

tracker. The men required to take charge of a railway train from Melbourne to Ballarat, a distance of one hundred miles, would be sufficient to conduct a train in Canada from Windsor to Montreal. Several valuable lessons may be learned from the Australians, which Canada would do well to profit by. In Sydney the art gallery, museum, zoological gardens, botanic gardens, domain, etc., are thrown open to the public on Sunday, and are thronged by thousands of the working class, who from the nature of their employment are prevented becoming visitors during the remaining days of the week. In all the Australian cities, and even in the small towns, vast reserves have been set apart for botanic gardens, parks, parades, and domains. These breathing spaces, all of which are free to the public, are kept with exquisite taste, and reflect the highest credit upon the culture and æsthetic spirit of the people, who cheerfully pay for their maintenance. At Ballarat (a small city) an artificial lake has been formed by utilizing the water pumped from the gold mines; the debris has been used for embankments, and a reserve of half a mile in width on each side of the lake created, which, in natural and artificial beauty, surpasses any portion of New York's famous Central Park. A stroll through the streets of Ballarat will convince the most sceptical that the reflex action upon the public by the cultivation of the beautiful has been highly beneficial to all classes. The humble cottage of the miner, equally with the mansion of the capitalist, is embowered with roses and a wealth of vegetation which is a revelation to a visitor accustomed to the crude and slovenly streets of Canadian towns.

In Queensland one meets the natives in considerable numbers, and on the Johnstone River they have recently eaten a number of Chinese, preferring the sons of the Flowery Kingdom to the Caucasians. The lubras (females) are by no means types of beauty, but the men are in no sense as inferior physically as they are represented by many modern geographers. In most cases they have well-developed chests and arms; they are not only active but muscular, though their shrunken and attenuated legs give them an unmanly appearance as compared with the average beef-eating Englishman. I believe that they are fully as intelligent as the average North American Indian, and the fact that they have long been employed by the Queensland Government as black troopers is corroborative evidence in their behalf. They hunt down their brothers of the forest without mercy, and such is their ferocity that their use on the frontiers of civilization has been generally abandoned. At present they are employed in all the colonies as "Black Trackers," in which capacity they have no equals. Wonderful as are the stories related of the North American Indian in following a trail, they sink into insignificance when compared with the well-proven feats of the Australian blacks. Given any trail, be it of horse or man, they will follow it with unerring sagacity, through the forest, over mountains, across streams, and even on well-beaten roads. These human bloodhounds have been known to thus pursue a criminal for weeks and finally run him down; hence they are practically invaluable in a land of vast semi-deserts and almost inaccessible mountain fastnesses. THAD. W. H. LEAVITT.

LITERARY NOTES FROM PARIS.

THE difficulty the French have in reading Dickens arises from their unacquaintance with English social life. Then, Dickens has been made next to grotesque by the translators, because untranslatable. In his native costume Dickens is light, brilliant, and free; in a foreign dress he becomes spiritless, heavy, dragging, and ill at ease; in a word, a "bird of paradise with clipped wings." Again, the French do not comprehend the salient trait of Dickens—humour,—which is neither *esprit* nor drollery, but a combination of both. And the humour of Dickens, like the magic harp, emits sighs, tears, songs, and gaiety, sensible to all currents of inspiration.

Dickens is the king of laughter and tears; he knows to be in turn tender and grotesque, ironical and passionate, gay as Fiddling, sombre as Ossian, pathetic as Goldsmith, realist as Swift, and brilliant as Addison. He imparts to all he touches intensity and specious life. Bells hold converse with the wind; the tea kettle sings for domestic industry; the wild waves speak to the little dying Dombey, and the cricket chirrups on the hearth to console the toil-worn bread-winner of the family. Dickens, according to M. de Houssey, describes only English life; if he does not know any other, he at least likes no other. When he denounces vice, however universal its character, it will be painted in essentially English colours. All his masks are for English faces. Pecksniff is the type of English hypocrisy; but Molière's Tartuffe personifies hypocrisy at large. And when Dickens exalts a virtue, it is embodied in a homely "miss" with blue eyes, blonde hair, rosy cheeks, and a chaste toilette.

Dickens, when in Paris in 1846-47, was everywhere well received, and

his talent was fully recognized and honoured. The French liked him, because, though a mordant observer and a satirist of the first order, he was different from other strangers, and he ever conserved his individuality. It was known that he never kept a journal of his impressions; but he took notes in a memory which never proved traitor to him. It sufficed that Dickens saw a landscape or witnessed a scene only once to be able to describe it years later in its minutest details. It might be said of him, as it was of Gustave Doré's designs, "he had collodion in the eye."

Dickens was intellectually and physically at his apogee in 1847. His eyes were so large and so luminous, and changed so rapidly their shade of expression, that it was difficult to determine their colour. His smile expressed potential goodness, which at once attracted and charmed. A French lady remembers that when a girl she was a fellow-lodger in the same house as Dickens. When she encountered him in the morning on the stairs, "his smile and salute made her feel happy and good for the whole day." And it must not be forgotten that Dickens, then happy in fame, income, and family, had a most atrocious childhood. He passed days in a cellar lower than the level of the Thames, sticking labels on blacking bottles for a few shillings a week, in the company of gutter children, while his old and in second childhood father was dying in the debtor's prison, and his sickly mother suffering from hunger and cold in a solitary attic. Many a morning he passed before Westminster Abbey going to his daily penance, weary, famishing, and shivering—a kind of city Arab. And now he sleeps at the feet of Handel, beside his *confrère* Thackeray, and beneath the smiling bust of Shakespeare!

MALTE-BRUN, the geographer, submitted a plan of colonization for the Island of Formosa to Napoleon in 1809—the year of the Battle of Wagram and of the disastrous English expedition to the Island of Walcheren. His aim was to cut out the trade of England in tea, raw silk, and nankeens with China. His plan was to commence innocently, so as not to excite the jealousy of Albion; but if that was roused, to brave it.

Formosa was to be a kind of entrepôt for the above exports, conveyed to the mainland by junks, which in return would take opium—a prohibited, but advantageous product. Having trained the Formosans to commercial habits, they were to be employed as pioneers of France in Japan and the Corea. Farther, the central position of Formosa would attract the pepper and araca of the Philippines; the diamonds and spices of Borneo; the cinnamon and odoriferous woods of Cochin China, reselling all to Europeans.

Next, to establish in the island factories to turn out silks, nankeens, and muslins; to create cotton plantations so as to ruin the English furnishers of thread at Bombay; manufacture arms, gunpowder, ironware, jewellery, build ship-yards, and naturalize New Zealand flax.

War with China, on account of seizing Formosa, was not to be apprehended. Then, as recently under Jules Ferry, the Chinese were a "*négligeable quantité*." They had no ships nor artillery worth mentioning, and by bribing the Viceroy of Fo-kein he would make matters pleasant at Peking. At all events, China had only rights over the other moiety of Formosa. The Dutch were *de facto* owners, having been the first to organize the island.

This plan was directed against "the tyrants of the sea"—the English. These disposed of, there remained only Russia. But she was more occupied expanding Japan-wards; besides, the Muscovites were only "novices at land-grabbing"! What progress since!

To throw dust in the eyes of John Bull, the scheme ought to have the air as "coming from private individuals—not French," the motive, merely "a speculation of merchants," backed by "the enthusiasm of some adventurers." Above all, it ought not to smack of anything military. The *mot d'ordre* should be given to the press to treat the scheme as a folly, the plaything of infants. All this was essential to deceive English politicians.

Malte-Brun was an exiled Dane, born at Thysted in 1775, and who died at Paris in 1826. Other elements of his plan consisted in organizing a band of 1,500 filibusters, chiefly Americans and some Danes; they were to assume the name of emigrants; a secret agent of France, with half a million francs, was to control the plot. Another expedition was to sail for Madagascar, where three French ships, reported to be Dutch merchants, but really laden with artillery, muskets, and ammunition under a thin layer of goods, would escort the "emigrants." Engineers and officers were to book disguised as passengers. Once landed at Formosa, and the house put in apple-pie order, the ships would set out for the United States laden with silks, tea, etc., and offer these at a low price, guaranteeing the free entry of American products to the island in exchange for arms, ammunition, and, above all, warrior-emigrants.

Americans, it seems, would "give their last rifle for cheap tea"; they would also smuggle it into Great Britain and Ireland. The Formosans,