

a bed of thorns. To both these works his friends and admirers affixed wreaths of everlasting flowers tied up with knots of crape.

The poor Queen of Servia arrived this week in Paris, amidst sympathetic comments from the French newspapers, who are always easily moved by a mother's grief. Anything relative to a mother touches the French hearts profoundly; and the part played by Germany in the melancholy little drama has naturally aroused the bitterest remarks. A friend of mine who saw Queen Natalie repeatedly in Florence declares that she is very handsome, but *not* distinguished. Everybody blames King Milan and will be glad if condign punishment overtakes him.

Yesterday I happened to be at Bougival, the charming little town on the Seine, three miles from St. Germain, where a great funeral was going on of a man of much mark in the commercial world. His story is as follows: When the Duke of Orleans, eldest son of King Louis Philippe, was thrown from his carriage on that fatal day in 1840, he was carried into a grocer's shop on the site of what is now the Chapel St. Ferdinand. Many of your readers may have visited that chapel and seen the large picture commemorative of the sad event, and pitied the young man struck down in the beauty of his youth, and the poor Queen Marie Amelie, who is seen sitting in the foreground of the shop, as she sat for hours until her unconscious son had breathed his last. The grocer's name was Pointelet, and it may be imagined that he was largely rewarded for having sheltered the House of Orleans in that moment of bitter agony. Pointelet, whose shop was demolished, became a contractor, and made a large profit as contractor for making the fortifications which extend far and wide on the line where stands the *chapelle*. Let it be noted that when every house in the neighbourhood was pulled down in the weeks previous to the siege of Paris, St. Ferdinand was allowed to remain, and was uninjured by bombs. When the elder Pointelet died he left a big lump sum to his son, who, casting about for a profitable undertaking, embarked it in the plaster of Paris works at Bougival. Here for years he has dug and quarried into the limestone, sending out enormous quantities, not only of plaster of Paris, but of the intensely hard cement used in the great ports of France, more particularly Cherbourg, which is a masterpiece of marine architecture. Pointelet's cement was said to be harder than even what remains to us of old Roman times, more unbreakable than stone. It may be imagined that he piled up money; some time ago he had saved capital which gave him £4,000 sterling a year, and was annually making an equivalent income by his works. And to the right and to the left he burrowed, and fabulous tales were told in the countryside of the depth to which went his excavations. On one occasion when I was staying at a house in the neighbourhood the lamp began to swing, a loud rumbling noise was heard, and all the inhabitants rushed out, fearing an earthquake. One of M. Pointelet's galleries had given way, causing a tremendous landslip about a quarter of a mile off. He was accused by the popular legend of plastering up the entrance to any particularly doubtful excavation, such as those running under a public road, and adroitly covering the wall with mud and moss when expecting the visit of the Government Inspector!

This wealthy and worthy person was borne to the grave yesterday with all the pomp which Bougival could muster; the high car covered with enormous wreaths, among the most conspicuous, two "*à mon grandpère*." In front of it were the firemen in uniform, playing military music; behind it the clergy and two nursing nuns who had attended him in his illness; these took precedence of the family, men and women, and innumerable neighbours, head-workmen, engineers, inspectors, some of whom wore the red ribbon at their button holes. The beautiful old church of Bougival, whose spire is said to have been constructed by the English in the wars of the Henries, was deeply draped in black, with a huge "P" over the main door. The chanting, the drums and trumpets, and the great stir in the little town all suggested the neighbourliness which survives in France, and is much more real than the unhappy governmental struggles, and will keep the country together in spite of all the efforts of her alarmed and angry foes across the frontier.

M. A. B.

MONTREAL LETTER.

TIME was when, it seemed, a primeval forest floated about our wharves. The many-armed masts of countless ships stood like skeleton wings or mazes of leafless trees. Now all this is changed, and some dark-funnelled vessels have supplanted the pretty, dainty craft of yore. You look in vain by day-light for anything picturesque, but at night the scene becomes metamorphosed. Work still goes on, only darkness exaggerates all. The ships swell to double their size. The men are no longer men, but blind, struggling, panting things, toiling away for dear life under the bleared, electric lights that watch them like merciless eyes through the blackness, while ever an anon comes writhing, snorting along the river bank a great, uncanny monster, spitting fire and shrieking to rend the air—"Work, work, work."

It was Dantesque, horrid, and I should tell you nothing about it if I were not going to show the other side of the medal. Climb up these steep stairs of the Sailors' Institute to the first flat over-looking the wharves. The low rooms have rather a shippy smell and appearance; but see, they are large, cosy, well lighted. Here sailors may come and read, write, play bagatelle and chess. At the grand piano as we passed a musically inclined steward thumped proudly "by ear," and near, oblivious of all, of their pathetically amusing awkwardness, now sprawling, now cramped, now biting their pens for inspiration, now gazing at the ceiling, rough, honest souls scratched down laboriously their quaint messages to sweethearts and wives.

A new Monastery? Yes, we are to have a new Monastery, though the

number of religious houses in Montreal already might satisfy even Spanish zeal. Let King Humbert make hotels and museums of Italian convents, and godless Republicans drive from France her children's most devoted preceptors, too civilized Europe's outcasts have still Monsieur Mercier and labyrinthine palaces awaiting them on the shores of this dear, unsophisticated Canada. One can imagine some Parisian *député de la gauche* sauntering through our city.

"Et cela, that huge building which occupies a whole block, a picture gallery perhaps?"

"Not at all—a nunnery, sir."

"But this, this imposing edifice must be your public library."

"Pardon me, our public library is a squat, hideous little building which, from its exterior, anybody might mistake for some livery stable. No, monsieur, this is another nunnery."

"Ha! we have here doubtless a school of art and design, or can it be the *Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers*?"

"I must contradict you again. The Montreal School of Art and Design does not boast any more creditable building than the veriest pauper's lodgings. Again you see still another nunnery."

Then the Parisian wanders westwards, where the Villa Maria Convent with its pinnacles looks like a fairy palace glinting in the sun.

"Some Canadian *Chateau de Compiègne*, eh? The residence of one of your railroad kings?"

"Ah, monsieur, to how many young ladies has this noble edifice been the very gate of Paradise; leading them from outward darkness to the feet of mother church; it is our finest Monastery. Next year you may discover another in an adjoining lot, for the Sisters of the Precious Blood have decided to erect a beautiful cruciform building at the expense of the faithful; some privileged ones, indeed, being permitted not only to present the stone, but to carry their gift.

"My friend," do you call this country *new France*?"

"We call it the France of *Louis Quatorze*."

I read in *La Patrie* a letter from Monsieur Benjamin Sulte, valiantly lauding French-Canadian orators. Not only they, but their compatriots generally, speak "the true French tongue." Of course, that all depends upon whether you call the "true French tongue" the French of "the fathers of the codfish," or of Parisian salons. Monsieur Sulte further remarks there are a hundred orators in this Province who can be compared with the first men of France; and though the older country is thirty-six times more populous than ours she could not produce as many *improvisateurs* speaking the language correctly. For so astounding a superiority French-Canadians must thank their constant contact with the English. These talk on every occasion, the former are consequently obliged to do likewise. "But," continues Monsieur Sulte, "where I find we are always *distingués*, is in our precision of speech, our fidelity to grammar, even while improvising the phrase." Judge Routhier astounded French audiences, and, it appears, Canada can boast dozens of such orators, while poor France possesses only a few, who cost her a great deal as professors. This may be, but, *entre nous*, I have heard what would cast no little doubt over these assertions. We hardly take voice and accent into account, because the Canadian voice and accent, are, whether French or English, very often horrible. With Europeans, however, it is quite different, and though these condescending friends may regard us patronizingly, and cry, "Bravo!" as if we were children, they secretly ridicule our speech most unmercifully. Everybody may admit Monsieur Sulte's ecstatic praises are in some cases thoroughly warranted, but few will consent to compare the sleek volubility of the showman with the grave discourse of Monsieur le Professeur; the rattling of a street piano with the sonorous roll of the organ.

Seventy-two dollars a year! It isn't too much to give for some hideous piece of furniture, or the felicity of seeing our names on an aristocratic subscription list, but it is too much, apparently, to give for *Art and Letters*, perhaps the most charming artistic periodical that has ever been published. Each number contains from 120 to 150 pages, royal quarto, and six or more superb illustrations, photogravures, typogravures and etchings. When I tell you these are issued by the successors to Goupil you know what to expect. The distinguished French writers—Renan, Sarcey, Daudet, Halévy, Coppée, etc.—contribute novels, biographies, critiques, while the works of such artists as Breton, Détaillé, Gérôme may be seen reproduced in it. Those enterprising Scribners are the sole importers of *Art and Letters* for Canada and the United States. For Canada? Alas! Their agent succeeded in obtaining one or two subscriptions in Quebec—from public institutions; a subscription in Ottawa—from the library; and one (perhaps) in Montreal, from our Art Gallery. So you see you must redeem us, good Torontonians.

LOUIS LLOYD.

At a time when the minds of men are being directed more and more to the pressing question, "Shall religious training be a part of the education of our children?" it may be well to hear what one [Mathew Arnold] who can scarcely be supposed to have any undue bias towards religion, and was, moreover, an excellent judge in matters of education and culture, had to say on such an important subject. It was very probably the last public utterance of that great and distinguished thinker:—"Religious instruction which politicians, making or administering the popular school, seek to exclude as embarrassing, if not futile, is a formative influence, an element of culture of the very highest value, and more indispensable in the popular school than in any other. Political pressure tends to exclude this element of culture; clerical pressure tends to give it a false character. The interest of the people is to get a true character imparted to it, and to have it firmly planted with this character in the popular school."—*Standard*.