

ingly liberal and democratic ; so liberal, in fact, that game is rapidly disappearing, from actual extinction. So long as the gunning period lasts, to all persons of age and who apply for it, a shooting permit is delivered upon payment of a certain tax, and this enables any one to wander on all lands not expressly reserved by the owners for their own gunning, and there kill game.

All told, the French peasant's life resembles in many respects the life of the Canadian farmer ; the day with him begins at dawn ; and he attends with his own hands to the plowing and sowing of the fields, and to all the work and duties necessarily incumbent upon the agricultural labourer. Yet he is quite another sort of a man in appearance and education. His ancestors were, so to speak, attached to the soil which he owns to-day, and this inheritance of labour has left on him its rough imprint. He, moreover, receives little education, and though he respects learning in others, he cares little for it so far as he is himself concerned.

Among the curious rural ceremonies figures the " blessing of the fields " on rogation day. This consisted in public prayers and processions through the fields, during which the village rector, clad in his priestly garments, would bless the earth newly sown. These public prayers were formerly an occasion for gatherings among the peasants, and often presented attractive spectacles ; but to-day, save in some districts of Brittany, the processions through the fields have been abolished, and the old rogation feast is gradually becoming a thing of the past.

Physically the northern French peasant is rather tall, and exceedingly muscular. In Brittany and the south he is thickset and short ; but active and energetic. The dif-

ferent races are still very marked throughout the whole of France, but especially so in the south, where it is often the case that the men of the mountains have a different origin from those of the plains below. Arles, for instance, claims to have preserved the ancient Greek type, being a Greek colony, while the Gallo-Roman origin is conceded to the majority in the southern section of the country. Thus it is difficult to find any unity in the population of France so far as the races of men go.

The many patois* of the south and west, the Basque, which is a language of his own, and the Breton, seem to indicate the existence in the past of so many distinct families of men, whose origin may have been common, but whose unity has ceased for centuries. The upper classes, and what French people are pleased to call the " debris " of the nobility, are of course of Frank or German origin ; but this race was never attached to the soil. It came with the invasions, mastered the Gallo-Roman provinces, and ruled over them well-nigh until the end of the last century. Then it was, that after so long a duration of power, this race weakened and fell under the uprising of modern ideas of equality and freedom.

Yet the French peasant, unhampered as he is to-day by any feudal bonds, retains in a measure the inheritance of the past. He seems to have derived a love of the soil, so strong and so intense, that he is willing to spend his life nailed, as it were, to the very spot to which the old laws had tied down his forefathers. Conservative above all, it can be said, that he purposely retards progress whenever it is in his power to do so. Thus it is that he is often unwilling to make use of new discoveries in agricultural

* [Pá-twa] A French word. Dialects peculiar to illiterate classes.