

THE FLANEUR.

Shirley Brook's famous old column in the *Illustrated London News* is now filled by George Augustus Sala, under the title of "Echoes of the week," and he signs it very appropriately G. A. S.

There are few things more amusing than to see a pretentious fellow making a gross blunder, and never noticing it. The *Chicago Tribune* lately afforded an instance of this kind. In the telegraphic column, it was stated that among Marshal MacMahon's guests at his New Year's reception, among heads of the state, generals, members of the assembly, and so forth, figured a rich Bishop of Paris. I wondered at first who this rich prelate might be, when the mistake suddenly occurred to me and I laughed very heartily. But turning the leaves of the paper, I came upon an editorial article, which gravely mentioned that some surprise was expressed in Paris at seeing Mgr. Guibert, a rich Bishop of Paris, holding the place of honor, at President MacMahon's reception. The telegraph reader's mistake was excusable enough, in the hurry of his work. But the editor's mistake arose simply from ignorance. *Errata humanum*. Of course, the archbishop of Paris was meant.

A race-course anecdote.

My friend Perkins is a great horse fancier. An educated man withal, cool, impassive and uncommonly fortunate in his wagers. Last summer he attended a famous race, where contrary to his wont, he was very bustling and active, betting heavily against the favorite, and, as usual, winning all his bets. A lady on the grand stand—a fair blue-stocking acquaintance of his—who had been watching his movements attentively, took the straight tip from him, and won several articles from her lady friends around—a fan, a pearl card-case, a pair of lavender kids and so on. Pleased with her success, she tore a leaf from her note book, wrote the simple word:

"Hippocrite!"

Upon it, and had it passed down to Perkins. On receiving it, he turned around with a smile, took off his hat and bowed profoundly.

A rough old turfman standing by, had seen the word and turning to Perkins, said:

"A royal way of resenting an insult."

"An insult? What do you mean?"

"That lady called you a hypocrite."

"She did not. She called me a hippocrite."

"Oh! only a matter of spelling."

"No, sir, only a matter of Greek. She meant a compliment. I am a judge of horses."

A French mode of advertising.

You walk along the streets in your best clothes and looking your best. You meet the belles of the boulevard to whom you bow, if acquainted; whom you scrutinize, if not acquainted. Suddenly, in the midst of the most fashionable throng, among a bevy of beauties, you suddenly feel a violent blow from the rear, almost throwing you off your centre of gravity. You are naturally indignant, and you turn round to demand bloody satisfaction. Your antagonist is ready for you. He bows and presents his card:

"Number twenty, Rue de Rivoli. Fancy Goods, Articles de Paris. Your distinguished patronage respectfully solicited...."

Perhaps one of the ugliest features of Canadian public life, is the scant respect accorded to the Judiciary. Now that by the law of Contested Elections, judges have to decide on cases of political bribery, and thus pronounce on political acts, they will be subjected to still further criticism. Instances of this have already happened quite recently in Montreal and Toronto. Two gentlemen—both lawyers—were discussing the decision of a Quebec judge in a late election case. One attacked, the other faintly defended His Honor.

"It's strange; and yet he is one of our best puisne judges," said the first.

"Our puny judges is good and—true," was the other's sardonic reply.

Why is the reciprocity treaty like a turn-coat politician?
Because it is gone over.

An editor of this city took the street cars the other evening, laden with two good-sized pasteboard boxes, of flower and vegetable grains, received from Vick, the famous florist of Rochester. On entering the car, he met a friend:

"How do you feel to night?"

"Very seedy."

It comes only once a year, but the sweet effects last nearly a twelve month. I question whether we could stand two in the same season. The Masquerade on the ice. The Carnival in Victoria rink. Well, I shall be there, of course, barring accidents. I have my domino well and thoughtfully chosen. So has she. Only, she imagines that it is a secret to me. I shall wait patiently till next Wednesday. Then we shall see. Oh then, the bliss classically sung in the last number of Punch:

"Felix

Quater felix, in imo qui scilicet
Pectore te, pia nympha, sensit."

That's meant for you, Berthie. You don't understand the words, but the pleasurable sensation you will experience and so will I.

ALMAVIVA.

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

THREE LOVES.

I.

One love, a silken cord, that binds
All hearts to one;
That leaves no loving task it finds
To do, undone.

Through sorrows hot and blinding tears,
Its hallowed ray
Shines softly on for years and years,
To cheer the way.

Oh! whisper softly as a breath
Of one divine,
Dear mother, till the hour of death,
This love is thine.

II.

Oh! who can know, or better tell,
If love be part of friendship's power,
Than he who in the present hour,
Lungs for the face he knows so well.

Walking together as one life,
With mutual hopes and kindred mind,
Whose differences but serve to bind
Their hearts, and keep them free from strife.

Hark! in my inmost heart I hear
A sound that few can understand;
'Tis love and friendship, hand in hand,
Low whispering, I incline my ear.

'Tis friendship speaks, ah! but for you
I were a hollow, worthless thing;
As feeble as a wedding ring,
To keep the wayward passion true.

III.

In map or woman, eyes may read
The silent language of the soul;
Oh! sorrow unto those who lead
A heart beneath a false control.

But there is love, and here is truth,
Though there be many false, indeed,
'Tis difficult in days of youth,
To pluck the flower and leave the weed.

To pluck and wear a love that wreaths
To raise us from our lower path,
Whom if we live, he'll live, it wreaths
With all the fervent love it hath.

I bear a pity in my breast
For him who may have none of these,
And he who loves one must seize,
With closer, fonder clasp the rest.

VOX TRISTIS.

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

CHARITY.

I.

Lavania Coldridge, the handsome wife of the rich banker of L—, was what is generally known as "a charitable woman." She was wont to head every worthy subscription list with a liberal sum of money, and help the poor and needy in a manner that had made her famous as an "alms giver." This woman also was a leader of fashion, as well reigning queen of the fashionable world of L—. A queen whose supremacy was never questioned by the minds of individuals who flocked about her, and ranked as her slaves and adorers. The first scene finds Lavania Coldridge languidly reclining on a sofa in one of her bright sitting-rooms, a novel in her hand, which she is idly turning over with her bejewelled fingers. She is not reading, this "butterfly of society." No, her eyes are wandering with a sort of dreamy sadness around her apartment.

On that divinely exquisite face, with its perfectly moulded features, there is a shade of discontent, such that a keen observer would remark that "fair, wealthy, and gifted though she were, life was not to her altogether sweet."

Her reverie is rudely broken by the servant's announcement, "A poor woman wishes to speak to you, ma'am."

"I am not well to-day," was the languid reply. "I cannot see her; bring me her message, and give her some food, if she wants any."

With these orders, the servant retired. Lavania raised herself on her arm, and said, half audibly, "I am almost weary of all I sought so hard to gain."

As the words escaped her lips, the servant returned.

"Mrs. Coldridge, the woman says she must see you. She is no common beggar indeed, ma'am."

"Could she not send her message?" the beauty irritably questioned. "Did she not want food?"

"Food! no; she was quite indignant, ma'am, when I gave her your answer."

"What did she say," demanded Lavania, growing somewhat more interested.

"Say, ma'am," she said, "if Mrs. Coldridge refuses to see me, she will repent it all the days of her life."

"Really, Bruce, her insolence is beyond endurance. What can she mean? The poor creature is evidently half-witted, but stay! perhaps I had better see her. Send her here."

"Hardly a fit person to come into a ladies' boudoir," muttered Bruce, making his exit, and with much reluctance he invited the poor wail, standing in the hall in her miserable rags, "To step this way to my lady's room."

Though Mrs. Coldridge had assumed wonderment as to who the beggar woman could be, her face had grown white, hard, and stern (most unreasonably assuredly) when the servant said "or Mrs. Coldridge will repent it all her life." She stood up to receive her visitor, who took no time answering her summons. The beggar entered, and for a moment the two women stood opposite to each other, scanning each other's

face. The one all resplendent in her magnificence and beauty of form and feature, dress and jewels. The other somewhat below the medium height, pitiable to behold, in her poverty and wretchedness, with a wan, prematurely-old face, lit up with large defiant eyes, that flashed anger and hate when they encountered Lavania Coldridge's. Her long, raven locks hung in tangled masses about her haggard face and fragile form, and when she spoke she flung them back with such impetuosity as to send a shudder through the other's frame. The lady stony and staring fixedly. They spoke both together, both in a low bitter way.

"May!" said the lady.

"Lavania!" said the beggar, taking a step nearer, "see what I am."

"What have you come here for?" inquires Lavania.

"Look what I have come to," pleads May.

"It was your fault!"

"Why have you come to me of all people?" says Mrs. Coldridge, nervously.

"What have I come here for?" retorts the other, "but—"

"For me to raise you to my level, to make you my equal, to give you back that place in society which you have lost," interrupted her listener.

"I know better than to ask such from you. I have come for charity, for mercy; I ask you in heaven's name to help. Oh! that I should have to entreat you for pity; it is worse, it is worst of all!"

"May Fielding!"

The beggar sobs.

"You have been ever a disgrace to your family. Do you expect help from me! You have been the stain that could not be blotted out, a wail and outcast whom your family disown, the curse of their lives, the bane of their existence."

This was said haughtily, while the speaker stood watching with unwomanly pleasure the effect of her words upon the other.

"They told me you were charitable," cried May, "and yet you refuse your own relation—your cousin. You refuse help. No, it is mercy I entreat on my benighted knees; I supplicate."

"May, I shall never forgive you, never stretch out a hand to save you, were I to see you grovelling in the dirt at my feet."

"I have sinned, but I have repented. Listen to my story. You have the privilege of superiority. It is your fault that I am what I am. Your husband, where is he?"

"Do not speak of him, or I shall tell them you are mad, and you shall be turned into the streets."

The poor object of humanity trembled like a leaf.

"You are unforgiving. Tell me of my father and mother; are they dead?"

Lavania sat down.

"I will answer none of your questions. You should have more sense, more decency."

"Decency!" said May, mockingly.

"Decency! yes; you don't understand it, do you, May Fielding?"

"Understand! hush, do not madden me. You have said enough already to drive anybody to the worst. Oh, woman! you have the stain. There will be more than one lost soul, for which you will be responsible. Some day you will suffer for this."

"How!" inquires Lavania. Because a woman and a—

May seized her arms before she could speak again.

"Hold."

"Leave me go!"

"Not till you retract what you have just said," May hisses forth. "I thought you were woman enough to feel for me."

"Feel," sneers Lavania, "I feel you now most truly."

"Lavania Coldridge, do you know I am starving, I, your cousin; and they are starving, the poor innocents, my children. He is dying, and how can I go to him without food, destitute of money. You are rolling in wealth; give me but a little; I am poor, once I was young and beautiful as you; I should not refuse any one such a request were I in your place."

The words were touching in the extreme; there was a wail of piteousness that would have melted any other heart than Lavania's. She merely answered with contracted eyebrows, and at the same time pushing off the outstretched arms of the pauper.

"May, you have so often come to me with lies on your lips that I no longer believe one word you say."

"But this time it is truth, all of it; believe me my husband is dying, my children are starving, you are my blood relation. Give me money, now! I'll see you; some day I can repay you, but the see me, pity me, give me gold."

"Not a farthing. May Fielding, I see, is as glib as ever with her paltry untruths."

"You have robbed me of all that could have made life sweet," proceeded the forlorn mortal; "you said false things of me; you have made my life a waste. What have I done to deserve it—nothing. Married beneath me, as you call it, yet Gerard was good to me. I loved him a little, not as I loved Louis, your Louis, whom you won through your treason. My Gerard is dying, and I may not see him. In the name of the Lord, I beseech you tell me where is your husband that I may pray him for charity, charity that the Bible says suffers long and is kind."

"Go away," cried Lavania.

"My God," weeps the other, "you shall repent this sooner or later, Lavania Coldridge."

Then the two glowered at each other with that hate and vengeance which woman alone can entertain. The dinner bell gonged outside.

"You must leave," says the lady coldly.

"Lavania, give me something—first a little money; feel for my misery; I have fallen so low, so very low. I deserted him; I want his forgiveness. I went to sing in the streets against his will to get food for my children; I was going back to him; he sent for me; I cannot; he will be dead before I reach him."

Mrs. Coldridge curtly replied: "May, I have said my say, Bruce will show you out."

"Charity," sighed forth the wanderer, "if you refuse me charity you will sorely repent it."

But the door was opened, and Mrs. Coldridge's shrill voice called the servant man. However, Bruce was stationed outside in the hall, and bowed respectfully to his mistress.

"Bruce!" said she, in an undertone, "do send that person away. She is quite mad."

Thus the dialogue ended between Lavania and May Fielding—the former, turning back into her room; the latter, with suppressed fury, following the domestic.

When she found herself alone in the passage with the man, she wheeled about, and addressed him in almost incoherent accents, saying:

"I heard your mistress tell you I was mad. Do you think I am?"

"No," returned Bruce; "and I heard everything you said to Mrs. Coldridge, when you were closeted in that room with her"—pointing upstairs.

May started. "You heard. Then, do you take my part?"

"Yes. What can I do for you?" retorts the old man, with a thought to his future interests, connected with his confidence in the beggar.

"Do your mistress and master live happily together?" murmurs she below her breath.

"Never," returned Bruce. "Master pines away, and misses is mighty jealous. My! but they are not much to be envied."

"Give that to your master the minute he comes in," and the woman thrust into his palm a scrap of paper, and the street door opened and closed on the retreating form of May Fielding.

Ten minutes after, the banker came home. "Bruce, man!" he said, "you look dumfounded, (encountering the servant.) "What's this?"

"Something a poor woman left for you, sir. It was I carried the ill-written message."

"Poor wronged May!" he cried. "I will—and in his haste he dashed out again, dropping the paper as he went."

"What is the matter?" said Lavania, appearing at the right instant. "Speak, Bruce!"

"The master just got a message—that's all, returned he."

It isn't all, thought the lady, as she stretched up the scrawl her husband had dropped. Lavania drank in its contents with feverish quickness. It ran thus—

"Dear Louis.—You loved me once, and for that love I ask you to help me now. You swore to succor me in time of need. The time has arrived to test your truth. Your wife has deceived you. I have always loved you. She made me out worse than I was. They are dying about me. I am starving. If you still love me, meet me at the toll-gate, as soon as you read this.—MAY FIELDING."

The wife became pallid. She turned to Bruce, saying: "Have the pony phaeton brought to the door at once! I wish to drive, and alone."

Soon the carriage, driven by the lovely wife of Louis Coldridge, might have been seen driving at a furious pace along the road towards the toll-gate.

II.

It was a picture of utter desolation. The puny, starving children, in the cold, gloomy, unfurnished garret. The man stretched on a straw mattress in the corner, with death stamped on his wasted countenance. Not even a covering over the all but lifeless body that, ere long, would be crumbling in the dust, food for worms. The haggard eyes were sunk back in his head, and moved restlessly; otherwise, the face was passive, marked, however, with pain and toil, showing what a life of deprivation and misery he had led. A refined face, and hair grown white, but not from years. No comforts surrounded the death bed of the gambler; no kind friend to hear the last words; no priest or clergyman to listen to a dying confession of a lost soul going unprepared to the great Tribunal of Heaven. The wind was whistling through that fever haunted room; and two babes—babes of some four or five summers, were crying beside an empty hearth, too young to understand how near death was to them.

"Amy," said the man, in a hollow voice, "is mammy coming?"

"Mammy, mammy!" chimed in the younger, pushing forward her white face, "mammy. I want mammy. I'm cold, I'm hungry."

"She is not coming," said the elder, peering out of the easement. "What shall we do, pappy?"

"Starve," says the man bitterly. "She might have come back. Nelly, stop crying. Come and kiss pappy—he's going to leave you."

"Don't go away and leave us all alone!" sob both the little ones, and clamber on to the mattress beside him, and with his children crying in his arms, he kisses them, and calls his wife's name, in dying cries; and he hears her step on the stairs, he thinks—but no, it is not hers. Then, with those childish figures in his last embrace, he draws his last fleeting breath.