

last occasion the whole country was startled to learn that the precious library, containing books, documents, and manuscripts, inaccessible elsewhere, had perished almost entirely.

Fortunately the Ancient Capital has still abundant treasures left, as we learn from a list published by M. Faucher de Saint Maurice, of the Royal Society of Canada. In the Basilica the following hang from the walls: "The Banishment of St. Paul," by Carlo Marotti; "The Christ," attributed to Van Dyck; "The Christ Outraged," by Fleuret; "The Pentecost," by Vignon; "The Holy Family," by Jacques Blanchard, and "The Annunciation," by John Bertrand. The collection of the Hôtel Dieu is very fine, and composed of the following works: "The Christ in the Crib," by Stella; "The Virgin and the Infant Jesus," by Noel Coypel; "The Ecstasy of St. Theresa," by William Menageot, and "The Meditation of St. Bruno," by Zurbaran. The Ursulines have also a number of valuable paintings, such as, "The Jesus and the Pharisee," the best Philip de Champagne extant; "The Death of St. Jerome," attributed to Domenichino; "The St. Nonus and St. Pelagia," by Prud'homme; "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," by Dieu; "The Birth of the Saviour," by Vigneau; "The Saviour Preaching the Gospel," by Philip de Champagne, and "The Algerian Captives Redeemed by the Friars of Mercy," by Restout. In addition to these we find several good examples of sixteenth and seventeenth century masters in other ancient churches outside of Quebec, as St. Anne du Nord, the site of the famous pilgrimages, where there is a splendid Le Brun; at Tadousac; St. Michael of Bellechasse; St. Antoine of Lotbinière; St. Henry of Levis, and other places.

The way that these works came into Canada is given by M. Faucher de Saint-Maurice, in the publication of a letter of Antoine Plamondon, a well-known Quebec painter, to M. J. M. Le Moine, the still better known historian and essayist. Plamondon says that in a conversation he had with the Abbé Desjardins, in 1826, on handing him letters from his brother, then almoner of the Hôtel Dieu, Quebec, the latter told him this: "All our churches were pillaged in the time of Robespierre, in 1793, by thousands of ruffians. Speculators had gathered together an infinite number of stolen paintings. One of these men failed in business, and his collection came under the hammer. I went to the sale, where the paintings were piled up in a courtyard in Paris, making a mountain of canvases. This mountain was knocked down to me *en bloc* for a mere trifle compared to its real value. A few days later, Cardinal Fesch, uncle of Napoleon, Archbishop of Lyons, and a great judge of art, directed me to have my collection transferred to his house. He bought a few and returned the rest, which then all went to Canada, where the buyers were the Quebec Seminary, the Cathedral, and several of the country churches. This took place from 1815 to 1820."

Quebec is not the only portion of French-Canada possessing good examples of ecclesiastical art. Almost all the ancient posts have some of their own as, for instance, Three Rivers, Nicolet, Yamachiche, Maskinongé, Batiscan and St. Anne de la Pérade. Montreal is still farther endowed, as might be expected from the wealth of its corporations and the taste of the members thereof. The Seminary of St. Sulpice stands at the head, and any one will be convinced of this who visits its spacious parlours and corridors. As much may be said of the Montreal College, under the same direction, at the foot of Mount Royal. The Congregation of Notre Dame, that founded Montreal, with Maisonneuve, and the Nuns of the Hôtel Dieu, who also coöperated, under Mademoiselle Mance, have a large number of relics of artistic worth on the one hand, and of still greater historical interest on the other.

A recent event has further revealed the riches of the French Province in this respect. The Montreal Antiquarian and Numismatic Society attempted, in last December, an exhibition of Historical Portraits, from the beginning of the colony down to 1840. The movement was mainly tentative and experimental, but it succeeded beyond anticipation, and while not more than a couple of hundred of specimens were looked for, over eight hundred were sent in from all parts of the Province. The best families, including a large number of the English-speaking, contributed to one of the most interesting, artistic, and historic displays ever devised in Canada. A committee of the Society, mainly represented by Mr. Henry Mott, of Montreal, have published a valuable descriptive catalogue, which will hereafter be consulted for its authenticity. It is to be hoped that this exhibition of historical portraits will soon be repeated on a large scale, so as to include Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and indeed all the Provinces of the Dominion. Even the Indians and the missionaries should not be forgotten, as they were not at the late exhibition. The venerable mission of Caughnawaga, over against Montreal, through its learned director, Father Burtin, of the Oblate Congregation, sent in portraits of two of its former pastors—M. Marcou, who wrote a complete Iroquois dictionary and grammar, preserved in the archives of the mission—and the famous Father Lafitau—the latter a remarkably well-coloured and delicate likeness. Caughnawaga sent also the portrait of Charlevoix, who passed several years there, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and wrote many chapters of his history. His room, arm-chair, books and book-case, with other relics, are still shown in the ancient presbytery.

Montreal.

JOHN TALON-LESPERANCE.

MR. BROWNING has received the unusual compliment of a message from Prince Bismarck, whose love for Englishmen is not generally supposed to be excessive. The Imperial Chancellor sent the poet his best wishes and congratulations, describing himself as one of his admirers, and expressing his regret that State business had thus far prevented him from reading Mr. Browning's last volume.

## AT THE FALLS OF RIVIERE DU LOUP.

WHERE the white raving cataract tosses high  
'Gainst the dark precipice, its sheets of foam,—  
A tiny harebell finds a sheltered home,  
And rears its drooping blossom towards the sky;  
And the great roaring flood that rages by  
But sheds a tender dew upon its head:  
Even so, the heart, in meek humility,  
That seeks but heaven in this rude earth of ours,  
May dwell unharmed amid the roar and din  
Of human passion, as in sheltered bowers,  
Growing but fairer 'mid turmoil and sin,—  
Keeping the hue of heaven, like the flowers,  
Because it keeps heaven's purity within.

AGNES MAULE MACHAR

## LONDON LETTER.

I SUPPOSE it must be nearly twenty years since, that, passing the Spaniards' Inn at Hampstead one summer afternoon, I saw at the small, geranium-decked window Dickens standing. He knew my companion, and laughingly called out something trivial, which I now forget; but the look of the man, with his "face of steel," and eyes which gleamed and sparkled—brown stars, still shining in my memory—I think I shall remember always. How fond he was of this queer roadside cottage. How often he used to come in the days when *Pickwick* was just published, and Phiz had taken up the drawing-block which poor Seymour dropped. It was here that Mrs. Bardell gave that celebrated tea-party the afternoon when Messrs. Dodson and Fogg sent all in a hurry for their client, and here he spent many of those holiday hours of which any one of his old friends (and was ever man blessed with so many?) tell you with the most affectionate enthusiasm. The testimony of one's own family carries little weight, as a rule, for their eyes are supposed to be blinded by affection. But it is the people who live in the house with the great man—those who see him at breakfast, that trying time, and talk to him when Society has shut the door, and he is left by the admiring throng to the humdrum critical home circle—to whom one should apply, and from whom one gets a truer impression than from pages of biography or stacks of letters. "I cannot tell you what my father was to us all," said Mrs. Perugini to me once, and from Miss Dickens' charming sketch some time back in *Cornhill* we have the other daughter's testimony of the manner in which the author of *David Copperfield* was regarded at Gadshill. Wendell Holmes says the *real* Thomas is only known to his Maker; but it is as well that "John's ideal Thomas" should be as truthful a portrait as possible, and the people who will most successfully draw you that portrait are in Thomas' own household. Up here on the heath, where yesterday the Van der Veldts used to sketch, with a bitter north-easter blowing in our faces, with iced ponds at our feet, with the great dome of St. Paul's dimly visible away beyond the vast stretch of houses to the right, Dickens' influence is potent still, and for one person who turns to look at our cathedral twenty hurry down the road toward Highgate to gaze at the little inn he made famous; for one who stays for country views of whitened fields and hedges, and bare trees, twenty push on to peer across the palings into Lord Mansfield's park, quoting from *Barnaby Rudge* how here the mob were turned aside from their original purpose of sacking this house during the Gordon Riots—"This is the place where Romney worked at his pretty, graceful portraits; his studio is now turned into an assembly room"—"Ah," I am answered, "but which is Jack Straw's castle, where Dickens used to dine, and did the Steerforths live down that lane?" "Those are the chimneys of Du Maurier's house," I continue conscientiously. "Here Lord Erskine used to walk, and if you keep straight on you get, in time, to High Barnet,"—"Where the Dodger first met Oliver Twist," comes in the interruption, and so, as it is no use instructing, I leave instruction alone. And, after all, how real are these creations, and how infinitely nearer to us than any dead law-lord are the Micawbers and Nickelsbys, the Kenwigs and Pecksniffs. "These are the realities; we are the shadows," as Wilkie's oft-quoted monk says to him of the pictures in the Spanish church; and without a doubt true immortality lies in the work which defies, sometimes for many a generation, those twin silencers, Time and Death.

Not long ago I went on a pilgrimage to the Gadshill shrine, and stayed for an hour in Rochester by the way to see the Hospital of Richard Watts, with which a Christmas number in *Household Words* has made us familiar. It is an ordinary white-washed house on the street (the charity was founded in Elizabeth's time, rebuilt about 140 years ago) with a tablet let in over the front door, but the interior is oddly enough arranged, for the Poor Travellers' six small bedrooms are built round a narrow court, into which their kitchen looks also; so the matron has the only cheerful view into the busy country town from her windows. But the kitchen is snug and warm, and the bedrooms (lighted by a large lamp-post in the centre of the yard) are clean and tidy. Every night—the evening on which I am writing this: the evening on which you will read this—these beds are full, and indeed have never once been empty these three hundred years. Through the dark winter, through the pleasant summer, the visitors tramp into Rochester; generally twice the number come than can be accommodated, and then the most destitute are chosen, and the rest drafted to the work-house. Four pence is given them to buy their supper, which they cook themselves in the kitchen, "and," says the matron, "some talk, and some read the paper, and they are always quiet and well-behaved." She showed