

Imperfect

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WHOLE NO. 58

ABJURATION.

'Tis done! 'tis well!—I've freely signed
The pledge which prompts me to be wise,
To keep the balance of my mind,
To cast the film from off my eyes:
Help me, divine, unerring Power!
To Thee, not man, do I appeal;
Oh! lend me strength this very hour
For my eternal weal.

How frail—how failing I have been
In man's best duties here below!
My thoughts how dark, my pangs how keen,
He, the All-Wise, can only know.
Yet I have yearned, in sorrow yearned,
To keep my soul unsoiled within;
For I too prematurely learned
The misery of sin.

To shun the cup that sometimes cheers,
But often deadens and destroys,
Will not bring back my wasted years,
My withered hopes, my banished joys:
But it may help to make the best
Of what remains of mortal life,—
Yield me an interval of rest,
And banish needful strife.

To scorn the draught that bringeth blight,
Sad waste of body, dearth of soul,
Will not afford the perfect light,
Nor make us truly, calmly whole.
But it may lend us strength to rise
To higher duties, holier aims:
Give us an impulse towards the skies,
And purify our claims.

A crowd of enemies remain
To curb or conquer, if we can;
A hundred nameless things that stain
And hurt the better part of man:
The list of passions, vices, and sins,
The uncharitable thought and deed,
With errors mixed and manifold,
Must fall ere we are freed.

Here I abjure the bane whose power
Holds countless souls in shameful thrall;
Aroused to reason, from this hour
I shun, scorn, loathe it, once for all!
Humbly, and with remorseful pain,
I ask the merciful Supreme
To banish from my restless brain
The past, a hideous dream.

Come, Temperance, pioneer and guide
To purer regions of delight,
And help me not to turn aside
From the true path of moral right;
But chiefly then, Religion come,
Without thee other aids are frail;
Hope, faith, truth, virtue are the sun,
These over all prevail.

JOHN CRITCHLEY PRINCE.

Varieties.

BRITAIN'S COLONIAL EMPIRE.

From the Ottawa Times.

THE colonies and dependencies of Great Britain are fortunately beginning to pay. Notwithstanding the withdrawal of troops and the abandonment of fortresses, these attached and inalienable allies of England are making progress. From 1855 to 1871 the total expenditure on the colonies came, in round numbers, to £44,000,000, and the total value of the exports to £450,000,000 sterling. This is surely something of which a nation such as England may be proud. The colonies are of material, not merely moral value to England. England makes money out of her colonies, instead of wasting money upon them. And what is still better, the inhabitants of the East Indies and of China are emigrating to the West Indies to better their circumstances, and giving value to property in Jamaica and Demerara. People are beginning to flee from destitution and misery to comfort and independence, out of countries hitherto supposed to be beyond the bounds of civilization. Even the old isolation of China has been broken down, and that mysterious Empire with its strange and stationary civilization, its rulers, and their brotherhood with the celestial bodies, its old world ideas, and its mental habit of feeding on the husks of abstract principles, out of which the life has departed long ago, is now sending forth thousands of its children to take a share in the movements of the outer world, and elbow themselves into a forward place in the competition of the races. So it is elsewhere. Canada is now attracting to herself a full share of old world emigration.

Through the exertions of the Minister of Agriculture streams of people are coming out from Europe, not to pass through Canada, as of old, but to settle down in it. They are now learning to appreciate Canada as a land to live in—as a land in which honest labor can ever find employment.

It is now being recognized in England, in France and in Germany, that Canada is not continually covered with snow, but that there are in it houses, and shops, work and land for all. They in Europe are beginning to learn that these Colonies pay, and yield a surplus to Europe. They are getting alive to the fact that Colonists are neither paupers nor mere dependents of the Empire, but people possessed of that peculiar energy which freedom never fails to bestow. They are beginning to notice the fact that our soil and our physique, that our climate and resources are wonderful; greater than those of England even, and much more so than those of the United States. People at a distance are beginning to recognize the vast merits of this country, and people are coming in wondrously large numbers from every quarter of the globe to fill up those great stretches of fertile territory, which extend from the headwaters of the St. Lawrence to the slopes of the Pacific. Canada, under such circumstances, must grow.

There can be no stop to the growth of a country so abounding in milk and honey. Progress is a certainty now, and with it power must come; our prayer being that when power will use it with discretion, and never for a moment lose sight of that connection to which they owe it all. They will not forget that it was English money that produced our railways and canals, English money that gave us our commerce, and that English hearts and hands have made us, as a people, what we are. Prosperity will come upon us, and its tide may overwhelm us, but it is hoped that the people of this country may be prudent in prosperity, and know fully how to appreciate that which will have made them prosperous and really great.

THE OWL AND THE GRASSHOPPER

An Owl sat sleeping in a tree. But a Grasshopper who was singing beneath would not let her be quiet, abusing her with very indecent and uncivil language, telling her she was a scandalous person, who plied at nights to get her living, and shut herself up all day in a hollow tree. The Owl desired her to hold her tongue, and be quiet; notwithstanding she was the more impertinent. She begged of her a second time to leave off; but all to no purpose. The Owl, vexed at the heart, to find that all she said went for nothing, cast about to inveigle her by a stratagem. "Well," says she, since one must be kept awake, it is a pleasure, however, to be kept awake by so agreeable a voice; which I must confess is in no way inferior to the finest harp. And, now I think on it, I have a bottle of excellent nectar, which my mistress Pallas gave me; if you have a mind I will give you a dram to wet your whistle." The Grasshopper, ready to die with thirst, and, at the same time, pleased to be so complimented upon account of her voice, skipped up to the place very briskly; when the Owl, advancing to meet her, seized, and without much delay made her a sacrifice to her revenge; securing to herself, by the death of her enemy, a possession of that quiet, which during her lifetime she could not enjoy.

THE APPLICATION.

Humanity, or what we understand by common civility, is not more a necessary duty, than it is easy to practice. The man that is guilty of ill-manners, if he has been bred to know what is meant by manners, must do violence to himself, as well as to the person he offends; and cannot be inhuman to others, without being cruel to his own nature. People of captious temper, being generally in

the wrong, in taking things ill, which were never so intended, are likely to be but the more persecuted, in order to be laughed out of their follies, and that not, unjustly. But we must take care to distinguish, and when anything truly impertinent and troublesome has been said or done to another, not to repeat it, because he takes it ill, but immediately to desist from it, especially when he is so moderate as to make it his request two or three times, before he proceeds openly to take his course, and to do himself justice. This point should be well considered; for many quarrels of very ill consequences, have been occasioned by a rash, unthinking persistence in the impertinent hu-



OUR FUTURE PRIME MINISTER.—4th page.

mor before mentioned. Some young people are fond of showing their wit and intrepidity, and therefore take such occasions to do it. And when a friend is peevish (as one may have a private cause for being so), they will not leave, till they have rallied them out of it; no, though he entreats them ever so gravely and earnestly. Whereas, in truth, we have no right to be impertinent with one another to extremity; and though there is no law to punish incivilities, as I have been speaking of, they will scarce fail of meeting with a deserved and just chastisement some way or other.

MALE TOILETTES.

On the whole the present male toilette is much less against advancing age than it has often been. At one point the growing fogies—that is, men over 35—may see a danger ahead; we mean as to the black chimney-pot hat. During a long time this wonderful article of attire has had nearly as levelling an effect on all ages out-of-doors as the white wig used to have in-doors. We do not say quite so. The powdered wig was a fashion despotically in favour of age; and it may be said of the tall, black, cylindrical head-covering, that it is decidedly in favour of middle-aged and elderly men when showing out-of-doors. The one respect in which there was a shifting disadvantage was as to the brim. Now and then a jauntiness of curl has been introduced, which gave to old men an appearance of affecting juvenile pertness. A level, rather broad rim served the eldest best. But absolute change of the whole shape now seems setting in; and some of the forms are so audaciously light and trivial that age at all advanced could not possibly venture on them. A classification of ages out-of-doors by the style of the head-gear is threatened. This is bad for men about forty. As to the fashion of the other garments, it is only in one or two points that age is unfortunate just now. The close-fitting walking

coat lends itself a little too conspicuously to exaggerated stomachic development; rotundity is made strikingly spacious, but to the spaciousness is given a gentle self-explaining appearance. It is a style vastly to be preferred to that of the full-dress garment now seen only in-doors during a portion of the day, but which once was the common wear; for middle-aged to have got rid of the swallow-tail coat, with its abrupt disclosure of corpulencies unequal and grotesque is a decided advantage. The respect in which age is most tried by the existing style is a certain scantiness in the upper garment. Middle-aged and elderly men are best suited by a decent expansiveness of skirt.

But things here might have been much worse; there have been the days of the "spencer." Still, it is odds that if a middle aged male has the daring to present himself in a short-tailed coat, he betrays his years at once. Again as to the other chief garment, advancing age is not unlucky. The time of the pantaloons was cruel to the shrunk shank, without being favourable to the opposite style. The moderation which now prevails is gently concealing in either case.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

REMINISCENCES OF LEIGH HUNT.

Of all my literary acquaintances, dear Leigh Hunt was, I think, the most delightful, as assuredly he was the most affectionate. Living within a short walk of my house, his disengaged evenings he made them by the brightness, the originality and loving kindness of his nature. Suffering severely from the *res angustidomus*, there was no reproving, no bitterness, no censoriousness in his conversation. He bore his own privations with cheerful resignation, and unaffectedly rejoiced in the better fortune of others. He was greatly delighted with the success of his play, and began another, the scenes of which he brought to us as he wrote, and read as only he could read. He had the wildest ideas of dramatic effect, and calculated in the most untopian spirit upon the intelligence of the British public. As I often told him, if he read them himself, the magic of his voice, the marvellous intonation and variety of expression in his delivery, would probably enchain and enchant a general audience as it does us; but the hope of being so interpreted was not to be entertained for a moment. As an example of the playfulness of his fancy, take the following: I was on my way to the theatre one morning with Charles Matthews in his carriage. We had not spoken for some minutes, when, as we were passing a wholesale stationer's at the west end of the Strand, Matthews, in his whimsical way, suddenly said to me, "Planche, which would you rather be? Roake or Varty?"—such being the names printed over the shop-windows. I laughed at the absurdity of the question, and declined hazarding an opinion, as I had not the advantage of knowing either of the persons mentioned. On my return home in the evening, for I usually dined at the theatre, I found Hunt at tea with my family, and told him the ridiculous question that had been put to me. "Now, do you know," he said, "I consider that anything but a ridiculous question. I should say it was an exceedingly serious one, and which might have very alarming, nay, fatal consequences under certain mental or physical conditions. You might have become impressed by the notion that it was absolutely necessary for you to come to some decision on the question, and so absorbed in its consideration that you could think of nothing else. All business, public or private, would be neglected. Perpetual pondering on one problem, which daily became more difficult of solution, would result in monomania. Your health undermined. Your brain overwrought, in the last moments of fleeting existence, only a few seconds left in which to make your selection, you might rashly utter 'Roake!' then, suddenly repenting,

gasp out 'Var,' and die before you could say 'ty.' He had a most amusing habit for coming words. Having paid my poor invalid wife what she considered a great compliment, she said, "Oh, Mr. Hunt, you make me really begin to fear that you are—pardon me the epithet—a humbug." "Good gracious!" he exclaimed, "that is a man who has been imprisoned for speaking the truth should be accused of *humbugism*!"—the softening of the gladdening elegance is the novelty of the expression.—*J. R. Planche.*

THE "FAT KNIGHT."

Falstaff has the passion of an animal, and the imagination of a man of wit. There is no character which better exemplifies the dash and immorality of Shakespeare. Falstaff is a great supporter of disreputable places, swearer, brawler, wine-bag, as low as he will can be. He has a big belly, bloodshot eyes, bloated face, shaking legs; he spends his life huddled up among his tavern jugs, or asleep in the ground behind the arras; he only wakes to curse, lie, brag, and steal. He is as big a swindler as Panurge, who had sixty-three ways of making money, "of which the honest was by sly theft." And what is worse, he is an old man, a knight, a courtier, and well bred. Must he not be odious and repulsive? By no means; you cannot help liking him. At bottom, like his brother Panurge, he is "the best fellow in the world." He has no malice in his composition; no other wish than to laugh and be amused. When insulted, he bawls out louder than his attackers, and pays them back with interest in coarse words and insults; but he owes them no grudge for it. The next minute he is sitting down with them in a tavern, drinking the health like a brother and comrade. If he exposes them so frankly that we are obliged to rebuke him, he says, "Well, so am I; what then? I like drinking: isn't the wine good? I take to my heels when hard hitting begins: isn't fighting a nuisance? I get into debt, and do fools out of their money: isn't it nice to have money in your pocket? I brag: isn't it natural to want to be well thought of?—'Dost thou hear, Hal? thou knowest, in the state of innocency, Adam fell; and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in the days of villany? Thou seest I have more flesh than another man, and therefore more frailty.' Falstaff is so frankly immortal, that he ceases to be so. Conscience ends at a certain point: nature assumes its place, and the man rushes upon what he desires, without more thought of being just or unjust than an animal in the neighbouring wood. Falstaff, engaged in recruiting, has sold exemptions to all the rich people, and only enrolled starved and half-naked wretches. There's but a shirt and a half in all his company; that does not trouble him. Bah! "they'll find linen enough on every hedge." The Prince, who has seen them pass muster, says, "I did never see such pitiful rascals." "Tut tut," answers Falstaff, "good enough to toss; food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better; tush! man, mortal men, mortal men." His second excuse is his unfeeling spirit. If ever there was a man who could talk, it is he. Insults and oaths, curses, jobations, protests, flow from him as from an open barrel. He is never at a loss; he devises a shift for every difficulty. Lies sprout out of him, fructify, increase, beget one another, like mushroom rooms on a rich and rotten bed of earth. He lies still more from his imagination and nature than from interest and necessity. It is evident from the manner in which he strains his fictions. He says he has fought alone against two men. The next moment it is four. Presently we have seven, then eleven, then fourteen. He is stopped in time, or he would soon be talking of a whole array. When unmasked, he does not lose his temper, and is the first to laugh at his boastings. "Galkants, lads, boys, hearts of gold. . . . What, shall we be merry shall we have a play extempore? He does the scolding part of King Henry with so much truth, that one might take him for a king, or an actor. This big pot-bellied fellow, a coward, a jester, a brawler, a drunkard, a lewd rascal, a pothouse poet, is one of Shakespeare's favourites. The reason is, that his manners are those of pure nature, and Shakespeare's mind is congenial with his own.—*Henri Paine.*