

given in the simplest language. Each chapter is a plain collection of facts and figures, and is followed by a list of questions on the subject-matter thereof.

THE BRITISH AMERICAN. Vol. I., No. 1, Montreal, H. D. Jardine. —Mr. Jardine's venture is one that will commend itself to all right-thinking, educated Canadians. We have often had cause to lament the lack of home magazine literature, the more so as the existence of a desire for such a supply is sufficiently demonstrated by the large circulation of British and American magazines in this country. For a share in this circulation the magazine before us makes a bid, and we cannot but express a hope that it will meet with the success it deserves. It is admirably edited, and perfectly printed. Its outside appearance is sober, but handsome and attractive; while its pages are filled with well-written articles, which cannot fail to please. The leading papers in the present number (that for August) are—"Imperial Defence," by the Editor; "Grote, the Historian," and "Sir John A. Macdonald and the Treaty." The lighter department contains—"The Spider-Club," by M. M. Eckmann-Chartrian, "A Montrealer Abroad," (who certainly made a mistake, or at least forgot to open his window-blinds as he dozed by gas-light in June in order to catch a six o'clock a.m. train at the Bonaventure station), "My Adventures at Niagara," the opening instalment of "Beatrice Silvani," by F. W. Robinson, and the first two chapters of a new serial, entitled "Good-bye, Sweetheart," by Rhoda Broughton, author of "Red as a Rose is She." The remainder of the matter consists of poetry, notes on the topics of the day, scientific notes, etc., etc.

THEATRE ROYAL.—The Holman Troupe closed their engagement here on Saturday last, the burlesques selected for Friday being "Orpheus aux Enfers." Miss Sallie Holman as Eurydice and Miss Julia as Cupid were exceedingly good in their respective parts. Signor Brandisi as Orpheus was in capital voice. Pluto, by Mr. Barton, was a very clever piece of acting, keeping up roars of laughter by his quaint and comic style. The other parts were well filled, and "Orpheus aux Enfers" was undoubtedly only one more success of this really popular troupe. On Saturday was produced "La Somnambule" and the "Child of the Regiment." Both these pieces were well received, but would have been more pleasing had they not been so hurried. The costumes and effects belonging to this troupe are entirely new this season, and by their elegance and costliness greatly enhance the beauty and splendour of the burlesques. The troupe will shortly re-appear in the city under a new management with several leading performers.

TYPOGRAPHICAL UNION ANNUAL PIC-NIC.—Mr. Howley has deserved well of the citizens of Montreal by throwing open to all classes his splendid grounds at the head of St. Antoine street; but he certainly never made a better hit than that of giving them to the typesetters, a class of the community whose power is oftener felt than appreciated. The printers deserve well of the world: they work hard; they are poorly paid, and they certainly do as good service for the public at large as any other class of craftsmen. Those of Montreal are no exception to this general definition. Mr. Howley has given them his grounds; will the public give them their patronage on Saturday next, the 26th instant? We think so, for surely they well deserve it. We hope to see a splendid turn-out, and a due acknowledgment of the merits of those who keep alive "the art preservative of all arts." Let the printers' holiday be shared in by all classes as some acknowledgment for the daily and nightly toil they expend for the public enlightenment.

Major McLennan, of the Woodstock (Ont.) Troop, writes a letter strongly condemning Col. Skinner's treatment of the "Ontario team" to Wimbledon. As both gentlemen are pretty well-known in the West, outsiders would do well to suspend judgment until the result of the investigation, which their respective positions under the Militia Department would seem to render necessary, may be made public. It is not at all improbable that the captain may have a clean record. At least we do not join in his condemnation on such *ex-parte* evidence.

LAWLOR'S SEWING MACHINES.—Principal office, 305 Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

HOSPICE ST. JOSEPH, MONTREAL,
August 5th, 1871.

MR. J. D. LAWLOR:

SIR,—On former occasions our Sisters gave their testimonials in favour of the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine, but having recently tested the working qualities of the "Family Singer," manufactured by you, we feel justified in stating that yours is superior for both family and manufacturing purposes.

SISTER GAUTHIER.

MONTREAL, April 23, 1871.

MR. J. D. LAWLOR:

DEAR SIR,—In answer to your enquiry about the working qualities of your Family Singer Sewing Machines, which we have in constant operation on shirts, we beg to say that they are, in every respect, perfectly satisfactory, and we consider them superior to any American Machine, and consequently take much pleasure in recommending them as the most perfect, useful and durable Machines now offered to the public.

Most respectfully,

J. R. MEAD & CO.

Shirt Manufacturers,
381, Notre Dame St.

CHARLES READE ON THE IRRATIONAL AND THE RATIONAL ROOF.

Mr. Charles Reade sends the following letter on the subject of housebuilding to the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

The shoe pinches all men more or less: but, on a calm survey, I think it pinches the householder hardest.

A house is as much a necessary of life as a loaf; yet this article of necessity has been lately raised to a fancy price by the trade conspiracies of the building operatives—not so much by their legitimate strikes for high wages as by their conspiring never to do for any amount of wages an honest day's work—and the fancy price thus created strikes the householder first in the form of rent. But this excessive rent, although it is an outgoing, is taxed as income: its figure is made the basis of all the imperial and parochial exactions that crush the householder. One of these is singularly unfair; I mean "the inhabited house duty." What is this but the property tax rebaptized and levied over again, but from the wrong person? The property tax is a percentage on the rent, levied in good faith, from the person whom the rent enables to pay that percentage; but the inhabited house duty is a similar percentage on the rent, levied, under the disguise of another name, from him whom the rent disables.

In London the householder constantly builds and improves the freehold: instantly parochial spies raise his rates. He has employed labour, and so far counterbalanced pauperism; at the end of his lease the house will bear a heavier burden; but these heartless extortioners cannot wait the end of the lease; they bleed the poor wretch directly for improving parochial property at his own expense. At the end of his lease the rent is raised by the landlord on account of these taxed improvements, and the tenant turned out with a heavier grievance than the Irish farmer; yet he does not tumble his landlord, nor even a brace of vestrymen. The improving tenant, while awaiting the punishment of virtue, spends twenty times as much money in pipes as the water companies do, yet he has to pay them for water a price so enormous that they ought to bring it into his cisterns, and indeed into his mouth for the money.

He pays through the nose for gas.

He bleeds for the vices of the working classes: since in our wealthy cities, nine-tenths of the pauperism is simply waste and inebriety. He often pays temporary relief to an improvident workman, whose annual income exceeds his own, but who will never put by a shilling for a slack time.

In short, the respectable householder of moderate means is so ground down and oppressed that, to my knowledge, he is on the road to despondency and ripening for a revolution.

Now, I can hold him out no hope of relief from existing taxation; but his intolerable burden can be lightened by other means; the simplest is to keep down his bill for repairs and decorations, which at present is made monstrous by original misconstruction.

The irrational house is an ANIMAL WITH ITS MOUTH ALWAYS OPEN.

This need not be. It arises from causes most of which are removable: viz: 1st, from unscientific construction; 2nd, plaster ceilings; 3rd, the want of provision for partial wear; 4th, the abuse of paint; 5th, hidden work.

Under all these heads I have already given examples. I will add another under head 3. The dado or skirting board is to keep furniture from marking the wall; but it is laid down only one inch thick, whereas the top of a modern chair overlaps the bottom an inch and a half. This the builders do not, or will not, observe, and so every year in London fifty thousand rooms are spoiled by the marks of chair-backs on the walls, and the owners driven to the expense of painting or papering sixty square yards, to clean a space that is less than a square foot, but fatal to the appearance of the room.

Under head 4 let me observe that God's woods are all very beautiful; that ONLY FOOLS ARE WISER THAN GOD ALMIGHTY; that varnish shows up the beauty of those woods, and adds a gloss; and that house-paint hides their beauty. Paint holds dirt, and does not wash well: varnish does. Paint can only be mixed by a workman. Varnish is sold fit to put on. Paint soon requires revival, and the old paint must be rubbed off at a great expense, and two new coats put on. Varnish stands good for years, and when it requires revival, little more is necessary than simple cleaning, and one fresh coat, which a servant or anybody can lay on. 5. Hidden work is sure to be bad work, and so need repairs, especially in a roof, that sore tried part; and the repairs are the more expensive that the weak place has to be groped for.

I have now, I trust, said enough to awaken a few householders from the lethargy of despair, and to set them thinking a little and organizing a defence against the extraordinary mixture of stupidity and low instinctive trade cunning of which they are the victims: for a gentleman's blunders hurt himself, but a tradesman's blunders always hurt his customer; and this is singularly true of builders' blunders; they all tend one way—to compel the householder to be always sending for the builder, to grope for his hidden work, or botch his bad work, or clean his unscientific windows, or whitewash his idiotic ceilings, or rub his nasty unguents off God's beautiful wood, and then put some more nasty odiferous unguents on, or put cows on his ill-cleaned chimneys; or, in short, to repair his own countless blunders at the expense of his customer.

Independently of the murderous and constant expense, the bare entrance into a modest household of that loose, lazy, drunken, dishonest personage, who has the impudence to call himself "the British workman," though he never did half a day's real work at a stretch in all his life, is a serious calamity, to be averted by every lawful means.

It is a sure sign that a man is not an artist, if, instead of repairing his defects, he calls an intellectual superior to counteract them. The fire-escape is creditable to its inventor, but disgraceful to the builders. They construct a fire-trap without an escape; and so their fellow-citizens are to cudgel their brains and supply the builders' want of intelligence and humanity by an invention working from the street. The fire-escape can after all save but a few of the builders' victims. The only universal fire-escape is—THE RATIONAL ROOF.

To be constructed thus: Light iron staircases from the third floor to top floor and rational roof. Flat roof, or roofs, metal covered, with scarcely perceptible fall from centre, open joists and iron girders, the latter sufficiently numerous to keep the roof from falling in, even though fire should gut the edifice. An iron-lined door, surmounted by a skylight; iron staircase up to this door, which opens rationally on to

the rational roof. Large cistern or tank on roof with a force-pump to irrigate the roof in fire or summer heats. Round the roof iron rails set firm in balcony, made too hard for bairns to climb, and surmounted by spikes. Between every two houses a partition gate with two locks and keys complete. Bell under cover to call neighbour in fire or other emergency.

Advantages offered by "the RATIONAL roof:"—

1. High chimney stacks not needed.

2. Nine smoking chimneys cured out of ten. There are always people at hand to make the householder believe his chimney smokes by some fault of construction, and so they gull him into expenses, and his chimney smokes on—because it is not thoroughly swept. Send a faithful servant on to the rational roof, let him see the chimney-sweep's brush at the top of every chimney before you pay a shilling, and good-bye smoking chimneys. Sweeps are rogues, and the irrational roof is their shield and buckler.

3. The rail-painted chocolate and the spikes gilt would mightily improve our gloomy streets.

4. Stretch clothes' lines from spike to spike, and there is a drying-ground for the poor, or for such substantial people as are sick of the washerwomen and their villainy. These heartless knives are now rotting fine cambric and lace with soda and chloride of lime, though borax is nearly as detergent and injures nothing.

5. A playground in a purer air for children that cannot get to the parks. There is no ceiling to crack below.

6. In summer heats a blest retreat. Irrigate and cool from the cistern; then set four converging poles, stretch over these from spike to spike a few breadths of awning; and there is a delightful tent and perhaps a country view. If the Star and Garter at Richmond had possessed such a roof, they would have made at least two thousand a year upon it, and perhaps have saved their manager from a terrible death.

7. On each roof a little flagstaff and streamer to light the gloom with sparks of colour, and tell the world is the master at home or not. This would be of little use now; but, when once the rational roof becomes common, many a friend could learn from his own roof whether a friend was at home, and so men's eyes might save their legs.

8. In case of fire the young and old would walk out by a rational door on to a rational roof, and ring at a rational gate. Then their neighbour lets them on to his rational roof, and they are safe. Meantime, the adult males, if any, have time to throw wet blankets on the skylight and turn the water on to the roof. The rational roof, after saving the family which its predecessor would have destroyed, now proceeds to combat the fire. It operates as an obstinate cowl over the fire; and, if there are engines on the spot, the victory is certain. Compare this with the whole conduct of the irrational roof. First it murdered the inmates; then it fed the fire; then it collapsed and fell on the ground floor, destroying more property, and endangering the firemen.

I am, yours very truly,

CHARLES READE

LITERATURE AND ART

Earl Russell, it is announced, is about to publish an historical essay on "The Foreign Policy of England, from 1570 to 1870."

General Faidherbe is about to publish a work on the campaign of the Army of the North in 1870. It is to be dedicated to M. Gambetta.

The "Battle of Dorking," about the authorship of which there has been so much speculation, was written by Colonel George Chesney, the author of "Indian Policy."

When France declared war against Germany, M. Gustave Doré is said to have commenced a picture illustrative of the victory of his countrymen. His countrymen gained the victory, for M. Doré, being a native of Strasbourg, where he was born in 1832, is now a German!

The popularity of photography has stimulated many trades and rendered the demand for gold, silver, glass, cards, &c., immense. In 1860-62, 3,500,000 cartes of Her Majesty were sold alone. Few people have any idea of the value of the copyrights. £35,000 have been paid for cartes of the Royal Family.

The University of Berlin has suffered another great loss in the field of historic teaching. The famous Leopold v. Ranke, Historiographer of Prussia, and Chancellor of the civil class of the order *pour le mérite*, who has been Professor of History at the University of Berlin since 1825, has just been dispensed from the performance of his duties. He is now in his seventy-sixth year, and requires rest after his long and active career.

A somewhat remarkable work has, says the *Levant Herald*, just appeared in Constantinople in the form of a photographic reproduction of a very beautiful Koran, copied in the year 1094 of the Hegira, by a celebrated Mussulman penman, Hanz Osman, from the manuscript of one of the lights of the ecclesiastical lore of Islam, Ali Al Kari. This work is due to the taste and perseverance of M. Fanton, a French barrister, and Kemal-Bey, who intended it as the first of a series of publications for spreading instruction among the Mussulmen. Many difficulties stood in their way. The existing system of photography would not suffice; but after many trials a process was perfected in England by which a perfect reproduction was effected, including the actual colour of the old letters, the paper used being of the precise texture and hue of the original manuscript. The mechanical and artistic part of their difficulties overcome, there still remained the old prohibition against the importation of Korans into Turkey from Europe. But the Grand Vizier and several of the Ministers having interested themselves in the matter, the necessary firman was granted, and the new Korans were passed through the Custom House. It is proposed to establish premises and apparatus in Stamboul for the preparation of a number of educational works on a similar plan.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. B., Kingston.—Is your letter of the 11th inst. intended for publication? If not, you should have known better, seeing your capacity for criticism, than to have addressed it to the Editor.