

tlemen, however patient they may be, so entirely to renounce the objects not only of their party association but of their personal ambition? Before long there will be by-elections; and when they occur, what course will Lord Hartington take? Will he run a Liberal Unionist candidate, or will he stand aside and leave the battle to be fought between the Conservatives and the Gladstonites? Will he advise his friends in the constituency to vote or to abstain? If he advises them to vote, will it be for the Conservatives or the Gladstonites? This attempt to keep in existence a political Mahomet's Coffin will be found, I fear, too artificial and operose to succeed.

The next upshot is that, though Unionism has gained a victory, and a victory for which Unionists have much reason to be thankful, it is a Quatre Bras, not a Waterloo, leaving the decisive battle still to be fought, while it is also apparent that the nation will have to undergo yet more calamity and peril before it will be brought to see the necessity of putting an end to the domination of Party, and of giving itself a national Government. This is a subject, however, with regard to which opinion is moving, and views which, when propounded in a Canadian journal, were treated as utterly paradoxical, are, under the pressure of events, gradually winning an entrance into the public mind.

In the midst of the electoral battle, the forward move of Russia at Batoum has passed almost unnoticed. I do not pretend to be a diplomatist, and I am certainly far from being a Jingo; but my conviction on this point has always remained the same. I do not believe it possible for ever to prevent a great and growing Empire from making its way to an open sea. I hold that, practically, the choice lies among three courses—allowing Russia to reach an open sea through the Bosphorus, allowing her to reach it by the Persian Gulf, and allowing her to reach it by the Gulf of Scanderoon; and that the least dangerous course of the three is to allow her to reach it by the Gulf of Scanderoon. Why, as a naval Power in the Mediterranean, she should be more hostile and formidable to England than the other Mediterranean Powers, or threaten the route to India more than they do, I never could understand.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

London, July 30, 1886.

SOCIETY AT THE AMERICAN CAPITAL.

Now that the brilliant nebulosity which represents Washington society to the popular mind, from its most majestic cumulus to its lightest attendant cirrus, has arisen from the steaming asphalt of the city and floated away to hover about the mountain tops, or enhance the attractions of the seaside, the opportunity for calm consideration of the elements of social life at the Capital is inviting. Calm consideration at any other time of the year is impossible, for various reasons. The chief of these is the newspaper correspondent, chiefly the lady correspondent. To the lady correspondent, and to the resources of her rhetoric, the world is mainly indebted for its present conception of Washington life. With an occasional notable exception, this is usually a person of boundless adjective eloquence, a fulsome ability to flatter, a gossippy instinct, and no discrimination whatever. Before her journalistic advent she has seldom tasted of the tree of the knowledge of social good and evil, and the educative advantages of Washington in that respect are great but confusing. Sometimes it is the sharp contrast between the pseudo-magnificence of official life and the former scenes of her provincialism, sometimes it is an intelligent appreciation of the sort of thing the people like and the newspapers will pay for, that is responsible for the flashy and over-coloured descriptions which the lady correspondent sends abroad. Whatever the cause, the effect is evident enough in the popular impression that a Washington winter is one long hysterical and gorgeous revel, having the White House for its pivotal centre, with iniquitous episodes, in which lobbying ladies, who spend the rest of their abundant leisure in conversing in bad French with the foreign legations, accomplish fabulous things. It is generally believed, owing to these invaluable scribblings, that nowhere are the upper waters of society so aimlessly frothy, with undercurrents so unspeakably vicious, as in Washington. This conviction is greatly to be deprecated, for it is not true.

While it would be extremely difficult to draw an actual line between the official and the unofficial resident of Washington, in favour of the latter, it may safely be said that the most potent and exclusive element of society here exists entirely apart from the office-holding class. It is a very common error to suppose that usage is dictated to the capital by the mistress of the White House, in newspaper parlance the "first lady of the land." Nominally Mrs. Cleveland will lead society here, practically she will be led by the comparatively small, insignificant, and unostentatious fraction of

society aforesaid. It is almost wholly Southern, and chiefly Virginian. It is entirely a leisure class, comprised of men and women whose culture is the product of several generations of extreme civilization, not too rich, but above the struggle for office and its attendant humiliations, not at all ambitious, but quietly tenacious of the social privileges that have always been theirs. Senators may come and go, administrations may wax and wane, but the conservative few, in their old-fashioned houses, continue to govern themselves and their capital by their own traditions, unmoved by anything but a gentle, sometimes scornful curiosity. There are always, of course, some official families who enjoy to the full all the privileges of both circles, as the Bayards and the Whitneys, but speaking generally they may be said to be concentric, revolving about the White House, one within the other, and the office-holders are on the outside. Even the social head of the democracy is necessarily democratic, but the social principle is essentially aristocratic everywhere. There are drawingrooms in Washington, therefore, strange as it may appear to people uneducated to accept the social ultimatum of a Court, from the inner sanctities of which some of the women best known in connection with the Administration find themselves debarred.

"You have men to rule you," said an American cynic to a British cynic, "who would not invite you to their tables."

"And you have men to rule you," responded the transatlantic caviller, "whom you would not invite to yours!"

A very brief sojourn in the American seat of government is sufficient to convince one of the retaliatory force of this rejoinder, and to impress one very strongly with its qualifications. It is quite an invaluable lesson, a Washington winter, in the present development of a great people, even from a social point of view. It is the only cosmopolitan city in America—the local character of New York is more marked than that of Kalamazoo. Here, from California to Maine, elected on a thousand issues, through the fair representatives of all classes, with their families, their tricks of dialect, their ways of living, their social ideals, and the whole result of such education as varying circumstances have given them. From the hard-headed Senator Blank, from beyond the Mississippi, who occupies two chairs in his wife's drawingroom, habitually elaborates his remarks with a toothpick, and assassinates the President's American every time he makes one, to the courtly and witty Ingalls, the elected of Kansas, but the product of Massachusetts, who combines, in his barbed personality, scintillating French qualities with icy New England ones—there is an *embarras de richesse* for the sociologist.

The social privileges of Washington are probably the most accessible in the world. The visiting code in vogue is responsible for this. Everybody calls at the White House, first calls are paid by the Congressmen's wives upon the Senators' and all ladies with husbands of higher official rank. The wives of the Senators call upon those of the Chief Justices, and the *corps diplomatique*. First calls are paid, however, rather oddly, by the "ladies of the Cabinet" upon those of the Senate. As the whole round world is privileged to call upon the reception days of office-holders' wives, which calls are promptly returned and usually in person, there is practically no bar to at least the incipient stages of social intercourse in Washington. This has, with its obvious drawbacks, one grand good result in a society in which it is at least possible that every member may stand upon his or her merits. "Where else," says one of the brightest of Washington's many bright women to me the other day, "could I, single, plain, and comparatively poor, without family advantages, find the best drawingrooms of the city open to me, simply by virtue of such brains as it has pleased a compensating Providence to bestow upon me?" Truly nowhere. Of course this first requisite of an ideal social state brings about a great many things less desirable. Discrimination is the most difficult of all social acquirements, and recognition is occasionally bestowed upon people seriously or ludicrously unworthy of it. Some of the most magnificent of recent entertainments were given by a woman whose frequent *bêtise* is the common joke of the newspapers. She signalled her advent in the society of the capital by calling upon the diplomatic body, bachelors and all! A single gentleman disappointing her at the last moment, she attempted to fill his chair at one of her very swell dinners by sending in haste for a prominent official—without his wife! It was she who at her own table, corrected General Blank's use of his fork, and at one of her crowded receptions apologised to several of her guests concerning the general character of the assembly on the ground that her "best people" had "not come yet"! Money is not all-potent here however, and the cool assurance that frequently carries the day in circles nominally more select is often calmly extinguished by the edict of Washington opinion.

The novel of social life at the capital has yet to be written. Mrs. Burnett's delightful "Through One Administration" is the best we have