

THE MAJOR.—Unquestionably it does, but still I am free to confess that the cogitations of the accomplished author are infinitely too *French* for my rough Anglo-Saxon taste. My faculty to appreciate Corneille was in a great measure destroyed by being early indoctrinated with Shakespeare and Milton.

THE LAIRD.—It's just in reading as in eating. Once feed man wi' roast beef and haggis, and sich like substantial realities, and a cog fu' o' puddocks, though stewed by the head cook o' Epicurus himself, would present few attractions to him!

THE DOCTOR.—I have just turned up Guizot's estimate of Paul Scarron's "*Roman Comique*."

THE MAJOR.—Pray read it.

THE DOCTOR.—After speaking of some of the leading actors in that celebrated fiction, the author says:—

"The scenes in which these different actors appear are varied; the descriptions are vivid, animated, and striking; in a word, although the "*Roman Comique*" is not marked by that force of observation, and that fund of philosophical truth which place "*Gil Blas*" in the first rank of productions of this kind, we find it characterized at least by great fidelity in the reproduction of external and laughable forms, by consummate talent in their arrangement and delineation, by an imagination most fruitful in the invention of details, by a careful choice of circumstances, and by a measure of pleasantry which we were not perhaps prepared to expect from the author; in a word, we find in it all those qualities which can entitle it to high praise, not as a burlesque composition, but, as its name indicates, as a really comic work."

THE MAJOR.—That passage confirms me in an opinion which I have long ago arrived at, that a wide difference exists between the perceptive instincts of the French and English, so far as an appreciation of humor is concerned. A dozen times, at least, have I attempted to read this same *Comic Romance*, but always was constrained to lay down the book with a yawn and a *scunner*, as our messmate the Laird would say. I cannot conceive how the man who could relish Tom Jones or Don Quixote, could by any possibility be reduced into a smile, to say nothing of a laugh, by the *humor* of Scarron.

THE DOCTOR.—And yet you see that a critic of unquestionable skill, like Guizot, ranks the "*Romance*" with "*Gil Blas*," and even awards the palm of superiority to the former.

THE MAJOR.—It is in truth passing strange, and furnishes to my mind the most bewildering of all mental puzzles. In every page does *Gil Blas* sparkle and vibrate with humor to my apprehension, whilst Scarron's production is flat and vapid as an uncorked bottle of soda-water. But I say, the poor Laird has emigrated to the land of Nod! Hush! what is he muttering in his slumbers?

THE LAIRD.—Haud ye'r hand, Major! No anither drap, if you should gang down on your bended knees! I'm a sober man, and no even

Father Matthew himself, could egg me on to tak mair than sax horns at ae sitting.—Snore—snore—snore!!

THE MAJOR.—Poor fellow, it is a pity to disturb him; however, wake him, Doctor, and let us into supper; perhaps a cup of good lohea or coffee may rouse him for our *post canam* discussions. [*The Laird is roused and the party retire.*]

AFTER SUPPER SEDERUNT.

MAJOR, LAIRD, DOCTOR, AND MRS. GRUNDY.

THE MAJOR.—Now, Laird, that you have sufficiently refreshed the inner man, we will proceed.

THE LAIRD.—I feel like an awakened giant. Mrs. Grundy, hae ye ony particlar receipt for masking tea, and whaur do ye get your jely and your honey, they are maist delecticious, there's something prime in a bap wi' fresh honey that has amaist the perfume o' the morning dew. Hae ye mony skeps, Mem?

THE MAJOR.—Never mind the skeps, Laird. Here are Colonial Chit-Chat, and News from Abroad. Our Chit-Chat for the past month is meagre, but the Parliamentary recess accounts for that. The News from Abroad you will find important.

The Major reads:—

During the past month the construction of a new Government is the main topic of interest; for, be it observed, her Majesty the Queen accepted the resignation of the Derby Cabinet with the best possible grace. And indeed she could scarcely do otherwise, since there was nothing in the state of political parties to render it incumbent upon her to urge Lord Derby's continuance in office, and her own personal predilections could not assuredly have pointed that way. To the Earl of Aberdeen, then, was confided the post of Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the task of forming a new Administration. The latter duty was mainly fulfilled, within a week after the discomfiture of Mr. Disraeli in the House of Commons; and how effectively it has been fulfilled, may be seen elsewhere in the list of the new Ministers. In point of talent, of official experience, of Parliamentary weight, and of general repute, a superior list has, we believe, never been presented to a British Sovereign. Every one generally is so cognizant of this fact, and of the capabilities and antecedents of the leaders therein named, that it would be a waste of time to recapitulate them. But the country, readily acknowledging the personal claims of these nobles and gentlemen upon its admiration, perceives at the same time the marvellous incongruity that distinguishes this Cabinet as a whole. Can such discordant materials be worked up to practical ends, without sacrifices of individual opinion that must draw down universal contempt? That is the question which men have already begun to ask; and to which a fitting reply can only be made as time progresses. The new Premier has attempted to solve all difficulty and anticipate all reproach, by declaring that for many years past there have been no important differences of opinion amongst the men who com-