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CORNELIUS O'DOWD UPON MEN AND WOMEN AND OTHER THINGS IN GENERAL

By Charles Lever

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TO JOHN ANSTER, ESQ., LL.D.

My dear Anster,

If you knew how often I have thought of you as I was writing this book,—if you knew how there rose before my mind memories of long ago—of those glorious evenings with all those fine spirits, to think of whom is a triumph even with all its sadness,—and if you knew how I long to meet once more the few soldiers who survive of that “old guard,”—you would see how naturally I dedicate my volume to him who was the best of us. Accept it, I beg you, as a token of recollection and regard from your affectionate friend,

CORNELIUS O’DOWD.

Lago Maggiore, July 20,1864.

NOTICE.

AMIABLE AND ACCOMPLISHED READER,

As I have very little to say for myself that is not said in some of my opening pages, there is no need that I should delay you on the threshold.

You will learn, if you take the trouble, by what course of events I came to my present pursuit, converting myself into what a candid, but not complimentary, friend has called “a diverting Vagabond.”

The fact was, I gave the world every reasonable opportunity of knowing that they had a remarkable man amongst them, but, with a stupidity all their own, they wouldn’t see it; so that when the solicitor who once

gave me a brief died—I believe it was a softening of the brain—I burned my wig and retired from the profession.

Now, let people say what they may, it is by no means easy to invent a new line of life; and even if you should, there are scores of people ready to start up and seize on your discovery; and as I write these lines I am by no means sure that to-morrow will not see some other Cornelius O'Dowd inviting the public to a feast of wisdom and life-knowledge, with perhaps a larger stock than my own of "things not generally known." I will disparage no man's wares. There is, I feel assured, a market for us all. My rivals, or my imitators, whichever you like to call them, may prove superior to me; they maybe more ingenious, more various, more witty, or more profound; but take my word for it, bland Header, there is always something in the original tap, whether the liquor be Harvey sauce or L.L. whisky, and such is mine. You are, in coming to me, frequenting the old house; and if I could only descend to it, I could print you more testimonials to success than Mr Morrison's of the pills, or the other man of cod-liver oil, but I scorn to give the names, imparted as they were in secret gratitude. One only trick of the trade I will condescend to—it is to assure you that you had need to beware of counterfeits, and that no O'Dowderies are genuine except signed by me.

My heart is broke with requests for my autograph. Will a sympathising public accept the above—which, of course, will be immediately photographed.

CORNELIUS O'DOWD

MYSELF.

Bland Reader,—If you ever look into the Irish papers—and I hope you are not so exclusive regarding them as is Mr Cobden with the 'Times'—you will see that, under the title, "Landed Estates Court, County Mayo," Judge Dobbs has just sold the town and lands of Kilmuray-nabachlish, Ballaghy, and Gregnaslattery, the property of Cornelius O'Dowd, Esq. of Dowd's Folly, in the same county.

Now the above-recited lands, measuring seven hundred and fourteen acres, two roods, and eleven perches, statute measure, were mine, and I am the Cornelius O'Dowd, Esq., referred to in the same paragraph.

Though it is perfectly true that, what between mortgages, settlement claims, and bonds, neither my father nor myself owned these lands any more than we did the island of Jamaica, it was a great blow to me to be sold out; for, somehow or other, one can live a long time in Ireland on parchment—I mean on the mere documents of an estate that has long since passed away; but if you come once to an open sale and Judge Dobbs, there's an end of you, and you'll not get credit for a pair of shoes the day after.

My present reason for addressing you does not require that I should go into my family history, or mention more of myself than that I was called to the Bar in '42; that I stood an unsuccessful election for Athlone; that I served as a captain in the West Coast Rifles; that I married a young lady of great personal attractions; and completed my misfortunes by taking the chairmanship of the Vichnasehneshee silver mines, that very soon left me with nothing but copper in my own pocket, and sent me to Judge Dobbs and his Court on the Inns Quay.

Like the rest of my countrymen, I was always hoping the Government would "do something" for me. I have not missed a levee for fourteen years, and I have shown the calves of my legs to every viceroyalty since Lord Clarendon's day; but though they all joked and talked very pleasantly with me, none said, "O'Dowd, we must do something for you;" and if it was to rain commissionerships in lunacy, or prison inspectorships, I don't believe one would fall upon C. O'D. I never knew rightly how it was, but though I was always liked at the Bar mess, and made much of on circuit, I never got a brief. People were constantly saying to me, "Con, if you were to do this, that, or t'other," you'd make a hit; but it was always conditional on my being somewhere, or doing something that I never had attempted before.

It was clear, if I was the right man, I wasn't in the right place; and this was all the more provoking, because, let me do what I would, some one was sure to exclaim, "Con, my boy, don't try that; it is certainly not your line." "What a capital agent for a new assurance company you'd be!" "What a success you'd have had on the stage! You'd have played Sir Lucius better than any living actor. Why don't you go on the boards? Why not start a penny newspaper? Why not give readings?" I wonder why they didn't tell me to turn organist or a painter in oils.

"You're always telling us how much you know of the world, Mr O'Dowd," said my wife; "I wish you could turn the knowledge to some account."

This was scarcely generous, to say the least of it.

Mrs O'D. knew well that I was vain of the quality—that I regarded it as a sort of specialty. In fact, deeming, with the poet, that the proper study of mankind was man, I had devoted a larger share of my life to the inquiry than quite consisted with professional advancement; and while others pored over their Blackstone, I was "doing Baden;" and instead of term reports and Crown cases, I was diverting myself in the Oberland or on the Lago Maggiore.

"And with all your great knowledge of life," continued she, "I don't exactly see what it has done for you."

Now, Mrs O'Dowd being, as you may apprehend, a woman, I didn't waste my time in arguing with her—I

didn't crush her, as I might, by telling her that the very highest and noblest of a man's acquirements are, *ipso facto*, the least marketable; and that the boasted excellence of all classical education is in nothing so conspicuous as in the fact that Greek and Latin cannot be converted into money as readily as vulgar fractions and a bold handwriting. Being a woman, as I have observed, Mrs O'D. would have read the argument backwards, and stood out for the rule-of-three against Sophocles and "all his works." I simply replied, with that dignity which is natural to me, "I *am* proud of my knowledge of life; I do recognise in myself the analyst of that strange mixture that makes up human chemistry; but it has never occurred to me to advertise my discovery for sale, like Holloway's Pills or somebody's cod-liver oil." "Perhaps you knew nobody would buy it," cried she, and flounced out of the room, the bang of the door being one of the "epigrams in action" wives are skilled in.

Now, with respect to my knowledge of life, I have often compared myself to those connoisseurs in art who, without a picture or an engraving of their own, can roam through a gallery, taking the most intense pleasure in all it contains, gazing with ecstasy at the Raffaeles, and lingering delighted over the sunny landscapes of Claude. To me the world has, for years, imparted a sense of much enjoyment. Human nature has been my gallery, with all its variety, its breadth, its effect, its warm colouring, and its cold tints.

It has been my pride to think that I can recognise every style and every "handling," and that no man could impose a copy upon me for an original. "And can it be possible," cried I aloud, "that while picture-dealers revel in fortune—fellows whose traffic goes no higher than coloured canvass—that I, the connoisseur of humanity, the moral toxicologist—I, who read men as I read a French comedy—that I should be obliged to deny myself the generous claret my doctor thinks essential to my system, and that repose and change of scene he deems of more consequence to me than mere physic?"

I do not—I will not—I cannot, believe it. No class of persons could be less spared than pilots. Without their watchful skill the rich argosy that has entered the chops of the Channel would never anchor in the Pool. And are there no sand-banks, no sunk rocks, no hidden reefs, no insidious shoals, in humanity? Are there no treacherous lee-shores, no dangerous currents, no breakers? It is amidst these and such as these I purpose to guide my fellow-men, not pretending for a moment to the possession of any heaven-born instinct, or any inspired insight into Nature. No; I have toiled and laboured in the cause. The experience that I mean to offer for sale I have myself bought, occasionally far more dearly than I intend to dispose of it. *Haud ignarus mali*; I am willing to tell where I have been shipwrecked, and who stole my clothes. "Don't tell me of your successes," said a great physician to his colleague, "tell me of your blunders; tell me of the people you've killed." I am ready to do this, figuratively of course, for they were all ladies; and more, I will make no attempt to screen myself from the ridicule that may attach to an absurd situation, nor conceal those experiences which may subject me to laughter.

You may deem me boastful if I have to set forth my qualifications; but what can I do? It is only when I have opened my pack and displayed my wares that you may feel tempted to buy. I am driven, then, to tell you that I know everybody that is worth knowing in Europe, and some two or three in America; that I have been everywhere—eaten of everything—seen everything. There's not a railway guard from Norway to Naples doesn't grin a recognition to me; not a waiter from the Trois Frères to the Wilde Mann doesn't trail his napkin to earth as he sees me. Ministers speak up when I stroll into the Chamber, and *prima donnas* soar above the orchestra, and warble in ecstasy as I enter the pit.

I don't like—I declare to you I do not like—saying these things; it smacks of vanity. Now for my plan. I purpose to put these my gifts at your disposal The year before us will doubtless be an eventful one. What between Danes, Poles, and Italians, there must be a row somewhere. The French are very eager for war; and the Austrians, as Paddy says, "are blue-moulded for want of a beatin'." There will be grand "battle-pieces" to paint; but, better than these, portraits, groups, "tableaux de genre"—Teniers bits, too, at the porch of an ale-house, and warm little interiors, in the style of Mieris. I shall be instructive at times—very instructive; and whenever I am very nice and dull, be assured that I'm "full of information, and know my subject thoroughly."

As "your own correspondent," I am free to go wherever I please. I have left Mrs O'D. in Ireland, and I revel in an Arcadian liberty. These are all my credentials; and if with their aid I can furnish you any amusement as to the goings-on of the world and its wife, or the doings of that amiable couple in politics, books, theatres, or socialities, I seek for nothing more congenial to my taste, nor more adapted to my nature, as a bashful Irishman.

If I will not often obtrude, I will not altogether avoid, my personal experiences; for there is this to be said, that no testimony is worth much unless we know something of the temper, the tastes, and the character of the witness. We have all heard, for instance, of the gentleman who couldn't laugh at Munden's drolleries on the stage for thinking of a debt of ten pounds that the actor owed him: and this same spirit has a great deal to do—far more than we like to own—with our estimate of foreign countries. It is so hard to speak well of the climate where we had that horrible rheumatism, or laud the honesty of a people when we think of that rascally scoundrel of the Hotel d'Odessa. For these reasons I mean to come into the witness-box occasionally, and give you frankly, not merely my opinions, but the way they were come by. I don't affect to be superior to prejudices; I have as many of these as a porcupine has bristles. There's all the egotism I mean to inflict on you, unless it comes under the guise of an incident—"a circumstance which really occurred to the author"—and now, *en route*.

I wonder am I right in thinking that the present race of travelling English know less about the Continent and foreigners generally than their predecessors of, say, five-and-twenty years ago. Railroads and rapid travelling might be one cause; another is, that English is now more generally spoken by all foreigners than formerly; and it may be taken as a maxim, that nothing was ever asked or answered in broken phraseology that was worth the hearing. People with a limited knowledge of a strange language do not say what they *wish*, but what they *can*; and there is no name for the helplessness of him who is tied up in his preter-pluperfect tense. Now we English are not linguists; even our diplomatists are remarkable for their little proficiency in French. I'm not sure that we don't benefit by this in the long-run. "Reden ist silber, aber Schweigen ist gold"—"Speech is silver, but silence is gold," says the German adage; and what a deal of wisdom have I seen attributed to a man who was posed by his declensions into a listener! One of the only

countrymen of my own who has made a great career lately in public life is not a little indebted to deafness for it. He was so unlike those rash, impetuous, impatient Irish, who *would* interrupt—he listened, or seemed to listen, and he even smiled at the sarcasms that he did not hear.

Listening, if we did but know it, sits more gracefully on us than speech, when that speech involves the denial of genders, and the utter confusion of all cases and tenses.

Next to holding their tongues, there's another thing I wish you English would do abroad, which is, to dress like sane and responsible people. Men are simply absurd; but the women, with their ill-behaved hoops and short petticoats, are positively indecent; but the greatest of all their travelling offences is the proneness to form acquaintance at *tables-d'hôte*.

It is, first of all, a rank indiscretion for any but men to dine at these places. They are almost, as a rule, the resort of all that is disreputable in both sexes. You are sure to eat badly, and in the very worst of company. My warning is, however, meant for my countrywomen only: men can, or at least ought, to take care of themselves. As for myself, don't be shocked; but I do like doubtful company—that is, I am immensely interested by all that class of people which the world calls adventurers, whether the same be railroad speculators, fortune-hunters, discoverers of inexhaustible mines, or Garibaldians. Your respectable man, with a pocket-book well stored with his circular notes, and his passport in order, is as uninteresting as a "Treckshuyt" on a Dutch canal; but your "martyr to circumstance" is like a smart felucca in a strong Levanter; and you can watch his course—how he shakes out his reefs or shortens sail—how he flaunts out his bunting, or hides his colours—with an unflagging interest I have often thought what a deal of cleverness—what stores of practical ability—were lost to the world in these out-at-elbow fellows, who speak every language fluently, play every game well, sing pleasingly, dance, ride, row, and shoot, especially with the pistol, to perfection. There they are, with a mass of qualities that win success! and, what often is harder, win goodwill in life! There they are, by some unhappy twist in their natures, preferring the precarious existence of the race-course or the billiard-table; while others, with about a tithe of their talents, are high in place and power. I met one of these men to-day, and a strong specimen of the class, well dressed, well whiskered, very quiet in manner, almost subdued in tone, but with a slight restlessness in his eye that was very significant. We found ourselves at table, over our coffee, when the others had left, and fell into conversation. He declined my offered cigar with much courtesy, preferring to smoke little cigarettes of his own making; and really the manufacture was very adroit, and, in its way, a study of the maker's habits. We talked over the usual topics—the bad dinner we had just eaten, the strange-looking company, the discomfort of the hotel generally, and suchlike.

"Have we not met before?" asked he, after a pause. "If I don't mistake, we dined together aboard of Leslie's yacht, the Fawn."

I shook my head. "Only knew Sir Francis Leslie by name; never saw the Fawn."

The shot failed, but there was no recoil in his gun, and he merely bowed a half apology.

"A yacht is a mistake," added he, after another interval. "One is obliged to take, not the men one wants, but the fellows who can bear the sea. Leslie, for instance, had such a set that I left him at Messina. Strange enough, they took us for pirates there."

"For pirates!"

"Yes. There were three fishing-boats—what they call *Bilancelle*—some fifteen or sixteen miles out at sea, and when they saw us coming along with all canvass set, they hauled up their nets and ran with all speed for shore. Rather absurd, wasn't it? but, as I told Leslie about his friends, 'the blunder wasn't so great after all; there was only a vowel between Raffs and Riffs.'"

The disparagement of "questionable people" is such an old device of adventurers, that I was really surprised such a master of his art as my present friend would condescend to it. It belonged altogether to an inferior practitioner; and, indeed, he quickly saw the effect it had produced upon me, as he said, "Not that I care a straw for the fellows I associate with; my theory is, a gentleman can know any one."

Richard was himself again as he uttered this speech, lying well back in his chair, and sending a thin cloud of incense from the angle of his mouth.

"What snobs they were in Brummel's day, for instance, always asking if this or that man was fit to be known! Why, sir, it was the very fellows they tabooed were the cream of the set; 'it was the cards they threw out were the trumps.'"

The illustration came so pat that he smiled as he perceived by a twinkle of my eye that I appreciated it.

"My father," continued he, "knew Brummel well, and he told me that his grand defect was a want of personal courage—the very quality, of all others, his career required. His impertinences always broke down when brought to this test. I remember an instance he mentioned.

"Amongst the company that frequented Carlton House was a certain old Admiral P———, whom the Prince was fond of inviting, though he did not possess a single agreeable quality, or any one convivial gift, except a great power of drinking the very strongest port without its producing the slightest show of effect upon him.

"One night Brummel, evidently bent on testing the old sailor's head, seated himself next him, making it his business to pass the decanters as briskly as he could. The admiral asked nothing better; filled and drank bumpers. Not content with this legitimate test, Brummel watched his opportunity when the admiral's head was turned, and filled his glass up to the brim. Four or five times was the trick repeated, and with success; when at last the admiral, turning quickly around, caught him in the very act, with the decanter still in his hand. Fixing his eyes upon him with the fierceness of a tiger, the old man said, 'Drink it, sir—drink it!' and so terrified was Brummel by the manner and the look that he raised the glass to his lips and drained it, while all at the table were convulsed with laughter."

The Brummel school—that is, the primrose-glove adventurers—were a very different order of men from the present-day fellows, who take a turn in Circassia or China, or a campaign with Garibaldi; and who, with all their defects, are men of mettle and pluck and daring. Of these latter I found my new acquaintance to be one.

He sketched off the early part of the "expedition" graphically enough for me, showing the disorder and

indiscipline natural to a force where every nationality of Europe was represented, and not by its most favourable types.

"I had an Irish servant," said he, "whose blunders would fill a volume. His prevailing impression, perhaps not ill-founded on the whole, was, that we all had come out for pillage; and while a certain reserve withheld most of us from avowing this fact, he spoke of it openly and freely, expatiating admiringly on Captain This and Major That, who had done a fine stroke of work in such a store, or such another country-house. As for his blunders, they never ceased. I was myself the victim of an absurd one. On the march from Melazzo I got a severe strain in the chest by my horse falling and rolling over me. No bone was broken, but I was much bruised, and a considerable extravasation of blood took place under the skin. Of course I could not move, and I was provided with a sort of litter, and slung between two mules. The doctor prescribed a strong dose of laudanum, which set me to sleep, and despatched Peter back to Melazzo with an order for a certain ointment, which he was to bring without delay, as the case was imminent; this was impressed upon him, as the fellow was much given to wandering off, when sent of a message, after adventures of his own.

"Fully convinced that I was in danger, away went Peter, very sad about me, but even more distressed lest he should forget what he was sent for. He kept repeating the words over and over as he went, till they became by mere repetition something perfectly incomprehensible, so that when he reached Melazzo nobody could make head or tail of his message. Group after group gathered about and interrogated him, and at last, by means of pantomime, discovered that his master was very ill. Signs were made to inquire if bleeding was required, or if it was a case for amputation, but he still shook his head in negative. 'Is he dying?' asked one, making a gesture to indicate lying down. Peter assented. 'Oh, then it is the *unzione estrema* he wants!' 'That's it,' cried Peter, joyfully—'unzione it is.' Two priests were speedily found and despatched; and I awoke out of a sound sleep under a tree to see three lighted candles on each side of me, and two priests in full vestments standing at my feet and gabbling away in a droning sort of voice, while Peter blubbered and wrung his hands unceasingly. A jolly burst of laughter from me soon dispelled the whole illusion, and Peter had to hide himself for shame for a week after."

"What became of the fellow—was he killed in the campaign?"

"Killed! nothing of the kind; he rose to be an officer, served on Nullo's staff, and is at this very hour in Poland, and, if I mistake not, a major."

"Men of this stamp make occasionally great careers," said I, carelessly.

"No, sir," replied he, very gravely. "To do anything really brilliant, the adventurer must have been a gentleman at one time or other: the common fellow stops short at petty larcenies; the man of good blood always goes in for the mint."

"There was, then," asked I, "a good deal of what the Yankees call 'pocketing' in that campaign of Garibaldi's?"

"Less than one might suppose. Have you not occasionally seen men at a dinner-party pass this and refuse that, waiting for the haunch, or the pheasant, or the blackcock that they are certain is coming, when all of a sudden the jellies and ices make their appearance, and the curtain falls? So it was with many of us; we were all waiting for Rome, and licking our lips for the Vatican and the Cardinals' palaces, when in came the Piedmontese and finished the entertainment. If I meet you here to-morrow, I can tell you more about this;" and so saying he arose, gave me an easy nod, and strolled away.

"Who is that most agreeable gentleman who took his coffee with me?" asked I of the waiter as I entered the *salle*.

"It's the Generale Inglese, who served with Garibaldi."

"And his name?"

"Ah, *per bacco!* I never heard his name—Garibaldi calls him Giorgio, and the ladies who call here to take him out to drive now and then always say Giorgino—not that he's so very small, for all that."

My Garibaldian friend failed in his appointment with me this morning. We were to have gone together to a gallery, or a collection of ancient armour, or something of this sort, but he probably saw, as your clever adventurer *will* see, with half an eye, that I could be no use to him—that I was a wayfarer like himself on life's highroad; and prudently turned round on his side and went to sleep again.

There is no quality so distinctive in this sort of man or woman—for adventurer has its feminine—as the rapid intuition with which he seizes on all available people, and throws aside all the unprofitable ones. A money-changer detecting a light napoleon is nothing to it. What are the traits by which they guide their judgment—what the tests by which they try humanity, I do not know, but that they do read a stranger at first sight is indisputable. That he found out Cornelius O'Dowd wasn't a member of the British Cabinet, or a junior partner in Baring's, was, you may sneeringly conjecture, no remarkable evidence of acuteness. But why should he discover the fact—fact it is—that he'd never be one penny the richer by knowing me, and that intercourse with me was about as profitable as playing a match at billiards "for the table"?

Say what people will against roguery and cheating, rail as they may at the rapacity and rascality one meets with, I declare and protest, after a good deal of experience, that the world is a very poor world to him who is not the mark of some roguery! When you are too poor to be cheated, you are too insignificant to be cherished; and the man that is not worth humbugging isn't very far from bankruptcy.

It gave me a sort of shock, therefore, when I saw that my friend took this view of me, and I strolled down moodily enough to the Chamber of Deputies. Turin is a dreary city for a lounger; even a resident finds that he must serve a seven years' apprenticeship before he gets any footing in its stiff ungenial society—for of all Italians, nothing socially is less graceful than a Piedmontese. They have none of the courteous civility, none of the urbane gentleness of the peninsular Italians. They are cold, reserved, proud, and eminently awkward; not the less so, perhaps, that their habitual tongue is the very vilest jargon that ever disfigured a human mouth. Of course this is an efficient barrier against intercourse with strangers; and though French is spoken in society, it bears about the same relation to that language at Paris, as what is called pigeon-English at Hong-Kong does to the tongue in use in Belgravia.

When I reached the Palazzo Carignan, as the Chamber is called, the *séance* was nearly over, and a scene of considerable uproar prevailed. There had been a somewhat sharp altercation between General Bixio and the “Left,” and M. Mordini had repeatedly appealed to the President to make the General recall some offensive epithets he had bestowed on the “party of movement.” There were the usual cries and gesticulations, the shouts of derision, the gestures of menace; and, above all, the tinkle-tinkle of the Presidents bell, which was no more minded than the summons for a waiter in an Irish inn; and on they went in this hopeless way, till some one, I don’t know why, cried out, “That’s enough—we are satisfied;” by which it seemed that somebody had apologised, but for what, or how, or to whom, I have not the very vaguest conception.

With all their depreciation of France, the Italians are the most persistent imitators of Frenchmen, and the Chamber was exactly a copy of the French Chamber in the old Louis Philippe days—all violence, noise, sensational intensity, and excitement.

I have often heard public speakers mention the difficulty of adjusting the voice to the size of a room in which they found themselves for the first time, and the remark occurred to me as figuratively displaying one of the difficulties of Italian public men. The speakers in reality never clearly knew how far their words were to carry—whether they spoke to the Chamber or to the Country.

Is there or is there not a public opinion in Italy? Can the public speaker direct his words over the heads of his immediate surrounders to countless thousands beyond them? If he cannot, Parliament is but a debating-club, with the disadvantage of not being able to select the subjects for discussion.

The glow of patriotism is never rightly warm, nor is the metal of party truly malleable, without the strong blast of a public opinion.

The Turin Chamber has no echo in the country; and, so far as I see, the Italians are far more eager to learn what is said in the French Parliament than in their own.

I remember an old waiter at the Hibernian Hotel in Dublin, who got a prize in the lottery and retired into private life, but who never could hear a bell ring without crying out, “Coming, sir.” The Italians remind me greatly of him: they have had such a terrible time of flunkeyism, that they start at every summons, no matter what hand be on the bell-rope.

To be sure the French did bully them awfully in the last war. Never was an alliance more dearly paid for. We ourselves are not a very compliant or conciliating race, but we can remember what it cost us to submit to French insolence and pretension in the Crimea; and yet we did submit to it, not always with a good grace, but in some fashion or other.

Here comes my Garibaldino again, and with a proposal to go down to Genoa and look at the Italian fleet. I don’t suppose that either of us know much of the subject; and indeed I feel, in my ignorance, that I might be a senior Lord of the Admiralty—but that is only another reason for the inquiry. “One is nothing,” says Mr Puff, “if he ain’t critical” So Heaven help the Italian navy under the conjoint commentaries of myself and my friend! Meanwhile, and before we start, one word more of Turin.

A FRIEND OF GIOBERTS: BEING A REMINISCENCE OF SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO.

Here I am at the “Feder” in Turin—as dirty a hotel, be it said passingly, as you’ll find out of Ireland, and seventeen long years it is since I saw it first. Italy has changed a good deal in the meanwhile—changed rulers, landmarks, systems, and ideas; not so my old acquaintance, the Feder! There’s the dirty waiter flourishing his dirtier napkin; and there’s the long low-ceilinged *table-d’hôte* room, stuffy and smoky, and suffocating as ever; and there are the little grinning coteries of threes and fours round small tables soaking their rolls in chocolate, and puffing their “Cavours,” with faces as innocent of soap as they were before the war of the liberation. After all, perhaps, I’d have no objection if some friend would cry out, “Why, Con, my boy, you don’t look a day older than when I saw you here in ‘46, I think! I protest you have not changed in the least. What *elixir vitæ* have you swallowed, old fellow? Not a wrinkle, nor a grey hair,” and so on. And yet seventeen years taken out of the working part of a man’s life—that period that corresponds with the interval between after breakfast, we’ll say, and an hour before dinner—makes a great gap in existence; for I did very little as a boy, being not an early riser, perhaps, and now, in the evening of my days, I have got a theory that a man ought to dine early and never work after it. Though I’m half ashamed, on so short an acquaintance with my reader, to mention a personal incident, I can scarcely avoid—indeed I cannot avoid—relating a circumstance connected with my first visit to the “Hotel Feder.”

I was newly married when I came abroad for a short wedding-tour. The world at that time required new-married people to lay in a small stock of Continental notions, to assist their connubiality and enable them to wear the yoke with the graceful ease of foreigners; and so Mrs O’D. and I started with one heart, one passport, and—what’s not so pleasant—one hundred pounds, to comply with this ordinance. Of course, once over the border—once in France—it was enough. So we took up our abode in a very unpretending little hotel of Boulogne-sur-Mer called “La Cour de Madrid,” where we boarded for the moderate sum of eleven francs fifty centimes per diem—the odd fifty being saved by my wife not taking the post-prandial cup of coffee and rum.

There was not much to see at Boulogne, and we soon saw it. For a week or so Mrs O’D. used to go out muffled like one of the Sultan’s five hundred wives, protesting that she’d surely be recognised; but she grew out of the delusion at last, and discovered that our residence at the Cour de Madrid as effectually screened us from all remark or all inquiry as if we had taken up our abode in the Catacombs.

Now when one has got a large stock of any commodity on hand—I don’t care what it is—there’s nothing so provoking as not to find a market. Mrs O’D.‘s investment was bashfulness. She was determined to be the

most timid, startled, modest, and blushing creature that ever wore orange-flowers; and yet there was not a man, woman, or child in the whole town that cared to know whether the act for which she left England was a matrimony or a murder.

"Don't you hate this place, Cornelius?"—she never called me Con in the honeymoon. "Isn't it the dullest, dreariest hole you have ever been in?"

"Not with you."

"Then don't yawn when you say so. I abhor it. It's dirty, it's vulgar, it's dear."

"No, no. It ain't dear, my love; don't say, dear."

"Billiards perhaps, and filthy cigars, and that greenish bitter—anisette, I think they call it—are cheap enough, perhaps; but these are all luxuries I can't share in."

Here was the cloud no bigger than a man's hand that presaged the first connubial hurricane. A married friend—one of much experience and long-suffering—had warned me of this, saying, "Don't fancy you'll escape, old fellow; but do the way the Ministry do about Turkey—put the evil day off; diplomatise, promise, cajole, threaten a bit if needs be, but postpone;" and, strong with these precepts, I negotiated, as the phrase is, and, with a dash of reckless liberality that I tremble at now as I record it, I said, "You've only to say where —nothing but where to, and I'll take you—up the Rhine, down the Danube, Egypt, the Cataracts———"

"I don't want to go so far," said she, dryly. "Italy will do."

This was a stunner. I hoped the impossible would have stopped her, but she caught at the practicable, and foiled me.

"There's only one objection," said I, musing.

"And what may that be? Not money, I hope."

"Heaven forbid—no. It's the language. We get on here tolerably well, for the waiter speaks broken English; but in Italy, dearest, English is unknown."

"Let us learn Italian, then. My aunt Groves said I had a remarkable talent for languages."

I groaned inwardly at this, for the same aunt Groves had vouched for a sum of seventeen hundred and odd pounds as her niece's fortune, but which was so beautifully "tied up," as they called it, that neither Chancellor nor Master were ever equal to the task of untying it.

"Of course, dearest, let us learn Italian;" and I thought how I'd crush a junior counsel some day with a smashing bit of Dante.

We started that same night—travelled on day after day—crossed Mont Cenis in a snow-storm, and reached the Feder as wayworn and wretched-looking a pair as ever travelled on an errand of bliss and beatitude.

"In for a penny" is very Irish philosophy, but I can't help that; so I wrote to my brother Peter to sell out another hundred for me out of the "Threes," saying "dear Paulina's health required a little change to a milder climate" (it was snowing when I wrote, and the thermometer over the chimneypiece at 9° Reaumur, with windows that wouldn't shut, and a marble floor without carpet)—"that the balmy air of Italy" (my teeth chattered as I set it down) "would soon restore her; and indeed already she seemed to feel the change." That she did, for she was crouching over a pan of charcoal ashes, with a railroad wrapper over her shoulders.

It's no use going over what is in every one's experience on first coming south of the Alps—the daily, hourly difficulty of not believing that you have taken a wrong road and got into Siberia; and strangest of all it is to see how little the natives think of it. I declare I often thought soap must be a great refrigerant, and I wish some chemist would inquire into the matter.

"Are we ever to begin this blessed language?" said Mrs O'D. to me, after four days of close arrest—snow still falling and the thermometer going daily down, down, lower and lower. Now I had made inquiries the day before from the landlord, and learned that he knew of a most competent person, not exactly a regular teacher who would insist upon our going to work in school fashion, but a man of sense and a gentleman—indeed, a person of rank and title, with whom the world had gone somewhat badly, and who was at that very moment suffering for his political opinions, far in advance, as they were, of those of his age.

"He's a friend of Gioberti," whispered the landlord in my ear, while his features became animated with the most intense significance. Now, I had never so much as heard of Gioberti, but I felt it would be a deep disgrace to confess it, and so I only exclaimed, with an air of half-incredulity, "Indeed!"

"As true as I'm here," replied he. "He usually drops in about noon to read the 'Opinione,' and, if you permit, I'll send him up to you. His name is Count Annibale Castrocaro."

I hastened forthwith to Mrs O'D., to apprise her of the honour that awaited us; repeating, a little *in extenso*, all that the host had said, and finishing with the stunning announcement, "and a friend of Gio-berti." Mrs O'Dowd never flinched under the shock, and, too proud to own her ignorance, she pertly remarked, "I don't think the more of him for that."

I felt that she had beat me, and I sat down abashed and humiliated. Meanwhile Mrs O'D. retired to make some change of dress; but, reappearing after a while in her smartest morning toilette, and a very coquettish little cap, with cherry-coloured ribbons, I saw what the word Count had done at once.

Just as the clock struck twelve, the waiter flung wide the double doors of our room, and announced, as pompously as though for royalty, "II Signor Conte di Castrocaro," and there entered a tall man slightly stooping in the shoulders, with a profusion of the very blackest hair on his neck and shoulders, his age anything from thirty-five to forty-eight, and his dress a shabby blue surtout, buttoned to the throat and reaching below the knees. He bowed and slid, and bowed again, till he came opposite where my wife sat, and then, with rather a dramatic sort of grace, he lifted her hand to his lips and kissed it. She reddened a little, but I saw she wasn't displeased with the air of homage that accompanied the ceremony, and she begged him to be seated.

I own I was disappointed with the Count, his hair was so greasy, and his hands so dirty, and his general get-up so uncared for; but Mrs O'D. talked away with him very pleasantly, and he replied in his own broken English, making little grimaces and smiles and gestures, and some very tender glances, do duty where his

parts of speech failed him. In fact, I watched him as a sort of psychological phenomenon, and I arrived at the conclusion that this friend of Gioberti's was a very clever artist.

All was speedily settled for the lessons—hour, terms, and mode of instruction. It was to be entirely conversational, with a little theme-writing, no getting by heart, no irregular verbs, no declensions, no genders. I did beg hard for a little grammar, but he wouldn't hear of it. It was against his "system," and so I gave in.

We began the next day, but the Count ignored me altogether, directing almost all his attentions to Mrs O'D.; and as I had already some small knowledge of the elementary part of the language, I was just as well pleased that she should come up, as it were, to my level. From this cause I often walked off before the lesson was over, and sometimes, indeed, I skulked it altogether, finding the system, as well as Gioberti's friend, to be an unconscionable bore. Mrs O'D., on the contrary, displayed an industry I never believed her to possess, and would pass whole evenings over her exercises, which often covered several sheets of letter-paper.

We had now been about five weeks in Turin, when my brother wrote to request I would come back as speedily as I could, that a case in which I held a brief was high in the cause-list, and would be tried very early in the session. I own I was not sorry at the recall. I detested the dreary life I was leading. I hated Turin and its bad feeding and bad theatres, its rough wines and its rougher inhabitants.

"Did you tell the Count we are off on Saturday?" asked I of Mrs O'D.

"Yes," said she, dryly.

"I suppose he's inconsolable," said I, with a sneer.

"He's very sorry we're going, if you mean that, Mr O'Dowd; and so am I too."

"Well, so am not I; and you may call me a Dutchman if you catch me here again."

"The Count hopes you will permit him to see you. He asked this morning whether he might call on you about four o'clock."

"Yes, I'll see him with sincere pleasure for once," I cried; "since it is to say good-bye to him."

I was in my dressing-room, packing up for the journey, when the Count was announced and shown in. "Excuse me, Count," said I, "for receiving you so informally, but I have a hasty summons to call me back to England, and no time to spare."

"I will, notwithstanding, ask you for some of that time, all precious as it is," said he in French, and with a serious gravity that I had never observed in him before.

"Well, sir," said I, stiffly; "I am at your orders."

It is now seventeen long years since that interview, and I am free to own that I have not even yet attained to sufficient calm and temper to relate what took place. I can but give the substance of our conversation. It is not over-pleasant to dwell on, but it was to this purport:—The Count had come to inform me that, without any intention or endeavour on his part, he had gained Mrs O'Dowd's affections and won her heart! Yes, much-valued reader, he made this declaration to me, sitting opposite to me at the fire, as coolly and unconcernedly as if he was apologising for having carried off my umbrella by mistake. It is true, he was most circumstantial in showing that all the ardour was on one side, and that he, throughout the whole adventure, conducted himself as became a Gran' Galantuomo, and the friend of Gioberti, whatever that might mean.

My amazement—I might almost call it my stupefaction—at the unparalleled impudence of the man, so overcame me, that I listened to him without an effort at interruption.

"I have come to you, therefore, to-day," said he, "to give up her letters."

"Her letters!" exclaimed I; "and she has written to you!"

"Twenty-three times in all," said he, calmly, as he drew a large black pocket-book from his breast, and took out a considerable roll of papers. "The earlier ones are less interesting," said he, turning them over. "It is about here, No. 14, that they begin to develop feeling. You see she commences to call me 'Caro Animale'—she meant to say Annibale, but, poor dear! she mistook. No. 15 is stronger—'Animale Mio'—the same error; and here, in No. 17, she begins, 'Diletto del mio cuore, quando non ti vedo, non ti sento, il cielo stesso, non mi sorride piu. Il mio Tiranno'—that was *you*."

I caught hold of the poker with a convulsive grasp, but quick as thought he bounded back behind the table, and drew out a pistol, and cocked it. I saw that Gioberti's friend had his wits about him, and resumed the conversation by remarking that the documents he had shown me were not in my wife's handwriting.

"Very true," said he; "these, as you will perceive by the official stamp, are sworn copies, duly attested at the Prefettura—the originals are safe."

"And with what object," asked I, gasping—"safe for what?"

"For you, lllustrissimo," said he, bowing, "when you pay me two thousand francs for them."

"I'll knock your brains out first," said I, with another clutch at the poker, but the muzzle of the pistol was now directly in front of me.

"I am moderate in my demands, signor," said he, quietly; "there are men in my position would ask you twenty thousand; but I am a galantuomo——"

"And the friend of Gioberti," added I, with a sneer.

"Precisely so," said he, bowing with much grace.

I will not weary you, dear reader, with my struggles—conflicts that almost cost me a seizure on the brain—but hasten to the result. I beat down the noble Count's demand to one-half and for a thousand francs I possessed myself of the fatal originals, written unquestionably and indisputably by my wife's hand; and then, giving the Count a final piece of advice, never to let me see more of him, I hurried off to Mrs O'Dowd.

She was out paying some bills, and only arrived a few minutes before dinner-hour.

"I want you, madam, for a moment here," said I, with something of Othello, in the last act, in my voice and demeanour.

“I suppose I can take off my bonnet and shawl first, Mr O’Dowd,” said she, snappishly.

“No, madam; you may probably find that you’ll need them both at the end of our interview.”

“What do you mean, sir?” asked she, haughtily.

“This is no time for grand airs or mock dignity, madam,” said I, with the tone of the avenging angel. “Do you know these? are these in your hand? Deny it if you can.”

“Why should I deny it? Of course they’re mine.”

“And you wrote this, and this, and this?” cried I, almost in a scream, as I shook forth one after another of the letters.

“Don’t you know I did?” said she, as hotly; “and nothing beyond a venial mistake in one of them!”

“A what, woman? a what?”

“A mere slip of the pen, sir. You know very well how I used to sit up half the night at my exercises?”

“Exercises!”

“Well, themes, if you like better; the Count made me make clean copies of them, with all his corrections, and send them to him every day—here are the rough ones;” and she opened a drawer filled with a mass of papers all scrawled over and blotted. “And now, sir, once more, what do you mean?”

I did not wait to answer her, but rushed down to the landlord. “Where does that Count Castrocaro live?” I asked.

“Nowhere in particular, I believe, sir; and for the present he has left Turin—started for Genoa by the diligence five minutes ago. He’s a Gran’ Galantuomo, sir,” added he, as I stood stupefied.

“I am aware of that,” said I, as I crept back to my room to finish my packing.

“Did you settle with the Count?” asked my wife at the door.

“Yes,” said I, with my head buried in my trunk.

“And he was perfectly satisfied?”

“Of course he was—he has every reason to be so.”

“I am glad of it,” said she, moving away—“he had a deal of trouble with those themes of mine. No one knows what they cost him.” I could have told what they cost *me*; but I never did, till the present moment.

I need not say with what an appetite I dined on that day, nor with what abject humility I behaved to my wife, nor how I skulked down in the evening to the landlord to apologise for not being able to pay the bill before I left, an unexpected demand having left me short of cash. All these, seventeen years ago as they are, have not yet lost their bitterness, nor have I yet arrived at the time when I can think with composure of this friend of Gioberti.

Admiral Dalrymple tells us, amongst his experiences as a farmer, that he gave twenty pounds for a dung-hill, “and he’d give ten more to any one who’d tell him what to do with it.” I strongly suspect this is pretty much the case with the Italians as regards their fleet. There it is—at least, there is the beginning of it; and when it shall be complete, where is it to go? what is it to protect? whom to attack?

The very last thing Italians have in their minds is a war with England. If we have not done them any great or efficient service, we have always spoken civilly of them, and bade them a God-speed. But, besides a certain goodwill that they feel for us, they entertain—as a nation with a very extended and ill-protected coast-line ought—a considerable dread of a maritime power that could close every port they possess, and lay some very important towns in ashes.

Now, it is exactly by the possession of a fleet that, in any future war between England and France, these people may be obliged to ally themselves to France. The French will want them in the Mediterranean, and they cannot refuse when called on.

Count Cavour always kept telling our Foreign Office, “A strong Italy is the best thing in the world for you. A strong Italy is the surest of all barriers against France.” There may be some truth in the assertion if Italy could spring at once—Minerva fashion—all armed and ready for combat, and stand out as a first-rate power in Europe; but to do this requires years of preparation, long years too; and it is precisely in these years of interval that France can become all-dominant in Italy—the master, and the not very merciful master, of her destinies in everything. France has the guardianship of Italy—with this addition, that she can make the minority last as long as she pleases.

Perhaps my Garibaldian companion has impregnated me with an unreasonable amount of anti-French susceptibility, for certainly he abuses our dear allies with a zeal and a gusto that does one’s heart good to listen to; and I do feel like that honest Bull, commemorated by Mathews, that “I hate prejudice—I hate the French.” So it is: these revolutionists, these levellers, these men of the people, are never weary of reviling the French Emperor for being a *parvenu*. Human inconsistency cannot go much farther than this. Not but I perfectly agree with my Garibaldian, that we have all agreed to take the most absurdly exaggerated estimate of the Emperor’s ability. Except in some attempts, and not always successful attempts, to carry out the policy and plans of the first Empire, there is really nothing that deserves the name of statesmanship in his career. Wherever he has ventured on a policy, and accompanied it by a prediction, it has been a failure. Witness the proud declaration of Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic, with its corroboration in the Treaty of Villafranca! The Emperor, in his policy, resembles one of those whist-players who never plan a game, but play trick by trick, and rather hope to win by discovering a revoke than from any honest success of their own hand. It is all the sharp practice of statecraft that he employs: nor has he many resources in cunning. The same dodge that served him in the Crimea he revived at Villafranca. It is always the same ace he has in his sleeve!

The most ardent Imperialist will not pretend to say that he knows his road out of rome or Mexico, or even Madagascar. For small intrigue, short speeches to deputations, and mock stag-hunts, he has not his superior anywhere. And now, here we are in Genoa, at the Hotel Feder, where poor O’Connell died, and there’s no fleet, not a frigate, in the port.

“Where are they?”

“At Spezia.”

“Where is Spezia?”

The landlord, to whom this question is propounded, takes out of a pigeon-hole of his desk a large map and unfolds it, saying, proudly, “There, sir, that is Spezia—a harbour that could hold Portsmouth, and Plymouth, and Brest, and Cherbourg “—I’m not sure he didn’t say Calais—“and yet have room for our Italian fleet, which, in two years’ time, will be one of the first in Europe.”

“The ships are building, I suppose?” said I.

“They are.”

“And where?”

“In America, at Toulon, and in England.”

“None in Italy?”

“Pardon me; there is a corvette on the stocks at Leghorn, and they are repairing a boiler at Genoa. Ah! Signor John Bull, take care; we have iron and coal mines, we have oak and hemp, and tallow and tar. There was a winged lion once that swept the seas before people sang ‘Rule Britannia.’ History is going to repeat itself.”

“Let me be called at eight to-morrow morning, and my coffee be ready by nine.”

“And we shall want a vetturino for Spezia,” added my Garibaldian; “let him be here by eleven.”

GARIBALDI’S WORSHIPPERS.

The road from Genoa to Spezia is one of the most beautiful in Europe. As the Apennines descend to the sea they form innumerable little bays and creeks, alongside of which the road winds—now coasting the very shore, now soaring aloft on high-perched cliffs, and looking down into deep dells, or to the waving tops of tall pine-trees. Seaward, it is a succession of yellow-stranded bays, land-locked and narrow; and on the land side are innumerable valleys, some waving with horse-chestnut and olive, and others stern and rock-bound, but varying in colour from the bluish-grey of marble to every shade of porphyry.

For several miles after we left Genoa, the road presented a succession of handsome villas, which, neglected and uncared for, and in most part untenanted, were yet so characteristically Italian in all their vast-ness—their massive style and spacious plan—as to be great ornaments of the scenery. Their gardens, too—such glorious wildernesses of rich profusion—where the fig and the oleander, the vine and the orange, tangle and intertwine—and cactuses, that would form the wonder of our conservatories, are trained into hedgerows to protect cabbages. My companion pointed out to me one of these villas on a little jutting promontory of rock, with a narrow bay on one side, almost hidden by the overhanging chestnut-trees. “That,” said he, “is the Villa Spinola. It was from there, after a supper with his friend Vecchi, that Garibaldi sailed on his expedition to Marsala. A sort of decent secrecy was maintained as to the departure of the expedition; but the cheers of those on shore, as the boats pulled off, told that the brave buccaneers carried with them the heartfelt good wishes of their countrymen.” Wandering on in his talk from the campaign of Sicily and Calabria, my companion spoke of the last wild freak of Garibaldi and the day of Aspromonte, and finally of the hero’s imprisonment at Varignano, in the Gulf of Spezia.

It appeared from his account that the poor wounded sufferer would have fared very ill, had it not been for the provident kindness and care of his friends in England, who supplied him with everything he could want and a great deal he could by no possibility make use of. Wine of every kind, for instance, was largely sent to one who was a confirmed water-drinker, and who, except when obliged by the impure state of the water, never ventured to taste wine. If now and then the zealous anxiety to be of service had its ludicrous side—and packages arrived of which all the ingenuity of the General’s followers failed to detect what the meaning might be—there was something very noble and very touching in this spontaneous sympathy of a whole people, and so Garibaldi felt it.

The personal homage of the admirers—the worshippers they might be called—was, however, an infliction that often pushed the patience of Garibaldi’s followers to its limit, and would have overcome the gentle forbearance of any other living creature than Garibaldi himself. They came in shoals. Steamboats and diligences were crammed with them, and the boatmen of Spezia plied as thriving a trade that summer as though Garibaldi were a saint, at whose shrine the devout of all Europe came to worship. In vain obstacles were multiplied and difficulties to entrance invented. In vain it was declared that only a certain number of visitors were daily admitted, and that the number was already complete. In vain the doctors announced that the General’s condition was prejudiced, and his feverish state increased, by these continual invasions. Each new arrival was sure to imagine that there was something special or peculiar in his case to make him an exception to any rule of exclusion.

“I knew Garibaldi in Monte Video. You have only to tell him it’s Tomkins; he’ll be overjoyed to see me.” “I travelled with him from Manchester to Bridgeport; he’ll remember me when he sees me; I lent him a wrapper in the train.” “I knew his son Menotti when at school.” “I was in New York when Garibaldi was a chandler, and I was always asking for his candles;” such and suchlike were the claims which would not be denied. At last the infliction became insupportable. Some nights of unusual pain and suffering required that every precaution against excitement should be taken, and measures were accordingly concerted how visitors should be totally excluded. There was this difficulty in the matter, that it might fall at this precise moment some person of real consequence might have, or some one whose presence Garibaldi would really have been well pleased to enjoy. All these considerations were, however, postponed to the patient’s safety, and an order was sent to the several hotels where strangers usually stopped to announce that Garibaldi could not be seen.

“There is a story,” said my companion, “which I have heard more than once of this period, but for whose authenticity I will certainly not vouch. *Se non vero e’ ben trovato*, as regards the circumstance. It was said that a party of English ladies had arrived at the chief hotel, having come as a deputation from some heaven-knows-what association in England, to see the General, and make their own report on his health, his appearance, and what they deemed his prospect of perfect recovery. They had come a very long journey, endured a considerable share of fatigues and certain police attentions, which are not exactly what are called amenities. They had come, besides, on an errand which might warrant a degree of insistance even were they —which they were not—of an order that patiently puts up with denial. When their demand for admission was replied to by a reference to the general order excluding all visitors, they indignantly refused to be classed in such a category. They were not idle tourists, or sensation-hunting travellers. They were a deputation! They came from the Associated Brothers and Sisters of Freedom—from the Branch Committee of the Ear of Crying Nationalities—they were not to be sent away in this light and thoughtless manner.

“The correspondence was animated. It lasted the whole day, and the last-sent epistle of the ladies bore the date of half-past eleven at night. This was a document of startling import; for, after expressing, and not always in most measured phrase, the indignant disappointment of the writers, it went on to throw out, but in a cloud-like misty sort of way, the terrible consequences that might ensue when they returned to England with the story of their rejection.

“Perhaps this was a mere chance shot; at all events, it decided the battle. The Garibaldians read it as a declaration of strict blockade; and that, from the hour of these ladies’ arrival in England, all supplies would be stopped. Now, as it happened that, in by far the greater number of cases, the articles sent out found their way to the suite of Garibaldi, not to the General himself, and that cambric shirts and choice hosiery, silk vests, and fur-lined slippers, became the ordinary wear of people to whom such luxuries were not known even by description, it was no mean menace that seemed to declare all this was to have an end.

“One used to sleep in a rich fur dressing-gown; another took a bottle of Arundel’s port at his breakfast; a third was habituating himself to that English liqueur called ‘Punch sauce,’ and so on; and they very reasonably disliked coming back to the dietary supplied by Victor Emmanuel.

“It was in this critical emergency that an inventive genius developed itself. There was amongst the suite of Garibaldi an old surgeon, Eipari, one of the most faithful and attached of all his followers, and who bore that amount of resemblance to Garibaldi which could be imparted by hair, mustache, and beard of the same yellowish-red colour, and eyes somewhat closely set. To put the doctor in bed, and make him personate the General, was the plan—a plan which, as it was meant to save his chief some annoyance, he would have acceded to were it to cost him far more than was now intended.

“To the half-darkened room, therefore, where Eipari lay dressed in his habitual red shirt, propped up by pillows, the deputation was introduced. The sight of the hero was, however, too much for them. One dropped, Madonna-wise, with hands clasped across her bosom, at the foot of his bed; another fainted as she passed the threshold; a third gained the bedside to grasp his hand, and sank down in an ecstasy of devotion to water it with her tears; while the strong-minded woman of the party took out her scissors and cut four several locks off that dear and noble head. They sobbed over him—they blubbered over him—they compared him with his photograph, and declared he was libelled—they showered cards over him to get his autograph; and when, at length, by persuasion, not unassisted by mild violence, they were induced to withdraw, they declared that, for those few moments of ecstasy, they’d have willingly made a pilgrimage to Mecca.

“It is said,” continued my informant, “that Ripari never could be induced to give another representation; and that he declared the luxuries that came from England were dear at the cost of being caressed by a deputation of sympathisers.

“But to Garibaldi himself, the sympathy and the sympathisers went on to the last; and kind wishes and winter-clothing still find their way, with occasionally very tiresome visitors, to the lone rock at Caprera.”

SOMETHING ABOUT SOLFERINO AND SHIPS.

Our host of the Feder was not wrong. There was not a word of exaggeration in what he said of Spezia. It could contain all the harbours of France and England, and have room for all the fleets of Europe besides. About seven miles in depth, and varying in width from two to three and a half, it is fissured on every side by beautiful little bays, with deep water everywhere, and not a sunk rock, or shoal, or a bar, throughout the whole extent. Even the sea-opening of the Gulf has its protection by the long coast-line of Tuscany, stretching away to the southward and eastward, so that the security is perfect, and a vessel once anchored within the headlands between Lerici and Palmaria is as safe as in dock.

The first idea of making a great arsenal and naval depot of Spezia came from the Great Emperor. It is said that he was not more than one day there, but in that time he planned the fort which bears his name, and showed how the port could be rendered all but impregnable. Cavour took up the notion, and pursued it with all his wonted energy and activity during the last three or four years of his life. He carried through the Chamber his project, and obtained a vote for upwards of two millions sterling; but his death, which occurred soon after, was a serious blow to the undertaking; and, like most of the political legacies of the great statesman, the arsenal of Spezia fell into the hands of weak executors.

The first great blunder committed was to accord the chief contract to a bubble company, who sold it, to be again resold; so that it is said something like fifteen changes of proprietary occurred before the first spadeful of earth was turned.

The inordinate jealousy Italians have of foreigners, and their fear lest they should “utilise” Italy, and carry

away all her wealth with them, has been the source of innumerable mistakes. From this, and their own ignorance of marine engineering, Spezia has already, without the slightest evidence of a commencement, swallowed up above eight millions of francs—the only palpable results being the disfigurement of a very beautiful road, and the bankruptcy of some half-dozen contractors.

There is nothing of which one hears more, than of the readiness and facility with which an Italian learns a new art or a new trade, adapts himself to the use of new tools, and acquires a dexterity in the management of new machinery.

Every newly-come English engineer was struck with this, and expressed freely his anticipations of what so gifted a people might become. After a while, however, if questioned, he would confess himself disappointed—that after the first extraordinary show of intelligence no progress was made—that they seemed marvellous in the initiative, but did nothing after. They speedily grew weary of whatever they could do or say, no matter in what fashion, and impatiently desired to try something new. The John Bull contentedness to attain perfection in some one branch, and never ask to go beyond it, was a sentiment they could not understand. Every one, in fact, would have liked to do everything, and, as a consequence, do it exceedingly ill.

Assuredly the Count Cavour was the political Marquis de Carabas of Italy. Everything you see was his! No other head seemed to contrive, no other eye to see, nor ear to hear. These railroads—as much for military movements as passenger traffic—this colossal harbour, even to the two iron-clads that lie there at anchor—were all of his designing. They are ugly-looking craft, and have a look of pontoons rather than ships of war; but they are strong, and have a low draught of water, and were intended especially for the attack of Venice, just when the Emperor pulled up short at Villafranca. It is not generally known, I believe, but I can vouch for the fact, that so terrified were the Austrians on receiving at Venice the disastrous news of Solferino, that three of the largest steamers of the Austrian Lloyd’s Company were brought up, and sunk within twelve hours after the battle. So hurriedly was the whole done that no time was given to remove the steward’s stores, and the vessels went down as they stood!

This reminds me of a little incident, for whose exact truth I can guarantee. On the day of the battle of Solferino, the Austrian Envoy at Rome dined with the Cardinal Antonelli. It was a very joyous little dinner, each in the highest spirits—satisfied with the present, and full of hope for the future. The telegram which arrived at mid-day told that the troops were in motion, and that the artillery fire had already opened. The position was a noble one—the army full of spirit, and all confident that before the sun should set the tide of victory would have turned, and the white legions of the Danube be in hot pursuit of their flying enemy. Indeed, the Envoy came to dinner fortified with a mass of letters from men high in command, all of which assumed as indisputable that the French must be beaten. Of the Italians they never spoke at all.

As the two friends sat over the dessert, they discussed what at that precise moment might be going on over the battle-field. Was the conflict still continuing? Had the French reserves been brought up? Had they, too, been thrown back, beaten and disordered? and where was the fourth corps under the Prince Napoleon? They were forty thousand strong—could they have arrived in time from the Po? All these casualties, and many others, did they talk over, but never once launching a doubt as to the issue, or ever dreaming that the day was not to reverse all the late past, and bring back the Austrians in triumph to Milan.

As they sat, the Prefect of Police was announced and introduced. He came with the list of the persons who were to be arrested and sent to prison—they were one hundred and eighteen, some of them among the first families of Rome—so soon as certain tidings of the victory arrived, and the game of reaction might be safe to begin.

“No news yet, Signor Prefetto! come back at ten,” said the Cardinal

At ten he presented himself once more. The Cardinal and his friend were taking coffee, but less joyous, it seemed, than before. At least they looked anxious for news, and started at every noise in the street that might announce new-come tidings. “We have heard nothing since you were here,” said the Cardinal. “His Excellency thinks that, at a moment of immense exigency, they may not have immediately bethought them of sending off a despatch.”

“There can be no doubt what the news will be when it comes,” said the Envoy, “and I’d say, make the arrests at once.”

“I don’t know; I’m not sure. I think I’d rather counsel a little more patience,” said the Cardinal. “What if you were to come back at, let us say, midnight.” The Prefect bowed, and withdrew.

At midnight it was the same scene, only that the actors were more agitated; the Envoy, at least, worked up to a degree of impatience that bordered on fever; for while he persisted in declaring that the result was certain, he continued to censure, in very-severe terms, the culpable carelessness of those charged with the transmission of news. “Ah!” cried he, “there it comes at last!” and a loud summons at the bell resounded through the house.

“A telegram, Eminence,” said the servant, entering with the despatch. The Envoy tore it open: there were but two words,—“*Sanglante déroute*.”

The Cardinal took the paper from the hands of the overwhelmed and panic-struck minister, and read it. He stood for a few seconds gazing on the words, not a line or lineament in his face betraying the slightest emotion; then, turning to the Envoy, he said, “Bon soir; allons dormir;” and moved away with his usual quick little step, and retired.

And all this time I have been forgetting the Italian fleet, which lies yonder beneath me. The Garibaldi, that they took from the Neapolitans; the Duca di Genova, the Maria Adelaide, and the Regina are there, all screw-propellers of fifty guns each; the Etna, a steam-corvette; and some six or seven old sailing craft, used as school ships; and, lastly, the two cuirassée gunboats, Formidabile and Terribile, and which, with a jealousy imitated from the French, no one is admitted on board of. They are provided with “rams” under the water-line, and have a strange apparatus by which about one-third of the deck towards the bow can be raised, like the lid of a snuff-box, leaving the forepart of the ship almost on a level with the water. Under what circumstances, and how, this provision is to be made available, I have not the very vaguest conception.

These vessels were never intended as sea-going ships; and the batteries are an exaggeration of the mistake in the Gloire, for even with the slightest sea the ports must be closed. Besides this defect, they roll abominably, and with a full head of steam on they cannot accomplish seven knots.

Turning from the ships to the harbour, I could not help thinking of Sydney Smith's remark on the Reform Club, "I prefer your room to your company;" for, after all, what a sorry stud it is for such a magnificent stable! It is but a beginning, you will say. True enough, and so is everything just now here; but, except the Genoese, the Italians have few real sailors. There are no deep-sea fisheries, and the small craft which creep along close to shore are not the nurseries of seamen. The world, however, has resolved, by a large vote, to be hopeful about Italy; and, of course, she will have a fleet, as she will have all the trade of the Levant, immensely productive mines, and vast regions of cotton. "What for no?" as Meg Dodds says; but I can't help thinking there are no people in Europe so much alike as the Italians and the Irish; and I ask myself, How is it that every one is so sanguine about the one, and so hopeless about the other? Why do we hear of the capacity and the intelligence of the former, and only of the latter what pertains to their ignorance and their sloth? Oh! unjust generation of men! have not my poor countrymen all the qualities you extol in these same Peninsulars, plus a few others not to be disparaged?

THE STRANGER AT THE CROCE DI MALTA.

At the Croce di Malta, where we stopped—the Odessa, we heard, was atrociously bad—we met a somewhat depressed countryman, whose familiarity with place and people was indicated by several little traits. He rebuked the waiter for the salad oil, and was speedily supplied with better; he remonstrated about the wine, and a superior "cru" was served the day following. The book of the arrivals, too, was brought to him each day as he sat down to table, and he grunted out, I remember, in no very complimentary fashion as he read our names, "Nobodies."

My Garibaldian friend had gone over to Massa, so that I found myself alone with this gentleman on the night of my arrival; for, when the company of the *table-d'hôte* withdrew, he and I were discovered, as the stage-people say, seated opposite to each other at the fire.

It blew hard without; the sea beat loudly on the shingly shore, and even sent some drifts of spray against the windows; while within doors a cheerful wood-fire blazed on the ample hearth, and the low-ceilinged room did not look a whit the worse that it suggested snugness instead of splendour. I had got my cup of coffee and my cognac on a little table beside me; and while I filled the bowl of my pipe, I bethought me how cheap and come-at-able are often the materials of our comfort, if one had but the prudence which ignores all display. My companion, apparently otherwise occupied in thought, sat gazing moodily at the fire, and to all seeming unaware of my presence.

"Will my smoking annoy you, sir?" asked I, as I was ready to begin.

"No," said he, without looking up. "I'd like to know where one could go to live nowadays if it did."

"Very true," said I; "the practice is almost universal"

"So is child-murder, so is profane swearing, so is wearing a beard, and poisoning by strychnine."

I was somewhat struck by his enumeration of modern atrocities, and I said, in a tone intended to invite converse, "You are no admirer, then, of what some are fain to call progress?"

He started, and, turning a fierce sharp glance on me, said, "I'd rather you'd touch me with that hot poker there, sir, than hurl that hateful word at my ears. If there's a thing I hate the most, it's what cant—a vile modern slang—calls 'Progress.' You're just in the spot at this moment to mark one of its high successes. Do you know Spezia?" "Not in the least; never was here before." "Well, sir, I have known it, I'll not stop to count how many years; but I knew it when that spot yonder, where you see that vile tall chimney, with its tail of murky smoke, was a beautiful little villa, all overgrown with fig and olive trees. Where you perceive that red glare—the flame of a smelting furnace—there was an orangery. I ought to know the spot well. There, where a summerhouse stood, on that rocky point, they have got a crane and a windlass. Now, turn to this other side. The road you saw to-day, crossed with four main lines, cut up, almost impassable between mud, rubbish, and fallen timber, with swampy excavations on one side and brick-fields on the other, led—ay, and not four years ago—along the margin of the sea, with a forest of chestnuts on the other side, two lines of acacias forming a shade along it, so that in the mid-day of an Italian July you might walk it in delicious shadow. In the Gulf itself the whole scene was mirrored, and not a headland, nor rock, nor cliff, that was not pictured below. It was, in a word, a little paradise; nor were the people all unworthy of their lovely birthplace. They were a quiet, civil, obliging, simple-minded set—if not inviting strangers to settle amongst them, never rude or repelling to them; equitable in dealings, and strange to all disturbance or outrage. What they are now is no more easy to say than what a rivulet is when a torrent has carried away its banks and swept its bed. Two thousand navvies, the outsweepings of jails and the galleys, have come down to the works; a horde of contractors, sub-contractors, with the several staffs of clerks, inspectors, and suchlike, have settled on the spot, ravaging its beauty, uprooting its repose, vulgarising its simple rusticity, and converting the very gem of the Mediterranean into a dreary swamp—a vast amphitheatre, where liberated felons, robbing contractors, foul miasma, centrifugal pumps, and tertian fevers, fight all day for the mastery. And for what?—for what? To fill the pockets of knavish ministers and thieving officials—to make an arsenal that will never be finished, for a fleet that will never be built." My companion, it is needless to say, was no optimist; but the strange point was, that while he was unsparing of his censure on Cavour and the "Piedmontese party," he was no apologist for the old state of things in Italy. So far from it, that he launched out freely in attack of Papal bigotry, superstition, and corruption, and freely corroborated our own Premier's assertions, by calling the Pope's the "worst government in Europe." In fact, he showed very clearly that the smaller states of Italy were well or ill

administered in the direct ratio that they admitted or rejected Papal interference,—Modena being the worst, and Tuscany the best of them.

Though he certainly knew his subject so far as details went—for he not merely knew Italy well in its several provinces, but he understood the characters and tempers of the leading Italians—yet, with all this, I could not help asking him, If he was not satisfied with the old Italy, and yet did not like the new, what he did wish for?

"I have my theory on that subject, sir," said he; "nor am I the less enamoured of it that I never yet met the man I could induce to adopt it."

"It is no worse than the fate of all discoverers, I suppose," said I; "Columbus saw land two whole days before his followers."

"Columbus was a humbug, sir, and no more discovered America than you did."

I was so afraid of a digression here that I stammered out a partial concurrence, and asked for some account of his project for Italy.

"I'd unite her to Greece, sir. These people, with the exception of a small circle around Rome, are not Latins—they are Greeks. I'd bring them back to the parent stock, who are the only people in Europe with craft and subtlety to rule them. Take my word for it, sir, they'd not cheat the 'Hellenes' as they do the French and the English; and as the only true way to reform a nation is to make vice unprofitable, I'd unite them to a race that could outrogue and outwit them on every hand. What is it, I ask you, makes of the sluggish, indolent, careless Irishman, the prudent, hard-working, prosperous fellow you see him in the States? Simply the fact, that the craft by which he outwitted John Bull no longer serves him. The Yankee is too shrewd to be jockeyed by it, and Paddy must use his hands instead of his head. The same would happen with the Italian. Give him a Greek master, and you'll see what he'll become."

"But the Greeks, after all," said I, "do not present such a splendid example of order and prosperity. They are little better than brigands."

"And don't you see why?" broke he in. "Have you ever looked into a gambling-house when the company had no 'pigeon,' and were obliged to play against each other. They have lost all decency—all the semblance of good manners and decorum. Whatever little politeness they had put on to impose upon the outsider was gone, and there they were in all the naked atrocity of their bad natures. It is thus you see the Greeks. You have dropped in upon them unfairly; you have invaded a privacy they had hoped might be respected. Give them a nation to cheat, however; let the pigeon be introduced, and you'll not see a better bred and a more courtly people in Europe."

That they had great social qualities he proceeded to show from a number of examples. They were, in fact, in the world of long ago what the French are to our own day, and there was no reason to suppose that the race had lost its old characteristics. According to my companion's theory, Force had only its brief interval of domination anywhere; the superior intelligence was sure to gain the upper hand at last; and we, in our opposition to this law, were supply retarding an inevitable tendency of nature—protracting the fulfilment of what we could not prevent.

I got him back from these speculations to speak of himself, and he told me some experiences which will, perhaps, account for the displeasure with which he regards the changed fortunes of Spezia. I shall give his narrative as nearly as I can in his own words, and in a chapter to itself.

THE STRANGE MAN'S SORROW.

"When I first knew Spezia, it was a very charming spot to pass the summer in. The English had not found it out A bottle of Harvey sauce or a copy of 'Galignani' had never been seen here; and the morning meal, which now figures in my bill as 'Dejeuner complet—two francs.' was then called 'Coffee,' and priced twopence. I used to pass my day in a small sail-boat, and in my evenings I played halfpenny whist with the judge and the commander of the forces and a retired envoy, who, out of a polite attention to me as a stranger, agreed to play such high stakes during my sojourn at the Baths.

"They were excellent people, of unblemished character, and a politeness I have rarely seen equalled. Nobody could sneeze without the whole company rising to wish him a long and prosperous life, or a male heir to his name; and as for turning the trump card without a smile and a bow all round to the party, it was a thing unheard of.

"I thought if I could only secure a spot to live in in such an Arcadia, it would be charming, but this was a great difficulty. No one had any accommodation more than he wanted for himself. The very isolation that gave the place its charm excluded all speculation, and not a house was to be had. In my voyagings, however, around the Gulf, I landed one day at a little inlet, surrounded with high lands, and too small to be called a bay, and there, to my intense astonishment, I discovered a small villa. It looked exactly like the houses one sees in a toy-shop, and where you take off the roof to peep in and see how neatly the stairs are made and the rooms divided; but there was a large garden at one side and an orangery at the other, and it all looked the neatest and prettiest little thing one ever saw off the boards of a minor theatre. I drew my boat on shore and strolled into the garden, but saw no one, not even a dog. There was a deep well with a draw-bucket, and I filled my gourd with ice-cold water; and then plucking a ripe orange that had just given me a bob in the eye, I sat down to eat it. While I was engaged, I heard a wicket open and shut, and saw an old man, very shabbily dressed, and with a mushroom straw hat, coming towards me. Before I could make excuses for my intrusion, he had welcomed me to Pertusola—'The Nook,' in English—and invited me to step in and have a glass of wine.

"I took him for the steward or fattore, and acceded, not sorry to ask some questions about the villa and its owner. He showed me over the house, explaining with much pride how a certain kitchen-range came from England, though nobody ever knew the use of it, but it was all very comfortable. The silk-worms and dried

figs and salt-fish occupied more space, and contributed more odour, perhaps, than a correct taste would have approved of. Yet there were capabilities—great capabilities; and so, before I left, I took it from the old gentleman in the rusty costume, who turned out to be the proprietor, a marquis, the 'commendatore' of I don't know what order, and various other dignities beside, all recited and set forth in the lease.

"I suppose I have something of Robinson Crusoe in my nature, for I loved the isolation of this spot immensely. It wasn't an island, but it was all but an island. Towards the land, two jutting promontories of rock denied access to anything not a goat; the sea in front; an impenetrable pine wood to the rear: and there I lived so happily, so snugly, that even now, when I want a pleasant theme to doze over beside my wood-fire of an evening, I just call up Pertusola, and ramble once again through its olive groves, or watch the sunset tints as they glow over the Carara mountains.

"I smartened the place up wonderfully, within doors and without. I got flowers, roots, and annuals, and slips of geraniums, and made the little plateau under my drawing-room window a blaze of tulips and ranunculuses, so that the Queen—she was at Spezia for the bathing—came once to see my garden, as one of the show spots of the place. Her Majesty was as gracious as only royalty knows how to be, and so were all her suite in their several ways; but there was one short, fat, pale-faced man, with enormous spectacles, who, if less polite than the rest, was ten times as inquisitive. He asked about the soil, and the drainage, the water and its quality—was it a spring—did it ever fail—and when, and how? Then as to the bay itself, was it sheltered, and from what winds? What the anchorage was like—mud—and why mud? And when I said there was always a breeze even in summer, he eagerly pushed me to explain, why? and I did explain that there was a cleft or gully between the hills, which acted as a sort of conductor to the wind; and on this he went back to verify my statement, and spent some time poking about, examining everything, and stationing himself here and there on points of rock, to experience the currents of air. 'You are right,' said he, as he got into his boat, 'quite right; there is a glorious draught here for a smelting-furnace.'

"I thought it odd praise at the time, but before six months I received notice to quit.

"Pertusola had been sold to a lead company, one of the directors having strongly recommended the site as an admirable harbour, with good water, and a perpetual draught of wind, equal to a blast-furnace."

Looking at the dress-coat in which you once captivated dinner-parties, on a costeimonger—seeing the strong-boned hunter that has carried you over post and rail, in a cab,—are sore trials; but nothing, according to my companion's description, to the desecration of your house and home by its conversion into a factory. Such an air of the "Inferno," too, pervades the smelting-house, with its lurid glow, its roar, its flash, and its furious heat, that I could readily forgive him the passionate warmth with which he described it.

"They had begun that chimney, sir," cried he, "before I got out of the house. I had to cross on a plank over a pit before my door, where they were riddling the ore. The morning I left, I covered my eyes, not to see the barbaric glee with which they destroyed all around, and I left the place for ever. I crossed over the Gulf, and I took that house you can see on the rocky point called Marola. It had no water; there was no depth to anchor in; and not a breath of air could come at it except in stillness. No more terrors of smelting-house here, thought I. Well, sir, I must be brief; the whole is too painful to dwell on. I hadn't been eight months there when a little steamer ran in one morning, and four persons in plain clothes landed from her, and pottered about the shore—I thought looking for anemones. At last they strolled up to my house, and asked permission to have a look at the Gulf from my terrace. I acceded, and in they came. They were all strangers but one, and who do you think he was? The creature with the large spectacles! My blood ran cold when I saw him.

"'You used to live yonder, if I mistake not,' said he to me, coolly.

"'Yes, and I might have been living there still,' replied I, 'if it had not been for the prying intrusion of a stranger, to whom I was weak enough to be polite.'

"He never noticed my taunt in the least, but, calmly opening the window, passed out upon the terrace. The others speedily gathered around him, and I saw that he knew the whole place as if it had been his bedroom; for not only did he describe the exact measurements between various points, but the depth of water, the character of the bottom, the currents, and the prevailing winds. He went on, besides, to show how, by running out a pier here, and a breakwater there—by filling up this, and deepening that—safe anchorage could be secured in all weathers; while the headlands could be easily fortified, and 'at a moderate cost,' I quote himself, 'of say twenty two or three millions of francs, while a fort erected on the island there would command the whole entrance.'

"'And who, in the name of all Utopia, wants to force it?' cried I; for, as they talked so openly, I thought I might interpose as frankly.

"He never seemed to resent my remark as obtrusive, but said quietly, 'Who knows? the French perhaps—perhaps your own people one of these days.'

"I'd like to have said, but I didn't, 'We could walk in and walk out here, with our iron-clads, as coolly as a man goes out in the rain with a mackintosh.'

"They remained fully an hour, talking as freely as if I was born deaf and dumb. At last they arose to leave, and the owl-faced man—he looked exactly like an owl—said, with a little grin, 'We're going to disturb you again.'

"'How so?' cried I; 'you can't smelt lead here.'

"'No, but we're going to make an arsenal. Where you stand now will be a receiving-dock, and that garden of yours a patent slip. You'll have to clear out before the New Year.'

"'Who is he? who is that with the spectacles?' asked I of one of the servants, who waited outside with cloaks and umbrellas.

"'That's the Conte di Cavour,' said the fellow, haughtily; and thus was the whole murder out at once. They turned me out, sir, in two months, and I never ventured to take a lease of a place till he died. After that event, I purchased a little spot on the island of Tino yonder, and built myself a cottage. They could neither smelt metal nor build a ship there, and I hugged myself at the thought of safety. But, would you believe it? last week—only last week—his successor, in rummaging over Cavour's papers in the Foreign Office, comes upon a

packet labelled ‘Spezia,’ and discovers a memorandum in these words, ‘The English Admiral, at dinner to-day, laughed at the idea of defending the mouth of the Gulf from the island. He said the entrance should be two-thirds closed by a breakwater, and a strong fort *à fleur d’eau* built on Tino. I have thought of it all night; he is perfectly right, and I’ll do it;’ and here, sir,” said my companion, drawing a paper from his pocket, “is a ‘sommation’ from the minister to surrender my holding on Tino, receiving a due compensation for the same, and once more betake myself, heaven knows where; for, though the great Count Cavour is dead and gone, his grand intentions are turning up every day, out of drawers and pigeonholes, and I shrewdly suspect that neither Pio Nono nor myself will live to see the last of them.”

ITALIAN LAW AND JUSTICE.

My Garibaldian friend has returned, but only to bid me good-bye and be off again. The Government, it would seem, are rather uneasy as to the movements of the “Beds,” and quietly intimated to my friend that they were sure he had something particular to do—some urgent private affairs—at Geneva; and, like the well-bred dog in the story, he does not wait for any further suggestions, but goes at once.

He revenged himself, however, all the time at breakfast, by talking very truculently before the waiters of what would happen when Garibaldi took the field again, and how miserably small Messrs Batazzi & Co. would look under the circumstances. Indeed, as he warmed with his subject, he went the length of declaring that, without a very ample apology for the events of Aspromonte, he did not believe Garibaldi would consent to take Venice, or drive the French out of Rome.

With a spirit of tantalising he prolonged this same breakfast for upwards of two hours, during which the officer of the gendarmerie came and went, and came again, very eager to see him depart, but evidently with instructions neither to molest nor interfere with him.

“Just look at that beggar,” cried the Garibaldian; “if he has come in here once during the last hour, he has come a dozen times, and all on my account! And I mean to smoke three ‘cavours’ over my anisetto before I leave. Waiter, tell the vetturino he’ll have plenty of time to throw a feed to his cattle before I start. You know,” added he, “if I was disposed to be troublesome, I’d not budge: I’d write up to Turin to the Legation and claim British protection; and I’d have these fellows on the hip, for they stupidly gave me a reason for my expulsion. They said I was conspiring. Now I could say, Prove it; and if we only went to law, it would take ten or twelve years to decide it.”

My companion now went on to show that, by a small expenditure of money and a very ordinary exercise of ingenuity, a lawsuit need never end in Italy. “First of all, you could ask the opposite party, Who was his advocate? and on his naming him, you could immediately set to work to show that this man was a creature so vile and degraded, no man with the commonest pretension to honesty would dream of employing him. The history of his father could be adduced, and any private little anecdotes of his mother would find a favourable opportunity for mention. Though a mere skirmish, if judiciously managed, this will occupy a week or two, and at the same time serve to indicate that you mean to show fight; for by this time the ‘Legale’s’ blood will be up, and he is certain to make reprisals on *your* man, so that for a month or so you and the other principal are in the position of men who, having come out to fight a duel, are first gratified with the spectacle of a row between the seconds. However, at last it is arranged that the lawyers are worthy of each other; and the next step is to demand the names of all the witnesses. This opens a campaign of unlimited duration, for, as nobody is rash enough to trust himself or his cause to real and *bonâ-fide* testimony, witnesses are usually selected amongst the most astute and ready-witted persons of your acquaintance.” “Oh,” cried I, “this is a little too strong, isn’t it?” “Let me give you an instance,” said he, good-humouredly, and not in the least disposed to be displeased with my expression of distrust. “Some time back an American gentleman took up his abode for some weeks on the Chiaja at Naples, and in the same house there lived an Italian, with whom, from frequently meeting on the stairs and corridors, a sort of hat-touching acquaintance had grown up. At length one day, as the American was passing hastily out, the Italian accosted him with a courteous bow and smile, and said, ‘When will it be your perfect convenience, signor, to repay me that little loan of two hundred ducats it was my happy privilege to have lent you last month?’

“The American, astounded as he was, had yet patience to inquire whether he had not mistaken him for another.

“The other smiled somewhat reproachfully, as he said, ‘I trust, signor, you are not disposed to ignore the obligation. You are the gentleman who lives, I believe, on the second floor left?’

“‘Very true; I do live there, and I owe you nothing. I never borrowed a carlino from you—I never spoke to you before; and if you ever take the liberty to speak to me again, I’ll knock you down.’

“The Italian smiled again, not so blandly, perhaps, but as significantly, and saying, ‘We shall see,’ bowed and retired.

“The American thought little more of the matter till, going to the Prefecture to obtain his visé for Borne, he discovered that his passport had been stopped, and a detainer put upon him for this debt. He hastened at once to his Minister, who referred him to the law-adviser of the Legation for counsel. The man of law looked grave; he neither heeded the angry denunciations of the enraged Yankee, nor his reiterated assurances that the whole was an infamous fraud. He simply said, ‘The case is difficult, but I will do my best.’ After the lapse of about a week, a message came from the Prefect to say that the stranger’s passport was at his service whenever he desired to have it.

“‘I knew it would be so!’ cried the American, as he came suddenly upon his lawyer in the street. ‘I was certain that you were only exaggerating the difficulty of a matter that must have been so simple; for, as I never owed the money, there was no reason why I should pay it.’

"'It was a case for some address, notwithstanding,' said the other, shaking his head.

"'Address! fiddle-stick! It was a plain matter of fact, and needed neither skill nor cunning. You of course showed that this fellow was a stranger to me—that we had never interchanged a word till the day he made this rascally demand?'

"'I did nothing of the kind, sir. If I had put in so contemptible a plea, you would have lost your cause. What I did was this: I asked what testimony he could adduce as to the original loan, and he gave me the name of one witness, a certain Count well known in this city, who was at breakfast with him when you called to borrow this money, and who saw the pieces counted out and placed in your hand.'

"'You denounced this fellow as a perjurer?'

"'Far from it, sir. I respect the testimony of a man of station and family, and I would not insult the feelings of the Count by daring to impugn it; but as the plaintiff had called only one witness to the loan, I produced two just as respectable, just as distinguished, who saw you repay the debt! You are now free; and remember, sir, that wherever your wanderings lead you, never cease to remember that, whatever be our demerits at Naples, at least we can say with pride, The laws are administered with equal justice to all men!'"

The entrance of the gendarme at this moment cut short the question I was about to ask, whether I was to accept this story as a fact or as a parable.

"Here he comes again. Only look at the misery in the fellow's face! and you see he has his orders evidently enough; and he dare not hurry me. I think I'll have a bath before I start."

"It is scarcely fair, after all," said I. "I suppose he wants to get back to his one o'clock dinner."

"I could no more feel for a gendarme than I could compassionate a scorpion. Take the best-natured fellow in Europe—the most generous, the most trustful, the most unsuspecting—make a brigadier of Gendarmerie of him for three months, and he'll come out scarcely a shade brighter than the veriest rascal he has handcuffed! Do you know what our friend yonder is at now?"

"No. He appears to be trying to take a stain out of one of his yellow gauntlets."

"No such thing. He is noting down your features—taking a written portrait of you, as the man who sat at breakfast with me on a certain morning of a certain month. Take my word for it, some day or other when you purchase a hat too tall in the crown, or you are seen to wear your whiskers a trifle too long or bushy, an intimation will reach you at your hotel, that the Prefect would like to talk with you; the end of which will be the question, 'Whether there is not a friend you are most anxious to meet in Switzerland, or if you have not an uncle impatient to see you at Trieste?' And yet," added he, after a pause, "the Piedmontese are models of liberality and legality in comparison with the officials in the south. In Sicily, for instance, the laws are more corruptly administered than in Turkey. I'll tell you a case, which was, however, more absurd than anything else. An English official, well known at Messina, and on the most intimate terms with the Prefect, came back from a short shooting-excursion he had made into the interior, half frantic with the insolence of the servants at a certain inn. The proprietor was absent, and the waiter and the cook—not caring, perhaps, to be disturbed for a single traveller—had first refused flatly to admit him; and afterwards, when he had obtained entrance, treated him to the worst of food, intimating at the same time it was better than he was used to, and plainly giving him to understand that on the very slightest provocation they were prepared to give him a sound thrashing. Boiling over with passion, he got back to Messina, and hastened to recount his misfortunes to his friend in power.

"'Where did it happen?' asked the hard-worked Prefect, with folly enough on his hands without having to deal with the sorrows of Great Britons.

"'At Spalla deMonte.'

"'When?'

"'On Wednesday last, the 23d.'

"'What do you want me to do with them?'

"'To punish them, of course.'

"'How—in what way?'

"'How do I know? Send them to jail.'

"'For how long?'

"'A month if you can—a fortnight at least.'

"'What are the names?' asked the Prefect, who all this time continued to write, filling up certain blanks in some printed formula before him.

"'How should I know their names? I can only say that one was the cook, the other the waiter.'

"'There!' said the Prefect, tossing two sheets of printed and written-over paper towards him—'there! tell the landlord to fill in the fellows' names and surnames, and send that document to the Podesta. They shall have four weeks, and with hard labour.'

"The Englishman went his way rejoicing. He despatched the missive, and felt his injuries were avenged.

"Two days after, however, a friend dropped in, and in the course of conversation mentioned that he had just come from Spalla de Monte, where he had dined so well and met such an intelligent waiter; 'which, I own,' said he, 'surprised me, for I had heard of their having insulted some traveller last week very grossly.'

"The Englishman hurried off to the Prefecture. 'We are outraged, insulted, laughed at!' cried he: 'those fellows you ordered to prison are at large. They mock your authority and despise it.'

"A mounted messenger was sent off at speed to bring up the landlord to Messina, and he appeared the next morning, pale with fear and trembling. He owned that the Prefect's order had duly reached him, that he had understood it thoroughly; 'but, Eccellenza,' said he, crying, 'it was the shooting season; people were dropping in every day. Where was I to find a cook or a waiter? I must have closed the house if I parted with them; so, not to throw contempt on your worship's order, I sent two of the stablemen to jail in their place, and a deal of good it will do them.'"

While I was laughing heartily at this story, my companion turned towards the gendarme and said, “Have you made a note of his teeth? you see they are tolerably regular, but one slightly overlaps the other in front.”

“Signor Générale,” said the other, reddening, “I’ll make a note of *your* tongue, which will do quite as well.”

“Bravo!” said the Garibaldian; “better said than I could have given you credit for. I’ll not keep you any longer from your dinner. Will you bear me company,” asked he of me, “as far as Chiavari? It’s a fine day, and we shall have a pleasant drive.”

I agreed, and we started.

The road was interesting, the post-horses which we took at Borghetto went well, and the cigars were good, and somehow we said very little to each other as we went.

“This is the real way to travel,” said my companion; “a man to smoke with and no bother of talking; there’s Chiavari in the hollow.”

I nodded, and never spoke.

“Are you inclined to come on to Genoa?”

“No.”

And soon after we parted—whether ever to meet again or not is not so easy to say, nor of very much consequence to speculate on.

THE ORGAN NUISANCE AND ITS REMEDY.

There is scarcely any better measure of the amount of comfort a man enjoys than in the sort of things of which he makes grievances. When the princess in the Eastern story passed a restless night on account of the rumpled rose-leaf she lay on, the inference is, that she was not, like another character of fiction, accustomed to “lie upon straw.”

Thus thinking, I was led to speculate on what a happy people must inhabit the British Islands, seeing the amount of indignation and newspaper wrath bestowed upon what is called the Organ Nuisance. Now, granting that it is not always agreeable to have a nasal version of the march in ‘William Tell,’ ‘Home, sweet Home,’ or ‘La Donna è mobile,’ under one’s window at meal-times, in the hours of work, or the darker hours of headache, surely the nation which cries aloud over this as a national calamity must enjoy no common share of Fortune’s favour, and have what the Yankees call a “fine time” here below.

Scarcely a week, however, goes over without one of these persecutors of British ears being brought up to justice, and some dreary penny-a-liner appears to prosecute in the person of a gentleman of literary pursuits, whose labours, like those of Mr Babbage, may be lost to the world, if the law will not hunt down the organs, and cry “Tally high-ho” to the “grinders.”

It might be grave matter of inquiry whether the passing annoyance of ‘Cherry ripe’ was not a smaller infliction than some of the tiresome lucubrations it has helped to muddle; and I half fancy I’d as soon listen to the thunder as drink the small beer it has soured into vinegar.

However, as the British Public is resolved on making it a grievance, and as some distinguished statesman has deemed it worth his while to devise a bill for its suppression, it is in vain to deny that the evil is one of magnitude. England has declared she will not be ground down by the Savoyard, and there is no more to be said of it.

A great authority in matters of evasion once protested that he would engage to drive a coach-and-six through any Act of Parliament that ever was framed, and I believe him. So certain is language to be too wide or too narrow—to embrace too much, and consequently fail in distinctness, or to include too little, and so defeat the attempt to particularise—that it does not call for more than an ordinary amount of acuteness to detect the flaws of such legislation. Then, when it comes to a discussion, and amendments are moved, and some honourable gentleman suggests that after the word “Whereas” in section 93 the clause should run “in no case, save in those to be hereafter specified,” &c., there comes a degree of confusion and obscurity that invariably renders the original parent of the measure unable to know his offspring, and probably intently determined to destroy it. That in their eagerness for law-making the context of these bills is occasionally overlooked, one may learn from the case of an Irish measure where a fine was awarded as the punishment of a particular misdemeanour, and the Act declared that one-half of the sum should go to the county, one-half to the informer. Parliament, however, altered the law, but overlooked the context. Imprisonment with hard labour was decreed as the penalty of the offence, and the clause remained—“one-half to the county, one-half to the informer.”

A Judge of no mean acuteness, the Chief Baron O’Grady, once declared, with respect to an Act against sheep-stealing, that after two careful readings he could not decide whether the penalties applied to the owner, of the sheep, the thief, or the sheep itself, for that each interpretation might be argumentatively sustained.

How will you suppress the organ-grinder after this? What are the limits of a man’s domicile? How much of the coast does he own beyond his area-railings? Is No. 48 to be deprived of the ‘Hat-catcher’s Daughter’ because 47 is dyspeptic? Are the maids in 32 not to be cheered by ‘Sich a gettin’ up stairs’ because there is a nervous invalid in 33? How long may an organ-man linger in front of a residence to tune or adjust his barrels —the dreariest of all discords? Can legislation determine how long or how loud the grand chorus in ‘Nabucco’ should be performed? What endless litigation will be instituted by any attempt to provide for all these and a score more of similar casualties, not to speak of the insolent persecution that may be practised by the performance of tunes of a party character. Fancy Dr Wiseman composing a pastoral to the air of ‘Croppies, lie down,’ or the Danish Minister writing a despatch to the inspiriting strains of ‘Schleswig-Holstein meer-

umschlungen.’ There might come a time, too, when ‘Sie sollen ihm nicht haben’ might grate on a French ambassador’s ears. Can your Act take cognisance of all these?

I see nothing but inextricable confusion in the attempt—confusion, difficulty, and defeat. There will be an Act, and an Act to amend that Act, and another Act to alter so much of such an Act, and then a final Act to repeal them all; so that at last the mover of a bill on the subject will be the greatest “organ nuisance” that the world has yet heard of.

It was “much reflecting” over these things, as my Lord Brougham says, that I sauntered along the Riviera from Genoa, and came to the little town of Chiavari, with its long sweep of yellow beach in front and its glorious grove of orange-trees behind—sure, whether the breeze came from land or sea, to inhale health and perfume. There is a wide old Piazza in the centre of the town, with a strange, dreary sort of inn with a low-arched entrance, under whose shade sit certain dignitaries of the place of an evening, sipping their coffee and talking over what they imagine to be the last news of the day. From these “Conscript Fathers” I learned that Chiavari is the native place of the barrel-organ, that from this little town go forth to all the dwellers in remotest lands the grinders of the many-cylindered torment, the persecutor of the prose-writer, the curse of him who calculates. Just as the valleys of Savoy supply white-mice men, and Lucca produces image-carriers, so does Chiavari yield its special product, the organ-grinder. Other towns, in their ambitions, have attempted the “industry,” but they have egregiously failed; and Chiavari remains as distinctive in its product as Spitalfields for its shawls, or Dresden for its china. Whether there may be some peculiarity in the biceps of the Chiavarian, or some ulnar development which imparts power to his performance, I know not. I am forced to own that I have failed to discover to what circumstance or from what quality this excellence is derivable; but there is the fact, warranted and confirmed by a statistical return, that but for Chiavari we should have no barrel-organs.

“Never imagine,” said a wise prelate, “that you will root Popery out of England till you destroy Oxford. If you want to get rid of the crows, you must pull down the rookery.” The words of wisdom flashed suddenly over my mind as I walked across the silent Piazza at midnight; and I exclaimed—“Yes! here is the true remedy for the evil. With two hours of a gunboat and four small Armstrongs the thing is done; batter down Chiavari, and Bab-bage will bless you with his last breath. Pull down the cookery, and crush the young rooks in the ruins. Smash the cradle and the babe within it, and you need not fear the man!”

There is a grand justice in the conception that is highly elevating. There is something eminently fine in making Chiavari, like the Cities of the Plain, a monument over its own iniquity. Leave not one stone upon another of it, and there will be peace in our homes and stillness in our streets. No more shall the black-bearded tormentor terrorise over Baker Street, or lord it in the Edgeware Road.

Commander Snort of the Sneezer will in a brief forenoon emancipate not only Europe and America, but the dweller beyond Jordan and the inhabitant of the diggings by Bendigo. Lay Chiavari in ashes, and you will no longer need Inspector D, nor ask aid from the head-office. Here is what the age especially worships, a remedy combining cheapness with efficiency. It may be said that we have no more right to destroy Chiavari than Kagosima, but that question is at least debatable. Are not the headaches of tens of thousands of more avail than the head of one? What becomes of that noble principle, the greatest happiness of the greatest number? The Italians, too, might object: true, but they are neither Americans nor French. They come into the category of states that may be bullied. The countries which have an extended seaboard and weak naval armaments are like people with a large glass frontage and no shutters. There is nothing to prevent us shying a stone at the Italian window as we pass up to Constantinople, even though we run away afterwards. I repeat, therefore, the plan is feasible. As to its cheapness, it would not cost a tithe of what we spent in destroying the tea-tray fortifications of Satsuma; and as we have a classic turn for monuments, a pyramid of barrel-organs in Charing Cross might record to a late posterity the capture of Chiavari.

I am not without a certain sort of self-reproach in all this. I feel it is a weakness perhaps, but I feel that we are all of us too hard on these organ fellows—for, after all, are they not, in a certain sense, the type and embodiment of our age? Is not repetition, reiteration, our boldest characteristic? Is there, I ask, such a “Grind” in the world as Locke King, and his motion for Reform? What do you say to “Rest and be thankful,” and, above all, what to the “Peace-at-any-price people”?

Is ‘Cherry ripe’ more wearisome than these? Would all Chiavari assembled on Wimbledon make up a drearier discord than a ministerial explanation? In all your experience of bad music, do you know anything to equal a Foreign Office despatch? and we are without a remedy against these. Bring up John Bright to-morrow for incessantly annoying the neighbourhood of Birmingham, by insane accusations against his own country and laudations of America, and I doubt if you could find a magistrate on the bench to commit him; and will you tell me that the droning whine of ‘Garibaldi’s March’ is worse than this? As to the *Civis Romanus* cant, it is too painful to dwell on, now that we are derided, ridiculed, and sneered at from Stockholm to Stamboul. Like Canning’s philanthropist, we have been asking every one for his story; never was there a soul so full of sympathy for sorrow. We have heard the tale of Italy, the sufferings of the Confederates, the crying wrongs of Poland, and the still more cruel, because less provoked, trials of Denmark. We have thrown up hands and eyes—sighed, groaned, wept; we have even denounced the ill-doers, and said, What a terrible retribution awaited them! but, like our great prototype, when asked for assistance, we have said,

“I’ll see you ——— first.”

Let us be merciful, therefore, and think twice before we batter down Chiavari. The organ nuisance is a bore, no doubt; but what are the most droning ditties that ever addled a weary head, compared to the tiresome grind of British moral assistance, and the greatness of that *Civis Romanus* who hugs his own importance and helps nobody?

R. N. F. THE GREAT CHEVALIER

D’INDUSTRIE OF OUR DAY.

I was struck the other day by an account of an application made to the Lord Mayor of London by a country clergyman, to give, as a warning to others, publicity to a letter he had just received from the East. The clergyman, it seems, had advertised in the ‘Times’ for pupils, and gave for address a certain letter of the Greek alphabet. To this address there came in due time an answer from a gentleman, dated Constantinople, stating that he was an Anglo-Indian on his way to England, to place his two sons in an educational establishment; but that having, by an excursion to Jerusalem, exhausted his immediate resources, he was obliged to defer the prosecution of his journey till the arrival of some funds he expected from India—certain to arrive in a month or two. Not wishing, however, to delay the execution of his project, and being satisfied with the promises held forth by the advertiser, he purposed placing his sons under his care, and to do so, desired that forty pounds might be remitted him at once, to pay his journey to England, for which convenience he, the writer, would not alone be obliged, but also extend his patronage to the lender, by recommending him to his friend Sir Hugh Rose, who was himself desirous of sending his sons to be educated in England. The address of a banker was given to whom the money should be remitted, and an immediate reply requested, or “application should be made in some other quarter.”

Now, the clergyman did not answer this strange appeal, but he inserted another advertisement, changing, however, the symbol by which he was to be addressed, and appearing in this way to be a different person. To this new address there came another letter, perfectly identical in style and matter: the only change was, that the writer was now at the Hôtel de la Reine d’Angleterre at Buda; but all the former pledges of future protection were renewed, as well as the request for a prompt reply, or “application will be made in another quarter.”

The clergyman very properly laid the matter before the Lord Mayor, who, with equal propriety, stamped the attempt as the device of a swindler, against which publicity in the newspapers was the best precaution. The strangest thing of all, however, was, that nobody appeared to know the offender; nor was there in the ‘Times,’ or in the other newspapers where the circumstances were detailed, one single surmise as to the identity of this ingenious individual. It is the more singular, since this man is a specialty—an actual personification of some of the very subtlest rogueries of the age we live in!

If any of my readers can recall a very remarkable exposure the ‘Times’ newspaper made some ten or twelve years ago, of a most shameful fraud practised upon governesses, by which they were induced to deposit a sum equivalent to their travelling expenses from England to some town on the Continent, as a guarantee to the employer, they will have discovered the gentleman with the two sons to be educated—the traveller in Syria, the friend of Sir Hugh Rose, the Anglo-Indian who expects eight hundred pounds in two months, but has a present and pressing necessity for forty.

The governess fraud was ingenious. It was done in this way: An advertisement appeared in the ‘Times,’ setting forth that an English gentleman, travelling with his family abroad, wanted a governess—the conditions liberal, the requirements of a high order. The family in question, who mixed with the very best society on the Continent, required that the governess should be a lady of accomplished manners, and one in every respect qualified for that world of fashion to which she would be introduced as a member of the advertiser’s family. The advertiser, however, found that all the English ladies who had hitherto filled this situation in his family had, through the facilities thus presented them of entrance into life, made very advantageous marriages; and to protect himself against the loss entailed by the frequent call on him for travelling expenses—bringing out new candidates for the hands of princes and grand-dukes—he proposed that the accepted governess should deposit with him a sum—say fifty pounds—equivalent to the charge of the journey; and which, if she married, should be confiscated to the benefit of her employer.

The scheme was very ingenious; it was, in fact, a lottery in which you only paid for your ticket when you had drawn a prize. Till the lucky number turned up, you never parted with your money. Was there ever any such bribe held forth to a generation of unmarried and marriageable women? There was everything that could captivate the mind: the tour on the Continent—the family who loved society and shared it so generously—the father so parental in his kindness, and who evidently gave the governess the benediction of a parent on the day she may have married the count; and all secured for what—for fifty pounds? No; but for the deposit, the mere storing up of fifty pounds in a strong box; for if, after two years, the lady neither married nor wished to remain, she could claim her money and go her way.

The success was immense; and as the advertiser wrote replies from different towns to different individuals, governesses arrived at Brussels, at Coblentz, at Frankfort, at Mayence, at Munich, at Nice—and heaven knows where besides—whose deposits were lodged in the hands of N. F. That ingenious gentleman straightway departed, and was no more seen, and only heard of when the distress and misery of these unhappy ladies had found their way to the public press. The ‘Times,’ with all that ability and energy it knows how to employ, took the matter up, published some of the statements—very painful and pathetic they were—of the unfortunate victims of this fraud, and gave more than one “leader” to its exposure. Nor was the Government wanting in proper activity. Orders were sent out from the Foreign Office to the different legations and consulates abroad, to warn the police in the several districts against the machinations of this artful scoundrel, should he chance to be in their neighbourhood. Even more distinct instructions were sent out to certain legations, by which R. N. F. could be arrested on charges that would at least secure his detention till the law officers had declared what steps could be taken in his behalf. It was not the age of photography, but a very accurate description of the man’s appearance and address was furnished, and his lofty stature, broad chest, burly look, and bushy whiskers—a shade between red and auburn—were all duly posted in each Chancellerie of the Continent.

For a while it seemed as if he lived in retirement—his late success enabled this to be an “elegant retirement”—and it is said that he passed it on the Lake of Como, in a villa near that of the once Queen Caroline. There are traditions of a distinguished stranger—a man of rank and a man of letters—who lived there estranged from all the world, and deeply engaged in the education of his two sons. One of these youths, however, not responding to all this parental devotion, involved himself in some scrape, fled from his father’s

roof, and escaped into Switzerland. N. F., as soon as he could rally from the first shock of the news, hastened after, to bring him back, borrowing a carriage from a neighbouring nobleman in his haste. With this he crossed the frontier at Chiasso, but never to come back again. The coachman, indeed, brought tidings of the sale of the equipage, which the illustrious stranger had disposed of, thus quitting a neighbourhood he could only associate with a sorrowful past, and a considerable number of debts into the bargain. Another blank occurs here in history, which autobiography alone perhaps could fill. It would be unfair and un-philosophical to suppose that because we cannot trace him he was inactive: we might as reasonably imply that the moon ceased to move when we lost sight of her. At all events, towards the end of autumn of that last year of the war in the Crimea, a stout, well-dressed, portly man, with an air of considerable assurance, swaggered into the Chancellerie of her Majesty's Legation at Munich, notwithstanding the representations of the porter, who would, if he had dared, have denied him admittance, and asked, in a voice of authority, if there were no letters there for Captain F. The gentleman to whom the question was addressed was an attaché of the Legation, and at that time in "charge" of the mission, the Minister being absent. Though young in years, F. could scarcely, in the length and breadth of Europe, have fallen upon one with a more thorough insight into every phase and form of those mysteries by which the F. category of men exist. Mr L. was an actual amateur in this way, and was no more the man to be angry with F. for being a swindler, than with Ristori for being Medea or Macready being Macbeth. Not that he had the slightest suspicion at the time of F.'s quality, as he assured him that there were no letters for that name.

"How provoking!" said the Captain, as he bit his lip. "They will be so impatient in England," muttered he to himself, "and I know Sidney Herbert is sure to blame *me*." Then he added aloud, "I am at a dead-lock here. I have come from the Crimea with despatches, and expected to find money here to carry me on to England; and these stupid people at the War Office have forgotten all about it. Is it not enough to provoke a saint?"

"I don't know; I never was a saint," said the impassive attaché.

"Well, it's trying to a sinner," said F., with a slight laugh; for he was one of those happy-natured dogs who are not indifferent to the absurd side of even their own mishaps. "How long does the post take to England?"

"Three days."

"And three back—that makes six; a week—an entire week."

"Omitting Sunday," said the grave attaché, who really felt an interest in the other's dilemma.

"All I can say is, it was no fault of mine," cried F., after a moment. "If I am detained here through their negligence, they must make the best excuse they can. Have you got a cigar?" This was said with his eyes fixed on a roll of Cubans on the table.

"Take one," said the other.

"Thanks," said F., as he selected three. "I'll drop in to-morrow, and hope to have better luck."

"How much money do you want?" asked Mr L.

"Enough to carry me to London."

"How much is that?"

"Let me see. Strasbourg—Paris, a day at Paris; Cowley might detain me two days: fifteen or twenty pounds would do it amply."

"You shall have it."

"All right," said F., who walked to the fire, and, lighting his cigar, smoked away; while the other took some notes from a table-drawer and counted them.

"Shall I give you a formal receipt for this?" asked F.

"You can tell them at the Office," said L., as he dipped his pen into the ink and continued the work he had been previously engaged in. F. said a few civil words—the offhand gratitude of a man who was fully as much in the habit of bestowing as of receiving favours, and withdrew. L. scarcely noticed his departure; he was deep in his despatch, and wrote on. At length he came to the happy landing-place, that spot of rest for the weary foot—"I have the honour to be, my Lord," and he arose and stood at the fire.

As L. smoked his cigar he reflected, and as he reflected he remembered; and, to refresh his memory, he took out some papers from a pigeon-hole, and at last finding what he sought, sat down to read it. The document was a despatch, dated a couple of years back, instructing H.M.'s representative at the Court of Munich to secure the person of a certain N. F., and hold him in durance till application should be made to the Bavarian Government for his extradition and conveyance to England. Then followed a very accurate description of the individual—his height, age, general looks, voice, and manner—every detail of which L. now saw closely tallied with the appearance of his late visitor.

He pondered for a while over the paper, and then looked at his watch. It was five o'clock! The first train to Augsburg was to start at six. There was little time, consequently, to take the steps necessary to arrest a person on suspicion; for he should first of all have to communicate with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who should afterwards back his application to the Prefect of Police. The case was one for detail, and for what the Germans insist upon, much writing—and there was very little time to do it in. L., however, was not one to be easily defeated.

If baffled in one road, he usually found out another. He therefore wrote a brief note to the Minister, stating that he might require his assistance at a later hour of the evening, and at a time not usually official. This done, he despatched another note to Captain E. F., saying familiarly it was scarcely worth while trying to catch the mail-train that night, and that perhaps instead he would come over and take a *tétè-à-tête* dinner with him at the Legation.

F. was overjoyed as he read it! No man ever felt a higher pleasure in good company, nor knew better how to make it profitable. If he had been asked to choose, he would infinitely rather have had the invitation to dine than the twenty pounds he had pocketed in the morning. The cognate men of the world—and all members of the diplomatic career are to a certain extent in this category—were in F.'s estimation the "trump cards" of the pack, with which he could "score tricks" innumerable, and so he accepted at once; and, in a very

few minutes after his acceptance, made his appearance in a correct dinner-dress and a most unexceptionable white tie.

"Couldn't refuse that pleasant offer of yours, L." (he was familiar at once, and called him L.), "and here I am!" said he, as he threw himself into an easy-chair with all the bland satisfaction of one who looked forward to a good dinner and a very enjoyable evening.

"I am happy to have secured you," said L., with a little laugh to himself at the epigram of his phrase. "Do you like caviar?"

"Delight in it!"

"I have just got some fresh from St Petersburg, and our cook here is rather successful in his caviar soup. We have a red trout from the *Tegen See*, a saddle of Tyrol mutton, and a pheasant—*voilà votre diner!* but I can promise you a more liberal *carte* in drinkables; just say what you like in the way of wine!"

F.'s face beamed over with ecstasy. It was one of the grand moments of his life; and if he could, hungry as he was, he would have prolonged it! To be there the guest of her Majesty's mission; to know, to feel, that the arms of England were over the door! that he was to be waited on by flunkies in the livery of the Legation, fed by the cook who had ministered to official palates, his glass filled with wine from the cellar of him who represented royalty! These were very glorious imaginings; and little wonder that F., whose whole life was a Poem in its way, should feel that they almost overcame him. In fact, like the woman in the nursery song, he was ready to exclaim, "This is none of me!" but still there were abundant evidences around him that all was actual, positive, and real.

"By the way," said L., in a light, careless way, "did you ever in your wanderings chance upon a namesake of yours, only that he interpolates another Christian name, and calls himself R. Napoleon F.?"

The stranger started: the fresh, ruddy glow of his cheek gave way to a sickly yellow, and, rising from his chair, he said, "Do you mean to 'split' on me, sir?"

"I'm afraid, F.," said the other, jauntily, "the thing looks ugly. You are R. N. F.!"

"And are you, sir, such a scoundrel—such an assassin—as to ask a man to your table in order to betray him?"

"These are strong epithets, F., and I'll not discuss them; but if you ask, Are you going to dine here today? I'd say, No. And if you should ask, Where are, you likely to pass the evening? I'd hint, In the city jail."

At this F. lost all command over himself, and broke out into a torrent of the wildest abuse. He was strong of epithets, and did not spare them. He stormed, he swore, he threatened, he vociferated; but L., imperturbable throughout all, only interposed with an occasional mild remonstrance—a subdued hint—that his language was less than polite or parliamentary. At length the door opened, two gendarmes appeared, and N. F. was consigned to their hands and removed.

The accusations against him were manifold; from before and since the day of the governesses, he had been living a life of dishonesty and fraud. German law proceedings are not characterised by any rash impetuosity; the initial steps in F.'s case took about eighteen months, during which he remained a prisoner. At the end of this time the judges discovered some informality in his committal; and as L. was absent from Munich, and no one at the Legation much interested in the case, the man was liberated on signing a declaration—to which Bavarian authorities, it would seem, attach value—that he was "a rogue and a vagabond;" confessions which the Captain possibly deemed as absurd an act of "surplusage" as though he were to give a written declaration that he was a vertebrated animal and a biped.

He went forth once more, and, difficult as it appears to the intelligence of honest and commonplace folk, he went forth to prosper and live luxuriously—so gullible is the world, so ready and eager to be cheated and deceived. Sir Edward Lytton has somewhere declared that a single number of the 'Times' newspaper, taken at random, would be the very best and most complete picture of our daily life—the fullest exponent of our notions, wants, wishes, and aspirations. Not a hope, nor fear, nor prejudice—not a particle of our blind trustfulness, or of our as blind unbelief, that would not find its reflex in the broadsheet. R. N. F. had arrived at the same conclusion, only in a more limited sense. The advertisement columns were all to him. What cared he for foreign wars, or the state of the Funds? as little did he find interest in railway intelligence, or "our own correspondent." What he wanted was, the people who inquired after a missing relative—a long-lost son or brother, who was supposed to have died in the Mauritius or Mexico: an affectionate mother who desired tidings as to the burial-place of a certain James or John, who had been travelling in a particular year in the south of Spain: an inquirer for the will of Paul somebody: or any one who could supply evidence as to the marriage of Sarah Meekins *alias* Crouther, supposed to have been celebrated before her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Kooroobakaboo—these were the paragraphs that touched him.

Never was there such a union of intelligence and sympathy as in him! He knew everybody, and seemed not alone to have been known to, but actually beloved by, every one. It was in *his* arms poor Joe died at Aden. *He* gave away Maria at Tunis. He followed Tom to his grave at Corfu; and he was the mysterious stranger who, on board the P. and O. boat, offered his purse to Edward, and was almost offended at being denied. The way in which this man tracked the stories of families through the few lines of a newspaper advertisement was positively marvellous. Whatever was wanting in the way of evidence of this, or clue to that, came at once into his attributions.

A couple of years ago, an English lady, the wife of a clergyman, passed a winter at Rome with her daughter, and in the mixed society of that capital made acquaintance with a Polish Count of most charming manners and fascinating address. The acquaintance ripened into intimacy, and ended in an attachment which led to the marriage of the young lady with the distinguished exile.

On arriving in England, however, it was discovered that the accomplished Count was a common soldier, and a deserter from the Prussian army; and means were accordingly had recourse to in order to obtain a divorce, and the breach of a marriage accomplished under a fraudulent representation. While the proceedings were but in the initiative, there came a letter from Oneglia, near Nice, to the afflicted mother of the young lady, recalling to her mind the elderly gentleman with the blue spectacles who usually sat next her at the English

Church at Rome. He was the writer of the present letter, who, in turning over the columns of the 'Times' read the melancholy story of her daughter's betrayal and misery. By one of those fortunate accidents more frequent in novels than in life, he had the means of befriending her, and very probably of rescuing her from her present calamity. He, the writer, had actually been present at the wedding, and as a witness had signed the marriage-certificate of that same *soi-disant* Count Stanislaus Sobieski Something-or-other, at Lemberg, in the year '49, and knew that the unhappy but deserted wife was yet living. A certain momentary pressure of money prevented his at once coming to England to testify to this fact; but if a small sum, sufficient to pay a little balance he owed his innkeeper and wherewithal to make his journey to England, were forwarded to the address of Frederick Brooks, Esq., or lodged to his account at the Bank of French & Co., Florence, he would at once hasten to London and depose formally to every fact he had stated. By the merest accident I myself saw this letter, which the lady had, for more accurate information about the writer, sent to the banker at Florence, and in an instant I detected the fine Roman hand of R. N. F. It is needless to say that this shot went wide of the mark.

But that this fellow has lived for upwards of twenty years, travelling the Continent in every direction, eating and drinking at the best hotels, frequenting theatres, cafés, and public gardens, denying himself nothing, is surely a shame and a disgrace to the police of Europe, which has been usually satisfied to pass him over a frontier, and suffer him to continue his depredations on the citizens of another state. Of the obloquy he has brought upon his own country I do not speak. We must, I take it, have our scoundrels like other people; the only great grievance here is, that the fellow's ubiquity is such that it is hard to believe that the swindler who walked off with the five watches from Hamburg is the same who, in less than eight days afterwards, borrowed fifty ducats from a waiter at Naples, and "bolted."

Of late I have observed he has dropped his second *prénom* of Napoleon, and does not call himself by it. There is perhaps in this omission a delicate forbearance, a sense of refined deference to the other bearer of that name, whom he recognises as his master.

In the ingenuity of his manifold devices even religion has not escaped him, and it would be impossible to count how often he has left the "Establishment" for Rome, been converted, reconverted, reconciled, and brought home again—always, be it noted, at the special charge of so much money from the Church Fund, or a subscription from the faithful, ever zealous and eager to assist a really devout and truly sincere convert!

That this man is an aspiring and ambitious vagabond may be seen in the occasional raids he makes into the very best society, without having, at least to ordinary eyes, anything to obtain in these ventures, beyond the triumph of seeing himself where exposure and detection would be certain to be followed by the most condign punishment. At Rome, for instance—how, I cannot say—he obtained admission to the Duc de Grammont's receptions; and at Florence, under the pretext of being a proprietor, and "a most influential" one, of the 'Times,' he breakfasted, by special invitation, with Baron Ricasoli, and had a long and most interesting conversation with him as to the conditions—of course political—on which he would consent to support Italian unity. These must have been done in pure levity; they were imaginative excursions, thrown off in the spirit of those fanciful variations great violinists will now and then indulge in, as though to say, "Is there a path too intricate for me to thread, is there a pinnacle too fine for me to balance on?"

A great deal of this fellow's long impunity results from the shame men feel in confessing to have been "done" by him. Nobody likes the avowal, acknowledging, as it does, a certain defect in discrimination, and a natural reluctance to own to having been the dupe of one of the most barefaced and vulgar rogues in Europe.

There is one circumstance in this case which might open a very curious psychological question; it is this: F.'s victims have not in general been the frank, open, free-giving, or trustful class of men; on the contrary, they have usually been close-fisted, cold, cautious people, who weigh carefully what they do, and are rarely the dupes of their own impulsiveness. F. is an Irishman, and yet his successes have been far more with English—ay, even with Scotchmen—than with his own countrymen.

In part this may be accounted for by the fact that F. did not usually present himself as one in utter want and completely destitute; his appeal for money was generally made on the ground of some speculation that was to repay the lender; it was because he knew "something to your advantage" that he asked for that £10. He addressed himself, in consequence, to the more mercantile spirit of a richer community—to those, in fact, who, more conversant with trade, better understood the meaning of an investment.

But there was another, and, as I take it, a stronger and less fallible ground for success. This fellow has, what all Irishmen are more or less gifted with, an immense amount of vitality, a quality which undeniably makes a man companionable, however little there may be to our taste in his manner, his education, or his bearing. This same vitality imparts itself marvellously to the colder temperaments of others, and gives out its own warmth to natures that never of themselves felt the glow of an impulse, or the glorious furnace-heat of a rash action.

This was the magnetism he worked with. "Canny" Scotchmen and shrewd Yankees—ay, even Swiss innkeepers—felt the touch of his quality. There was, or there seemed to be, a geniality in the fellow that, in its apparent contempt for all worldliness, threw men off their guard, and it would have smacked of meanness to distrust a fellow so open and unguarded.

Now Paddy has seen a good deal of this at home, and could no more be humbugged by it than he could believe a potato to be a truffle.

F. was too perfect an artist ever to perform in an Irish part to an Irish audience, and so he owes little or nothing to the land of his birth.

Apart from his unquestionable success, which of course settles the question, I would not have called him a great performer—indeed, my astonishment has always been how he succeeded, or with whom.

"Don't tell me of Beresford's blunders," said the Great Duke after Albuera. "Did he beat Soult? if so, he was a good officer."

This man's triumphs are some twenty odd years of expensive living, with occasional excursions into good society. He wears broadcloth, and dines on venison, when his legitimate costume had been the striped uniform of the galleys, and his diet the black bread of a convict.

The injury these men do in life is not confined to the misery their heartless frauds inflict, for the very humblest and poorest are often their victims: they do worse, in the way they sow distrust and suspicion of really deserving objects, in the pretext they afford the miserly man to draw closer his purse-strings, and "not be imposed on;" and, worst of all, in the ill repute they spread of a nation which, not attractive by the graces of manner or the charms of a winning address, yet cherished the thought that in truthfulness and fair dealing there was not one could gainsay it.

As I write, I have just heard tidings of R. N. F. One of our most distinguished travellers and discoverers, lately returning from Venice to the South, passed the night at Padua, and met there what he described as an Indian officer—Major Newton—who was travelling, he said, with a nephew of Lord Palmer-ston's.

The Major was a man fall of anecdote, and abounded in knowledge of people and places; he had apparently been everywhere with everybody, and, with a communicativeness not always met with in old soldiers, gave to the stranger a rapid sketch of his own most adventurous life. As the evening wore on, he told too how he was waiting there for a friend, a certain N. F., who was no other than himself, the nephew of Lord Palmerston being represented by his son, an apt youth, who has already given bright promise of what his later years may develop.

N. F. retired to bed at last, so much overcome by brandy-and-water that my informant escaped being asked for a loan, which I plainly see he would not have had the fortitude to have refused; and the following morning he started so early that N. F., wide awake as he usually is, was not vigilant enough to have anticipated.

I hope these brief details, *pour servir à l'histoire de Monsieur R. N. F.*, may save some kind-hearted traveller from the designs of a thorough blackguard, and render his future machinations through the press more difficult to effect and more certain of exposure.

I had scarcely finished this brief, imperfect sketch, when I read in 'Galignani' the following:—

"Swindling on the Continent.—A letter from Venice of March 29 gives us the following piece of information which may still be of service to some of our readers, though, from the fact with which it concludes, it would seem that the proceedings, of the party have been brought to a standstill, at least for some time. This is not, however, it may be recollected, the first occasion we have had to bring the conduct of the individual referred to under the notice of our readers for similar practices:—

"'I am informed that one Mr Newton, *alias* Neville, *alias* Fane, and with a dozen other *aliases*, has been arrested at Padua for swindling. This ubiquitous gentleman has been travelling for some years at the expense of hotel-keepers, and other geese easily fleeced, on the Continent In the year 1862, Mr Neville and his two sons made their suspicious appearance at Venice, and they now, minus the younger son, have visited Padua as Mr Robert N. Newton and son, taking up their residence at the Stella d'Oro. They arrived without luggage and without money, both of which had been lost in the Danube; but they expected remittances from India! The obliging landlord lent money, purchased clothes, fed them gloriously, and contrived, between the 8th Feb. and 25th of March, to become the creditor of Newton and son for 1000 swanzig. The expenses continued, but the remittances never came. The patient landlord began to lose that virtue, and denounced these *aliases* as swindlers. The police of Vienna, hearing of the event, sent information that these two accommodating gentlemen had practised the victimising art for two months in December last at the Hotel Regina Inghilterre, at Pesth, run up a current account of 700 florins, and decamped; and a hotel-keeper recognised the scamps as having re-resided at the Luna, in Venice, in 1862, and "plucked some profit from that pale-faced moon." Mr Newton's handwriting proved him to be in 1863 one Major Fane, who had generously proposed to bring all his family, consisting of ten persons, to pass the winter at the Barbesi Hotel at Venice, if the proprietor would forward him 700 fr., as, owing to his wife's prolonged residence at Rome and Naples, he was short of money, which, however, he expected, would cease on the arrival of supplies from Calcutta. These gentlemen are now in durance vile, and there is no doubt but that this letter will lead to their recognition by many other victims.'"

Let no sanguine enthusiast for the laws of property imagine, however, that this great man's career is now ended, and that R. N. F. will no more go forth as of old to plunder and to rob. Imprisonment for debt is a grievous violation of personal liberty certainly, but it is finite; and some fine morning, when the lark is carolling high in heaven, and the bright rivulets are laughing in the gay sunlight, R. N. F. will issue from his dungeon to taste again the sweets of liberty, and to partake once more of the fleshpots of some confiding landlord. F. is a man of great resources, doubtless. When he repeats a part, he feels the same sort of repugnance that Fechter would to giving a fiftieth representation of Hamlet, but he would bow to the necessity which a clamorous public imposes, however his own taste might rebel against the dreariness of the task. Still, I feel assured that he will next appear in a new part. We shall hear of him—that is certain. He will be in search of a lost will, by which he would inherit millions, or a Salvator Rosa that he has been engaged to buy for the Queen, or perhaps he will be a missionary to assist in that religious movement now observable in Italy. How dare I presume, in my narrow inventiveness, to suggest to such a master of the art as he is? I only know that, whether he comes before the world as the friend of Sir Hugh Rose, a proprietor of the 'Times,' the agent of Lord Palmerston, or a recent convert from Popery, he will sustain his part admirably; and that same world that he has duped, robbed, and swindled for more than a quarter of a century will still feed and clothe him—still believe in the luggage that never comes, and the remittance that will never turn up.

After all, the man must be a greater artist than I was willing to believe him to be. He must be a deep student of the human heart—not, perhaps, in its highest moods; and he must well understand how to touch certain chords which give their response in unlimited confidence and long credit.

No doubt there must be some wondrous fascination in these changeful fortunes—these ups and downs of life—otherwise no man could have gone, as he has, for nigh thirty years, hunted, badgered, insulted, and imprisoned in almost every capital of Europe, and yet no sooner liberated than, like a giant refreshed, he again returns to his old toil, never weary wherever the bread of idleness can be eaten, and where a lie will pay for his liquor.

Talk of novel-writers—this is the great master of fiction—the man who brings the product of imagination to the real test of credibility—the actual interest of his public. Let him fail in his description, his narrative, the

progress of his events, or their probability, and he is ruined at once. He must not alone arrange the circumstances of his story, but he must perform the hero, and that, too, as we saw lately at Padua, without any adventitious aid of dress or costume. I can fancy what a sorry figure some of our popular tale-writers would present if they had to appeal to an innkeeper with this poor story of their luggage lost in the Danube. What a contempt the rascal must have had for Italian notions of geography, too, when he adopted a river so remote from where he stood! And yet I'd swear he was as cool, as collected, and as self-sustained at that moment, as ever was Mr Gladstone in the House as he rose to move a motion of supply.

Well, he is in Padua now, doubtless dreaming of fresh conquests, and not impossibly speculating on a world whose gullibility is indeed infinite, and which actually seems to take the same pleasure in being cheated in Fact as it does in being deceived in Fiction. Who knows if the time is not coming when, instead of sending a box of new novels to the country, some Mr Mudie will despatch one of these R. N. F. folk by a fast train, with a line to say, "A great success: his Belgian rogueries most amusing; the exploit at Madrid equal to anything in 'Gil Bias'."

GÀRIBÀLDI

We had a very witty Judge in Ireland, who was not very scrupulous about giving hard knocks to his brothers on the bench, and who, in delivering a judgment in a cause, found that he was to give the casting-vote between his two colleagues, who were diametrically opposed to each other, and who had taken great pains to lay down the reasons for their several opinions at considerable length. "It now comes to my turn," said he, "to declare my view of this case, and fortunately I can afford to be brief. I agree with my brother B. from the irresistible force of the admirable argument of my brother M."

The story occurred to me as I thought over Garibaldi and the enthusiastic reception you gave him in England; for I really felt, if it had not been for Carlyle, I might have been a bit of a hero-worshipper myself The grand frescoes in caricature of the popular historian have, however, given me a hearty and wholesome disgust to the whole thing; not to say that, however enthusiastic a man may feel about his idol, he must be sorely ashamed of his fellow-worshippers. "Lie down with dogs, and you'll get up with fleas," says an old Irish adage; but what, in the name of all entomology, is a man to get up with who lies down with these votaries of Garibaldi? So fine a fellow, and so mangy a following, it would be hard to find. The opportunity for all the blatant balderdash of shopkeeping eloquence, of that high "Falootin" style so popular over the Atlantic, of those grand-sounding periods about freedom and love of country, was not to be lost by a set of people who, in all their enthusiasm for Garibaldi, are intently bent on making themselves foreground figures in the tableau that should have been filled by himself alone.

"Sir Francis Burdett call *you* his friend!—as well call a Bug his bedfellow!" said the sturdy old yeoman, whose racy English I should like to borrow, to characterise the stupid incongruity between Garibaldi and his worshippers. It is not easy to conceive anything finer, simpler, more thoroughly unaffected, or more truly dignified, than the man himself. His noble head; his clear, honest, brown eye; his finely-traced mouth, beautiful as a woman's, and only strung up to sternness when anything ignoble or mean had outraged him; and, last of all, his voice contains a fascination perfectly irresistible, allied, as you knew and felt these graces were, with a thoroughly pure, untarnished nature. The true measure of the man lies in the fact that, though his life has been a series of the boldest and most daring achievements, his courage is about the very last quality uppermost in your mind when you meet him. It is of the winning softness of his look and manner, his kind thoughtfulness for others, his sincere pity for all suffering, his gentleness, his modesty, his manly sense of brotherhood with the very humblest of the men who have loved him, that you think: these are the traits that throw all his heroism into shadow; and all the glory of the conqueror pales before the simple virtues of the man.

He never looked to more advantage than in that humble life of Caprera, where people came and went—some, old and valued friends, whose presence warmed up their host's heart; others, mere passing acquaintances, or, as it might be, not even that; worshippers or curiosity-seekers—living where and how they could in that many-roomed small house; diving into the kitchen to boil their coffee; sallying out to the garden to pluck their radishes; down to the brook for a cress, or to the seaside to catch a fish,—all more or less busy in the midst of a strange idleness; for there was not—beyond providing for the mere wants of the day—anything to be done. The soil would not yield anything. There was no cultivation outside that little garden, where the grand old soldier delved, or rested on his spade-handle as he turned his gaze over the sea, doubtless thinking of the dear land beyond it.

At dinner—and what a strange meal it was—all met, full of the little incidents of an uneventful day. The veriest trifles they were, but of interest to those who listened, and to none more than Garibaldi himself, who liked to hear who had been over to Maddalena, and what sport they had; or whether Albanesi had taken any mullet, and who it was said he could mend the boat? and who was to paint her? Not a word was spoken of the political events of the world, and every mention of them was as rigidly excluded as though a government spy had been seated at the table.

He rarely spoke himself, but was a good listener—not merely hearing with attention, but showing, by an occasional suggestion or a hint, how his mind speculated on the subject before him. If, however, led to speak of himself or his exploits, the unaffected ease and simplicity of the man became at once evident. Never, by any chance, would an expression escape him that redounded to his own share in any achievement; without any studied avoidance the matter would somehow escape, or, if accidentally touched on, be done so very lightly as to make it appear of no moment whatever.

To have done one-tenth of what Garibaldi has done, a man must necessarily have thrown aside scruples which he would never have probably transgressed in his ordinary life. He must have been often arbitrary, and

sometimes almost cruel; and yet, ask his followers, and they will tell you that punishment scarcely existed in the force under his immediate command—that the most hardened offender would have quailed more under a few stern words of reproof from “the General” than from a sentence that sent him to a prison.

That, to effect his purpose, he would lay hands on what he needed, not recklessly or indifferently, but thoughtfully and doubtless regretfully, we all know. I can remember an instance of this kind, related to me by a British naval officer, who himself was an actor in the scene. “It was off La Plata,” said my informant, “when Garibaldi was at war with Rosas, that the frigate I commanded was on that station, as well as a small gun-brig of the Sardinian navy, whose captain never harassed his men by exercises of gunnery, and, indeed, whose ship was as free from any ‘beat to quarters,’ or any sudden summons to prepare for boarders, as though she had been a floating chapel.

“Garibaldi came alongside me one day to say that he had learned the Sardinian had several tons of powder on board, with an ample supply of grape, shell, and canister, not to speak of twelve hundred stand of admirable arms. ‘I want them all,’ said he; ‘my people are fighting with staves and knives, and we are totally out of ammunition. I want them, and he won’t let me have them.’

“‘He could scarcely do so,’ said I, ‘seeing that they belong to his Government, and are not in *his* hands to bestow.’

“‘For that reason I must go and take them,’ said Garibaldi. ‘I mean to board him this very night, and you’ll see if we do not replenish our powder-flasks.’

“‘In that case,’ said I, ‘I shall have to fire on you. It will be Piracy; nothing else.’

“‘You’ll not do so;’ said he, smiling.

“‘Yes, I promise you that I will. We are at peace and on good terms with Sardinia, and I cannot behave other than as a friend to her ships of war.’

“‘There’s no help for it, then,’ said Garibaldi, ‘if you see the thing in that light:’ and good-humouredly quitted the subject, and soon after took his leave.”

“And were you,” asked I of my informant, Captain S.——“were you perfectly easy after that conversation? I mean, were you fully satisfied that he would not attempt the matter in some other way?”

“Never more at ease in my life. I knew my man; and that, having left me under the conviction he had abandoned the exploit, nothing on earth would have tempted him to renew it in any shape.”

It might be a matter of great doubt whether any greater intellectual ability would not have rather detracted from than increased Garibaldi’s power as a popular leader. I myself feel assured that the simplicity, the trustfulness, the implicit reliance on the goodness of a cause as a reason for its success, are qualities which no mere mental superiority could replace in popular estimation. It is actually Love that is the sentiment the Italians have for him; and I have seen them, hard-featured, ay, and hard-natured men, moved to tears as the litter on which Garibaldi lay wounded was carried down to the place of embarkation.

Garibaldi has always been a thoughtful, silent, reflective man, not communicative to others, or in any way expansive; and from these qualities have come alike his successes and his failures. Of the conversations reported of him by writers I do not believe a syllable. He speaks very little; and, luckily for him, that little only with those on whose integrity he can rely not to repeat him.

Cavour, who knew men thoroughly, and studied them just as closely as he studied events, understood at once that Garibaldi was the man he wanted. He needed one who should move the national heart—who, sprung from the people himself, and imbued with all the instincts of his class, should yet not dissever the cause of liberty from the cause of monarchy. To attach Garibaldi to the throne was no hard task. The King, who led the van of his army, was an idol made for such worship as Garibaldi’s. The monarch who could carry a knapsack and a heavy rifle over the cliffs of Monte Rosa from sunrise to sunset, and take his meal of hard bread before he “turned in” at night in a shepherd’s shieling, was a King after the bold buccaneer’s own heart.

To what end inveigh against the luxuries of a court, its wasteful splendours, or its costly extravagance, with such an example? This strong-sinewed, big-boned, unpoetical King has been the hardest nut ever republicanism had to crack!

It might be possible to overrate the services Garibaldi has rendered to Italy—it would be totally impossible to exaggerate those he has rendered the Monarchy; and out of Garibaldi’s devotion to Victor Emmanuel has sprung that hearty, honest, manly appreciation of the King which the Italians unquestionably display. A merely political head of the State, though he were gifted with the highest order of capacity, would have disappeared altogether from view in the sun-splendour of Garibaldi’s exploits; not so the King Victor Emmanuel, who only shone the brighter in the reflected blaze of the hero who was so proud to serve him.

Yet for all that friendship, and all the acts that grew out of it, natural and spontaneous as they are, one great mind was needed to guide, direct, encourage, or restrain. It was Cavour who, behind the scenes, pulled all the wires; and these heroes—heroes they were too—were but his puppets.

Cavour died, and then came Aspromonte.

If any other man than Garibaldi had taken the present moment to make a visit—an almost ostentatious visit—to Mazzini, it might be a grave question how far all the warm enthusiasm of this popular reception could be justified. Garibaldi is, however, the one man in Europe from whom no one expects anything but impulsive action. It is in the very unreflectiveness of his generosity that he is great. There has not been, I am assured, for many years back, any very close or intimate friendship between these two men; but it was quite enough that Mazzini was in trouble and difficulty, to rally to his side that brave-hearted comrade who never deserted his wounded. Nor is there in all Garibaldi’s character anything finer or more exalted than the steadfast adherence he has ever shown to his early friendships. No flatteries of the great—no blandishments of courts and courtiers—none of those seductive influences which are so apt to weave themselves into a man’s nature when surrounded by continual homage and admiration—not any of these have corrupted that pure and simple heart; and there is not a presence so exalted, nor a scene of splendour so imposing, as could prevent Garibaldi from recognising with eager delight any the very humblest companion that ever shared hardship

and danger beside him.

To have achieved his successes, a man must of necessity have rallied around him many besides enthusiasts of the cause; he must have recruited amongst men of broken fortunes—reckless, lawless fellows, who accepted the buccaneer's life as a means of wiping off old scores with that old world "that would have none of them." It was not amidst the orderly, the soberly-trained, and well-to-do that he could seek for followers. And what praise is too great for him who could so inspire this mass, heaving with passion as it was, with his own noble sentiments, and make them feel that the work before them—a nation's regeneration—was a task too high and too holy to be accomplished by unclean hands? Can any eulogy exaggerate the services of a man who could so magnetise his fellow-men as to associate them at once with his nobility of soul, and elevate them to a standard little short of his own? That he *did* do this we have the proof. Pillage was almost unknown amongst the Garibaldians; and these famished, ill-clad, shoeless men marched on from battle to battle with scarcely an instance of crime that called for the interference of military law.

Where is the General who could boast of doing as much? Where is the leader who could be bold enough to give such a pledge for his followers? Is there an army in Europe—in the world—for whom as much could be said?

All honour, therefore, to the man—not whose example only, but whose very contact suggests high intent and noble action. All honour to him who brings to a great cause, not alone the dazzling splendour of heroism, but the more enduring brightness of a pure and unsullied integrity!

Such a man may be misled; he can never be corrupted.

A NEW INVESTMENT.

I am not so sure how far we ought to be grateful for it, but assuredly the fact is so, that nothing has so much tended to show the world with what little wisdom it is governed than the Telegraph. It is not merely that cabinets are no longer the sole possessors of early intelligence, though this alone was once a very great privilege; and there is no over-estimating the power conferred by the exclusive possession of a piece of important news—a battle won or lost, the outbreak of a revolution, the overthrow of a throne—even for a few hours before it became the property of the public. The telegraph, however, is the great disenchanter. The misty uncertainty, the cloud-like indistinctness that used of old to envelop all ministerial action, converting Downing Street into a sort of Olympus, and making a small mythology out of Precis-writers, is all gone, all dispersed. Three or four cold hard lines, thin and terse as the wire that conveyed them, are sworn enemies to all style, and especially to all the evasive cajoleries of those dissolving views of events diplomacy loves to revel in. What becomes of the graceful drapery in which statesmen used to clothe the great facts of the world, when a simple despatch, "fifteen words, exclusive of the address," tells the whole story? and when we have read that "the insurgents are triumphant everywhere, the king left the capital at four o'clock, a provisional government was proclaimed this morning," and suchlike, what do we care for the sonorous periods in which official priestcraft chants the downfall of a dynasty?

The great stronghold of statecraft was, however, Speculation—I mean that half-prophetic view of events which we always conceded to those who looked over the world from a higher window than ourselves. What has become of this now? Who so bold as to predict what, while he is yet speaking, may be contradicted? who is there hardy enough to forecast what the events of the last half-hour may have falsified, and five minutes more will serve to publish to the whole world?

It may be amusing to read the comments of the speech or the leading article, but the "despatch" is the substance: and however clever the variations, the original melody remains unaltered. Let any one imagine to himself a five-act drama, preceded by a telegraphic intimation of all its incidents—how insupportable would the slow procession of events become after such a revelation! Up to this, Ministers performed a sort of Greek chorus, chanting in ambiguous phrase the woes that invaded those who differed from them, and the heart-corroding sorrows that sat below the "gangway." There has come an end to all this. All the dramatic devices of those days are gone, and we live in an age in which many men are their own priests, their lawyers, and their doctors, and where, certes, each man is his own prophet.

These reflections have been much impressed upon me by a ramble I took yesterday in company with one of the most agreeable of all our diplomatists—one of those men who seem to weld into their happy natures all the qualities which make good companionship, and blend with the polished manners of a courtier the dash of an Eton boy and the deep reflectiveness of a man of the world—a man to whom nothing comes wrong, and whom you would be puzzled to say whether he was more in his element at a cabinet council, or one of a shooting-party in the Highlands.

"I say, O'Dowd," cried he, after a pause of some time in our conversation, "has it never struck you that those tall poles and wires are destined to be the end of both your trade and mine, and that within a very few years neither of our occupations will have a representative left? Take my word for it," said he, more solemnly, "in less than ten years from the present date a penny-a-liner will be as rare as a posthorse, and a post-shay not more a curiosity than a minister-plenipotentiary."

"Do you really think so?"

"I am certain of it. People nowadays won't travel eight miles an hour, or be satisfied to hear of events ten days after they've happened. Life is too short for all this now, and, as we can't lengthen our days, we must shorten our incidents. We are all more or less like that gentleman Mathews used to tell us of at Boulogne, who said to the waiter, 'Let me have some-thing expensive; I am only here for an hour.' Have you ever thought seriously on the matter?"

"Never," said I.

“You ought, then,” said he. “I tell you again, we are all in the same category with flint locks and wooden ships—we belong to the past. Don’t you know it? Don’t you feel it?”

“I don’t like to feel it,” said I, peevishly.

“Nonsense!” cried he, laughing. “Self-deception does nothing in the matter, say what one will. A modern diplomatist is only a ‘smooth-Bore.’ What ‘our own correspondent’ represents, I leave to your own modesty.”

“It will be a bad day for us when the world comes to that knowledge,” said I, gloomily.

“Of course it will, but there’s no help for it. Old novels go to the trunkmakers; second-hand uniforms make the splendour of dignity-balls in the colonies: who is to say that there may not be a limbo for us also? At all events, I have a scheme for our transition state—a plan I have long revolved in my mind—and there’s certainly something in it.

“First of all realise it, as the Yankees say, that neither a government nor a public will want either of us. When the wires have told that the Grand-Duke Strong-grog-enofif was assassinated last night, or that Prince Damisseisen has divorced his wife and married a milliner, Downing Street and Printing-house Square will agree that all the moral reflections the events inspire can be written just as well in Piccadilly as from a palace on the Neva, or a den on the Danube. Gladstone will be the better pleased, and take another farthing off ‘divi-divi,’ or some other commodity in general use and of universal appreciation. Don’t you agree to that?”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t know,” drawled he out, in mimicry of my tone: “are you so conceited about your paltry craft that you fancy the world cares for the manner of it, or that there is really any excellence in the cookery? Not a bit of it, man. We are bores both of us; and what’s worse—far worse—we are bygones. Can’t you see that when a man buys a canister of prepared beef-tea, he never asks any one to pour on the boiling water—he brews his broth for himself? This is what people do with the telegrams. They don’t want you or me to come in with the kettle: besides, all tastes are not alike; one man may like his Bombardment of Charleston weaker; another might prefer his Polish Massacre more highly flavoured. This is purely a personal matter. How can you suit the capricious likings of the million, and of the million—for that’s the worst of it—the million that don’t want you? What a practical rebuke, besides, to prosy talkers and the whole long-winded race, the sharp, short tap of the telegraph! Who would listen to a narrative of Federal finance when he has read ‘Gold at 204—Chase rigged the market’? Who asks for strategical reasons in presence of ‘Almighty whipping—lost eighty thousand —Fourth Michigan skedaddled ‘?

“How graphic will description become—how laconic all comment! You will no more listen to one of the old circumlocutionary conversers than you would travel by the waggon, or make a voyage in a collier.

“How, I would ask, could the business of life go on in an age active as ours if all coinage was in copper, and vast transactions in money should be all conducted in the base metal? Imagine the great Kings of Finance counting over the debts of whole nations in penny-pieces, and you have at once a picture of what, until a few years ago, was our intellectual condition. How nobly Demosthenic our table-talk will be!—how grandly abrupt and forensic!

“There is nothing, however, over which I rejoice more than in the utter extinction of the anecdote-mongers —the insufferable monsters who related Joe Millers as personal experiences, or gave you their own versions of something in the morning papers. Thank heaven they are done for!

“Last of all, the unhappy man who used to be sneered at for his silence in company, will now be on a par with his fellows. The most bashful will be able to blurt out, ‘Poles massacred,’ ‘Famine in Ireland,’ ‘Feast at the Mansion House,’ ‘Collision at Croydon,’ ‘Bank discount eleven.’

“Who will dare to propagate scandal, when all amplification is denied him? How much adulteration will the liquor bear which is measured by drop? Nor will the least of our benefits be the long, reflective pauses—those brilliant ‘flashes of silence’ which will supersede the noise, turmoil, and confusion of what we used to call conversation. No, no, Corneli mi. The game is up. ‘Our own Correspondent’ is a piece that has run its course, and there’s nothing to do but take a farewell benefit and quit the boards.”

“If I could fall back on my pension like you, I’d perhaps take the matter easier,” said I, gruffly.

“Well, I think you ought to be pensioned. If I was a Minister, I’d propose it. My notion is this: The proper subjects for pension are those who, if not provided for by the State, are likely to starve. They are, consequently, the class of persons who have devoted their lives to an unmarketable commodity—such as poonah-painting, Berlin-wool work, despatch-writing, and suchlike. I’d include ‘penny-a-lining’—don’t be offended because you get twopence, perhaps. I’d pension the whole of them—pretty much as I’d buy off the organ-man, and request him to move on.”

“As, however,” said I, “we are not fortunate enough to figure in the Estimates, may I ask what is the grand scheme you propose for our employment?”

“I’m coming to it. I’d have reached it ere this, if you had not required such a positive demonstration of your utter uselessness. You have delayed me by what Guizot used to call ‘an obstructive indisposition to believe.’”

“Go on; I yield—that is, under protest.” “Protest as much as you like. In diplomacy a protest means, ‘I hope you won’t; but if you will, I can’t help it,’ *Vide* the correspondence about the annexation of Nice and Savoy. Now to my project. It is to start a monster hotel—one of those gigantic establishments for which the Americans are famous—in some much-frequented part of Europe, and to engage as part of the household all the ‘own time’ celebrities of diplomacy and letters. Every one knows—most of us have, indeed, felt—the desire experienced to see, meet, and converse with the noticeable men of the world—the people who, so to say, leave their mark on the age they live in—the cognate signs of human algebra. Only fancy, then, with what ecstasy would the traveller read the prospectus of an establishment wherein, as in a pantheon, all the gods were gathered around him. What would not the Yankee give for a seat at a table where the great Eltchi ladled out the soup, and the bland-voiced author of ‘The Woman in White’ lisped out, ‘Sherry, sir?’ Only imagine being handed one’s fish by the envoy that got us into the Crimean war, or taking a potato served by the accomplished writer of ‘Orley Farm’! Picture a succession of celebrities in motion around the table, and conceive, if you can, the vainglorious sentiment of the man that could say, ‘Lyons, a little more fat;’ or,

‘Carlyle, madeira;’ and imagine the luxury of that cup of tea so gracefully handed you by ‘Lost and Saved,’ and the culminating pride of taking your flat candlestick from the fingers of ‘Eleanor’s Victory.’

“Who would not cross the great globe to live in such an atmosphere of genius and grandeur? for if there be, as there may, souls dead to the charms of literary greatness, who in this advanced age of ours is indifferent to the claims of high rank and station and title? Fancy sending a K.C.B. to call a cab, or ordering a special envoy to fetch the bootjack! I dare not pursue the theme. I cannot trust myself to dwell on a subject so imbued with suggestiveness—all the varying and wondrous combinations such a galaxy of splendour and power would inevitably produce. What wit, what smartness, what epigram would abound! What a hailstorm of pleasantries, and what stories of wise aphorisms and profound reflections! How I see with my mind’s eye the literary traveller trying to overhear the Attic drolleries of the waiters as they wash up their glasses, or endeavouring to decoy Boots into a stroll with a cigar, well knowing his charming article on Dickens.

“The class-writers would of course have their specialties. ‘Soapy-Sponge’ would figure in the stable-yard, and ‘Proverbial Philosophy’ watch the trains as a touter. Fabulous prices might be obtained for a room in such an establishment, and every place at the *table-d’hôte* should be five guineas at least. For, after all, what would be an invitation to Compiègne to a sojourn here? Material advantages might possibly incline to the side of the Imperial board; but would any one presume to say that the company in the one was equal to the ‘service’ at the other? Who would barter the glorious reality of the first for the mean and shallow mockery of the last? Last of all, how widespread and powerful would be the influence of such an establishment over the manners of our time! Would Cockneyism, think you, omit its H’s in presence of that bland individual who offers him cheese? Would presumption dare to criticise in view of that ‘Quarterly’ man who is pouring out the bitter beer? What a check on the expansive balderdash of the ‘gent’ at his dessert to know and feel that ‘Adam Bede’ was behind him!

“Would Brown venture on that anecdote of Jones if the napkin-in-hand listener should be an ex-envoy renowned for his story-telling? Who would break down in his history, enunciate a false quantity, misquote a speech, or mistake the speaker, in such hearing? Some one might object to the position and to the functions I assign to persons of a certain distinction, and say that it was unworthy of an ex-ambassador to act as a hall-porter, or a celebrated prose-writer to clean the knives. I confess I do not think so. I shrewdly suspect a great deal of what we are pleased to call philosophy is only a well-regulated self-esteem, and that the man who feels himself immeasurably above another in mind, capacity, and attainments, and yet sees that other vastly superior in station and condition, has within his heart a pride all the more exalting that it is stimulated by the sense of a great injustice, and the profound consciousness that it is to himself, to his own nature, he must look to redress the balance that fortune would set against him.

“In the brilliant conversation of the servants’ hall, then, would these many gifted men take their revenge; and what stores of good stories, what endless drolleries, what views of life, and what traits of character, would they derive from the daily opportunities! It has constantly been remarked by foreigners that there is no trait of our national manners less graceful in itself than the way in which inferiors, especially menials, are addressed in England. It is alleged, perhaps with some truth, that we mark every difference of class more decisively than other nations; and certainly in our treatment of servants there is none of that same confidential tone so amusing in a French vaudeville. The scheme I now suggest will be the effective remedy for this.

“Will Jones, think you, presume to be imperative if it be Alfred Tennyson who has brought up his hot water? Will Brown be critical about the polish, if it be Owen Meredith has taken him his boots? Will even Snooks cry out, ‘Holloa, you fellow!’ to a passing waiter, if the individual so addressed might chance to be an Oriental Secretary or a Saturday Reviewer?

“And would the most infatuated of Bagmen venture on what O’Connell used to call a ‘chuck-under-the-chin manner,’ were the chamber-maid to be Margaret Maitland?

“Such, in brief, is my plan, O’Dowd; nor is the least of its advantages that it gets rid of the Pension List, and that beggarly £1200 a-year by which wealthy England assumes to aid the destitute sons and daughters of letters. As for myself, I have fixed on my station. I mean to be swimming-master, and the prospectus shall announce that His Excellency the late Minister at the Court of——-ducks ladies every morning from eight till nine. Think over the project, and drop me a hint as to the sort of place would suit you.”

ITALIAN TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

My diplomatic friend is rarely very serious in his humour; this morning, however, he was rather disposed that way, and so I took the opportunity to question him about Italy, a country where he has lived long, and whose people he certainly understands better than most Englishmen. I gathered from him that he considered the English were thoroughly well informed on Italy, but in the most hopeless ignorance as to the Italians. “As for the house and the furniture, you know it all.” said he; “but of the company you know positively nothing.”

Byron understood them better than any other Englishman. He had his admission *par la petite porte*—that is, he gained his knowledge through his vices; and the Italians were so flattered to see a great Milor adapt himself so readily to their lax notions and loose morality that they grew frank and open with him.

His pretended—I suppose it was only pretended—dislike to England disarmed them, too, of all distrust of him; and for the first time they felt themselves judged by a man who did not think Charing Cross finer than the Piazza del Popolo.

Byron’s rank and station gained him a ready acceptance where the masses of our travelling countrymen would not be received; for the Italians love rank, and respect all its gradations. Even the republics were great aristocracies; and in all their imitations of France they have never affected “equality.” They love splendour

too, and display; and in all their festivals you see something like an effort to recall a time when their cities were the grandest and their citizens the proudest in all Europe.

They are a very difficult people to understand. There are not so many salient points in the Italian as in the German or the Frenchman; his character is not so strongly accented; his traits are finer—his shades of temperament more delicate.

Besides this, there is another difficulty: one is immensely aided in their appreciation of a people by their lighter drama, which is in a measure a reflex of the daily sayings and doings of those who listen to it. Now the Italians have no comedy, or next to none; so barren are they in this respect, that more than once have I asked myself, Can there be any domesticity in a nation which has not mirrored itself on the stage? What sort of a substance can that be that never had a shadow?

The immortal Goldoni, as they print him in all the play-bills, is ineffably stupid, his characters ill drawn, his plots meagre, and his dialogue as flat as the talk of a three-volume novel. The only palpable lesson derivable from him is, that all ranks and classes stand pretty much on an equality, and that as regards modes of expression the count and his coachman are precisely on a level. There is scarcely a trait of humour in these pieces—never, by any accident, anything bordering on wit. The characters talk the veriest commonplaces, and announce the most humdrum intentions in phraseology as flat and wearisome.

Now you will ask, perhaps, Is this a fair type of the present-day habits—are the Italians of our time like those of Goldoni's? My reply would be, that it would be difficult to imagine a people who have changed less within a century. The same small topics, the same petty interests engage them. They display the same ardent enthusiasm about trifles, and the same thorough indifference to great things, as their grandfathers; and they are marvellously like the dreary puppets that the immortal dramatist has given us as their representatives.

It has been reproached to Sheridan, that no people in real life ever displayed such brilliancy in conversation as the characters in the 'School for Scandal;' and tame as Goldoni reads, I verily believe his dialogue is rather above the level of an Italian salon.

The great interests of Life, the game of politics, the contests and reverses of party, literature in its various forms, and the sports of the field, form topics which make the staple of our dinner-talk. Instead of these the Italians have their one solitary theme—the lapses of their neighbours, the scandals of the small world around them. Not that they are uncharitable or malevolent; far from it. They discuss a frailty as a board of physicians might a malady, and without the slightest thought of imputing blame to "the patient." They have now and then a hard word for an unfortunate husband, but even him they treat rather as one ignorant of conventional usages and the ways of the polite world, than as a man radically bad or cruel.

They have in their blood the old Greek sensitiveness to suffering, and they dislike painful scenes and disastrous catastrophes; and this sentiment they carry to extremes. Although they have the finest representative of Othello—Salvini—at this moment in Europe, the terrible scene of the murder of Desdemona is a shock that many would shrink from witnessing. They will bear any strain on the imagination, but their fine-strung nerves revolt against the terrible in action. To this natural refinement is owing much of that peculiar softness of manner and reluctance to disoblige which foreigners frequently mistake for some especial desire to win their favour.

The idleness which would make an Englishman awkward sits gracefully on the Italian. He knows how to "do nothing" with dignity. Be assured, if Hercules had been of Anglo-Saxon blood, Omphale would never have set him down to spin; but being what he was, I could swear he went through his tomfoolery gracefully.

And with all this, is it not strange that these are the people who furnish the most reckless political enthusiasts of the world, and who, year after year, go to the scaffold for "an idea"? There is something hysterical in this Italian nature, which prompts to paroxysms like these—some of that impulsive fury which, in the hill-tribes of India, sends down hordes of fanatics to impale themselves on British bayonets. The men like Orsini abound—calm of look, mild of speech, and gentle in manner, and yet ready to commit the greatest of crimes and confront the most terrible of deaths for a mere speculative notion—the possibility of certain changes producing certain contingencies, and of which other changes are to ensue, and Italy become something that she never was before, nor would the rest of Europe suffer her to remain, if ever she attained to it.

Wine-tasters tell us it is vain to look for a bottle of unadulterated port: I should in the same way declare that there are few rarer things to be found than a purely Italian society. The charm of their glorious climate; the beauty of their country, the splendour of their cities, rich in centuries of associations, have attracted strangers from every corner of the Old World and the New; and the salons of Italy are but caravanserais, where all nations meet and all tongues are spoken.

The Italians like this; it flatters national pride, and it suits national indolence. The outer barbarians from the Neva or the Thames have fine houses and give costly entertainments. Their sterner looks and more robust habits are meet subject for the faint little jests that are bandied in some *patois*; and each thinks himself the superior of his neighbour. But as for the home life of these people, who has seen it? What is known of it? Into that long, lofty, arched-ceilinged drawing-room, lighted by its one lamp, where sits the Signora with her daughter and the grimy-looking, ill-shaven priest, there is not, perhaps, much temptation to enter, nor is the conversation of a kind one would care to join in; and there is but this, and the noisy, almost riotous, reception after the opera, where a dozen people are contending at "Lansquenet," while one or perhaps two thump the piano, and some three or four shout rather than sing the last popular melody of the season, din being accepted as gaiety, and a clamour that would make deafness a blessing being taken for the delight of a charmed assembly.

I have been told that Cavour once said, that no great change would be accomplished in Italy till the Italians introduced the public-school system of England. So long as the youth of the country were given up for education to the priests—the most illiterate, narrow-minded, and bigoted class in Europe—so long would they carry with them through life the petty prejudices of their early days; or, in emancipating themselves from these, fall into a scepticism whose baneful distrust would damp the ardour of all patriotism, and sap the strength of every high and generous emulation. As the great statesman said, "I want Italians to be Italians,

and not to be bad Frenchmen."

With a Peninsular Eton or Rugby at work, who is to say what might not come of a people whose intellectual qualities are unquestionably so great? The system which imparts to boys the honourable sense of responsibility, the high value of truthfulness, the scorn of all that is mean,—this is what is wanting here. Let the Italian start in life with these, and it would not be easy to set limits to what his country may become in greatness.

I have never heard of a people with so little self-control; and their crimes are, in a large majority of cases, the results of some passionate impulse rather than of a matured determination to do wrong. It is by no means uncommon to find that your butler or your coachman has taken to his bed ill of a *rabbia*, as they call it—a fit of passion, in plain words, brought on by a reproof he has considered unjust. This same *rabbia* is occasionally a serious affair. Some short time ago, an actor, who was hissed off the stage at Turin, went home and died of it; and within a very few weeks, a case occurred in Florence which would be laughable if it had not terminated so tragically. One of the new guardians of the public safety, habited in a strange travestie of an English police-costume, was followed through the streets by a crowd of boys, who mocked and jeered him on his dress. Seeing that he resented their remarks with temper, they only became more aggressive, and at last went so far as to pursue him through the city with yells and cries. The man, overcome with passion, got *rabbia*, and died. Ridicule is the one thing no Italian can bear. When you lose temper with an Italian, and give way to any show of violence before him, he is triumphant; his cheek glows, his eye brightens, his chest expands, he sees he has you at a disadvantage, and regards you as one who in a moment of passion has thrown his cards on the table and exposed his hand. After this it is next to impossible to regain your position before him. If you be calm, however, and if, besides being calm, you can be sarcastic, he is overcome at once.

It is a rare thing—one of the rarest—to see this weapon employed in the debates; but when it does occur, it is ever successful. The fact is, that Wit, which forms the subtlety of other nations, is not subtle enough for the Italian; and the edge that cuts so cleanly elsewhere makes a jagged wound with them.

After all, they are very easy to live with. If the social atmosphere is not very stimulating or invigorating, it is easy to breathe, and pleasant withal; and one trait of theirs is not without its especial merit—they are less under the control of conventionalities than any people I ever heard of, and consequently have few affectations. If they do assume any little part, or play off any little game, it is with the palpable object of a distinct gain by it; never is it done for personal display or individual glory. There are no more snobs in Italy than there are snakes in Iceland; and that, after all, is, as the world goes, saying something for a people.

Of all the nations of Europe, I know of none, save Italy, in which the characters are the same in every class and gradation. The appeal you would make to the Italian noble must be the same you would address to the humble peasant on his property. The point of view is invariably identical; the sympathies are always alike. No matter what differences education may have instituted and habits implanted, the nobleman and his lackey think and feel and reason alike. Separate them how you will in station, and they will still approach the consideration of any subject in the same spirit, and regard it with the same hopes and fears, the same expectations and distrusts. To this trait, of whose existence Cavour well knew, was owing the marvellous unanimity in the nation on the last war with Austria. The appeal to the prince could be addressed, and was addressed, to the peasant. There was not an argument that spoke to the one which was not re-echoed in the heart of the other. In fact, the chain that binds the social condition of Italy is shorter than elsewhere, and the extreme links are less remote from each other than with most nations of Europe.

Every Italian is a conspirator, whether the question be the gravest or the lightest; all must be done in it ambiguously—secretly— mysteriously. Whatever is conducted openly is deemed to be done stupidly. To take a house, buy a horse, or hire a servant without the intervention of another man to disparage the article, chaffer over the price, and disgust the vendor, is an act of impetuous folly. "Why didn't you tell *me!*" says your friend, "that you wished to have that villa? My coachman is half-brother to the wife of the *fattore*. I could have learned everything that could be urged against its convenience, and learned, besides, what peculiar pressure for money affected the owner." Besides this, everything must be done as though by mere hazard: you really never knew there was a house there, never noticed it; you even sneer at the taste of the man who selected the spot, and wonder "what he meant by it." In nine cases out of ten the other party is not deceived by this skirmishing; he fires a little blank-cartridge too, and so goes on the engagement. All have great patience; life, at least in Italy, is quite long enough for all this; no one is overburdened with business; the days are usually wearisome, and the theatres are only open of an evening!

It is, besides, so pleasant and so interesting to the Italian to pit his craft against another man's, and back his own subtlety against his neighbour's. It is a sort of gambling of which he never wearies; for the game is one that demands not merely tact, address, and cunning, but face, voice, manner, and bearing. It is temperament. Individuality itself is on the table; and so is it, that you may assume it as certain that the higher organisation will invariably rise the winner.

Imagine Bull in such a combat, and you have a picture of the most hopeless incapacity. He frets, fumes, storms, and sulks; but what avails it? he is "done" in the end; but he is no more aware that the struggle he has been engaged in is an intellectual one, than was the Bourgeois Gentilhomme conscious that he had been for forty years "talking prose."

The Priest was doubtless the great originator of all this mechanism of secrecy and fraud. For centuries the Church has been the Tyrant of Italy. The whole fate and fortunes of families depended on the will of a poor, ill-clad, ignoble-looking creature, who, though he sat at meals with the master, ate and talked like a menial. To this man was known everything—all that passed beneath the roof. Not alone was he aware of the difficulties, the debts, the embarrassments of the family, but to him were confided their feelings, their shortcomings, their sorrows, and it might be their shame. From him there was nothing secret; and he sat there, in the midst of them, a sort of Fate, wielding the power of one who knew every spring and motive that could stir them, every hope that could thrill, every terror that could appal them. There was no escape from him—cold, impassive spectator of good or evil fortune, without one affection to attach him to life, grimly watching the play of passions which made men his slaves, and only interested by the exercise of a power that degraded them. The layman could not outwit him, it is true, but he could steal something of the craft that he

could not rival. This he has done; how he has employed it any one can at least imagine who has had dealings in Italy.

THE DECLINE OF WHIST.

What is the reason of the decline of Whist? Why is it that every year we find fewer players, and less proficiency in those who play? It is a far graver question than it may seem at first blush, and demands an amount of investigation much deeper than I am able to give it here.

Of course I am prepared to hear that people nowadays are too accomplished and too intellectual to be obliged to descend for their pastime to a mere game at cards; that higher topics engage and higher interests occupy them; that they read and reflect more than their fathers and grandfathers did; and that they would look down with disdain upon an intellectual combat where the gladiators might be the last surviving veterans of a bygone century.

Now, if the conversational tone of our time were pre-eminently brilliant—if people were wiser, wittier, more amusing, and more instructive than formerly—if we lived in an age of really good talkers,—I might assent to the force of this explanation; but what is the truth? Ours is, of all the times recorded by history, the dullest and dreariest: rare as whist-players are, pleasant people are still rarer. It is not merely that the power of entertaining is gone, but so has the ambition. Nobody tries to please, and the success is admirable! It is fashionable to be stupid, and we are the most modish people in the universe. It is absurd, then, in a society whose interchange of thought is expressed in monosyllables, and a certain haw-haw dreariness pervades all intercourse, to say that people are above Whist. Why, they are below Push-pin!

It would be sufficient to point to the age when Whist was most in vogue, to show that it flavoured a society second to none in agreeability; and who were the players? The most eminent divines, the greatest ministers, the most profound jurists, the most subtle diplomatists. What an influence a game so abounding in intellectual teaching must have exercised on the society where it prevailed, can scarcely be computed. Blackstone has a very remarkable passage on the great social effect produced upon the Romans by their popular games; and he goes so far as to say that society imbibes a vast amount of those conventionalities which form its laws, from an Tin-conscious imitation of the rules which govern its pastimes. Take our own time, and I ask with confidence, should we find such want of purpose as our public men exhibit, such uncertainty, such feebleness, and such defective allegiance to party, in a whist-playing age? Would men be so ready as we see them to renounce their principles, if they bore fresh in their mind all the obloquy that follows “a revoke”? Would they misquote their statistics in face of the shame that attends on “a false score”? Would they be so ready to assert what they know they must retract, if they had a recent recollection of being called on “to take down the honours”?

Think, then, of the varied lessons—moral as well as mental—that the game instils; the caution, the reserve, the patient attention, the memory, the deep calculation of probabilities, embracing all the rules of evidence, the calm self-reliance, and the vigorous daring that shows when what seems even rashness may be the safest of all expedients. Imagine the daily practice of these gifts and faculties, and tell me, if you can, that he who exercises them can cease to employ them in his everyday life. You might as well assert that the practice of gymnastics neither develops the muscle nor increases strength.

I cannot believe a great public man to have attained a fall development of his power if he has not been a whist-player; and for a leader of the House, it is an absolute necessity. Take a glance for a moment at what goes on in Parliament in this non-whist age, and mark the consequences. Look in at an ordinary sitting of the House, and see how damaging to his party that unhappy man is, who *will* ask a question to-day which this day week would be unanswerable. What is that but “playing his card out of time”? See that other who rises to know if something be true; the unlucky “something” being the key-note to his party’s politics which he has thus disclosed. What is this but “showing his hand”? Hear that dreary blunderer, who has unwittingly contradicted what his chief has just asserted—“trumping,” as it were, “his partner’s trick.” Or that still more fatal wretch, who, rising at a wrong moment, has taken “the lead out of the hand” that could have won the game. I boldly ask, would there be one—even one—of these solecisms committed in an age when Whist was cultivated, and men were brought up in the knowledge and practice of the odd trick?

Look at the cleverness with which Lord Palmerston “forces the hand” of the Opposition. Watch the rapidity with which Lord Derby pounces upon the card Lord Russell has let drop, and “calls on him to play it.” And in the face of all this you will see scores of these bland whiskered creatures Leech gives us in ‘Punch,’ who, if asked, “Can they play?” answer with a contemptuous ha-ha laugh, “I rather think not.”

To the real player, besides, Whist was never so engrossing as to exclude occasional remark; and some of the smartest and wittiest of Talleyrand’s sayings were uttered at the card-table. Imagine, then, the inestimable advantage to the young man entering life, to be privileged to sit down in that little chosen coterie, where sages dropped words of wisdom, and brilliant men let fall those gems of wit that actually light up an era. By what other agency—through what fortuitous combination of events other than the game—could he hope to enjoy such companionship? How could he be thrown not merely into their society, but their actual intimacy?

It would be easy for me to illustrate the inestimable benefits of this situation, if we possessed what, to the scandal of our age, we do not possess—any statistics of Whist. Newspapers record the oldest inhabitant or the biggest gooseberry, but tell us nothing biographical of those who have illustrated the resources and extended the boundaries of this glorious game. We even look in vain for any mention of Whist in the lives of some of its first proficients. Take Cavour, for instance. Not one of his biographers has recorded his passion for Whist, and yet he was a good player: too venturous, perhaps—too dashing—but splendid with “a strong hand!” During all the sittings of the Paris Congress he played every night at the Jockey Club, and won very

largely—some say above twenty thousand pounds.

The late Prince Metternich played well, but not brilliantly. It was a patient, cautious, back-game, and never fully developed till the last card was played. He grew easily tired too, and very seldom could sit out more than twelve or fourteen rubbers; unlike Talleyrand, who always arose from table, after perhaps twelve hours' play, fresher and brighter than when he began. Lord Melbourne played well, but had moments of distraction, when he suffered the smaller interests of politics to interfere with his combinations. I single him out, however, as a graceful compliment to a party who have numbered few good players in their ranks; for certainly the Tories could quote folly ten to one whisters against the Whigs. The Whigs are too superficial, too crotchety, and too self-opinionated to be whist-players; and, worse than all, too distrustful. A Whig could never trust his partner—he could not for a moment disabuse himself of the notion that his colleague meant to outwit him. A Whig, too, would invariably try to win by something not perfectly legitimate; and, last of all, he would be incessantly appealing to the bystanders, and asking if he had not, even if egregiously beaten, played better than his opponents.

The late Cabinet of Lord Derby contained some good players. Two of the Secretaries of State were actually fine players, and one of them adds Whist to accomplishments which would have made their possessor an Admirable Crichton, if genius had not elevated him into a far loftier category than Crichtons belong to. Rechberg plays well, and likes his game; but he is in Whist, as are all Germans, a thorough pedant. I remember an incident of his whist-life sufficiently amusing in its way, though, in relation, the reader loses what to myself is certainly the whole pungency of the story: I mean the character and nature of the person who imparted the anecdote to me, and who is about the most perfect specimen of that self-possession, which we call coolness, the age we live in can boast of.

I own that, in a very varied and somewhat extensive experience of men in many countries, I never met with one who so completely fulfilled all the requisites of temper, manner, face, courage, and self-reliance, which make of a human being the most unabashable and unemotional creature that walks the earth.

I tell the story as nearly as I can as he related it to me. "I used to play a good deal with Rechberg," said he, "and took pleasure in worrying him, for he was a great purist in his play, and was outraged with anything that could not be sustained by an authority. In fact, each game was followed by a discussion of full half an hour, to the intense mortification of the other players, though very amusing to me, and offering me large opportunity to irritate and plague the Austrian.

"One evening, after a number of these discussions, in which Rechberg had displayed an even unusual warmth and irritability, I found myself opposed to him in a game, the interest of which had drawn around us a large assembly of spectators—what the French designate as *la galerie*. Towards the conclusion of the game it was my turn to lead, and I played a card which so astounded the Austrian Minister, that he laid down his cards upon the table and stared fixedly at me.

"'In all my experience of Whist,' said he, deliberately, 'I never saw the equal of that.'

"'Of what?' asked!

"'Of the card you have just played,' rejoined he. 'It is not merely that such play violates every principle of the game, but it actually stultifies all your own combinations.'

"'I think differently, Count,' said I. 'I maintain that it is good play, and I abide by it.'

"'Let us decide it by a wager,' said he.

"'In what way?'

"'Thus: We shall leave the question to the *galerie*. You shall allege what you deem to be the reasons for your play, and they shall decide if they accept them as valid.'

"'I agree. What will you bet?'

"'Ten napoleons—twenty, fifty, five hundred if you like!' cried he, warmly.

"'I shall say ten. You don't like losing, and I don't want to punish you too heavily.'

"'There is the jury, sir,' said he, haughtily; 'make your case.'

"'The wager is this,' said I, 'that, to win, I shall satisfy these gentlemen that for the card I played I had a sufficient and good reason.'

"'Yes.'

"'My reason was this, then—I looked into your hand!'

"I pocketed his ten napoleons, but they were the last I won of him. Indeed, it took a month before he got over the shock."

It would be interesting if we had, which unhappily we have not, any statistical returns to show what classes and professions have produced the best whist-players. In my own experience I have found civilians the superiors of the military.

Diplomatists I should rank first; their game was not alone finer and more subtle, but they showed a recuperative power in their play which others rarely possessed: they extricated themselves well out of difficulties, and always made their losses as small as possible. Where they broke down was when they were linked with a bad partner: they invariably played on a level which he could never attain to, and in this way cross purposes and misunderstandings were certain to ensue.

Lawyers, as a class, play well; but their great fault is, they play too much for the *galerie*. The habit of appealing to the jury jags and blurs the finer edge of their faculties, and they are more prone to canvass the suffrages of the surrounders than to address themselves to the actual issue. For this reason, Equity practitioners are superior to the men in the courts below.

Physicians are seldom first-rate players—they are always behind their age in Whist, and rarely, if ever, know any of the fine points which Frenchmen have introduced into the game. Their play, too, is timid—they regard trumps as powerful stimulants, and only administer them in drop-doses. They seldom look at the game as a great whole, but play on, card after card, deeming each trick they turn as a patient disposed of, and not in any way connected with what has preceded or is to follow it.

Divines are in Whist pretty much where geology was in the time of the first Georges; still I have met with a bishop and a stray archdeacon or two who could hold their own. I am speaking here of the Establishment, because in Catholic countries the higher clergy are very often good players. Antonelli, for instance, might sit down at the Portland or the Turf; and even my old friend G. P. would find that his Eminence was his match.

Soldiers are sorry performers, for mess-play is invariably bad; but sailors are infinitely worse. They have but one notion, which is to play out all the best cards as fast as they can, and then appeal to their partner to score as many tricks as they have—an inhuman performance, which I have no doubt has cost many apoplexies.

On the whole, Frenchmen are better players than we are. Their game is less easily divined, and all their intimations (*invites*) more subtle and more refined. The Emperor plays well. In England he played a great deal at the late Lord Eglinton's, though he was never the equal of that accomplished Earl, whose mastery of all games, especially those of address, was perfection.

The Irish have a few brilliant players—one of them is on the bench; but the Scotch are the most winning of all British whisters. The Americans are rarely first-rate, but they have a large number of good second-class players. Even with them, however, Whist is on the decline; and Euchre and Poker, and a score more of other similar abominations, have usurped the place of the king of games. What is to be done to arrest the progress of this indifferentism?—how are we to awaken men out of the stupor of this apathy? Have they never heard of the terrible warning of Talleyrand to his friend who could not play, as he said, "Have you reflected on the miserable old age that awaits you?" How much of human nature that would otherwise be unprofitable can be made available by Whist! What scores of tiresome old twaddlers are there who can still serve their country as whisters! what feeble intelligences that can flicker out into a passing brightness at the sight of the "turned trump"!

Think of this, and think what is to become of us when the old, the feeble, the tiresome, and the interminable will all be thrown broadcast over society without an object or an occupation. Imagine what Bores will be let loose upon the world, and fancy how feeble will be all efforts of wit or pleasantry to season a mass of such incapables! Think, I say, think of this. It is a peril that has been long threatening—even from that time when old Lord Hertford, baffled and discouraged by the invariable reply, "I regret, my Lord, that I cannot play Whist," exclaimed, "I really believe that the day is not distant when no gentleman can have a vice that requires more than two people!"

ONE OF OUR "TWO PUZZLES".

The two puzzles of our era are, how to employ our women, and what to do with our convicts; and how little soever gallant it may seem to place them in collocation, there is a bond that unites the attempt to keep the good in virtue with the desire to reform the bad from vice, which will save me from any imputation of deficient delicacy.

Let us begin with the Women. An enormous amount of ingenuity has been expended in devising occupations where female labour might be advantageously employed, and where the more patient industry and more delicate handiwork of women might replace the coarser mechanism of men. Printing, bookbinding, cigar-making, and the working of the telegraph, have been freely opened—and, I believe, very successfully—to female skill; and scores of other callings have been also placed at their disposal: but, strange enough, the more that we do, the more there remains to be done; and never have the professed advocates of woman's rights been so loud in their demands as since we have shared with them many of what we used to regard as the especial fields of man's industry. Women have taken to the practice of Medicine, and have threatened to invade the Bar—steps doubtless anticipatory of the time when they shall "rise in the House" or sit on the Treasury benches. Now, I have very little doubt that we used not to be as liberal as we might in sharing our callings with women. We had got into the habit of underrating their capacities, and disparaging their fitness for labour, which was very illiberal; but let us take care that the reaction does not cany us too far on the other side, and that in our zeal to make a reparation we only make a blunder, and that we encourage them to adopt careers and crafts totally unsuited to their tastes and their powers.

It is quite clear—in fact, a mere glance at the detail of the preliminary studies will suffice to show it—that medicine and surgery should not be shared with them. For a variety of reasons, they ought not to be encouraged to take holy orders; and, on the whole, it is very doubtful if it would be a wise step to introduce them into the army, much less into the navy. Seeing this, therefore, the question naturally arises, Are women to be the mere drudges—the Helots of our civilisation? Are we only to employ them in such humble callings as exclude all ideas of future distinction? A very serious question this, and one over which I pondered for more than half an hour last night, as I lay under the influence of some very strong tea and a slight menace of gout.

Women are very haughty creatures—very resentful of any supposed slight—very aggressive, besides, if they imagine the time for attack favourable. Will they sit down patiently as makers of pill-boxes and artificial flowers? Will they be satisfied with their small gains and smaller consideration? Will there not be ambitious spirits amongst them who will ask, What do you mean to offer us? We are of a class who neither care to bind books nor draw patterns. We are your equals—if we were not distinctively modest, we might say something more than your equals—in acquirement and information. We have our smattering of physical-science humbug, as you have; we are read up in theological disputation, and are as ready as you to stand by Colenso against Moses; in modern languages we are more than your match. What have you to offer us if we are too proud, or too poor, or too anything else, to stand waiting for a buyer in the marriage-market of Belgravia? You will not suffer us to enter the learned professions nor the Service; you will not encourage us to be architects, attorneys, land-agents, or engineers. We know and we feel that there is not one of these callings either above our capacity or unsuited to our habits, but you deny us admittance; and now we ask, What is

your scheme for our employment? what project have you that may point out to us a future of independence and a station of respect? Have you such a plan? or, failing it, have you the courage to proclaim to the world that all your boasted civilisation can offer us is to become the governesses to the children of our luckier sisters? But there are many of us totally unsuited to this, brought up with ways and habits that would make such an existence something very like penal servitude—what will you do with us?

With this cry—for it became a cry—in my ears, I tried to go asleep. I counted seventeen hundred and forty-four; I thought of the sea; I imagined I was listening to Dr Cumming; and I endeavoured to repeat a distich of Martin Tupper: but the force of conscience and the congo carried the day, and I addressed myself vigorously to the question. I thought of making them missionaries, lighthouse-keepers, lunacy commissioners, Garter Kings-at-Arms, and suchlike, when a brilliant thought flashed across my brain, and, with the instinct of a great success, I saw I had triumphed. “Yes,” cried I aloud, “there is one grand career for women—a career which shall engage not alone all the higher and more delicate traits of their organisation, which will call forth their marvellous clear-sightedness and quick perception, their tact, their persuasiveness, and their ingenuity, but will actually employ the less commendable features of female nature, and find work for their powers of concealment, their craft in deception, and their passion for intrigue. How is it that we have never hit upon it before? for of all the careers meant by nature for women, was there any one could compare with Diplomacy!”

Here we have at once the long-sought-for career—the *desideratum tanti studii*—the occupation for which men are too coarse, too clumsy, too inept, and which requires the lighter touch and more delicate treatment of female fingers. It is the everyday reproach heard of us abroad, that our representatives are deficient in those smaller and nicer traits by which irritations are avoided and unpleasant situations relieved. John, they say, always imagines that to be national he must be “Bull,” and toss on his horns “all and every” that opposes him. Now, late events might have disabused foreign cabinets on this score: a quieter beast than he has shown himself need not be wished for. Still, he has bellowed, and lashed his tail, and cut a few absurd capers, to show what he would be at if provoked; but the world has grown too wise to be terrified by such exhibitions, and quietly settled down to the opinion that there is nothing to fear from him. Now, how very differently might all this have been if the Duchess of S. were Ambassador at Paris, and the Countess of C. at St Petersburg, and Lady N. at Vienna! There would have been no bluster, no rudeness, no bullying—none of that blundering about declining a Congress to-day because a Congress “ought to follow a war,” and proposing one to-morrow, “to prevent a war.” Women despise logic, and consequently would not stultify it. A temperance apostle is not likely to adulterate the liquor that he does not drink; and for this reason, female intelligence would have escaped this “muddle.” Her Ladyship would have thrown her blandishments over Rechberg—he is now of the age when men are easy victims—all the little cajoleries and flatteries of women’s art would have been exerted first to find out, and then to thwart, his policy. It is notorious that English diplomacy knows next to nothing through secret agency. Would such be the case if we had women as envoys? What mystery would stand the assault of a fine lady, trained and practised by the habits of her daily life?

They tell us that our fox-hunters would form the finest scout-cavalry in Europe; and I am convinced that a London leader of fashion—I have a dozen in my eye at this moment—would track an intrigue through all its stages, and learn its intimate details of place and time and agency, weeks before a merely male intelligence began to suspect the thing was possible.

Imagine what a blue-book would be in these times—would there be any reading could compare with it? We used to admire a certain diplomatist—a pleasant narrator of court gossip—giving, as he did, little traits of Kings and Kaisers, and telling us the way in which majesty was graciously pleased to blow his royal nose. Imagine a female pen engaged on such themes! What clever and sharp little touches would reveal the whole tone of a “reception”! We should not be told “His Majesty received me coldly,” but we would have a beautiful analysis of the royal mind in all its varied moods of displeasure, concealment, urbanity, reserve, and deception. Compared with the male version of the same incident, it would be like Faraday’s report on a case of supposed poisoning beside the blundering narrative of a country apothecary!

It is a long time—a very long time—before an old country has energy enough to throw off any of its accustomed ways. It requires the vigorous assault of young and sturdy intelligences, and, above all, immense persistence, to effect it.

Light comes very slowly indeed through the fog of centuries’ growth, and there is hope always when even the faintest flicker of a ray pierces the Boeotian cloud. Now, for some years back, it may have been remarked that a sort of suspicion has been breaking on the minds of our rulers, that the finer, the higher, and subtler organisations of women might find their suitable sphere of occupation in the diplomatic service.

“I don’t speak German, but I play the German flute,” said the apologetic gentleman; and so might we say. We don’t engage ladies in diplomacy, but we employ all the old women of our own sex! Wherever we find a well-mannered, soft-spoken, fussy old soul, with a taste for fine clothes and fine dinners, fond of court festivities, and heart and soul devoted to royalties, we promote him. If he speak French tolerably, we make him a Minister; if he be fluent, an Envoy Extraordinary.

I remember an old medical lecturer in Dublin formerly, who used to hold forth on the Materia Medica in the hall of the University, and who, seeing a “student” whose studies had been for some time before pursued in Germany, appear in the lecture-room, with a note-book and pen to take down the lecture—

“Tell that young gentleman,” said the Professor, “to put up his writing materials, for there’s not one word he’ll hear from me that he’ll not find in the oldest editions of the ‘Dublin Pharmacopoeia.’” In the same spirit our diplomatists may sneer at the call for blue-books. We have all of us had the whole thing already in the ‘Times;’ and why? Because we choose to employ unsuitable tools. We want to shave with a hatchet instead of a razor; for be it remarked, as no things are so essentially unlike as those that have a certain resemblance, there is nothing in nature so remote from the truly feminine finesse as the mind of a male “old woman.”

It is simply to the flaws and failures of female intelligence that the parallel applies. A very pleasant old parson, whom I knew when I was a boy, and who used to discourse to me much about Edmund Burke and Gavin Hamilton, told me once that he met old Primate Stewart one day returning from a visitation, and turned his horse round to accompany the carriage for some distance. “Doctor G.,” said the Archbishop, “you

remind me most strikingly of my friend Paley."

"Oh, my Lord, it is too much honour: I have not the shadow of a pretension to such distinction."

"Well, sir, it is true; I have Paley before me as I look at you."

"I am overwhelmed by your Lordship's flattery."

"Yes, sir; Paley rode just such another broken-down old grey nag as that."

Do not therefore disparage my plan for the employment of women in diplomacy by any ungenerous comparisons with the elderly ladies at present engaged in it. This would be as unfair as it is ungallant.

There are a variety of minor considerations which I might press into the cause, but some of them would appeal less to the general mind than to the official, and I omit them—merely observing what facilities it would give for the despatch of business, if the Minister, besieged, as he often now is, by lady-applicants for a husband's promotion, instead of the tedious inquiry, "Who is Mr D.?—where has he been?—what has he done?—what is he capable of?" could simply say, "Make Mrs T. Third Secretary at Stuttgart, and send Mrs O'Dowd as Vice-Consul to Simoom!"

A MASTERLY INACTIVITY.

It is no small privilege to you "gentlemen of England who live at home at ease," or otherwise, that you cannot hear how the whole Continent is talking of you at this moment. We have, as a nation, no small share of self-sufficiency and self-esteem. If we do not thank God for it, we are right well pleased to know that we are not like that Publican there, "who eats garlic, or carries a stiletto, or knouts his servants, or indulges in any other taste or pastime of 'the confounded foreigner.'" The 'Times' proclaims how infinitely superior we are every morning; and each traveller—John Murray in hand—expounds in his bad French, that an Englishman is the only European native brought up in the knowledge of truth and the wash-tub.

By dint of time, iteration, and a considerable amount of that same French I speak of, an article expressly manufactured for exportation, we really did at last persuade patient and suffering Europe to take us at our own valuation. We got them to believe that—with certain little peculiarities, certain lesser vices, rather amiable than otherwise—no nation, ancient or modern, could approach us. That we were at one and the same time the richest, the strongest, the most honourable, the most courageous people recorded in history; and not alone this, but the politest and the most conciliatory, with the largest coal-fields and the best cookery in Europe. Now, there is nothing more damaging than the witness who proves too much. Miss Edgeworth tells us somewhere, I think, of an Irish peer who, travelling in France with a negro servant, directed him, if questioned on the subject, always to say his master was a Frenchman. He was punctiliously faithful to his orders; but whenever he said, "My massa a Frenchman," he always added, "So am I."

In the same spirit has Bull gone and damaged himself abroad. He might have enjoyed an unlimited credit for his stories of English wealth and greatness—how big was our fleet, and how bitter our beer; he might have rung the changes over our just pride in our insular position and our income-tax, and none dared to dispute him; but when, in the warm expansiveness of his enthusiasm, he proceeded to say, not merely that we dressed better and dined better than the foreigner, but that our manners were more polished, our address more insinuating, and the amiability of our whole social tone more conspicuous, "Mossoo," taking him to represent all from Stockholm to Sicily, began to examine for himself, and after some hesitation to ask, "What if the wealth be only like the politeness? What if the national character be about as rude as the cookery? What if English morality turn out to be a jumble and confusion, very like English-French? Who is to tell us that the coal-fields may not be as easily exhausted as the civility?" These were very ugly doubts, and for some years back foreigners, after that slow fashion in which public opinion moves amongst them, have been turning them over and over, but in a manner that showed a great revulsion had taken place on the Continent with regard to the estimate of England.

A nation usually judges another nation by the individuals and by the Government. Now it is no calumny to say that, taking them *en masse*, the English who travel abroad, whether it be from indifference, from indolence, from a rooted confidence in their own superiority, or from some defect in character, neither win favour for themselves, nor affection for their country from foreigners. So long as we were looked upon, however, as colossal in wealth and power, a certain rude and abrupt demeanour was taken as the type of a people too practical to be polished. It grew to be thought that intense activity and untiring energy had no time to bestow on mere forms. When, however, a suspicion began to get abroad—it was a cloud no bigger at first than a man's hand—that if we had the money it was to hoard it, and if we had the power it was to withhold its exercise; that we wanted, in fact, to impose on the world by the menace of a force we never meant to employ, and to rule Europe as great financiers "bear" the Stock Exchange—then, and then for the first time, there arose that cry against England as a sham and an imposition, of which, as I said before, it is very pleasant for you at home if the sounds have not reached you.

All our late policy has led to this. Ever ready to join with France, we always leave her in the lurch. We went with her to Mexico, and left her when she landed. We did our utmost to launch her into a war for Poland, in which we had never the slightest intention of joining. Always prompt for the initiative, we stop short immediately after. I have a friend who says, "I am very fond of going to church, but I don't like going in." This is exactly the case of England. She won't go in.

Now, I am fully persuaded it would have been a mistake to have joined in the Mexican campaign. I cannot imagine such a congeries of blunders as a war for the Poles. But why entertain these questions? Why discuss them in cabinets, and debate them in councils? Why convey the false impression that you are indignant when you are indifferent, or feel sympathy for sufferings of which you will do nothing but talk?

"Masterly inactivity" was as unlucky a phrase as ever was coined. It has led small statesmanship into

innumerable blunders, and made second-rate politicians fancy that whenever they folded their arms they were dignified. To obtain the credit for a masterly inactivity, it is first of all essential you should show that you could do something very great if you would. There would be no credit in a man born deaf and dumb having observed a discreet silence. To give England, therefore, the prestige for this high quality, it was necessary that she should seem to bestir herself. The British lion must have got up, rolled his eyes fearfully, and even lashed his tail, before he resolved on the masterly inactivity of lying down again.

In Knickerbocker's 'History of New York' we have a very graphic description of the ship in which the first Dutch explorers sailed for the shores of North America. "The vessel was called the *Goede Vrouw* (Good Woman), a compliment to the wife of the President of the West India Company, who was allowed by every one, except her husband, to be a sweet-tempered lady—when not in liquor. It was, in truth, a gallant vessel of the most approved Dutch construction—made by the ablest ship-carpenters of Amsterdam, who, as is well known, always model their ships after the fair forms of their countrywomen. Accordingly, it had one hundred feet in the keel, one hundred feet in the beam, and one hundred feet from the bottom of the stern-post to the taffrel. Like the beauteous model, who was declared to be the greatest belle of Amsterdam, it was full in the bows, with a pair of enormous cat-heads, a copper-bottom, and withal a prodigious poop."

It is, however, with her sailing qualities we are more interested than with her build. "Thus she made as much lee-way as head-way—could get along nearly as fast with the wind ahead as at poop, and was particularly great in a calm." Would not one say, in reading this description, that the humorist was giving prophetically a picture of the England of the present day, making as much lee-way as head-way, none the better, wherever the winds came from, and only great in a calm? The very last touch he gives is exquisite. "Thus gallantly furnished, she floated out of harbour sideways, like a majestic goose." Can anything be more perfect; can anything more neatly typify the course the vessel of the State is taking, "floating out sideways, like a majestic goose!" amidst the jeers and mockeries of beholding Europe.

Our whole policy consists in putting forward some hypothetical case, in which, if certain other states were to do something which would cause another country to do something else, then England would be found in that case—— God forgive me!

I was going to quote some of that balderdash which reminds one of 'The Rivals,' where Acres says, "If you had called me a poltroon, Sir Lucas!"

"Well, sir, and if I had?"

"In that case I should have thought you a very ill-bred man."

See what it is to have a literary Foreign Secretary; see how he goes back to our great writers, not alone for his style, but his statesmanship. We have been insulted, mocked, and sneered at; our national honour derided, our national strength defied; but we are told it is all right: our policy is a "masterly inactivity," and the Funds are at ninety-one and one-eighth!

The 'Times.' too, is of the same cheery and encouraging spirit, and philosophically looks on the misfortunes of our friends pretty much as friends' misfortunes are usually regarded in life—occasions for a tender pity, and a hopeful trust in Providence. Let them—the writer speaks of the Allied armies—let them go on in the career of rapine and cruelty; let them ravage the Duchies and dismember Denmark; but a time will come when the terrible example of unlawful aggression shall be retorted upon themselves, and the sorrows of Schleswig be expiated on the soil of the Fatherland.

"They are going to hang Larry," cried the wife of a condemned felon to the lawyer, who had hurried into court, having totally forgotten he had ever engaged to defend the prisoner.

"Let them hang him, and I'll make it the dearest hanging ever they hanged."

These may be words of comfort in Downing Street. I wonder what the Danes think of them?

A NEW HANSARD.

There is an annual publication called the 'Wreck Register,' which probably few of us have ever seen, if even heard of. Its object is to record all the wrecks which have occurred during the preceding year, accompanying the narrative by such remarks or observations as may contribute to explain each catastrophe, or offer likelihood of prevention in future. It is, though thoroughly divested of any sensational character, one of the dreariest volumes one can take up. Disaster follows disaster so fast, that at length the reader begins to imagine that shipwreck is the all but invariable event of a voyage, and that they who cross the ocean in safety are the lucky mortals of humanity.

Fortunately, however, long as the catalogue of misfortune is, this is not the case, and we have the satisfaction of learning that the percentage of loss is decreasing with every year. The higher knowledge and attainments of merchant captains, and the increase of refuge harbours, are the chief sources of this security. The old ignorance, in which a degree or two of latitude more or less was a light error in a ship's reckoning, is now unheard of, and they who command merchant-ships in our day are a very well informed and superior order of men. With reference to the conduct and capacity of these captains, this 'Wreck Register,' is a very instructive publication. If, for instance, you find that Captain Brace, who was wrecked on the Azores in '52, was again waterlogged at sea in '61, and ran into an iceberg off Newfoundland in '62, you begin, mayhap unfairly, to couple him too closely with disaster, and you turn to the inquest over his calamities to see what estimate was formed of his conduct. You learn, possibly, that in one case he was admonished to more caution; in another, honourably acquitted; and in the last instance smartly reprimanded, and his certificate suspended for six months or a year. Now, though you have never heard of Captain Brace in your life, nor are probably likely to encounter him on sea or land, you cannot avoid a certain sense of relief at the thought that so unlucky a commander, to say the least of it, is not likely for a while to imperil more lives, and that the

warning impressed by his fate will also be a salutary lesson to many others.

It was in reflecting over this system of inquiry and sentence, that it occurred to me what to admirable thing it would be to introduce the 'Wreck Register' into politics, and to have a yearly record of all parliamentary shipwrecks; all the bills that foundered, the motions that were stranded, the amendments lost in a fog!—to be able to look back and reflect over the causes of these disasters, investigating patiently how and why and where they happened, and asking ourselves, Have we any better security for the future? are we better acquainted with the currents, the soundings, or the headlands? and, above all, what amount of blame, if any, is attributable to the commander?

If we find, for instance, that the barque Young Reform, no matter how carefully fitted out for sea—new sheathed and coppered, with bran-new canvass, and a very likely crew on board—never leaves the port that she does not come back crippled; and that old and experienced captains, however confidently they may take the command at first, frankly own that they'll never put foot in her again, you very naturally begin to suspect that there's something wrong in her build. She is either too unwieldy, like the Great Eastern, or she is too long to turn well, or she requires such incessant repair; or, most fatal of all, she is entered for a trade where nobody wants her; and therefore you resolve that, come what will, you'll avoid her.

What an inestimable benefit to the student of politics would a few such brief notices be, instead of sending him, as we send him now, to the dreary pages of Hansard! Imagine what a neat system of mnemonics would grow out of the plan, when, instead of poring over interminable columns of tiresome repetition, you had the whole narrative in few words—thus: "Barque Reform, John Russell, commander, lost A.D. 1854 The Commissioners seeing that this vessel was built for the most part of old materials, totally unseaworthy, are of opinion that she ought not to have sailed at all; and severely censure the commander, J. R, for foolhardiness and obstinacy, he having, as it has been proved, acted in entire opposition to 'his owners.' On the pressing recommendation, however, of the owners, and at the representation that E. has been long in the service, and is, although too self-confident, a very respectable man, his certificate has been restored to him."

Lower down comes the entry:—

"The Young Reform.—This was a full-rigged ship, in great part constructed on the lines of the barque lost in 1854. She sailed on the 28th February 1859, commanded by Captain Dizzy. No insurance could be effected upon her on any terms, as the crew were chiefly apprentices, and a very mutinous spirit aboard. She put back, completely crippled, after three days' stormy weather; and though the commander averred that some enemies of his owners had laid down false buoys in the channel, he was not listened to by the Commissioners, who withheld his certificate. Has never been employed since, and his case by many considered a very hard one."

Of course, all the small class of coasting vessels—railroad bills and suchlike—suffer great losses. They are usually ill-found and badly manned; but now and then we come upon curious escapes, where a measure slips through unobserved, like a blockade-runner; and it is ten to one in such cases they have that crafty old pilot Pam on board, who has been more than fifty years at sea, and is as wide awake now as on his first day.

What analogies press in on every hand! Look at the way each party bids for and buys up the old materials of the other, fancying they have some "lines" of their own that will turn out a clipper to beat everything. And think of those "Sailors' Homes," where old salts chew their quids at ease—those snug permanent Under-Secretaryships, those pleasant asylums in the Treasury or the Mint! Picture to your mind the dark den in Downing Street, where the Whipper-in confers in secret, and have you not at once before you the shipping-office, and the crimp, and the "ordinary seaman" higgling for an extra ten shillings of wages, or begging that his grog may not be watered? And, last of all, see the old lighthouse-keepers, the veteran First Clerks who serve every Administration, and keep their lamps bright for all parties—a fine set of fellows in their way, though some people will tell you that they have their favourites too, and are not so brisk about the fog-signals if they don't like the skipper.

I think I have done enough to show that such a work as I speak of would redound to public benefit; and I only ask, if my suggestion be approved of, that I may be remembered as the inventor, and not treated as Admiralty Lords do the constructors of new targets, testing the metal and torturing the man. Bear in mind, therefore, if the political 'Wreck Register' be ever carried into execution, its device must be "O'Dowdius fecit."

It might not be amiss, in the spirit that has suggested this improvement, to organise in connection with the proceedings of the House a code of signals on the plan of Admiral Fitzroy's storm-signals, and which, from the great tower, or some similar eminence, might acquaint members what necessity for their presence existed. Fancy, for instance, the relief an honourable gentleman would experience on seeing the fine-weather flag up, and knowing thereby that something of no moment was being discussed—a local railroad, a bill to enable some one to marry his grandmother, or a measure for Ireland! Imagine the fog-signal flying, and see how instantaneously it would he apprehended that D. G. was asking the noble Lord at the head of the Government a question so intensely absurd as to show a state of obscurity in his own faculties, in comparison to which fog is a thin atmosphere! Or mark what excitement would be felt as the storm-drum was hoisted, telling how the Government craft was being buffeted and knocked about, and the lifeboat of the Opposition manned to take charge of the ship if abandoned! What a mercy to those poor, hard-worked, harassed, and wearied "whips"! what a saving there would be in club-frequenting and in cab-hire! Now would the lounger, as he strolled along Pall-Mall, say, "No need to hurry." "light airs of wind from the east" means a member for Galway and some balderdash about the Greeks. "Thick weather in the Channel" implies troubles in Ireland—nothing very new or interesting. "Dirty weather to the east'ard" would show mischief in the Danubian provinces, and a general sense of unquiet in the regions of the Sultan Redcliffe. These are hints which I have not patented, and the chances are that "My Lords" will speedily adopt them, and call them their own.

FOREIGN CLUBS.

How is it, will any one tell me, that all foreign Clubs are so ineffably stupid? I do not suspect that we English are pre-eminent for social gifts; and yet we are the only nation that furnishes clubable men. Frenchmen are wittier, Germans profounder, Russians—externally at least—more courteous and accommodating; and yet their Clubs are mere *tripots*—gambling establishments; and, except play, no other feature of Club-life is to be found in them.

To give a Club its peculiar "cachet"—its, so to say, trade-mark—you require a class of men who make the Club their home, and whose interest it is that all the internal arrangements should be as perfect, as well ordered, and frictionless as may be. Good furniture, good servants, good lighting, good cookery, well-adjusted temperature, and a well-chosen cellar, are all essentials. In a word, the Club is to be the realisation of what we all think so much of—comfort. Now, how very few foreigners either understand or care for this! Every one who has travelled abroad has seen the "Cercle," or "L'Union," or whatever its name be, where men of the highest station—ministers, ambassadors, generals, and suchlike—met to smoke and play whist, with a sanded floor, a dirty attendance, and yet no one ever complained. They drank detestable beer, and inhaled a pestilent atmosphere, and sat in draughts, without a thought that there was anything to be remedied, or that human skill could or need contrive anything better for their accommodation.

When these establishments were succeeded by the modern Club, with its carpeted floor, silk hangings, ormolu lamps, and velvet couches, the change was made in a pure spirit of Anglomanie; somebody had been over to London, and come back full of the splendours of Pall-Mall. The work of imitation, so far as decoration went, was not difficult. Indeed, in some respects, in this they went beyond us, but there ended the success. The Club abroad is a room where men gamble and talk of gambling, but no more; it is not a Club.

For the working of the Club, as for that of constitutional government, a special class are required. It, is the great masses of the middle ranks in England, varied enough in fortune, education, habits, and tastes, but still one in some great condition of a status, that supply the materials for the work of a parliamentary government; and it is through the supply of a large community of similar people that Clubs are maintained in their excellence with us.

For the success of a Club you need a number of men perfectly incapable of all life save such as the Club supplies; who repair to the Club, not alone to dine and smoke and sup, and read their paper, but to interchange thought in that blended half-confidence that the Club imparts; to hear the gossip of the day told in the spirit of men of their own leanings; to ascertain what judgments are passed on public events and public characters by the people they like to agree with;—in fact, to give a sort of familiar domestic tone to intercourse, suggesting the notion that the Club is a species of sanctuary where men can talk at their ease. The men who furnish this category with us are neither young nor old, they are the middle-aged, retaining some of the spring and elasticity of youth, but far more inclining to the solidity of riper years. If they frequent the Opera, it is to a stall, not to the *coulisses*, they go. They are more critical than they used to be about their dinners, and they have a tendency to mix seltzer with their champagne. They have reached that bourne in which egotism has become an institution; and by the transference of its working to the Club, they accomplish that marvellous creation by which each man sees himself and his ways and his wants and his instincts reflected in a thousand varied shapes.

Now, there are two things no nation of the Continent possesses—Spring, and middle-aged people. You may be young for a good long spell—some have been known, by the judicious appliances of art, to keep on for sixty years or so; but when you do pass the limit, there is no neutral territory—no *mezzo termine*. Fall out of the Young Guard, and you must serve as a Veteran. The levity and frivolity, the absence of all serious interest in life, which mark the leisure classes abroad, follow men sometimes even to extreme old age. The successive changes of temperament and taste which we mark at home have no correlatives abroad. The foreigner inhabits at sixty the same sort of world he did at six-and-twenty: he does not dance so much, but he lingers in the ballroom, and he is just as keenly alive to all the little naughty talk that amused him forty years ago, and folly as much interested to hear that the world is just as false and as wicked as it used to be when he was better able to contribute to its frailty and wickedness.

Not one of these men, with their padded pectorals and dyed whiskers, will admit that they are of an age to require comfort. They are ardent youths all of them, turning night into day as of old, and no more sensible of fatigue from late hours, hot rooms, and dissipation, than they were a quarter of a century back.

Can you fancy anything less clubable than a set of men like this? You might as well set before me the stale bon-bons and sugar-plums of a dessert for a dinner, as ask me to take such people for associates and companions. The tone of everlasting trifling disgraces even idleness; and these men contrive in their lives to reverse the laws of physics, since it is by their very levity that they fall.

The humoristic temperament is the soul of Club-life. It is the keen appreciation of others in all their varied moods and shades of feeling that imparts the highest enjoyment to that strange democracy, the Club; and foreigners are immensely deficient in this element. They are infinitely readier, smarter, and wittier than Englishmen. They will hit in an epigram what we would take an hour to embrace in an argument; but for the racy pleasure of seeing how such a man will listen to this, what such another will say to that, how far individuality, in fact, will mould and fashion the news of the day, and assimilate its mental food to its own digestive powers, there is nothing like the Englishman—and especially the Englishman of the Club.

There is nothing like Major Pendennis to be found from Trolhatten to Messina, and yet Pendennis is a class with us; and it is in the nicely-blended selfishness and complaisance, the egotism and obligingness, that we find the purest element of Club-life.

The Parisian are the best—far and away the best—of all foreign Clubs; best in their style of "get-up," decoration, and arrangement, and best also in tone and social manner. The St Petersburg Club is the most gorgeous, the habits the most costly, the play the highest. It is not very long since that a young Russian noble lost in one evening a sum equal to a hundred thousand pounds. The Vienna Club is good in its own stiff German way; but, generally speaking, German Clubs are very ill arranged, dirty, and comfortless. The Italian

are better. Turin, Naples, and Florence have reasonably good Clubs. Home has nothing but the thing called the English Club, a poorly-got-up establishment of small whist-players and low “points.”

It is a very common remark, that costume has a great influence over people’s conduct, and that the man in his shooting-jacket will occasionally give way to impulsive outbursts that he had never thought of yielding to in his white-cravat moments. Whether this be strictly true or not, there is little doubt that the style and character of the room a man sits in insensibly affects his manner and his bearing, and that the habits which would not be deemed strange in the low-ceilinged chamber, with the sanded floor and the “mutton lights,” would be totally indecorous in the richly-carpeted room, a blaze of wax-light, and glittering with decoration. Now this alternating between Club and *Café* spoils men utterly. It engenders the worst possible style—a double manner. The over-stiffness here and the over-ease there are alike faulty.

The great, the fatal defect of all foreign Clubs is, the existence of some one, perhaps two tyrants, who, by loud talk, swagger, an air of presumed superiority and affectation of “knowing the whole thing,” browbeat and ride rough-shod over all their fellows. It is in the want of that wholesome corrective, public opinion, that this pestilence is possible. Of public opinion the Continent knows next to nothing in any shape; and yet it is by the unwritten judgments of such a tribunal that society is guided in England, and the same law that discourages the bully supports and encourages the timid, without either the one or the other having the slightest power to corrupt the court, or coerce its decrees. Club-life is, in a way, the normal school for parliamentary demeanour; and until foreigners understand the Club, they will never comprehend the etiquette of the “Chamber.”

A HINT FOR C. S. EXAMINERS.

I have frequently heard medical men declare that no test of a candidate’s fitness to be admitted as a physician was equal to a brief examination at the bedside of a sick man. To be able to say, “There is a patient; tell us his malady, and what you will do for it,” was infinitely better than long hours spent in exploring questions of minute anatomy and theoretical physic. In fact, for all practical purposes, it was more than likely he would be the best who would make the least brilliant figure in an examination; and the man whose studies had familiarised him with everything from Galen to John Hunter, would cut just as sorry a figure if called on to treat a case of actual malady.

It cannot possibly be otherwise. All that mere examination can effect, is to investigate whether an individual has duly prepared himself for the discharge of certain functions; but it never can presume to ascertain whether the person is one fitted by nature, by habit, by taste, or inclination, for the duties before him. Why, the student who may answer the most abstruse questions in anatomy, may himself have nerves so weak as to faint at the sight of blood. The physician who has Paracelsus by heart, may be so deficient in that tact of eye, or ear, or touch, as to render his learning good for nothing. Half an hour in an hospital would, however, test these qualities. You would at once see whether the candidate was a mere mass of book-learning, or whether he was one skilled in the aspect of disease, trained to observe and note all the indications of malady, and able even instantaneously to pronounce upon the gravity of a case before him. This is exactly what you want. No examination of a man’s biceps and deltoid, the breadth of his chest or the strength of his legs, would tell you whether he was a good swimmer—five minutes in deep water would, however, decide the matter.

Now, I shall not multiply arguments to prove my position. I desire to be practical in these “O’Dowdiana,” and I strive not to be prosy. What I would like, then, is to introduce this system of—let us call it—Test-examination, into the Civil Service.

I have the highest respect for the pedagogues of Burlington House. I think highly of Ollendorff and I believe Colenso’s Arithmetic a great institution. I venerate the men who invent the impossible questions; but I own I have the humblest opinion of those who answer them. I’d as soon take a circus-horse, trained to fire a pistol and sit down like a dog, to carry me across a stiff country, as I’d select one of these fellows for an employ which required energy, activity, or ready-wittedness. There is no such inefficiency as self-sufficiency; and this is the very quality instilled by the whole system. Ask the veterans of the Admiralty, the War Office, the Board of Trade, and the Customs, and you will get but the same report, that for thorough incompetency and inordinate conceit there is nothing like the prize candidate of a Civil Service examination. Take my word for it, you could not find a worse pointer than the poodle which would pick you out all the letters of the alphabet.

What I should therefore suggest is, to introduce into the Civil Service something analogous to this clinical examination; something that might test the practical fitness of the candidate, and show, not whether the man has been well prepared by a “grinder,” but whether he be a heaven-born tide-waiter, one of Nature’s own gaugers or vice-consuls.

I know it is not easy to do this in all cases. There are employments, too, wherein it is not called for. Mere clerkship, for instance, is an occupation of such uniformity that a man is just like a sewing-machine, and where, the work being adjusted to him, he performs it as a matter of routine. There are, however, stations which are more or less provocative of tact and ready-wittedness, and which require those qualities which schoolmasters cannot give nor Civil Service examiners take away; such as tact, promptitude, quickness in emergency, good-natured ease, patience, and pluck above all. These, I say, are great gifts, and it would be well if we knew how to find them. Let us take, by way of illustration, the Messenger Service. These Foreign Office Mercuries, who travel the whole globe at a pace only short of the telegraph, are wonderful fellows, and must of necessity be very variously endowed. What capital sleepers, and yet how easily awakened! What a deal of bumping must their heads be equal to! What an indifference must they be endowed with to bad roads and bad dinners, bad servants and bad smells! How patient they must be here—how peremptory there! How they must train their stomach to long fastings, and their skins to little soap! What can Civil Service examination discover of all or any of these aptitudes? Is it written in Ollendorf, think you, how many hours a

man can sit in a caleche? Will decimal fractions support his back or strengthen his lumbar vertebrae? What system of inquiry will declare whether the weary traveller will not oversleep himself, or smash the head of his postilion for not awaking him at a frontier? How will you test readiness, endurance, politeness, familiarity with ‘Bradshaw’ and Continental moneys?

I think I have hit on a plan for this, suggested to me, I frankly own, by analogy with the clinical system. I would lay out the Green Park—it is convenient to Downing Street, and well suited to the purpose—as a map of Europe, marking out the boundaries of each country, and stationing posts to represent capital cities. At certain frontiers I would station representatives of the different nations as distinctly marked as I could procure them: that is to say, I’d have a very polite Frenchman, a very rude and insolent Prussian, a sulky Belgian, a roguish Italian, and an extremely dirty Russian. Leicester Square could supply all. It being all duly prepared, I’d start my candidate, with a heavy bag filled with its usual contents of, let us say, a large box of cigars, a set of fire-irons, twenty pots of preserved meats, a case of stuffed birds, four cricket-balls, and a photograph machine, some blue-books, and a dozen of blacking. I’d start him with this, saying simply, “Vienna, calling at Stuttgart and Turin;” not a word more; and then I’d watch my man—how he’d cross the Channel—how he’d cajole Moossoo—and whether he’d make straight for the Rhine or get entangled in Belgian railroads. I’d soon see how he dealt with the embarrassments of the roads and relished the bad diet; and not alone would I test him by hardships and hunger, fatigue and occasional upsets; but I’d try his powers of self-resistance by surrounding him with dissolute young *attachés* given to blind hookey and lansquenet. I’d have him invited to ravishing orgies, and tempted in as many ways as St Anthony; and all these after long privations. Then, I’d have him kept waiting either under a blazing sun or a deep snow, or both alternately, to test his cerebral organisation; and I’d try him with impure drinking water and damp sheets; and, last of all, on his return, I’d make him pass his accounts before some old monster of official savagery, who would repeatedly impugn his honesty, call out for vouchers, and d—n his eyes. The man “who came out strong” after all these difficulties I would accept as fully equal to his responsibilities, for it would not be alone in intellectuals he had been tested: the man’s temper, his patience, his powers of endurance, his physical strength, his resources in emergency, his readiness to meet difficulty, and, last of all, his self-devotion in matters of official discipline, enabling him to combine with all the noble qualities of a man the submissive attractions of a spaniel.

“Are you sure,” asks some one, “that all these graces and accomplishments can be had for £500 per annum?” Not a doubt of it. It is a cheap age we live in; and if you wanted a shipload of clever fellows for a new colony, I’d engage to supply you on easier terms than with the same number of gardeners or strong-boned housemaids.

Last of all, this scheme might be made no small attraction in this economical era—what is called self-supporting; for the public might be admitted to paid seats, whence they could learn European geography by a new and easy method. “Families admitted at a reduced rate—Schools and Seminaries half-price.”

OF SOME OLD DOGS IN OFFICE.

Whenever the Budget comes on for discussion there are some three or four speakers, of whom Mr Williams of Lambeth is sure to be one, ready to suggest certain obvious economies by the suppression of some foreign missions, such as Dresden, Hanover, Stuttgart, &c. They have not, it is true, anything forcible or pungent to say on the subject; but as they say the same thing every year, the chances are that, on the drip-drip principle, they will at last succeed either in abolishing these appointments, or reducing the salaries of those who hold them.

Ministers of course defend them, and Opposition leaders, who hope one day to be Ministers, will also blandly say a word or two in their favour. For my own part, I don’t think the country cares much about the matter, or interests itself more deeply who drones away life at Hanover than who occupies an apartment at Hampton Court. In each case it is a sort of dowager asylum, where antiquated respectability may rest and be thankful.

The occupants of these snug berths, however far from England—at least in so far as regards any knowledge of public opinion—are sure to be greatly alarmed at these suggestions for their suppression. Poor pigeons! if you only knew what a sorry sportsman it is who fires at you, you’d never flutter a wing. Be of good heart, I say. Even if Williams’s gun go off at all, the recoil may hurt himself, but it will never damage you. Take my word for it, “the smooth-Bore of Lambeth never hit anything yet.” This assurance of mine—I have given it scores of times personally—never gives the comfort that it ought; for these timid souls, bullied by long dealings with the Office—tormented, as Mr Carlyle would say, with much First Clerk—grow to be easily panic-stricken, and have gloomy nightmares of a time when there shall be no more life-certificates nor any quarter-days.

I cannot enter into their feelings, but I suppose they are reasonable. I conclude that one would like to have a salary, and to be paid it punctually. Self-preservation is a law that we all recognise; and some of these officials may possibly feel that there is no other line of life open to them, and that, if you take away from them their mission, they will be poor indeed. You will think me perhaps as absurd as Mrs Nickleby, who connected roast-pork and canaries, if I confess to you that it is an old mastiff that my father had when I was a boy that brought these people very forcibly to my mind. Poor old Turco!—I can’t know how old he was, but he was nearly blind, exceedingly feeble, intensely stupid, and much given to sleep. Still, whenever any one of the family—he didn’t mind the servants—would go out to the stableyard, he’d rouse himself up, and, affecting to believe it was an intruder, he’d give a fierce bark or two, when, discovering his error, he’d wag his tail and go back to his den—all this being evidently done to show that he was as vigilant as ever—a sort of protest, that said, “Don’t believe one word about my being blind and toothless, still less flatter yourself that the place is

secure. It requires all my activity and watchfulness to protect; but go back in peace, I'm ready for them."

Now, this is exactly what Turco is doing at Munich and Dresden. Whenever Williams comes out with a hint that he is not wanted, Turco makes a furious noise, rushes here and there after a turkey-cock if he can find one, and thoroughly satisfies the family that he is an invaluable beast, and could not be dispensed with.

Like Turco, too, who always barked, or tried to bark, whenever he heard any noise or commotion going on outside, these people are sure to make an uproar if there be any excitement in their neighbourhood. No sooner did Schleswig-Holstein begin to trouble the world, than despatches began to pour in from places that a few weeks before even the messengers scarcely knew on the map. They related interviews with unknown princes and unheard-of ministers, and spoke of hopes, fears, wishes, and anxieties of people who had not, to our appreciation, a more palpable existence than the creatures of the heathen mythology! Much grumbling, and sore of ear, Williams goes back to his kennel.

"What! suppress the mission at Hohen-Schwein-stadt, when I hold here," exclaims the Minister, "the admirable report of our diplomatic agent on the state of public feeling in that important capital? Will the honourable gentleman, to whose long experience of foreign politics I am ready to bow, inform me how the relations of England with the Continent are to be carried on unless through the intervention of such appointments? Can the honourable member for ———" (a shipowner, perhaps) "carry on his great and important business without agencies? Can the honourable gentleman himself" (a brewer) "be certain that the invigorating and admirable produce of his manufacture will attain the celebrity that it merits, or become the daily beverage of countless thousands in the tropics, unassisted by those aids which to commerce or diplomacy are alike indispensable?" This is very like the Premier's eloquence. I almost think I am listening to him, and even see the smile of triumph with which he appeals at the peroration to his friends to cheer him. Turco is safe this time; and, better still, he need never bark again till next Easter and another Budget.

It is a very curious thing—it opens a whole realm of speculation—how small and few are the devices of humanity. We fancy we are progressing simply because we change. We give up alchemy, and we believe in medicine; we scout witchcraft, and we take to spirit-rapping; and instead of monasteries and monks, we have missions and plenipotentiaries. If it be a fine thing to die for one's country, it's a pleasant one to live for it; to know that you inhabit an impenetrable retreat, which no "Own Correspondents" ever invade, and where, if it was not for Williams, no sense of fear or alarm could come to disturb the tranquil surface of a stagnant existence.

It is astonishing, too, what a wholesome dread and apprehension of England and English power is maintained through the means of these small legations in secluded spots of the Continent, in remote little duchies, without trade or commerce, far away from the sea, where no one ever heard of imports or exports, and the name of Gladstone had never been spoken. In such places as these, a meddlesome old envoy, with plenty of spare time on hand, often gets us thoroughly hated, always referring to England as a sort of court of last appeal on every question, social, moral, religious, or political, and dimly alluding to Lord Palmerston as a kind of Rhadamanthus, whose judgments fall heavily on ill-doers.

The helpless hopeless condition of small states in all such conflicts was actually pitiable. The poor little trembling King Charles dog in the cage of the lion, and who felt that he only lived on sufferance, was the type of them. I remember an incident which occurred some years ago at the Bagni di Lucca, which will illustrate what I mean. An English stranger at one of the hotels, after washing his hands, threw his basinful of soap-and-water out of the window just as the Grand-duke was passing, deluging his imperial highness from head to foot. The stranger hurried at once to the street, and, throwing himself before the dripping sovereign, made the most humble and apologetic excuses for his act; but the Grand-duke stopped him short at once, saying, "There, there! say no more of it: don't mention the matter to any one, or I shall get into a correspondence with Palmerston, and be compelled to pay a round sum to you for damages!"

After all, one could say for these small posts in diplomacy what, I think it was Croker said for certain rotten boroughs in former days, "If you had not had such posts, you would have lost the services of a number of able and instructive men, who, entering public life by the small door, are sure to leave it by the grand entrance."

These small missions are very often charming centres of society in places one would scarcely hope for it; and from these little-known legations, every now and then, issue men whom it would not be safe for Williams to bark at, and whom, even if he were rabid, he would not bite.

DECLINE OF THE DRAMA.

What a number of ingenious reasons have been latterly given for the decline of the Drama, and the decrease of interest now felt for the stage. Some aver that people are nowadays too cultivated, too highly educated, to take pleasure in a play; others opine that the novel has supplanted the drama; others again declare that it is the prevalence of a religious sentiment on the subject that has damaged theatrical representation. For my own part, I take a totally different view of the subject. My notion is this: the world will never pay a high price for an inferior article, if it can obtain a first-rate one for nothing; in other words, people are come to the conclusion that the best actors are not to be found on the boards of the Haymarket or the Adelphi, but in the world at large—at the Exchange, in the parks, on railroads or river-steamers, at the soirées of learned societies, in Parliament, at Civic dinners or Episcopal visitations.

Why has the masquerade ceased to interest and amuse? Simply because no travestie of costume, no change of condition, is so strikingly ludicrous as what we see on every side of us. The illiterate man with the revenue of a prince; the millionaire who cannot write his name, and whom yesterday we saw as a navvy; the Emperor who, a few years back, lodged over the bootmaker's; the out-at-elbow followers of imperial fortune, now raised to the highest splendour, and dispensing hospitalities more than regal in magnificence;—these are the

spectacles which make the masquerade a tiresome mockery; and it is exactly because we get the veritable article for nothing that we neither seek playhouse nor ballroom, but go out into the streets and highways for our drama, and take our Kembles and Macreadys as we find them at taverns, at railway-stations, on the grassy slopes of Malvern, or the breezy cliffs of Brighton. Once admit that the wild-flower plucked at random has more true delicacy of tint and elegance of form, and there is no going back to the tasteless mockery of artificial wax and wire. The broad boards of real life are the true stage; and he who cannot find matter of interest or amusement in the piece performed, may rely upon it that the cause is in himself, and not in the drama. Some will say, The world is just what it always was. People are no more fictitious now than at any other time. There was always, and there will be always, a certain amount of false pretension in life which you may, if you like, call acting. And to this I demur *in toto*, and assert that as every age has its peculiar stamp of military glory, or money-seeking, or religious fervour, or dissipation, or scientific discovery, or unprofitable trifling, so the mark of our own time will be found to be its thorough unreality. Every one is in travestie. Selfishness is got up to play philanthropy, apathy to perform zeal, intense self-seeking goes in for love of country; and, to crown all, one of the most ordinary and vulgar minds of all Europe now directs and disposes of the fate and fortunes of all Christendom.

Daily habit familiarises us with the acting of the barrister. His generous trustfulness, his love of all that is good, his scorn for Vice, his noble pity, and the withering sarcasm with which he scathes the ill-doer, we know, can be had, in common cases, for ten pounds ten shillings; and five times as much will enlist in our service the same qualities in a less diluted form; while, by quadrupling the latter sum, we arrive at a self-devotion before which brotherly love pales, and old friendships seem a cold and selfish indifferentism. We had contracted for this man’s acuteness, his subtlety, his quick perception, and his ready-wittedness; but he gives, besides these, his hearty trustfulness, his faith in our honour, his conviction in our integrity: he knows our motives; he has been inside our bosom, and comes out to declare that all is pure and spotless there; and he does this with a trembling lip and a swelling throat, the sweat on his brow and the tear in his eye, it being all the while a matter of mere accident that he had not been engaged on the opposite side, and all the love he bears us been “briefed” for the defendant.

Look at the physician, too. Who is it, then, enters the sick-room with the footfall of a cat, and draws our curtain as gently as a zephyr might stir a rose-leaf, whose tender accents fall softly on our ear, and who asks with the fondest anxiety how we have passed the night? Who is it that cheers, consoles, encourages, and supports us? Who associates himself with our sufferings, and winces under our pain, and as suddenly rallies as we grow better, and joins in our little sickbed drolleries? Who does all these?—a consummate actor, who takes from thirty to forty daily “benefits,” and whose performances are paid at a guinea a scene!

The candidate on the hustings, the Government commissioner on his tour of inspection, the vicar-general of my lord bishop, the admiral on his station, the minister at the grand-ducal Court, are all good specimens of common acting—parts which can be filled with very ordinary capacities, and not above the powers of everyday artists. They conjugate but one verb, and on its moods and tenses they trade to the end of the chapter. These men never soar into the heroic regions of the drama; they infuse no imagination into their parts. They are as unpoetical as a lord-in-waiting. There are but two stops on their organ. They are bland, or they are overbearing; they are either beautifully gentle, or they are terrible in their wrath.

It is a strange feature of our age that the highest walk of the real-life drama should be given up to the men of money, and that Finance should be the most suggestive of all that is creative, fanciful, and imaginative. What a commentary on our era! It is no paradox I pronounce here. The greatest actor I ever saw, the most consummate artist, was a railroad contractor; that is, he had more persuasiveness, more of that magnetic captivation which subordinates reason to mere hope, than any one I ever listened to. He scorned the pictorial, he despised all landscape effects, he summoned to his aid no assistance from gorge or mountain, no deep-bosomed wood or bright eddying river; he was a man of culverts and cuttings, of quartz and limestone and flint; with a glance he could estimate traffic, and with the speed of the lightning-flash tell you what dividend could come of the shares.

It was, however, in results that he was grandiose. Hear him on the theme of a completed line, a newly-opened tunnel, or a finished viaduct—it was a Poem! Such a picture of gushing beatitude as he could paint! It was the golden age—prosperity, happiness, and peace on every side; the song of the husbandman at his plough mingling with the hum of the village school; the thousand forms of civilisation, from cheap sugar to penny serials, that would permeate the land; the peasant studying social science over his tea, and the railway-guard supping his “cheap Gladstone” as he speculated on the Antiquity of Man. Never was such an Eden on earth, and all to be accomplished at the cost of a mere million or two, with a “limited liability.”

With what a grand contempt this great man talked of the people who busied themselves in the visionary pursuits of politics or literature, or who devoted themselves to the Arts or Field-sports! With him earthworks were the grandest achievements of humanity, and there was no such civiliser as a parliamentary train. Had he been simply an enthusiast, that fatal false logic that *will* track enthusiasm—however it be guided—would have betrayed him: but the man was not an enthusiast—he was a great actor; and while to capitalists and speculators he appealed by all the seductive inducements of profits, premiums, and preference shares, to the outer and unmoneyed world he made his approaches by a beautiful and touching philanthropy.

Did he believe in all this? Heaven knows. He talked and acted as if he did; and though, when I last saw him, he had smashed his banker, ruined his company, and beggared the shareholders, he was high-hearted, hopeful, and buoyant as ever. It was a general who had lost a battle, but he meant to recruit another army. It was some accidental rumour of a war—some stupid disturbance on the Danube or the Black Sea—that had frightened capital and made “money tight.” The scheme itself was a glorious project—an unrivalled investment. Never was there such a paying line—innumerable towns, filled with a most migratory population, ever on the move, and only needing to learn the use of certain luxuries to be constantly in demand of them.

With a good harvest, however, and money easy, if Lord Russell could only be commonly civil to the Continental Cabinets, all would go well yet. The bounties of Providence would be diffused over the earth—food would be cheap, taxation reduced, labour plenty, and “then, sir, these worthy people shall have their line, if I die for it.”

I find it very hard to believe in Borneo's love or Othello's jealousy. I cannot, let me do all that I will, accept them as real, even in their most impassioned moments, and yet this other man holds me captive. If I had a hundred pounds in the world, I'd put it into his scheme, and I really feel that, in not borrowing the money to make a venture, I am a poor-spirited creature that has not the courage to win his way to fortune.

And yet these fellows have no aid from dress or make-up. They are not surrounded with all the appliances that aid a deception. They come to us in their everyday apparel, and, mayhap, at inopportune moments, when we are weary, or busy, or out of sorts, to talk of what we are not interested in, and have no relish for. With their marvellous tact they conquer apathy and overcome repugnance; they gain a hearing, and they obtain at least time for more. There is much in what they say that we feel no interest in; but now and then they *do* touch a chord that vibrates within us; and when they do so, it is like magic the instinct with which they know it. It was that Roman camp, that lead-mine, that trout-stream, or that paper-mill, did the thing; and the rogue saw it as plainly as if he had a peep into our brain, and could read our thoughts like a printed book. These then, I say, are the truly great actors, who walk the boards of life with unwritten parts, who are the masters of our emotions, even to the extent of taking away our money, and who demand our trustfulness as a right not to be denied them.

Now, what a poor piece of mockery, of false tinsel and fringe and folly and pretence, is your stage-player beside one of these fellows! Who is going to sit three weary hours at the Haymarket, bored by the assumed plausibility of the actor, when the real, the actual, the positive thing that he so poorly simulates is to be met on the railroad, at the station, in the club, on the chain-pier, or the penny steamer? Is there any one, I ask, who will pay to see the plaster-cast when he can behold the marble original for nothing? You say, “Are you going to the masquerade?” and I answer, “I am at it.” *Circumspice!* Look at the mock royalties hunting (Louis XIV. fashion) in the deep woods of Fontainebleau. Look at haughty lords and ladies—the haughtiest the earth has ever seen—vying in public testimonies of homage—as we saw a few days ago—to the very qualities that, if they mean anything, mean the subversion of their order. Look at the wasteful abundance of a prison dietary, and the laudable economy which half-starves the workhouse. Look at the famished curate, with little beyond Greek roots to support him, and see the millionaire, who can but write his name, with a princely fortune; and do you want Webster or Buckstone to give these “characters” more point?

Will you take a box for the ‘Comedy of Errors,’ when you can walk into the Chancery Court for nothing? Will you pay for ‘Much Ado about Nothing,’ when a friendly order can admit you to the House? And as for a ‘New Way to Pay Old Debts,’ commend me to Commissioner Goulburn in Bankruptcy; while ‘Love's Last Shift’ is daily performed at the Court of Probate, under the distinguished patronage of Judge Wills. Is there any need to puzzle one's head over the decline of the drama, then? You might as well ask if a moderate smoker will pay exorbitantly for dried cabbage-leaves, when he can have prime Cubans for the trouble of taking them!

PENSIONS FOR GOVERNORS.

I do not remember ever to have read more pompons nonsense than was talked a few days ago in Parliament on the subject of pensions for retired colonial governors.

On all ordinary occasions the strongest case a man can have with the British public is to be an ill-used man—that is to say, if you be a man of mark, or note, or station. To be ill-used, as one poor, friendless, and ignoble, is no more than the complement of your condition. It is in the fitness of things that pauperism, which we English have declared to be illegal, should neither be fondled nor caressed. To be ill-used profitably there must be something pictorial in your case; it must have its reliefs of light as well as shade. There must be little touches, a bright “has been,” sunny spots of a happy past Without the force of these contrasts, there is no possibility of establishing the grand grievance which is embodied in ill-usage.

Now, Mr B. C. who brought on this motion was a sorry artist, and the whole sum and substance of his case was, that as we secured the services of eminent and able men, we ought to pay them “properly.” Why, in that one word “properly” lay the whole question. What constitutes proper payment? Every career in life carries with it some circumstance either of advantage or the reverse, which either compensates for the loss of a material benefit, or is requited by some addition of a tangible profit. The educated man who accepts three hundred a-year in the Church is not recompensed, or considered to be recompensed, by this miserable pittance. It is in the respect, the influence, the power, and the reverence that attach to his calling he is rewarded. Place a layman in the parish beside him with that income, and mark the difference of their stations! The same of the soldier. Why or how does seven-and-sixpence diurnally represent one the equal of the best in any society of the land? Simply by a conventional treaty, by which we admit that a man, at the loss of so much hard cash, may enjoy a station which bears no imaginable proportion to his means.

On the other hand, there are large communities who, addressing themselves to acquire wealth and riches, care very little for the adventitious advantages of social state. As it is told of Theodore Hook, at a Lord Mayor's feast, that he laid down his knife and fork at the fifth course, and declared “he would take the rest out in money;” so there are scores of people who “go in” for the actual and the real. They have no sympathy with those who “take out” their social status partly in condition partly in cash, as is the case with the curate and the captain.

Almost every man, at his outset in life, makes some computation of how much his career can pay him in money, how much in the advantages of rank and station. The bailiff on the estate makes very often a far better income than the village doctor; but do you believe that Æsculapius would change places with him for all that? Is not the unbought deference to his opinion, the respect to his acquirements, the obedience to his counsel, something in the contract he makes with the world? Does he not recognise, every day of his life, that he is not measured by the dimensions of the small house he resides in, or the humble qualities of the hack he rides, but that he has an acceptance in society totally removed from every question of his fortune?

In the great lottery we call life, the prizes differ in many things besides degree. If the man of high ambition determine to strain every nerve to attain a station of eminence and power, it may be that his intellectual equal, fonder of ease, more disposed to tranquillity, will settle down with a career that at the very best will only remove him a step above poverty; and shall we dare to say that either is wrong? My brother the Lord Chancellor is a great man, no doubt. The mace is a splendid club, and the woolsack a most luxurious sofa; but as I walk my village rounds of a summer's morning, inhaling perfume of earth and plant, following with my eye the ever-mounting lark, have I not a lighter heart, a freer step, a less wearied head? Have I not risen refreshed from sleep? not nightmared by the cutting sarcasms of some noble earl on my fresh-gilt coronet, some slighting allusion to my "newness in that place"? Depend upon it, the grand law of compensation which we recognise throughout universal nature extends to the artificial conditions of daily life, and regulates the action and adjusts the inequalities of our social state.

What is a viceroy or a colonial governor? A man of eminence and ability, doubtless, but who is satisfied to estrange himself from home and country, and occupy himself with cares and interests totally new and strange to him, for some five or fifteen thousand pounds a-year, plus a great variety of other things, which to certain minds unquestionably represent high value—the—station, the power, the prestige of a great position, with all its surroundings of deference and homage. Large as his salary is, it is the least distinctive feature of his high office. In every attribute of rank the man is a king. In his presence the wisest and the most gifted do no more than insinuate the words of their wisdom, and beauty retires curtsying, after a few commonplaces from his lips. Why, through all the employments of life, who ever attains to the like of this? His presence is an honour, his notice is fame. To be his guest is a distinction for a day; to be his host is to be illustrious for a lifetime. Are these things nothing? Ask the noble earl as he sits in his howdah; ask my lord marquis as he rides forth with a glittering staff.

Did any one, even Mr B. C. himself, ever imagine that Mr Macready ought to be pensioned after he had played Cardinal Wolsey? Was it ever proposed, even in Parliament, that Mr Kean should have a retiring allowance when he had taken off his robes as Henry IV.? These eminent men were, however, just as real, just as actual, during their brief hour on the stage, as His Excellency the Viceroy or the "Lord High." They were there under a precisely similar compact. They had to represent a state which had no permanence, and a power that had no stability. They were to utter words which would be ridiculous from their lips to-morrow, and to assume a port and bearing that must be abandoned when they retired to change their clothes.

It is one of my very oldest memories as a boy that I dined in company with Charles Kemble. There was a good deal of talking, and a fair share of wine-drinking. In the course of the former came the question of the French Revolution of '30, and the conduct of the French King on that occasion. Kemble took no part in the discussion; he listened, or seemed to listen, filled his glass and emptied it, but never spoke. At last, when each speaker appeared to have said his say, and the subject approached exhaustion, the great actor, with the solemnity of a judge in a charge, and with a grand resonance of voice, said: "I'll tell you how it is, sirs; Charles X. has forfeited a—a—a right good engagement!" And that was exactly the measure that he and all his tribe took, and are now taking, of kings and rulers—and let us profit by it. The colonial king has his "engagement;" it is defined exactly like the actor's. He is to play certain parts, and for so many nights; he is to strut his hour in the very finest of properties, and is sure, which the actor is not always, of a certain amount of applause. No living creature believes seriously in him, far less he himself, except, perhaps, in some impassioned moment or other like that in which I once knew Othello so far carried away that he flung Iago into the orchestra.

Pension Carlisle, pension Storks, if you will; but be just as well as generous, and take care that you provide for Paul Bedford and Buckstone.

In Archbishop Whately's 'Historic Doubts,' we find that the existence of the first emperor can be disproven by the very train of argument employed to deny the apostles. Let me suggest the converse of this mode of reasoning, and ask, Is there a word you can say for the Viceroy you cannot equally say for the actor? Have you an argument for him who governs St Helena that will not equally apply to him who struts his hour at the Haymarket?

I perceive that the writer of a letter to the 'Times' advocates the claims of the ex-Governors, on the plausible plea that it is exactly the very men who best represent the dignity of the station—best reflect the splendour of the Sovereign—who come back poor and penniless from the high office: while the penurious Governor, who has given dissatisfaction everywhere, made the colony half rebellious by his narrow economies, and degraded his station by contemptible savings, comes back wealthy and affluent—self-pensioned, in fact, and independent.

To meet this end, the writer suggests that the Crown, as advised thereon, should have a discretionary power of rewarding the well-doer and refusing the claim of the unmeriting, which would distinctly separate the case of the worthy servant of the Sovereign from that of him who only employed his office to enrich himself.

There is a certain shallow—it is a very shallow—plausibility about this that attracts at first sight; and there would unquestionably be some force in it, if dinner-giving and hospitalities generally were the first requisites of a colonial ruler; but I cannot admit this. I cannot believe that the man who administers India or Canada, or even Jamaica or Barbadoes, is only an expatriated Lord Mayor. I will not willingly consent to accept it as qualification for a high trust that a man has a good cook and an admirable cellar, and an ostentatious tendency to display the merits of both. Mind, I am no ascetic who say this: I like good dinners; I like occasionally—only occasionally though—very good dinners. I feel with a clever countryman who said he liked being asked out to dine, "it was flattering, and it was nourishing;" but with all this I should never think of "elevating my host" to the dignity of high statesmanship on the mere plea of his hospitality.

We have had some able men in our dependencies who were not in the least given to social enjoyments, who neither understood them for themselves nor thought of them for others—Sir Charles Napier, for instance. And who, let me ask, would have lost the services of such a man to the State, because he had not the tastes of a Sir William Curtis, nor could add a "Cubitt" to his stature?

All discretionary powers are, besides, abuses. They are the snares and pitfalls of official jobbery; and there would be no end of bickering and complaining on the merits of this and the shortcomings of that man. Not to say that such a system as this writer recommends would place a Government in the false position of rewarding extravagance and offering a premium for profusion, and holding up for an example to our colonial fellow-subjects the very habits and tastes which are the bane and destruction of young communities.

Can any one imagine a Cabinet Council sitting to determine whether the ex-Governor of St Helena had or had not entertained the officers of the 509th Foot on their return from India, or whether he of Heligoland had really fed his family on molluscs during all the time of his administration, and sold the shells as magnesia? There could be but one undeniable test of an ex-Governor's due claim to a pension, since on the question of a man's hospitalities evidence would vary to eternity. There are those whose buttermilk is better than their neighbours' bordeaux. I repeat, there could be but one test as to the claim; and as we read in a police sheet, as a sufficient ground for arrest, the two words, "Drunk and Disorderly," so should any commission on pensions accept as valid grounds for a pension, "Insolvent and a Bankrupt."

To talk of these men as ill-used, or their case as a hard one, is simply nonsense! You might as well say that the man you asked to dinner to-day has a legitimate ground of complaint against you because you have not invited him to breakfast to-morrow.

A GRUMBLE.

I wonder is the world as pleasant as it used to be? Not to myself, of course—I neither ask nor expect it; but I mean to those who are in the same position to enjoy it as I was—years ago. I am delicate about the figures, for Mrs O'D. occasionally reads these sketches, and might feel a wifelike antipathy to a record of this nature. I repeat—I wonder is life as good fun as it was when I made my first acquaintance with it? My impression is that it is not. I do not presume to say that all the same elements are not as abundant as heretofore. There are young people, and witty people, and, better, there are beautiful people, in abundance. There are great houses as of yore, maintained, perhaps, with even more than bygone splendour: the horses are as good—the dogs as good—the trout-streams as well stocked—the grouse as abundant—foreign travel is more easy—all travel is more facile—there are more books and more illustrated newspapers; and yet, with all these advantages—very tangible advantages too—I do not think the present occupants make the house as pleasant as their fathers did, and for the very simple reason, that they never try.

Indifferentism is the tone of the day. No one must be eager, pleased, displeased, interested, or anxious about anything. Life is to be treated as a tiresome sort of thing, but which is far too much beneath one to be thought of seriously—a wearisome performance, which good manners require you should sit out, though nothing obliges you to applaud or even approve of it. This is the theory, and we have been most successful in reducing it to practice. We are immensely bored, and we take good care so shall be our neighbour. Just as we have voted that there is nothing new, nothing strange, nothing amusing, we defy any one to differ with us, on pain of pronouncing him vulgar. North American Indians are not more case-hardened against any show of suffering under torture than are our well-bred people against any manifestation of showing pleasure in anything. "It wasn't bad," is about the highest expression of our praise; and I doubt if we would accord more to heaven—if we got there. The grand test of your modern Englishman is, to bear any amount of amusement without wincing: no pleasure is to wring a smile from him, nor is any expectancy to interest, or any unlooked-for event to astonish. He would admit that "the Governor"—meaning his father—was surprised; he would concede the fact, as recording some prejudice of a bygone age. As the tone of manners and observance has grown universal, so has the very expression of the features. They are intensely like each other. We are told that a shepherd will know the actual faces of all the sheep in his flock, distinguishing each from each at a glance. I am curious to know if the Bishop of London knows even the few lost sheep that browse about Rotten Eow of an afternoon, and who are so familiar to us in Leech's sketches. There they are—whiskered, bearded, and bored; fine-looking animals in their way, but just as much living creatures in 'Punch' as they are yonder. It is said that they only want the stimulus of a necessity, something of daring to tempt, or something of difficulty to provoke them, to be just as bold and energetic as ever their fathers were. I don't deny it. I am only complaining of the system which makes sheep of them, reduces life to a dreary table-land, making the stupid fellows the standard, and coming down to their level for the sake of uniformity. Formerly they who had more wit, more smartness, more worldly knowledge than their neighbours, enjoyed a certain pre-eminence; the flash of their agreeability lighted up the group they talked in, and they were valued and sought after. Now the very homage rendered, even in this small way, was at least a testimony that superiority was recognised and its claims admitted. What is the case now? Apathy is excellence, and the nearest approach to insensibility is the greatest eminence attainable.

In the Regency, when George IV. was Prince, the clever talkers certainly abounded; and men talk well or ill exactly as there is a demand for the article. The wittiest conversationalist that ever existed would be powerless in a circle of these modern "Unsurprised ones." Their vacant self-possession would put down all the Grattans and Currans and Jeffreys and Sydney Smiths in the world. I defy the most brilliant, the readiest, the most genial of talkers to vivify the mass of inert dulness he will find now at every dinner and in every drawing-room.

The code of modern manners is to make ease the first of all objects; and, in order that the stupidest man may be at his ease, the ablest is to be sacrificed. He who could bring vast stores of agreeability to the common stock must not show his wares, because there are a store of incapables who have nothing for the market.

They have a saying in Donegal, that "the water is so strong it requires two whiskies;" but I would ask what amount of "spirits" would enliven this dreariness; what infusion of pleasantry would make Brown and Jones

endurable when multiplied by what algebraists call an *x*—an unknown quantity—of other Browns and Joneses?

We are constantly calling attention to the fact of the influence exerted over morals and manners in France by the prevailing tone of the lighter literature, and we mark the increasing licentiousness that has followed such works as those of Eugene Sue and the younger Dumas. Let us not forget to look at home, and see if, in the days when the Waverleys constituted almost all our lighter reading, the tone of society was not higher, the spirit more heroic, the current of thought and expression purer, than in these realistic days, when we turn for amusement to descriptions of every quaint vulgarity that makes up the life of the boarding-house or the strolling theatre.

The glorious heroism of Scott's novels was a fine stream to turn into the turbid river of our worldliness and money-seeking. It was of incalculable benefit to give men even a passing glance of noble devotion, high-hearted courage, and unsullied purity.

I can remember the time when, as freshmen in our first year, we went about talking to each other of 'Ivanhoe' and 'Kenilworth;' and I can remember, too, when the glorious spirit of those novels had so possessed us, that our romance elevated and warmed us to an unconscious imitation of the noble thoughts and deeds we had been reading.

Smile if you like at our boyish enthusiasm, it was better than the mocking spirit engendered by all this realism, or the insensate craving after stimulus taught by sensation novels.

Now, I am not old enough to remember the great talkers of the time when George III. was King, or those who made Carlton House famous; but I belonged to a generation where these men were remembered, and where it was common enough to hear stories of their Attic nights, those *noctes cænæque deorum* which really in brilliancy must have far transcended anything that Europe could boast of conversational power. The youth of the time I speak of were full of these traditions. "If I am not the rose, I grew near one," was no foolish boast; and certainly there was both in the tone of conversation and the temper of society a sentiment that showed how the great men had influenced their age, and how, even after their sun had gone down, a warm tint remained to remind the world of the glorious splendour that had departed.

Being an Irishman, it is to Ireland I must go for my illustration, and it is my pride to remember that I have seen some of those who were, in an age of no common convivial excellence, amongst the first and the greatest. They are gone, and I may speak of them by name—Lord Plunkett, the Chief-Justice Bushe, Mr Casey, Sir Philip Crampton, Barré Beresford—I need not go on. I have but to recall the leading men at the bar, to make up a list of the most brilliant talkers that ever delighted society. Nor was the soil exhausted with these; there came, so to say, a second crop—a younger order of men—less versed in affairs, it is true, less imbued with that vigorous conviviality that prevailed in their fathers' days—but of these I must not speak, for they have now grown up to great dignities and stations, they have risen to eminence and honour and repute, and might possibly be ashamed if it were known that they were once so agreeable. Let me, however, record one who is no more, but who possessed the charm of companionship to a degree I never knew equalled in all my varied experiences of life,—one who could bring the stores of a well-stocked mind, rich in scholarship, to bear upon any passing incident, blended with the fascination of a manner that was irresistible. Highly imaginative, and with a power of expression that was positively marvellous, he gave to ordinary conversation an elevation that actually conferred honour on those who were associated with it; and high above all these gifts and graces, a noble nature, generous, hopeful, and confiding. With an intellect that challenged any rivalry, he had, in all that touched worldly matters, the simplicity of a child. To my countrymen it is needless I should tell of whom I speak; to others, I say his name was Mortimer O'Sullivan. The mellow cadence of his winning voice, the beam of his honest eye, the generous smile that never knew scorn, are all before me as I write, and I will write no more.

OF OUR BROTHERS BEYOND THE BORDER.

There is a story current of a certain very eminent French naturalist, who is so profoundly impressed by the truth of the Darwinian theory, that he never passes the cage where the larger apes are confined in the Jardin des Plantes without taking off his hat, making a profound obeisance, and wishing them a *bon jour*.

This recognition is touching and graceful. The homage of the witches to him who should be king hereafter, had in it a sort of mockery that made it horrible; but here we have an act of generous courtesy, based alike on the highest discoveries of science and the rules of the truest good-breeding.

The learned professor, with all the instincts of great acquirements and much self-knowledge united, admits them at once to equality and fraternity—the liberty, perhaps, they will have to wait some time for; but in that they are no worse off than some millions of their fellow-countrymen.

One might speculate long—I don't know exactly how profitably—on the sense of gratitude these creatures must feel for this touching kindness, how they must long for the good man's visit, how they must wonder by what steps he arrived at this astonishing knowledge, how surprised they must feel that he does not make more converts; and, last of all, what pains they must take to exhibit in their outward bearing and behaviour that they are not unworthy of the high consideration he bestows on them! Before him no monkey-tricks, no apish indecorums—none even of those passing levities which young gorillas will indulge in just like other youths. No; all must be staid, orderly, and respectful—heads held well up—hands at rest—tails nowhere; in fact, a port and bearing that would defy the most scrutinising observer to say that they were less eligible company than that he had just quitted at the café.

I own I have not seen them during the moment of the Professor's passage. I am unable to state authentically whether all this be as I surmise, but I have a strong impression it must be. Indeed, reflecting on

the habits and modes of the species, I should be rather disposed to believe them given to an exuberant show of gratitude than to anything like indifference, and expect to witness demonstrations of delight more natural possibly than graceful.

Now, I have not the most remote intention of impugning the Professor's honesty. I give him credit—full credit—for high purpose, and for high courage. "These poor brothers of ours," says he, "have tails, it is true, and they have not the hypocampus major; but let me ask you, Monsieur le Duc, or you, Monseigneur the Archbishop, will you dare to affirm on oath that you yourself are endowed with a hypocampus major or minor? Are you prepared to stand forward and declare that the convolutions of your brain are of the regulation standard—that the medullary part is not disproportioned to the cineritious—that your falx is not thicker or thinner than it ought—and that your optic thalami are not too prominent? And if you are not ready to do this, what avails all your assumption of superiority? In these—they are not many—lie the alleged differences between you and your caged cousins yonder." Thus speaks, or might speak, the Professor; and, I repeat, I respect his candour; but still I would venture to submit one small, perhaps ungenerous doubt, and ask, Would he, acting on the noble instincts that move him, vote these creatures an immediate and entire emancipation, or would he not rather wait a while—a few years, say—till the habit of sitting on chairs had worn off some of the tail, and a greater familiarity with society suggested not to store up their dinner in their jaws? Would he like to see them at once take their places in public life, become public functionaries, and ministers, and grand cordons?

Would he not rather, with that philosophy his country eminently teaches, say, "I will do the pity and the compassion. To me be the sympathetic part of a graceful sorrow. To posterity I bequeath the recognition of these poor captives. Let them be liberated, by all means; but let it be when I shall be no longer here to witness it. Let others face that glorious millennium of gorilla greatness."

I am afraid he would reason in this fashion; it is one thing to have an opinion, and to have what Frenchmen call the "courage of your opinion." He would say, "If Nature work surely, she works slowly; her changes are measured, regular, and progressive. With her there are no paroxysms; all is orderly—all is gradual It took centuries of centuries to advance these poor creatures to the point they occupy; their next stage on the journey is perhaps countless years away. I will not attempt to forestall what I cannot assist. I will let Time do its work. They are not ill-treated, besides; that large creature with the yellow eyebrows grinned at me very pleasantly this morning, and the she-ourang-outang was whipping her infant most naturally as I came by."

"What a cold-blooded philanthropy is this!" cries another. "You say these are our brothers and our kinsmen; you declare that anatomy only can detect some small and insignificant discrepancies between us, and that even in these there are some of whose functions we know nothing, and others, such as the prehensile power, where the ape has the best of it. What do you mean by keeping them there 'cribbed, cabined, and confined'? Is a slight frontal inclination to disqualify a person from being a prefect? Is an additional joint in the coccyx to prevent a man sitting on the woolsack, or an extra inch in the astragalus to interfere with his wearing spurs? If there be minute differences between us, intercourse will abolish them. It will be of inestimable service to yourselves to come into contact with these fresh, fine, generous natures, uncontaminated by the vices of an effete and worn-out civilisation. Great as are the benefits you extend to them, they will repay you tenfold in the advantages to yourselves. Away with your unworthy prejudices about a 'black pigment' and long heels! Take them to your hearts and your hearths. You will find them brave—ay, braver than your own race. Their teeth are whiter and their nails longer; there is not a relation in life in which you will dare to call yourself their better."

I will go no farther, not merely because I have no liking for my theme, but because I am pilfering. All these arguments—the very words themselves—I have stolen from an American writer, who, in Horace Greeley fashion, is addressing his countrymen on the subject of negro equality. He not alone professes to show the humanity of the project, but its policy—its even necessity. He declares to the whites, "You want these people; without them you will sink lower and lower into that effete degeneracy into which years of licentiousness have sunk you. These gorillas—black men, I mean—are virtuous; they are abstemious; they have a little smell, but no sensuality; they will make admirable wives for your warriors; and who knows but one may be the mother of a President as strikingly handsome as Ape Lincoln himself!" There is no doubt much to be said for our long-heeled friends, whether with or without a hypocampus major. I am not very certain that we compliment them in the best taste when the handsomest thing we can say of them is, that they are very like ourselves! It is our human mode, however, of expressing admiration, and resembles the exclamation of the Oberland peasant on seeing a pretty girl, "How handsome she'd be if she only had a *goître!*"

THE RULE NISI.

A great many sea-captains discourage the use of life-preservers and floating-belts on board ships of war, on the simple ground that men should not be taught to rely for their safety on anything but what conduces to save the ship. "Let there be but one thought, one effort," say they, "and let that be for the common safety." If they be right—and I suspect they are—we have made a famous blunder by our late legislation about divorce. Of all the crafts that ever were launched, marriage is one from which fewest facilities of desertion should be provided.

Romanism makes very few mistakes in worldly matters. There is no feature of that Church so remarkable as its deep study and thorough acquaintance with all the moods and wants and wishes of humanity. Whatever its demerits, one cannot but admit that no other religion ever approached it in intimacy with the human heart in all its emotions and in all its strivings, whether for good or evil.

Rome declares against all breach of the marriage tie. The Church, with a spirit of concession it knows how to carry through all its dealings, modifies, softens, assuages, but never severs conjugalism. It makes the tie

occasionally a slip-knot, but it never cuts the string, and I strongly suspect that it is wise in its legislation.

For a great many years we gave the policy that amount of imitation we are wont to accord to Romanist practices; that is, we follow them in part—we adopt the coat, but, to show that we are not mere imitators, we cut off one of the skirts; and if we do not make the garment more graceful, we at least consult our dignity, and that is something. We made divorce the privilege of men rich enough to come to Parliament for relief; we did with the question what some one proposed we should do with poisons—make them so costly that only wealthy men should be able to afford the luxury of suicide. So long as men believed that divorce was immoral, I don't think any one complained that it should be limited to persons in affluence. We are a lord-loving race, we English, and are quite ready to concede that our superiors should have more vices than ourselves, just as they have more horses and more pheasants; and we deemed it nothing odd or strange that he, whose right it was to walk into the House of Peers, should walk out of matrimony when it suited him.

Who knows?—perhaps we were flattered by the thought that great folk so far conceded to a vulgar prejudice as to marry at all. Perhaps we hailed their entrance into conjugalism as we are wont to do their appearance at a circus or a public garden—a graceful acknowledgment that they occasionally felt something like ourselves: at all events, we liked it, and we showed we liked it by the zeal with which we read those descriptions in newspapers of marriages in high life, and the delight with which we talked to each other of people we never saw, nor probably ever should see. It was not too much, therefore, to concede to them this privilege of escape. It was very condescending of them to come to the play at all; we had no right to insist that they should sit out the whole performance.

By degrees, however, what with rich cotton-lords, and cheap cyclopaedias, and penny trains, and popular lectures, there got up a sort of impression—it was mere impression for a long time—that great folk had more than their share of the puddings' plums; and agitators began to bestir themselves. What were the privileges of the higher classes which would sit most gracefully on their inferiors? Naturally we bethought us of their vices. It was not always so easy to adopt my lord's urbanity, his unassuming dignity, his well-bred ease; but one might reasonably aspire to be as wicked. Sabbath-breaking had long since ceased to be the privilege of the better classes, and so men's minds reverted to the question of divorce. “Let us get rid of our wives!” cried they; “who knows but the day may come when we shall kill woodcocks?”

Now the law, in making divorce a very costly process, had simply desired to secure its infrequency. It was not really meant to be a rich man's privilege. What was sought for was to oppose as many obstacles as could be found, to throw in as many rocks as possible into the channel, so that only he who was intently bent on navigating the stream would ever have the energy to clear the passage. Nobody ever dreamed of making it an open roadstead. In point of fact, the oft-boasted equality before the law is a myth. The penalty which a labourer could endure without hardship might break my lord's heart; and in the very case before us of divorce, nothing can possibly be more variable than the estimate formed of the divorced individuals, according to the class of society they move in.

What would be a levity here, would be a serious immorality there; and a little lower down again, a mere domestic arrangement, slightly more decorous and a shade more legal than the old system of the halter and the public sale. It was declared, however, that this “relief”—that is the popular phrase in such matters—should be extended to the poor man. It was decided that the privilege to get rid of a wife was, as Mr Gladstone says of the electoral right, the inalienable claim of a freeman, and the only course was to lower the franchise.

Let us own, too, we were ashamed, as we had good right to be ashamed, of our old *crim. con.* law. Foreigners, especially Frenchmen, had rung the changes on our coarse venality and corruption; and we had come to perceive—it took some time, though—that moneyed damages were scarcely the appropriate remedy for injured honour.

Last of all, free-trade notions had turned all our heads: we were for getting rid of all restrictions on every side; and we went about repeating to each other those wise saws about buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market, and having whatever we wanted, and doing whatever we liked with our own. We are, there is no denying it, a nation of shopkeepers; and the spirit of trade can be tracked through every relation of our lives. It is commerce gives the tone to all our dealings; and we have carried its enactments into the most sacred of all our institutions, and imparted a “limited liability” even to marriage.

Cheapness became the desideratum of our age, We insisted on cheap gloves and shoes and wine and ribbons, and why not cheap divorces? Philosophers tell us that the alternate action of the seasons is one of the purest and most enduring of all sources of enjoyment; that perpetual summer or spring would weary and depress; but in the ever-changing aspect of nature, and in the stimulation which diversity excites, we find an unfailing gratification. If, therefore, it be pleasant to be married, it may also be agreeable to be unmarried. It takes some time, however, before society accommodates itself to these new notions. The newly divorced, be it man or woman, comes into the world like a patient after the smallpox—you are not quite certain whether the period of contagion is past, or if it be perfectly safe to go up and talk to him. In fact, you delay doing so till some strong-minded friend or other goes boldly forward and shakes the convalescent by the hand. Even still there will be timid people who know perhaps that their delicacy of constitution renders them peculiarly sensitive, and who will keep aloof after all. Of course, these and similar prejudices will give way to time. We have our Probate Court; and the phrase *co-respondent* is now familiar as a household word.

Now, however tempting the theme, I am not going to inquire whether we have done wisely or the reverse by this piece of legislation; whether, by instilling certain precepts of self-control, a larger spirit of accommodation, and a more conciliatory disposition generally, we might have removed some of the difficulties without the heroic remedy of the decree *nisi*; whether, in fact, it might not have been better to teach people to swim, or even float, rather than make this great issue of cheap life-belts. I am so practical that I rather address myself to profit by what is, than endeavour by any change to make it better. We live in a statistical age. We are eternally inquiring who it is wants this, who consumes that, who goes to such a place, who is liable to this or that malady. Classification is a passion with us; and we have bulky volumes to teach us what sorts of people have chest affections, what are most prone to stomachic diseases, who have ophthalmia, and who the gout. We are also instructed as to the kind of persons most disposed to insanity, and we have a

copious list of occupations given us which more or less incline those who profess them to derangement. Even the Civil-Service Examiners have contributed their share to this mass of entertaining knowledge, and shown from what parts of the kingdom bad spellers habitually come, what counties are celebrated for cacography, and in what districts etymology is an unknown thing. Would it not, then, be a most interesting and instructive statistic that would give us a tabular view of divorce, showing in what classes frailty chiefly prevailed, with the relative sexes, and also a glimpse at the ages? Imagine what a light the statement would throw on the morality of classes, and what an incalculable benefit to parents in the choice of a career for their children! For instance, no sensible father would select a life of out-door exposure for a weak-chested son, or make a sailor of one with an incurable sea-sickness. In the same way would he be guided by the character of his children as to the perils certain careers would expose them to.

A passing glance at the lists of divorce shows us that no “promovent”—it is a delicate title, and I like it—no promovent figures oftener than a civil engineer. Now, how instructive to inquire why!

What is there in embankments and earthworks and culverts that should dispose the wife of him who makes them to infidelity? Why should a tunnel only lead to domestic treachery? why must a cutting sever the heart that designs it? I do not know; I cannot even guess. My ingenuity stands stockstill at the question, and I can only re-echo, Why?

Next amongst the “predisposed” come schoolmasters, plasterers, &c. What unseen thread runs through the woof of these natures, apparently so little alike? It is the boast of modern science to settle much that once was puzzling, and reconcile to a system what formerly appeared discordant. How I wish some great Babbage-like intellect would bestir itself in this inquiry.

Surely ethical questions are as well worthy of investigation as purely physical or mechanical ones, and yet we ignore them most ignominiously. We think no expense too great to test an Armstrong or a Whitworth gun; we spend thousands to ascertain how far it will carry, what destructive force it possesses, and how long it will resist explosion;—why not appoint a commission of this nature on “conjugate;” why not ascertain, if we can, what is the weak point in matrimony, and why are explosions so frequent? Is the “cast” system a bad one, and must we pronounce “welding” a failure? or, last of all, however wounding to our national vanity, do “they understand these things better in France”?

ON CLIMBING BOYS.

With the common fate of all things human, it is said that every career and walk in life has some one peculiar disparagement—something that, attaching to the duties of the station as a sort of special grievance, serves to show that none of us, no matter how favoured, are to imagine there can be any lot exempted from its share of troubles. Ask the soldier, the sailor, the parson, the doctor, the lawyer, or the actor, and each will give you a friendly warning to adopt any other career than his own.

In most cases the *quid amarum*, the one bitter drop, is to be found in the career itself, something that belongs to that one craft or calling; just as the white-lead colic, for instance, is the fatal malady of painters. There are, however, a few rare cases in which the detracting element attaches itself to the followers and not to the profession, as though it would seem there was a something in the daily working of that peculiar craft which warped the minds and coerced the natures of men to be different from what temperament and character should have made of them.

The two classes which most prominently exhibit what I mean are somewhat socially separated, but they have a number of small analogies in common. They are Sweeps and Statesmen! It would be tempting—but I resist the temptation—to show how many points of resemblance unite them—how each works in the dark, in a small, narrow, confined sphere, without view or outlet; how the tendency of each is to scratch his way upwards and gain the top, caring wonderfully little how black and dirty the process has made him. One might even go farther, and mark how, when indolence or weariness suggested sloth, the stimulus of a little fire underneath, whether a few lighted straws or a Birmingham mass-meeting, was sure to quicken progress and excite activity.

Again, I make this statement on the faith of Lord Shaftesbury, who pronounced it before their Lordships in the Upper House:—“It is no uncommon thing to buy and sell them. There is a regular traffic in them; and through the agency of certain women, not the models of their sex, you can get any quantity of them you want.” Last of all, on the same high authority, we are told of their perfect inutility, “since there is nothing that they do could not be better done by a machine.”

I resist, as I say, all temptations of this kind, and simply address myself to the one point of similarity between them which illustrates the theory with which I have started—and now to state this as formally as I am able. Let me declare that in all the varied employments of life I have never met with men who have the same dread of their possible successors as sweeps and statesmen. The whole aim and object of each is directed, first of all, to keep those who do their work as little as possible, well knowing that the time will come when these small creatures will find the space too confined for them, and set up for themselves.

A volume might be written on the subtle artifices adopted to keep them “little”—the browbeatings, the insults, the crushing cruelties, the spare diet intermixed with occasional stimulants, the irregular hours, and the heat and confinement of the sphere they work in. Still, nature is stronger than all these crafty contrivances. The little sweep will grow into the big sweep, and the small under-sec. will scratch his way up to the Cabinet I will not impose on my reader the burden of carrying along with him this double load. I will address myself simply to one of these careers—the Statesman’s. It is a strange but a most unquestionable fact, that no other class of men are so ill-disposed to those who are the most likely to succeed them—not of an Opposition, for that would be natural enough, but of their own party, of their own colour, of their own

rearing. Let us be just: when a man has long enjoyed place, power, and pre-eminence, dispensed honours and pensions and patronage, it is not a small trial to discover that one of those little creatures he has made—whose first scraper and brush he himself paid for—I can't get rid of the sweep out of my head—will turn insolently on him and declare that he will no longer remain a subordinate, but go and set up for himself. This is excessively hard, and might try the temper of a man even without a fit of the gout.

It is exactly what has just happened; an apprentice, called Gladstone, having made a sort of connection in Manchester and Birmingham, a district abounding in tall chimneys, has given warning to his master Pam that he will not sweep any longer. He is a bold, aspiring sort of lad, and he is not satisfied with saying—as many others have done—that he is getting too broad-shouldered for his work; but he declares that the chimneys for the future must be all made bigger and the flues wider, just because he likes climbing, and doesn't mean to abandon it. There is no doubt of it. Manchester and Stockport and Birmingham have put this in his head. Their great smelting-houses and steam-power factories require big chimneys; and being an overbearing set of self-made vulgar fellows, they say they ought to be a law to all England. You don't want to make cotton-twist, or broad-gauge iron; so much the worse for you. It is the grandest object of humanity. Providence created men to manufacture printed cottons and cheap penknives. We of Manchester understand what our American friends call manifest destiny; we know and feel ours will be—to rule England. Once let us only introduce big chimneys, and you'll see if you won't take to spinning-jennies and mules and treddles; and there's that climbing boy Gladstone declares he'll not leave the business, but go up, no matter how dirty the flue, the day we want him.

Some shrewd folk, who see farther into the millstone than their neighbours, have hinted that this same boy is of a crotchety, intriguing type, full of his own ingenuity, and enamoured of his own subtlety; so that make the chimney how great you will, he'll not go up it, but scratch out another flue for himself, and come out, heaven knows where or how. Indeed, they tell that on one occasion of an alarm of fire in the house—caused by a pantry-boy called Russell burning some wasterpaper instead of going up the chimney as he was ordered—this same Will began to tell how the Greeks had no chimneys, and a mass of antiquarian rubbish of the same kind, so that his master, losing patience, exclaimed, "Of all plagues in the world he knew of none to compare with these 'climbing boys!'"

LINGUISTS

There are two classes of people not a little thought of, and even caressed, in society, and for whom I have ever felt a very humble estimate—the men who play all manner of games, and the men who speak several languages. I begin with the latter, and declare that, after a somewhat varied experience of life, I never met a linguist that was above a third-rate man; and I go farther, and aver, that I never chanced upon a really able man who had the talent for languages.

I am well aware that it sounds something little short of a heresy to make this declaration. It is enough to make the blood of Civil-Service Commissioners run cold to hear it. It sounds illiberal—and, worse, it seems illogical. Why should any intellectual development imply deficiency? Why should an acquirement argue a defect? I answer, I don't know—any more than I know why sanguineous people are hot-tempered, and leucophlegmatic ones are more brooding in their wrath. If—for I do not ask to be anything higher than empirical—if I find that parsimonious people have generally thin noses, and that the snub is associated with the spendthrift, I never trouble myself with the demonstration, but I hug the fact, and endeavour to apply it.

In the same spirit, if I hear a man in a salon change from French to German and thence diverge into Italian and Spanish, with possibly a brief excursion into something Scandinavian or Sclav—at home in each and all—I would no more think of associating him in my mind with anything responsible in station or commanding in intellect, than I should think of connecting the servant that announced me with the last brilliant paper in the 'Quarterly.'

No man with a strongly-marked identity—and no really able man ever existed without such—can subordinate that identity so far as to put on the foreigner; and without this he never can attain that mastery of a foreign language that makes the linguist. To be able to repeat conventionalities—bringing them in at the telling moment, adjusting phrases to emergencies, as a joiner adapts the pieces of wood to his carpentry—may be, and is, a very neat and a very dexterous performance, but it is scarcely the exercise to which a large capacity will address itself. Imitation must be, in one sense or other, the stronghold of the linguist—imitation of expression, of style, of accent, of cadence, of tone. The linguist must not merely master grammar, but he must manage gutturals. The mimicry must go farther: in simulating expression it must affect the sentiment. You are not merely borrowing the clothes, but you are pretending to put on the feelings, the thoughts, the prejudices of the wearer. Now, what man with a strong nature can merge himself so entirely in his fictitious being as not to burst the seams and tear the lining of a garment that only impedes the free action of his limbs, and actually threatens the very extinction of his respiration?

It is not merely by their greater adaptiveness that women are better linguists than men; it is by their more delicate organisation, their more subdued identity, and their less obstreperous temperaments, which are consequently less egotistical, less redolent of the one individual self. And what is it that makes the men of mark or note, the cognate signs of human algebra, but these same characteristics; not always good, not always pleasant, not always genial, but always associated with something that declares preeminence, and pronounces their owner to be a "representative man"?

When Lord Ward replied to Prince Schwartzenberg's flippant remark on the bad French of English diplomatists by the apology, "that we had not enjoyed the advantage of having our capital cities so often occupied by French troops as some of our neighbours," he uttered not merely a smart epigram but a great philosophical truth. It was not alone that we had not possessed the opportunity to pick up an accent, but that

we had not subordinated our minds and habits to French modes and ways of thought, and that the tone and temper of the French people had not been beaten into us by the roll of a French drum. One may buy an accomplishment too dearly. It is possible to pay too much even for a Parisian pronunciation! Not only have I never found a linguist a man of eminence, but I have never seen a linguist who talked well. Fluent they are, of course, like the Stecknadel gun of the Prussians, they can fire without cessation, but, like the same weapon, they are comparatively aimless. It is a *feu roulant*, with plenty of noise and some smoke, but very "few casualties" announce the success. The greatest linguist of modern Europe, Mezzofanti, was a most inferior man. Of the countries whose dialect he spoke to perfection, he knew nothing. An old dictionary would have been to the full as companionable. I find it very hard not to be personal just now, and give a list—it would be a long one—of all the tiresome people I know, who talk four, five, some of them six modern languages perfectly. It is only with an effort I abstain from mentioning the names of some well-known men who are the charming people at Borne and Vienna every winter, and each summer are the delight of Ems, of Berlin, and of Ischl. What tyrants these fellows are, too, over the men who have not got their gift of tongues! how they out-talk them and overbear them! with what an insolent confidence they fall back upon the petty superiority of their fluency, and lord it over those who are immeasurably their masters! Just as Blondin might run along the rigging of a three-decker, and pretend that his agility entitled him to command a squadron!

Nothing, besides, is more imposing than the mock eloquence of good French. The language in itself is so adaptive, it is so felicitous, it abounds in such innumerable pleasant little analogies, such nice conceits and suggestive drolleries, that he who acquires these has at will a whole armoury of attack and defence. It actually requires years of habit to accustom us to a display that we come at last to discover implies no brilliancy whatever in him who exhibits, though it argues immense resources in the treasury from which he derives this wealth.

I have known scores of delightful talkers—Frenchmen—who had no other charm than what their language lent them. They were neither profound, nor cultivated, nor witty—some were not even shrewd or acute; but all were pleasant—pleasant in the use of a conversational medium, of which the world has not the equal—a language that has its set form of expression for every social eventuality, and that hits to a nicety every contingency of the "salon;" for it is no more the language of natural people than the essence of the perfumer's shop is the odour of a field flower. It is pre-eminently the medium of people who talk with tall glasses before them, and an incense of truffles around them, and well-dressed women—clever and witty, and not over-scrupulous in their opinions—for their company. Then, French is unapproachable; English would be totally unsuited to the occasion, and German even more so. There is a flavour of sauer kraut about that unhappy tongue that would vulgarise a Queen if she talked it.

To attain, therefore, the turns and tricks of this language—for it is a Chinese puzzle in its involvements—what a life must a man have led! What "terms" he must have "put in" at cafés and restaurants! What seasons at small theatres—tripots and worse! What nights at bals-masqués, Chateaux des Fleurs, and Cadrans rouges et bleus! What doubtful company he must have often kept! What company a little more than doubtful occasionally! What iniquities of French romance must he have read, with all the cardinal virtues arrayed as the evil destinies of humanity, and every wickedness paraded as that natural expansion of the heart which alone raises man above the condition of the brute! I ask, if proficiency must imply profligacy, would you not rather find a man break down in his verbs than in his virtue? Would you not prefer a little inaccuracy in his declensions to a total forgetfulness of the decalogue? And, lastly of all, what man of real eminence could have masqueraded—for it is masquerading—for years in this motley, and come out, after all, with even a rag of his identity?

Many people would scruple to play at cards with a stranger whose mode of dealing and general manipulation of the pack bespoke daily familiarity with the play-table. They would infer that he was a regular and professional gambler. In the very same way, and for the selfsame reason, would I carefully avoid any close intimacy with the Englishman of fluent French, well knowing he could not have graduated in that perfection save at a certain price. But it is not at the moral aspect of the question I desire particularly to look. I assert—and I repeat my assertion—that these talkers of many tongues are poor creatures. There is no initiative in them—they suggest nothing—they are vendors of second-hand wares, and are not always even good selectors of what they sell. It is only in narrative that they are at all endurable. They can *raconter*, certainly; and so long as they go from salon to salon repeating in set phrase some little misadventure or accident of the day, they are amusing; but this is not conversation, and they do not converse.

"Every time a man acquires a new language, is he a new man?" is supposed to have been a saying of Charles V.—a sentiment that, if he uttered it, means more of sarcasm than of praise; for it is the very putting off a man's identity that establishes his weakness. All real force of character excludes dualism. Every eminent, every able man has a certain integrity in his nature that rejects this plasticity.

It is a very common habit, particularly with newspaper writers, to ascribe skill in languages, and occasionally in games, to distinguished people. It was but the other day we were told that Garibaldi spoke ten languages fluently. Now Garibaldi is not really master of two. He speaks French tolerably; and his native language is not Italian, but a patois-Genoese. Cavour was called a linguist with almost as little truth; but people repeat the story, just as they repeat that Napoleon I. was a great chess-player. If his statecraft and his strategy had been on a par with his chess, we should never have heard of Tilsit or Wagram.

Lord Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington, and George Canning, each of whom administered our foreign policy with no small share of success, were not linguists; and as to Charles Fox, he has left a French sentence on record that will last even as long as his own great name. I do not want to decry the study of languages; I simply desire to affirm that linguists—and through all I have said I mean colloquial linguists—are for the most part poor creatures, not otherwise distinguished than by the gift of tongues; and I want to protest against the undue pre-eminence accorded to the possessors of a small accomplishment, and the readiness with which the world, especially the world of society, awards homage to an acquirement in which a boarding-school Miss can surpass Lord Brougham. I mean to say a word or two about those who have skill in games; but as they are of a higher order of intelligence, I'll wait till I have got "fresh wind" ere I treat of *them*.

THE OLD CONJURORS AND THE NEW.

As there are few better tests of the general health of an individual than in the things he imagines to be injurious to him, so there is no surer evidence of the delicate condition of a State than in the character of those who are assumed to be dangerous to it. Now, after all that has been said of Rome and the corruptions of Roman government, I do not know anything so decidedly damnatory as the fact, to which allusion was lately made in Parliament, that the Papal Government had ordered Mr Home, the spiritualist, to quit the city and the States of his Holiness, and not to return to them.

In what condition, I would ask, must a country be when such a man is regarded as dangerous? and in what aspect of his character does the danger consist?

Do we want ghosts or spirits to reveal to us any more of the iniquities of that State than we already know? Is there a detail of its corrupt administration that the press of Europe has not spread broadcast over the world? What could Mr Home and all his spirits tell us of peculation, theft, subornation, bigotry, and oppression, that the least observant traveller has not brought home with him?

And then, as to the man himself, how puerile it is to give him this importance! The solitary bit of cleverness about him is his statement that he has no control whatever over the spirits that attend him. Asking him not to summon them, is pretty like asking Mr Windham not to send for his creditors. They come pretty much as they like, and probably their visits are about equally profitable.

In this respect Home belongs to a very low order of his art. When Bosco promises to make a bouquet out of a mouse-trap, or Houdin engages to concoct a batter-pudding in your hat, each keeps his word. There is no subterfuge about the temper the spirits may happen to be in, or of their willingness or unwillingness to present themselves. The thing is done, and we see it—or we think we see it, which comes much to the same.

With this provision of escape Mr Home secures himself against all failure. Should, for instance, the audience prove to be of a more discriminating and observant character than he liked or anticipated, and the exhibition in consequence be rendered critical, all he had to do was, to aver that the spirits would not come; it was no breakdown on *his* part Homer was sulky, or Dante was hipped, or Lord Bacon was indisposed to meet company, and there was the end of it. You were invited to meet celebrities, but it was theirs to say if they would present themselves.

On the other hand, when the proper element of credulity offered—when the séance was comprised of the select few, emotional, sensitive, and hysterical as they ought to be—when the nervous lady sat beside the timid gentleman, and neuralgia confronted confirmed dyspepsia—the artist could afford to be daring, and might venture on flights that astounded even himself. What limit is there, besides, to contagional sympathy? Look at the crowded theatre, with its many-minded spectators, and see how one impulse, communicated occasionally by a hireling, will set the whole mass in a ferment of enthusiastic delight. Mark, too, how the smile, that plays like an eddy on a lake, deepens into a laugh, and is caught up by another and another, till the whole storm breaks out in a hearty ocean of merriment. These, if you like, are spirits; but the great masters of them are not men like Mr Home—they have ever been, and still are, of a very different order. Shakespeare and Molière and Cervantes knew something of the mode to summon these imps, and could make them come at their bidding besides.

Was it—to come back to what I started with—was it in any spirit of rivalry that the Papal Government drove Mr Home out of Home? Was it that, assuming to have a monopoly in the wares he dealt in, they would not stand a contraband trade? If so, their ground is at least defensible; for what chance of attraction would there be for the winking Virgin in competition with him who could “make a young lady ascend to the ceiling, and come slowly down like a parachute!”—a spiritual fact I have heard from witnesses who really, so far as character went, might challenge any incredulity.

If the Cardinals were jealous of the Conjuror, the thing is intelligible enough, and one must feel a certain degree of sympathy with the old-established firm that had spent such enormous sums, and made such stupendous preparations, when a pretender like this could come into competition with them, without any other properties than could be carried conveniently about him.

But let us be practical The Pope’s Government demanded of Mr Home that he should have no dealings with the Evil One during his stay at Rome. Now, I ask, what should we say of the efficacy of our police system if we were to hear that the Chief Inspector at Scotland Yard lived in nightly terror of the pickpockets who frequented that quarter, and came to Parliament with a petition to accord him some greater security against their depredations? Would not the natural reply be an exclamation of astonishment that he who could summon to his aid every alphabetical blue-coat that ever handled a truncheon, should deem any increased security necessary to his peace? And so, would I ask, of what avail these crowds of cardinals—these regiments of monsignori—these battalions of bishops, Arch and simple?—of what use all the incense and these chanted litanies, these eternal processions, and these saintly shin-bones borne in costly array—if one poor mortal, supposed to live on visiting terms with the Evil One, can strike such terror into the whole army led on by Infallibility?

If I had been possessed of any peculiar dread of coming unexpectedly on the Devil—as the old ladies of New York used to feel long ago about suddenly meeting with the British army—I should certainly have comforted myself by the thought that I could always go and sit down on the steps of the Vatican. It would immediately have occurred to me, that as Holyrood offers its sanctuary against the sheriff, the Quirinal would be the sure retreat against Old Nick; and I have even pictured to myself the rage of his disappointed malice as he saw me sheltering safely beneath a protection he dared not invade. And now I am told to relinquish all the blessed enjoyment of this immunity; that the Pope and the Cardinals and Antonelli himself are not a whit better off than the rest of us; that if Mr Home gets into Rome, there is nothing to prevent his having the Devil at his tea-parties. What an ignoble confession is this! Who will step forward any longer and contend that this costly

system is to be maintained, and all these saintly intercessors to be kept on the most expensive of all pension-lists, if a poor creature like Home can overthrow it all?

Can any one conceive such a spectacle as these gorgeous men of scarlet and purple cringing before this poor pretender, and openly avowing before Europe that there is no peace for them till he consents to cross the Tiber?

Why—I speak, of course, in the ignorance of a laic—but, I ask, why not fumigate him and cleanse him? When I saw him last, the process would not have been so supererogatory. Why not exorcise and defy him? Why not say, Come, and bring your friend if you dare; you shall see how we will treat you. Only try it It is what we have been asking for nigh two thousand years. Let the great culprit step forward and plead to his indictment.

I can fancy the Pope saying this—I can picture to myself the proud attitude of the Pontiff declaring, “I have had enough of these small devilries, like Louis Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel—I am sick of Mazzini and his petty followers. Let us deal with the chief of the gang at once; if we cannot convict him, he will be at least open to a compromise.” This, I say, I can comprehend; but it is clear and clean beyond me that he should shirk the interview, and own he was afraid of it. It would not surprise me to-morrow to hear that Lord Derby dreaded the Radicals, and actually feared the debating powers of “Mr Potter of the Strikes.”

GAMBLING FOR THE MILLION.

Nothing shows what a practical people we are more than our establishment of insurances against railroad accidents. The spirit of commercial enterprise, by which a man charters himself for a railroad voyage with an insured cargo of his bones, ligaments, cartilage, and adipose tissue, abundantly proves that we are nature’s own traders and shopkeepers.

Any ordinary people less imbued with Liverpool and Manchester notions would have bestirred themselves how to prevent, or at least lessen, the number of those casualties. They would have set to work to see what provisions could be adopted to give greater security to travel. We, on the contrary are too business-like to waste time on this inquiry. We are convinced that, let us build ships ever so strong, there will still be shipwrecks. So we feel assured that a certain number of railway accidents, as they are called, will continue to occur—be as broad gauge as you will! We accept the situation, therefore, as the French say, and insure; that is to say, we book a bet at very long odds—say, three to a thousand—that we shall be rolled up, cut in two, flattened into a thin sheeting, and ground into an impalpable powder, between Croydon and Brighton. If we arrive safe, the assurance office pockets a few shillings; if we win our wager, our executor receives a thousand pounds.

It is about the grimmest kind of gambling ever man heard of; and yet we see folk of the most unquestionable propriety—dignitaries of the Church, judges, civil and uncivil servants of the Crown, and scores of others, whom nothing would tempt into the Cursaal at Ems or Baden, as coolly as possible playing this terrific game, and backing themselves heavily for a dorsal paralysis, a depressed fracture of the cranium, or at least a compound dislocation of the hip-joint.

Now, if the Protestant Church entertained what the Romanists call cases of conscience, I should like greatly to ask, Is this right? Is it justifiable to make a contingent profit out of your cerebral vertebrae or your popliteal space?

We have long been derided and scoffed at for making connubialism marketable, and putting a price on a wife’s infidelity, but it strikes me this is something worse; for what, after all, is a rib—a false rib, too—compared with the whole bony skeleton?

“Allah is Allah,” said the Turkish admiral to Lady Hester Stanhope, “but I have got two anchors astern,” showing that, with all his fatalism, he did not despise what are technically called human means. So the reverend Archdeacon, going down for his sea-baths, might say, “I’m not quite sure they’ll carry me safely, but it shall not be all misfortune—I’ll take out some of it in money.”

The system, however, has its difficulties; for though it is a round game, the stakes are apportioned with reference to the rank and condition of the winner—as, for instance, the Solicitor-General’s collarbone is worth a shoemaker’s whole body, and a Judge’s patella is of more value than a dealer in marine stores and his rising family. This is a tremendous pull against the company, who not only give long, but actually incalculable odds; for while Mr Briggs of the second class can be crumpled up for two hundred pounds, the Hon. Sackville de Cressy in the coupe cannot be even concussed under a thousand; while if the noble Duke in the express carriage be only greatly alarmed, the cost may be positively astounding.

This I certainly call hard—very hard. When you book a bet at Newmarket you never have to consider the rank of your opponent, save as regards his solvency. He may be a peer—he is very probably a publican—it is perfectly immaterial to you; but not so here. The company is positively staking against the incommensurable. They have no means of knowing whether that large broad-shouldered man yonder is or is not a royal duke; and when the telegraph announces a collision, it may chance that the news has declared what will send every shareholder into bankruptcy, or only graze them without hurting anybody.

We all know how a number of what are technically termed serious people went to Exeter Hall to listen to the music of the ‘Traviata,’ what no possible temptation would have induced them to hear within the walls of a theatre. I will not question the propriety of a matter only to be settled by a reference to conscience; but as the music and the words—for the airs were sung—were the same, the hearers were not improbably in the enjoyment of as emotional an amusement as though they had gone for it to the Queen’s Theatre. Now, may not these railway insurances be something of the same kind? May it not be a means by which deans and canons and other broad-hatted dignitaries may enjoy a little gambling without “going in” for Blind Hooky or

Roulette? Regard for decorum would prevent their sojourning at Homburg or Wiesbaden. They could not, of course, be seen “punting” at the play-table at Ems; but here is a legitimate game which all may join in, and where, certainly, the anxiety that is said to impart the chief ecstasy to the gamester’s passion rises to the very highest It is heads and tails for a smashing stake, and ought to interest the most sluggish of mortals.

What a useful addition, then, would it be for one’s Bradshaw to have a tabular view of the “odds” on the different lines, so that a speculative individual, desiring to provide for his family, might know where to address himself with best chance of an accident! One can imagine an assurance company puffing its unparalleled advantages and unrivalled opportunity, when four excursion trains were to start at five minutes’ intervals, and the prospect of a smash was little short of a certainty. “Great attraction! the late rains have injured the chief portion of the line, so that a disaster is confidently looked for every hour. Make your game, gentlemen—make your game; nothing received after the bell rings.”

THE INTOXICATING LIQUORS BILL.

Anything more absurd than the late debate in the House on the best means of suppressing intemperance it is very hard to imagine. First of all, in the van, came the grievance to be redressed; and we had a statistical statement of all the gallons of strong drink consumed—all the moneys diverted from the legitimate uses of the family—all the debauchees who rolled drunk through our streets, and all the offences directly originating in this degrading vice. Now, what conceivable order of mind could prompt a man to engage in such a laborious research? Who either doubts the enormity of drunkenness or its frequency? It is a theme that we hear of incessantly. The pulpit rings with it, the press proclaims it, the judges declare it in all their charges, and a special class of lecturers have converted it into a profession. None denied the existence of the disease; what we craved was the cure. Some discrepancy of opinion prevailed as to whether the vice was on the increase or the decrease. Statistics were given, and, of course, statistics supported each assertion. This, however, was a mere skirmish—the grand battle was, How was drunkenness to be put down?

Mr Lawson’s plan was: If four-fifths of the ratepayers of any district were agreed that no spirituous liquors should be sold there, that such should become a law, and no licence for their sale should be issued. The mover of this proposal, curiously enough, called this “bringing public opinion to bear on the question.” What muddle of intelligence could imagine this to be an exercise of public opinion I cannot imagine. Such, however, is the plan. Drunkenness is to be repressed by making it impossible. Did it never occur to the honourable gentleman, that all legislative enactments whatever work not by enforcing what is good, but by punishing what is evil? No law that ever was made would render people honest and true to their engagements; but we arrive at a result not very dissimilar by making dishonesty penal.

The Decalogue declares: “Thou shalt not commit a murder.” Human law pronounces what will come of it if you do. It is, doubtless, very imperfect legislation, but there is no help for it. We accept such cases, however, as the best defences we can find for our social condition, never for a moment presuming to think that we are rendering a vice impossible by attaching to it a penalty.

Mr Lawson, however, says, There shall be no drunkenness, because there shall be no liquor. Why not extend the principle—for it is a great discovery—and declare that, wherever four-fifths of the ratepayers of a town or borough are of opinion that ingratitude is a great offence to morals and a stain to human nature, in that district where they reside there shall be no benefits conferred, nor any act of kindly aid or assistance rendered by one man to his neighbour? I have no doubt that, by such legislation, you would put down ingratitude. We use acts in the moral world pretty much as in the physical; and it is entirely by the impossibility of committing the offence that this gentleman proposes to prevent its occurrence. But, in the name of common sense, why do we inveigh against monasteries and nunneries?—why are we so severe on a system that substitutes restraint for reason, and instead of correction supplies coercion? Surely this plan is based on exactly the same principle. Would it, I ask, cure a man of lying—I mean the vice, not the practice—to place him in a community where no party was permitted to talk?

The example of the higher classes was somewhat ostentatiously paraded in the debate, and members vied with each other in declaring how often they dined out without meeting a drunkard in the company. This is very gratifying and reassurring; but I am not aware that anybody ascribed the happy change to the paucity of the decanters, and the difficulty of getting the bottle; or whether it was that four-fifths of the party had declared an embargo on the sherry, and realised the old proverb by elevating necessity to the rank of virtue.

Let me ask, who ever imagined that the best way to render a soldier brave in battle was to take care that he never saw an enemy, and only frequented the society of Quakers? And yet this is precisely what Mr Lawson suggests. If his system be true, what becomes of all moral discipline and all self-restraint? It is not through my own convictions that I am sober; it is through no sense of the degradation that pertains to drunkenness, and the loss of social estimation that follows it, that I am temperate. It is because four-fifths of the ratepayers declare that I shall have no drink nearer than the next parish; and this reminds of another weak point in the plan.

The Americans, who understand something of the evils of drink, on the principle that made Doctor Panloss a good man, because he knew what wickedness was, lately passed a law in Congress forbidding the use of fermented liquors on board all the ships of war. It was one of those sweeping pieces of legislation that men enact when driven to do something, they know not exactly what, by the enormity of some great abuse. Now, I have taken considerable pains to inquire how the plan operates, and what success has waited on it. From every officer that I have questioned I have received the same exact testimony: so long as the ships are at sea the men only grumble at the privation; but once they touch port, and boats’ crews are permitted to go ashore, drunkenness breaks out with tenfold violence. For a while all real discipline is at an end; parties are despatched to bring back defaulters, who themselves get reeling drunk; petty officers are insulted, and

scenes of violence enacted that give the unhappy locality where they have landed the aspect of a town taken by assault and given up to pillage. I am not now describing altogether from hearsay; I have witnessed something of what I speak.

As drunkenness, when the ship was at sea, was the rarest of all events, and the good conduct of the men when on shore was the great object to be obtained, this system may be, so far as the navy is concerned, pronounced a decided failure. Whatever may be said about the policy of sowing a man's wild oats, nobody, so far as I know, ever hinted that the crop should be perennial.

Legislation can no more make men temperate than it can make them cleanly or courteous. If Parliament could work miracles of this sort, it would make one really in love with constitutional government. But what a crotchety thing all this amateur lawmaking is! Why did it not occur to this well-intentioned gentleman to inquire how it is that drunkenness is unknown, or nearly unknown, in what are called the better classes? How is it that the orgies our grandfathers liked so well, and deemed the great essence of hospitality, are no longer heard of? The three-bottle man now could no more be found than the Plesiosaurus. He belongs to a past totally and essentially irrevocable.

And by what has this happy change been effected? Surely not by withdrawing temptation. Not only have we an infinitely wider choice in fluids than our forefathers, but they are served and ministered with appliances far more tasteful and seductive. It is, however, to the higher tone of society the revolution is owing. Men saw that drunkenness was disgraceful: it rendered society disorderly and riotous; it interfered with all real conversational pleasure; it led to unmannerly excesses, and to quarrels. A higher cultivation repudiated all these things; and even they who, so to say, "liked their wine" too well, were slow to disparage themselves by an indulgence which good taste declared to be ungentlemanlike.

Is it completely impossible to introduce some such sentiment as this into other orders of society? We see it certainly in some foreign countries—why not in our own? Radical orators are incessantly telling us of the mental powers and the intellectual cultivation of the working-classes, and I am well-disposed to believe there is much truth in what they say. Why not then adapt, to men so highly civilised, some of those sentiments that sway the classes more favoured of fortune? The French artisan would deem it a disgrace to be drunk—so the Italian; even the German would only go as far as a sort of beery bemuddlement that made him a more ideal representative of the Vaterland: why must the Englishman, of necessity, be the inferior in civilisation to these? I am not willing to believe the task of such a reformation hopeless, though I am perfectly convinced that no greater folly could be committed than to attempt it by an Act of Parliament.

When legislation has led men to be agreeable in society, unassuming in manners, and gentle in deportment, it may make them temperate in their liquor, but not before. The thing cannot be done in committee, nor by a vote of the House. It is only to be accomplished by the filtering process, by which the good habits of a nation drop down and permeate the strata beneath; so that, in course of time, the whole mass, leavened by the same ingredients, becomes one as completely in sentiment as in interest. "Four-fifths of the ratepayers" will not effect this. After all, Mr Lawson is only a second-hand discoverer. His bill was a mere plagiarism from beginning to end. The whole text of his argument was said and sung by poor Curran, full fifty odd years ago:—

"My children, be chaste till you're tempted;
While sober, be wise and discreet;
And humble your bodies with fasting
Whenever you've nothing to eat."

THE END.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CORNELIUS O'DOWD UPON MEN AND WOMEN AND OTHER THINGS IN GENERAL ***

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