbers without number. Pretty girls, of course. Music naturally.

SWINBURNE, the poet, according to the London correspondent of the Irish *Times*, is preparing, under the instruction of Father Keogh, the Superior of the Brompton Oratory, for his reception into the Roman Catholic Church.

MR. WILLIAM BLACK, author of "A Princess of Thule," is at present living at Brighton, where he intends to remain for six months. His readers may therefore look forward to a new story, one of the chief features of which will be the delineation of the life, manners, and scenery at the greatest of English watering-places.

IN the forthcoming number of *Social Notes* there will be an article on the late Princess Alice, from the pen of Mr. Theodore Martin. It is said that the Queen herself has taken a deep interest in the paper, and has revised it with her own hand.

WITH such unfinished works as Charles Dickens' "Edwin Drood," Thackeray's "Denis Duval," Macaulay's "History of England," Motley's "Life of John Barneveldt," and Henry Wilson's "History of the Great Conflict," must now be placed Bayard Taylor's "Life of Goethe."

THE late Caleb Cushing was a great novel reader, and read everything in this line from the trashiest yellow-coloured novel, through the light and heavy French schools, to the profound works on psychology that the novels of to-day are getting to be. He has always had a passion for novel-reading, and unless extremely busy would keep one at his side all day long, ready to pick it up at his first spare moment. He could not converse on light, social topics, but would stop on the street and join in a discussion with strangers if a word was dropped while he was passing on any profound subject, or indicating a sober topic of discourse.