

## THE ANTIDOTE

IS Published every Saturday at the offices, 171 and 173 St. James Street Montreal. It is issued by the JOURNAL OF COMMERCE plant and machinery, in time for the evening suburban trains. Personal inquiries may be made of the proprietor. Subscription ONE DOLLAR per annum, single copies FIVE CENTS. May be obtained at all the leading stationers and newsdealers in Montreal, Toronto, Quebec, Hamilton, Ottawa, London, Halifax, St. John's, Kingston, Winnipeg, Victoria, Vancouver, &c. All communications and remittances should be addressed "THE ANTIDOTE," 171 and 173 St. James Street, Montreal. We do not undertake to return unused MSS. or sketches. Published by M. S. FOLLY at the above address.

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### MODERN EPICUREANISM.

There is little doubt that the tendency of the present age is, towards placing luxury as the chief aim of life, for which we all (with few exceptions) strive and struggle. In acquiring wealth, the duties and responsibilities, which should be attached thereto, are not reckoned in comparison to the pleasures which that wealth brings to its possessor. It is often said (that history repeats itself, and in spite of the self denying doctrines of Christianity, we fear there is very little more real self denial among the mass of civilized communities of to-day than there was with the followers of Epicurus some fifteen hundred years ago.

We were reminded of this by a recent issue of London "Punch" in which was an illustration depicting two university men seated at a table, where they had been partaking of a very recherche banquet. The repast was over and one of the pair raising his cup to his lips, remarked "After all, what is life without coffee." "True," replied his companion, "but after all what is life with coffee?" We could not help thinking that the coffee might be taken as representing metaphorically the same crown of earthly luxury, and then indeed the allegory carries its own admirable moral. The one epicure looks upon his existence as worthless without it is attended with the supreme though brief, finishing, pleasure, while the other has reached the further and last stage, and finds that even with that crowning delight life is—nothing.

There are many whom the above captivates, and who, building upon mere worldly enjoyments, discover, when they arrive at their "coffee," that the journey they are travelling is but a passing pageant or empty dream. And so it will always be with those whose desires are bounded by mere material comforts and who stretch out for nothing beyond the cup of coffee. The Israelites marching towards the promised land and still hungering after the fleshpots of Egypt have numerous counterparts in this latter quarter of the nineteenth century, and there is many a modern Hanibal passing his time in Capua.

Far be it from us to advocate the rejection of the good things of this life—"it is a poor heart that never rejoices"—but we should not linger too long under the green shade by the pleapant springs, otherwise instead of being refreshed we shall become enervated and unfitted to continue our journey with that success which alone will enable us to reach the goal.

Let us throw off our epicureanism and then our "coffee" will neither seem the sole comfort which makes life endurable, nor will it leave a bitter taste behind it.



### MUSICAL MARTYRDOM.

The probable and charitable feeling when one hears of a woman who before marriage gave up her time largely to practicing, "leaving off music" after marriage, is that of pity for her (that she was ever constrained to begin it: or—for perhaps or the principle that you can not tell if you can play the flute till you have tried and in order to train the ear to some intelligent and pleasurable appreciation of harmony, a rudimentary musical education should be given to all children—the pity for her might only extend to her having been constrained to labor on at an uncongenial and utterly useless occupation. No person in whom any of the divine faculty of music had life, could, after having attained a mastery over the musical difficulties of instrumentation and after having made its exercises a daily habit, fail to renounce the habit and forego the mastery. If music had not been alien to nature it must have become a second nature by use. Of course this does not mean that there was a dislike to hearing music any more than an absence of the

painter's temperament involves a dislike to seeing pictures, but simply of the gifts and the predisposition which go to make the musician were wanting, as the soil and climate for oranges are wanting in Canada.

In fact the enjoyment of rythmical sounds is so universal to mankind that, as a general rule, the last thing an unmusical man suspects about himself is that he is unmusical. Once one of the most excruciating and disunited of itinerant bands conceivable out of Hades, was jerking through a popular set of quadrilles in a variety of keys and times, when a benevolent and cheerful auditor said to a silent sufferer pacing his garden with him, "Do you like music?" "Yes," was the answer, "of course"—who would own to being the man that has not music in his soul?—But the "Yes" was languid and slow, for the noise the players were making bore the generic name of music, and the thought had risen, as it must have often risen to most people, that the tuneful art gives too much pain for too rare a pleasure. "So do I; I delight in it," was the hearty reply. "I do enjoy this now. In fact I am so fond of music that there is no style I do not enjoy. It gives me the greatest pleasure even to hear a barrel organ." Many respectable people, wholly without ear, think they are fond of music on much the same grounds. Some of them regret that they never learned music; some of them have learned it. Only the latter are objectionable in society.

It is a decided alleviation to party goes in general, and probably to most of the martyrs to music themselves, that the barbarous custom of making oppressed young ladies bestow their vocal or instrumental tediousness on the oppressed company, has gone far towards disappearing. The poor girls, called on to air their abilities before a room full of strangers, and indifferent or even hostile acquaintances and aware from the comments themselves and their intimates pass on the performances of other girls, and the manner in which they listen to them, that they will have more critics than hearers and that criticism will chiefly mean censure, fall far short of their best, where their very best would not qualify them to take the place of fourth-rate professionals at public concerts. They have spent weary hours in