

NEW YEAR'S DAY IN QUEBEC, 1798.

I commenced my career at Quebec on the 1st January, 1798—a great day in Lower Canada at that time—a day of extraordinary festivity, which was extended to the two or three following days. Amongst the Canadians it was the fashion for everybody to visit everybody during one of the three first days of the year, when a glass of noyau or other liquor was, with a piece of biscuit or cake, presented to the visitor, which, after a hard day's work in calling at some twenty or thirty houses, frequently terminated in sending a number of very respectable people home in a staggering condition towards the close of the day.

After paying my official visit to my commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Gother Mann, who, at the same time, commanded the garrison of Quebec, and to whom Lacy introduced me, the Lieutenant Colonel conducted me to the château, the residence of the governor, and presented me to his Excellency Captain-General Prescott. The General was a little man, not exceeding five feet four or five inches high, very slender and certainly not much under eighty years of age; he was nevertheless active, a good officer, but exceedingly peppery.

When we had secured a lodging in the house of one Mackenzie, a drunken old Scotchman in Palace street, near the gate, we commenced our New Year's Day rounds, and amongst my numerous visits was one to the renowned Mrs. Stuart, one of the lions of Quebec. This lady was of large proportions, about sixty years of age, dressed in the extreme of a fashion forty years gone by; her hair frizzed up a yard high above her head, increasing in width as it rose in height, the whole well covered with *maréchal* and pink powder, with some decorations of lace and ribbons scattered about the top, and surmounted by a splendid plume of ostrich feathers. Her body was cased in a long and stiff pair of stays, displaying an elegantly-carved and ornamental busk, and leaving the neck and bosom almost completely uncovered; an immense pair of hoops spread out her dress to the extent of a yard at least on each side, so as to cover the entire length of the sofa, upon which she was seated quite erect.

Her sleeves just covered her elbows, and were profusely trimmed with rich lace; from her ears depended a mass of gold and valuable stones; round her neck were four or five necklaces of coral, of amber, of pearls, of beads of various colours and some gold chains; but there was one in particular, larger than all the others, and hanging so low as to require being supported from falling on her lap by a large clasp or hook fastened to the centre of the lap of her dress—this caused the said gold chain to hang in two festoons, upon each of which were fastened four family miniatures of the largest dimensions, and round each arm, which was left quite uncovered, there were three similar portraits, together with sundry other bracelets; her fingers were plentifully supplied with rings, and she had one on each thumb.

But the watch formed not only the most conspicuous, but also the most costly of all the ornaments, being set with diamonds and fastened to her side by a large flowered hook, from which some ten to twelve short chains were suspended, each finished with a small swivel holding a large seal or a key of the diameter of a half-crown, a scent-bottle, a gentleman's mourning-ring, or other trinkets of the like description. I cannot close this already too-lengthy detail of the dress of the very celebrated Mrs. Stuart, of royal ancestry, without adverting to the pink stockings, short dress, and white satin shoes, having heels two or three inches high, neatly covered with red morocco leather, and fastened by a handsome pair of buckles containing many brilliant stones.

After pronouncing all the usual compliments in reference to the commencement of the new year, and passing some very absurd flattery on her ornaments, but which my friend Lacy conducted with exquisite talent, and having sipped a glass of noyau, we most respectfully inquired if we might be permitted to have the honour of paying our respects to the young ladies; when, after a short pause, Mrs. Stuart observed, "well, gentlemen, since you are so obliging as to wish to extend your visit to the children, I shall ascertain if they are prepared;" then, ringing the bell, she ordered the servant to see if the children were dressed, and if so, to desire they might be brought in. In a few minutes, the children were ushered into our presence, and proved to be three very fine young women, the youngest about twenty years of age; but we were merely permitted to bow and

pass the usual compliments of the season, after which, Mrs. Stuart, in a very commanding tone, addressed them, "there—there—children, don't make yourselves disagreeable—away with ye!" the poor girls instantly obeyed, and ran off to the nursery. One of these adult babies, some time afterwards, contrived to get married to a Captain S— in the 24th regiment, then stationed at Quebec.

At an early hour we began to prepare for the grand ball and supper at the Governor's residence, and as it was necessary that I should be presented in due form, I was directed to be at the château by half-past seven o'clock punctually. Accordingly at the stated time, I was ushered into the presentation chamber, adjoining the ball-room, and there, amidst some fifteen or twenty ladies and gentlemen, all under the same circumstances, I waited, standing, the important moment; for, in order to prevent the possibility of any one being caught sitting in this imitation royal apartment, every chair and seat of every description had been carefully removed.

At length the General and his lady, Mrs. Prescott, attended by the aides-de-camp, the Deputy-Adjutant-General, &c., and a number of other officers on the staff made their *entrée*. His Excellency standing rather prominently, and the retinue, forming the usual crescent, slightly retired. Each individual as governed by accident, was presented by the aide-de-camp in waiting; the gentlemen made well-studied court-bows, upon which his Excellency had always some obliging inquiry to make, which, however, did not exceed two or three questions. On being led up to the Captain General, each lady made a very low courtesy, her knees almost touching the carpet, and retained an erect posture; immediately on rising his Excellency advanced and kissed her, and although eighty winters at least had passed their chills through his blood, it was remarked that he performed that agreeable part of his official duties with the warmth of his most youthful days. Each individual was in like manner and with equal pomp presented to Mrs. Prescott.

All the ladies and gentlemen thus newly admitted into the aristocratic sphere, moved on into the ball-room, as quickly as each presentation had been completed; after which a flourish of trumpets was sounded in the orchestra, as two doors at the opposite extremity of the room opened, announcing that the King and Queen, represented by the Governor and his lady, were about to make their *entrée*. The King, preceded by the master of ceremonies, and followed by his numerous staff, entered by the door on the right, and the Queen, attended by her daughter, Mrs. Baldwin, who had been married to one of the General's aides-de-camp, and by four or five other ladies, in some way either connected with the Governor's family, or with the principal officers of the Government, entered by the door on the left.

The trumpets having instantly ceased, the full band struck up "God save the King!" and continued playing that celebrated national anthem during the whole of the time that the King and Queen were walking round the room, addressing a few words to each person as they passed, who were all standing, and until they arrived at the upper end of the room, where the royal seats were placed under the orchestra. The music now stopped, upon which the master of ceremonies advanced to the royal personages, bowed to the ground, and was ordered to lead forth the couple destined to dance the *minuet de la cour*, a formality never omitted on these grand nights. The master of ceremonies bowed again, and accordingly proceeded, and immediately led out a Monsieur de Chambeau and Miss Robe, who advanced to the King and Queen, saluted, and proceeded with the minuet.

The former was a perfect Frenchman in manners; had a large head, with a brown face pitted with the small-pox, large eyes, and elevated arched eye-brows, and an astonishing mouth, containing an abundance of exceedingly long teeth, of various colours, his body was small and short, his legs thin, and feet and hands were of good dimensions. Miss Robe was tall and elegant, had been very handsome, and danced the minuet to perfection, and received loud and reiterated applause on being reconducted to her seat, and saluting after and before advancing to the royal representative.

From "The Adventures of Col. Landmann."

Our New York Letter.

New York streets are full of English mistletoe, imported per S.S. Majestic. Here is a pretty little idyll—the staliest ocean liner in the world ploughing the wintry seas with a cargo of Christmas evergreen from the old England to perpetuate old customs in the New England beyond the seas.

A. Bruce Joy, the famous English sculptor, is over here. There has been an exhibition of his works in Schaus's gallery, including three fine busts of Mr. Gladstone, showing what an useful career he might have had as a sculptor's model (he is so characteristic) and a beautiful group, called "The First Flight," introducing Miss "Exie" Kitchen, the exquisite daughter of the Dean of Winchester, called Alexandra, after her godmother, the Princess of Wales.

A Fifth Avenue florist has imported some of the queer little dwarfed and tortured Japanese fir-trees. The favourite Christmas decorations this year are bunches of palm-leaves, sold at 25c a leaf. They are strikingly effective. The brisk business in selling off last year's Christmas cards cheap has led to people manufacturing cards this year to be sold as last year's, thus saving their reputation for only producing good expensive things.

Dr. Virgin, a New York pastor, who received a call from Boston and declined it, and had a rise of \$2,000 a year from his own congregation, has got off pretty easily in the matter of jokes upon wise and foolish virgins.

Chauncey Depew is a very versatile man; last month he gave Stanley his send-off; this month he is acting auctioneer at a doll show, with Marshal P. Wilder as a rival; the month before last he was the Railway President, giving the employes of the Grand Central their send-off. In justice to himself he must now invent a patent-medicine.

Mr. Pat Divver, a saloon keeper, has been appointed a New York police magistrate for 10 years at \$8,000 a year. He must be familiar with the records of his clients.

The next monthly meeting of the Century Club—the Athenaeum of America—will be held in their new Club house in West 43rd street.

At the Author's Club's last meeting the lions were George Kennan, the Siberiologist, and T. P. O'Connor, the author of the "Star of the Evening," in London.

I note the following new books and magazines:—

SHORT STORIES.—CURRENT LITERATURE.—Published by the *Current Literature* Publishing Co., N.Y., January, 1891. That excellent little eclectic magazine, *Current Literature*, has this month changed its form to the same as Scribner's magazines. It is excellently edited; it and the companion magazine, *Short Stories*, published by the same office, are two of the most readable magazines in America.

DAISY DAYS, by Agnes M. Clansen. [New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.] A lovely child's book, with exquisite pictures, some coloured, some in grisaille, specially made in Nuremberg. It has charming verses by E. Nesbit, Carl Otta, Graham R. Tomson, Robert Ellice Mack and Agnes M. Clansen. Those entitled "Daisy Days," by Carl Otta, are as beautiful as Jean Ingelow's "Songs of Seven."

CAPTAIN JANUARY, by Laura E. Richards. [Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1890.] A very pretty little book, charmingly got up, with a parti-coloured white and grey binding, like the Houghton, Mifflin & Co. poets. The weak point in it is that it would only interest precocious children. It is the story of a little girl brought up in a light-house on the Atlantic coast by the lighthouse-keeper, an old sea captain. The only books he possesses are a Bible, a Shakespeare and a Webster's dictionary; so the whole of the child's life is one dream of Shakespeare. If Oscar Wilde or Andrew Lang had handled this idea they would have made a bewitching book for grown-up children. This book is aimed at precocious children.

SPEAKING OF ELLEN. [New York: G. W. Dillingham & Co., 1890.] Here we have Socialism as crude as a red Indian's paintings and incidents so improbable that they want the master-hand of a Conway or Haggard to give them the glamour of possibility. Take Eina, a wealthy New York lady, making a friend of a little French seamstress whom her cousin has made his mistress, and falling in love with a mill hand she has only seen about once. Take the farcical election of the directors of the mill, in which all the heroes and heroines, except the blind woman, including even Ralph, the silly New York dude, become the members of the board. The bright spot in the book is the first two-thirds of Ellen's career. The triumph of love over