

ON THE PORTRAIT OF VISCOUNTESS POWERSCOURT.

BY B. DISRAELI, ESQ., M. P.

A valley of green hills, with circling shade,
Closing the world from contemplation's view,
Save at one gentle entrance, where the glade
Spreads into rich campaign, with many a hue
Of azure mountains bounded, and arranged
In promised harvests, such as prophets drew.
In radiant visions of that teeming land,
Vowed to the labours of the sacred band
When wandering in the desert. From the brow
Robed with the spreading oak, a tall cascade—
Tall, and yet delicate, as if it played
For beauty, not for power—forth gushes now
With summer strength; and, with voluptuous ease,
Reviving, not destroying, the fresh trees
That air their graceful branches to its flow.
As they would hail some renovating breeze.
Making their glowing beauty still more glow!
Fair scene! Yet fairer at this noon tide hour,
When from the stately palace of her race,
Fresh as the fragrance of some uncultured flower
That is not half so sweet as her bright face,
Forth comes in all the pride of beauty's power,
The gentle POWERSCOURT with airy grace:
Bearing some treasured tone, with pensive mien,
To muse upon its music 'mid the scene.

LONDON SOCIETY.

BRITISH MATRONS TRYING TO EMULATE THE
GLORIES OF HOLLAND HOUSE—FAIR DIS-
CIPLES OF BRILLAT SAVARIN DON THE
COOK'S APRON.

Holland house is a thing of the past. Lady Palmerston, who did so much to hold together the party to which her husband belonged, has been gathered to her rest, and the death of the Countess of Waldegrave has extinguished the gaiety of Strawberry hill. It may be said, indeed, that the salon, considered as a power in political life, is almost extinct among us; but nevertheless the influence of woman makes itself felt even among those who say cabinets, and it may be said without exaggeration that it is a distinct disadvantage to the liberal party that the Marquis of Hartington is not a married man. For when the leader of a political party has a clever wife who knows how to make the admissions to her entertainments, as it were, the blue riband of society, she can do a great deal to forward his interests. Her smiles are indeed much more likely to win votes than the eloquence of her lord, and many a wavering adherent has been won by a judicious invitation to a dinner or ball, while new recruits even are sometimes gained by the same means. It is not complimentary to the House of Commons, but it is nevertheless true that year by year there are more men within its walls who have obtained seats at St. Stephen's mainly with a view to social advancement. Such men, who are usually parvenu millionaires, have ambitious wives and marriageable daughters, and with a fine discrimination as to political matters, not always guided by the purest patriotism, these ladies are sure to be in favour of that political party which promises them the best chances of an entree into society. True, they never obtain an admission into the *vie intime* of the great houses whose drawing-rooms they throng on the occasion of big entertainments; but, sprung from nothing, they are content with little, and the aspiring member of Parliament has very often to vote as the ladies of his family desire. Here, then, we see that although women in this country are denied the franchise, they can assuredly exercise a great deal of influence in political matters. It is the same in the country as in the town. The house of the great magnate of the county is the goal of the ambitious professional men and others for many miles around it, and no one knows better than the wife of the country gentleman with political aspirations, or a nobleman who desires to serve his party, how much she can do in the months preceding a general election by the judicious issue of invitations. It does not matter if they come no more after the election is over, and readers of Thackeray will remember the laments of Major Ponto in the "Book of Snobs" over the cruel treatment he received from the political magnate in his neighbourhood when the contest for the county was ended and he had openly "ratted" to oblige his wife and daughters.

AUTUMNAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

This autumn there will be a great deal of this political entertaining going on. A general election is not, perhaps, so imminent as some of the Radical papers would make us believe, and, indeed, I learn from authoritative sources that it is not likely to happen till next year, but nevertheless now is the time to pave the way for success, to exercise such influence as you may happen to possess in the county, and to conciliate men of opposite opinions in politics by discriminating invitations to themselves, their wives and families. Here, then, the chateleine of a country house can show herself a better electioneering agent than the sharpest attorney, and the sight of the Duchess of Omnium's card will do more to win adherents than the most logical and convincing arguments which the Duke's candidate can put forward. "Fine words," says an old proverb, "butter no parsnips," but the practical benevolence of an invitation to a great house is remembered with gratitude when the time comes to assemble at the ballot-boxes and perform those electoral functions which are popularly but erroneously supposed to be dearer to the bucolic Briton than beer. "They dine their men more than we do," says a character in one of Lord Beaconsfield's novels, commenting on the success of a political party; and the remark comes from one who above all men un-

derstands the value of cultivating society and using great houses for political purposes. He has been credited of old with an amiable weakness for dukes, and now that he is a member of that order which so often gets the oyster and leaves the commoner the shells, he is still less likely to underrate the social power which he and his associates possess as factors in the coming political campaign. Thus it happens that you hear a great deal now of plans for autumnal entertainments, county balls and the like, and many people will keep open houses solely for the furtherance of political aims. Bribery and corruption in the old sense of the words are, it may safely be said, pretty nearly extinct among us nowadays, and voters are not bought in these times as in the era when Walpole truthfully remarked that every man had his price. But the sort of corruption—if, indeed, it deserves so hard a name—of which I have been speaking is common enough, and kind words and gracious smiles are much more potent than pounds, shillings and pence.

SOCIETY AND COOKERY.

Society has of late been very much exercised in its mind on the subject of cookery. First, we had the establishment of the School of Cookery, which, like everything else at South Kensington, was accompanied by much more noise and puffery than honest work. For of South Kensington it may assuredly be said, to parody the words of the Latin proverb, "Nil tetigit quod non vitavit," and the School of Cookery was no exception to the rule. Lectures were delivered, and plates and omelettes were made before delighted audiences of fine ladies, who possibly learned something, but who regarded the whole thing as an addition to their list of amusements, and Mr. Buckmaster showed them how to play at cooking so prettily that it became a formidable rival to Prince's and Hurlingham. Then the school took to educating young women in the culinary art, sent them to teach classes in the country at a higher price than they received from the school, that omnivorous institution pocketing the difference. Yet it may be conceded that the establishment of the School of Cookery did some good, though it did not teach in a very satisfactory fashion, for it called public attention to our shortcomings in this respect, and the British householder, who above all things likes a good dinner, began to ask himself whether he was as well fed as he ought to be. The British matron was thereupon driven frantic by demands for curious and appetizing foreign dishes. The menus of famous French houses were studied with eagerness, and the worthy citizen waxed furious because it was not possible in his modest establishment, albeit he paid a "professed cook" very high wages, to produce dishes that would rival the chefs d'œuvre of Brebant's or the Café Anglais. In many cases the skill to do great things was present, but the batterie de cuisine was found to be painfully defective. And, apropos of such a discovery, here is a little anecdote: Once upon a time, some years ago, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, went to dine with Mr. Gladstone, who, if I remember rightly, was in those days Prime Minister, and who, at all events, resided near to Lord Granville, on Carlton House terrace. "The people's William" was, of course, most anxious to provide a fitting fare for his distinguished guest, and, feeling that his own cook might not be quite equal to the exigencies of the situation, he borrowed Lord Granville's chef for the occasion, feeling safe in the hands of a man who cooked for so noted a gourmet as his lordship. There is no need to say anything about the banquet, but Lord Granville, being curious as to his cook's experiences of the Gladstonian kitchen, asked him how he got on. "Ma foi," said the professor, shrugging his shoulders, "what could I do? There were not enough saucepans."

"THE DOCTOR IN THE KITCHEN."

The mania for cookery which still exists in fashionable society has of late received an additional impetus from a series of papers by Mr. Ernest Hart in the *British Medical Journal*, in which, under the title of "The Doctor in the Kitchen," he gave us some very good advice as to the dietetic value of certain kinds of food, and showed us what to eat, drink and avoid. Such warnings were certainly needed, for as a rule society certainly overates itself. Dinners are far too elaborate and far too long, and though Sir Henry Thompson, the eminent surgeon, who has also lifted up his parable on the same subject, has often cautioned us, we still continue piling one entree or another, taking half a dozen different wines during the repast, and, after trying our stomachs in every possible way, we deliberately arrest the process of digestion by swallowing ice pudding at the end of a hideously heterogeneous meal. No wonder that there is an amount of dyspepsia in the country that sorely taxes the resources of the medical profession, and there is nothing left for us at the end of the season but to rush off to the German spas and recruit. Half the people you see walking in the early morning under the lines at Homburg, listening to the "Morgenstern" waltzes and taking periodical tumbler of the Elizabeth Brunnen, are gathered there simply because they have neglected the hygiene of the table and have dined not wisely but too well through all the London season.

THE fashionable English weddings are solemnized at 3 o'clock in the afternoon by a special license, which costs \$100. People who cannot afford so expensive a ceremony have their banns called and are married before 12 o'clock.

CANADIAN SONNETS.

We republish the third part of a paper contributed to the November number of the *Canadian Monthly* by John Lesperance on Canadian Sonnets. The enumeration is satisfactory so far as it goes, but the author might have mentioned the names of George Murray, Barry Dane and others, many of whose most beautiful Sonnets were originally published in the *News*, thus confirming what we lately stated with pride that this journal has been the first vehicle of publication of many of the best works of Canadian literature.

III.

Canadian poetry is a narrow domain, but it is fairly well stocked with names and works. The pity is that it is not appreciated even among ourselves, and is practically a sealed book to the outer world. It is our bounden duty to do it at least common justice, whenever opportunity offers, and the pages of the *Canadian Monthly* are the natural field for such rehabilitation. In the restricted sphere of the sonnet our Canadian verse is specially meagre, but it happens that the little we have to offer is so very good as to compare favourably with anything which we have presented in the foregoing pages.

I shall doubtless surprise everyone of my readers by claiming for John Reade the second place, after Longfellow, among the sonnetiers of America. The judgment, however, is a deliberate and conscientious one, and I invite the sceptics to give Mr. Reade's works that critical examination which alone can convince them whether I am right or wrong. It is altogether too much the fashion to depreciate native productions to the advantage of foreign talent, simply because we are personally acquainted with the authors and elbow them in the round of their every-day duties. It is an additional drawback with our writers that they have not the chance to appear before us in the tempting presentations of creamy paper, new type, and elegant binding, which so often entice one to read and affect to relish what one would not otherwise care for. Not having facilities of permanent publication, they throw off their fancies in the columns of newspapers, or the pages of periodicals, and thus receive at best only an ephemeral notice. Mr. Reade has published a fine work, "The Prophecy of Merlin and other Poems," but his sonnets are not in them. These are the fruits of his maturer years. Pending their collection in book form, I cannot do more than select one or two of his sonnets as proof of the high position which I claim for him.

God help the man who mortgages his life
For patriot dues! Henceforward he is safe
No more. His noblest virtues lost of strife
The Hydra that he serves to last of life.
His self-respect, his every social tie,
All that for which the world's best heroes fight
Must be surrendered, or, unless he die,
He is a slave—mayhap a despot slave.
Like Dionysius, fearful of the light,
Or Bellarius, begging to the grave
Trough streets o'er which his conquering banners
Wave.
And his reward—to have poor poets sigh
Above his dust the requiem of the brave.

Here is another of the finest classic mould:

If Homer ne'er had sung; if Socrates
Had never lived in virtue's cause to die;
If the wild chorus of the circling seas
Had never echoed back poor Sappho's sigh;
If Sparta had not, with the purest blood,
Trace on all time the name "Thermopylae";
If Greece, united through the surging flood
Of Persian pride, had not arisen free;
If nought of great, or wise, or brave, or good
Had proved thee, Hellas, what thou wast to be;
Save that thou didst create "Antigone!"
Thou still standest in the van of nations stood.
Fallen are thy noblest temples, but above
Them all still stands thy shrine of Woman's Love.

I must be allowed to transcribe a third, on a personal theme entitled "Tulit Alter."

Honours! Shall I thus complete thy plaint,
O older brother? Or, the actual wrong,
Is it much lighter? Those who would thy quaint,
Immortal verse have claimed could not far long
Deceive or please or please. If the song
Worthless had been, Bathyllus had not sung—
That is thy praise, my great, long silent friend,
And Heaven's best gifts to all mankind belong.
Birds, sheep, and bees, and oxen, are they less
Happy because they go unworded of men?
Or better for thy praise, Pythagoras,
Who would have brought the golden age again?
Like them should we to duty yield our days,
Careless alike of human blame or praise.

If John Reade is a genuine poet, Charles Heavysege is one also. Here at least are two names which do not go forth to the world on sufferance, or on appeals *ad misericordiam*. They stand upon their own merit and need not fear comparison with any contemporaneous poets. We have a right to be proud of them, for they shed as much lustre upon this young country as any of the public men of whom we are constantly writing. This is not the place for an analysis of Heavysege's genius, to which, have attempted to do justice in another quarter, and of which I may have occasion to speak more fully on a future occasion. I have to do with him now only as a sonneteer. His compositions of this kind are not numerous, and all are found, I believe, in the volume which contains his "Jephthah's Daughter." The following is a magnificent instance of the sublime in thought and expression and, I, for one, am quite willing to set it beside most of the sonnets which I have already cited.

'Tis solemn darkness: 'tis the sublime of shade;
Night, by no stars nor rising moon relieved;
The awful blank of nothingness arrayed,
O'er which my eyeballs roll in vain, deceived.

Upward, around, and downward I explore,
E'en to the frontiers of the aboriginal;
But cannot, though I strive, discover more
Than what seems one huge cavern of despair.
Oh, Night, art thou so grim, when, black and bare
Of moonbeams, and no cloudlets to adorn,
Like a nude Ethiop 'twixt two hours fair,
Thou stand'st between the evening and morn?
I took thee for an angel, but have wooed
A cacodemon in mine ignorant mood.

THE CANADIAN MONTHLY has been the receptacle of much clever verse of native production, and many of the sonnets which it has published from time to time are worthy of reproduction. I would instance those of Mr. A. W. Gundry and Mr. Francis Rye. In the number for December, 1876, I find the following credited to the well-known initials, F. A. D.:

True love is like no flecked sunbeam's ray,
In April days to shine awhile and fade;
But rather like the ivy overleaf,
Ungraceful columns in some cloistered way,
Which upward grows by slow degrees and sure,
From tiny plant to sturdy, trusty stem,
Until it twines a leafy diadem,
Around the carved charms of marble pure.
No weaker grows its friendly firm embrace,
Come sun, or rain, or night, or heat, or cold,
And ever through the years it spreads apace
With tender ties, which ever grow so bold,
It clasps with binding tendrils every grace,
And, constant, love each better being old.

The following is from "Spring Field Flowers," a volume of poems, by Professor Daniel Wilson, LL.D., University College, Toronto.

True love is lowly as the wayside flower,
That springeth up beneath the traveller's tread,
And lifteth trustfully its lovely head,
Content to bless therewith the passing hour;
Unheeding of the wealth of Heaven's dower
It lavisheth upon a path bestead
With the coarse trafficking of sordid need,
So it lie open but to sun and shower.
And love no less deals with unstinted hand:
Lavish to others, heedless of reward;
Deeming no sacrifice of self too hard,
So that with fruitful arms outspread, she stand
Sowing around home's hearth her harvest treasure;
Heard's hoards of golden grain, showered down in
affluent measure.

The exiguity of space interferes with my proposed rehearsal of French-Canadian poetry, which I will have to postpone until another time. I must say, however, that the subject is full of interest, and will be replete with pleasant surprises when fully treated for English readers. I will confine myself, in conclusion, to two sonnets from the pen of L. H. Frechette, late M. P. for Levis, and a poet of undisputed genius. In his latest work, "P'le-M'le," he has a collection of sonnets, which are perfect in form and sentiment, and mainly devoted to domestic themes. It will be observed how scrupulously Mr. Frechette follows the Italian standard. The following is on "Belœil Lake," imbedded in the mountain of that name, on the banks of the beautiful Richelieu.

Qui n'aime à visiter ta montagne rustique,
O lac qui, suspendu sur vingt sommets hardis,
Dans son lit d'algues vertes, au soleil resplendis,
Comme un joyau tombé d'un ciel fantastique!

Quel mystère se cache en tes flots onguentés?
Ta vague n'est-elle étreinte quelque entèrre antique?
Ou bien Dieu mit-il là ton titre poétique
Pour servir de miroir aux saints du paradis?

Caché, comme un ermite, en ces monts solitaires,
Tu ressembles, ô lac! à ces âmes austères
Qui vers tout idéal se tournent avec foi.

Comme elles, aux regards des hommes tu te voiles;
Calme, le jour—le soir, tu souris aux étoiles;
Et puis il faut monter pour aller jusqu'à toi!

This is addressed to Miss Chauveau, a daughter of the late Premier of Quebec.

A quel don révent-ils, vos beaux yeux andalous,
Quand, volant à demi sa lueur incertaine,
Votre regard s'en va se perdre loin de nous,
Comme s'il contemplait quelque image lointaine?

Quand vous semblez chasser toute pensée humaine,
Et que, sur le clavier au son plaintif et doux,
Sans but, las de distraire, votre doigt se promène,
Jeune fille rêveuse, à quel songez-vous?

Oh! sans doute qu'ailleurs votre âme ouvre ses ailes
Et s'en va retrouver, dans des sphères nouvelles,
Ceux que le ciel emporte, hélas! et ne rend pas!

Nous vivons dans un monde où presque tout s'oublie;
Mais il reste toujours quelque chagrin qui llo
Les anges de là-haut aux anges d'ici-bas!

With these beautiful verses, as a delicate perfume in the nostrils, this short paper may be appropriately closed.

"Tying bonnet under her chin," is the title of a promiscuous poem of anonymous ownership. Probably by a woman who ties her back of the left ear.

An English fashion is to give parties at which the guests appear as some flower, fruit or vegetable. The lady who goes as a sugar-beet is usually said to be dressed in the best taste.

They were meandering, arm in arm, up the street, and a short distance ahead of them walked a young lady very handsomely attired. The sun was about setting, and his light was throwing a beautiful crimson glow all over the earth. He said, in a rather subdued tone of voice: "How beautiful! perfectly grand!" etc. "Well, I don't know," was the response from the fair one by his side. "I don't admire her style, and the dress is a mighty poor fit." He weakened, and the sunset interested him no more.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the REV. JOSEPH T. INMAN, Station D, New York City.