

# THE SATURDAY READER.

VOL. II.—No. 40.

FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 9, 1866.

FIVE CENTS.

## CONTENTS.

MODERN SPEAKERS.	NO MAN'S LAND.
THE JAUNDICE, A SEQUEL TO THE SCARLET FEVER.	ON BOARD THE ARGYLE-SHIRE.
GILBERT RUGGE.	"THE RIGHT TO FLY."
LIST OF NEW BOOKS.	PASTIMES.
THE FAMILY HONOUR.	CHESS.
GHOST OR NO GHOST.	TO CORRESPONDENTS.
LOST AND FOUND.	SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.
MUSICAL.	WITTY AND WHIMSICAL.
KITTY. (Poetry.)	

Continued from week to week, the NEW STORY,

"THE TWO WIVES OF THE KING."

TRANSLATED FOR THE "SATURDAY READER" FROM THE FRENCH OF PAUL FEVAL.

## MODERN SPEAKERS.

THOMAS Carlyle, in his late speech, delivered on the occasion of his installation as Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh, is reported to have said, that, at the present time, the Anglo-Saxon race seems to be wasting itself away in wind. The remark is as true as it is forcible. At no period since language was conferred upon man—or since the English speech began to be spoken—has there been such a prodigious quantity of talk, as there is now laid on the shoulders of the people of this generation. A universal clatter of tongues belts, as with a girdle of ceaseless and unmeaning sounds, every portion of the globe where our language is the medium of verbal expression. Take the British Islands, Australia, the United States and British North America, and each will be found the scene of a wordy uproar that deafens and deadens the public ear, palls upon the public taste, and frightens away, at the same time, originality and common sense.

It may be said this is free speech; but we deny the assertion; for freedom is as much opposed to license as to slavery, and the public speakers of the present day yield themselves up to license on every possible occasion, and participate in a common saturnalia of verbiage.

There are, we are happy to say, some illustrious exceptions to this rule—speakers of the Gladstone stamp—upon whose eloquent and thoughtful utterances, crowded senates and mighty populations, hang with an equal delight and a common profit; such men are the teachers of their contemporaries, and their lessons are based upon learning and experience, and are expounded with logic and with genius. But the speakers of the other class, and their name is legion, have nothing in view but that popularity, which is the stepping-stone, in the British colonies and the United States, to political pre-eminence; and to secure that popularity, they have recourse, in season and out of season, to a species of declamation and abusive stump-oratory, which, though it may be palatable to those who know the man and the locality, has less of interest for the general public and less of spontaneous humour and ready eloquence, than the addresses which attract crowds of auditors round the stall of the common street auctioneer. The modern public speaker of the common stamp, is a pitiable spectacle to every one who can appreciate good oratory, but they who read his speeches are to be considered as objects far more deserving of sympathy.

In the United States and Canada, the man of many words is looked upon as a phenomenon of genius; he is a power in the State; his merits are canvassed in social circles, and in bar-rooms, when the frequenters thereof reach that stato of egotism when they fancy they can pronounce

an opinion on any subject under the sun; he occupies the first place at public celebrations, and those unfortunate Pariahs of the press, the Reporters, hang upon his words as if he were Demosthenes revived. Did our readers ever remark the style and attitude of the modern speaker, as he prepares to launch into the depths of the bombastical, or soar into the regions of the "spread eagle?" After having been escorted by a dozen of his friends to the platform, he takes that calm and philosophic survey of the crowd which betokens that he is indifferent to the fact of there being any one present to hear him; then takes off his hat and out flies his handkerchief, which he uses to wipe from off his brow, the steam engendered by the big thoughts that are boiling within his brain—there is a breathless silence while this intellectual operation is performed, and also while he extends his hand to a glass of water beside him, and applies it to his lips, with the solemnity of Socrates quaffing off the cup of hemlock. Another instant, and the stillness by the multitude is broken by his pronunciation of the important words, "Mr. Chairman"—then he flies off into space and into nonsense; the longest adjectives in the language rebound from his lips, like sparks from an anvil, but not so brilliant; by a jugglery all his own, he manipulates a rumour into a fact, and a falsehood into a truth, and manages his sentences in such a manner that they shall glitter like a boy's fire-cracker, and conclude with a similar explosion—which explosion is duly pointed out, in the newspapers, by the words "cheers," and "applause."

The political speeches of the men who occupy public positions in America, and who dream they are statesmen—but are no more so than an ant is an elephant—may be characterized by the epithets, windy and watery. Who is bold enough to read, from beginning to end, a set speech by any of those professional talkers? Who will peruse them a dozen years hence? How many men in Canada, for instance, have read that ponderous volume of 1032 pages—the "Debates on Confederation," a book not over a year printed, which cost the Province some \$20,000, and which, as an encyclopedia of dullness and egotism, we back against any publication of ancient or modern times, excepting the folio volumes, mentioned by Moore in his "Diary," as having been written by a German savant on the "Digestion of a Flea." There are three or four good speeches in the volume, but they are lost—overshadowed by the mass of rubbish, under which they lie buried, like diamonds beneath a dung heap.

We should like some of our modern politicians to give us, instead of rhapsodies, repetitions and common-places, a few such political maxims as the one by Charles James Fox, viz:—"That which is morally wrong, cannot be constitutionally right." And talking of Fox, what recollections spring up? These were the days of the battles of giants, and the gifted gladiators, on either side, still make history ring with the echo of their blows—with their eloquence and their renown. Fox, Pitt, Burke, Sheridan, Grattan, Canning, Brougham—where are their representatives on this continent? The answer is—nowhere. In the mighty Republic beyond our borders, where questions are now at issue which must affect its future interests as well as the fate of millions yet unborn, where do we find an orator or a statesman that has yet risen high enough above the mists of party prejudice, to take a calm and comprehensive survey of the turbulent social elements at war beneath him? President Johnson, alone—and he has no pretensions to be regarded as an orator—is the only man, so far, that seems to be able

to grapple with the dangers that loom before the ark of the Republic. It is said that great occasions produce great men; but in the case of the United States, this would seem to be a fallacy. But let us not crow over much; for if our own country were drifting into a civil war, or emerging out of one, upon whom should we look for succour or for the exercise of sound statesmanship?

The public speakers of Great Britain stand immeasurably above those of America, in all that constitutes oratory. In the House of Commons, we have the first orator and statesman of the age, Gladstone; John Bright, the most effective public speaker, the most impressive rhetorician in the empire; and Disraeli, in whom the faculties of sarcasm and eloquence seem to be equally divided. In the House of Lords, Derby, "the Rupert of debate," sustains his ancient fame, and Brougham, though old in years, has lost none of that fire which set England in a blaze, when, standing up in defence of Queen Caroline, he scathed, with his forensic lightnings, her dissolute husband, king George the Fourth.

In British America, there is one orator and statesman, whose name deserves especial mention—the Hon. Joseph Howe, of Nova Scotia. His fame has extended to Great Britain, and over the United States, and we have an example of his great oratorical power, at the Detroit Convention, when his logic and his eloquence, exerted on behalf of the Reciprocity Treaty, won over the majority of the cool, practical American merchants who came there to look upon its continuance with an unfavourable eye. It may do very well for newspapers to sneer at the Nova Scotian statesman, who, in days gone by, fought for the people with pen and tongue, and gave to the people of the Mother Country the first idea of the immense resources of the British North American possessions; but it may yet turn out that those who pursue the lion will feel the force of that paw that struck down Irresponsible Government in his native Province. The speech of Mr. Howe, when put on his trial by the Government, for a libel published in his paper, the *Nova Scotian*—and when, being no lawyer, and not able to procure one, he had to address the jury on his own behalf—is one of the most eloquent efforts it has ever been our happiness to read. He won his case, and the Municipal institutions which had existed for a century, crumbled into dust.

We hope, that, from what we have stated in this article, our readers will gather nothing which may make them believe in the application of Cowper's lines to the present time:—

"The age of virtuous politics is past,  
Statesmen have grown too shrewd to be sincere,  
And we too wise to trust them." J.S.W.

## THE JAUNDICE.

A SEQUEL TO THE SCARLET FEVER.

In a series of letters, edited by Chas. H. Stokoe.

Harry Tourniquet, Esq., M.D., at Ottawa, to Mr. Robert Trepan, medical student, at Montreal.

LETTER V.

Dr. Tourniquet to Mr. Harry Trepan.

DEAR BOB,

If you've kept my last letter, return it; Or tear it to tatters, stamp on it, burn it! Don't leave the least atom, to let it be seen, That I such an idiot could ever have been.

About love and marriage I set down enough Of nonsensical rubbish a pillow to stuff; And, if not mistaken, I actually prated About a vile tale, which Miss Barker related!