

English Jottings.

Sir William Cusack-Smith, Bart, has probably done a kindness to whist-players and would-be-whist-players, whose number is as the sand upon the sea-shore for multitude, by the publication of a neat little book entitled "Encyclopædia of the Game of Whist" (W. W. Gibbings, 18, Bury Street, W. C.), which is "prefaced with words of advice to young players." The advice perhaps is as good as possible, better than any ever issued in verse from a Delphic oracle; but experience leads one to doubt the utility of advice. We could, most of us, fill a few volumes quarto with what we have received and administered of that drug; but we should have a difficulty in filling merely a few lines with cases in which it has been of any benefit to anybody. Some of Sir William's observations lead one to reflect upon the extreme tenuity of the line which separates fairness from unfairness. "Most players," says he, "sort their cards on some constant plan, and place the trump suit always in the same position in their hands. This is bad policy; for it may easily enable a clever adversary to count their trumps, to his manifest advantage." This, of course, is quite fair; yet it would be considered unfair to take advantage of an adversary who held his cards so that you could look over them if you liked. You would be expected to warn him, and even to complain that he was not justified in leading you into temptation. As for "bad policy," is it not bad policy for Sir William to tell the young beginner that "the extreme average advantage to be obtained from the best of play does not, at short whist, exceed, if it reach, half a point in the value of a rubber?" It may be quite true; but it is not likely to encourage the tryo to give his mind to the game. Still the little work may well be kept within reach, wherever players or learners of whist are gathered together.

In the matter of Prince George's coming promotion, we would remark that Prince George has already entered his twenty-seventh year, and is completing his sixth year as a lieutenant. Moreover, he last month completed his fourteenth year of service in the navy. His promotion, therefore, cannot be said to have thus far been hurried. Of the seven living Admirals of the Fleet not one was still a lieutenant when he was as old as Prince George now is, and one was a post-captain before he was twenty-three, while two more attained post-rank ere they were eight-and-twenty. Nor had any one of them, when made commander, as many years service to his credit as Prince George has.

But the Prince's promotion has been wisely delayed. The Prince of Wales has expressed a hope that his second son would make the Navy his "profession for life." If Prince George would do this, he must not be advanced too quickly in the earlier stages of his career. The ordinary course of promotion prevents any officer from remaining a captain for more than about fifteen years, a rear-admiral about five, a vice-admiral about four, and an admiral eligible for a command about five. From the day, that is to say, when an officer becomes a captain to the day when he ceases to be eligible for ordinary appointments, less than thirty years usually elapse; and no one who really aspires to make any calling his "profession for life" can wish to be obliged to retire from the active pursuit of that profession before the age of sixty or sixty-five. If promoted to be captain at thirty, Prince George will still be able to enjoy all the highest commands before he is sixty.

The *Anti-Jacobin* denounces the German Emperor's visit to England in language which is quite Carlylian:—"It will be seen" it says, "that though this visit may be sport to him, it is no fun for us. The Emperor makes his announcement—must do it by his own lips—that the Triple Alliance is re-forged. Then, while those other two Powers are bitterly thinking of what we have done to infix the third leg of the stool, on he comes to England, with his Chancellors, and his War Secretaries, and all the high parade of imperial embrace. Couldn't he have let that alone? Is it friendly? Is it wise? Put England and her convenience out of the question

altogether, and is it wise? Peace is his desire, of course. He has thought deeply of the matter; and not for worlds would he disturb the avalanche which will one day fall on this side or that—upon his own house-hold or on his neighbours'—but yet he will never be quiet. He must needs run hither and thither with his sword-jangling and his trumpet-blowing, which, if it do no more harm, worries the nerves of everybody about him. Surely he should know that it is for the League of Peace to be still. Why should he make it appear what it is not? Be it what it may, however, it is for him to maintain its character—settled, serene, fearing nothing menacing nobody, sufficing to leave every member of it free to look after its own every-day affairs, and willing that all the rest of the world should do the same thing. But it would appear that nothing can suppress the restless stirring of the youthful Emperor, which he will find no advantage to himself while it is a misfortune for his friends. His junketing here will add nothing to the strength or the stability of his alliances, but it will increase the suspicion and the anger with which we, his allies, are regarded. Besides, his desires are not ours. His "game" is not ours, altogether. To see France utterly destroyed would be an enormous relief to Germany, but it would not at all do for England, to whom the existence of a powerful France is almost as necessary as it is to Russia herself; the necessity being to keep German ambition within due bounds. Moreover, there is bad blood enough between France and England already; and though it is none of our making we want no more of it. Yet before the useless and inconsiderate visit of the Emperor is half over—with its naval displays, its military displays, its Guildhall banquets, and the terrible speeches to which our imperial visitor is given—the hatred of France for this country will be super-heated, while, of course, there will be more annoyance and ill-will in Russia. And the good of it? There is absolutely none. A great deal of needless irritation—provocation, even—is balanced by no advantage whatever."

In his charming *Echoes of the Week*, Mr. Sala tells us of a Universal Help Bureau. He says:—"In connection with such a beneficent institution a circular has just been sent me. The manageress of the undertaking is a lady. Good. The public are bound in courtesy to help a lady who is willing to help them. The Bureau is in Pall Mall, opposite Marlborough-house. A very nice address indeed. The lady proposes to help her fellow-creatures by aiding them to find eligible furnished houses and apartments; engaging servants; providing care-takers; interviewing governesses; meeting children who are passing through the metropolis on their way to or from school; leaving visiting cards; providing entertainments for "At Homes;" undertaking shopping; arranging talk and other floral decorations, and inserting advertisements in the papers; while for the moderate fee of sixpence people can have letters and parcels 'left to be called for.' Ladies can also write their letters at the office in Pall Mall."

The other night Mr. Fredericks, who is the manager of a music hall, was accosted by a small boy who proffered him three coppers, and at the same time demanded a check for the gallery. Mr. Fredericks surveyed the lad, and coldly remarked, as he noticed his indifferent attire:

"But you've got no collar on!"

"No collar!" cried the boy; "no collar! Why should I? Do you take me for a dawg?"

Mr. Fredericks collapsed.

The mean between extremes they say,
Is always best to hold;
So neither give yourself away
Nor let yourself be sold.

GIBBS.—I can quite understand why those political chaps are always abusing the City Corporation.

BLOOM.—Yes. They say corporations have no souls.

GIBBS.—What a disappointment that must be to the devil!