

OUR CANADIAN PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 120.—THE HON. THEODORE ROBITAILLE,

RECEIVER-GENERAL.

Dr. Robitaille, who now represents Bonaventure in the House of Commons, is, we learn from the "Parliamentary Companion," descended from one of the oldest French families in Canada, the members of which have frequently figured in the history of the country. One of his granduncles, Messire Robitaille, was chaplain to the active militia force of Lower Canada during the war of 1812, in which all the family took an active part on the loyal side; another was one of the founders of the College at Ste. Anne de la Pocatière; and a third, Jean Robitaille, was a member of the Canadian Legislature for twenty years, from 1809 to 1829. Dr. Robitaille was born in 1834 at Varennes, where his father followed the notarial profession. He commenced his education at the model school of the village, and was then removed to the United States, and subsequently to the Seminary of Ste. Thérèse and Laval University. He completed his course of study at McGill College, where he took his medical degree in 1858. Dr. Robitaille's political career dates from 1861, when he was returned for his present constituency to the Canadian Legislature. He sat in that House until the general election of 1867, and was then returned to the House of Commons. At the last election he was again returned, and in January last was sworn a member of the Privy Council and appointed Receiver-General.

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

ZAIDEE'S CAPRICE.

The play was at an end. The curtain fell
And silence reigned in the deserted hall.
Hushed was the ankle of the prompter's bell,
And hushed the arch stage-boy's nasal call.

Hushed was the mad applause and laughter loud,
Faintest the flickering foot-lights one and all,
And from wardward wended the dimpled crowd
From pit and gallery, circle, box and stall.

Homeward they wandered I too, who nightly ply
The magic art which holds enraptured the ear,
With subtle memory deceives the eye,
Wreathes the glad smile, or draws the pitying tear.

Homeward they wend if haply they have homes—
Not always if Art's devotees the lot—
The author seeks his study and his tomes,
To thread the mazes of a novel plot.

The clown puts off his wild exuberant folly
And muley garb to don his private rage,
And with his private air of melancholy
His weary form along the pavement drags.

The fairy leaves her tinsel's tawdry glimmer,
Wiles from her low cheeks the faded paint,
And the child gasps lights throw a sickly glimmer
O'er the trail, fagot, weak, and wan, and faint.

The columbine dusts off the powdered chalk
From brazen arms whose native charms are red,
And joins her husband in the homeward walk
To the conjugal supper, and to bed.

The glittering, bustling heroes of the ballet,
Quit the disguise which makes them seem so fair;
Shrinking north archways of the square alley
To dwellings poor, yet virtuous, repair.

Yet, envious, some who mourn a youth long down,
Eyes fever glimmered in the hectic cheek,
On the frat' sister's equipage have thrown
Who keeps a brougham on a pound a week!

The famed tragedian who portrays the crushing,
Her's agents of moral strife;
Runs, like a peacock school-boy, meekly rushing
Home, to be henpecked by a shrewish wife.

And she, the tragic temple's brightest star:
In Art omnipotent, in Beauty grand;
Whose proud renown is spreading wide and far
Through her remote recesses of the land.

She, who to Art a magic power imparts,
Fettering B. Jareus in her mystic bands;
Winking the homage of ten thousand hearts,
The loud applause of twice ten thousand hands.

She who each secret heartspring can assail,
And strangely sadden the serene brain;
Can make the thoughtless wildly weep and wail,
And, by a gesture, make them laugh again.

She, too, wends homeward: not, indeed, on foot,
Nor humbly jolting in a hackney cab;
A chariot hers, with prancing steeds to boot,
Dark rife-green, and lined with red and drab.

Home to her gorgeous, art-adorned saloon,
Where, having entrance but a chosen few,
She reigns a fairy sovereign o'er her boon
Comrades, and lightly sways the noisy crew.

Where eiddies round the social steaming bowl,
(By far too keen, my friend, for you and me.)
Mingling the flow of nectar and of soul,
The pungent wit of sparkling repartee.

But there was one among her guests to-night:
A man of travel, and of intellect,
Who seemed to have the *cutre* there, of right:
A glass where wit and fashion might reflect.

His converse rippled in a sparkling flow
Of raucous satire from his tattered lip;
Painting word pictures, as rich colours glow
Beneath a graceful artist's pencil tip.

He spoke of politics, art, foreign lands:
Of love, adventure, hazard, and intrigue,
And sang strange ditties few might understand,
Yet, still, the ear would charm and not fatigue.

And Zaidée listened, breathless, 'neath the spell
Of the rich fancies the glib tongue expressed:
Till he began a little tale to tell,
Which roused the fair one's personal interest.

A little tale which would the annals swell
Of martyrdom beneath the social code;
Of how vice buys and innocence will sell—
A sacrifice—a marriage *à la mode*.

You, in our story, the result will trace
Of which *his* narrative became the cause:
We could not tell it with Hugh Clifford's grace,
Nor win, like him, your favour or applause.

We hasten to the "Good-nights" which came after
The varied comments when the speaker ceased:
And leave the lingering echoes of their laughter
To hover o'er the remnants of the feast.

II.

The morning came and o'er her chocolate
Lustrely wrapped in a flimsy cloud

Of snowy drapery, Zaidée lingered late,
Gabbled her evening lesson half aloud.

There was a bounding step upon the stair:
Then entered, through the rudely opened door,
A personation of intense despair,
Dashing its now silk hat upon the floor.

With raiment disarranged, disordered hair,
Said Zaidée, glancing archly from her page,
And slyly putting on her requish air:
"Brother, you'd make your fortune on the stage."

"False! She is false," he cried, "whom I thought true.
" Fool that I was to think her true to me.
" By Heaven! a deed of dire revenge I'll do—
" And wed with the first comely wench I see."

"Make no rash vow," she said, "I will not own
" As sister, pretty Anna, my soubrette,
" Though brighter cheeks, or tinier hand, or zone,
" I don't remember to have seen as yet."

Then, with a sudden infall of caprice,
Which so became her nature's sprightly tone:
" Prithce, sweet Thee, these frantic ravings cease,
" And trust your case to me, and me alone."

"What say you if I know a spouse for you,
" Fair, chaste, accomplished, educated, good:
" Who, swearing to love, honour, and be true,
" Will keep her altar-vows as housewives should?"

"Who weds in haste repenteth when too late,
" Till you have seen my paragon, defer:
" I ask of you no favour but to wait:
" I'll win the maid and you shall marry her."

Thus she decreed, and Theo's voice was stilled.
" A charming woman ever has her way:
" When once that wayward sorceress Zaidée willed,
" No man was rash enough to say her "Nay."

Then, to her Manager in haste she wrote
(She managed him though, were the truth disclosed),
A dainty, pink, patchouli-scented note,
Described herself, "severely indisposed—"

To act was understood. Then presto! Quick!
She darted to the ballet's mystic shrine:
Transformed herself, by pantomimic trick,
To a male image of the form divine.

And as before the glass, by Theo's side
In virile garbments she stood arrayed,
The keenest eye might scarcely have discerned
Which was the youth and which the charming maid.

Archly she turned, a bright-eyed roguish elf,
And kissed his dexter cheek with merry laugh.
" Adieu, sweet Thee! I go, your second self,
" To woo and win for you your better half."

III.

Bright with its thousand lights, the festive hall
Shone gayly on the thoughtless glittering throng:
On much of character, or on name at all:
On much of innocence, and much of wrong.

Beauty was there, enhanced by all that art,
Cunningly subtle, lends to native charms:
By all that taste and splendour can impart
Of keenest edge to woman's warlike arms.

Yet one meek, dove-like spirit hovered there,
The gentle eyes of every eye:
A lovely magnet, so supremely fair,
One still must gaze, though gazing were to die.

Bright were her violet eyes. Her golden hair
Wreathed on her brow in great Madonna braids:
Queenly he moved, with proudly modest air,
The fairest flower among a thousand meads.

Grand in her splendid maidenhood she bent
Upon the arm of him whom she should wed:
Modestly downward her bright orbs were bent,
And when he whispered, not a word she said:

And oridant in every gesture lay
The deep oppression of a secret grief:
Yet of the varied charms she brought in play,
In Zaidée's eyes that sweet sad air was chief.

She, patient long, at length in merry valse
Pounced like a playful tiger on her prey,
Clasped her in arms most amorously false,
And whirled her in the dance's maze away.

Still palpitant, with wild exultant glow,
Her partner to the Cactus bow she led:
Pours out her love in hot impulsive flow,
Reading her soul as only woman reads.

Drawing from the sad soul its piteous tale,
Till the crushed heart threw off its veil of fear,
And Zaidée, bending o'er her, said and pale,
Whispered her passionate pleadings in her ear.

"O fly with me, I am possessed of wealth,
" And if to gold you give but little heed,
" I'm young and comely, strong in hope and health,
" What more endowments does a suitor need?"

"But more than this: I love you with a zest
" Of a first passion's boundless, quenchless fire.
" Oh! do not take you round to your breast
" In weak submission to a cruel sire."

"Better to die than thus exclude the light—
" For Love is sunshine flowing from above—
" No blacker crime may be in Heaven's sight:
" 'Tis terrible—to wed and not to love."

"O! cruel. Make not life a living death,
" Nor end my young life's undeveloped prime.
" In wedding him, you take from me my breath,
" Staining your pure soul with a double crime!"

She sank upon a knee and seized the hand
Which yielded to the sweet imprisonment:
Did Zaidée plead, no man could long withstand:
Then how might a weak maid withhold consent?

And while from Amy's eyes the tears fell fast—
Soft gushing tears of love and gratitude:
Her rival found his fiancée at last,
And said to Zaidée something very rude.

Before the tired musicians were released,
Or champagne-volley ceased their noisy play,
Or the gay revels of that evening ceased:
A duel was arranged for break of day.

IV.

Swift to her hostelry fair Zaidée sped,
Flung off her sable broadcloth's dark disguise,
And stood confessed in charms which merited
The praise they ever won from mortal eyes.

She sought her erowhite rival in his halls
Where he made preparations for the fight,
And stealing on him sad and lonely, recalls
Memories long hidden in Oblivion's night.

She stood a brilliant spectre of the past:
The dead past which his iron will had slain:
And coldly spoke: "Sir, when we parted last,
" Both hoped perhaps we should not meet again."

"You are intent on death to one I love,
" Resign your purpose and submit to fate:

"Or you shall feel, I swear by all above,
" The dire reprisals of a Woman's Hate."

"No more!" he cried, "My Honour is at stake,
" And what is life to me and honour lost?
" For a weak idiot do you Dalton take
" By Woman's angry wiles to be thus crossed?"

"Honour!" she sneered "talk not of honour now"
Her dangerous eyes a fierce defiance hurled—
"My woman's wiles shall strike your proud head low
" And brand you as a felon to the world."

Pale as the marble slab on which he lent,
Ghastly and white his evil visage turned:
And 'neath his knitted brows on her he bent
Eyes hideous, that as lurid fire-pits burned.

His nervous hand sought trembling for the dirk,
But Zaidée did not seem the least alarmed:
Out came her glittering dagger with a jerk—
"O coward Fool!" he cried, "I too am armed!"

"Write an apology upon the spot—
" I tell you I've a penchant for this man
" Within twelve hours he will be mine—if not,
" You're free to wed the maiden—if you can!"

"Agreed," he cried, "I have affairs in town,
" I leave your precious protégée seat free,
" If I but find—by the night mail set down—
" You both are hence, leaving the field to me."

"Well said," she cried, "your brain is keen,
" Your judgment, as it ever was, discreet.
" Adieu!" she curtsied: tripped across the green,
And hastened to her inn with footstep fleet.

V.

The clock struck twelve, as, like a little bird,
With palpitating breast, that leaves its cage,
Amy, with timid ears, the summons heard,
And tripped downstairs with footstep soft and sage.

In her white bridal raiment, and her wreath
Of orange blossoms, hastening to the gate,
Under great oak trees fanned by zephyr's breath,
Where her fond lover's urgent post-boys wait.

Nostalgic as Amy's violet orbs were bright
While throbbing her breast with wild, tumultuous joys:
Swift, whirled the lovers through the moonlit night,
For Zaidée, with bright gaiters, urged the boys.

She woke her brother with a merry kiss,
Who slept the innocent, sweet sleep of youth,
As yet unconscious of the coming bliss:
But soon his sister's lips disclose the truth.

"Up, up," she cried, "and quickly dress for church,
" While you are shaving, I will curl your hair."
Then, (in her bosom making a short search),
"Here is the license and the bride is—there."

She sped her maid to summon priest and clerk—
Watched drive away the palpitating pair—
Then changed her dress: and scarce had done her work
Before she heard their footsteps on the stair:

Then gravely heard her brother's introduction—
"My sister, Amy—Zaidée, my dear wife."
Then the girls' lips commenced the honey suction,
And vow a friendship-lasting as their life.

VI.

Loud laughed, that night, each late uproarious guest,
Lingered delighted o'er champagne and ice,
As her red lips the merry tale expressed
Of folly-loving Zaidée's last caprice.

Art and Literature.

Mr. Spurgeon has been offered \$50,000 to deliver a course of fifty lectures in the United States.

According to a Cretan correspondent of the *Levant Times*, an antique statue of Venus had been found near the village of Ims.

A manuscript of 84 folios, of the immortal astronomer, Copernicus, has been found at Ermeland in Prussia. The subject is not stated.

Mr. Ruskin has purchased for £1,000 a book of sketches, bearing the title *Dessins de Benozzo Gozzoli*, and found by MM. Lotichos at Florence in 1823.

The discovery has just been made at Cologne of a fine sketch of one of the most celebrated paintings by Rubens, belonging to the church of St. Martin d'Alst.

Messrs. Macmillan have in press a poem by Mr. Eubule Evans, entitled "The Curse of Immortality," which is likely to attract more than ordinary attention.

The University of Heidelberg has recently appointed a professor of English literature, no other German university having more than a lecturer (or reader) hitherto.

In view of Lord Lytton's burying-place it is singular, says the *Athenaeum*, that five times in the last four leaves of "Kenelm Chillingly" occur the words "Victory or Westminster Abbey."

The whole of the unpublished works of Rossini had been bought by Mr. Albert Grant, formerly M.P. for Kidderminster, of Madame Rossini, the great composer's widow, for 100,000 francs.

Mr. Gladstone has presented to the Rev. S. Baring-Gould the sum of £50 from the royal bounty for the purchase of books. Mr. Baring-Gould is at present engaged in writing "Lives of the Saints."

Some most interesting discoveries of different constructions have just been made in the excavations of the Esquimaux. Also at the Castro Pretorio, several Egyptian columns, and the fourth side of the Proetorium Camp.

The Circle Club, a social association of English authors and artists, will issue an annual in May or June to be called "Holiday Papers." It is to be illustrated by Marks, Val. Prinsep, Concanen, Val. Bromley, and a host of eminent pencils.

We (*Britannia*) regret to learn that the *Dark Blue Magazine*, which at first gave promise of excellence, is now amongst the things that were. The publication has ceased, and the editor has repaired to America, where, we hope, he will be enabled to pursue a more prosperous career.

A curious work, "The History of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots," is being printed, and will shortly be published for private circulation only. It has been written by Professor Pell, under the personal patronage of the Empress Eugénie, and translated from the original MS. by M. de Flandre, of Edinburgh.

In the Royal printing office of Berlin photographic copies of about a score of autographs of Peter the Great, possessed by the archives of the Prussian State, are being taken. These facsimiles will appear in a grand work now in course of preparation by the Imperial Government of Russia to honour the memory of the Czar.