



## Life, Literature and Education.

(Contributions on all subjects of popular interest, whether relating to the Literary Society discussions or not, are always welcome in this Department.)

### A TRIUMPH FOR CANADIANS.

Canada must rejoice in the success of Canadians wherever and however gained. Regarding the latest triumph of the Dominion's children, that of the Mendelssohn Choir in New York, the New York Independent, a high-class journal, and one of the least effervescent of American publications, says:

"Enthusiasm almost without precedent filled Carnegie Hall on the evenings of February 12th and 13th, when the Mendelssohn Choir, of Toronto, and the Pittsburgh Orchestra gave two joint concerts. The Orchestra and its conductor, Mr. Paur, while they acquitted themselves with credit, especially in the ninth symphony of Beethoven, were not the main objects of this enthusiasm; New York has better things in that line; but what astonished and delighted everybody was the way the Canadian choir sang Liszt's 'Thirteenth Psalm,' Gounod's cantata, 'By Babylon's Wave,' the final choruses from Wagner's 'Meistersinger,' and other things. It was electrifying.

"Who has not at some time or other dreamed of a body of singers, selected and trained as carefully as the members of a permanent orchestra, producing effects altogether beyond the reach of the usual chorus of amateurs? England has such 'vocal orchestras,' as one might call them, and so have a few German cities; but New York has none, wherefore the song of the Canadians came as a revelation. The conductor, to whom most of the credit is due—Mr. A. S. Vogt—is a Canadian who was educated in Germany. Apart from his personal gifts, he has a method which explains his success. He limits the choir's membership to 220, and the constitution of the society requires that the chorus disband after each season's work, and that a complete reorganization be made annually. In this way superannuated singers are easily eliminated. The choir has been in existence eleven years. It is to be hoped that its visits to the metropolis will become annual: such concerts are as refreshing as spring breezes."

### PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT ON EDUCATION.

The President of the big country over the border often says things that are well worth hearing. The following, from his recent address at Harvard University, will recommend itself to all who appreciate education of the right kind:

"If your education and the pleasant lives you lead here," said he, "make you so fastidious and over-refined that you cannot do the hard work of practical politics, then you had better never have been educated at all. The weakling and the cow-

ard are out of place in a strong and free community.

"Like most other things of value, education is good only in so far as it is used aright, and if it is misused, or if it causes the owner to be so puffed up with pride as to make him misestimate the relative values of things, it becomes a harm and not a benefit. There are few things less desirable than the arid cultivation, the learning and refinement which lead merely to that intellectual conceit which makes a man in a democratic community like ours hold himself aloof from his fellows and pride himself upon the weakness which he mistakes for supercilious strength. Small is the use of those educated men who in after life meet no one but themselves, and gather in parlors to discuss wrong conditions which they do not understand, and to advocate remedies which have the prime defect of being unworkable. . . . The educated man who seeks to console himself for his own lack of the robust qualities necessary to bring success in American politics by moaning over the degeneracy of the times, instead of trying to better them, by railing at the men who do the actual work of political life instead of trying himself to do the work, is a poor creature, and, so far as his feeble powers avail, is a damage and not a help to the country."

### RAMBLES ABOUT THE OUTSKIRTS OF ONTARIO.

#### HERON BAY.

When a schoolboy, my village formed a centering point for a half-dozen wagon roads that ran like white ribbons into a rolling, green country of fenced fields and bush-lots. From the "Big Hill," of a summer afternoon, it looked pastorally beautiful, its houses buried amongst the elms and maples, above which, however, shot the two church steeples and the mill stack. Between it and this vantage point, a bare, smoothly-sloping hill, the river meandered quietly, shaded, like the village, by elm trees.

The orchards had not lost all their white bloom and cattle were reveling in new pasture, when the chances of life, a few years later, dropped me of a C. P. R. train far from this home spot at Heron Bay. I remember watching it as a parting friend until it swung out of sight, and then, turning to investigate the new surroundings. As a community, I don't know what term would rightfully apply—town would be ironical; village an undue exaggeration. The inhabitants called it a "place." Certainly, the little red railway station and its scattered following of some half-dozen log and wooden houses looked insignificant enough, and very lonely and remote, seeming what in reality it was—an outpost of civilization. The gray line of railway disappearing either way among the hills, appeared a slender connection with that Ontario I had left not two days ago. Every where were the hills of gray rocks, thinly covered with a starved growth of bushes. Down the track to the east lay a swampland of evergreens, strikingly black and conical topped.

The quiet of the swamp and the hills seemed to be settled down

with the departure of the train. The post-office man went off with a particularly empty mail bag hanging limply over his shoulder. The station agent rattled a hand-truck load of baggage over the platform, and, chatting easily, three or four women went off to their houses. But I was in the Indians' country now. A dozen aborigines lounged about on the platform, stolidly eyeing the new arrival and his luggage, or talking a guttural, unintelligible tongue. Aimless-looking fellows, surely. They stared in the window of the station office at the agent clicking off telegraphic despatches, or shuffled, moccasins-shod, over to the little stove. Not the eagle-eyed savage of story these slouching fellows in baggy, ragged, white man's clothing and shapeless felt hats. The squaws were even less pleasing in appearance. One very old woman, cadaverous as a mummy, sucked a short, discolored pipe.

Until evening I was actively busy putting up a tent in a field back of the station. Before sunset I climbed a ridge-like hill that rose sharply 200 feet or more a short distance back from my camping ground. Taking a well-worked path part of the way, I came upon a spring of quite cold though brown-looking water, lacking the sparkle and whiteness of the springs in a limestone country. It supplied all the houses. I disturbed a couple of Indian boys loitering there, who hurriedly filled their two pails and shied off the path like wild creatures. A few steps more and the foot of the hill, or cliff—for it rose very steeply—was reached. It was quite bare of soil, except in the cracks that seamed its face. At a distance it had looked gray, but the rock, at close range, was a dull green, quite fine-grained and slate-like, and unlike any of the big boulders to be seen in the fields of southern Ontario. In places small patches of quartz gleamed snowy white, wherever a crevice held even a handful of soil, something grew—a clump of grasses and flowers, a Juneberry bush, or a scrubby little spruce tree. The Juneberry bushes were covered with white bloom—festal spots against a desolate ground. So, too, were the blueberries, but their humble little white bells were not visible at any distance. Half-way up the slope grew steeper, so that it became necessary to follow ledges and scramble up with the aid of the bushes that held tenaciously to the surface inequalities. Then it became gentler, and I found myself walking over curiously smooth, rounded rock surfaces, as clean and free of soil as if newly swept. The bare hand laid repeatedly upon it took no impression of dust.

Ahead and on either side, as far as visible, stretched a rough succession of rocky hills, not much higher than my standpoint, and covered in the same thin manner. Patches of evergreen forest filled the hollows. There was no sign of life or habitation. Turning around and looking downward, Heron Bay's little houses looked smaller and lonelier than ever, scattered over the meadow-like patch of level ground the railway traversed. On the south the same naked hills rose, but less sharply. Except to the southeast, where the spruce

swamp extended to Lake Superior, the little meadow was quite enclosed by rocks—like a little green lake in the midst of an endless wilderness of hills. The sun had just disappeared, and an orange glow slowly faded to yellow and pale blue. A party of Indians moved single file toward the swamp, presently becoming lost to view. Lights appeared in the windows of the houses below. It had grown very still. From among the bushes near-by came a bird whistle, clear, beautifully modulated, and plaintive. "Oh, how dreary, dreary, dreary it is!" as if the gray rocks and the spruce woods had given to his spirit their sad tone, without disturbing their serenity. After a pause, another bird, farther off, replied, fainter and even more musically. Three or four of them kept up their responses till it grew cold. The first singer, disturbed by my attempts to see him, stopped whistling, uttered a short, sparrow-like remonstrance, and flew away, giving me a glimpse of a gray body, with some white markings on the throat.

It had now grown dark, the houses were indistinct black spots, but my tent still gleamed, ghost-like, on the field below. What brought and kept these people here? It was not altogether apparent then. One old gentleman, who had come to live with his son, was more at a loss than myself. I found out next day. He had been a farmer "down in Ontario," and felt out of place among the Indians and rocks. He spent much of the time digging and planting in a little plot beside the station, but without much enthusiasm. The frosts lying on the planks every morning made him shake his head doubtfully. A great expectation was fulfilled, however, when, one day, a freight car was backed in and a cow unloaded and transferred to the little field. The new arrival liked her environment even less, and never lost an opportunity to break through the fence, leading her old attendant a lively chase. From these runs he would come in warm and breathless, but radiant. No doubt the tenant's retreating heels were reminiscent of good days on the farm. The old gentleman had become wonderfully cheerful before my visit terminated, and had resurrected an old scythe, which he tinkered at daily in anticipation of the haying.

Of the Geological Survey of Canada.

### THE LOTUS EATERS.

In these days, when the "strenuous life" is so much lauded, even the farmers are in danger of suffering with weariness from it. Farmers' Institute lecturers are turned loose on us by the score, all spurring us up to make two or possibly three blades of grass grow where only one grew before. We have been so busy doing this and forking the extra blades of hay that we fail to see the beauty in the wonderful sights that nature is continually spreading before us. The Women's Institutes are not much better. On lovely June afternoons, when the ladies could revel in a walk in the glorious woods or wander by some sylvan stream, they, instead, assemble in some hot room and exchange recipes for puddings. The most of the agricultural