



Though we number among our contributors and well-wishers queens of song and queens of society, and, what is better still, queens by right divine as dispensers of all the sweet boons with which gentle womanhood solaces humanity, gracious words and acts of kindness, it is not often that we are favoured with a message from a real queen, who sits upon a real throne and receives homage from real subjects. The message to which we would call attention as thus exceptional comes from South-Eastern Europe, from that isolated fragment of the Latin race, which enshrines in its name—Roumania—the prized tradition of a descent to which the tongue of its people bears witness. The Queen of Roumania is not, however, of Latin, but of Teutonic stock. She comes of a mighty race of rulers, who made their mark in the world with the sword more often than with the pen. The line from which she is sprung can be traced back directly, from generation to generation, for fully eight centuries. Yet, in that long duration, the house of Wied produced no scion more worthy of the world's esteem than the gifted daughter of the philosophic Prince Hermann, Elizabeth, Queen of Roumania. It has fallen to this exalted lady to play several rôles on the stage of thought and action. Born on the 29th of December, 1843, she spent her early years chiefly at Neuwied or Monrepos. Her love for study was soon manifested, history, mythology, poetry—all knowledge, in fact—having a constant charm for her. She learned languages, was taught botany and other branches of sciences, became acquainted with the great writers of the Fatherland—with some of them personally—and long before her 17th year had made her first essays in the art of poeise. Her devotion to that art and such enthusiastic love of nature that accompanies which she chose to be known to the world of letters. "Carmen Sylva" is probably a familiar name to many, who do not know that the possessor of it is a queen. A New York firm has just brought out a tasteful volume of translations from her poetry, under the title of "Songs of Toil," in which the German and English occupy opposite pages. It contains "The Potter's Song," "The Miller's Song," "The Fisherman," "The Glass-blower," "The Letter-Carrier," "The Weaver," "The Stonecutter," and other ditties of the same class, which fully justify the title and bear witness to the breadth and sincerity of the august author's sympathy with the lowliest walks of life and the humblest forms of labour. On another occasion we shall have more to say of "Carmen Sylva" and her work.

"Spanish Ballads," is the title on the back of an exquisite little volume, so tastefully ornate that we wonder whether the interior will fulfil, in solid worth, so fair a promise. On opening it, we meet with an old, forgotten friend of our days of romance. The book is a new edition of Lockhart's famous collection of "Ancient Spanish Ballads, Historical and Romantic," with illustrations by William Allen, R. A., David Roberts, R. A., etc.,—in fact, a reproduction of the revised edition of 1841. It belongs to a series called "Knickerbocker Nuggets," first because the volumes composing it are printed at the "Knickerbocker Press," and secondly, because a "nugget" is defined as "a diminutive mass of precious metal." We would advise all our friends who are hunting for gold in the field of literature, to look for these nuggets. They include "Gulliver's Travels," Moore's "Irish Melodies," Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome," and other gems of letters in a form which makes them more than ever desirable.

A combination of causes has tended to push the art of letter-writing into comparative desuetude. Nevertheless, that it is still cultivated to some extent is shown by the comparatively frequent occurrence of contemporary names in a work just issued from the Knickerbocker Press, under the comprehensive title of "British Letters Illustrative of Character and Social Life." The editor, Mr. Edward T. Mason, is well known by some previous works of the same kind, "Personal Traits of British Authors," "Humorous Masterpieces," etc. Some years ago Mr. W. Baptiste Scoones prepared an interesting volume of selections, which was published under the title of "Four Centuries of English Letters," beginning with the correspondence of the Paston family and ending with that of Charles Kingsley. Mr. Mason's plan is different. Instead of arranging his material in chronological order, he classes it according to the subjects of which it treats. For instance, in the first volume we find "Autobiographic Sketches," "Glimpses of men and women," "The family"; in the second, "Manners, customs and behaviour," and "National traits," and in the third, "The Town," "The Country," "Whim and fancy," and so on. Certainly there is reading here for many a spare hour, reading for all moods, didactic, gossip, humorous, moralizing, satirical, descriptive, calculated both to please and to profit, but never to bore, for one can drop his correspondent without offence when he feels inclined. Moreover, there is a carefully compiled index, so that he can come upon his favourites with the least possible trouble. Altogether, it is a work to be grateful for, and we thank Mr. Mason and his publishers for their gift.

"The Regulations of the Provincial Board of Health for the Direction of Local Boards of Health of the Province of Quebec" is a booklet that every citizen should carefully study. How much the moral and intellectual well-being and progress of a community depend upon its observance of sanitary laws it ought to be needless for us to insist. There are some truths, however, which cannot be too frequently or too earnestly impressed upon people's attention, and the appearance of this publication reminds us that we have at least an organization that will allow the public neither to ignore nor to neglect one of its most important duties. The Provincial Board of Health is composed of Dr. E. Persillier-Lachapelle (President), Montreal; Dr. Remi F. Rinfret, Quebec; Mr. Henry R. Gray, Montreal; Dr. C. E. Lemieux, Quebec; Dr. J. B. Garneau, Ste. Anne de la Pêrade; Dr. R. L. MacDonnell, Montreal; the Hon. A. H. Paquet, M.D., St. Cuthbert; Dr. Elzéar Pelletier (secretary), Montreal; and Dr. J. A. Beaudry, Medical Inspector, Montreal.

#### MR. CHARLES MAIR ON FRENCH CANADA.

The following is that portion of the speech of Mr. Charles Mair, the poet, at the banquet given to Col. Irvine, in Prince Albert, N.W.T., which specially refers to the French speaking section of our people. That portion of Mr. Mair's eloquent and patriotic address which dealt with the settlement and character of the United Empire Loyalists, and with the stand made by united French and British Canada in resisting invasion, we reserve for another issue:

In responding to the toast of "The land we live in," Mr. Mair, after referring in complimentary terms, which the audience confirmed by its applause, to Col. Irvine's long connection with the Northwest, and the esteem in which he was universally held, said that the sentiment was not confined to our present circumstances, but ran back to the time when the foundations of our country were laid by the energy, devotion and courage of brave men and high-minded women. It is an interesting fact, he said, that these foundations were laid through national rivalries and racial antagonisms, and were cemented, not only by conquest, but by defeat. Had France, for example, been blessed in the middle of the last century by a patriotic and energetic king; had her destinies not been controlled by abandoned women, and her colonial empire not been traduced by sceptical philosophers, the peace of Paris would, in all likelihood, be a still unwritten treaty, and we,

gentlemen, would not be here to-night. For it was the settlers of New France—the inhabitants of the suppositional "barren leagues of snow" who, almost alone, understood and advocated the true policy for France; and who, though unable to control it, though plundered, and, finally, abandoned in their extremity by their mother country, yet fought for her to the bitter end, and only yielded when resistance was no longer possible. This people is the primary constituent of our Canadian nationality, allied with us in the carrying down of British liberty upon this continent; and, thanks to the wisdom that lies in generosity and clemency, thanks to the winning power of justice and of institutions based upon it, we have in our French Canadian fellow subjects to-day a people, he believed, as jealous for the preservation of that liberty as the descendants of the British people in Canada themselves. That clemency and generosity, as history tells us, gentlemen, was amply repaid by the loyalty of the French Canadians in the hour of trial. In the war of American Independence every effort was made to detach them from the British interest. They were alternately flattered and threatened by American emissaries; yet, though their mother country was actively co-operating with the American insurgents, they, in the mass, remained true to their new allegiance, and were the means of saving Canada to the British crown. Mr. Mair said he referred to those matters because it had become the fashion of certain annexation newspapers to rail at what they chose to call "French aggression." Complaint is made that the French Canadians are actually prolific and are multiplying; that their industrious habits are telling against our own people; and it is even alleged as a sinister fact that they look to France with pride as the cradle of their race. Now, gentlemen, if there is aggression, let us meet it, not by whining and complaint, but in the proper spirit. Fertility and industry are not vices; they are virtues. Let us not only equal, but strive to surpass, our French Canadian compatriots in reproductiveness, in industry, and in that unity of sentiment which characterizes them, but which does not, as yet, distinctly characterize us. We shall then have nothing to fear from aggression—we shall be able easily to cope with it. Nor is the affection of the French Canadian for France objectionable. If that affection is a crime, then it is a crime in him who now addresses you to think of Scotland with love, because she is the land of his forefathers; it is a crime in some friends near him to love Ireland, or England, for a similar reason. No, gentlemen, it is an honour to the French Canadian that he reverences France—a country which, with all her faults and excesses, we of British descent cannot help but respect; a country which has wrung freedom from despotism many a time, and which has been, is now, and, he hoped, would ever continue to be, one of the most illustrious nations in the world.

#### VILLANELLE.

##### THE ICE CASTLE.

The castle gleams with silver snow,  
New fall'n from Heaven or clouds it seems.  
How bright its towers and turrets glow!

Like tale in childhood long ago,  
Or vision from the land of dreams,  
The castle gleams with silver snow.

And gazing from the Square below,  
From every point a glory streams;  
How bright its towers and turrets glow!

No task to ramble to and fro  
Mid frigid halls, young Baptiste deems;  
The castle gleams with silver snow,

And high o'er all where breezes blow  
The chimes ring as the castle gleams.  
How bright its towers and turrets glow!

But walls and towers shall lesser grow—  
Soon fade those bright electric beams;  
The castle gleams with silver snow.  
How bright its towers and turrets glow!

ROBT. STANLEY WEIR.