

A TALE OF A TOBOGGAN.

"On Christmas Eve," said Jeannette Lepage—
 Jeannette was a gay, adventurous soul—
 "I'll ride down the hill on my *traine sauvage*,*
 And fear neither goblin nor ghost nor ghoul."

Black eyes had Jeannette, and her cheeks were red,
 And her sweet-voiced laughter never ceased,
 And in her dark hair, so the gossips said,
 Was tangled the heart of the parish priest!

And with many a "Jean" did she coquette,
 With faithless vows to become his bride,
 For a heartless flirt was this gay Jeannette
 Who lived at the foot of the Laurentide.

And André was drinking his farm away,
 And François had gone to a foreign part,
 And just a year ago Christmas Day,
 Michel had died of a broken heart.

But handsome Pierre had prevailed at last,
 And as soon as the holy-day had sped—
 The banns once cried the news spread fast—
 Pierre and Jeannette would be safely wed.

The moon quivered down on Jeannette Lepage,
 And the tall old pines made a sorrowful stir,
 As she trudged through the snow with her *traine sauvage*,
 And the stars shed silver tears for her.

A stranger stood on the hill's white crest,
 But it was not Jeannette who would turn and flee,
 "Will you dare to ride," he the girl addressed,
 "From here to the foot of the hill with me!"

"Truly!" she cried, "for I know you well,
 Your voice, your form—and for the rest
 Your face is hid—but you shall not tell
 That Jeannette Lepage feared a silly jest."

In an instant over the snow they sped,
 And then to the maid this horror befell,
 "You know me, Jeannette?" the stranger said,
 "Then you did not so quickly forget Michel?"

Wild-eyed she looked, and sudden grew
 The shapely youth to a spectre grim,
 Whose bony hands white grave-clothes drew
 About her form, confined close with him.

Her prayers—her *aves*—ah, *pauvre petite*!
 Can you remember a single bead,
 To tell on your journey so fleet—so fleet,
 To the graveyard whither Michel would lead?

Not one; but they flash past the chapel there,
 With its blessed cross 'gainst the starlit blue,
 And Jeannette points straight through the frosty air
 At the sacred emblem—as mortals do.

In a gray-walled convent a nun in gray,
 With smooth gray hair and a saintly brow,
 Says many an *ave* on Christmas Day.
 And Pierre? Pierre is a *gran'-père* now!

SARA J. DUNCAN.

READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

DARWIN ON CARLYLE.

CARLYLE and Darwin met several times, but, as might have been expected, they were not much drawn to each other, though, as every one knows, Darwin's brother, Erasmus, was Mrs. Carlyle's most faithful and devoted friend. Notwithstanding the hard things which Carlyle said of Darwin and Darwinism, here is the worst that Darwin has to say about Carlyle:—"Carlyle sneered at almost every one. One day in my house he called *Grote's History*, 'a fetid quagmire, with nothing spiritual in it.' I always thought until his *Reminiscences* appeared that his sneers were partly jokes, but this now seems rather doubtful. His expression was that of a depressed, almost despondent, yet benevolent man; and it is notorious how heartily he laughed. I believe that his benevolence was real, though stained by not a little jealousy. No one can doubt about his extraordinary power of drawing pictures of things and men, far more vivid, as it appears to me, than any drawn by Macaulay. Whether his pictures of men were true ones is another question. He has been all powerful in impressing some grand moral truths on the minds of men. On the other

hand, his views about slavery were revolting. In his eyes might was right. His mind seemed to me a very narrow one, even if all branches of science which he despised are excluded. It is astonishing to me that Kingsley should have spoken of him as a man well fitted to advance science. He laughed to scorn the idea that a mathematician such as Whewell could judge, as I maintained he could, of Goethe's views on light. He thought it a most ridiculous thing that any one should care whether a glacier moved a little quicker or a little slower, or moved at all. As far as I could judge, I never met a man with a mind so ill-adapted for scientific research."

IRISH AGITATION IN AMERICA.

If it is true that the Irish agitation is a great injury to America, the question naturally presents itself, What is to be done about it? The increase in boldness upon the part of the Irish, to which allusion has been made, is well adapted to produce an Anti-Irish or so-called know-nothing feeling, signs of which have already appeared. But a know-nothing policy would only aggravate the disease which it purports to cure, and to resort to it would be like trying to prevent a quarrel by taking sides in it. What we need is not to dominate the Irish but to absorb them. Their best interests and ours are, indeed, the same in this matter. We want them to become rich, and send their sons to our colleges, to share our prosperity and our sentiments. We do not want to feel that they are among us and yet not really a part of us. But if know-nothingism is out of place, the question returns, What is to be done about it? And the answer is nothing is to be done about it, for it is not actions we want but opinions. We need to have it generally understood that no man can be both an Irishman and an American; that he must be wholly the one or all the other. We need to have this truth so held by all people who think seriously that the rest of the community will be constrained to accept their views, and that a public opinion will be formed which no one, for the sake of votes, will dare to trifle with, and which no one can afford to disregard. If this idea, which really lies at the root of our naturalization laws, were firmly held by our people as one of the cardinal doctrines of their political faith, the pressure which it would exert would be irresistible. We should then have no cause for anxiety about the effect of these laws, for with our versatility and our resources we could easily absorb any European population which has ever come to our shores or which is ever likely to come here.—*The Forum*.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY.

SOCIAL inequality, since it arises from unalterable nature and inevitable chance, is irritating only when it is not recognized. The American plutocrat may be forced to travel for a week in the company of a hodman, because American theories discountenance first and third class carriages, but catch him speaking to him! Whereas an English Duke, if by chance thrown into the companionship of an honest countryman, would be on the best of terms with him before an hour was over, and the good understanding between the two would be made all the easier should the latter have on his distinguishing smock-frock. The genuine Tory is the most accessible of persons, the genuine Radical the least so. The one takes things as they are and must be, the other views them as they are not and cannot be, and, kicking against imaginary evils, often pays the penalty of finding himself firmly saddled with the realities. "One can live in a house without being an architect," and it is not at all necessary that the common people should understand the English constitution in order to feel that their lives are the sweeter and nobler because they are members of its living organism. Not a ploughboy or a milkmaid but would feel, without in the least knowing why, that a light had passed from their lives with the disappearance of social inequalities and the consequent loss of their dignity as integral parts of a somewhat that was greater than themselves. . . . Democracy is only a continually shifting aristocracy of money, impudence, animal energy, and cunning, in which the best grub gets the best of the carrion; and the level to which it tends to bring all things is not a mountain table-land, as its promoters would have their victims think, but the unwholesome platitude of the fen and the morass, of which black envy would enjoy the malaria so long as all others shared in it. Whatever may be the pretences set forth by the leading advocates of such a state of things among us, it is manifest enough that black envy is the principal motive with many of them, who hate the beauty of the ordered life, to be ruling stars of which they cannot attain, just as certain others are said to "hate the happy light from which they fell." They hate hereditary honours, chiefly because they produce hereditary honour, and create a standard of truth and courage for which even the basest are the better in so far as they are ashamed by it. Do the United States, some may ask, justify this condemnation? They are but a poor approach to the idea of democracy which seems now about to be realised among us; but they have already gone a long way towards extinguishing that last glory of, and now best substitute for, a generally extinct religion—a sense of honour among the people. "Why, what a dern'd fool you must be!" exclaimed a New York shopkeeper to a friend of mine, who had received a dollar too much in changing a note, and returned it. If there is a shopkeeper in England who would think such a thing, there is certainly not one who would dare to say it. Nor, in losing sight of the sense of "infinite personal value," which is the source of honour and the growth of a long enduring recognition of inevitable inequalities, have the Americans preserved delight. Dr. Johnson's saying finds a remarkable comment in the observation of a recent American traveller:—"In the United States there is everywhere comfort, but no joy."—*Fortnightly*.

* French-Canadian for toboggan.