

## THE ART OF DINNER GIVING.

"A Most Reluctant Diner-Out" writes in the May number of the *Cornhill Magazine* a humorous account of his experiences as a guest at friends' tables.

"The other day," he says, "I dined with that most pleasant host, Mr. G., and his still more pleasant wife, Mrs. G. But it was a sad day for me. G. is a man who has been blessed, or the other thing, by great riches; and has a French cook. Some of this great artist's inventions made me very ill. Now I would apostrophize my friend G. in this way: 'Do not think, when I refuse your invitations to dinner, that it is from my distaste for your society and that of Mrs. G., but I dread your French cook. That pleasant, rotund and accomplished foreigner—comely, too, with his white vestments and his white cap—presents to me the awful idea of Black Death. When that distinguished foreigner goes to revisit his dear Paris for three weeks (surely you, who are a kind-hearted man, allow him that holiday), I shall be delighted to dine with you and Mrs. G., and to banquet upon the inferior productions of some Betsy or Molly, who holds the undistinguished post of Kitchen-maid in your superb kitchen.'"

Suggestions are also made thus:

"One great point in dinner-giving is, that the hostess should know when to move after dinner. Most clever women stay too long. They delight in good talk, and in the good talk of clever men; but they forget that festivity, to be successful, should be rapid. Everything in this life is too long; and diners, as well as church services, require to be greatly abridged. A great wit, of a former generation, once said to me, after we had been detained an unconscionable time by a very brilliant hostess not being willing to leave the dinner table, 'There is no material difference, sir, among women, but this—but this—that one woman has the sense to leave the dinner table sooner than another. I trust, young man, that you will recollect this when you have to make the choice of a wife.'"

"Let it not be thought that in the endeavor to make the party-giving of mankind more simple, less formal, less expensive, and more measurable, we are aiming at a small matter. The greatest men—among them, Goethe and Sydney Smith (two people not much alike in other respects)—have laid down this grand maxim (I have not the words before me, but I remember the substance of the passages): that pleasure is an abiding thing—that man is permanently the better and happier for having, if only once in his life, enjoyed some innocent pleasure heartily.

These two remarkable men coincided in another view they took of human society. They had both seen and lived with the most intelligent people in their respective countries. They had lived with wits and scholars, and men of science, and great people; and they both said that the happiness of society consisted in bringing people together who had a mutual respect for one another, and who would be inclined to love one another. Now let dinner givers think of this great maxim, though it may appear to be a commonplace one. Your object should be—for fortune has blessed you with the means of doing it—to promote harmony and good fellowship in the world: to makemen of different classes understand one another; and, in short, to blend society together in bonds of affection and respect.

I have hitherto spoken of this matter of entertainment, if not humorously, at any rate without great seriousness. But there

is a serious side to the matter. "plain living and high thinking" should be the main object to be aimed at; and you, who are rich and powerful, could do much to promote this. Remember that if there is any truth impressed upon us by the records of history, it is this; that great luxury generally precedes remarkable decadence in every nation—that is, in every nation that we know much about, the annals of which have been accurately recorded. It is for you to encourage simplicity in living; and you may be sure that this simplicity will coincide with that, which must be your great object, namely, to give the greatest pleasure by your entertainments."

## MUSKETRY.

This Adjutant-General, Lord William Paulet, has promulgated the following in a general order:—

"The Secretary of State for War having been pleased, on the recommendation of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, to approve of the grant of a money prize with a medal to the best shot of the army in each year, and also of the regimental rewards for good shooting being in future issued in lump sums instead of by daily payments; and his royal Highness being of opinion that, in view of the advantage thus held out to the troops, the standards of proficiency required in order to qualify for prizes ought to be raised, and that this can be attained with benefit to the public service, and without exacting from the soldiers more than they are quite capable of performing: It has been decided—1. To increase the number of points for passing from the third to the second class from 30 to 36. 2. To increase the number of points to be obtained in the first class, in order to become a 'marksman,' from 20 to 22 for the Enfield rifle, and from 30 to 33 points with the Whitworth. 3. To reduce the number of answers to be given in each judging distance practice from six to four, requiring eight instead of twelve answers in each period, but retaining the same number of points as at present for passing from the third into the second class, and requiring 10 points to be made in order to pass from the second into the first class. 4. To increase the number of points required to render a soldier eligible for reward as 'best shot of the battalion,' and 'best shot of the company,' from 20 to 22 with the Enfield, and from 30 to 33 with the Whitworth rifle."

These new rules are to be adopted for the present year's course. The order defining the amount and regulating the issue of the money prizes in lump sums will be promulgated by the War Office.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

The volunteer review at Portsmouth passed off satisfactorily.

The 30th Regiment from Halifax, N. S., is to go to Waterford.

Prince Arthur lunched with the officers of the 39th Regiment at Fermoy.

The 47th foot will return from Barbadoes to England during the ensuing summer.

The Viceroy of Egypt spent £600,000 in his recent reception of the Prince of Wales.

The turret ship "Scorpion" has been commissioned, and is now on the Irish coast.

Admiral Milne has succeeded Lord Clarence Paget as commander-in-chief of the Mediterranean fleet.

When the Prince of Wales left Constantinople he left £800 for distribution among the Sultan's servants.

It is stated that King Victor Emmanuel is in such a state that he cannot sit down for fear of an attack of apoplexy.

It is now stated authoritatively that Major General Whitfield will succeed to the command of troops in China and India.

When the Prince of Wales stopped on board the "Ariadne," the men saluted him with three such thundering cheers that some of the Turks were quite frightened, and started for the shore as fast as possible.

It appears, according to recent accounts, that the rebel natives in New Zealand have committed further outrages upon settlers, for which they have been severely punished. It has been resolved at a great meeting of the colonists to petition the Queen for aid.

The ex-Queen of Spain was present at the races in the Bois. Her ex-Majesty's flunkeys created great sensation. James Plush will be surprised to hear that the lackeys of the ex-Queen wear a large crown and *fleurs-de-lis* embroidered on the calves of their scarlet stockings.

Viscount Monck's able speech in the House of Lords on the Army has afforded great satisfaction in military circles. No doubt, now there exists too much of the element of volunteering in the recruiting of the Army, the present state of the case is nothing more nor less than the recruiting competing with money and the labour market.

The Earl of Radnor, who died in the early part of April, had been a member of the House of Commons continuously for twenty seven years before he succeeded to the title in 1828. His legislative service, therefore, extended over near sixty-eight years. He was born in 1779 and educated in France, where he was in boyhood presented to Louis XVI, and Marie Antoinette.

The young Emperor of China, being curious to judge for himself of the effect of opium, tried a pipe, and of course suffered severely. The Queen Mother (so says the story going the round of the Indian papers) made inquiries, and having found out that one of the chief eunuchs had supplied His Majesty with the opium, had the wretched servant beheaded, as an example to the rest of the household, and a fresh proclamation against the use of the drug was sent through the empire.

Whitsuntide will witness the assemblage of formidable fleet at Portland; as the *Agincourt*, *Black Prince*, *Valiant*, *Hector*, *Duncan*, *Donegal*, *Royal George*, *Trafalgar*, and *Mersey* will all be ready to leave that roadstead about the 14th of May, on a cruise which will last about a fortnight, and during which the Royal Naval Reserve will have an opportunity of proving that the encomiums passed upon it by those who value the institution are not unmerited.

A dastardly attempt was made on the night of April 15th to upset the special train by which the King of Italy was travelling to Naples, but fortunately it was thwarted by the vigilance of one of the men employed on the line. A large quantity of stones had been piled up across the rails, within a tunnel through which the train had to pass, near the station of Foggia. The signalman stationed there discovered the plot, and stopped the train before it had reached the tunnel. After the obstruction had been removed the train proceeded on its way.