

his marriage day, makes room for the bigamist, Elizabeth Chudleigh, weeping crocodile's tears over there in the gloom: then the hall resounds with "God save the King," as George the Fourth comes in around from Westminster: and anon the echo of a dynamite explosion startles all loyal subjects into alarm. One can fancy the delight with which the sisters of Macaulay welcomed a walk with him in and out among these enchanted rooms and streets. "I seem to know every inch of Whitehall," he said to them, "I go in at Hans Holbein's gate and come out at the matted galleries. . . . The old parts of London, which you are sometimes surprised at my knowing so well, those old gates and houses down by the river have all played their parts in my stories." What would not one give to receive from a fairy godmother a gift of imagination such as his? The narrow dull city courts and lanes which mean so little to me, the noisy vulgar streets full of nothing but omnibuses and enormous carts, to him were an endless pleasure. It's but a question of eyes and no eyes, of course. One sees only as much as one chooses in this world, neither more nor less.

The frescoed corridors remind one of poor mistaken Haydon and his bitter disappointment. I remember hearing that after the final decision some friend of his, going into a coffee-house near Westminster, saw him sitting by a table, his face hidden by his hands. "He was crying like a woman," I was told, "you see the rejection of the sketches meant ruin." It was not long after that those trembling fingers fired the shot in the studio in Burwood Place, a shot which stilled forever the troubled heart and brain. I cannot call to mind anything more pathetic in its way than his autobiography, interleaved as it is with vigorous useless sketches, every page, every word, overshadowed by that immense conceit, that belief in himself and his own powers, which surely never accompanies true genius. But beneath the many ludicrous traits one finds unmistakable touches of true feeling, of love for that art for which he did his best, of passionate if mystical devotion to those who bore his name. The painter spirit was strong in him: he knew what he meant to express, but was not able to express it: and, unaware of this failure, he was angry the outside world refused to find in his work what, except to his own eyes, was indeed conspicuous by its absence.

In a comparatively little known story called *The Rogue's Life*, Wilkie Collins describes charmingly—thinking of his father, I am sure—the quiet industrious, uneventful lives led by the band of patient artists who established the British school in the first part of this century. He tells how their patrons bought, for small sums indeed, but for love of Art, not love of speculation, those exquisite pictures which, when one comes upon them in private collections or in the National Gallery, teach in a dozen different ways the value of what to trivial minds would be only trivial things. It is simply, perhaps, a couple of boys fishing on a cool summer evening, some children watching their boat sailing in a tub, a long green lane chequered with shadow—just something which many a painter would scoff at for a subject; and yet what infinite pleasure one derives from these unambitious pieces, while Haydon's prodigious historical scenes or hasty inartistic pot-boilers fail to rouse the least interest. Who cares to look at "Dentatis" when instead one can see through the half-open doors or lattice panes into one of Webster's cottage interiors? Who wants to stand by "Napoleon" when one can lounge on the banks of a quiet stream and hold a rod with one of Collins' chubby-faced country lads? "That is best which lieth nearest: shape from that thy work of art" applies to us all, I think, from the painter and the poet to the housewife.

From these old friends on canvas one turns to the newer acquaintances of to-day. Millais has been painting his landscape for the coming Academy in a little wooden hut up in Scotland where it was so cold, he says his breath froze on the window-panes. The success of the piece is undoubted, of course, as those who recollect his other country scenes with their poetic titles well know. He has but to lift his brush, and, if he likes to take the trouble, he beats every artist out of the field. Who that could buy "Chill October" or "Flowing to the Sea" would have a Hallswelle or a Leader instead? A good portrait by Millais makes Onless and Hall, even the great Watts, admirable as he is, seem vastly inferior: and the "Boyhood of Raleigh" (do you remember the expression in Raleigh's face?) compensates for the comparative failure of some of his subject-pictures. When quite young and tinctured with Pre-Raphaelitism he yet towered above all his associates, keeping what was good in their doctrine, rejecting what was bad, as he showed for instance in "The Vale of Rest" or "In the Apple Orchard." Holman Hunt went all wrong, not only in his gruesome "Awakened Conscience" and "Pot of Basil," but in most of the other of his extraordinary productions, while Millais kept the proper balance and was able after a time to correct those slight faults of exaggeration, and elaboration of detail, into which he had fallen from a revolt against a hard form of slovenly art at the time. It's a far cry from Millais to Dicksee, yet I must not forget to mention here that that excellent if sentimental and sometimes disappointing painter is finishing a fine subject-piece, which will compare favourably with his "symbols" of two years ago. A newly ordained priest is entering a dim church to fulfil his duties, but turns at the door to watch a group of laughing girls who are passing by. This picture will be etched and photographed (a detestable process the latter) into favour I suppose, and will run the popular "Harmony" very close. Then Leighton is busy with "The Return of Andromache," but I confess to a strong dislike of this artist's work; with all his good qualities it is years since he has pleased me. And Goodall is going to give us another large Scripture scene "The Death-bed of David" ("Oh horrible, horrible, most horrible!"), and Seymour Lucas has an interesting group composed of Charles II., Duke of York, Pepys, and other notabilities of the time, who surround Wren while that dignified gentleman explains the plans of the new St. Paul's among the ruins of the old cathedral. Frith has a crowd of tattered children gathered

round a fish shop, their half starved mothers watching with envy a family of well dressed boys and girls in a large victoria. By the way he tells me that on going to borrow the carriage from a firm in Long Acre, the man who rolled out the victorias for him to choose the shape was the same person who had done the artist a similar service in 1859 with the coaches required for the "Derby Day," nearly thirty years ago. Frith was shown a photograph of the magnificent carriage built by these makers for the coronation of Maximilian of Mexico, which the King also drove in to his place of execution. I have still many more picture notes, but will spare you unnecessary details. Can you not satisfactorily figure to yourselves the probable subjects chosen by Alma Tadema and Orchardson, Boughton and Burne Jones, Poynter and Marcus Stone, Fildes and Prinsep (their names are legion) to say nothing of the painters of blue seas and purple heathers, who are too numerous to mention? If you cannot make up your minds remember that in a very short time your curiosity will be satisfied, for the critics appointed by the London papers will then give you accurate details with a proper mixture of art terms, and all possible information as to what you ought and what you ought not to admire. WALTER POWELL.

### SOME CANADIAN LITERARY WOMEN.—I.

SERANUS.

ONE day, six years ago, two ladies sat side by side at the *table d'hôte* of the North-Western Hotel, Liverpool. One of them, of English descent, though Canadian by birth and education, was *petite*, very dainty in style, manner, and attire, with a noticeably intellectual cast of face, which was finely chiselled, and quite classic in character. Her companion, apropos of some characteristics of the Dominion and its people, into which their talk had drifted, suddenly remarked:

"What a peculiar name yours is. Do the Canadians have Roman names?"

The fairy-like personage surveyed her friend in some astonishment, when the latter produced a letter, recently addressed to her by the lady at her side, which was apparently signed, Seranus Harrison.

"Oh, that," said this lady, with a laugh at the odd mistake, "is not Seranus; it is S. Frances."

But as in the signature of Mrs. Harrison the S runs into the Frances, and the initial F closely resembles an E, the error was a very natural one, and to it we owe the *nom de plume* of a woman, whose writings are so well known to the readers of THE WEEK, that it has been thought that a few words regarding her career would be of general interest.

Susan Frances Riley (now Mrs. J. W. F. Harrison) was born in Toronto, and received her education partly there, partly in Montreal. At a ladies' school in the latter city, she read on Prize Day her first noteworthy literary effort, a poem in blank verse, called "The Story of a Life," which elicited great approval from the assembled crowd, and subsequently brought to "Seranus" several effusions from McGill College students, in English, French, Latin, and in one case in Homeric hexameters. "Seranus," while in Montreal, was a favourite pupil in Professor Clark Murray's mental philosophy class at McGill, and she was an active member of the Montreal Ladies' Literary Association. Here she began to write verse, over the signature "Medusa," to the *Canadian Illustrated News*, and when she married and removed to Ottawa, she for some time was Ottawa correspondent of the *Detroit Free Press*. To Stewart's (George S. V.) *Quarterly* (New Brunswick) she used to send verse also, and when *Belford's Magazine* was started, she contributed reviews and musical items to it. She was also an occasional and welcome contributor to the *Rose-Belford Canadian Monthly*.

Of a young girl whose literary predilections are so strong that at the age of sixteen she has begun to write acceptably for the papers, a successful career may be confidently prophesied. But a rival pursuit—music—early attracted and long held the attention of "Seranus." She is not only an accomplished executant on the piano, but her compositions have been published in England and the States, and musical composition, were it not for the great difficulties attending it, would be her preferred and ideal profession. She wrote the words and arranged the music of the "Address of Welcome to Lord Lansdowne," when His Excellency came to Canada (Ottawa). She has also set a number of her own songs to music. Her chief work in this line was writing the full orchestral score of a Canadian Comic Opera, somewhat after the fashion of the Gilbert and Sullivan Operas. This work, called *Pipandor*, a three act opera, took some two years to prepare. The libretto was written by Mr. F. A. Dixon, of Ottawa, also a poetic contributor to the *Canadian Monthly*. The scenes, incidents, and motif of this opera are old French, but running through it are a number of French-Canadian songs, the music of which has been re-arranged and adapted by Seranus to Dixon's patter songs and comic verse. The whole forms an elaborate opera, which would be very effective on the stage if the necessary funds could be secured to mount the opera, supply the scenery and costumes, and train the choruses and principal people in the cast. A great deal of the fine work of the old Breton and Norman poets and musicians enriches this opera, and its thoroughly national character should, were it brought out in Canada, make it a decided success. Seranus' setting of songs is subtle, artistic, and high class, too unlike the ordinary popular music-hall type to attract the uncultivated taste of the multitude, either here or in England. Her talent for music, which has the encouragement and sympathy of her musical husband—an organist and choir leader—is undoubted, and she should be congratulated on her success in a branch of the profession as rarely good as it is difficult to cultivate.

The aim and direction of Mrs. Harrison's literary work is distinctively French-Canadian. The interesting and picturesque features of Montreal,