

(Written for the Canadian Illustrated News.)

TOUCHSTONE PAPERS.

NO. VIII.—SPOONEY.

Woman is a perpetual mystery to man. She is so many-sided that she always escapes his analysis. But man is no mystery to woman. She seems to have nothing else to do in the world but to study him and she does so to perfection. Indeed in most cases she reads him through by intuition. Unless a woman is dead in love with a man, no amount of shams will impose upon her, and when she discovers them, she has a superb cruel way of laying them bare. Hence poor Spooney, with his faultless clothes, hair parted in the middle, smooth cheeks, white hands and dancing gait, meets with scant mercy at her hands. I believe no class is more hateful to the true woman than the lady's man, simply because what woman most admires in man is virility, just as what we most adore in the female is femininity.

"I'm very fond of music," says Spooney. "Are you?" asks Elsie, looking up at him with a half-malicious twinkle of her clear eyes, while her white hands rest upon the keys of her Chickering. "What shall I play for you?" "O, any thing, any thing you like. I'm very fond of music." And he stands up beside her.

Elsie, who is a thorough pupil of Herr K...., plunges into a prelude of Bach's, wild and brilliant, but very intricate. Spooney tries his best to look intelligent and pleased, but his face is a blank. The fair pianist then lapses into a sonata of Beethoven, the despair of executants. Sombre, dreamy, incoherent, yet full of deep, absorbing soul-melody. Spooney glances up at the ceiling or down at the arabesques of the carpet, sorely puzzled at the series of learned sounds and utterly insensible to their mystical harmony. The last note still trembles on the string, when Spooney bows to Elsie with a "very nice, Miss." O unregenerate barbarian! As well call Niagara "nice," or the Jungfrau a St. Peters. With the instinct of the woman-artist, Elsie has measured her man, and without one word of reply, her white fingers sparkle among the gay notes of the Labitzky Waltzes. With wondrous rapidity, she showers out the *Nutcracker*, the *Peri* and other pretty trifles of the Russian composer. Our friend, so fond of music, is agitated from top to toe, as if he were in conjunction with an electric machine, his face is radiant and he looks as though he felt like catching Elsie by the waist and whirling her out into the dance. "Very beautiful music, Miss," when she rises from the piano. Elsie says nothing, but her lips are almost contemptuously curled. She has used a woman's practical way of satisfying herself that Mr. Spooney is no musician at all, that he is not even a real lover of music, but only "a snatcher up of unconsidered trifles," which have only a superficial, sensuous meaning and no true psychical expression.

Herr K.... would have gone about examining Mr. S., and finding out the same thing in a man's rough, analytical way. "Very fond of music, Sir, eh?" "Yes, Sir, very." "Then you must know something about it?" "I flatter myself I do." "Well, what do you know of thorough bass?" "Oh!" exclaims Spooney, as if knocked down by a catapult. "What do you know of counterpoint? What is a fugue? How much have you read of the literature of music, the different schools, the progress of instrumentation" and so on. The answer of Spooney is that of all the young elegants of his class. He never heard of these big names in all his life and has no conception of music beyond its being a fashionable pastime.

In science, in literature, in art, it is the same shallowness and the same attempts at making believe. There is no greater fun than drawing these fellows out in the presence of an intelligent company, causing them to compromise themselves and then bringing down a quiet laugh on their devoted heads. Yet they never profit by the experience and are ready to make fools of themselves on the first occasion which presents itself.

I am told that the lisp is a sign of weak-mindedness. I have certainly noticed the coincidence in scores of cases; still I should be slow to accept it as a general rule. Spooney almost invariably has the lisp, however, either natural or affected. You cannot cure him of it. All the ridicule which has been showered on Dundreary will not persuade his votaries that this singularity is a social defect. If lip-sucking is congenital, there is a way to correct it; if it is assumed, what business has any one to render conversation disagreeable, by making his speech almost incomprehensible! I knew a young woman who dismissed a lover of this class, in high dudgeon, because as he undertook to read to her some erotic verses and encountered a line of alliterative sibilants, he sprinkled her fair cheek with saliva! Pardon my mentioning the circumstance, but it may prove a warning to similar delinquents.

Virtue is as great an ornament in man as it is in woman. Indeed it is a greater one, because of man's more grievous temptations and his more frequent occasions of sin in the battle of the world. But the thing called goodness, or the mawkish sentimentality of virtue, is the most despicable of impostures. It is the distinctive badge of the Spooney. If he thinks to please woman by his milk-and-water theology, or his ethical cant, he is woefully mistaken. Women prefer the dare-devil, the rough and ready fellow with muscle in his arm, an unflinching eye and the fearlessness of death. In a little country town where I resided a few years ago, there were two distinct classes of young men, outside of a few solidly upright and virtuous one. The first class were the goodies, fit for nothing but fawning upon the girls. The second class were the hard cases, addicted to horse-riding, hunting, athletic sports, practical jokes and not a few were pretty hard drinkers. Now, it was a remarkable fact that the girls only laughed at the first, treating them like poodles, while all their admiration and their love were given to the scapegraces who seemed to care for neither. Shirley used to say that she wanted her husband to be her master and her lord, and in consequence she spurned the spooney nobleman who offered her his hand. Hers was a profound insight into human nature.

I doat on paradoxes, believing them to be the spice of life. Hence I shall not wholly condemn spoonies, for they are delightfully paradoxical. They will fight. Strange as it may seem, the history of the world proves that the most effeminate and luxurious men can be roused by patriotism to shed their blood for hearth and home.

Alcibiades, who wore rings on his fingers, scented his hair

and lived almost entirely in the society of loose women, was one of the bravest soldiers and most skilful generals of Greece. Clodius, softest of Romans, who penetrated the secrets of Bona Dea, handled his broadsword like a true gladiator when waylaid by bandits on the Via Appia. Henry IV, head of the Bourbons, could turn a madrigal in the voluptuous shades of a lady's bower, and then don his metal harness for a charge on the battle-field. The cads of Belgravia stood all the hardships of the Crimean trenches and fought like heroes at Inkerman and the Tchernaya. The *petits cravés* of the Quartier Latin tramped through the weary marches of Champagne and the Moselle and did noble garrison work in the Paris forts. The dandies of Broadway toiled steadfastly along the corduroy roads of the Chickahominy, while a whole regiment of Creole *jeunesse dorée*, from New Orleans, was mowed down as it led the forlorn hope at Seven Oaks. Juvenal has done justice to this anomaly in human nature and I can do no less. I was very much amused the other day, on reading the last work of Bulwer, to find that famous dandy, the friend of the Count D'Orsay, laying down a set of admirable rules for the manly game of boxing.

Parents, in the education of their boys, should be supremely careful to train them to manliness from their tenderest years. They should be taught the bravery of truth telling. They should be instructed, while being meek and pacific, never to turn their back on a fight. A black eye or a split lip are less injury than a chicken heart.

Music and the Drama.

Vieuxtemps has been playing in London.

Rubinstein sailed for England on Saturday.

Booth and Jefferson will appear in Boston shortly.

Mme. Lucca has made \$50,000 in the United States.

Rosa d'Erina has been singing in the State of New York.

Mme. Nilsson will return to Boston on the 6th of October.

Miss Nelson goes to England in June and will return in the fall.

Wagner's "Lohengrin" has proved a complete failure at Milan.

Mr. H. F. Daly will play at Booth's Theatre, New York, next season.

Madame Ristori is to appear at Her Majesty's Theatre this season.

Camilla Urso has been performing at Philadelphia with great success.

Molière's plays are being produced at the Princess's Theatre, London.

Strauss's latest compositions are called the "Engagement Waltzes."

Strauss has made a success with his new opera, "The Roman Carnival."

Mme. Nilsson appeared at Drury Lane on the 6th inst. as "Marguerite."

M. Gounod will conduct three concerts at Spa during the month of August.

A new oratorio by Herr W. Fritz, entitled "David," has been performed at Weimar.

Mr. J. W. Albaugh's "Poverty Flat" has been having a great run at the Boston Theatre.

A young English soprano, Miss Thompson, has made a successful *début* at Cologne in "Il Barbiere."

A permanent Italian Opera House is to be established at Vienna, under the direction of Herr Julius Sulzer.

A commemorative tablet is to be affixed to the house in Berlin which Spontini inhabited from 1820 to 1842.

A new comedy by Mr. H. J. Byron, entitled "Time's Triumph" is about to be produced at the Charing Cross Theatre.

A new opera, "Romeo and Juliet," by Signor Antonio Mercadeti, has been successfully produced at Mahon, Minorca.

"Mademoiselle of the Thirty-Six Virtues" is the eccentric title of a piece about to be brought out at the Paris Ambigu.

Lotta, the well known American actress, has been magnificently fitted in London. She was recently the guest of the Lord Mayor.

The Emperor of Austria has ordered the performance of M. Gounod's opera, "Polyeucte," at the Imperial Theatre during the exhibition season.

The new tenor, M. Salomon, has just made his *début* at the French Opera, Paris, selecting the part of Arnold, in "Guillaume Tell," for his first appearance.

The receipts at the Vienna Opera House amount to £1,000 on each of the Patti nights. The impresario, M. Merelli, has gained £6,000 in the last two months.

The erection of the Balthus National Festival-Stage-Play-Theatre is being pushed on, although there is an immense sum of money wanted for its completion.

At the London Gaiety "Guy Mannering" has been revived, with Sir Henry Bishop's original music, and at the Olympic a dramatization of Wilkie Collins' "The New Magdalen" is in preparation.

Signor Verdi has just written a string quartet, which is said by some of the Italian papers to equal the best quartets of Beethoven. The Italian composer's "Aida" has achieved a great success at Naples.

A Mario Scholarship for young tenors is to be founded at the Conservatoire de Musique. Signor Mario, in recognition of the compliment, has given the founders a full-size portrait of himself as Don Giovanni, and a similar one of Grisi as Donna Anna.

A correspondent of the *Euterpe*, a Leipzig musical paper, asserts that he has discovered at Augsburg an unpublished work by Haydn, consisting of a setting of Schiller's "Ode to Joy," which has been rendered famous by its incorporation with the choral movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

A recent representation at Vienna, for the benefit of Adeline Patti, has been a success without precedent in the theatrical annals of the town. The piece played was "Dinorah." After the shadow dance, in the midst of a deluge of flowers, a massive silver basket of great beauty, and an exquisite coronet in silver and gold were presented to the songstress.

The *Allgemeine Zeitung* announces the early publication of works of Goethe, hitherto unpublished, among them his scientific correspondence from 1812 to 1832, which he collected himself, and his correspondence with the two brothers, Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt. It is said the most interesting part of it consists of the letters between Goethe and Wilhelm von Humboldt from 1795 to 1822.

Art and Literature.

Mr. J. Faed's well-known picture of "Burns and Highland Mary" was knocked down in a London sale room the other day for 220 guineas.

The title of Mr. Browning's new poem, which will not appear just yet, is "Red Cotton Country; or, Turf and Towers." Could there be a much more absurd title?

Mr. James Gordon Bennet, the proprietor of the *New York Herald*, is proposing to start a daily London newspaper after the model of that world-famed journal.

Sir Henry Rawlinson will shortly give to the world a series of papers on the politics and geography of Central Asia, under the title of "England and Russia in the East."

The declared value of printed books exported from England in the last three months was £183,084, being an increase of more than £20,000 in the like period of the previous year.

The French Academy of Fine Arts has given this year as the competition in painting for the Grand Prix de Rome, the interpretation of the 137th Psalm, "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down," &c.

The British and Foreign Bible Society are now engaged in the translation of the Bible into the Japanese language, and the first instalment, that of the Gospel of St. John, has been completed and printed.

Mr. Thomas Spencer Baynes, professor of literature and logic in the University of St. Andrews, has been selected by Messrs. Black, of Edinburgh, to edit a new edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," which they have resolved to issue.

An interesting discovery has been made by a peasant who was labouring in a field near Arles. This consists of a work in glass, in two parts, one in common glass in the form of a vase, the other comprises an ornament superposed on red glass, and is enriched with oval decorations; on one of the sides is the inscription "Diva Maximiana Augusta."

One of the most curious exhibits forwarded to Vienna as a model of Paris in pasteboard, and measuring twenty yards in circumference; it is a faithful copy of the capital before the Communists changed its features, or the Germans its suburbs. Each public building is distinctly shown, as also the city streets; the fortifications look as large as life.

Private advices state that the old walls of Adrianople, which are in course of destruction, have been found to be pre-Byzantine character, the lower layers consisting of huge stones placed side by side, without cement. Probably they would be found to be the case in a great many other instances, and the dates of the structures could not be determined by this circumstance only.

At Constantinople a number of old rusted helmets deposited in the Church of St. Irene were lately sold to a Jew as old iron, at about 12s. or 15s. the pound. There were about ten. The purchaser commenced cleaning them, and then discovered that they were of fine steel, and adorned with Arabic inscriptions, showing that they dated from very ancient times. He began by selling them at 25 piastres (25 centimes each); the price then 30, 40, and even 50, until at last an Armenian bought up all that were left at 225. 50c. each, and put them up to sale in the bazars. The government has repurchased them at from £2 to £3 apiece.

Sir John Lubbock, to whom the English community is indebted for the bank holidays, has a bill before Parliament for the protection and preservation of the old stone monuments which, like Stonehenge, Druids' circles, and cromlechs, have existed in many parts of the United Kingdom from time immemorial. From the ethnological and archaeological point of view, these relics are of great importance, and will become more important as our knowledge increases. Even within the present century some of the ancient structures have been destroyed, because ignorant farmers or landowners found them in the way, or because the stones, when proven, could be used to mend a road or build a wall.

A full-sized photographic copy of the celebrated Bayeux Tapestry will be among the works of art shown at the great International Exhibition. This unique piece of needle-work, believed to have been executed by the queen of William the Conqueror and her maidens, and represents the battle of Hasting, with preceding and subsequent events. It is two hundred and thirty feet in length and twenty-two in breadth. Very soon after the work was completed by the queen, as is supposed, it was presented by her to the abbey of Bayeux, in Normandy, and is now in charge of the municipal authorities of that city. During the Franco-German war the tapestry was rolled up and hidden, but has since been restored to its place in the public library.

The supplement of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of the 10th of April has an article upon Swinburne's "Byron," and detailed quotations from the preface of the new edition, in which the hope is expressed that "something at once new and true" may one day be brought to light concerning Byron's life. However, this, like much else besides, lies in the lap of the gods, and especially in the lap of one goddess, who still treats the earth. Till she speaks we cannot guess what she may have to say. To this phrase the editor adds: "Countess Guiccioli had died meanwhile without divulging anything." Now says Mr. Karl Hillebrand, writing to us from Florence, I have had the privilege of looking through the whole of the extremely valuable manuscript collection left by the Countess, which is still in the possession of her family. It contains, besides the MS. of a work on "Byron's Stay in Italy," by the Countess, which is full of unpublished letters and contemporary notices, a quantity of Lord Byron's autograph manuscripts (for instance, of "Marino Falieri," several cantos of "Don Juan," "Dante's Prophecy," &c.), and, what is a good deal more important, an extensive correspondence, dated from 1820 to 1823, which, however, is hardly adapted for publication.

The following is the lament of one of the most distinguished English authoresses, well paid and read with avidity. Amateurs will be a little astonished, and yet there is nothing remarkably exceptionable in the lady's views; she has the courage to say what many have felt: "I would rather serve in a shop, rather scour floors—rather nurse children than undergo those tedious and interminable disputes and this unwomanly publicity. I am now chained to a desk, eight, ten, twelve hours a day, at mere drudgery. All my thoughts of writing are for hard money. But for these dear ties I should never write another line, but go out in some situation, as other destitute women do. Since I have become a professed authoress, woe is me! A washer woman hath a better trade. I write merely for remuneration, and would rather scour floors if I could get as much by that healthier, more respectable, and more feminine employment. I myself hate all my own doings, and consider being forced to this drudgery the greatest misery that life can afford. But it is my wretched fate and must be undergone—so long, at least, as my father is spared to me. If I should have the misfortune to lose him, I shall go quietly to the workhouse, and never write another line—a far preferable destiny. No woman's situation can stand the wear and tear of all this anxiety. It killed poor Mrs. Hemans, and will, if not averted, kill me."