



Mr. A. I. Hubbard, Secretary.

NEW RINK OF THE MONTREAL CURLING CLUB.

Mr. F. Staucliffe, President.

Our Toronto Letter.

[From our own correspondent.]

TORONTO, December, 1890.

"Figaro here! Figaro there!" used to sing the Queen's tutor, and the favourite basso of his day, Signor La Clache, and so I have always called *Il Barbieri Figaro*, with the emphasis on the Fig. Yesterday when I asked Mr. Winnifell if the Paris *Figaro* was in yet, I was contentedly ignorant; but a gentleman in the store, who probably pitied my gross stupidity, was most careful to enquire immediately after me if he could see the *Figaro*—a gentle hint, which I am greatly obliged to him for thinking I should be quick enough to take. To-day, however, I say Figaro in gentle imitation of the genial singer whose broad white waistcoat even now gleams upon my vision. What a beautiful *Figaro* this year's Christmas Number is! Such softness of design and brilliancy of colouring! Such lovely tones in sepias, blues and browns! Such drawings! And then the wealth of its letter-press, its stories, poems, music, its jokes, puns and fun! But why do they send us the soup without its salt—the French in English? It seems to me that no one ought to have a *Figaro* that cannot read it in the mother-tongue. The French language has such capabilities of expression, such delicacy of touch, such quick sarcasm, such duality, if one may call it so, that power of expressing an idea that will awaken a thought beyond itself!—not the *double entendre* which is vulgar and ill-smelling, but the prose that echoes poetry. No matter how well a translation is done one misses the perfume of the flower. I shall get a French *Figaro* even at the large expenditure of a dollar and a half, but I do not want an English one.

And the other Christmas papers. So many and so beautiful. One hardly knows how to choose, still a couple of illustrations among the many your correspondent lingered over take precedence of them all. They are two belonging to that modest but always excellent Christmas Number, *Yule-Tide* "Sweet Seventeen" and "Sweetener Seventy." Can seventy be so beautiful? one asks, gazing upon the picture of a lovely old lady with white hair, soft, clear flesh like that of an infant, in soft white laces at neck and throat. Then let me live to seventy.

But we must not stop at the English papers, for have we not our own? Here is *Saturday Night*, for instance, as large as the largest, as rich with illustrations, as "full of meat" as the best of them, and Canadian! Mr. Sheppard himself has a story, and he is no mean story-writer, as "Dolly" can testify. Pauline Johnson has a poem, and of such quality is the number full.

I do not like to hear of any offence against good—that is, pun—taste in our theatres; but Dumas' "Clemenceau Case," as given at the Grand by a New York company, has drawn upon itself many strictures. Prudery is one thing, and vulgar realism another. We object to both, but if the choice is between two evils give us prudery.

I know a "case," that would furnish an equally attractive and yet perfectly pure piece for dramatic representation, and it has the merit of being Canadian, also. "L'Affaire Sougraine" (Darveau, Quebec, 1884), of our poet and author, M. Leon Pamphile Le May, is the "case"

I refer to. The plot of the novel—for novel it is—is strong enough, the characters strange, quaint, piquant, the circumstances Canadian, and the range of scene from the far North-West to Montreal. Why cannot we have it on our boards, then? Somebody was praising somebody else a week or two ago for having introduced a "Canuck" into a play. Surely, it is the irony of fate, or we should have had our own Canucks on our own boards long ago. Have we not yet outgrown the barbarism that needs coarseness to amuse it? If we have, there is plenty of Canadian drama for us to regale ourselves and the world with, full of wit and mirth, of wisdom and sentiment, and free from sense, when it means sensuality. Surely we are old enough to make our *debut* in this as in other of the arts.

Mrs. Harrison's charming volume of verse is out this week, and all who have read "Seranus" are expecting a treat. Some of the poems have appeared in the periodical press, I hear, but we shall all be glad to read them again; while the new ones—those that have not before been printed—are something to be anticipated. "Pine, Rose and Fleur-de Lis" is the elegant title of the book, and it is published by Kent & Co., King street, Toronto. Mrs. Harrison excels in the *vers de société* which Austin Dobson has made so fashionable and illustrated by such charming examples in his own work, and our "Seranus" comes not far behind him.

"From Grave to Gay, from Lively to Severe," brings us to a very important work that has just been published here by Williamson, King street, Toronto. "The Hittites," by Rev. John Campbell, I.L.D., of your city, is the work of a man who has scarcely his equal for learning on the continent. We have all been accustomed to read our Bibles so cursorily, to be satisfied with such vague conclusions on its simply-told statements, and to view the past (especially of a people who have fallen) from the exaggerated importance that attaches itself to an unchallenged present, that to learn that the peoples whose unfamiliar names and lost geography we repeat so glibly at school or at home, at church or in our closets, were great nations, the equals in power, civilization and riches of great nations of to-day, is to give us a new revelation. And not only of the people themselves—the Hittites, and as has also been lately told, the Amalekites—but of the Jews themselves, the Chosen People, the receivers of the oracles of God; whose literature is equal to that of the most cultivated people the world has ever seen; whose history has been miraculously preserved and with which has been embalmed the only cosmogony the world knows; that history of itself that is still a revelation of itself and a prophecy. A people whose priests, prophets and poets are and have always been the models of all others. Truly, it is little we know of a people whose very punishments are a prophecy, and of whom came the Light of the World. They are very profound thanks that we owe to those patient students who delve among the archives of the past and bring forth to us treasures the like of which we have never dreamed of, and reveal to us secrets in which are concealed the truths of our most holy faith. Days are these which kings and prophets have desired to see, yet have died without the sight. Let us not be too vain, and so lose our opportunities.

I learn with pleasure that one of your contributors, Mr. Matthew Richey Knight, is to publish a monthly, to be called *Canada*. It is a good name, loyal and comprehensive, and opens a far vista of possibilities. Prof. G. C. D. Roberts, Rev. Arthur Lockhart and other of our Canadian literati are to honour the first number by their presence. It is to appear in January, and will be well got up, the mechanical work being in the hands of the Nova Scotia Printing Company. Success to the new venture!

Personal and Literary Notes.

Lady Brooke, who was, as Miss Maynard, known as one of the greatest heiresses, has perfected a scheme for teaching sewing to the children in her district which would bear inspection from other intending philanthropists.

A New Yorker who recently spent some time in the literary circles of London, says there must be at least one hundred biographies of Mr. Gladstone already in manuscript, awaiting the event of his death, at which time they will be ready for publication in book form.

The Canadian Methodists have been asked to contribute \$500 to provide one of the seven pillars for the City Road chapel, London, to be built in commemoration of John Wesley.

The Faskally Mansion House shootings and fishings in the county of Perth, Scotland, have been let to Sir George Stephen. The shootings extend to 10,840 acres, and the mansion house is at the south entrance to the Pass of Killiecrankie, near the junction of the Tummel and Garry, the Falls of Tummel and the Pass of Killiecrankie being within the Faskally policies.

The *Gazette*, of India, recently announced the departmental promotion of Lieuts. Cartwright and Duff of the Royal Engineers. These promising young officers are attached to the public works department in British India, and now grade as 1st class assistant engineers. Cartwright and Duff are ex-Kingstonians.

"My Own Canadian Home."

At the coming Christmas closing exercises, for the first time in the history of our country, the school children of Canada from the Atlantic to the Pacific will sing their own national song, "My Own Canadian Home." This is largely owing to the generosity of Mr. J. E. Ganong, of St. Stephen, N.B., who has presented copies to all the teachers and to the scholars of the principal cities of the Dominion, in all 95,000 copies.

The words of this song were written in 1888 by Mr. E. G. Nelson, and printed by order of the Department of Education on the covers of educational matter. In August of the present year they were set to music by Mr. Morley McLaughlin, and both the composers being residents of St. John, the Board of Trade of that city forwarded a copy, with a printed note, to every paper in Canada. The song is now played by the principal bands of America, including Gilmour's, Salem Cadets and the Washington Marine, and Mr. Ganong announces his intention of presenting the band score to every band in the Dominion.