

## THE BOHEMIAN IN THE SOUTH.

What a glorious thing! To look out of your window, through which the soft wind gently steals, in February, and hear the birds chirping and the water running, to see the green grass, the street-awning, and the significant straw hat.

In Richmond we had a June day, and the streets were alive with "darkies" and "Dolly Vardens," for the same sun that had hatched out the hibernating black "chickens" of Virginia, had brought her lilies into bloom as well.

Richmond is miserably paved. Even the mules find some difficulty in securing a foot-hold on its broken flags and crumbling bricks. The city is built upon an amphitheatre of hills, whose convex surface looks towards the North. Either extremity of the amphitheatre abuts upon the James River, and in the basin which it encloses is situated the business portion of the town. The city is regularly laid out, well built (of dark red brick or the fine stone, so easily obtained from the bed of the James) and well lit with gas. It has an old-fashioned, English look, quite different from the flashy, mushroom appearance of some of the northern cities. That portion which was burnt before the evacuation has been splendidly rebuilt. The railway station is a miserable affair. Government Hill is a delightful garden, and Hollywood Cemetery, which is entirely the work of nature, is the most beautiful place I ever saw.

Connecting Richmond with Manchester, on the opposite side of the river, are five bridges, three for railways and two for passengers. Between the piers of the bridges, and over boulders and ledges of freestone, come streaming the pinky waters of the James. Many little islands, overgrown with black willows in tangled confusion, intervene between the bridges and form a pretty foreground for the city, viewed from Manchester. Traces of the siege are still visible in some places, but the efforts of the last few years have done much to obliterate the signs of war, the wrecks and ruins that encumbered and defaced Richmond, nine years ago. Crossing the new Mayo's Bridge, (the old one was swept away by a freshet in '67) the Bohemian will find himself in a straggling town, that has the appearance of a train waiting for a locomotive. It always seems to be Sunday here, but when Sunday does come, the stillness, the absence of human beings, the corpse-like appearance of everything, is very suggestive of a catacomb. But should you pass yonder "coloured" church, the deep strains of the *Doxology* would dispel any creeping of the flesh that such death-like appearance might induce. Indeed! the chiming of the bells in Richmond would soon soothe your nerves, and the little birds would twitter in your ears "not dead but sleeping," (which I believe to be *allegorically*, and for the most part *literally* true). Moving southwest from this "sleepy hollow" by the broad yellow road, one soon passes the old earthen fort and breastworks beyond Manchester, pursues an almost uninterrupted course between great red fields and deserted houses, sentinel chimneys, standing guard over the embers of desolated homes, long lines of blackened fences, mourning for the oceans of waving corn and fragrant tobacco which they once enclosed, and, at length, approaches a district which the armies of both sides had spared, and which forms a striking contrast to the country around Richmond.

### THE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

could scarcely be realized by a stranger. Every white man owned from one to five thousand acres of land, of the finest description, most of which was cleared and in a high state of cultivation. In proportion to the amount of land, each proprietor owned from twenty to two hundred and fifty negroes. Land was worth twenty dollars an acre, and the average price of negroes ranged from one thousand to fifteen hundred dollars. Most of the planters had large sums of money in the banks or invested in profitable enterprise. A few persons owned as much as ten thousand acres of land and as many as five hundred negroes.

Every white man was educated and was, generally speaking, a gentleman in every respect. Hospitality and generosity were, and are still, prominent features in the character of this pre-eminently aristocratic people. Conservative in politics, they were ultra-liberal in commercial transactions and (paradoxically, it may seem) in benevolent undertakings. They are not, and were not, the cruel task-masters and hardened tyrants that I was taught to believe. Wealthy, educated, waited upon by scores of servants, breathing an almost tropical atmosphere, assured by the past as to the continuance of these things, what wonder that they should have become somewhat indolent and reckless, somewhat proud and independent; what wonder that the enterprise, the perseverance, the resolution of those Englishmen who felled the forest in Pocahontas's time, should have dwindled down in their descendants, until those traits became almost visionary, and resembled the reality only "as the mist resembles the rain." But the old spirit was still theirs, and it wanted only the spark of war to light up the old enthusiasm, the dormant energy of Virginia's children.

Of the many causes that induced the late war, and of its disastrous results, even to the victorious party, I shall not speak, but deem it not amiss to dwell upon the condition of the negro prior to the war, and the relations that subsisted between master and slave. Although negroes were constantly imported from Africa (and that very often by Northern ship-owners and Northern enterprise) yet the majority of the slaves were born in slavery and knew no other condition. The first introduction of negro slaves into America was by the State of Massachusetts, and at one time all of the States owned slaves and sanctioned slavery. But the Africans could not endure the cold climate of the North, and were sold to the Southern planters by the men who first imported them. Here, among the cotton fields and tobacco plantations, the negro found a more congenial home. When the North found that the slavery business was a failure, she passed laws forbidding it within her (rather ill-defined) boundaries. But in the South slavery was so successful in its results that all other labour became, in time, excluded from the market. Generation after generation of whites grew up in the midst of this state of things, looking upon slaves as personal property, and generation after generation of negroes were born and grew up without feeling the weight of bondage which had been transmitted to them, and which seemed as inevitable as that black parents should beget black children. Slaves were a constant source of anxiety

to their masters. They were valuable, and for that reason alone, must have been well cared for. Each slave had two outfits of clothes, boots, and head-gear annually. In case of sickness, each had the best of medical attendance, and on nearly every plantation divine service was held every Sabbath. They were well housed and well fed, and, during the slack season, were often granted holidays.

In return for this they worked, not very hard, but very steadily and continuously, and the profit of their labour went to their masters. Occasionally they were treated cruelly, and sometimes were kept at work for twenty-four hours continuously. Sometimes they were rented to other parties, and sometimes sold. They were seldom thrashed, and when they were, they were staked out, and not hung up, as is stated in books on the subject. Ninety-nine per cent. of them were perfectly happy and contented, and would not have wished for freedom but for the agitation and influence of Northern enthusiasts and speculating literary adventurers, in whose minds the truth and their purses were forever at variance.

The present condition of the people is something to be deplored. Men, formerly wealthy, are left with nothing but their broad acres, which they have not the capital to cultivate, and which are rapidly returning to their primeval condition by the luxuriant upgrowth of "old field pine." In some districts where, a few years ago, a tree was scarcely visible, the eye wanders over dense forests of pine that have sprung up and encumbered the soil within the last ten years. Some of the most fertile land in this State can be bought for two dollars an acre, and magnificent white oak and yellow pine, that have never been touched by the axe of civilization, can be obtained for two dollars a tree, standing, and this in close proximity to navigable streams and railway stations.

Those planters who saved a little from the general ruin have removed to Richmond and the large cities, and thousands of acres of fertile land are idly waiting the influx of population, enterprise and capital. The Southern people were left by the war absolutely ruined. Men who owned whole miles of property could scarcely get food to eat or raiment to wear, while the freed slaves wandered about the country in the full flush of the novelty—freedom, no longer maintained by their masters, neglected by their liberators, unwilling to work, but revelling in outrages of every description. Many foreigners are now coming into the country, land-owners are partitioning their estates, and selling them in small parcels, a few factories are being erected, the people are slowly recoiling from their ruined condition, and but for the temporary dullness induced by the recent money-panic a brighter day is dawning on Virginia. A few years more, and the rich coal fields, the smiling farms and valuable forests of the "Old Dominion" will be a theme of wonder to the nations, and a source of wealth to many people.

The present condition of the negro is unenviable. Most of them squat on the farms of their old masters, they work just enough to keep body and soul together, they talk loudly of George Washington and the Independence of America, they steal chickens, sleep in the sun, and vote "The Black Republican ticket." They are paid usually twenty-five cents a day, because if they receive fifty cents they won't work the next day, but contentedly repose on their laurels. They are deserting the country and flocking to the towns and cities, which they infest in every direction. They are civil, well-behaved, and lack only industry and perseverance to become, what their Yankee brothers so earnestly desire them to be, their equals in every respect. A happier people it would be hard to find, always laughing and joking, singing or grotesquely gesticulating some profound argument into the woolly pate of a black brother, they enliven this otherwise sober country, wonderfully. Nothing is more common than to see a wench with a bundle on her head and lugging a child by the arm, "hoeling it down" with shiny heel on the railway track in real old Virginia style.

What they eat here sometimes puzzles me to find "a habitation and a name" for. Meats are less plentifully partaken of than in Canada. A profusion of vegetables is always to be found on the table. Sweet potatoes, hominy, corn-dodgers, batter cake, and fried rice are a few of the curiosities; preserved peaches, citrons, and other and rarer edibles, are commonly placed before the unaccustomed traveller. Their living, though perhaps not so substantial as our own, is better suited for this mild climate. Nearly every one dresses in black (of course I refer to men), but much better taste is displayed than in the North, where broadcloth prevails. I have seen no high-heeled boots nor "shoo-fly" neckties; no low-cut vests, nor profusion of gold studs, no little brooch pinned on the coat collar, and no enormous rings on little fingers, since I came here. The men all look like gentlemen, and behaved as such. The language, although the same as our own, has a peculiar accent, something between the drawing twang of the Yankee and the wabbling lisp of the negro. The Virginians "reckon" a good deal, and "right-smart" and "right-bad" it considerably, and "on-yon" it somewhat. Of course, this slang prevails only amongst certain classes, although it is very expressive and not so repulsive as some I have heard.

Many of their houses here are constructed of wood, with the chimneys built up outside the house. Within the houses nearly every room has a fire-place, up-stairs and down, but stoves are a rarity. Many of the houses have no cellars but are built on brick arches, three or four feet from the ground. Mules are very commonly employed for draught and farm work. Farmers plough with one horse, and travel chiefly on horseback. The Virginian horses are rather small, but usually very tough and beautiful.

A great deal of the soil is a rich red clay. The country is rolling, and between the hills every vale is watered by a stream of limpid purity. The public roads are merely turnpikes. I have not seen a "macadamised" road in a tramp of one hundred miles. The bridges are good, at least those are which span the James, the Appamattox, the Notamay, the Mahern, and the Roanoke.

Tobacco is not grown extensively northeast of Powhatan county, but southwest of that district it is cultivated almost exclusively. The manipulation and process it has to undergo formed the topic of my last letter, and unfolded some mysterious secrets anent the "weed" of which some of your readers who indulge in that same may be ignorant.

The delightful weather we have had for some days has been succeeded by a cold sleet from the northeast, awakening memories of a Canadian November. The mulberry trees outside my window are broken and almost ruined with the weight of ice upon them, and I am broken, too, somewhat, by this long letter, and so must say *au revoir*.

CANADIAN.

## MGR. TACHE, ARCHBISHOP OF ST. BONIFACE.

According to promise we give the following biography of Mgr. Taché, for which we are indebted to the *True Witness* :—

Jean Baptiste Taché, brother of Sir Etienne Paschal Taché, and Louise Henriette Boucher de La Broquerie were the parents of three sons, Joseph Charles, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour and at present Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Antoine Louis, now sheriff of St. Hyacinthe, and Alexandre, the subject of this sketch. Born at Rivière du Loup, below Quebec, on the 23rd of July, 1823, he began at an early age to aspire to the Priesthood, and in order to prepare for that exalted station was placed in the College of St. Hyacinthe. It was there that he first heard of the vast regions of the distant North-West; of the many tribes of Red Men from whose sons the waters of Baptism had not yet washed the stain of Adam's sin; and of the brave little band of Missionaries who, Cross in hand, had penetrated into the boundless wilds, and were preaching salvation and teaching civilization to all whom they could reach. Young Taché, in whose soul the lovely virtue of charity had long since taken root, yearned to be numbered among those heroic pioneers of Christianity; and he begged of God in earnest prayer to make known the divine will to His servant. The youth's prayer was heard. "God wills it" spoke a voice from heaven, sending a thrill of joy through his soul, a joy which the perils that stared him in the face, countless as they were, could not repress. Without delay he joined the community of *Oblats* Missionaries at Longueuil, then directed by R. P. Guigues, the late lamented Bishop of Ottawa. On June 24th, 1845, the superior sent forth two Apostles to the far off Hudson Bay territories; they were R. P. Aubert, and the Novice Taché who had not yet attained his twenty-second year. From Montreal to the Red River settlement their voyage by water was made in a frail bark canoe, the only means of transport then used by the Canadian *voyageur*. Arrived at the scene of his future labours, the young Novice received the holy Order of Priesthood from the hands of the Bishop of the North-West, Mgr. Provencher. The ordination took place on October 12th, 1845.

Father Taché laboured energetically and most successfully during the six following years and towards their close, in 1851, he was chosen by Mgr. Provencher to be Coadjutor Bishop of his limitless Diocese. After receiving this nomination, which he did while protesting his unworthiness and many imperfections, he went to France to lay before the Superior General a report of the Northern Missions. In the mean time His Holiness the Pope had approved of and confirmed the wise selection of Mgr. Provencher; and on November 23rd 1851, in the Cathedral of V. Viers, France, Father Alexandre Taché was consecrated Bishop of Arath in *partibus infidelium* by Mgr. de Mazenod of Marseille. The new Prelate, after paying homage and professing allegiance to the Holy Father at Rome, set out on his return to the Episcopal See of St. Boniface, where he arrived in June 1852 after a tedious and wearying voyage. We shall not attempt to pourtray the apostolic labours of Mgr. Taché and the wonderful success that has crowned them. To do so without wounding the good Bishop's modesty would be impossible. Suffice it to say that, aided and abetted by Mgr. Grandin of St. Albert, Mgr. Farad and Mgr. Clut of Athabaska, he has established in a country where ice and snow are the principal products and which extends northward as far as the pole itself, an Ecclesiastical Province, poor in worldly goods it is true, but in the eyes of God and of His Church equal to the richest in Europe. Of this province Mgr. Taché was appointed Metropolitan two years ago.

The name of Archbishop Taché is, as the whole reading public knows, prominently connected with the union of Manitoba to the Dominion; and a portion of the press would have us believe that he is responsible for the troubles and bloodshed connected with that event. With the single exception of one of his own Priests, M. Ritchot, there is no man more misrepresented and abused by the penny-a-liner than the Archbishop of St. Boniface. The epithet of *traitor* applied to Mgr. Taché and *murderer* to M. Ritchot have become as familiar as household words. This is the way Canada rewards the Catholic Bishop who, at his country's call, tore himself away from the dearest association, the society of his Church's Princes during the Council of the Vatican; crossed as fast as steam would carry him the greater part of two continents and the wide Atlantic; and rested not until he had repaired as far as was then possible the mischief of which the blunders of those in power were the cause. Shame on thee Canada, because of thy base ingratitude to the son of thine own bosom!

### THE EFFECTS OF EUGENIE'S DISPLEASURE.

Olive Logan, in chronicling the revival of "Des Bibelots du Diable" at the Renaissance, Paris, says: "This is a fairy piece which had a run of over a hundred nights at the Varieties some years ago. Two performers who then received the plaudits of the crowd shall know them no more forever. One of these was Lassagne, a comedian whose humorous loutishness I never saw excelled upon the stage. He played the stolid, ignorant, guffawing peasant in a way that could and did shake crowned and uncrowned heads (and bodies) with laughter. But see on what a slight thread our destinies hang! One evening when the Empress was present at the theatre, Lassagne indulged in that bit of business which is a standard stupidity among comic men. In a scene where he was called upon to take off his jacket and vest, under the imperative bidding of somebody else, he made as if he were about to remove more of his garments, and was brought to reason by a p-remptory 'Ah! hold on!' &c., from the other performer. Eugénie considered herself very greatly affronted by this piece of vulgarity, and sent word to the management that Lassagne must never again play when she visited the theatre. When the news was communicated to the poor comedian his brain reeled, he fainted, and when he returned to consciousness his mind was gone. The insanity of poor 'Carlotta,' brought about by Napoleon's lack of good faith to Maximilian, has moved the sympathies of the entire world, but the fate of the poor actor who was made a lunatic by Eugénie's caprice is little known or cared for. He dragged on some miserable years in a mad-house, his hours passed in the heartrending portrayal of his old parts, mingled with agonised prayers for forgiveness from the offended lady. I cannot offer any extenuation for his vulgarity, but I should not like to have the wreck of his life on my conscience. He died without ever recovering his reason."