

OUR CANADIAN PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 93.—THE LATE LIEUT.-COL. IRVINE.

A distinguished Canadian, full of years and honours, has passed away. John George Irvine, for many years principal aide-de-camp to the Governor General, died at Quebec, on Tuesday, the 31st Oct., in the sixty-ninth year of his age. He had of late years been subjected to severe attacks of paralysis, and though his strength rallied to an extent that almost surprised his friends, yet they were warned that his time might not be much longer in this world. Col. Irvine was the son of the Hon. James Irvine, a gentleman who for many years occupied a seat in the Legislative Council, and was one of the leading merchants of Quebec. The Colonel was born in Quebec, in December, 1802, and, when at a suitable age, was sent to Edinburgh to complete his education at the University in that city. He subsequently received a commission in the 31st Regiment, but did not long continue in the regular service. In the troublous times of '37-'38 Mr. Irvine was active in the support of the Crown, having raised a company of Volunteers at the first sign of outbreak. In 1838 he raised a regiment one thousand strong for service in Canada, which remained on duty for two years, when it was disbanded. For all these military services Col. Irvine was highly complimented by his superiors. In 1837 he served as extra aide-de-camp to the Earl of Gosford, then Governor General, and in 1840, on the disbandment of his regiment, was appointed Quarter-Master General of Militia. From time to time up to the hour of his death, Colonel Irvine has filled the respective offices of extra Provincial and principal aide-de-camp to the successive Governors General, or Administrators of Government, in Canada. The genial amiability of his nature, the courtly gentleness of his manner, added to his practical knowledge of military affairs, made him peculiarly fitted for the discharge of the delicate duties connected with his office, and perhaps no man in Canada was more admired and respected, certainly very few more generally known. One of the late Col. Irvine's most pleasing services was his acting, by special appointment, as Adjutant-General of Militia in attendance on H. R. H. the Prince of Wales during his visit to Canada in 1860. For his efficient conduct on that occasion he received the thanks of His Royal Highness as well as of the Governor-General. Mr Fennings Taylor in his "Sketches" says of Colonel Irvine:—"Being brought into contact with the different noblemen and gentlemen who have successively governed or administered the Government of Canada, the subject of our sketch has, we believe, had the great good fortune to be appreciated and trusted by them all. In truth, it could scarcely be otherwise, for the Colonel appears to combine in his person qualities that do not always meet in the same character. He is a cheerful and a genial man, and yet a discreet and a guarded one. He is fond of society, delights in its innocent amusements, and enjoys with a pure relish the charms of social intercourse, and yet it is to be observed that he is as prudent as he is popular. People will learn nothing from him which he ought not to communicate. The ties of honour and confidence, by which he is bound to all Governors and to all Governments, are held to be inviolable, and they are therefore always guarded with religious aspect." This estimate of the deceased gentleman's character is not overdrawn, and the fact of his qualities and conduct being such explains his uninterrupted popularity. Colonel Irvine leaves a large family all in good positions, one of them being the Hon. Solicitor-General for Quebec, another at present commanding the Volunteers at Fort Garry, and the third Assistant Controller in H. M. service.

NEWFOUNDLAND CORRESPONDENCE.

ST. JOHN'S, Nfld., Oct. 28, 1871.

LIFE IN NEWFOUNDLAND—A DAY'S RAMBLE.

When the brain and nerves are suffering from an unduly prolonged mental strain, the best remedy is a walk of fifteen or twenty miles. This restorative acts as a counter-irritant, and by withdrawing the nervous irritation from the brain, it directs it to the muscular system, where it is safely and healthily expended. The result is relief and rest for the brain, and renewed mental vigour. Having felt lately a touch of that mental lassitude that springs from a tension of the mental faculties continued too long without due intervals of rest, I resolved to adopt the above prescription, and devote a day to pedestrian exercise. Knowing from experience the benefit of having an object in view, when entering on an excursion, I decided on paying a visit to a little fishing village a short distance from St. John's, where I had never been previously. A brief account of this walk may interest the readers of the *Canadian Illustrated News*, as furnishing a glimpse of life as it goes on in this out-lying portion of creation.

THE ROAD TO BLACKHEAD.

The village to which I directed my footsteps is named Blackhead, and lies a few miles south of St. John's harbour. The road to it runs over a bleak range of hills that stretches along the coast, winding along the shoulders, through the gorges and over the lower summits of these hills, till it emerges at a small indentation of the coast which affords a slight shelter for fishing boats. Here, amid the clefts of the

rock, a few fishermen have built their huts along the summit of a low cliff at whose base the swell of the mighty Atlantic is making perpetual music. On leaving St. John's, the road strikes at once up the steep declivity of the South Side Hill. It is a rough, narrow mountain road, but sufficiently well made for present purposes. On pausing to take breath, when half way to the summit, the traveller enjoys a fine view of the city of St. John's, from end to end, stretching along the northern side of the splendid, land-locked harbour. In a bright day, and at a distance, the city looks remarkably well, with its forest of masts, its busy wharves, lofty fish and oil stores, its sombre wooden houses, its church spires rising above their roofs, the Roman Catholic Cathedral, on its commanding site, overlooking the whole, and standing out most conspicuously.

AUTUMN WOODS.

A sudden turn of the road now completely shuts out the view of the city; and the traveller finds himself in a little gorge between two hills, piles of red sandstone rising precipitously on the right, in wild, fantastic shapes, and a rounded summit, covered with stunted firs, mountain ash and birch trees on the left. The red sandstone is older by many ages than Hugh Miller's Old Red Sandstone, being one of the strata of the Cambrian or Huronian formation which is developed throughout the whole southern portion of the island. The gorgeous colouring of the foliage of the trees at this season (October 20th) at once arrests attention and refreshes and charms the eye. Very touching and suggestive it is to note how, just before the chilling blasts of November come, to wither the leaves and mingle them with the dust, nature, for a few brief days, glorifies them with a splendour and beauty such as they could not boast of in the bloom of summer. What variety and depth of colouring—what harmonies and contrasts, far beyond the painter's art—what warmth and richness in some of the tints! Does it not remind one of that "brightening before death" of which we meet so many instances, glorifying the approaching decay of the tomb with fore-gleams of immortality? A coming resurrection, a glorious spring-time are heralded by both. The short-lived beauty of the dying foliage is very sweet. Even the humble shrub on which the huckle-berries grow has now a strange beauty of its own, being clad in deepest crimson. On my walk, I note whole acres of these crimson-covered shrubs surrounding the grim rocks with loveliness, as the sunbeams light up the little valleys and the sides of the hills. Then, the leaves of the birch have assumed an orange tint which contrasts beautifully with the dark green of the firs with which they are intermingled. The mountain-ash has put on a soberer yellow hue, and the ferns stand in russet brown. The poplar has donned crimson robes, and the beech still retains its glossy green which renders the former more effective. The colours, too, come out in large masses, not in individual detached leaves, so that everything tawdry or little in its effect is prevented. With the sun shining on them, the effect is even grand. Indeed sunlight is like the breath of life to the pomp of autumn—wanting it, there is little splendour—with it, the effect is wonderful beyond description. It is like varnish bringing out the hidden veins in a piece of rich wood. When the passing cloud intercepts the sunbeams, I observe that the landscape, even with all the bright colouring, is dull; but when the cloud passes away, and the sun shines out, the whole scene becomes a bright picture, glad and cheerful. At an elevated spot, on the little road winding among the hills, I took my stand for a few minutes, and enjoyed the view of the breadth of wood, as far as the eye could reach, watching the effect of the passing clouds, now darkening the tints and now causing them to flash out in the full light of the sun. The sombre green of the firs seemed to furnish the shadows of the picture and to act as a foil to the brightness. Close to the ground, in spots, are the red patches of huckle-berry bushes, little islands amid the landscape, or, here and there, encircling a huge gray boulder with their scarlet glories. Instead of being lost in the universal emerald of summer, each tree now stands out in its individuality, and has its own peculiar colour. And yet, though the variety of shades is endless—yellow, purple, brown, scarlet, glowing crimson, orange and yellow—there is still a oneness of effect. Nature scatters the hues with careless hand, but there are no abrupt contrasts—nothing to shock or disturb. According to the progress each tree has made towards decay so are the varieties of colouring. Out of scantiest materials all the wonderful effects are produced. As we gaze, however, we are conscious of a feeling of sadness. All this glory indicates decay, and prophecies the near approach of winter with its icy chains. As yet, the early frosts have not come; but in a few more days the woods will have a soberer hue, as winter begins to breathe on them. The shrubs will be stripped of their scarlet glories; the leaves will become russet-brown, or assume a sombre, frost-bitten hue; and the glories of autumn will vanish "like the bubble on the fountain," when the surly blasts of November sweep over the landscape:—

"Oh, Autumn! why so soon
Depart the hues that make thy forests glad:
Thy gentle wind and thy fair sunny noon,
And leave thee wild and sad!"

"Ah! 'twere a lot too blessed
For ever in thy coloured shades to stray;
Amid the kisses of the soft south-west
To rove and dream for aye;

"And leave the vain, low strife
That makes men mad—the tug for wealth and power,
And waste its little hour."

BRYANT.

A HOWLING WILDERNESS.

At the end of the second mile along this mountain track, the scene changes. The scanty woods are left behind; scarcely a particle of vegetation is visible; the whole surface of the ground is packed with boulders, so closely that not a shrub has been able to take root. Some tufts of wild grasses manage to struggle into sunlight, in spots where a little streamlet trickles among the rocks; and where a boulder has been split by the frosts, and a little soil has formed in the cleft, some humble bramble has rooted itself and stands up, a solitary witness of the supremacy of life over death. But the whole scene is one of grim desolation, like the bottom of some prime-

val ocean suddenly left dry. The closeness with which the boulders are packed resembles the work of human hands. Some of them are of immense size, and are perched on hill-summits on a knife-edge. Many are conglomerates, showing the water-worn pebbles of ancient sea-beaches, of which their mass is mainly composed. Whence came these myriads of rock-fragments, most of them unlike the neighbouring rock-formations? The region must once have been the bottom of an ancient ocean, over which, during the glacial period perhaps, icebergs and ice-floes ploughed their way, and into whose waters the glaciers extended widely their crystal walls. From mountain chains no longer in existence, these gigantic navvies rent off the rock-masses, and strewed them over the ocean's bed, which, in the course of ages, rose above the surface, and now forms the hilly range through which I am wandering. Venerable fragments are these of a world that has vanished—of some pre-Laurentian realm, whose dust now strews the floor of the Atlantic. These dark, weather-beaten boulders, what a tale they could unfold of the illimitable past—of the changes and convulsions that occurred half a million years ago! Rightly looked at, they too are beautiful, no less than the gaily-tinted leaves. Hoary monuments—wrecks of vanished creations—fragments of primeval worlds that have been quarried by the glacier, and clasped in the embrace of the iceberg, and slept for hundreds of centuries at the bottoms of sea, and been again and again raised to the upper air to be once more submerged, and now in these latter days destined to visit once again "the glimpses of the moon,"—ye, too, are venerable and beautiful!

A LONELY DEATH-BED.

Another mile through this stony wilderness is passed, and I come to a little wooden cross by the wayside. It marks the spot where, a few years ago, the body of a hapless traveller, who perished in a snow-storm, was found. It is a lonely, desolate place—an awful death-bed, with the savage winds shrieking among the summits, and hurling the blinding snow-drifts on their wings of gloom, and chilling and freezing the current of life. We picture the poor traveller staggering on through the snow-storm, thinking of the blazing hearth in the home that is to see him no more,—of the anxious hearts that are beating for him far away. Hope and love animate him for one more struggle, but in vain. He feels the fierce blasts freezing his life's blood, and the stupor of death seizing on him. He stumbles and falls, and, with a cry for mercy, he sinks into the chill embrace of death, and lies stiff and stark with the snow for a winding sheet. May Heaven preserve us from such a terrible death!

ANNALS OF THE POOR—FILIAL AFFECTION.

Hitherto I had met no human being on this lonely mountain-road; but at a turn in the way I now see two women before me, trudging along, bound, like myself, for Blackhead. They prove to be chatty and communicative. The eldest informs me that they are sisters, the daughters of a poor widow who is dependent on the dole of three shillings a week from the Poor-relief Fund. They have at home a little brother ten years of age, and the mother is weak and sickly. Once a week, all the year, in the heats of summer and amid the storms of winter, this poor girl traverses this wild road to get her mother's pittance; and purchase and carry home the little food it procures—walking sixteen miles in a day and carrying home the two stones of Indian meal and the pint of molasses, and perhaps a quarter of a pound of tea and a few cakes of biscuit to fence off starvation for another week. When the road is deep with snow and the cold intense, one wonders how a young girl, twenty-two years of age, can accomplish such a task; but she does it, and cheerfully too. "Is it how does we live," she says, "with three shillin's a week? Well, we doesn't live, thin—we starve like; and if it wasn't for the neighbours that cuts and hauls us our wood in winter, we would perish entirely. But they niver forgets us,—and sends mother many's the male when the snow's on the ground. What kind of a place is Blackhead? Well, bleak and cowlid and nothin' but rocks. Don't I feel it cowlid walking to St. John's in winter? I don't mind it—sure mother would die of hunger if I didn't go for her allowance—and thank the Lord, I niver had a day's sickness, only last year when I had the fayer. No, I niver wears gloves in winter—couldn't get them and don't miss them. I just takes my bundle under my shawl and covers my hands with it. No, I niver covers my ears in winter, and niver got frost-burnt. I earns somethin' at the fishery in summer, but the work's hard and the wages goes mostly in clothes. How much did I earn this summer? Well, three pound fifteen in four months. Used to get only two hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, when fish was plenty. Worked at heading, salting, washing, and carrying the fish. Wore out four pair of boots. They charges awful for anything you take up on credit—about double then. Brother Mick will be able to help mother a bit, in three or four years—and then maybe I may get married—but I couldn't leave mother now—she would perish without me." Such is a sample of the annals of the poor. On approaching the village, the two girls, unloosing a bundle, produced two pair of tolerably decent boots, and after divesting themselves of the wretched feet-ware in which they had been walking, they entered Blackhead, tidy and clean,—a little bit of self-respect that I think was quite admirable, in the midst of their deep poverty. On enquiry in the village, I found that the tale of this poor girl was true in every particular, and that her devotion to her mother was the theme of admiration in the little community. She often took the road for St. John's, I was told, in weather such as that a strong man would scarcely venture out of doors. Though so hardy out of doors, her face tells a tale of slow starvation.

A FISHING VILLAGE—HUMBLE LIFE.

At length I entered Blackhead, and found it a small hamlet containing between thirty and forty houses, and about 180 inhabitants. A few houses on each side of the road, at the entrance of the village, make a feeble attempt to form a street, and then the effort seems to have been abandoned, and the cottages are built at random among the rocks, along the summit of the cliff, with winding paths between. There is a neat stone chapel at the entrance of the village where all worship on Sundays, the people being all Roman Catholics. It is quite a typical village of Newfoundland fishermen. All round the little cove are seen the "fish-flakes" formed of stout upright poles supporting a horizontal framework covered with boughs, on which the codfish are dried, the free circulation of air being essential to the proper treatment of the fish. A little wooden breakwater extends a short way into the sea, and is of great service to the fishermen in rough weather. Huge, frowning