

TO ALEXANDER MACLACHLAN.

HARP of the wildwood speak : thy rude refrain
 In wayward numbers, like the Eolian lyre,
 Swept by the wind in sweet melodious ire
 Touches the heart and echoes o'er again
 A sigh of passing joy, of present pain.
 The poetry of Nature's sacred fire
 Lives on forever and men's hearts inspire,
 In divers tongues, in sempiternal strain.
 Deep in the solitudes of forests vast,
 Beneath the maple and the lofty pine,
 Whose spreading limbs salute the passing blast,
 We hear thy mingling notes in love combine.
 Ring out ! to others leave the glorious past ;
 To Canada futurity divine. J. A. CURRIE.

PILOT BOAT, NO. 24.

THIRTY years ago the incorporation of Lower St. Lawrence boats was unknown, perhaps unthought of, and in the early spring time, with the snow still white on the hills, and the blue waters flecked with floating ice, these hardy men launched their swift boats ; and, with a single apprentice in each, steered eastward to meet the spring fleet of sailing ships, which then in vast squadrons sought the head of navigable waters. Sharp and weatherly these boats were, though rarely more than twenty-five feet overall, with three spritsails and a jib, and a sleeping box for the master and apprentice amidship, and in such tiny craft did the old time pilot steer toward the fog and ice of the gulf, lying to on many a stormy day or dark weary night, peering eastward for the sight of expected sails. Such a race of boatmen, either for skill or intrepidity—lost by the act of incorporation and the more prosaic schooner—will never be known again on any waters. I was a very young boy in those days, and lived on the shore of a bay, where a section of the little fleet often sought shelter and repose, and as the white wings would appear in the northern horizon, inward bound, I would wait with eyes riveted on the approaching sails till their numbers, in large black lettering on the foresail, would become visible, and I could thus ascertain whether their masters were friends or strangers.

The trimmest and fleetest boat of the squadron was certainly No. 24 ; and the most indulgent pilot of the profession was her owner, known and loved by me as Mr. Germain. What fascinating hours were those spent at his bright fire, within a few yards of the tinkling wavelets on the shore, listening with quickened pulses to his tales of storm and darkness, out of which would suddenly emerge the lights of a great ship flying before the gale, and right on board of him ; or, of days of dense fog, suddenly hardening into lofty pillows of thunderous canvas, and the sharp stem of a clipper bark, cleaving straight on to the listed hull of his tossing boat. Once I was permitted to see the operation of "taking a pilot" performed on a gusty September day, when No. 24 had to compete with five other swift pilot boats for the credit of first reaching a large ship hove to, with a jack visible at the forepeak, about four miles to the north, and my admiration of No. 24 and her skillful skipper grew even stronger as I witnessed the bird-like velocity of the one, and the successful manoeuvring of the other, finishing alongside with submerged gunnel ; and witnessing with friendly pride the "whipping" of the victor to the deck, whence his stentorian words of command sent the yards swinging round, as the ship, paying off, went foaming ahead, while the apprentice steered the boat shoreward, grasping the tiller with the reflected dignity of his great master.

One evening we were seated on an elevated point, Germain scanning with his marine glass the eastern horizon, when the topsails of an inward-bound vessel came within its range. The sun was sinking into a bank of inky clouds, and an oily sea, barely darkened by the light breeze, undulated lazily ; but there was a strange moan in the voice of waters washing the serried reefs, which I can even now recall. In a few minutes the white sails were set, and sheeted home, and curtesying gracefully, the pretty boat went forth into the gathering darkness for the last time ; and ere I left the shore her lantern showed like a wil-o'-the-wisp on the trackless waters. At what hour the gale arose I know not ; but the grey light of morning stole on a wild scene of storm, piling the angry waters on the rocky shore like mountains of snow, as we all went forth to look for the brave little craft. We saw her immediately under a rag of a foresail, its mast nearly parallel with the angry waves, as the storm heeled her down ; and we sorrowfully recognised the hopelessness of the struggle she had waged all through that terrible night : for to east and west stretched half submerged reefs, reverberating with the artillery of the storm, and under her lee a hopeless roll of breakers. She came fast home now that the surf had seized her, bearing the helpless thing in vast strides to her fate. A few moments more, and the keel catches, and turning her bow shoreward, she rushes towards us in a smother of foam, strikes again, and turns broadside to the sea. Then through the salt spray in my eyes, and saltier tears, I see her as she rolls over, and her broken mast and sail float uselessly apart.

They were lashed to the stern, not much mutilated, but the protracted struggle, as inch by inch he had contested with death, had left on his brow and set lips an awful sternness, as, in dripping garments, and the sea brine crusted on their temples, we bore them sorrowfully from the tiny wreck left to moulder on the shore.

J. H. F.

Metis, Que.

CORRESPONDENCE.

JUDGE WURTELE AT AYLMER ASSIZES (QUEBEC).

To the Editor of THE WEEK :

SIR,—In yours of 21st inst., in comment upon the "remarkably light sentence" (viz., six hour in gaol) "upon Messrs. John Cosgrove and James McColl" (McCabe) "for embezzlement of public funds under the former Quebec Government," you observe—in conjectural explanation—that "surely some important mitigating circumstances must have been in the mind of the judge."

There were such mitigating circumstances, but, evidently, they were not brought to your notice ; and your predicates on the subject are based on an imperfect report in which the *suppressu veri* as to mitigating facts has, unfortunately, given ground for your reflections.

Judge Wurtele, allow me to say, has the reputation, well earned and established by judicial record, of being not only a most able, but also as a most just and impartial judge, with an ever abiding sense of duty proper to his office. No invidious distinction can well be drawn between him and other judges in our Province (Quebec), or in fact elsewhere in our broad Dominion—for, truly, they are all just and honourable men—but in this instance it can be said of him that, naturally, and from habit of life in long and extended public service, in leading or prominent parts, under the "fierce light" (of exposure) which surrounds all public men in this essentially democratic country, he is incapable of such dereliction as that imputed to him.

Personally, I have no interest in the case further than that of common citizenship's, and of the maintenance of the purity and honour of our Bench, and of the respect due to it.

When the judge rendered the judgment in question, I happened to be in my place, withing the Bar (as Q.C.), waiting for my cases on the civil docket, and saw and heard the whole thing : the facts occurred as follows :

On opening of the Court, the counsel for the prisoners moved to withdraw their plea of "Not Guilty," entered up in the previous term—six months before—and to substitute therefor one of "Guilty," but with a statement—in mitigation—to the effect : "That owing to the absence in the States of their principal witness (their foreman in the colonization road work in question), and the impossibility on their part of disproving the technical case charged against them, while in their hearts feeling themselves innocent, they, to save trial, formally plead Guilty." At the same time the counsel briefly stated the facts of the case, viz. : That the monies in question (for colonization roads) had been placed at the command of the parties charged, with a restriction to pay no more than a certain amount *per diem* for work on the roads. That men could not be got to work for such wages *per diem*. That to meet the difficulty the foreman or foremen charged with the immediate direction of the work, while paying only fair wages to the men employed, made up the deficit between the fixed rates and the amounts paid by crediting the men for more time than was actually spent. This—it was stated in Court—had been the habit in such cases, throughout the Province for many years, and had never been objected to until now by the present Government.

In the present case there was really no embezzlement—all the money having been faithfully expended on the works. Messrs. Cosgrove and McCabe were made trustees—selected as such from their high standing and known trustworthiness, both being mayors and leading magistrates in their respective communities ; and both known to have contributed largely out of their own means towards the work of colonization in the region in question, viz., the valuable phosphate and other mineral region in the valley of the River *Aux Lieves*, in the county of Ottawa. These statements were made in open court, in the hearing of the prosecuting counsel for the Crown, and were not questioned, but seemed to be admitted ; all he asked from the Bench being a judgment *however slight* under the circumstances of the case, that would condemn such a practice. Similar prosecutions are pending in other parts of the Provinces—amongst them the notable one against "The Honourable Dr. Lavallee," of Terrebonne, a Member of the Legislative Council in Quebec—a gentleman of highest and most honourable standing, and who, like Messrs. Cosgrove and McCabe, are not fairly open to such "heroic" treatment in vindication of public interests, or even of party political ones.

M. M.

TOBACCO is a moral sedative. The maxims of stoicism, or rather quietism, harmonize with the lethargic influence of the popular weed as naturally as the passionate temper of the South-Latin races harmonizes with the effect of their hot spices ; and the equanimity of the tobacco-smoking Mussulman proceeds from a chemical, rather than philosophical, source of causation. Our carnivorous redskins seem to use tobacco as an antidote of their ferine instincts, and its lenitive influence may have promoted its adoption among the care-worn toilers of our feverish traffic-civilization. But those advantages are indisputably offset by the enervating effects of the nicotine habit. Inveterate smokers endure the vexations of daily life with a quietude which gradually passes into apathy and indolence ; and though the moderate use of the seductive narcotic seems rather to promote a certain dreamy enjoyment of metaphysical studies, that predilection soon becomes a penchant for mystic reveries, and at last degenerates into a chronic aversion to mental efforts. The precocious use of tobacco is very apt to stunt the development of the more practical mental faculties. Boy-smokers are given to day-dreams and procrastination. In Spanish America the sight of a languid, cigarette-lethargized youngster is a very familiar phenomenon ; and in a college town of northern Belgium my tobacco-smoking schoolmates were characterized by a certain good-natured phlegm, coupled, however, with slowness of comprehension and often with latent selfishness.—*The Open Court.*