

THE AESTHETIC CRAZE.

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE FROM GEORGE TO HIS FRIEND JACK.

DEAR JACK:—

I write you to say that the aesthetic craze struck the town on last Tuesday an hour after noon. When Miss Hortense Matilda de Fontes-Age arrived in the train, as if dropped from the moon.

Her costume was—well, indescribable quite. And occasioned indeed on all sides quite a flutter; Both Mary and Kate said she looked like a fright—in language aesthetic, "utterably utter."

Her manner and style were a study alone; A full blossomed tulip she bore in one hand, And the way that she gazed that flower, I must own, Can't be told in what language I've now at command.

Her walk was quite "utter"—a stumbling glide; With shoulders a kind of pulled in a bunch; She looked like those pictures that sharply deride The aesthetic craze in the pages of Pwack.

The number she talks and the boah she gets through, The numerical tricks of her "aesthetic" taste, Will soon drive me mad—as it is, I feel "blue," And my language, at times, is not proper or chaste.

The very last straw that she's heaped on my back, Is to make my two sisters, like her, "quite too too;" And so, in despair, I sit down, my dear Jack, To pour out my troubles aesthetic to you.

Ah me! I suppose I should not give away. But wait for old Time to break through all the tolls; Mark Tapley in trouble was jolly and gay; In patience I suffer, like Job with his boils.

So a merrier look I will take at the ways Of the "utterly utter," or these "quite too too," And laugh to myself as the crazy displays Of Houghton and my sisters I lastly view.

Imagine, dear Jack, if imagine you can, If the craze of a sudden should strike below stairs, And bring all the servants right under its ban And the "utterly utter" in cooking affairs.

Just imagine for once, if you can, in your mind, The picture of Biddy, our fat Irish cook, Hanging o'er a potatoe, the "utter" defined In the languor and languish of every look.

As a contrast to Hortense, in attitude utter Up stairs in the parlour, o'er tulip or rose, Putting Mary and Kate in an envious flutter At her "utterly utter" aesthetic repose!

Imagine, my boy, how absurd it would be If Sukey, the housemaid, should fall in the snare, And the "utterly utter" should suddenly see In the dust-pan and duster that fall to her care!

I fear such a sad state of things soon will be, Though against them Dame Fashion will soon set her stings When she sees her pet follies so commonly free As to get all mixed up with life's practical things.

The "utter's" absurdity stands out so plain When brought into contrast with practical things, That Fashion feels foolish, won't have it remain; So the "utterly utter" it soon find itself wain.

For instance, imagine a garden where blows The rose and the cabbage, set out side by side; What a shock in the aesthetic as the best o'er the rose, Would receive the "utter" as the brand!

The cabbage would bring up a vision of pork— Of fat greasy pork—and the both suggest eating, With the necessary by-play of knife and of fork, Which would shock the Aesthete even into retreating.

Everything in its place, so the cabbage and rose We should not in our gardens plant close in position, Or a mignonette border put round potatoes, For each in this life has a separate mission.

The things of earth earthly we should not combine With things more divine, how'er useful they be For we all have some tastes that are more or less fine, And if we had not what a world we should see;

But this aesthetic craze places shew on the rack, Is foolish and weak. But I new rest content For I feel in my soul, and I'm sure you do, Jack, It will go where old China and Keramics went.

GEORGE.

St. John, N.E., August 15, 1881.

JAMES GILLESPIE BLAINE IN FIFTEENTH ST. WASHINGTON.

In one of a group of four tall houses, built of brown stone and red brick, situated in Fifteenth street, Washington, and bearing the number 821, dwells the American Secretary of State. With the assurance of meeting with the kindest welcome from a statesman-universally known for his hospitality and his amiability, and of being entertained with his charming conversation for a few minutes, if the pressing morning duties of the Premier will at all permit it, we stroll along the quiet street, and arriving at the neat doorstep, pull the bell at Mr. Blaine's. Our cards are taken by a young negress, who, in English undefiled by the slave's jargon of the Southern plantation, makes the usual cautious remark that she does not know if Mr. Blaine is at home. Four large rooms constitute the drawing-room suite, the ground-floor, at Mr. Blaine's. A bow-window on the street adds to the size of the room, and affords further scope for the loving ornamentation with which each of these apartments is endowed. There are many valuable objects here; much rare china on the walls and in cabinets; fine pictures; some good statures; but the greatest charm of the place is its home-like spirit, which enters the heart of the visitor, and tells him that the Premier and his family specially inhabit these rooms, and keep no corner of their house sacred to the bold ceremony of merely receiving visitors.

Mr. Secretary Blaine's house is incontestably the most popular in Washington. On Wednesday afternoons—the days in Washington when, during the Session of Congress, the wives of Cabinet Ministers, and those of foreign Ambassadors receive—there is no house in the American

capital so crowded. Whatever the weather, however thin the attendance in other drawing-rooms, there is always a throng at Mr. Blaine's. Nor is this due to the importance of his present position as Secretary of State. It was the same when he was in Congress, whether as member or Speaker of the House; it was the same when he was in the Senate; it would be the same if Mr. Blaine were not in politics. People go there because they like Mr. Blaine and all his family, which consists of his intellectual and lady-like wife; a kinswoman of brilliant reputation in American letters, who uses the nom de plume of "Gail Hamilton;" and six fine and promising children. Never since the days of the silver-voiced Henry Clay of Kentucky, has there been a man in the United States whose personal magnetism has been acknowledged as so potent as that of Mr. Blaine. The power which Mr. Blaine exercises over men, the unflinching success he enjoys in winning their affection, has been variously attributed to his epigrammatic speech, his delightful jocularity, to his earnestness and his splendid physique. But there is a more simple explanation. Mr. Blaine's popularity is simply derived from the sweet and unaffected nature of the man, and from the unchanging goodness of his big warm heart. To be a great statesman, and yet a kind, generous, and sympathetic friend to uncountable scores of little people whose acquaintance he has made during the last twenty or thirty years of his life; to maintain a demeanor of perfect dignity at all times, and yet to know how to unbend to each visitor in just the degree necessary to make the latter feel that of all "good fellows" in the world, "Blaine of Maine" is the best, demands intellectual talents and moral qualities of the highest order. These talents and these qualities are well-known to be the attributes of Mr. Blaine; and they are not denied him even by those whose interests in the political arena are arrayed against his own.

In the examination of the drawing-rooms at Mr. Blaine's we find, among other valuable possessions, one very interesting picture,—a large canvas by Sir Peter Lely, representing Charles II, and his Court. It is signed with the date 1658. It was painted by Sir Peter for Lord Baltimore, and was bought by Mr. Blaine for a sum of comparative unimportance at the sale of the Calvert estate, Riverdale, Maryland, a few years ago. There is not an art-gallery in Europe, public or private which would not be enriched by this large historical picture, full of portraits, and executed in Lely's most delicate, and yet most animated style. Near at hand, on a pedestal, stands a fine life-size bust of Mr. Blaine, as good a likeness of the statesman, as could perhaps be obtained in this form of a man, the charm of whose features lies principally in their mobility and ever changing-play. Portraits of men of letters abound here. Dickens, Thackeray, Disraeli, Washington Irving, Hawthorne, and many others gaze down from the walls, principally in the last of the suite of drawing-rooms—the one in which the Premier sits of a morning before going to the Department of State, examining such letters as imperatively demand his attention at home. Routine correspondence is carried on by secretaries in a vast room at the top of the house, and is an enormous and never-ceasing task. Listen! A deep mellow voice is warmly crying out, "Now, is there anything more annoying than to be kept waiting? To which we reply with truth, "It is not annoying with the prospect in view of seeing you." Blaine of Maine acknowledges the compliment by a hearty grasp on both his extended hands. It is impossible to exaggerate the charm of his manner, because of his own great brilliancy, he has a sort of delightful and modest deference to the opinion of his listener, as though to say, "Am I right? Does your judgment approve of this? which is needless to say, is most "taking" with every auditor. And there is nothing false here. It is the natural idiosyncrasy of a frank and impulsive man, with a very warm heart, kindly instincts, and generous nature. In stature, Mr. Blaine is above the medium height, and is of strong and compactly-built frame. His head is large, his hair gray, and abundant; his face is engaging in expression, and large in feature, and lighted by a pair of brilliant dark-brown eyes. His movements are alert and vigorous, save when he is in the inquisitorial tortures of an inherited enemy—the gout. "I suffer vicariously from the gout," he explains with a rueful grimace. "I never earned the gout. I never drank a glass of spirits in my life. Yet I must endure the agonies of the gout, because my jolly old British ancestors denied themselves nothing." These ancestors were of that excellent mingling known as the Scotch-Irish.

On the 31st January 1830, at West Brownsville, Pennsylvania, James Gillespie Blaine was born. The old farmhouse, where he first opened his eyes, is still standing. Local history asserts that the Gillespie farmhouse was the first stone house built on the western side of the Monongahela River. The great-grandfather of Mr. Blaine was Commissary-General of the northern department of Washington's army, and the heroic exertions of Colonel Blaine, with the sacrifice of his own fortune and his persistent applications for contributions from his friends, alone kept the continental army from starvation during the terrible winter at Valley Forge. In 1818 Mr. Blaine's father was the possessor of the largest landed estate in Western Pennsylvania; an estate comprising not only a goodly portion of the land on which now stands the city of Pittsburg, but which included endless timber-tracts and coal-tracts of incalculable value.

Vicissitudes compelled the family to dispose of the great bulk of these possessions piecemeal; but the remnant still owned by Mr. Blaine, though but the merest fraction in the matter of area compared to that which his father held fifty years ago, is nevertheless of value immeasurably greater than was the whole estate a half century since.

At the age of eleven, James Blaine was sent, for the advantages of better tuition, to Lancaster, Ohio, where he lived in the family of his kinsman, Thomas Ewing, at that time Secretary of the Treasury. His cousin, "Tom" Ewing, was his classmate, and both were under the tuition of Mr. William Lyons, a brother of the present Minister to France. At the age of eighteen, Mr. Blaine graduated at Washington College, Pennsylvania, and immediately after "went West" again into Ohio, and began to instruct others. Cupid mingling his arts with the teaching, and Mr. Blaine becoming the husband of a young lady-teacher in the same educational establishment with himself, the pair resolved to return to the home State of the young wife, Maine. Here he became an editor of newspapers—first of the Kennebec Journal, the next the Portland Advertiser. Elected to the State Legislature of Maine in 1858, since that date Mr. Blaine has been unceasingly engaged in the political arena of his country. Whether as State Legislator, National Representative, Speaker of the House, Senator, or Secretary of State, Mr. Blaine has ever shown himself to be a man of marvellous powers, and one of the finest types of American Statesmen.

The sobriquet of "the Plumed Knight," by which Mr. Blaine is so often mentioned in the American Press, is derived from the speech made by Robert Ingersoll when he nominated Mr. Blaine for the Presidency in 1876. Mr. Ingersoll said:

"Republicans demand a man who will sacrilegiously preserve the financial honor of the United States; one who knows enough to know that the National debt must be paid through the prosperity of this people; one who knows enough to know that all the financial theories in the world cannot redeem a single dollar; one who knows enough to know that all the money must be made, not by law, but by labour; one who knows enough to know that the people of the United States have the industry to make the money and the honour to pay it over just as soon as they can. The Republicans of the United States demand a man who knows that prosperity and resumption, when they come, must come together; when they come, they will come hand in hand through the golden-harvest fields; hand in hand by the whirling spindles and the turning wheels; hand in hand by the open furnace-doors; hand in hand by the chimneys filled with eager fire raked and grasped by the hands of the countless sons of toil.

This is a grand year—a year filled with the recollections of the Revolution; filled with proud and tender memories of the sacred past; filled with legends of liberty—a year in the sons of freedom will drink from the fountain of enthusiasm; a year in which the people call for the man who has preserved in Congress what their soldiers won upon the field; a year in which they call for the man who has torn from the throat of treason, the tongue of slander; the man who has snatched the mask of Democracy from the hideous face of the rebellion; the man who, like the intellectual athlete, hath toodled in the arena of debate, challenging all comers, and who, up to the present moment, is a total stranger to defeat. Like an armed warrior, like a plumed knight, James G. Blaine marched down the halls of the American Congress, and threw his shining lance full and fair against the brazen forehead of every traitor to his country and every maligner of his fair reputation."

Mr. Blaine has been twice before the people as a Presidential candidate, and twice has he been defeated by "the dark horse." It is not impossible that the third time—as a dusky pythoness of a gypsy-camp on the heath might say—would "work a charm." In the recent senatorial contests in America, it was plainly shown that the sympathies of the people were, from first to last, warmly in favour of the policy pursued by the Chief Magistrate of the nation, and his admired and beloved Secretary of State.—London World.

VARIETIES.

SIC TRANSIT.—As the train rolled into Fremont, Ohio, the fat passenger remarked, "If we had time, I'd stop and take dinner with old Hayes." "With whom?" asked the sad passenger severely. "Old Hayes," the fat passenger replied. "Didn't you know him? Used to be President of the Republic. Some months ago people were calling him 'His Most Excellent Excellency Rutherford B Hayes, President of the United States of America and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy.'" Then he got on the cars one day in March. Then he got on, when he got as far as Altoona, people were calling "Rutherford B. Hayes, ex-President of the United States." When he reached Pittsburg, they called him "Ex-President Hayes." When the train got as far west as Cleveland, the papers announced the arrival of Hon. R. B. Hayes. And the day after he reached Fremont an old Fremontier, lighting a spring fire with an ancient pea-brusher and blighted boots in his back-yard said to his neighbour, with little grammar and less reverence, "Old Hayes is got rich." Sic transit gloria of the United States of America! Yesterday men would chase after Hayes's carriage fifteen miles through mud and dust to beg him

for a little Missouri corner post-office worth three hundred and sixty-five dollars a year and pay your own rent. To-day he appears at an hotel, and the clerk says cheerfully, "Want a sample-room, Mr. Hayes?" He goes to the bank, and the cashier looks at him pleasantly, but with intense scrutiny, and says, "Could you get another name on this for us, please?" Verily, my brother, all is vanity! So is the greatness of the man who hath been President."

ALTHOUGH you may drive a coach and six through Acts of Parliament, they are proof against a tricycle, even when it is driven by steam. Sir Thomas Parkyns, being of an ingenious turn of mind, has invented a tricycle which goes by steam, and he was proudly trying his invention along the public roads at Greenwich, in the presence of admiring crowds, when some one was pleased to regard it as a dangerous nuisance. There is, of course, no Act of Parliament in existence which was passed for the purpose of putting down steam tricycles; but there is a statute on the book which, though drawn with a different object, may be construed to embrace them within its ample folds. The Highway and Locomotive Acts of 1865 and 1878 were passed in order to regulate the movements of traction engines and steam rollers, which when not regulated have a knack of rushing uninvited into private drawing-rooms or breaking through into front cellars, and of colliding with innocent horses and carts that keep the right side of the road. But, unfortunately for Sir Thomas Parkyns, this act defines "locomotive" as "a locomotive propelled by steam or by other than animal power." Now, the new tricycle is unquestionably a locomotive, and it is propelled by steam. It therefore comes within the definition of the statute, and consequently must abide by the requirements of the statute, which are that it must travel more than two miles an hour, and that it must have three persons in attendance! The stipendiary so ruled, and upon appeal Lord Coleridge has confirmed his judgment. It may be law, but it is very absurd that a light and agile tricycle should be subject to the same rules as a fifty-ton roller or traction engine.

HIS SOLEMN WARNING.—"Yas there's money made in stocks, no doubt," said the old man, as he removed his hat and ran his fingers through his gray locks, "but it's a rësky business; it's suthin like betting on where favour's going to strike, with the odds in favour of hitting the tree you stand under." "Then you never speculate?" "Never. I dig along on the old farm, taking one crop with another, and pulling out stumps when I've nothing else to do; and if I don't make any great shakes, I haven't anything to worry over. I had a purty solemn warning during the coal-ile excitement, and it cured me o' speculating." "How was that?" "Waal, I was a widower then; wife fell down the well, and was drawed out as stiff as a poker. I had a big farm, lots of stock, and was called purty solid. We all got excited about ile, and all of us dug more or less holes in search of the stuff. All of a sudden a widdler living about two miles from me found ile in a dozen places on her farm. She was a widdler with a bad nose, freckles all over her face, eyes on the squire, and built up like a camel. But when she struck ile that was a different thing. Old Deacon Spooner, who was a widower, got mashed right away. Our preacher, who had lost his third wife, saw the spec. I thought it over, and concluded she was an angel. I guess some six or seven of us began courting that widow within sixteen hours after the first sight of ile. I know the procession reached from the gate to the house." "And you got her?" "Not much I didn't, and that's what I'm thankful for. Somehow or other I couldn't work up to the pint. That nose kinder stood in the way every time I was ready to pop the question. She acted like she wanted me, but Deacon Spooner got the best of us all, and they made a hitch." "And then what?" "Nothing, except she had dosed that farm with a barrel of ile, and thus got a husband for herself, and a home for her five children. When the news came out, I was so cold along the back-bone that they had to kiver me up with a hoss-blanket; and since that time I haven't had the nerve to buy eggs at seven cents a dozen and hold 'em for a rise."—American Paper.

A GENERAL DEFEATED.—A Mrs. J. G. Robertson writes: "I was suffering from general debility, want of appetite, constipation, etc., so that life was a burden; after using Burdock Blood Bitters I felt better than for years. I cannot praise your Bitters too much.

OUR CHESS COLUMN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. W. S., Montreal.—Papers to members. Thanks. We are sorry to see that the members of St. George's Chess Club have tied to their acceptance of the challenge of the Philadelphia Club the condition that there shall be a stake of a large sum of money on each side. Money prizes are always objectionable, and it would be well if, instead of setting the example of adopting them, the members of chess clubs generally would use their influence in opposing a practice, which must detract so seriously from the respectability of the Royal game. In the meantime, however, we need not be surprised to find in what are called professional encounters that the same objectionable feature should exhibit itself, if the largest and most influential clubs of the great cities on both sides of the Atlantic cannot be satisfied with victory as the chief prize to be obtained in a contest over the chess-board.

The stipulations of the members of the Havana Chess Club, in their challenge to the Philadelphia players, are much more consonant with the spirit of chess, and their