

THE ANTIDOTE

Published every Saturday in time for the evening suburban trains. Subscription ONE DOLLAR per annum, single copies FIVE CENTS. May be obtained at all the leading stations 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.

SOCIAL STUDIES.

The commonplace little phrase, "going into society," is susceptible of a variety of meanings, and it is, in fact, used with almost as great a number of significances as exist among the persons who employ it. Society, both as a phrase and a fact, is at once too much and too little considered. There are those who affirm the "hollowness," the "heartlessness," the "frivolity" of society—those who denounce it most being usually recruited from the ranks of the cynical or the inexperienced. There are those who look upon its magic portals as the open sesame to all that is worth living for, and those are usually recruited from the ranks who know least of it. There is a vulgar pose of exertion worthy of a better cause expended to "get into" society; and there is another pose, often unconscious, but still a distorted one, that effects to look with distaste on social pleasure to "scorn delights and live laborious days," or to believe rapture and bliss are limited strictly to a tete-a-tete—a form of mutual devotion that is tolerably sure to end disastrously, consumed by its own ardor.

It is a question if society merits either the adulation or the condemnation so lavishly poured forth upon it. To be sure, one may say, there is society and society. The "One Hundred" recognize nothing as "society" outside of its own official hall-mark; and in a city where intellectual ideas create an aristocracy of letters, the gathering which includes men and women most famous and most talented—people whose names stand for something—is apt to be more coveted than that of the ultra-fashionable. Heads not only hold their own against heels, but even displace hearts as trumps. Though to what degree head and heart may be dissevered is another story, as

Rudyard Kipling would say. Outside that world of fashion and unusual luxury conveniently designated as the "One Hundred," society means—what? As a rule, the meeting of cultivated and well-bred men and women. Surely there is nothing demoralizing about this; nothing that should make life less, but rather more, liberal, elevated and refined. The culture of good manners is best achieved in social contact. Professor Boyce pointed out in one of his recent admirable treatises on ethics that conscience itself is a virtue, for if one lived in utter isolation, alone in the world, things that are now right or wrong would be neither the one nor the other, as the question of right or wrong requires the conditions of two or more persons together to create the moral standard.

"Society," says George William Curtis, "is the festival of wit, beauty and wisdom." It's hall of reunion, whether Holland House, or Charles Lamb's parlor, or Schiller's garret, or the Tailor's, is a palace of pleasure. Society is as much a sphere of art as any of the more recognized spheres. To be rich and to visit certain persons no more fits a man or woman for society than to be 20 years old and to have a palette, fits him to be an artist.

This is the true ideal of society. To go into it, to meet men and women of simple and sincere natures, of flawless integrity, of wit and experience and brilliancy and charm, is to enjoy the highest privileges of life. This is what life is for—to know each other, to sympathize to re-inspire our ideals, and renew fidelity to every lofty purpose. Friendship and acquaintanceship are governed by the law of spiritual gravitation, and when left to their simple and natural relation form no small part of destiny.



Fashionable Wedding.

The marriage of Mr. Herbert Desjardins, son of Senator Desjardins, one of the mayorality candidates, to Miss Caroline Louger, daughter of Judge Loranger, was a brilliant affair. Another fashionable wedding in French society was that of Mr. Cleophas Beausoleil, son of Ald. Beausoleil, M. P., to Miss Rose Vallee.

HOME GOSSIP (2.)

Strangely enough, a form of gossip more inquisitorial, more treacherous to those who indulge in it, more injurious than the talk-over-my-neighbor chatter, which if many love, none praise, flourishes among us, almost unblamed. Many a pious and thoughtful family—perhaps all the more probably the more pious and thoughtful it is—constitutes in its sheltered home a permanent court of inquiry upon the member who happens last to have left the room.

Why is he restless? Why is she pale? Is there anything amiss with the conscience? with the heart? or is it not rather, temper? Each member of the court gives evidence; everybody sums up in turn, and frequently. Perhaps the member who has had the misfortune to leave the room is known or suspected to be striving to conceal some pang of disappointed ambition or love, or cherishing some hope or affection not yet ripe for revelation; in such cases there are little accidental self-betrays, unwary speeches, unguarded expressions of countenance or even confidential talks to be told and discussed. Perhaps there is no concealment to tear away, but some distinct event, little or great, for good or ill, makes the member of the court who is out of the room an advantageous topic. His or her conduct can be expounded, arraigned, discriminated upon, even approved; but the temptation of the home court of inquiry is not to approvals.

Or perhaps the member who has left the room is in a normal state of nothing particular, and not debateable, being doing or suffering out of the family wont. Well, there is a subject, then, for domestic pathology. The court goes into a detailed analysis of temperament, character and antecedents; the discussion is at once vague and minute; anecdotes from earliest childhood may be brought to point a moral; possibilities in the farthest future may be predicted from yesterday's trivial indiscretion. No matter how or why, the person who is out of hearing must be the theme of the talk, and the talk must be investigating and judicial. The microscope is in full play, and diagnosis runs riot.