

suspected of about as much interest in a dry debate as a kitten would take in the theory of evolution, sit till midnight and after in the expectation of a division; and even when word goes forth that it will not be reached till some time in the small hours of the morning, the fair parliamentarians often adjourn to the little supper rooms below, fortify themselves with coffee and cake and compliments, and wait. Doubtless you have heard of the display of innocent legislative hilarity that rewards them, when at last the whips scurry off in obedience to the Speaker's mandate to "call the members in." How Major Prior, from beyond the Rockies, is induced occasionally to sing, in his splendid baritone, about the "Little Midshipmite," or the early morning struggling feebly through the rich intersections of the north-western windows looks down in wonder upon the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, wholly dignified and decorous, and even a little gray, bald, and rheumatic in spots as it is, shouting rhythmically and jubilantly across the mace "*Brigadier, vous avez raison!*" How the honourable gentlemen of the Opposition aim large and forcible paper-balls at the occupants of the Treasury benches, and how the missiles are returned with unearned increment attached in the shape of mucilage and pen-holders. Besides the fun of seeing Parliamentary dignity turned inside out, the ladies have a consciousness of fashionable rectitude in sitting up late to see it, which, indeed, they greatly require to support them through the fatigue it entails. It is especially the correct thing to spend an hour or two in the Speaker's gallery in such radiance of apparel as is naturally reflected from Government House. There is something semi-strong minded, demi-æsthetic, in it that is agreeable to the feminine sense of the fitness of things; it is said to be an admirable soporific moreover, after the effect of Viceroyalty and champagne upon one's excited nerves. There is a flavour of philanthropy about it too, for the jaded Parliamentary eye approves, and the more frivolous of the exhausted Parliamentarians leave the seats the country has provided for them to chat with the late comers. The press gallery opposite makes its own peculiar comments, and the people who have been listening to the debate devote themselves to the distraction of guessing the antecedent festivity from the character of the arriving draperies, which a dinner at Rideau Hall causes to culminate in gorgeousness.

Our Governor-General, talking of Viceregal hospitalities, has won golden opinions as a dinner-giver, which he must deserve in no ordinary sense, since the surroundings of these official repasts must count somewhat as odds against their success. The dining-room used for this purpose is a huge, bare, high ceiled apartment that all the art of the Pre-Raphaelites could not make anything but most unprepossessing. The immense windows are shielded by straight red curtains, or rather blinds, which are made uglier still by being puffed in parallel lines from top to bottom. One would think that Mr. William Morris's occasional Canadian disciples, who ought to be as the little leaven leavening the whole lump, might induce their fellow-countrymen to do a little better than this for their Queen's Representative. In the meantime, it is no small achievement to have established a brilliant reputation as a host among accessories like these.

The room makes a very fair theatre, however, and an excellent ball-room. The stage is usually improvised at the north end, and although the "properties" of Government House do not include an asbestos fire for the lighting of the amateur hero's cigarette, or a tank of real water for the submerging of the amateur heroine, they are numerous and effective enough to put a three-act comedy through very respectably indeed. Theatricals have already been given at Rideau Hall this season, in fact they formed almost the first of the Easter gayeties. The piece, which was repeated last week at the Opera House for the benefit of the Convalescent Children's Home—a charity in which their Excellencies and the Household take a special interest—was *Everybody's Friend*, the title rôle giving Lord Frederick Hamilton an admirable opportunity to portray a wittily naïf young gentleman with an unlimited capacity for getting himself into trouble and looking grieved over it. Lord Frederick was evidently the inspiration of the piece, although he divided the laurels very evenly with Mr. Kimber, whom the Dominion knows so well in his official capacity of Black Rod. Among the ladies Mrs. Charles Stuart, to whom Ottawa long ago gave the palm of amateur histrionic achievement, very cleverly maintained her right to it. One does not go to Government House theatricals to criticise, but to applaud, as a rule. In this case, however, the applause was thoroughly deserved, and there was very little to criticise. The general verdict was to the effect that the affair surpassed anything of the sort that had been given since Lord Dufferin's time, which was, I understand, a sort of Golden Age in Ottawa's amateur theatrical world.

Preparations are going forward actively to make the farewell banquet to Lord Lansdowne a success upon an unprecedented scale. The drill shed has been abandoned, probably to the caterer's great comfort and satisfaction, in favour of the Russell House; and a suggestion for a recep-

tion afterward of the lady friends of the banqueters has been submitted for Her Excellency's decision. It is expected that the farewell demonstrations to Lord Lansdowne will be quite as marked a manifestation of the regard in which Ottawa holds him as that which welcomed him back from Toronto and placed on record the Capital's opinion of the gentleman who has since had such an abundant opportunity to utilize his Canadian impressions in another "Pilgrim's Progress" from Tullamore Jail.

To-night (Monday) everybody will go to hear the end of the Fishery Debate, which has been so odd an illustration of the undisputed sway of the party spirit in Dominion politics. As an arrangement calculated at least to allay American hostility to Canada, and smooth the way to further trade negotiations, the Opposition must approve the treaty, yet respect for party tradition, the belligerent spirit that will not down, and apparently the fact that the treaty does not secure all earthly and economic blessings for Nova Scotia in return for the clearing privilege, unite to prolong a hostility which a good many of the hostile, should the matter come to a division, which is improbable after Mr. Davies' "I am willing, sir, that it should be accepted," would doubtless bring to a consistent end by voting for the Bill.

Sir Charles Tupper in his opening speech, into which utterance a mellowness as of Old Falernian seems to have crept, urged the honourable gentlemen of the Opposition to believe that every word wrung from him and from his party in defence of the treaty would be used against it at Washington. It is not easy to conclude that the Liberals are fighting the treaty with a view to facilitating its ratification by Congress, but if that were their purpose it is surely better furthered than if they took the advice of the Minister of Finance and kept silence. The Americans would certainly hesitate before assenting to an arrangement so advantageous to Canada as to be received without a word of cavil both by the Canadian Government and its none too gracious Opposition. If the Republicans moreover, can use Canadian Conservative utterances to stone a Democratic treaty with, its defenders will find telling missiles in the speeches of the treaty's opponents here. From which point of view the longer the wordy war goes on the better the friends of the equitable and honourable though not to radical measure of relief, should be satisfied.

SARA J. DUNCAN.

TO THE FIRST WILD FLOWER.

Oh, fairest thing in this great world!
Oh, frailest thing, that e'er unfurled
Its heart with timid hardihood
To all the rough winds of the wood!
Least one, I dare not bless thee—
Sweet one—nor yet caress thee,
My breath, my touch, would surely be thy doom;
But oh, when Nature made thee
In this untrampled shade, she
Put all her wealth of beauty in thy spear of bloom.

Oh, Bodiless! Oh, Beautiful!
My heart is dull, and very dull;
What do I in this sacred place?
How should I look upon thy face?
And yet if thou shouldst blossom
Upon my lifeless bosom,
In some fair spring, long, long years from to-day,
'Twould set my heart to beating,
And o'er and o'er repeating,
Ne'er from my soul such poem sprang as from my soulless clay!

A. ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

THE FIRST SPRING FLOWER.

THE winter had been long and severe, and we were heartily tired of it. Early in March there came three or four bright warm days, with the promise of spring in the air. We heard the mellow flute-note of a blue-bird. A few pioneer robins had also arrived from the south, and were gladly welcomed. They were all male birds; we did not expect the females for a week or two yet. The deep snow began to thaw and settle down in the streets and on the lawns of the city and in the open fields. In the more sunny and sheltered spots little patches of earth appeared, scattered over with last year's dead leaves, or covered with gray and sodden-looking grass. The water was trickling and running a little in the streets or lay spread out in clear pools on which the sun flashed dazzlingly. The thaw had not gone far enough yet to muddy the water. The sidewalk was dry in some places; on these boys were playing marbles or girls were swinging their skipping-ropes.