

I had only a clerk's salary to depend on then, and what little I had laid up for a rainy day, was soon spent; had it not been for what my wife earned by her pen, we must have suffered for the necessities of life.

She paid my doctor's bill, a heavy one it was too, procured delicacies to tempt my capricious appetite, provided for the house, and had money to spare to keep the wolf from the door, until I was well enough to earn more; and in that time, no duty was neglected, nothing slighted, my home was, as it has ever been, comfortable and inviting. She still writes occasionally, though I am thankful there is now no necessity for her doing so."

The entrance of Mrs. Oddfield, abruptly closed the conversation, and soon after, Charles Hastings departed, uncomfortably in love with a blue-stockings.

(FOR THE CANADIAN LITERARY JOURNAL.)

SKETCH FROM FRENCH HISTORY DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

PROLOGUE.

In looking back into the vista of bygone years, we cannot thoroughly realize the secret springs which led to the facts which history has embalmed for us. 'Tis true, the facts stand out in bold outline, but the lights and shadows which form the background of the picture are not so easy of recognition, and in comparison as more light and less shadow, or more shadow and less light are inserted so does the picture assume the kaleidoscopic tendency.

It would not do for us to write the History of our own age, it would of necessity be biassed by one individuality, so we wander backward, and by chance, lighting upon the *so called* age of chivalry find food for thought and reflection.

'Tis an age fraught with Philosophies; 'tis the age during which art, the great handmaid of life, made her most rapid progress in Western Europe, and alas! also the age when religion lapsed into a state of rabid fanaticism on the one hand, and on the other was neglected entirely, or replaced by a philosophy which to charac-

terize as "heathenish" would but meekly express the virulence of its opposition to all that good men have ever held sacred and dear.

Our intention in giving SKETCHES of this era, is not to systematically furnish a copious history of the age, but in a desultory and *suggestive* manner, to retell the already oft told tale.

REIGN—LOUIS XV.—DATE 1753.

TIME,—EVENING.

A young man, shabbily dressed with his head bowed down, walks with restless activity the streets of Paris.

His dress ill accords with the splendour of the streets through which he passes, nor do the allurements of the imitative arts seem to attract his attention, though it is the most luxurious age of the world, and every mansion he passes is prodigal in its display of the most costly and precious gems of art.

Yet he cannot be insensible or phlegmatic, for ever and anon, as he raises his head, we see under densely shaggy eye-brows an eye that flashes, with a pent up genius—It is easy to see however, that he has not yet wrung from the world, the meed of praise which his genius deserves, but that he is determined to do, or die, is told by the fixed and heroic expression of the mouth, and, as we study the face which can only be seen now and again, when he for a moment raises his head and takes, as it were, a "sniff of mundane affairs, we cannot at once determine whether, if fortune should smile upon him, he would thrive under her too often enervating influence. Yet the width of brow and length of head, seem to betoken determination and energy, while the fitful smile and now, and again the fierce baffled look, which flashes across his face, speak of passions of no ordinary force, and not easy of control. It is a face which once seen is not easily forgotten, and one that makes us long to know more of the life and history of its possessor.

That his course through life has been eventful we are sure, but what the events are we are allowed only to conjecture. The spell is however upon us, and we follow him till he comes to the Opera