

breathless caves of verdure; gulfs where feathered crags rise like castle walls, where the noonday sun pierces with keen rays athwart the torrent, and the mossed arms of fallen pines cast wandering shadows on the illumined foam; pools of liquid crystal turned emerald in the reflected green of impending woods; rocks on whose rugged front the gleam of sunlit waters dances in quivering light; ancient trees hurled headlong by the storm to dam the raging stream with their forlorn and savage ruin; or the stern depths of immemorial forests, dim and silent as a cavern, columned with innumerable trunks, each like an atlas upholding its world of leaves, and sweating perpetual moisture down its dark, and channelled rind; some strong in youth, some gouty with decrepid age, nightmares of strange distortion, gnarled and knotted with wens and goitres, roots intertwined beneath like serpents petrified in an agony of contorted strife; green and glistening mosses carpeting the rough ground, mantling the rocks, turning pulpy stumps to mounds of verdure, and swathing fallen trunks, as, bent in the impotence of rottenness, they lie outstretched over knoll and hollow like mouldering reptiles of the primeval world, while around, and on, and through them, springs the young growth that fattens on their decay—the forest devouring its own dead. Or, to turn from its funeral shade to the light and life to the open woodland, the sheen of sparkling lakes, and mountains basking in the glory of the summer noon, flecked by the shadows of passing clouds that sail on snowy wings across the transparent azure.”

No pestilent fever or insidious deadly miasma lurks in our forests. On the contrary, their pure, piney breath brings back health to many an ailing mortal, and beneath their feathery hemlocks, and aromatic spruces, one may lie down at night in sweet security from snakes, or centipedes, or other crawling horrors that make each night in a tropical forest a period of peril.

Is there one of us recalling the life of the *coureurs de bois*, the men who above all others made the trackless forest their own, does not feel a stirring of the pulses of admiration and envy, and a pathetic regret that those romantic days in which they flourished are over forever? They were the natural outcome of the beaver trade, which, in the earliest stage of Canadian history formed the struggling French colony's chief source of support. All that was most active and vigorous in the colony took to the woods, thereby escaping from the oppressive control of intendants, councils, and priests, to the savage freedom of the wilderness. Not only were the possible profits great; but in the pursuit of them there was a fascinating element of adventure and danger, which irresistibly appeals to the spirit of enterprise and daring that civilization has not yet quite extinguished within our breasts.

Though not a very valuable member of society and a thorn in the side of princes and rulers, the *coureur de bois* had his uses, at least from an artistic point of view; and his strange figure, sometimes brutally savage, but oftener marked with the lines of a dare-devil courage, and a reckless, thoughtless gaiety, will always be joined to the memories of that grand world of woods which the nineteenth century is fast civilizing out of existence.

Lost in the forest! What a thrill runs swift to the heart as we repeat the words! Ever since our young eyes overflowed at the immortal legend of the babes in the wood, sleeping the sleep that knew no awakening beneath the leafy winding-sheet brought them by their bird mourners, we seem to have had a clear conception of all the terrors the phrase implies, and we follow with throbbing pulses and bated breath the recital of such an experience as the foremost and noblest of all the pioneers of these North American forests had.

One eventful autumn, nearly three centuries ago, Champlain had caught sight of a strange looking bird, and left his party to go in pursuit. Flitting from tree to tree the bird lured him deeper and deeper into the forest, then took wing and vanished. On essaying to retrace his steps Champlain found himself at a loss. Whither should he turn? The day was clouded, and he had left his compass in camp. The forest closed around him, trees mingled with trees in limitless confusion. Bewildered and lost he wandered all day, and at night slept fasting at the foot of a great tree. Awakening chilled and faint, he walked until afternoon, then happily found a pond upon whose bosom were waterfowl, some of which he shot, and for the first time broke his fast. Kindling a fire he prepared his supper, and laid down to sleep in a drenching rain. Another day of blind and weary wandering succeeded, and another night of exhaustion. He found paths in the wilderness, but they had not been made by human feet. After a time the tinkling of a brook touched his ear, and he determined to follow its course in the hope that it would lead him to the river where his party was encamped. “With toil-some steps he traced the infant stream, now lost beneath the decaying masses of fallen trunks, or the impervious intricacies of matted windfalls, now stealing through swampy thickets or gurgling in the shade of rocks, till it entered at length, not into the river, but into a small lake. Circling around the brink, he found the point where, gliding among clammy roots of alders, the brook ran out and resumed its course.” Pressing persistently forward he at length forced his way out of the entanglement of underbrush into an open meadow, and there before him rolled the river, broad and turbulent, its bank marked with the portage-path by which the Indians passed the neighbouring rapids. The good God be praised! he had found the clue he sought. Inexpressibly relieved he hastened along the river side, and in a few hours more was being joyfully welcomed by his companions, who had been anxiously

searching for him. “From that day forth,” we are told, “his host, Durant, would never suffer him to go into the forest alone.”

Although the *coureur de bois* has long since made his exit, there still remains in Canada a class of men who have somewhat in common with him. These are lumber-scouts or bush-rangers, whose business it is to seek for “limits” that will pay handsome profits. It is boards, not beavers, they have upon their minds. They are often Indians or half-breeds, and the skill of these self-taught surveyors is sometimes very remarkable. They will explore the length and breadth of the *terra incognita*, and report upon the kind and value of its timber, the situation, and capability of its streams for floating out the logs, and the facilities for hauling and transportation. They will even map out the surface of the country, showing the position of its streams and lakes, its groves of timber, and its mountainous or level appearance with a skill and accuracy bewildering to ordinary mortals in whose eyes the whole district would be one great confused wilderness.

No more interesting experience in woodcraft could be had than a scouting excursion in such company. The trackless forest has no terrors, no mysteries for them. To them Nature opens her heart, and tells all her secrets. In lightest marching order, each man's entire equipment being carried in a shoulder-pack upheld by a “lump-line” around the forehead, they plunge into the wilderness. With unerring instinct they pursue their way, now following the course of some winding stream; now circling a tiny lake lying gem-like in a verdurous setting, now scrambling amongst cliffs, where, to paraphrase Parkman, seeing, but unseen, the crouched wild-cat eyes them from the thicket; now threading a maze of water-girded rocks, which the white cedar, and the spruce clasps with serpent-like roots; then diving into leafy depths where the rock-maple rears its green masses, the beech its glistening leaves, and clear smooth stem, while behind, stiff and sombre, stands the balsam fir and the white pine towers proudly over all.

When night falls they make their simple bivouac, and their roaring camp-fire like a magician's wand strangely transforms the scene. As the flame casts its keen red light around, wild forms stand forth against the outer gloom—the oak, a giant in rusty mail; the mighty pyramid of the pine, the wan and ghastly birch, looking like a spectre in the darkness. The campers gather close around the ruddy flame made welcome by the cool breath of approaching autumn, and after the broiled trout or roast duck have disappeared, and an incense offering of fragrant smoke ascended from their pipes, they curl up in their blankets and sleep as only those who live such a life can sleep, serenely oblivious of the harsh shriek of the owl, the mournful howl of the wolf, or the soft footfall of some prowling beast—is it a lynx or bear?—that breaks in upon the breathless stillness.

Splendid as our forests are at midsummer when the delighted eye roams unweariedly over their billowy expanses of sumptuous verdure, it is in the autumn time that they reach their rarest beauty. Then for a brief space before they strip themselves of their foliage to stand bare and shivering through the long cold winter, they change their garb of green into a myriad of hues of gold and flame.

A keen, frosty night following upon the decline of summer heat, and lo! as though some mighty magician had been at work, a marvellous transformation awaits our admiration. Where yesterday a single colour in various tints prevailed, to-day we behold every possible shade of brilliant scarlet, tender violet, sombre brown, vivid crimson and glittering yellow. The beech, the birch, the oak, and above all the maple have burst forth into one harmonious and entrancing chorus of colour—the swan song of the dying foliage—the stern, straight fir alone maintaining its eternal green, as if it said: “Behold in me the symbol of steadfastness,”—verily, verily, the wide world round, a more splendid and enchanting sylvan panorama cannot be found.

J. MACDONALD OXLEY.

## THE ENLARGED CONCEPTION OF WOMAN'S SPHERE.

PROFESSOR FITCH'S VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT.

THE most complete and thorough education and development of the faculties of woman and the consequently enlarged conception of her possibilities and her sphere have now been on their trial for a long enough period to afford some data for calm and well grounded conclusions. As we all know, there has existed, side by side with the progressive element, a reactionary and alarmist one—ready to make the most of any apparent resulting evil, and to predict unmeasured ills to future humanity as the result of initiating the feminine intellect in the mysteries of the classical languages or the exact sciences. It is unnecessary to refer in detail to all the injury, physical, intellectual and social, which, according to some very insistent force, might be expected to flow from encouraging in women any such audacious aspiration as that of sharing the work of man for the common weal of the race, at least in any department beyond that of the *ménage* or the nursery. The fact of the existence of differing and preëminent gifts among women as well as men, and also the fact that many women were not appointed by the “logic of events” to either the *ménage* or the nursery—were, in such pleadings, almost entirely ignored. Dangers existing

mainly in vivid imaginations, largely influenced by prejudice, have been held up before us, *ad infinitum*—we would almost say *ad nauseam*—by writers who, liberal in other matters, seemed to narrow their view of the good of our race to the mere perfection of the human animal and who, strange to say, for champions of evolution, seemed in this matter to consider physical and mental development as antagonistic. Undoubtedly there is at present a tendency to force mental progress at the expense of physical well-being in the education of both sexes—and this tendency cannot be too strongly condemned and opposed by all who have voice or influence in the matter. But that, apart from this general evil which may and must be remedied, there is any ground for the position of the alarmists—the best authorities on the point—those who have most carefully and candidly investigated the circumstances unanimously deny. The name of Professor Fitch is one that commands the respect of all interested in education, and his recent article in the *Contemporary Review* on “Women and the Universities” will be read with much interest. The present writer may be excused for pointing out that his very decided deliverance on the question fully bears out the position taken by her from an early period, as stated in articles in the *Canadian Monthly* and THE WEEK. The following quotation very clearly gives the result of the experience of the past years as opposed to the prognostications of the alarmists: “It was feared that the opening of new facilities for study and intellectual improvement would result in the creation of a new race of puny, sedentary, and unfeminine students, would destroy the grace and charm of social life, and would disqualify women for their true vocation, the nurture of the coming race and the government of well ordered, healthy, and happy homes. All these predictions have been emphatically falsified by experience. The really fatal enemy to health among young women is the aimless, idle, frivolous life into which, for want of better employment, they are so often tempted to drift. Intellectual pursuits, when duly co-ordinated with other forms of activity, are attested by all the best medical authorities to be eminently conducive to health. Such records as exist in regard to the strength and general capacity of the students, to their marriages and to the usefulness of their subsequent careers are contradictory of the dismal anticipations which were at first expressed on this subject.” He goes on to cite in support of this position the weighty testimony collected by the late Mrs. Emily Pfeffer from medical and educational authorities in her “Women and Work,” and also Mrs. Sedgwick's “Health Statistics of Women Students of Cambridge and Oxford and of their Sisters.” “It will be plain,” he says, “to all who study this evidence, that there is no antagonism between serious study and a healthy and joyous life; and that the widening of women's intellectual interests is more likely to add to the charm and grace and happiness of the home than to diminish it.”

This is just what might have been expected, *a priori*, and just what some of us did predict as the natural result. If woman as well as man is an intellectual being—which, outside of Turkey and India, is not usually disputed—it should follow that more thorough cultivation of all the faculties, combined with the greater breadth of view which such cultivation gives, should, by increasing the power of the individual, increase her capabilities of efficiency in any direction to which they may be directed. Furthermore, in regard to the removal of certain inequalities of opportunity still existing, Dr. Fitch wisely remarks:—

“The appeal must be made to the awakened conscience, the larger experience, and the higher sense of duty of the nineteenth century: That human beings, whether male or female, come into the world, not only to ‘get a living’ but to live, that the life they live depends largely on what they know and care about, upon the breadth of their intellectual sympathy, upon their love of truth, upon their power of influencing and inspiring other minds; and that for these reasons mental culture stands in just as close relations to the needs of a woman's career in the world as to that of a man. All these are propositions, which, if not self-evident, are at least seen in a clearer light by the people of our generation than by their predecessors; and it is on those who have arrived at such convictions that there lies the responsibility of giving effect to them.”

As we must content ourselves with a very few quotations from Professor Fitch's article, which should be carefully read by all interested in the subject, we must leave out some very forcible and pertinent comments on the “impertinence” which would attempt to dictate to either man or woman as to the particular kinds of knowledge which might or might not be of use to them. He thus winds up his argument by a plea which is perhaps the most cogent of all:—

“It cannot be doubted that, in the intelligence of many women, in their desire for truth, in their higher aims, and in their power to render service to the world in which they live, there is a great store of wealth which has never been adequately recognized or turned to profitable account. The world is made poorer by every restriction, whether imposed by authority or only conventionally prescribed by our social usages, which hampers the free choice of women in relation to their careers, their studies or their aims in life. It is probable that in many ways, yet undiscovered, in certain departments of art, of scientific research, of literature and of philanthropic work, the contributions of women to the resources of the world will prove to be of increasing value to mankind. And it may also be that experience will prove certain forms of mental activity to