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## McGILL UNIVERSITY GAZETTE.

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Rejected Communications will not be returned, to which rule no exception can be made. The name of the writer must always accompany a communication.

### THE FUNERAL OF A VILLAGE GIRL.

(From the French of M. Brizeux.)

When fair Louise, half child, half woman, died  
Like some frail blossom crushed by wind and rain,  
Her bier was followed by no mourning train.  
One priest alone accompanied who sighed  
Brief prayers, to which in accents soft and low,  
A boy attendant answered, full of woe.  
Louise was poor: in death—our common lot—  
The rich have honours which the poor have not.  
A simple cross of wood—a faded pall—  
These were her funeral honours—this was all—  
And when the sexton from the cottage room  
Conveyed her light young body to the tomb,  
A bell toll'd faintly, as if loth to say  
So sweet a maiden had been call'd away.  
'Twas thus she died—and thus, by hill and dale,  
'Mid broom whose fragrances floated on the gale,  
And past green cornfields, at the dawn of day,  
The scant procession humbly took its way.  
April had lately burst upon the earth  
In all the glory that attends her birth,  
And tenderly upon the passing bier  
She snowed her blossoms, and she dropp'd her tear.  
Flowers, pink and white, arrayed the hawthorn now,  
While starry buds were trembling on each bough:  
Sweet scents and harmonies the air carol'd,  
And every bird was warbling in its nest.

GEO. MURRAY.

### Editorials.

THERE are few things more interesting and absorbing for us than matters connected with literature and science. Not that we pretend to any surpassing intimacy with the one or the other of these two great departments of human knowledge, to know either of which, even in an imperfect way, requires a lifetime of constant application. But it is not necessary for the imbuing of a man with a love of literature or with a love of science that he should have read, marked and learned every morsel that has ever been written, even in his own language, or have weighed and considered every theory propounded since the time when the earliest philosophers of Greece speculated concerning the origin of the world. Much less does to inspire one with a love of literature or with a love of science. So it was not remarkable that we should have had our attention arrested the other day by an account given by a *Herald* reporter of a mission which he undertook amongst the booksellers and librarians of this city for the purpose of finding out something about the

pursuit of literature by our citizens. The state of things disclosed cannot fail to be dispiriting to the small remnant who have some other aim in life than to amass colossal fortunes, or to become members of the Hunt, or, as trained athletes, to break records. A literary decadence has set in in Montreal; so the booksellers tell us. It must be a relief to feel that the decadence cannot last much longer, for the little love and knowledge of literature that was amongst us twenty years ago has been so steadily decreasing during this period—if we are to believe the booksellers and librarians—that there can be but little left at the present time to take away from. Perhaps the tide having reached its lowest point may soon begin to turn,—or perhaps not. Such a low state have we now reached that our *litterateurs* may be counted by the half-dozen, we cannot find enough people anxious to hear such a man as Matthew Arnold to fill a small hall, and three-fourths of those who did go to hear him were not intelligent enough to appreciate what he said. Our youth, instead of developing a taste for literature, think rather of developing their muscles, and of how they are to get rich enough to join the Hunt, or make a fine display on our fashionable streets, while all their spare evenings are taken up going to hear the plays which Mr. Sparrow provides for their edification and amusement in Cotté Street. The attention of our young ladies is divided between out-door sports, parties, and the romantic adventures related in the cheaper style of novels. Our boys affect dime novels, our more elderly citizens seek ease and spirituous liquors at the clubs, while our sisters pine after the band at the rink. Such is the picture drawn by the sarcastic bookseller, whom the *Herald* reporter first encountered on his tour of investigation. Selling books seems to be bitter work in Montreal, if one is to judge from the wailing and lamentation which the gentlemen engaged in the trade gave forth on this occasion. But their account is, no doubt, somewhat exaggerated. We do not desire to claim a Bostonian character for Montreal; we do not even deny that we can make but a sorry show, so far as literary culture is concerned; but surely we do not wallow in the mire so completely as these booksellers and librarians would have our friends believe. A writer, whom it is hard for us not to believe to have been at one time either a bookseller or a librarian, writes to the same paper complaining that when a Boston lady asked him to show her where our literary people lived, he felt so ashamed for his dear city that he was as an ass that is dumb. Our citizens of literary tastes do not occupy whole terraces nor cover the mountain with their castles. And yet that Boston lady could not have travelled much beyond her native city or else her observational powers were not of that character which the fact of her coming from Boston would have led one to expect. Nevertheless, we think there are men of literary tastes in Montreal, not in legions, perhaps, but in hundreds. So that we do not believe much in this great literary decadence. For when one talks of a decadence, it is naturally presumed that there has first been some extraordinary activity from which the falling off takes place. In Montreal we have had no such literary activity and no such falling off. For its