

candidates who were wheelmen. Pedalling then pays better than political Shibboleths.

The rage is all for auto-motor vehicles; the types of horseless carriages are becoming very numerous. The latest is the invention of a M. Bollée, and he calls his carriage a *voiturette*. It is simply a bath chair and bicycle combination; the chair in front or seat is for one occupant, a lady, or two babies or other person; behind is the gentleman pedalling and steering. The occupant of the front seat is not called upon to indulge in any treadmill work. It is said Paris will soon have the spectacle of a rider with one wooden leg, who works his bike very well. Be assured we shall duly see a cyclist with two wooden legs. Last summer very amusing races were held, where the pedestrians (?) had but wooden legs. There are three sturdy beggars in Paris of whom two are negroes, who have only wooden legs and who are allowed to beg in the streets. Why not put them into bicycle training at once—for the mile a minute race?

Paris, May 6, 1896.

Z.

### Concerning Curry-combs.

KING James's version of the New Testament defines a colt as the foal of an ass, but in revised speech the term is applied to a horse under four years of age. A certain man, who to many occupations added the rearing of colts, took a city friend to inspect his paddock. The city friend half edified by the sight of much natural life, and half alarmed by the recklessness with which the skittish creatures tossed their hind legs into the air, yet retained sufficient presence of mind to observe and wonder at an equine freak that formed part of the immature stud. "Of what race and lineage," he asked, "is that animated buffalo-robe?" The proprietor replied with warmth "That's no buffalo, but the best beast in the whole lot; only he wants grooming. Clippers and the curry-comb will make a beauty of him." The city man who, as may be inferred, was clerical, made answer, "O man, great is thy faith!" He had not grown up on a farm himself, nor had he ever suffered his hair and beard to grow long in the backwoods where barbers' poles do not flourish. His portraits, cherished by his admiring family, taken at all stages from five to forty, indicated an invariably well-groomed child, youth, and man, with no suspicion of the animated buffalo-robe of Nature's sweet adorning.

Jean Jacques Rousseau, whom Cowper disdained to ask whether birds confabulate or no, with Volney and other enthusiasts, proposed, as a panacea for all the ills of human society, getting back to Nature. Mr. Micawter eloquently remarked, that, if it had been feasible, he and his young friend Copperfield would doubtless have "pu'd the gowans fine." To get back to primitive nature is not feasible; there are cherubim before its gate, and a flaming sword turning every way to bar man out of Paradise. Stevenson's Vailima Letters, although delightfully unconventional, do not leave on the ordinary mind the impression that Eden is to be found in the islands of the Pacific. Indeed, the islanders there are ever yearning after the fabulous cloud-girt shores of Bolootoo, just as Ponce de Leon set off in quest of the mysterious fountain of Bimini to find his grave. "We look before and after, and pine for what is not," although "naught" would rhyme better with fraught and thought, yet the only man that pines for what is naught is the annihilationist. "Man never is, but always to be, blest" expresses part of the same thought, and it is a very old one, that led the eye of the Greek into futurity after futurity, looking for the Saturnian Reign and the return of the Golden Age.

Nature, even Canadian nature, has its attractions, as Sagittarius vicariously detailed in the issue of the sixth of March, a nine days, warning from the ideas so fatal to Caesar, yet cities and towns kept on their conquering way even through the snow which the newspaper man calls "the beautiful." Ruskin and Ouida and many other lovers of nature abhor our modern civilization, and the Canadian poet longs to get out of a house, his garret in which is confronted with an ugly telegraph pole strung with fifty wires, shaken with the vibration of the ever-passing trolley, and throbs with the pulse of a diabolical telephone conductor that turns his sky-light into an incessant Æolian harp. This is not

written "concerning Sagittarius," or concerning any other writer who contributes his quota to the fund of THE WEEK's intellectual entertainment. Such work is left to the Spider. But the author of "Why I Love Muskoka" furnishes a hint which is gratefully acknowledged. Muskoka is beautiful, and was once more so. People who know them as they are may call it in question, but the fact is nevertheless well attested, that the bay front of Gravenhurst and the river bank of Bracebridge were once scenes of unblemished loveliness, barring the flies. The axe of the chopper, unsightly mills, sawdust and other abominations have ruined them. As you survey the ravage of man's hand you say with Victor Hugo: "Les Turcs ont passé là: tout est ruines et deuil." Of course they were not Turks, and Muskoka is not Armenia; they were only civilizing barbarians.

That Ruskin and Ouida would admire Canadian scenery, such as that of the wild parts of Muskoka, is doubtful. They would probably say that, while they admire Nature, they like her best with her hair combed. This combing of Nature's hair takes a long time, involving the life-work of many generations of hair-dressers, called pioneers and agriculturists, builders, road-makers, hedgers, and landscape-gardeners. The level turnpike road, the by-path with hedgerows in which hawthorn and holly vie with honeysuckle and eglantine, the open river reaches, the rich bespangled pasture, the rolling corn-land, the picturesque village in the hollow, the manor-house, the old church on the hill, are the results of centuries of toil and cultivation, as found in England, and, with variations, in other countries of the Old World. It is wonderful how, in some of the more favoured parts of Canada, such as Western Ontario, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and Nova Scotia, with the exception of antiquity and the quick-set hedge, the nature combing of the mother-land has been rivalled, presenting scenes of cultivated rural beauty that rest the eye, after the bewildering vision of piled-up rocks and tangled forests which hold lakes and rivers in their hidden depths. The combing process, during which the tangled hair is all down over Nature's face and shoulders, is the most unsightly stage of that Dame's existence, and that is the stage through which in many parts of our fair Dominion she is passing now.

Any one familiar with the wild Indian, the cow-boy, and the bushwhacker, unless he be a poet or a Paderewski, will cheerfully admit that the shears and the comb could be used about their heads to the benefit of their personal appearance. These human subjects lead back to the animated buffalo-robe, by this time, no doubt, transformed, through clipping and curry-combing, into a presentable animal. There being no horses on the islands of Muskoka, curry-combs are there employed for scaling fish. The writer knows of no ancient precedent for this abnormal use of the hostler's implement, but Joseph Bonomi in his "Nineveh and its Palaces," has an illustration of part of a Nimrod frieze that represents an Assyrian servant curry-combing a horse! The curry-comb, therefore, is an ancient instrument of culture. Rough old Papirius Cursor, dictator of Rome and scourge of the Samnites, when the cavalry asked for some remission of duty, told them that they need not rub down their horses on dismounting, by which it would seem that a Roman's horny hand occasionally made the toilet of his steed. But the Romans and the Greeks groomed themselves as well as their horses with body-scrapers, called *strigiles* and *stlengides*. Ælian says the Agrigentines made them of silver, and Cyrus the younger offered a golden one for competition to his mercenary Greeks.

"God bless the Duke of Argyle—  
Scratching-posts for many a mile"

is a libel on the Highlanders, and a tribute to the zeal of MacCallum More for inclosures. A little-read Roman historian, Spartianus, relates that the Emperor Hadrian, while bathing in a public bath, saw a veteran well-known to him rubbing his back against the marble wall of the bath room, whereupon he presented him with a bath-slave, a strigil, and money for the slave's support. The next day he found a regiment of soldiers rubbing the wall in expectation of similar favours. This was too much for the Emperor's liberality; he called them to him, and exhorted them to curry each other. Perhaps this is how the expression "to curry favour" came into existence, and the mercenary proverbial