

generation. The plan of the work is in itself attractive, viz., that of grouping facts and events into chapters which typify and illustrate the formative periods of the country's growth rather than the setting forth in minute detail of the history from year to year. This procedure gives room for picturesque writing, and presents the events of the time in a guise most acceptable to the general reader. The work, we may add, has the aid of excellent typography, and is enriched by a number of portraits of prominent men, fairly well engraved on wood, and, generally speaking, good likenesses.

In the title, *A Popular History of the Dominion of Canada, from the discovery of America to the present time*, by the Rev. W. H. Withrow, M.A., we have a clue to the character of the work issued by the talented editor of the *Canadian Methodist Magazine*. The work is essentially a popular history, covering the whole ground of the national annals, with a necessarily brief but intelligible outline of the history of each separate Province. It is especially attractive in its treatment of the earlier history of the country; its narrative of the explorers and discoverers, the heroic struggle between the two races for possession of the continent—the story of the Jesuit missions, the histories of the Indian tribes, and the gradual colonization and material development of the Dominion being particularly well brought out and sympathetically delineated. The narrative of the later history, the incidents of the American Revolutionary War, the settlement of the Upper Province by the U. E. Loyalists, the political struggles which preceded the rebellion era, and the more recent story of Confederation, as well as the national growth and development of the country, find a fitting treatment and appreciative consideration. The work is deserving of its success to which the author's pleasant style of narration contributes something; and it bids fair to retain a firm hold upon public favour as a lively and faithful narrative of Canadian history.

In the department of "history and biography" our French compatriots have not been quite idle during the past two years. Though the English writer in the Upper Province is at no little disadvantage in chronicling their literary undertakings, from the absence of information as to the doing of the *littérateurs* of Quebec, and the difficulty of meeting with the publication of the Lower Canadian press in the West. Those who control the public libraries of the Upper Province greatly fail in their duty in manifesting so little interest in the writings of literary men in the Sister Province, whose industry and historic pride in the literature of their section of Canada are notable characteristics which do credit to their intelligence and public spirit.

So far as we have been able to glean, however, the chief contributions to history issuing from French Canada appear to consist of papers read before the Historical Societies of Montreal and Quebec, and of brochures containing historical memoranda relating to persons and events in the earlier life of the country. The most important of these is the *Seventh Volume of Mémoires* published by *La Société Historique de Montréal* which deals with the *Voyage de Kalin en Amérique*, and has been translated and edited by M. L. N. Marchand, a Montreal advocate, Kalin, who was a Swedish botanist of distinction and a Professor of the University of Upsala, was selected by the great Linnaeus to make a voyage to the United States and Canada, under the auspices and at the expense of the Royal Academy at Stockholm. His purpose was to make a collection of seeds of plants and trees native to the New World, and to describe the physical features and natural productions of the country. The expedition was undertaken in 1748, and covered a period of four years, during which he explored the country from Philadelphia to the White Mountains, thence via Albany and Saratoga, to Niagara Falls and back to the Quaker City. From the White Mountains he seems to have made his way to Quebec, and in his journals he jotted down matters historical and scientific which Quebec *savants* now deem worthy of reproduction. The present volume, we understand, is only an instalment of the work M. Marchand is about to prepare, and does not as yet deal with the Canadian portion of the narrative. The Montreal Society is to be congratulated on the result, so far, of M. Marchand's work.—G. MERCER ADAMS.

THE MIRACLE OF LIFE.

The anxious parent is accustomed to remark, when a small boy has just escaped drowning, or a small girl has narrowly failed to fall out of a window, "It is a wonder that children ever live to grow up." Still more wonderful is it, in the light of the revelations of sanitary science, that anybody manages to live from one day to another. Indeed, it is little short of a miracle that any one except an occasional savage is alive at the present moment.

Ten or fifteen years ago, it was discovered that nearly all our food was adulterated, and that the rest of it was normally unfit to eat. We were told that our bread was made of the most worthless parts of flour, and was plentifully poisoned with alum; that our coffee was chicory and beans, our tea copperas and birch twigs, our wine chiefly sulphuric acid and log-wood, and our beer *Cocculus indicus*. As for the meat sold in our markets, it was for the most part as unwholesome as our pure Orange County milk furnished by distillery-fed cows, and a man actually took his life in his hands who ventured to eat pork.

Curiously enough, we continue to consume adulterated groceries and deadly butchers'-meat, and still live. We ought all to have wasted away long ago, or to have died with the "horrid pains" asserted by Mr. Mantlini to be inseparable from poisoning. It is barely possible that the fact that our drugs are grossly adulterated is the only thing that has saved us. The adulteration of drugs is conducted on a different principle from the adulteration of food. The drugs being for the most part poisons, are adulterated with harmless substances. The man who fancies that he is taking six grains of quinine is really taking only one, and when a doctor prescribes an ounce of Epsom salts, the druggist furnishes only a quarter of an ounce, the remainder of the prescription being made up of inert and innocuous substance. It may be that by thus mitigating the character of the medicine given us by doctors ostensibly to cure diseases resulting from the use of adulterated food, our lives have been prolonged unintentionally by druggists whose real and only purpose was to make money by dishonest means.

The alarm concerning adulterated food and drugs had somewhat subsided prior to the discovery that mankind was doomed to immediate extinction by sewer gas. People, finding that they continued to live in spite of this habit of daily poisoning themselves with deadly food, were rapidly becoming careless as to how much alum and *Cocculus indicus* they might consume. When, however, they found that sewer gas was killing them with the swiftness and certainty of prussic acid, they became seriously alarmed. The doctors who made the discovery that all the ills of life were directly traceable to bad drainage, and that good drainage and immunity from sewer gas were absolutely unknown, told the most terrible tales of the condition of our houses. Our wretched system of plumbing was such that every city house was a perpetual reservoir of sewer gas, while bad drainage was poisoning not merely the air, but the earth, in every country town. We must infallibly die either of diphtheria or typhoid fever; and as for our children it was simply absurd to think that they could survive their first year when constantly exposed to the deadly sewer gas. There is no doubt that those sanitary apostles were in earnest. Indeed, drainage became a passion with them, and they devoted all their energies to convincing us that if we had drains connected with our houses, we would promptly die of diphtheria, and that if we had no drains, typhoid fever would surely hurry us out of the world.

Nevertheless, we still live. People who had inhabited houses before sewer gas ever attracted attention, and who had never thought of contracting diphtheria or typhoid fever, resolved to risk the sewer gas a little longer, and actually contrived to live and preserve their health. Less reckless people, gathering from the writings of sanitary apostles that it was almost hopeless to secure immunity from bad drainage unless a despotic government should undertake to drain the country by force, resigned themselves to their fate. There is nothing more certain than that we ought all to have died of diseases resulting from sewer gas and bad drainage long ago; but as we failed to die to any great extent in the way and manner prescribed by sanitary apostles, it is probable that the dread of sewer gas, like the dread of adulterated food, will before very long cease to greatly alarm the public.

Our last cause of alarm is malaria. The subtle poison which was formerly found only in swampy regions has now spread over the entire country. The uplands of New Jersey and the granite hills of New England are full of it. We cannot escape it, whether we live in the city or the country. If it does not kill us outright and suddenly by producing what are called "congestive chills," it kills us none the less surely with intermittent and remittent fevers, and with a dozen other diseases that fasten upon us in consequence of the undermining of our constitutions by malarial poison. We have miraculously escaped poisoning by adulterated food, we have managed in a perfectly inexplicable way to live in spite of sewer gas and bad drainage; but there is—if we may believe the doctors—not one chance in a thousand that we can escape the subtle and fatal poisoning of both mind and body due to malaria.

After all, malaria may not prove to be quite so deadly as we are told that it is. May it not be possible that a few of the diseases which are now ascribed to it, and some of the symptoms which are held to be proofs of malarial poison, have an entirely different origin? However this may be, we have lived so long in spite of the demonstrations that we ought to die, that we may reasonably hope that the human race will not be extirpated by malaria, at least within the present generation.

SWORD AND PISTOL.

The duel seems to be seriously threatened with extinction in the land where of all others it has lately been kept up with the greatest ostentation. French "affairs of honor" of the most modern pattern are often enough ridiculous burlesques, in which the combatants, standing off at arms' length, and making nothing worthy of the name of a lunge, do not either expect or wish to do one another any greater harm than inflicting a flesh wound in the arm. Still, there have been several cases, even within the last ten years, where a fatal sword-thrust has been given, either by accident

or intention. And for duels with firearms, even when the pistols are loaded with half charges of powder, it is obvious that a fatal result must be still more likely to occur. It is for this reason—the impossibility of ensuring that a pistol-shot shall not kill the man it hits—that fire-arms have been generally discarded in France in favor of the small sword, which most rarely puts a duellist's life in real peril.

Notwithstanding all this, an ingenious French writer has just been taking upon himself to teach his countrymen that fighting with the pistol is a more scientific, gentleman-like and satisfactory mode of settling quarrels than a combat with cold steel. This gentleman takes up the rather novel ground that proficiency with the pistol is an accomplishment as creditable to the proficient, and as likely to do him honor and give him pleasure, as any skill with the foils. He urges in favor of the now discredited and unfashionable weapon that a man can practice with it more conveniently than with the other. He needs but little instruction to begin with; he requires only a small gallery, or even room, to practice in; he need not pull off his coat, or get into any vulgar heat or excitement over the business; and, finally, he can always do his practice just as well while alone, whereas the fencer requires, at least as often as he can, to have an adversary with whom to measure his weapon. With all this he declares that the satisfaction of being a good shot, and being able to "pick off" the enemy with accuracy, is as great as that of being a clever fencer, and capable of "pinking" the adversary with equal precision. This, it will be observed, is an altogether different line of argument from that which was used in England when the pistol in this country succeeded in superseding the sword. Our own good people imagined, either rightly or wrongly, that in the use of the latter weapon strength, size, and skill had too great an advantage, whereas in a duel with pistols the small and weak and inexperienced man was more on a level with his antagonist. The conclusion thus arrived at is open to some considerable question; but it found favor with the Britisher of the Georgian era, and prevailed in full force down to the time of the extinction of duelling in this country.

Were we—or rather were our ancestors—wrong after all? Is the practised pistol shot more assuredly an unfair match for the novice than the most accomplished and muscular swordsman for the least experienced adversary? There is certainly something to be said on both sides; and in the first place as far as bodily strength and size are concerned. It may be asked why it is fairer that a small spare man, who is very difficult to hit, should be allowed to force a Daniel Lambert to go out with pistols, than that a modern Goliath should be entitled to insist upon meeting a youth of moderate dimensions with sword or rapier. Then, as regards skill, there can be no doubt that the *habitudes* of shooting galleries who picks off his two dozen wafers a day, and is reasonably cool-headed, can almost make certain of killing an opponent who has little or no practice. Why is it more fair that this man should profit by the knowledge, or rather the knack, he has acquired, than that the pupil of a clever fencing master should reap the benefit of his lessons in the school of arms? But the chief argument put forward by the partisans of the sword is a little more humane than either of these. It must be obvious to any one in a duel with pistols the nature of the wound received is dependent almost entirely upon accident. There is probably not a man who in the actual field, standing at the usual distance from his adversary, could make sure of hitting him in a spot where the injury would not be fatal, whereas an expert swordsman who has a decided advantage over his enemy can, without the least difficulty, hit him in a place where the blow will touch no vital part. Now, it may be assumed that very few men go out with the fixed intention of killing their man if they can. However angry they may have been when the challenge was given or received they are seldom so blood-thirsty when it comes to the actual meeting as not to be content with giving a disabling wound. Hence where the disparity of skill and strength is greatest the weaker man runs, as it is argued, a better chance of escaping with his life from a sword thrust than he does from a bullet. The records of duelling, at least in later times, certainly seem to bear out to a large extent this plausible contention. Nor do the more ancient annals really tell a different tale, for in the earlier times men often fought, like Lord Bruce and the Earl of Dorset, *à outrance*, and had the combat been stopped when the first severe wound was received no life would usually have been lost.

As for the risk run by a duellist under the orthodox code of rules, it is much smaller than most persons are inclined to suppose. An expert who had studied the statistics of the business found that, even in the time when pistols were almost exclusively used, the proportion of men who were killed to those who fought was only one in fourteen, and that only one man was even wounded out of about six that went out. A man may, as Sir Lucius O'Tigger said, "have a bullet clean through him," and yet not get his *quieten* thereby; and it is the same with a sword-thrust, even when it strikes the body full, without being impeded or diverted by the sword-arm. It is not always understood by amateurs that in fighting with pistols there is a good deal of veritable "guarding." The right arm doubled up in front of the body forms a pretty strong shield, while the pistol itself, with its trigger and guard and the fingers holding it,

is also a solid defence, protecting the head and neck. The haunch, slightly turned across, protects the vital parts of the lower body, and the left arm and leg are kept quite out of the line of fire, although, if the object of the combatant were to receive a slight, rather than a mortal, wound, he might perhaps with advantage be advised to expose these parts, instead of hiding them behind the body and the right leg.

E. B. M.

HOW TO SPLIT A SHEET OF PAPER.

It is one of the most remarkable properties of that wonderful product, paper, says the British and Colonial Printer and Stationer, that it can be split into two or even three parts, however thin the sheet. We have seen a leaf of the *Illustrated News* thus divided into three parts, or three three-thin leaves. One consisted of the surface on which the engravings are printed; another was the side containing the letter-press, and a perfectly blank piece on either side was the paper that lay between. Many people who have not seen this done might think it impossible, yet it is not only possible, but extremely easy, as we shall show. Get a piece of plate-glass, and place it on a sheet of paper; then let the latter be thoroughly soaked. With care and dexterity the sheet can be split by the top surface being removed. But the best plan is to paste a piece of cloth or strong paper to each side of the sheet to be split. When dry, violently and without hesitation pull the two pieces asunder, when part of the sheet will be found to have adhered to one and part to the other. Soften the paste in water and the pieces can be easily removed from the cloth. The process is generally demonstrated as a matter of curiosity, yet it can be utilized in various ways. If we want to paste in a scrap-book a newspaper article printed on both sides of the paper, and possess only one copy, it is very convenient to know how to detach the one side from the other. The paper, when split, as may be imagined, is more transparent than it was before being subjected to the operation, and the printing-ink is somewhat duller. Otherwise the two pieces present the appearance of the original if again brought together. Some time ago the information of how to do this splitting was advertised to be sold for a considerable sum. We now impart it to all our readers gratuitously.

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

THIS autumn Johann Strauss takes up his permanent residence in Buda-Pesth.

THE music of a new ballet by Rubinstein, entitled "La Vierge," has just been published.

AN ancient banjo has recently been discovered in the centre of the largest Egyptian pyramid.

MARIE BRANDT, the young American prima donna, has just completed a successful engagement in Cologne.

RUBINSTEIN has expressed his determination to compose a funeral march in honor of Richard Wagner.

KING ALPHONSO has presented Masini, the tenor, with a ring, in which is set a black pearl surrounded by diamonds.

THE Berlin municipality has decided to name a new street after Richard Wagner. It is a turning of the Beethoven Strasse.

THE Prince of Wales will open the new Royal College of Music, in Kensington, in May next. Fifty scholarships will be established at once.

PROF. HELMHOLTZ, the celebrated writer on science, and well known for his works on musical theory, has just been knighted by the Emperor of Germany.

MARY BEBBE's brief career with the Boston Ideal has closed. Her salary has been paid in full to March 17. It is understood that trouble regarding the assignment of parts caused the break.

THE great Handel Festival of 1883 will be held at the Crystal Palace, London, on June 13, 16, 18, 20. Sir Michael Costa, who has conducted these triennial festivals since 1857, will resume his old post.

FRANZ LISZT is now the last of the group of representative modern composers whose names have been closely associated with the "Music of the Future" movement which arose after and through the reformatory deeds of Beethoven.

AN English paper says that "Wagner's Newfoundland dog, during the touching funeral ceremony, not only betrayed the utmost sorrow, but showed his sympathy with the members of the family by fawning upon them as if he would share their grief."

ON Sunday the roof of the Payret Theatre, at Havana, fell into a coffee house below. There were ten persons in the coffee-house at the time, some of whom escaped. Among the dead bodies already taken from the ruins is that of Ensign Sagastizabal, co-proprietor of the theatre. Several families living in the entresol escaped by taking refuge on the balconies.

THE tenor Roncini died recently on the stage at Sinigaglia, just as he was about to sing in Faust. As the curtain rose, he attempted to rise from the chair in which he was seated, but fell back trembling and staring wildly. At first it was supposed that he was drunk, but it was soon found that he had been stricken with apoplexy, which resulted in his death without his having again become conscious.

AMONG the wreaths laid on Wagner's coffin there was a laurel crown, with the inscription, "From Johannes Brahms, February 18, 1883." Almost all the great concertatores and music schools in Germany sent representatives or floral tributes. Only the Berlin Hochschule, over which Herr Joachim presides, is said to have been conspicuously absent.

AMONG other strange coincidences is the part played by the number thirteen in the life of the late Richard Wagner. In the first place, thirteen is the number of letters comprising his name; then we come to dates. In the year 1813 he was born; on the 13th March, 1861, his great work, *Tannhäuser*, failed to arouse any appreciation in Paris; it was on the 13th February that he breathed his last, and he died after thirteen years of married life.