

celebrity. Is it not time respectable sheets should refuse to admit any but artistic cuts? While they continue to issue such fearful documents, we cannot wonder that foreigners maintain we have no art, comic or otherwise.

The difference between the legitimately comic and the laughable is the difference between broad farce and wit. Absurdity may excite a vulgar guffaw from the groundlings but is immeasurably below the aim of art. This distinction seems to be unknown to some public caterers. Such crass pictorial crudities as they offer are outside of the question and do not deserve to be considered in estimating Canadian comic art.

Caricature, or comic art proper, lends valuable points to the physiologist as well as to the psychologist. Our feverish civilization has evolved new facial expressions. Students of coins and of statuary must have noticed the graver expression of the faces of old, the greater likeness to the old gods, and the less to the fox. A series of portrait caricatures to date, from the time of the inscrutable countenances of the Memnon type, would indubitably show how the quickening of the wits has made changes in physiognomy. Lavater a hundred years since published his essays on faces, and, if he did not establish a system, he at least left matter for thoughtful enquiry. His portraits were almost all taken from German heads, with labels affixed to show that certain casts of visage characterize certain inner qualities. In none of them do we find the nervous shrewdness of the New England peddler nor the rattlesnake eye of the speculator and "boodler." These came in with the age of electricity. As above said, a continuous series of cotemporary caricatures would show progressive change in like manner as an Antinous is developed from the diagram of a frog, and *vice versa*. Future Canadians will have impressed on them by the pencils of our comic artists, the personality of Sir John A. Macdonald, and the men of to-day more vividly than could be done by the pens of historians. The man who is well caricatured may make himself easy about his place in history. Posterity will be familiarly acquainted with his person and habits as he lived.

To return to our question: "Has Canada a comic art worthy of the name?" It might be invidious to particularise artists and periodicals whose mission it is to supply the demand for caricature. Suffice that a call for it exists and exerts an influence. The political, and even social, effects of pictorial hits are not to be ignored. It may be asked is this power, this art, a good and legitimate power? When exercised for good I, for one, think it is. Free from all prejudice in our own favour, mis-called "patriotic," the conclusion must be come to, that Canada does possess a comic art, its best examples not below the English standard, more artistic on an average and in better drawing than the American, less stagey than the French and more perspicuous than the German. A test is easily made, the qualities sought are quick perception of points, self-control in the artist to restrain over-exaggeration, ease of treatment as distinct from mere smartness, absence of vulgarity a modicum of grace and a cultured hand. Lay the work of a known Canadian artist, or artists, alongside of the cartoons in last week's *Punch*, and if we find the designs are equal in the qualities sought, then the question is answered affirmatively, "True comic art has an existence in Canada."

An injurious piece of advice is frequently given to Canadian *litterateurs*, to limit their authorship to Canadian themes. This, if acted on, would be to cramp the flight of thought. With illustrative artists localism, on the contrary, is the essence of success. The more our comic pencils picture the Canada of to-day with its physiognomies, incidents, virtues and foibles, the more their illustrations will please in the present and be historic material in the future.

HUNTER DUVAR.

A MODERN MYSTIC—V.

WHEN we met the next day, Helpsam said: "Let us go and take afternoon tea with Madame Lalage. She told me last night if I could bring you she would have a few literary people to meet you."

"I prefer," said McKnom, "talking in the open air, but as Mrs. Lalage no doubt means it kindly, we must, I suppose, accept her invitation."

We found Madame Lalage in her drawing-room; the dainty tea service set out on a pretty table of the time of Voltaire, and, seated on divans and on chairs, some of the leading literary men and women of Ottawa. There were Lampman and Waters, Hale with Gunhilda and two other ladies.

"So Mr. McKnom," began Madame Lalage, who is a Canadian Madame Dacier, "I learn from Mr. Helpsam that you have been attacking my friends the Sophists. You seem to have taken the calumnies of Plato and Aristotle for gospel, the Sophists were very useful and respectable people I assure you. Oh, you must not shake your head. They were the journalists and literary men of the fifth century, B.C. In the following century they gave place to Specialists, Rhetoricians, Logicians, Moralists, but they did a great work in their day. The mistake Socrates and Plato made was in regarding them as the cause of the flippancy, levity, heartless cleverness, scepticism which weighed on their hearts; they were the outcome of the democracy which I am told you denounce with all Plato's horror; you surely do not take as evidence the satire of Aristophanes?"

McKnom: "You acknowledge they were sceptical and this was baneful in teachers of youth."

Madame Lalage: "I know this, that Macaulay hardly exaggerates, when, in his youthful essay, he dilates on all we owe Athens—the Athens he has in his mind was shaped by the Sophists—the foundations laid on which Alexandria and Athens rose to be centres of learning. These men wandered from place to place teaching, and were sometimes greatly honoured. Would this have been possible did they corrupt the youth? I grant you they were unsound in faith, but was not this unsoundness a measure of their advance?"

McKnom: "I do not attach so much importance to that as you think. You are, my dear lady, judging me by the reports made to you by my friend Mr. Helpsam. With them, however, man was the measure of everything. They had no base for morals external to themselves—in a word, no immutable base at all. It is a very curious thing that the answer given by God when he spoke to Moses and told him to say, 'I am,' had sent him, would agree with the Platonic philosophy. Plato uses *being* as opposed to what is created, and 'I am' is clearly used in that sense. None of us can say 'I am,' because we are not the same for two consecutive minutes. Many persons reading superficially think that the phrase, 'God is truth,' means merely that He cannot lie. It has a far profounder meaning and in fact when our Lord says, 'I am the way, the truth and the life,' and again, 'Before Abraham was I am,' He is talking language Plato would have understood, and claiming to be God-being, as opposed to whatever is created. Aristotle uses the Greek words, *onta, einai, esti*, to express 'being' as the highest abstract notion which is reached by a supreme analysis of our mental conceptions. With Plato on the other hand it means abiding, real, absolute being, opposed to *ta gignomena*, things created, and therefore which may be destroyed. The doctrine of Goethe that nothing is, but all things are *becoming*, is, as we might expect, entirely opposed to Platonism, which holds that in the world of sense and in the moral world, beneath ever varying phenomena are fixed and immutable facts, arrangements, laws; that these are the work of a Creator, expressions of His will, existing independently of man, greater than the conceptions we form of them, above even our conceptions, objective and not subjective; that these are *ideai*, not ideas in the usual acceptation, but forms plastic and eternal, determining the forms, combinations, plans, modes, outlines into which all created things are cast, that as all things are modelled on these—and these the work of a supreme mind—there must be throughout all creation a unity of design, and is not this what the professors of physical science demonstrate in the material world?"

"Well," said Mr. Hale, "If there are these unalterable laws of nature, do they not exclude a Providence, in which, however, Plato with great inconsistency believed?"

"I do not agree with you there," said Helpsam, "for those laws imply not merely one or several remote acts of creation, but creative energy constantly put forth. It is in the highest degree improbable that God should put forth creative energy at one period and then cease. If space is infinite then there must be regions beyond the power of any contrivances of finite creatures to explore, and every day in remote and, for man, unsurveyed spaces there may be—nay, certainly are—scenes of new creation."

"A profound thought," said McKnom, "which I confess I never met and which never struck me before."

"And," added Helpsam, "as in our works—take for instance an eight-day clock, and a three-hundred-and-sixty-five-day clock could be made—there is need of the intervention of mind to keep them going; so it may be with what we call the laws of nature."

"This is all very profound," said Miss ———, "but would not Mr. McKnom give us his views on Platonic love?"

That gentleman looked at the young lady sideways with a smile half of pity, half of reproof, and said: "Plato never married. How would the young lady like love not leading thither?"

"O, well, my dear," said Madame Lalage, "we have soared into regions above such small considerations. You might as well talk of a lover's sigh in a cyclone."

"No, no, dear Madame," replied McKnom, "if the question is asked seriously it is in point—genuine love has its idea—its form, its model in the nature of God, who is the root of all goodness and all wisdom, but He who made the affections placed the intellect, what Plato calls *nous*, above them. Man is a constitution which can only work happily and harmoniously when lordly reason is supreme over its other parts—affections, feelings, passions. But in order that the intellect may do its work, it must be enlightened. The enlightenment of the intellect is the measure of the justness of conscience. Have you ever noticed the remarkable words of our Lord, 'This is life eternal.' What? To love God? No. To fear God? No. To love your neighbour? No. But 'to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent.' From a true knowledge of God the others come."

He paused and sipped his tea and one of the young ladies murmured a line from her favourite poet,

We needs must love the highest when we see it.

"You see, my dear friends," continued McKnom, "when you have these objective realities there is something in which the mind can anchor; you have a fulcrum on which to get a leverage; you have influences which mould, elevate, instruct, beautify, ennoble mind and character, as the placid lake reflects all the beauty of form and tint of overarching sky and shelving shore and shimmering tree top; as the air, the rain, the sun, com-

binning with the laws of its nature mould the plant and flowers. The power to be beautiful is in the seed of the rose, but without the earth, the air, the rain, the sun, it is only a little grain, and so man has in him possibilities of infinite nobleness, goodness, greatness, heroism, but without a knowledge of the truth all lies dormant—sometimes languishes to death."

McKnom had finished his tea and one of the young ladies, taking his cup, said, "Shall I give you another?" The face of the sage lighted up with a smile in answer to hers, and he said, "Yes, thank you; like Doctor Johnson, I am fond of tea."

"Well," said Madame Lalage, "every Saturday we take tea here and sometimes counsel, and so far we are like the majesty of Pope's verse, and we shall always be glad to see you, Mr. McKnom."

"Pope," said McKnom, with some contempt, "a good epigrammatist but a bad philosopher—in fact a Sophist, flippant, plausible, superficial, ingenious, sceptical. Whatever is, is not best, because in the moral world by its very nature moral beings can make things good, better, best, or bad, worse, worst. Without unity man's mind is a higgledy-piggledy, which Doctor Johnson defined to be 'a conglomerated mass of heterogeneous matter.' Around him are sights and scenes, which become a spiritual burden where there is the least earnestness; above him heights he cannot reach, mysteries which return no answer to his questionings, a monotony of change, an awful and boundless gloom. With unity in the mind, unity in the object it contemplates, all is order in phenomena, and his nature will call for whatever is harmonious for the eye, the ear, the touch, the affections, the intellect. He will want a government that will secure liberty and order; love based on beauty, affection, esteem; friendship, strong, trustful, noble; society refined, intellectual, free from envies and scandals; property acquired without over-reaching, and maintained by thrift and honest dealing. Power will be sought for the means of doing good and prized only for that. All this is possible only by having a permanent object of contemplation and affection, an object infinitely good and powerful. To seek such an object is a law of the mind, and this is the reason why in all ages men have sought for an infallible authority. The Egyptians—and they were a wise and great people when Greece was sunk in barbarism—gave their priesthood authority to deal with every action of men's lives, from the diet of the king to the scales of the musician. Greek philosophy sought such authority in tradition, the testimony of the wise, the voice of mankind; and the adherents of the Church of Rome have an infallible Pope and a multitude of directors. The infallibility is necessary, but it can be found only in God."

It was drawing towards six o'clock, when who should come in but an eminent Cabinet Minister and one of the A.D.C's.

"Now," said Helpsam, "let us have the application of Platonism to Canadian political life."

"Suppose," said Madame Lalage, addressing the A. D. C., "you suggest to His Excellency to make a convivium at which Sir John, Mr. Blake, Sir John Thompson and Mr. Laurier shall be present, and let us have a Platonic discussion on the art of governments."

The A. D. C. laughed as we all did, as though the idea was ludicrous.

"That," said one of the party, "must probably be deferred to next session. Why should Madame not make one or two *noctes canaque derum* herself?"

"Then," answered Madame, "will you all sup with me on Sunday evening?"

All agreed and we took our leave.

NICHOLAS FLOOD DAVIN.

PHOTOGRAPH OF A FRENCH-CANADIAN VILLAGE.

STRANDED for an afternoon in this place, the idea arises of whiling away the gap between trains by faithfully transcribing the surroundings. St. Vincent de Paul, the locality in question, is a very small place, very French, and very hard to get at. Its chief inhabitants consist of 338 linen-garbed convicts, under the wing of a fortress-like penitentiary, back of which, in a rich, verdant champaign, stretches a beautiful farm, on which some of them are working in gangs—not very hard. After entering the cool stone portals, disposing of some business with one of the unfortunates behind wickets, and having a word with the warden, the problem of the day began, to wit, what to do with myself. I strayed down the hill past the few sleepy sunny-white cottages on the street along the prison-wall, where I lit upon the hotel at the corner, on whose gallery I write. It is a large hostelry; the gallery is most attractive and rustic, in parts latticed with green, and there is much of fresh colours of paint about it, and a shrub in a green box at the end. It has an ample yard behind, with many large white sheds and stables.

A wedding-party have taken possession of the inner rooms, and there is piano playing and reasonably tuneful singing, very pleasant to hear. All the party have just had ginger-ale sent up to them. A glance shows the men sitting with white vests and their coats off. In a few minutes they are dancing lively, old-fashioned steps to the music of "Munny Musk," and other obsolete strains. All, at length, will have supper down stairs, and the wives will take their husbands aside and grumble over the bill.

This hotel has not only the point of vantage on the corner, but is near the church, which stands just by on the top of the hill, whence its fine masonry front and tin-clad