

A SKETCH OF LOWER CANADA.



MOUTH OF RIVER ST. CHARLES

SOME two hundred years ago an expedition from France sailed up the St. Lawrence, in search of what they might discover in the way of trade, and to acquire territory for their country. Sieur de Monts was the nominal commander, but his able lieutenant, Champlain, was the real leader of the party, and now began a career of discovery which has placed his name prominently in our Northern history, and christened the great lake which forms a broad boundary between the northern part of New-York State and the State of Vermont.

After stopping for a short time to establish the now ancient trading-post of Tadousac, one small vessel of the expedition proceeded on the voyage farther up the river, past the Islands of La Coudre, Crane Island, the Modams, and the great Island of Orleans, when they came in sight of the bluff on which they were to found a city, an enthusiast naming it at once, by his exclamation, "Quel bec!"—"What a beak or bluff!" That winter Champlain and his party passed in the mouth of the little river St. Charles, which enters the St. Lawrence close to and just below Quebec, its wild and beautifully-wooded shores presenting, no doubt, a decided contrast to the busy ship-yards and lumber-loaded docks of to-day. When the spring set in, this able commander decided that the first thing to be done was to build a fort or castle on the highest point of the promontory, seeing at



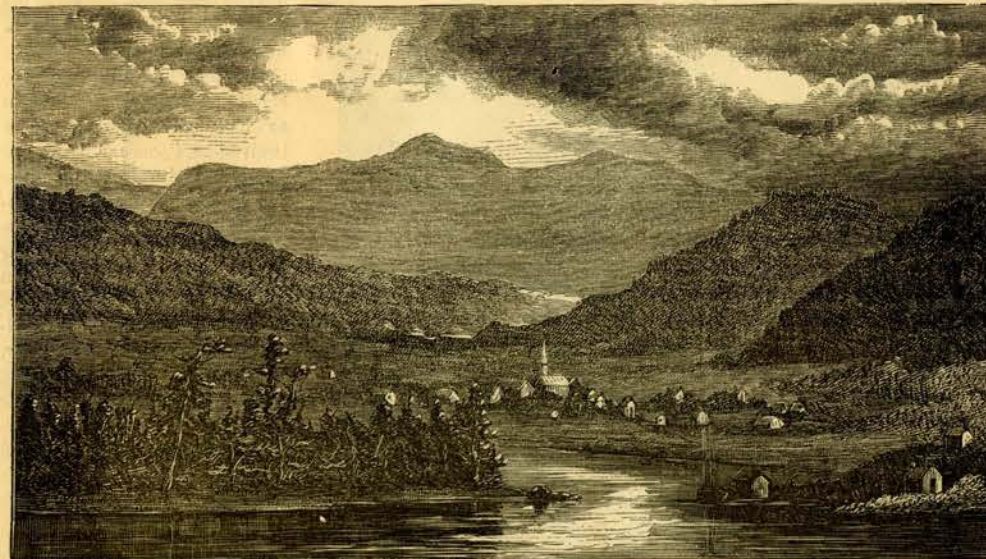
BREAKFAST ON THE SCHOONER.

once that it would be a key to the great river as yet unexplored, and supposed to lead to the country they called "Saguenay"—a country thought to contain stores of gold, not second to those then recently collected by the Spaniards in Mexico and to the southward.

Succeeding years brought fresh importations of the French, generally at first of the *bourgeois*, or middle class, and later the *pay-sans* from Normandy and round about, who distributed themselves along the shores of the river and gulf on both sides, and in New

Brunswick, on the Bay of Chaleur. It was among a portion of these simple people that he whom *they* called Monsieur de New York, and his companion Monsieur de Quebec, made a sojourn for a few summer days in the year 1869, partly to learn their little ways, and partly to sketch them, their customs and manners, and the country where they dwell, with a purpose of constructing certain pictures at a future day. The first objective point being *Baie St. Paul*, sixty miles down the river, it was discovered that the means of conveyance were by the mail-wagons, carrying one passenger at a trip, and by schooners trading between the ports of Quebec and Baie St. Paul—if courtesy be not strained in calling Baie St. Paul a port. A few minutes' conversation with the wharfinger at the Palais dock settled the conveyance of the tourists, and for the moderate sum of twenty-five cents each they engaged a passage on the schooner *Marie Sophie*, Captain Seymour. She was to sail next evening, which was Tuesday, at seven; and, with the idea that sixty miles was an affair of one tide, the would-be *voyageurs* returned inside the walls of the oldest city on this northern end of the continent to make preparations for the voyage. Strange to say, although so near Quebec, no one seemed to know anything about the place of destination except some of the *habitans*, or native farmers, whose information was not of

a dead calm, until threatening dark clouds and fading daylight so alarmed the brave captain and his trusty mate—the only taciturn *habitant* in the country—that they cast anchor at once, much to the disgust of her tourist passengers, who bewailed the unpromising commencement of the voyage, which doomed them to pass an uncomfortable night in easy shooting-distance of comfortable beds on shore. Soon the threatening rain came down, and the male portion of the passengers and the crew were obliged to crouch under the sails for protection, as the little hole of a cabin was quite filled up with women. The water in a very little while found its way through the sail, and, trickling down, wetted necks and backs in a most uncomfortable way. Something had to be done, and Yankee enterprise lifted the hatch, and found in the hold a dry, if somewhat stifling, refuge. This idea being new, Monsieur le Captain, in genuine worship of old fogysm, was disposed to resent the



BAIE ST. PAUL.

quite enough drink for him all the rest of the cruise, he avowing that only a copper-lined stomach could hold such stuff.

When the rain held up a little, Toma, an obliging member of the crew, brought a lighted candle, that the company might see to pick out soft barrels, planks, or bags of salt, to sleep on—an attention welcome, truly, had it not the effect of introducing into the refuge the remainder of the men on board, who managed to keep up a perpetual buzzing, after the manner of their kind, for nearly the whole night, and also added to the closeness of the hold. At the proper time, as usual, the morning dawned, and all turned out for a consecutive wash in the deck-bucket, and to prepare breakfast over a most primitive arrangement of fire built in a large iron pot, partially filled with earth, to prevent it from burning the deck. The *habitans*, expecting delay, probably from former experience, were provided with the necessaries for making bread-scouse

Seven o'clock on Tuesday came, and punctual to the minute was the embarkation easily effected by swinging from the wharf on the shrouds of the schooner down to her deck, where some twenty passengers, all *habitans*, except one, a specimen of the ubiquitous Yankee photographer, were already assembled. The *personnel* of the party was less striking, because more modernized, than those yet to be seen, and therefore let it suffice to say that they possessed all the vivacity of their fatherland, and were quite equal to any native-born French in ability to make the most of a topic of conversation, as they made the most of the topic then under discussion—whether the *Marie Sophie* would reach her destination on the following day or not. With the rise of tide the schooner hauled into the stream, and drifted in

innovation, but at last entreaties prevailed, and he retired again to his cubby-hole in the after part of the craft. When at last all had become quiet, despairing sighs were heard through the darkness of the place, which were finally ascertained to proceed from the photographer, as a mild suggestion for a "drink of something" to revive his drooping spirits. He was felt out after a lengthened search, and the flask of strong rye mentioned in the list of outfittings was held to his lips; there came a gurgling sound, followed by a groan from the depths, for the liquor had entered into his inner man with such penetrating effect that a



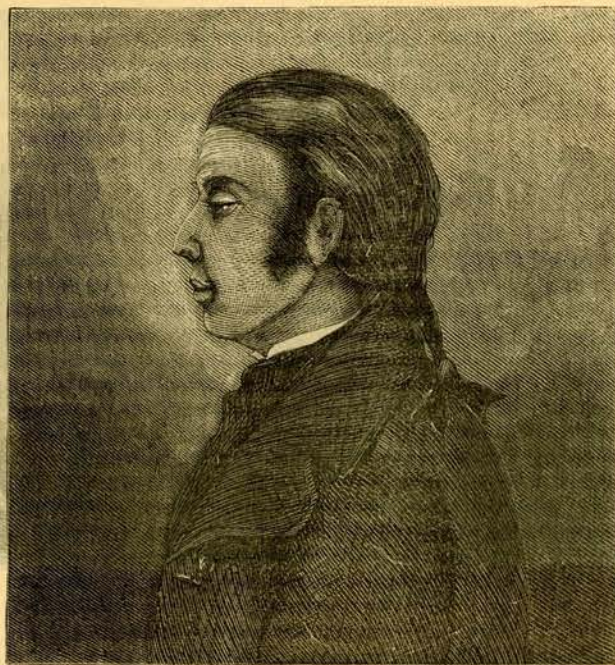
CHURCH SCENE, BAIE ST. PAUL.

and tea, which they, in their frugality, consider a most luxurious breakfast, the boiling water being obtained from an old iron teakettle suspended over the fire on a crow-bar propped up at one end on the windlass, and at the other by a convenient chunk of firewood. Here the tin pot so luckily provided became invaluable, and the production of excellent tea was the work of a few minutes only—which tea helped the cold beef and dry bread down wonderfully.

With the sunrise the wind came and blew a full-sail breeze dead ahead, and, by dint of numerous tacks, the Marie Sophie was put well on her way for some hours, until the dock at St. Jean d'Isle was nearly abreast; when, for fear of the white caps in the river below, or for compassion on the sea-sick photographer (who had been declaring himself a regular sea-dog before starting), the brave Captain Seymour suddenly

changed his course, and, heading in boldly, beached his schooner on the sand, close alongside of another, where a group of genuine old peasants were seated on a hen-coop alongside the foremast. They looked beautifully primitive, almost primeval, each capped with the national *bonnet rouge*, and placidly puffing his short French clay-pipe, in the sweet companionship of his boyhood's friends. Here was a chance for dinner; and, with an assurance that the schooner would sail at the next tide, she was abandoned for the present, and an exploring expedition organized up the road to the village of old, Norman-fashioned houses, dazzling with whitewash, roofs and all; and windmills waving their long gray arms in the sunlight. The parish church, as in all Lower-Canadian villages, occupies the most commanding site, that it may be ever present to the faithful from every side; opposite is the house of the *curé* and the presbytery, near which was found a woman, who agreed to sell the strangers something to eat.

English was an unknown tongue to her, and *habitant* French, half-Indian as it is, quite so to them, causing little, droll misunderstandings in regard to the cooking of eggs, which made much amusement, and helped to pass the time, until at length the repast was arranged to satisfaction, and a supply laid in for emergencies. A walk up the road and along the beach proved that the neat and picturesque appearance of the houses was not confined to the heart of the village—some were even more picturesque. They often stood on the end of a narrow strip of land running far back from the road, for it is a time-honored custom with the fathers to divide their lands equally among their sons, giving each a strip the whole depth of the paternal domain. As *habitant* children are usually numerous, and seldom have enterprise enough to leave home in search of fortune, the largest original farms in the old parishes



THE LAST WEARER OF THE CUE.

soon dwindle in the process. Returning along the beach, it was found to be very beautiful, generally formed of flat rock, with stratifications running off-shore, variegated and shining in the bright sun, opalescent sometimes, and rich-colored in the shadows. Here was a little girl of seven or eight years doing the family washing in a pool of water left in a hollow of the rock by the receding tide—taking charge of a little sister, too! but so timid that, when M. de New York began to make a drawing of her as she worked, she gathered her clothes in one arm, and, with baby in the other, fled precipitately up-shore—distrusting all protestations that no harm was intended. The people are really very innocent here, and it has even been stated, on very good authority, that some of them are so far behind the times that they still speak of the good Louis XIV. as their sovereign lord and king. However that may be, some of them certainly know better, as there is resident among them one woman who has actually been to France, and who has in her house a curious Yankee instrument—a sort of hand sewing-machine turned by a crank—said to have been taken from a Boston ship which was wrecked in the river a year or two since.

When the tide rose, a second disappointment came, for brave Captain Seymour remembered the dangers of the darkness and the river below Cape Tomma, where there is no safe anchorage for more than ten miles along the rocky coast, and the opposite low, broken shores of Madam Island, and the cranes, terrible to him as the Scylla and Charybdis to the ancients. Another night on salt-bags, another day of calms and drift, and the Marie Sophie came to anchor, for the last time that voyage, in sight of Baie St. Paul, to wait for the flood next morning, that she might be poled up the narrow channel with the rising tide. It was seven o'clock when the debarkation took place, and the

ironical ceremony of drinking the health of the Marie Sophie was gone through with—hunger almost blinding the eyes of the ship's company (or such of them as had only contemplated a twelve-hours' journey instead of a sixty-hours' cruise) to the beauties of one of the most picturesque bays they had ever beheld. A mountain rises on either side, the lofty range of St. Urbain fills in the distance at the head of the valley in which lies the village, its parish church, as ever, the central object, springing high above the largest buildings. Nearer, a charming woodland of balsam firs gives bold relief to the sand-spit on which runs the road along and up the "Du Galf," on Whirlpool River, ending in salmon-haunted pools, until it reaches the the church-square; to-day thronged with calashes and two-wheeled vehicles of every description, even to hay-carts, made available for church-going by the use of household chairs for the women to sit

on. It was the last of a three-days' festival of prayer; and, as piety is a distinguishing trait of these people, many of the worshippers had come miles to attend. All troubles were now at an end, for, unexpectedly, there came forward Monsieur Bois, a former Quebec merchant, and the present host of the principal boarding-house of the place. He promised to have breakfast very quickly, and could tell the gentlemen every thing they wanted to know. He was here, he said, only for the entertainment of a few chance travellers in summer-time, and as many, perhaps, caribou-hunters in the winter. It rained after breakfast, and, in answer to many questions, M. Bois told much of the people and the customs of other days. "You will find," said he, "the Canadians to be excellent, polite, good, lazy, money-loving people; very pious Catholics, and obedient in all things to their priests. To-day, Friday, as I told you, is the last of a festival of prayer held here by the priests of our own and the neighboring parishes of St. Joseph, St. Urbain, Isle la Coudre, Les Eboulements, and one or two more; and, although it is not a matter of obligation, there is a churchful of people at mass—say five hundred, out of a population of three thousand souls; those only being expected to attend who can leave their work without serious inconvenience." As to costume, M. Bois said that he remembered perfectly well the knee-breeches, or, as they say, "petit pantalon à la grenade," swallow-tailed coats, and big beaver-hats, which were the fashion at the end of the last century, and in proof obtained from the clothes-press of an old woman near by a complete *bourgeois* suit of Louis XV.'s time. The peasant-dress he did not recollect, but Madame Marie Seymour (a common name in the place, the reader will perceive), an old woman of eighty years at least, was found to have preserved her wedding-dress of sixty years ago. She was "proud to show it to

monsieur." It consisted of a short white skirt, having the blue-and-white striped-silk pockets on the outside, a kind of sack of white linen, with full puffed and embroidered sleeves. It was belted around the waist, and a dainty, salmon-colored silk handkerchief covered the shoulders, falling in a point behind and in front. The hair was rolled up over a cushion on top of the head, and covered with a high-backed Norman cap, starched stiffly, the ends of the hair being suffered to hang down the back in two braids, which were tied with a blue ribbon, like one which went round the cap, and was made in a bow behind. The stockings were white and ornamented with needle-work, and slippers of kid, with pointed heels of the style of to-day, but not so high, and covered with the same green kid as the back part of the slipper, the fronts being of pink kid, ornamented with crimson silk, set in fancifully down to the very points of the

in common use formerly, she said, in the best houses, but was now seldom seen except in hunting-camps and hovels. This old woman also spoke of long blue coats, which came nearly down to the heels, and were worn over the brass-buttoned jackets of the time, on great occasions, with a large white collar turned over outside. Both men and women then wore, as they still do, the *habitant* boot of reindeer-skin, having legs of some soft leather, with this difference, that the legs were then very short, and were tied around the ankles with a thong. The reiteration of these particulars, at the top of her voice, was accompanied with such violent wavings of the arms and hands, and indeed of the body, as to be quite alarming; and it proved the work of at least half an hour to get politely away from her cabin, and some time longer to get beyond the reach of her voice, as she kept up her oft-told story until satisfied that mon-

in the extreme; for many are still marked with rich fire-stains, and glow with comfortable color. The chimneys are still built so very large and strong that the owners never attempt to pull them down when they take away the house for a change of location, as they frequently do, but leave them standing erect on the spot until the winter-frosts so crack the plaster as to give an opening for the crow-bar and wedge. In some parts of the country these lone chimneys are as numerous as the way-side crosses, which abound here, as in all Catholic countries, but are usually very insignificant affairs, made of solid logs roughly hewn and painted black, sometimes with little shrines set in a hole about ten inches square, containing a wax or plaster figure of the Virgin and Child, or incidents of the Crucifixion. These crosses are usually erected by private hands, and often as an act of propitiation for sin or in memory of some



FISHING FOR SMELTS AND SARDINES AT BAIE ST. PAUL

very-pointed toes. A black string hung around the neck, to which was suspended a little silver crucifix, which in this country is very necessary to complete the costume.

A cousin of old Marie, Marie Joseph Seymour, also a very old peasant, is celebrated as the last man in that part of the country who still wears "la queue." He is a good specimen of the people in physiognomy, and bears in his face the mildness and contentment so characteristic of them. The next day M. New York was taken to visit some of the relics of the last generation, and made the acquaintance of an old couple of ultra-French politeness and gabble. The wife produced a chestful of short jackets and winter capote-coats, such as are worn everywhere in the Canadas at present; also a leathern cap, cut in a peak at the top, and trimmed with red flannel and fur, telling that they were the styles of her youthful days. She had besides a curious iron swinging lamp, with an inner saucer to hold the oil and wick, which projects far enough to light at the point, or lip. It was

seigneur was quite out of hearing. Nearly every house in Baie St. Paul and the other very old parishes is built of logs, the exceptions being a few of stone, all so well and compactly constructed as to be very comfortable in a country where the thermometer often falls forty degrees below zero during the winter. The method of warming has been the first to advance, and to-day, in almost every house, a great black stove of cast-iron has taken precedence of the huge fireplace where big logs used to burn so brightly. Thus yearly does the progress of the age, even in priest-governed Canada, drive out the beautiful customs of other days. Sad, indeed, do these innovations of civilized ugliness seem to the artist, who looks at them only from his picturesque point of view. The messieurs were for some time unable to tell what it was, in the quaint interiors of these houses, which seemed to break the harmony of them, until they recognized the big black stoves as the destroyers of their peace of mind. A few years since, the chimney-places must have been beautiful

one loved and lost. Childish and bigoted as the *habitans* seem, there is much that is beautiful in the perfect spirit of their faith, held as implicitly and with all the confidence of a Mohammedan. The priests are really exemplary men in every way that the Church directs, and rule their flocks with love and moderation, teaching doctrines of peace and good-will. As Monsieur Bois remarked, the people never fight, and, although a stranger would think, from the loud talking always to be heard in their houses, that there was no end of quarrelling going on, such a thing is almost unknown among them. The fact that no less than four lawyers are supported by the parish seems also to indicate that they are a litigious people; but it may not be the truth, as these lawyers all belong in some way to the cumbrous machinery of government. One is a clerk of the town council, presided over by a mayor; one a receiver of school-rates; one a clerk to the *seigneur*, or agent of the crown-lands, who is a very important man in a Lower-Canada town; a fourth has charge of

the Church-rates and other business connected with the ecclesiastical establishment.

The novelty and consequent gentle excitement of a first visit to so out-of-the-way and interesting a place as Baie St. Paul having worn off a little, the *voyageurs* began to be impressed with that delightful sense of quiet and repose only to be felt in a place entirely finished, and not in a state of constant reconstruction and improvement like a Yankee town, and really to enjoy the pure and genial freshness which belongs to a Lower-Canadian summer. A perfectly-delightful sense of laziness, too, came upon them, and made one of the great delights of their

day the half-doze for half an hour after dinner, while sitting on the shaded bench of Monsieur Bois's porch, opposite the church-square, where the four roads meet as they come over the mountain from St. Joseph on one side and Les Eboulements on the other, back from St. Urbain and up from the bay. It was pleasant, very pleasant, for them to throw the fly in the whirlpool below the bridge (by-the-by, quite a specimen of engineering, and costly to the amount of four thousand dollars) for the small trout which are to be caught numerous in that river. They are plucky little fish, and amuse the angler at a time when he may not care for the grand excitement of a contest that tries his tackle and his skill to the full. There are some fine salmon in this stream, but, as are all the rivers of Lower Canada now, this also is preserved, and none but the owners are allowed to fish without a permit, duly signed and sealed. It is said that, in years far back,



RETURNING FROM THE HAY-FIELD.

the salmon resorted here in great numbers, but were fished out and driven away by constant persecutions, until the water was purchased by some gentlemen of Quebec, one of whom, after having guarded it for only a season, indulged himself in a single afternoon's sport, when he took one fish of twelve, one of fourteen, and one of forty, pounds' weight. This seems a great catch for any stream, but in the Magdalène and St.-Jean Rivers—tributaries to the Saguenay—such would be looked upon as only tolerably good sport; however, these rivers are farther down the St. Lawrence, and have been preserved for several years. Another kind of fishing, very profitable to the *habitans* and quite new to the tourists, is the sardine and smelt fishing. The capture of these little fish is effected thus: On certain mornings, when the tides serve, expeditions are organized by the young men of the village, to the number of thirty or forty, or more, who go down to

the beach before break of day, provided with carts full of barrels for holding, baskets for carrying, and nets for ensnaring—which nets need particular description. They are about thirty feet long, and four feet wide, loaded at the lower edge with lead weights to keep them down, and buoyed at the upper with corks to keep them up. At each end are poles of perhaps eight feet in length, so that they may be conveniently moored in the water by the fishermen, one at each end. Every man dresses in his oldest clothes, and worn-out reindeer boots, that he may get wet without damage. At daylight, if the tide has been properly calculated, the very shelving bottom of the bay is entirely uncovered, by the retreat of the water to the channel two miles from shore, where, carefully avoiding the numerous quicksands which make this a treacherous road, the fishermen wend their way to the water's edge, and, having unrolled their nets, very quietly walk in nearly to the depth of their necks, holding the poles upright, and standing still while the tallest of their fellows walk about in the water outside of them, thrashing and splashing to drive the fish in-shore—these efforts being further aided by the noisy rowing of boats in the channel farther out. After a little time the nets are slowly "walked in," bringing goodly quantities of beautiful, gasping, flopping, struggling little creatures up on the beach, to load the baskets and perhaps to fill the barrels of their captors.

Large fish are seldom taken, but on one particularly memorable occasion a sixty-pound striped bass somehow allowed himself to be made prisoner. Thou-



A FUNERAL PROCESSION.

sands of fat shrimps are brought in with the fish, and are left as worthless on the sands, for, curiously enough, these people know nothing of cooking or eating them. An attempt of M. de New York to convince them that even live shrimps were good to eat, was received not only with wonder and disgust, but caused the circulation of a report which annoyed the good M. Bois immensely—a report that he did not feed his boarders well.

At the turn of the tide, which rises seventeen feet in only five hours, for it runs down the other seven of the twelve, the fishing-party throw their impedimenta on the carts, and proceed before the incoming water at a jog-trot back to *terra firma*, following the tried tracks of their wheels made when going out—the result of the morning's fishing often being a three-days' supply of fish for the village, to repay them for their sport before work-hours in the morning. Nothing can be more picturesque than this sardine-fishing, with the animated figures of the men and horses relieved against the glow of the eastern sky as the sun rises; every object casting long shadows westward, the water dancing in slight ripples, and far off the distant horizon, dotted with the white sails of some of the many craft which cruise up and down the great river of the North. Although very seldom to be enjoyed in the bay itself, there is great sport to be had, at certain seasons in the river outside, fishing for narwhal, or, as the Canadians call them, "white porpoises." They are only to be killed by harpooning or shooting, and, as both methods require great skill, they nearly always result in the disappointment of the tyro, who sees the half-breeds and Canadian hunters securing prizes under his very nose, while all his attempts are in vain. Vegetation is wonderfully rapid in this northern country, and, although there can only be counted five months in their spring, summer, and autumn seasons, the *habitans* manage to raise fair crops of grain in that time. At the date of the expedition here related, it was early autumn, or the middle of August, and the grain was already ripe for harvesting, a process which again reminds us strongly of Normandy—as in that country the women work with the men reaping, and use the sickle to cut the wheat in the picturesque style of their forefathers and mothers, although the men swing the more modern innovation of the cradle. When the day comes for the cutting and gathering in, and the long and carefully-watched-for hour of ripening is at hand, the farmer's family—literally the whole family, go into the field, and, cutting only so much as can be gathered that day, work on gayly until the twilight, when, having quickly



OLD GABRIEL.

loaded the two-wheeled cart of the country, and surmounted it with a tired baby or two, the pet of the many household dogs, and the great basket, long since emptied of the frugal luncheon—probably black bread spread with unsalted butter, an egg for each, and possibly a can of pea-soup—they return home through the gloaming to sleep the happy sleep of the industrious rustic.

There are many more peculiar simple customs which obtain here, and much might our high civilization learn in Christian charity from them—from one especially in spirit, if it be not practical in very deed—it is the entertainment and support of the aged and infirm of the neighborhood, for a little time in turn, by every well-to-do family. The halt, the lame, the blind, are never at a loss for shelter and for food, handed, as it were, from one good Samaritan to another, until death relieves the community of the burden of their entertainment. They are buried at length with all the kindly offices of the mother Church—not, indeed, with the full form of a ceremonial, such as the Gallican ritual gives to the open purse of the wealthy, but decent and Christianly, as should be. Nearly always some person well off in worldly goods is found to pay for some few masses to be said for the repose of the poor soul, and thus it fares as well as many born to good luck in a worldly way. Funerals are in all countries and with all religions impressive and solemn, but here hardened indeed must be the individual who does not feel the warning, thought-engendering influence of the simple and yet formal procession and burial-service. It is early morning. The clouds hang heavily still. The church-bell tolls and tolls the accomplished

years of the dead as the body is carried on its bier from the chapel to the grave by the hard-handed pall-bearers—near neighbors and old friends of the deceased. In advance, leading the procession, an acolyte bears the silver emblem of the Crucifixion; after him incense-bearers; then the two typical candles, the acolyte bearing the vessel containing the holy water, the chorister singing the funeral chant; and, lastly, the celebrant in alb and stole. For the paupers less pomp is exhibited, and for the rich much more; but the solemnity always impresses, and leads to thoughts of a something beyond the grave.

With profitable reflections like these, and sweet communings with Nature, life passed at Baie St. Paul; and, when the Marie Sophie was again in readiness to dare the dangers of the river, the messieurs believed themselves, at least for the hour, morally and physically better men. The Marie Sophie and luck were never mated, and therefore it created no surprise that the morn-

ing of the return was terribly rainy. She lay out in the channel waiting for the tide and her passengers, who, partly by the aid of Bois's cart and partly by the aid of her boat, were at last safely got on board. To their dismay they found a cargo of wood, which filled the hold, and made a deck-load of some four feet high, except where space was left for the cooking-apparatus and for the requirements of working ship. This time twelve passengers made up her complement, and of them four were women, one young and pleasant to look upon. The tide soon rose, and, although a dead calm, the Marie Sophie drifted magnificently out of the bay, past sundry jagged rocks, in company with masses of floating sea-weeds, around which the spotted sandpipers were swimming like ducks, as they fed on certain larvæ, insects, or "other small deer," of which they seemed particularly fond.

For the first night the schooner lay at anchor in sight of the mountains of St. Urbain, and, protected by a blanket borrowed from the generous Peter Bois, the messieurs slept a moderately tranquil sleep on the wood-piled deck. The horrors of the next night, however, were only to be appreciated by sad experience. At anchor again, but this time only five miles from Quebec, under the lee of the Island of Orleans, the rain descending in torrents—in perfect sheets—the wind blowing fiercely, the river rough as the sea; it was impossible to remain on deck. In the cabin—six feet wide by eight feet long, and perhaps five in height—there were stowed sixteen persons—thirteen dirty *habitans*, men and women (one sea-sick), a one-eyed French sailor, if possible dirtier

than the rest, and the messieurs. Monsieur de New York, "dead with sleep," was rolled into a bunk already occupied by a person of the weaker sex, while M. de Quebec, with difficulty, sat upright, and tried to do the agreeable to the natives, who, always cheerful and vivacious, were telling childish fairy-stories and simple nursery-tales to make the time pass. The French sailor was particularly entertaining, and, with the proverbial politeness of his nation, invited the "gentleman to tell a story" in his turn, but, as the gentleman insisted upon doing it in English, the rule was waived in his case on condition of a song to be sung at a later hour. When nine o'clock was indicated by the ship's time, all story-telling came to an abrupt finish, and, falling on their knees, the ship's company assisted with responses the prayers said by the pretty young *habitant* girl, as she told her beads in rapid ecclesiastical French-Latin. The evening duties over, all composed themselves to sleep; and, even in the stifling atmosphere of a little hole so crowded that not one was sure of his or her own limbs, there came upon all the rest of the innocent. Not much refreshed, but somewhat less sleepy when the morning broke and the storm subsided, the messieurs appeared on deck, and watched with joy the preparations for "heaving up the anchor" and "getting under way." It still rained very fast, when at five o'clock in the morning the adventurous craft touched the wharf once more, to the relief and delight of two individuals, who had endured ten days of pleasure and annoyance strangely mingled, and ever to be remembered while they live. The storm had been terrific in the city, and every one of the hill-side streets leading up into the town from the docks was washed into channels and ruts fearful to behold. Comfortable beds awaited the tourists, and a few hours' sleep, taken in spite of the broad daylight, banished the vivid memories of trials and disappointments, and brought back, in beautiful freshness, the delights of a trip to Baje St. Paul so strongly, that only two days after found the messieurs bargaining with "Old Gabriel," of Lake St. Charles, for an expedition inland to the northward, which that rare *voyageur's* eighty years' experience well fitted him to lead.

GILBERT BURLING.

TRAILING ARBUTUS.

AMONG the floral gifts of Spring no fairer or sweeter flower blossoms into life than the darling of the forest, the *Epigaea* of the poets, the May-flower of the children, or the trailing arbutus, more widely known to fame. When not a single crimson bud on the dark-gray maples has wakened from its winter sleep, and the willows still keep their downy catkins folded under their sheathing bracts, the creeping tendrils of the trailing arbutus have wound their way unseen, and, springing into life with the first genial sun, have brought forth in full perfection the fragrant, clustering blossoms.

Botanists have named this plant *Epigaea repens*, from a characteristic it possesses of trailing on the ground, and the genus contains only this one representative. It is called the

May-flower, from the month when it attains its most luxuriant development. We believe it has no real claim to the name of trailing arbutus, as this belongs to a member of the *Ericinæa* family. It is a perennial plant, with evergreen leaves, and is found in the woods from Nova Scotia to the Carolinas. It is covered with rusty hairs; the leaves are hardy, woody, and tipped with a point. It likes a sandy soil, chooses often the cleft of a rock, and delights especially in the shade of the pines. Its flowers have an indescribable fragrance, and vary in color, now of the purest white, and now of every hue, from the delicate rose-tint of sea-shells to a bright pink.

Trailing arbutus blossoms from the first of March till late in May. Two years ago we found some clumps of delicious buds in January. The tiny, white points were as sharply cut, the interlacing way in which they are bound lovingly together was as strongly marked, and the tender green as softly shaded, as in any specimens of the plant we ever saw in the full beauty of normal development. In the early part of March we have cut it with a hatchet from the frozen ground with its clustering roots and clinging mosses. Then placing it in a warm room, and protecting it under glass from the dry atmosphere, the tiny, white buds grew into dainty blossoms of purest white. They looked like wax, and had no perfume, for their color and fragrance are only evolved when the sun has kissed their pure lips.

But it is later in the season that this forest-flower is culled in its full loveliness and warmth of rosy coloring. It is, moreover, a fastidious little creature, and will grow only in the locality it loves. You may spend days of fruitless search in pursuit of it, unless you know its favorite haunts. Who with a heart attuned to floral beauty does not, in the warm days of spring, feel a stir in the pulse, and recall a memory of happy days in the past, when it was a pleasure to go in search of this earliest of spring flowers, this token of sunny days and leafy woods, of balmy winds and smiling skies? Sometimes it was a secluded nook close by the side of a snow-drift or the gnarled roots of an ancient forest-tree which concealed the treasure; and sometimes, on a sunny bank, we caught the beauty of its laughing eye, and inhaled the fragrance of its dainty breath.

The wild-woods rang with the merry shouts of those who, bending low, had pulled wet, trailing masses, where among tufts of rough, roundish leaves were the delicious blossoms, fashioned by fairy fingers, flushed with warm pink, and breathing the spicy odors of Araby the Blest. No gardener has trained this darling of the forest, no hot-house culture has changed its simple nature, but, in beauty, grace, and fragrance, it surpasses the gorgeous inmates of the gardens. Its pure lips are made of air and dew, it glistens like a star, and its color is that of the morning dawn. Poets have immortalized it, painters have transferred its glowing beauty to canvas; but poem and picture cannot set the blood bounding in the veins as does the sight of a little clump of its starry blossoms.

How wonderful is the mystery hid within

the delicate flowers whose advent seems always like a fairy creation! By what marvellous power do they elaborate the sap from the dead earth, which is transformed into blossoms of such matchless loveliness? What is the secret of magic coloring by which the same brush paints now a flower pure as a snow-flake, now tints one with rose-pink delicate as a sea-shell, and now lays on the hue of a damask-rose? Where is the fountain from which such ineffable perfume is distilled? What is the potent charm by which these tiny blossoms hold such sway over the fancy, insuring a welcome as often as the year renews the miracle of their appearance?

These flowers are to us the prophets of the future. In their beauty, color, form, fragrance, and profusion, we catch glimpses of higher tastes, of nobler powers of appreciation, of loftier capabilities, of possibilities of future existence, which are now only dreams. In their early appearance after the death of Winter we recognize the comforting lessons of the resurrection of the body and the immortality of the soul. In their lavish luxuriance we behold the infinite power of the hand which forever bestows the graceful gift and forever renews the boundless supply.

Botanists have given to trailing arbutus no expression in the language of flowers, but it speaks words of deep import to every lover of woodland mysteries, to every heart in sympathy with Nature. There is a saintly purity about the flower, a wealth of dewy fragrance in its soft corolla, a charming modesty in the way it hides in the soft depths of protecting mosses, a sweet humility in its trailing tendrils, a *naïve* unconsciousness and unaffectedness in its graceful bearing, which breathe in voiceless words from every opening chalice.

But its most grateful language is that which unites it with the joys of early years, its sweetest perfume that which wakens the music of memory, and which, when every spring renews the miracle of its fragile life, interweaves the hallowed associations of the past with the fairest flower that opens to the northern sky.

EMMA M. CONVERSE.

SONNET.

THE WINTER WOOD-FLOWER.

THROUGH the bared forest, by its dreary ways,
So hard and rugged in the grasp of frost,
I wandered where a million leaves were tossed,
The fading trophies of dead summer days:
There, in the coldest, gloomiest nook, ablaze
With gorgeous color, like a fairy lost
In some lone wild by fairy feet uncrossed,
Bloomed a strange flower amid the woodland maze.
All round the dimness of that desolate place
It shed both light and perfume, its fair head,
Swayed by the gale, still bent in curves of grace.
Bloom on, O flower! the blessed type thou art
Of one last hope, which o'er its brethren dead
Shines on the frost-bound stillness of my heart!

PAUL H. HAYNE.