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THE CANADIAN Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, OCTOBER 24, 1863.

FERGUSON & GREGORY, Proprietors

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT.

On the afternoon of Thursday the 15th inst., His Excellency the Governor General formally signified to the Honourable Gentlemen and Gentlemen of both Houses of the Legislature, that having done all that was required of them for the present, they were now at liberty to go home, and to stay there, until that certain something officially described as 'the exigencies of the public service,' should again call them together. A satirist of even a very genial humour might hint that the mystical period or limit of thirty days once passed, the majority of our M.L.C.'s and our M.P.'s are very willing indeed, to start for home at the word 'go.' But to leave before the thirty days are out, ah—hem—that is not to be thought of.

The session just closed has been remarkable, so we are told, and we believe it, as having witnessed the most sustained and keenly-contested struggle between the 'ins' and the 'outs' that Canada has seen for many a day. Well—the match, second innings, 1863, has been played out, and the 'ins' have it by 3. Not much to brag of, to be sure; but recollect that 'a miss is as good as a mile,' in some cases, of which that in question is probably one.

The most important measures passed, *the* measures, in fact, of the session, have been the Militia Act, and the Volunteer Act. That they may work well, or if requiring amendment, that they may be without difficulty altered so as to work better, must be the hope of every true Canadian.

To make use of a rather hackneyed though still significant expression, we consider it to be the 'mission' of the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS to encourage, as far as we may be justified by real merit in so doing, the development of Canadian literary talent. We commence in this number 'The Governess,' a tale of 'love's young dream,' by Ellen Vavasour, a promising young Canadian authoress; which we hope will prove interesting to all who have had, or who expect to have happen to them, the celebrated dream just above mentioned.

A GROWING EVIL IN ENGLISH SOCIETY.

We find the following amongst recent European items of news:

MATRONS PREFERRED TO MAIDENS.—At the Guards' ball, recently given in London, it was the remark that the young matrons monopolized all the young men in the dance, and that a great number of the girls were doomed to sit like wall-flowers, and "waste their sweetness on the desert air!" So seriously has the innovation been felt among the upper ten thousand, that a strike has been mooted for next season, and the matrons are likely to have the field to themselves. Then we shall see what the Guards will do.

This is not a circumstance to be noted for its rarity, or an evil specially characteristic of the ball above-mentioned, but one which has for some time been gradually developing itself in increasing proportions, and on all available occasions. It has already been made the subject of sharp and

scathing criticism by the periodical press. The Saturday Review, in particular, has of late commented pretty frequently on this new feature in English "society," with much ironical pathos and polished sarcasm. The Review strongly censures the prevailing tendency to naturalize in England the French fashion of making married ladies the stars in company, to the neglect and detriment of the unmarried. The rank injustice of the thing should excite the righteous indignation of every lover of fair play. For remember, that in England, at all events, the young lady who by her own good looks and winning ways, or by her mother's superior management, has secured an eligible husband and an "establishment," is looked upon as having achieved what in the language of the world is called "success." That accomplished, why should she not step out from the arena, cultivate the society of her husband in preference to that of all other men, and let her less fortunate sisters have their chance? But no, according to the new fashion, *a la mode de Paris*, she is now to flare out in public, with all her newly-acquired advantages of *prestige* of success and social authority, as a more dangerous rival than ever before. To use the language of a late celebrated reviewer, we should say that 'this will never do,' and that it ought to be put down.

Our English cotemporary, well informed no doubt, and capable of judging in the matter, attributes the preference shown by the gentlemen for the society of married ladies, to the circumstance that they avoid thereby the persecution, so it is styled, of sly worldly-wise misses and their managing mammas. Possible law-suits for breach of promise, and actions for damages in which the defendant is placed at an enormous disadvantage, loom up before them with portentous aspect. And then the expense of married life is in England so extravagantly in excess of what a single man can keep himself up on in about an equal style, that the man who as a bachelor might be rich, or 'comfortable,' would as a married man be in comparative poverty. If the ladies will insist upon living, when married, in a style beyond the means of men who are their social equals to afford, they need not be so much astonished, after all, that the gentlemen should prefer to flirt where they can do so without danger of troublesome queries as to their 'intentions.' The prevailing senseless passion for extravagance in dress and jewellery, servants, equipage, houses and furniture, is what dooms to single blessedness vast numbers of both sexes; who might marry and live both in comfort and in happiness, could they but overcome the terrors of conventional requirements.

But if this sort of flirtation has its advantages, it has also its dangers. The British Cato of our time, speaking in the Saturday Review, not long ago warned those whom it might concern, that the too exclusive cultivation of each other's society by charming young married ladies and impulsive young gentlemen, was very much like skating upon thin ice. He even spoke, if we recollect aright, not only of ice that might break, but of ice that had already given way; a most startling and terribly suggestive idea. The sentence in which this similitude was carried out, did not strike us at the time as possessing that clear verbal sequence so generally characteristic of the Saturday Review writers: but it was calculated, nevertheless, to convey to the mind a most distinct and vivid impression of actual danger.

It is not too much to assume that the subject of the comparative claims of married ladies and single ones to prominence and attention in society may be of interest in Canada as well as in England. Here, it may be remarked, the different circumstances of our Province completely reverse the case from what we have been speaking of above; and give to our young unmarried ladies very decidedly the advantage. We may perhaps profitably apply here the oft-quoted maxim, that 'all extremes are errors,' and that 'the truth lies between.' In France the young unmarried lady, kept rigidly at home or in a convent school like a confined grub in its chrysalis state, until her fate is decided for her, by others, is all at once let fly out in public after marriage, like a winged and painted butterfly, to sport her hour of fashionable folly. But here, in this country, it too often happens that marriage and the care of a house and of a family shut the wife in almost at once, to a life in which the predominance of the useful over the agreeable is sufficiently marked. Gail Hamilton, with a woman's eye for such things, and a woman's tact in tracing them out, has lately told us some home truths about this. Nay further, it is a fact which an observant mind can

scarcely fail to note, that what the American authoress says on this point applies with much greater force to Canada than to the States. This is a truth which will become more apparent the more the distinctive social habits and customs of the people on both sides of the lines are considered.—(Those who are inclined to question the correctness of this view, may have their skepticism somewhat relieved by a consideration of the large numbers of American married couples with only one or two children, or none at all, and what is in a lesser degree to be taken into account, the numbers of families that do not 'keep house,' but live in boarding-houses and hotels.) Partly from sheer physical exhaustion, and partly from want of the healthy stimulus afforded by exhilarating diversion of the faculties from their unvarying every day strain, the young mother and house-keeper hastens to become a prematurely old woman. Meanwhile pleasures, gaieties, diversions, and such like, are all for 'the girls,' of course. What business has 'the old woman,' as she is called, with anything of the kind? A quiet visit to a neighbour's house, with plenty of young hyson tea, hot cakes, and gossip, is recreation enough for her. This is the talk, and it means a good deal too, as we all very well know. If fashionable society in France and in England be certainly in one extreme of error, let us consider if we in Canada, taking the country as a whole, be not ourselves as decidedly in the other.

ARTISTIC TASTE IN ENGLAND.

(From the Times.)

LORD STANLEY stands up for the artistic character of England. 'There are persons who tell you there is a point of refinement which is reached in some other countries, to which you will never bring the English taste. I have heard that often, but I don't believe it. There is no want of taste for beauty in the English mind. The English mind. The English eye is more sensitive to dirt, to disorder, to whatever indicates negligence and slovenliness, than that of any people of Europe, excepting the Dutch. Our gardens excel those of any other nation.' He will not allow that the English lower orders even, have no taste for art, or that their case is desperate. 'I have not heard that English gentlemen are inferior to foreigners either in love for art or in capacity for appreciating it; and what one class can do, that with equal opportunities can be done by any other class.'

Lord Stanley after doing justice to the artistic element in the English mass, turns to the Schools of Art and their working. This is very satisfactory, and the effect is already seen in our manufactures. He quotes M. Chevalier's report:—'The upward movement is visible above all among the English. The whole world has been struck with the progress they have made since the last Exhibition in designs for stuffs and the distribution of colors, as also in carving and sculpture and articles of furniture.' M. Chevalier even trembles for the pre-eminence of France in the domain of taste. Another French juror says:—'It is impossible to ignore the fact that a serious struggle awaits France from this quarter.' A third, M. Merimee, says just the same thing:—'It is our duty to remind our workmen that defeat is possible, and that it may be even foreseen at no distant date.' All these tributes to English progress in art turn into tributes to the Schools of Design, for it is to their lessons that this improvement is attributed. At the time of the first Great Exhibition there were only 19 of these schools, now there are 90; 70,000 pupils receive instruction in them. In 1862 there were 3,700 first-class prizes given, 1,068 local medals, and 89 national medals or medallion prizes. If this movement goes on, we may look for the rise of a better architecture in our towns, which is much wanted. 'There is not much,' says Lord Stanley, 'to be said for our architecture; but as art becomes domesticated among us, its spirit and its lessons will pervade the local architects in whose hand our town edifices and our streets houses are placed. A hundred years hence for what we know, the reproach will be wiped away from England that her street houses are brick walls with holes; and if it is too much to expect a Burgos, or a Liege to erect itself upon English soil, there will still be towns with street architecture not utterly flat and wearisome. There is nothing so cheap as good taste; and when architects discover that good effects may be produced by a good style, without costly ornament, the taste for them will spread. Art, says Lord Stanley, will become 'not the mere plaything of luxury or the mere slave of wealth; it will become a natural inhabitant of the soil, and everybody who wants to build will have the guide near at hand. Its influence will be felt in an improved national eye, in a perception which will not be the gift of this or that great professional architect, but which will reside in the whole educated class. There is no reason why even mills should not be fine buildings.' 'Near Wigan,' says Lord Stanley, 'I saw a new mill of vast extent rising, which was not as usual an eye-sore, but a real pleasure to the eye to rest upon it, so well had architectural effect been attended to in its construction.' That our mills are the utterly ugly structures they are is owing simply to the entire indifference of the owners and the public, until quite lately to architectural effects. There has been a sort of technical idea of the proper sphere for architectural effects. There has been an idea that a cathedral ought of course to be a grand building, and that a nobleman's mansion ought to be a fine building; and that a town-hall or an infirmary ought to exhibit some pretensions; but that as for houses in general, mills, street rows, architecture was not meant for them. But architecture ought to be a pervading spirit co-extensive with the air we breathe. The mills in France and Belgium are fine edifices—plain, but appealing to the eye. There is no reason why ours should not be the same. We commit the cause to the Schools of Art and their patrons.