

## MATERIAL AND SOCIAL CONDITION.

The majority of the members and adherents of the French Protestant churches belong to the labouring class and are very poor indeed in this world's wealth, and yet some are exceedingly rich; as we have already noticed, in good thoughts and works. Some, however, may be classed in a higher sphere, socially, according to the world's estimation. There are an architect and land surveyor, a notary, a bookseller, an editor of a paper, book-keepers, druggists, a former principal of one of the Protestant Commissioners schools, taking the law course in McGill College with a view probably to study for the Bar; another a distinguished graduate in Arts and Law of the same College, soon to pass his examination for admission to the Bar; a physician's lady; a gentleman of wealth retired from business, an adherent however of an English-speaking congregation; a lady, the wife of a respectable retail merchant, and others with whom we have not met.

This article has been hastily written, yet, in spite of imperfections, our hope is that it may be of interest and profit to the readers of the SPECTATOR and the public in general.

Observer.

## COMPLIMENTS.

What honour that  
But tedious waste of time to sit and hear  
So many hollow compliments and lyes—  
Outlandish flatteries.

Thus Milton, in "Paradise Regained," would seem to assign to this word Compliment an expression of civility which includes some hypocrisy. Dr. Johnson translates the noun "an act of civility," the verb as "to flatter." It is of French origin, and is usually understood to mean less than it declares, being properly Complement, something superfluous or more than enough. The French language peculiarly adapts itself to the honeyed utterances of society, and yet some of the compliments handed down to us by this light-hearted nation have been singularly unfortunate. A compliment implies compliance, or assent, with the will of another, having a desire to please or flatter any weakness or prejudice of theirs, and in excess of the truth as a rule. But compliments are the current coin of society. The man who can pay a compliment without outraging the delicacy of feeling of the recipient, and in such a manner as to ensure belief, is certain to secure goodwill and success in the world, for long ago sociability taught men that, in order the better to cement their likings for each other, it is necessary that everybody should show off his neighbour in the best light. Lord Chesterfield, in his famous advice to his son, dwells at some length on the necessity of studying the weakness of others, and flattering their vanity, more especially with regard to women and their beauty; "upon which," he adds, "scarce any flattery is too gross for them to swallow." Indeed, most of the writers of past days would seem to assign to women a special complacency with regard to compliments. "Many women doat upon a man for his compliments . . . they are won in a minute," writes Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy." And though it is quite possible to remind a pretty woman of her charms in a well turned compliment without overstepping the boundary of truth; still, such is the perversity of human nature, the fair ones of incontestable beauty desire to be esteemed for their understanding, wit, or some other virtues which they most probably lack; just as Richelieu, the ablest statesman of his time, desired to be accounted by his flatterers a poet.

A well-turned compliment throws grace over society, and to produce the best effect it must be premeditated without appearing so. A hundred years ago it was part of the education of youth to pay pretty compliments with the air of believing them. Judging from the rapid, fulsome strain in which many handed down to us in the "Academy of Compliments" are couched, the women of that day must indeed have shown much amiable complacency. What would be said now to a man who would address a woman as follows:—"For your beauty, Madam, I may name you Venus, for your comeliness Pallas, for your honour Juno. I should show myself insensible were I not amazed with the curiosity of your beauty. At last, oh, fair one, cast the eyes of thy resplendent presence on thy abject creature, that by the brightness of those eyes his baseness may be turned through thy perfections into a most happy preference!" No wonder that in the "Art of Complaisance" men are instructed to consider ladies' society merely a pleasing amusement or school of politeness, lest, perchance, they should get to care only for madrigals and periwigs.

Compliments have ever been esteemed the key to open the secret cabinet of princes' breasts, and no good man but has his circle of courtiers, who compliment him by deeds as well as words. Many a man dates his success in life from a well-turned compliment. One of the most popular men of his day made his mark in society when a friend addressing him in the crush-room of the opera said, "Look at that fat Lady D—, isn't she like a great white cabbage?" "She is, indeed, like one," was the wise reply—"all heart." The lady heard, and was his friend from thenceforth. Fashionable life is passed, not so much in being happy as in playing at being happy, and compliments help to keep up the delusion. Many polite phrases are expressions and nothing more, and we glean something of the meaning of the

word compliment, in the use we make of it, as a mode of addressing those to whom we adopt the third person in writing. This is not always understood by the lower orders. A man-servant each morning, in reply to inquiries as to the health of an invalid lady, was wont to reply, "Miss M——'s compliments, she is worse," or better, as the case might be, until at last came, "Miss M——'s compliments, and she died this morning."—*Globe*.

## DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

Some of our readers object to our strictures in sewing, saying that we are giving their daughters the impression that they need not learn needlework. We do not intend to give any such impression. Indeed we would wish every girl to learn sewing, cooking and housekeeping; but we do not think that all women should be dressmakers. In this country, and in this age of ups and downs, it is essential that every girl should know how to make her living in some special way. We have too many feminine "Jacks of all trades," who really do nothing well. When a woman who has been well brought up, suddenly finds herself thrown on her own resources, if she is not well enough educated to teach, she thinks she can at least sew; and she attempts all sorts of work; dressmaking, fancy work, plain sewing, even tailoring, but one soon finds that she can do nothing well, and she finds herself that she is not sufficiently expert at any thing to earn a good living. If she seems to have some taste for dressmaking and we say to her that it is a pity that she did not learn the trade when she was young, she will exclaim "Oh dear, my family would not have heard of such a thing; why my papa was quite well off at one time, and we kept two servants," &c. She will really seem hurt that we should deem it possible that she could condescend to anything so ungenteel; and seems quite proud of not having learned the business which she attempts to follow; and yet had she learned it she might now be able to earn more than a living, for our good *modistes* are few and far between. False pride so often prevents those who really have taste and aptitude for the trade from learning it, and it is only when driven by force of circumstances that they condescend to it as a *dernier resort*. A late leading dressmaker was of this class, but as we speak of born poets, so we may say of her that she was a "born *artiste*" in mantua making; but a great deal of her success was owing to the fact that she did not let the ladies choose their own trimmings. Knowing that she had good taste herself she would not allow it to be violated by the bad taste of her patrons. A really good *modiste* who is possessed of taste and judgement in adapting styles to suit her customers, is always sure to have plenty of them even in Montreal. The lady who now has charge of the dressmaking department at a leading dry goods house is an example of this—when making a new engagement her services are eagerly sought after by all the best stores; wherever she goes her customers follow her, and when she started for herself she had more work than she could manage; but being accustomed to work for stores where she is less cramped as to choice of materials and trimmings she prefers it to private work. Now this lady's success is owing to her having chosen a business for which she has taste and talent. She takes pride in the perfection of her work and her customers feel secure of satisfaction when they place their materials in her hands. Is it not quite possible that every girl should thus excel in some special trade or profession? She need not necessarily practice it, but the day may come when she will be glad to have a trade at her fingers' ends, or a profession stored away in her brain. Should a daughter of ours show decided taste for millinery or mantua making, we should send her to the best milliner or *modiste* and gladly pay for her teaching. Oh, no, Mrs. Shoddy, we should not be at all afraid to let her associate with ordinary apprentices. So far as we can observe these girls have less forward manners and behave with greater propriety when going to and from their work than some of the school girls, daughters of the Shoddys.

It is a curious fact that parents should be so particular as to with whom their children shall associate after leaving school, when it is well known that our Commissioners' Schools (which are really intended for the poorer classes) are filled with the children of well-to-do, or even wealthy parents, and this often to the exclusion of children of the poor, who cannot afford to send them elsewhere; and otherwise to their prejudice, inasmuch as these rich men's children sometimes obtain the scholarships, which enable them to pass through the High School and McGill College free of charge, when their fathers could well afford to pay for them; and they are thus depriving some poor man's children of the boon to which they are entitled. Sometimes people have even been mean enough to send their children merely for a few months to obtain this scholarship; but we believe regulations have now been made to prevent the recurrence of this fraud upon the poor. We should always prefer choosing our children's companions carefully during their younger years, since it is then that their manners and characters are formed, and earliest impressions are most lasting and most difficult to change. We may think that there can be but little choice between the children attending public and those of our private schools, since so many of our richest families have but lately risen from the ranks of the poor, but riches do bring a certain amount of refinement, and the son of the *parvenu* is reared in a very different manner to that in which