

Kirby's "Chien d'Or," which I confess had never any charms for me, was pronounced by one of our literateurs, in a paper read before the Montreal "Society of Canadian Literature," "one of the best Canadian novels written." Haliburton's "Sam Slick" is as original a personality as Dickens' "Sam Weller." Mrs. Moodie, when later years and more prosperous circumstances had brought a clearer judgment and less prejudiced opinions, gave us some good work, as did also others. And, to-day, Wilfred Chateaucclair, cultured, æsthetic, ardent, passionate, patriotic, full of high ideals—and erratic only as sometimes the highest genius is erratic—and with him many a lesser star in the galaxy of Canada's literary firmament are demonstrating that the two pursuits of prose and poetry may be successfully co-existent.

We have need of prose. Its almost illimitable realm is forever inviting us to fresh explorations. We want more writers of high class fiction. We are proud of, and thankful for, those we have; but there is room for more. We want essayists, more of them: thoughtful, philosophic or brilliant; deducers of practical conclusions for our guidance from the ethics of the past and of to-day. Art critics and critics of nature, who shall give us books like White's "Selborne," and Dudley Warner's "Summer in a Garden"—only with the locale changed.

Nay, and let not our Kingsford and his compeers take umbrage, we have even room for more historians. We want more writers on general and particular subjects. On hygiene and domestic, moral, social, religious and educational matters, in the magazines and the newspapers. We want any number of strong, practical, common sense, observant, alert writers—and of writers graceful, fanciful, but always reverent. So that, while we accord our grateful recognition to our poets in the past, and while we look with unqualified pride, and hope that is limitless, to our singers of to-day, we yet earnestly desire to have a more widely distributed effort in the direction we have indicated.

EROL GERVAISE.

Montreal.

LITTLE MAY.

AH, well-a-day! our little May,
With her eyes so blue, and her hair so brown,
And her heart so light, she strayed away
O'er the clover fields to the distant town.

She strayed away, our little May,
So blue her eyes, and her hair so brown;
For the fields were lone, and the town was gay,
And one stood waiting out over the down.

Ah! many a day, for little May,
With her eyes so blue and her hair so brown,
Her mother looked out where the great town lay,
And sighed as the years crept over the down.

At last, one day, was it little May?
Her eyes were blue, her hair—so brown,
The hair of this weary woman was gray,
Who paused by the grave this side o' the down.

Oh, woe the day! moaned the woman gray,
When with eyes so blue, and with hair so brown,
And with heart so light, I strayed away
O'er the clover fields to the distant town.

Toronto.

JAY KAYELLE.

LONDON LETTER.

IN a busy little nook out of Whitehall Scotland Yard is to be found. The police, with their offices of all sorts, occupy the whole of the Yard, and here cabmen bring property found in their carriages or the owners of those umbrellas and handbags hasten to give information of their loss. A queer place, full of echoing noises that come through the open windows with startling clearness; a queer place with a character of its own, and one not easy to forget. Doors were perpetually banging, and people came briskly out into the air and tramped by without looking to the right or left, under the archway into the high road; cabs are for ever rattling in and out; everyone has an immense deal to do and to think about, and no time for anyone's concerns but their own. I stood aside while my companion searched for information as to the whereabouts of the Police Museum we were trying to find, and watched the anxious, restless crowd. There were fifty types, from the strong-minded old maid who was determined to recover her brown paper parcel, to the young gentleman who had lost a favourite stick. There were many nationalities, including a Frenchman, unaltered, even to the shape of his boots, since Leech drew him, and a Spaniard, fresh with grievances no doubt connected with the exhibition in Earl's Court. Every now and then idle folk strolled in, who, making nothing of us and our official surroundings, contented themselves with a stare and then turned back again, away from us and our noisy clamour; or country cousins, bent on doing the town thoroughly, took a rapid glance round, and then despatched us in a couple of seconds as not being interesting, for in our court there are no shops, and no carriages, and no smart people.

By-and-by we were guided to a house in a corner—a house nearly two centuries old, built the day just after the lodging of the Scotch Princes was cleared away—and then, after giving up our order, we stumbled through a dark

passage, down some steps into a small room built out at the back, and so found ourselves among the relics of which the police have from time to time become possessed, in consequence of the break up of the home of a murderer like Lamson, or a burglar like Peace, or an astrologer like Signor Zendavesta. Coverings were taken off the glass cases running round the walls. Some necessary dusting and re-arranging was given to the less valuable things exposed on the table or on shelves, and then we were permitted leisurely to examine the contents of the museum, unlike any museum I have visited. These hoarded relics make Madame Tussaud, who must wish to add to the Chamber of Horrors, no doubt very envious.

Near a small penknife and pair of scissors once belonging to the Claimant there lie picklocks, jemmy, gimlet, and crucible, the portable property of Peace, an excellent steady person of good character, deacon in his church, whose daughter living with him in the respectable suburban home, was quite unaware of her father's pursuits at night. Not far off is the astrologer's stock in trade, composed of a gaudy telescope, through which the Maidens of Marylebone, on payment of a small fee could have seen their future husbands; but the apparatus won't work now and the faded photographs (amongst which we were told were Neville, the actor, and Holman Hunt, the artist) gummed on the revolving ball look dismal enough in the bright light of Scotland Yard. The Signor had a large gilt Book of Fate with which to impress his clients; a few of his letters are still to be found hid carefully among the leaves, and on pink crumpled notepaper was written the following appeal: *Dear Sir,—I shall be glad if you will let me know by return how soon I shall be engaged, and how soon I shall be married.* It is to be hoped the young lady received a satisfactory answer. Zendavesta, by the way, lived in classic Cato Street, once the home of the Conspirators, the last prisoners lodged in the tower. Until very lately, the room in the loft still existed, which was drawn by Cruickshank in his well-known sketch of the murder of Smithers, the Bow Street officer. Now, the road is known as Homer Street and is a dingy shabby place, down which no one of consequence goes, and where any astrologer who respected himself and his calling would scorn to live. However, this particular dabbler in the Black Art found his employment exceedingly remunerative (like the gentleman who lived over in Lambeth Marshes whom the courtiers of the time of Charles the First were wont to consult) and was proportionately annoyed when the police came down upon him and confiscated his entire bag of tricks. We were shown, also, some trifles belonging to Dr. Lamson, and his photograph, and were told that the hangman was wont to declare that this particular murderer was the only gentleman he had ever had to do with. The faces of Roupell the forger and the Claimant looked out from one of the pages of the book, the latter old, lined and grey, so unlike the man I remembered seeing at his trial, it is impossible to believe it can be the same. Here, too, is a ghastly portrait of Carey, the informer, taken after his murder; and among the many bad pictures, one is struck by the excellent one of that handsome rogue Vivian (now doing ten years), who, well-dressed, intelligent, prosperous looking, and admirably photographed by a well-known firm, is sadly out of place among these other brown and dingy works of art, which all have an amateur touch about them. Wherever one's eyes turn they fall on something about which our guide discourses, regardless of time, reminding us of innumerable tragedies forgotten, of bits of criminal history as absorbing as Thornbury's "Old Stories Re-told," of cases of circumstantial evidence, as wonderful as those printed (do you remember them?) in *Chambers' Journal* forty years ago. He touches a dusty pocket-book and the history of its late owner is deftly put before you, a history which, though varied to begin with, ends in precisely the same manner as the others he repeats, or, you mention the name of a criminal long since dead, a man whose life was an extraordinary romance when out of prison, and straightway you are told in the quiet tone in which one speaks of the weather, fact upon fact, enough for a three volume novel, in connection with this person. One lingers long in this crowded little room with its clouded skylight, for in every corner is piled all manner of suggestive lumber, nothing but lumber here and now, but which was anything but useless once on a time, for in yonder dusty corner stand the flags used by the rioters of 1866; any quantity of skeleton keys all laid about the shelves; there is a long row of dark lanterns, many sets of burgling tools in the latest improved fashion; knives taken from violent-tempered sailors; a watchman's rattle once belonging to a much-laughed-at "Charlie"; copper rings, brooches, and earrings which have had their day in the salons of Whitechapel and Ratcliffe Highway, and now twinkle here in retirement under the care of the police. There hangs a good mezzo-tint of Jack Shepperd in his cell near to an original note of Lefroy the murderer: a gruesome relic of Bellingham is tenderly cared for; a gambler's bundle of flash notes lies not far from a lock of a woman's hair. What a sermon could be preached in this Museum, with its curiosities gathered a few miles round Whitehall. The visitor hears stories of a country as strange as if it were in the antipodes, of a people as utterly unlike those whom one has seen and known as if they were savage islanders. Listening to the guide as he explains and comments on the contents of the cases, you feel as if there were none but clever rogues peopling London, no honest citizens left. As one passes out again into the bustling Yard, leaving the room to its customary shrouded solitude it is hard to

get the impression the relics have made out of one's head, and our talk in consequence for the next hour or so was mainly of such exciting topics as murders and murderers.

"And we had an adventure with the police once," said my companion, who, though a timid lady, had yet been absorbed in the Scotland Yard tales, "and it happened in this wise. G. and I came home late from dining out, and were astonished to find the maid waiting for us on the doorstep. 'If you please,' she said, in a blood-curdling whisper, pointing to the house next door, which was unfurnished and to let, 'there's thieves in there.' It appeared that in my dressing-room she had through the partition wall heard some body moving, some one talk and laugh, and had from the garden at the back looked up and seen a light, which was quickly put out, at one of the windows. The story was pooh-poohed; she was nervous and had exaggerated; but when I too heard exactly the same muffled noises which she had described, I thought it only right to send G. at once for a policeman, while I and the maid waited for safety in the road. Our guardian came tramp, tramp, down the quiet road, talking to my husband. 'You are sure you heard the noises, ladies?' he said to us. Then he rang two or three times loudly at next door's bell, but no one came to answer it. Leaving us to guard the front, he went to the back, over our garden wall, into theirs, to see what he could discover; we now observed he had found a window which was easy to open. By that time I was waiting in the dining-room, for the road was full of shadows and very alarming, and through the walls I heard the policeman walking slowly up the uncarpeted stairs, pausing every now and then to look into the corners. How he dare! Then for a minute or two everything was quiet. Soon, to my relief, his steps sounded again, coming down this time; other steps followed him; he was speaking, and somebody was answering. I ran out to G., who was waiting, and smoking, by the railings. As I was telling him, the house door opened and out came our valiant protector, pushing before him two very small boys, aged eight and nine, who were looking as much scared as I was feeling. They had run away, they said (they lived round the corner), and had begun a totally new life by getting in next door and bivouacking in the top floor at the back. They had matches and provisions, taken from their mother, and had enjoyed themselves immensely till the bell rang, when they professed themselves frightened to fits, and when they heard footsteps coming nearer and nearer up the stairs, they ran wildly out in order to face the danger. Such shaking little adventurers were never seen before. They were led away through the dark by the policeman, and we heard afterwards that they weren't particularly welcomed at home, where their room was more desired than their company. Having once tasted liberty, I should doubt if they will stay quiet. Is it of material like these that our soldiers and sailors are made, or our thieves and vagabonds?"

WALTER POWELL.

ACADIAN LEGENDS AND LYRICS.

A GIFTED son of Canada is Arthur Wentworth Eaton, the author of "The Heart of the Creeds," who is now an episcopal clergyman in the city of New York. Perhaps few of those who have read or heard of that book were aware that its author was a Nova Scotian, with his heart in the Dominion, though his bodily presence belongs to the literary circle of the American metropolis. "Acadian Legends and Lyrics," however, a volume got up after the model of Kegan Paul's best, and just published in London and New York by White & Allen, emphasizes the author's nationality, not only in title, but contents; it enables Canadians, to many of whom his verses were not altogether unknown before, to frankly welcome and claim him as theirs. Of these poems, "The Resettlement of Acadia" and "L'Île Ste. Croix," are familiar to readers of the recent collection, "Songs of the Great Dominion." There is delightful melody in the last stanzas of "L'Île Ste. Croix:"

Spring cannot last, and o'er the waves
The welcome sail of Pontgravé:
But half the number silent lay,
Death's pale first-fruits, in western graves.

Sing on, wild sea, your sad refrain,
For all the gallant sons of France,
Whose sons and sufferings enhance
The romance of the western main.

Sing requiems to these tangled woods
With ruined forts and hidden graves;
Your mournful music history craves
For many of her noblest moods.

"L'Ordre de Bon Temps," also celebrating those jovial ceremonies of goodfellowship which Champlain instituted among his companions in old Quebec, is a charming ballad (by the way, Arthur Weir has one on the same subject); and "De Soto's Last Dream" has attracted admiration widely.

After "Legends," the volume is divided into "Lyrics" and "Sonnets." These are more uneven. The best qualities observable are a light pictorial touch as if of skilful water-colour sketches, and an earnest expression of fine religious liberality. His sketching power is illustrated in the deserted "Whaling Town" and "The Old New England Meeting House:"

Many a time I have sat as a child
And listened until my ears were wild
To the basses and tenors, with nasal sound,
Through fine old fugue-tunes marching round.