

hunger, for the sun has now risen toward the zenith and his dinner hour has tolled.

It is a relief after this Philistine infliction to sit in the shade of the wood, watching the opposite bank quiver through the heat, rejoicing in the contrast of our *dolce far niente* with our late visitor, hot labour, and hotter pork and beans and green tea.

As I lie dreaming in my hammock (we each brought one strapped to our saddles) I can see that my companions have really fallen asleep, and not to let the artist be the only one to show her appreciation of this lovely day, by her sketch, I am moved to list in numbers :—

DOLCE FAR NIENTE IN A HAMMOCK.

Boast not of southern seas and groves of palm,
Nor of the magic of the Orient ;
Here in the land of labour let me lie
And dream away the hours, gently rocked
By winds of summer ; for my lullaby
The multitudinous murmur of the leaves,
Like to the languid sound of summer seas
On far Ionian islands ; let the sun
Chequer the page with glancing light and shade.
The gold alyssum and anemone,
The king and queen of this fair sylvan court,
Make gorgeous pageant with their white and gold ;
The hop-vine clasps the aspen, and above
Blue tender peeps the heaven through the green.
Speak not to-day of labour, leave the plough
Half buried, and the idle steer to graze
For one long day of summer ; only to be
Is't not enough, is't not enough—my soul ?

The lengthening shadows, and the finished sketch, warn us to be gone, back to our fellow-men in the little hive of industry. The bronchos have had an idle time all day in the rich grass, and step out briskly towards home.

The almost inevitable result of a hot day is apparent. Huge and sullen and nigrescent the thunder-clouds are embattled in the west, all fringed with fire from the setting sun, and moving nearer and higher with a slow majesty which is very awe-inspiring ; but where we are the air is still serene, and the birds are not yet aware of the storm, which will soon send them to their leafy coverts and hush their song. A rice bird sits on a bulrush, his scarlet epaulets showing up vividly against his black uniform ; a bob-link sings his evensong from a spray, and a yellow-throated meadow lark trills back responsive ; a grey plover walks hurriedly away with mincing steps, walking delicately, like Agag, and bowing as he goes ; the bittern booms his deep bass from a distant marsh ; from overhead comes the warlike clarion of a passing flock of wild geese hasting from the wheat fields to their nightly quarters.

We have loitered, watching these many friends of ours, until the storm is really at hand. The wind, which before blew gently from the east, now drops, and anon springs up again and blows stronger from the opposite quarter. We know that sign, and it hardly needs the muttered roll of the thunder, and the pale phantom of a flash, to make us rouse our horses to a hard gallop. The west is a sombre black, lit now and then by the lightning ; the sun has gone down ; but lo ! there in the exquisite blue of the east, as yet uninvaded by the storm, trembles a star.

BASIL TEMPEST.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR OF 1775.*

IN a previous communication I drew attention to a singular incident, unrecorded in Canadian history, and occurring in this interesting collection of German letters, from officers serving under General Burgoyne, in the War of the American Revolution, 1775-83, and recently translated by that indefatigable searcher of the past, Wm. L. Stone, the American historian, relating some quaint social customs, observed by these distinguished military men during their stay at Quebec in 1776-7. A striking incident, and so far mentioned by no Canadian annalist, was the punishment publicly inflicted on eight French Canadians, charged with being "annexationists" ; these letters, nineteen in number, cover 250 pages of Mr. Stone's elegantly printed volume, and contain some spicy tid-bits of historical information. They acquire additional value from the fact that being written on the spot, and recording what their authors had actually heard or seen, offer many guarantees of impartiality, which one would in vain seek for in the heated opinions of the English and American contemporary writers. These letters are from Quebec, Staunton, Philadelphia, Savannah, New-Port, Cambridge, Boston, New York, Brooklyn, and from other parts of New England and Canada. Some of the descriptions of the leading engagements, penned by these highly educated eye-witnesses, throw quite a new light on the military operations of the period. They are, in general, too long and too circumstantial to be quoted *in extenso*.

In default of one of those stirring military despatches, which the eminent staff-officers were so freely sending to their German relations beyond the sea, I subjoin a short, quaint epistle, written by the chaplain of a Hessian regiment, to his brother in Germany :—

LETTER FROM A HESSIAN CHAPLAIN.

"BROOKLAND, near New York, Sept. 7, 1776.

"I have put some posts in the ground, and laid a board on it for a desk, upon which I will write and tell my dearly beloved brother that upon the other half of

* Letters of Brunswick and Hessian Officers during the American Revolution. Translated by William L. Stone, author of "The Life and Times of Sir William Johnson, Bart.," "History of New York," etc.

our globe I am in health, happy and grateful to God. I also walk out every pleasant morning and admire the beautiful clouds which ascend from the valleys to the heavens overhead.

"Notwithstanding I have seen such solemn and majestic scenery upon the ocean, I am inexpressibly glad to set foot on Staten Island. Scarcely can I restrain myself from kissing God's earth. Is she not our mother ? Our loved Hessians assimilate themselves to their surroundings in all things ; and I remember them in my sermons and in my prayers during the still hours of the night while on my bed, that they may be strong in Christian courage. The delay of the English generals makes them impatient, while the offensive look cast upon the Germans by the English excites still more ire. This state of feeling caused, lately, a bloody affray. A subordinate officer of the Yagers, to whom an Englishman said, while drinking, 'God damn you Frenchmen, you take our pay,' answered calmly, 'I am a German, and you are a S—' Thereupon both of them whipped out their swords, and the Englishman received such a gash that he died of his wounds. The brave German was not only pardoned by the English general, but the latter issued an order that the English should treat the Germans like brothers. This will be done the more readily, as the intelligent German has already begun to speak a little English.

"Our first movement forward was an attack against the rebels, who defended themselves more poorly than one would have expected from persons who had the stimulus of a love of freedom. The slaughter was horrible, more especially by the English troops, upon whose ranks the Germans drove the rebels like sheep. O friend ! it was to me a terrible sight when, the other day, I went over the battle-field among the dead, who mostly had been hacked and shot all to pieces. Many of these were Germans, which gave me the greater agony. We have taken many prisoners, who would mostly have taken service with us had they not been prevented by the English.

"The Indians, many of whom are in our vicinity, are not like those which Rousseau (Rousseau ?) and Iselin have described. On the contrary, they are all very obliging, friendly, and used to work, supple as the deer of the forest, and not without a belief in God. When I hold up my right hand towards heaven, they fold their hands upon their breast and bow themselves low to the ground," p. 185.

The exulting tone of the reverend gentleman was destined to undergo a marked change ere many months were over : Saratoga and Yorktown were looming in the distance.

J. M. LE MOINE.

Quebec, Oct., 1891.

THE RAMBLER.

THERE is a phrase current just at present which suggests a few reflections. We are hearing a good deal about the "minor poets." As all our poets in Canada are major ones I cannot hurt anyone's feelings by the lucubrations which follow. But I fancy that the word "minor" used in the patronizing inflection dear to the reviewer causes many a shiver to the sensitive versifier. Mr. Andrew Lang, recognizing the importance of a school of magazine poets, has lately attempted a parallel between the minor poets of Greece, who, as he remarks, would undoubtedly have sent verse to magazines had the magazines been in existence at that age of the world—and the minor poets of to-day. The result of the parallel is certainly to impress us with the richness of the thought and the grace of the expression in that far distant day. The Greeks were beyond everything lovers of nature, and their utterances, in which remnants of the half-pagan lore of a mythical age are insensibly combined with human phases seeking expression, are not unlike some of the modern poetry which finds so good a market in leading periodicals. Mr. Lang, in specifying "brevity" and "objectivity" as two important features of such poetry, is, as usual, completely right. But it might also be noticed that whereas poetry was once expected to rouse emotions or suggest thoughts, much of the verse to-day abounding in journals and magazines, and known as "fugitive" or "occasional" verse, does neither. It simply causes us to see. Our perception is aroused—nothing more. In its way this is a good thing, a very good thing, but it is not enough. To the Peter Bells of this world, such verse should come as a revelation, although I am afraid it does nothing of the kind ; but to those whose perceptions are already keen it comes as nothing. Is, then, poetry no longer a fine art, or is it only now becoming an art, the time of inspiration being past ? This is a delicate and difficult question, which my readers may ponder on in solitude. But this much is clear. The greatest poets are those who combine both objectivity and subjectivity. The Laureate owes his present position to this wonderful union of qualities. There never was a finer objective picture in all verse than that of the lonely Moated Grange, superior in Pre-Raphaelite touches of realism to anything he has done since, and yet the grange

* The animosity between the Germans and the French was well known, so that the English soldier mentioned in the text probably used the epithet "Frenchman" designedly as a term of reproach. Duponceau, one of Baron Steuben's aides, writing of his journey with that General, says : "I remember that at Mannheim, the Baron, with a significant look, pointed out to me, at the tavern where he dined, a paltry engraving hung up on the wall, representing a Prussian knocking down a Frenchman in great style ; underneath ends the following appropriate motto : 'a Frenchman to a Prussian is no more than a mosquito.'"

is not only a grange, but has added to it the charm of being the place that shelters Mariana. The human interest centred in passages of rare objective fidelity creates a great poet. Again, these high qualities must be held in just balance. The subjectivity of Byron weakens him. The delirious egotism of Rossetti unmans him. The too ever-present *eternal féminin* of Mrs. Browning becomes fatiguing. Reaction, if not revulsion, sets in. Here is a comparison of methods. The purely objective poet is telling us, for instance, about a sunset he has seen, and takes exactly fourteen lines to describe how the grey changed to green, and the green to saffron, and the saffron to rose ; how the steel grey of the water reflected the roseate tints, and how one white gull, beating high up against the clouds, showed blood-red as it circled over the top of the leafless, black branches of the distant forest. The subjective poet, on the contrary, condenses as much as possible and probably paints the scene in two such lines as these :—

The broken splendours of the burning west
Held a white life on fire, while I, etc., etc.

The advantage of the subjective method is, you observe, that the poet is privileged to drag himself in on any pretext and almost upon every occasion. The advantage of the objective method is that you usually know what the poet is talking about. His popularity is, therefore, certain. Busy people, with a taint as of Peter Bell about them, are not going to rack their brains for an hour trying to find out what a "white life on fire" means. The inventory style of the objective poet suits them better.

Extremists are always in danger, and while subjective poets may the oftener fall into ridiculous use of the *ego*, objective poets should also take warning as to the excessive employment and recurrence of mere images. In true poetry there must be life-blood and backbone. Images must be used as symbols—not always—but often enough to persuade us that there is something over and beyond and above the cloud-capped towers and the gorgeous palaces of rosy and jasper cloud which meet our eyes at day-rise and day-set. In short, our poets must command for us the Ideal. Without Ideality a literature may live, but it does not take a leading place in the ages.

That nothing succeeds like success is true of Pietro Mascagni. The *Spectator*—I think—points out that he is the son of a baker, while Dvorak is the son of a butcher, and Verdi's father certainly sold candles, if not a candlestick maker. Art, verily, is no respecter of persons. Are we sufficiently democratic yet—for, let me tell you, a colony is ever the most exclusive of places—to appreciate genius should it burst suddenly upon us from some plebeian home ? I doubt it. Mascagni is indeed a fortunate fellow, but he is no founder of a new creative school. His absorption of other men's ideas, says a contemporary, is extraordinary, and his power of combination inexhaustible. The initial performance in London under Signor Lago, of "Cavalleria Rusticana" was disgraceful, owing to lack of rehearsal and inefficient singers. *En passant*, the Canadian Society of Musicians brings on De Pachmann for its forthcoming convention. This should prove a great attraction, for De Pachmann, although a supremely egotistical artist is a finished performer and exponent of Chopin's mysteries chiefly. The Canadian Institute held its inaugural meeting with much success last Saturday evening, Nov. 7.

The decadence of Ideality is an idea prevalent among our best thinkers. Hear what Mr. Gladstone has to say on this subject : "The conviction which possesses my mind is that the main operative cause which has stimulated the growth of negation is not intellectual, but moral, and is to be found in the increased and increasing dominion of the things seen over the things unseen." Further, he asserts that we cannot wage too general an "indictment against modern civilization and the enormous development of luxurious enjoyment. We have altered the standard of our wants, multiplied the demands of appetite, established a new social tradition, created a new environment, of which we are doomed to be the creatures." "Is it wonderful," he asks, "that in a self-indulgent age a creeping palsy should come silently over the inward life, or that the devotee of doubt passes naturally into spiritual atrophy ? Under the name of the so-called 'inquiry' of the day, we become the mere victims of assumption, due to prejudice, to fashion, to propensity, to appetite, to the insidious pressure of the world power, to temptation in everyone of its Protean shapes."

I did not attempt any analysis of Bernhardt's acting last week because I thought I had said enough about the stage of late. But I have since heard several such remarkable utterances on the subject that I wish now I had had my say as well as *ces autres*. People who ought to know better will compare her with "the Devenport," and commit similar blunders. As if the shuddering house were not vindication enough, triumph enough, testimony enough ! Whatever else she is, she is intellectually passionate, subtle, refined, with less personality than one has imagined, but more force. There was nothing in the least remarkable either about her clothes, *messieurs et mesdames*, you, who, if you went to see her "gowns," must have been disappointed. She wears her things as Rosina Vokes wears them, because she has to ; otherwise, one imagines she does not particularly think about them. At least she does not advertise them. What surprised critical people most was her subtle trace of comedy in the first and second