

picnic ground, going by a road running due north, with our shadows, as we were sorry to notice, falling a little to the eastward.

The spot at last selected for our out-door dinner was in a large, gently undulating field, where four lofty Norway pines stood just far enough apart for their emerald foliage to intermingle overhead and leave the sides open. Without removing our wraps, we found it quite warm enough, and the complacent zephyr kept singing a wild sweet chant through the dark overgreen above us. Altogether, things were very romantic, very lovely! Still, while we were enjoying this golden calm, an awful cyclone was close at hand!

Just when we were getting down to the substantial part of our meal, the writer, with his usual awkwardness, overturned a pail of water; and while the others made heroic efforts to rescue food and dishes from this miniature freshet, he accomplished a second mistake, while trying to help on matters, by hanging the table-cloth to dry on some bushes outside the bower. The article used for this purpose, Miss Orbondizer's red shawl, having received a thorough wetting.

The shawl hadn't hung there twenty seconds, when we were startled by a tremendous roaring; and looking in the direction from whence the sound came, our hearts began to thump as we beheld an immense bull on a hill some forty yards distant standing apart from other cattle, and with voice and actions giving every indication of extreme anger. Of course we understood the cause of all this trouble. The bull had spied the ruddy garment, and after the manner of his kind, had taken it for an invitation to deadly combat. In another minute Sir Taurus lowered his head and came toward us at royal speed, making the turf fly with almost every bound.

Our situation had now become entirely too interesting! Although every man in the crowd was something of a traveller, not one of us had been in Spain, and consequently knew nothing of practical bull-fighting. There were no trees in the field except the four pines, whose big trunks were without branches until high above the ground, and our horses were all unharnessed, quietly grazing near a neighboring stream, never dreaming of the approaching typhoon: so our only course was to run for it, with a dark prospect that more than one would be overtaken and unpleasantly lifted.

But, as some antique philosopher declares, "there is a man for every emergency," and in this case, Charlie Jackson proved the correct fellow to fill the occasion. Charlie is a medical student, and, as anyone should be who intends becoming a doctor, remarkably cool-headed.

Intuitively assuming charge of affairs, he detailed the rest of us masculines to assist the ladies toward the highway with all possible speed, and then grasping the ruddy garment, started off in an opposite direction, at the same time shouting defiance to the enraged animal. The latter changed his course, and went after the future pill maker at a rate that must have ensured the immediate capture of an ordinary runner. But our embryo doctor, among other accomplishments, possessed splendid pedestrian powers; and on this occasion he scampered away so fast that the savage brute gained very slowly.

In a few moments the fair ones were all safely beyond the high road fence; and then we fellows hastened back to see what had become of Charlie.

The course taken by pursued and pursuer having carried them over a low ridge, they were now out of sight, and as we ran on, we half expected to find that Jackson had been overtaken and gored to death by his cruel antagonist. Therefore, on reaching the high ground, we were astonished to discover that our little drama had ended in a very comical and altogether unique denouement.

While running for his life toward a fence on the farther side of the field, Charlie came to a little meadow, which looked all right enough; but the first investigating step showed that its rank grass concealed an expanse of black mud, as thick and sticky as patent glue, and of depth not to be calculated. However, the horned fury was horribly near, and there was no time for turning to the right or left. So our hero plunged desperately forward, and by exerting all his strength, got through to the firm ground on the other side—with the complexion of his pretty, light gay garments spoiled forever. But the brute was not so fortunate, for coming on with headlong rage, and careless of mud, holes or anything else but that red shawl, which now lay where Jackson had dropped it in the middle of the swamp, he managed to reach the object of his wrath, and then sank to the full length of his legs and remained stuck fast.

Charlie crawled back to our side on a fence that crossed the low ground; and as we hurried away, the other cattle came down and expressed sympathy with their leader in his misfortune by a perfect babel of bovine noises. The last we saw of our enemy his horns were decorated with fragments of the shawl, which waved about like some new-fashioned flag of distress. The fight had evidently been all taken out of him, and he was loudly bellowing with terror.

You may be sure not many minutes went by before our teams were hitched up and we were rapidly leaving this Indian Summer Picnic ground. And driving home in the glorious twilight was, somehow or other, not so romantic as it might have been.

The next issue of the local paper described how Judge Raymond's prize bull "Ilector" had got mired, while chasing unknown parties, supposed to be ruffians from the city, and was only released after tremendous labor on the Judge's part, assisted by twenty men and several pairs of oxen!

JONATHAN.

**A STRONG INSINUATION.**—A man who had killed his father managed to secure a verdict of "not guilty." The Judge, after pronouncing his acquittal, asked him if his mother were still living.

Yes, your honor.

Well, good-bye till I see you again.

## ODDS AND ENDS

THE CRITIC has done itself credit by its selection of "Eschena's" descriptive essay on the French dramatists. They are, naturally enough, but little read by the generality of even fairly well read people in these days. The essayist has therefore adopted the very best style in which she could have treated the subject, in making her articles plainly descriptive. I have understood that the lady is young, and indeed that this is her first appearance in print. If so, she deserves no small commendation for the simplicity of her style. A perpetual striving after fine writing is the bane of the newspaper press, and the avoidance of it in a young writer is evidence of refined taste as well as the best earnest of latent power.

A recent article from the pen of "Sartor Resartus, Jr.," on E. A. Poe's critical writings, is also of a nature to sustain the high character of THE CRITIC. Believing the scope of poetry to be catholic, one cannot, however, accept the canons of Poe without considerable reserve. They approach too nearly the French notion of art—which amounts to the exclusion of everything but an ideal beauty. In poetry there is a strong element of power in a degree of realism, as there is in painting in the realism and story-telling of the English school, so much deprecated by French critics, even by the illustrious Taine, whose grasp of English characteristics is very broad, as well as appreciative and discriminating. We scarcely find beauty in the terrible *Conceit*, or in the awful tragedies of Marlow, or indeed the kind of beauty meant by the French critics in the *Orestes*, the *Edipus*, the *Antigone*, the *Hippolytus*, or the *Heracles*. Yet in all we are shudderingly made to feel the poetic potency of even the direct passions, which are far from being used for "heightening the effect of mere beauty." I should, however, be one of the last to underrate the moral effect of beauty.

Some of Poe's tales are indeed themselves a grim poetry in prose, but none the less enthralling from their truculent nature.

I must also congratulate THE CRITIC on the "American Widow." It is by far the best-written story that has as yet appeared in its columns. The conclusion is, however, somewhat of a "sell."

The *Week* of 22nd Oct. contains two somewhat remarkable letters, one questioning the success, and, by implication, the permanency of, Canadian Federation; the other drawing largely on a misty future of sentiment in favor of the Imperial article.

The latter is from the pen of Mr. Martin I. Griffin, a writer I should scarcely have suspected of so "fossil" a Toryism as to have precluded his yet learning to call the "Rebellion of 1870" a "Revolution," "and to justify it by the epithet." I hardly thought the mantle of Dr. Johnson had descended to this day and generation. Meanwhile the plain common-sense of Lord Lansdowne has pronounced on the impossible points of the scheme.

Mr. Longley treats the subject of Federation in a calm, and certainly perspicuous manner. But I hope there is enough of the spirit which aspires to a broad nationalism rather than a narrow provincialism, to float the good ship Canada over the not very formidable shallows and bars of a captious nationalism, on the one hand, and a sentiment which seems more municipal than even provincial on the other.

Meantime the by-elections controvert the Grit press, the Canadian Pacific scores points, and stands a monument of the magnificent energy of its syndicate. The importance of this grand work might from the first have been gauged by the "envy, hatred and malice" of the American press. The Grits without a policy (unless the disparagement of their own country be one) will soon be, it is said, without even a leader. Of course the vacancy can be filled, but when it is filled where will be the policy? Vive le Canada!

There are some indications, besides a letter signed "Common Sense" in the *Herald* a few days ago, and besides the article in that journal on Mr. Joseph Cook's lecture on "Athens," that the depths of that "philosopher's" profundity are being sounded, and found to be but shoal water. I do not intend any special reference to Mr. Cook's temperance utterances, but allude to his general critical tone, which is crude, and betrays either want of intuition, want of capacity, or want of ingenuousness. All the reading that a reader can cram his brains withal, and all the ostentation of it he may glory himself withal, are vanity, if he lack the innate perception of truth, and the power and courage to assimilate it—if he lack the sense of proportion which detors from exaggeration—if his mental scales are not hall-marked for gold—if he is denied of heaven sobriety of judgment to use them.

There was a time when I used to keep pace in reading with the publication of all novels that were good, and of many that were anything but good. But it is many years since publication became too fast and furious, and the monotony of the ordinary novel wearisome. Now and then, but very rarely now, one lights upon a feast. I have just read Geo. MacDonald's "Sir Gibbie." I have not the smallest idea how long ago it was written; for, tho' I recognize in Dr. MacDonald perhaps the first novelist of the day, I never hurry myself to read even books that bear a name guaranteeing value. All books good for the soul come to one some time or another without any uneasy seeking. There are none of Dr. MacDonald's, me judice, that are not good for the spirit. He "finds" you at every turn; and, impregnated and permeated throughout with true religion as he is, his keen satire of the everlasting shams that surround and sicken one, is infinitely refreshing. Every way the lash plays about, as in driving four-in-hand, one would one moment touch up a lagging wheeler—another try for a fly on a leader's ear—the next quicken the run of a poor cur on the road-side.