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TEMPERATURE

as observed by Heare & Harrison, Thermometer and Barometer Makers, Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE WEEK ENDING

May 14th, 1882.			Corresponding week, 1881				
Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.		
Mon..	50°	38°	48°	Mon..	70°	41°	57°
Tue..	49°	33°	42°	Tue..	63°	40°	51°
Wed..	56°	32°	44°	Wed..	69°	45°	52°
Thu..	58°	44°	51°	Thu..	63°	39°	51°
Fri..	50°	31°	40°	Fri..	64°	45°	54°
Sat..	54°	34°	44°	Sat..	62°	46°	54°
Sun..	56°	34°	45°	Sun..	50°	34°	42°

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, May 20, 1882.

A CHAT WITH OSCAR WILDE.

Mr. Oscar Wilde's lecture announced for to-night, will, unfortunately, leave us insufficient time to notice it in this number. Mr. Wilde is, however, here, and may deserve himself that recognition which must for the present at least be denied his lecture. We have spoken before of Mr. Wilde's antecedents and his objects. It remains to say a few words about his personality. With his appearance, probably most of our readers are acquainted. But what cannot be conveyed in a photograph is the manner of the man himself. Those who expect affectation and silliness of speech must be, to judge from our own experience, grievously disappointed in a man who acts and speaks simply as a gentleman of refined manners and accustomed to society—moreover, as a man to whom "the study of mankind is man." "The man who is bored by others," as Mr. Wilde remarked, "must be a bore himself," and the observation is a good gauge of his estimate of the interviewing, with which during his American trip he has been largely favored.

Our own visit was made not exactly in an interviewing spirit, but several hours spent in his company produced the impression recorded above, of a courteous, clever Englishman, with distinct views of his own, but little spoiled by the flattery which might have turned a wiser man's head, but which he has been shrewd enough to use for what it is worth, and to lay aside its effects in the presence of men of the world.

We talked but little of art, the subject in view of his lecture savoring, perhaps, a little of "shop"—certainly no extravagant ideas obtruded themselves upon a somewhat matter-of-fact conversation. Mr. Wilde expressed his delight with the States, as a country in which young men were so highly esteemed—a very true criticism by the way, and especially noticeable to one who comes direct from the land *par excellence* of old fogginess, where no man has a right, in the view of otherwise excellent people, to express any opinion at all before thirty.

About the courtesy of all his audiences Mr. Wilde is enthusiastic. He came to New York to speak and lecture for the first time in his life, and his audiences, with scarcely any exception, have treated him, he says, like an old friend.

But the pleasantest feature of his tour seems to have been his visit to California. The country, the people, the climate, are all, according to him, delightful, and certainly it is a fact not unworthy of record, that in a city like San Francisco, Mr.

Wilde should have been enabled to lecture ten times, at short intervals, and always to fair houses. A single lecture may attract many out of pure curiosity, but it says much for the San Franciscans, or for Mr. Wilde, or probably for both, that he should have been able to interest a people to whom Art of any description is somewhat of a novelty, and that they should have been ready to go again and again to hear the great truths and principles of Art, by whomsoever expounded.

Next week we trust to say something of the lecture itself, and the principles involved. For the present we can only wish Mr. Wilde a good audience, and his hearers a good lecture.

"COMPLIMENTS FLIES."

Some doubt has been expressed of late as to whether they really do manage things better in France. A copy of a French newspaper, however, which lies before us seems to prove conclusively that in point of abuse we have still much to learn, or, to speak with historical correctness, that we have greatly degenerated. Some complaints have been made by both political parties of late of a certain acrimony which is thought to have been imported into political discussion. But the alpeans flourished by our statistes are thin and puny compared with the shillelagh of M. Camille Farcy, who pitches into M. Gambetta in *La France*. Our contemporary supposes itself to have great cause of complaint against M. Gambetta, with which we have nothing to do. But such being the case, that it should call him "An Adventurer," "A would-be Dictator," "A Haunter of a Cosmopolitan Bohemia," "a man of neo-Cæsarism," is all right and proper. "Compliments flies where gentlemen meet," according to a vulgar English proverb. But the description of a statesman of M. Gambetta's position, or for the matter of that of any public man, in a public journal as "lourd, épais, mal élevé, piqué d'aïl, bardé de lard, frotté d'huile rancé," seems to go a little far. It is currently reported that M. Gambetta, though he certainly is not "scant of breath," may be said to resemble Hamlet in the other particular, and he certainly is a Southerner, which makes the graceful allusions to garlic and oil possess a certain conventional applicability. With these advantages the *France* has looked up its cookery book and compared M. Gambetta first to a leg of mutton in which cloves of garlic have been cunningly inserted, then to a quail "jacketed" in bacon. Passing from cookery to ethnology it suggests that like the noble savage he rubs himself with bad oil while it has previously questioned his breeding and availed itself of his physical bulk to apply two epithets which connote mental as well as bodily heaviness. The proceeding strikes one as in the first place slightly "mal élevé" itself, and secondly, as more than slightly "lourd." M. Gambetta's foes are apt to reproach him with his luxurious habits and his weakness for aristocratic society, two things not very congruous with the *France's* description. As a description of a Marseilles long-shore man by a local fish-gate the thing would not be bad. Under the circumstances it is not to be recommended for imitation.

THE PHILHARMONIC CONCERT.

On Thursday last the Philharmonic Society gave their second concert of the season. To say that it was altogether an improvement upon their first would not be absolutely true, nevertheless we believe the Society is gradually and steadily advancing in a way that bids fair to make it worthy of its position as our representative musical institution.

The programme on Thursday comprised "Miriam's Song of Triumph" (Schubert), and Handel's "Acis and Galatea." The first of these was chiefly remarkable for the very excellent playing of the orchestra. Miss Joseph, who took the solo part in the cantata, was scarcely equal to the task, and in addition labored under the disadvan-

tage of a slight cold. Still she sang intelligently and correctly. The chorus started well, but in the last number, "Mighty is the Lord," they got away from Mr. Couture with rather disastrous results. The best number decidedly was the solo and chorus, "Strike your timbrels," judged upon which alone Mr. Couture deserves very decided praise.

The second and third parts were filled by "Acis and Galatea." Of the wisdom of the selection we cannot say very much. The work in its entirety is distinctly monotonous, and requires very perfect singing to enable an audience to listen to it with any degree of interest to the end. Moreover, the music is largely given to the soloists, on whom far more than in the ordinary run of cantatas and oratorios the weight of the work falls. That this is a mistake where the solos are taken by amateurs goes without saying. To say that the gentlemen and ladies who essayed the parts on Thursday were not quite equal to the task, is but to say that Miss Crompton is inferior to Lemmens-Sherington, Mr. Norris to Mr. Edward Lloyd, or Mr. Delahunt to Santley.

In fact, the work did drag. Miss Compton sang well throughout, though she has developed an excessive *portamento* which she would do well to modify. The part of Acis hardly suited Mr. Norris as well as his music generally does, but he sang "Love in her eyes sits playing," very nicely. Mr. Fetherstone made a fair Damon, and Mr. Delahunt a capital Polypheme. His voice is rather heavy for "O ruddier than the cherry," which, indeed no one can sing after Santley, but he was astonishingly good in "Cease to beauty to be suing," and deserved far more applause than he got.

The chorus, as before, were a little shaky, especially on the *rallentandos*, but may be congratulated on the whole upon conscientious work at a difficult task, several numbers of which they rendered exceedingly well, noticeably "Mourn all ye muses," than which they have never done better.

The orchestra, as we hinted above, deserves special mention. Hitherto it has been one of the drawbacks to the enjoyment of the Society's concerts. Last time, however, we noticed a very decided improvement, commenced by the weeding of the orchestra itself, the abolition of the brass and drums, (which one day may be restored perhaps, but the absence of which in their present state is a great boon), and followed by persistent hard work, and frequent rehearsals. The result is very striking. That the playing of the orchestra was the feature of last week's concert, nobody who heard it will hesitate to affirm, and Mr. Couture deserves the heartiest congratulations for the success with which his efforts in this direction have been crowned.

On the whole, it is a matter of the greatest satisfaction to record the steady progress which the Society is making. More than once we have expressed our hopes that it would eventually take the position which it ought to occupy in our city and which it bids fair now to win. Musical talent we have in plenty in Montreal, and we look to the Philharmonic to bring it out, and to establish itself, as it is on the way to do, as the central point, around which the musicians of the city may congregate.

SOME NOTES ON THE CHARACTER OF ROMEO.

(A paper read before the Montreal Shakespeare Club.)

BY ARTHUR J. GRAHAM.

I take it that it will not be expected of anyone of us to-night to advance any strikingly new theory upon the play before us. It will be something if we succeed any of us in putting before the rest some few thoughts which may invite discussion, some ideas as to this or that character gleaned it may be from the wide field of criticism already harvested. Such at least will be my own aim in these few notes (they are little more) upon Shakespeare's earliest tragedy. On this principle I turn naturally to the com-

parison which has been so often made between this play and Hamlet, a comparison which perhaps should rather be called a contrast. The similar construction of the cast and plot must strike anybody at first sight. We have in each case the hero, contrasting strangely in circumstances of climate and birth, yet governed in the main by the same impulses. We have his trusty friend and ally. We have the heroine brought to an early grave though from vastly different causes. We have in each the consummation of the tragedy over the dead body of the heroine, the interference and death of Laertes in the one balanced by the fate of Paris in the other. But in each case it is probably the contrast which strikes us more than the likeness.

"Contrast" says Dowden, "the hero of the one play, the man of the South, with the chief figure in the other, the Teuton, the man of the North. Contrast Hamlet's friend and comforter, Horatio, possessed of gray strength, self-government, and balance of character, with Romeo's friend Mercutio, all brilliance, wit, intellect, and effervescent animal spirits. Contrast, the gay festival in Capulet's house with the brutal drinking bout of the Danish king and his courtiers. Contrast the moonlit night in the garden while the nightingale's song is panting forth from the pomegranate tree, with the silence the nipping and eager air of the platform at Elinore, the beetling height to seaward, and the form of terror which stalked before the sentinels. Contrast the perfect love of Juliet and her Romeo, with the piteous foiled desire for love in Hamlet and Ophelia. Contrast the passionate seizure upon death, as her immediate and highest need, of the Italian wife, with the misadventure of the crazed Ophelia, so pitiful, so accidental, so unheroic, ending in "muddy death."

In this contrast we have one striking characteristic of Shakespeare remarkably displayed. As has been often pointed out there never was an author who as it were prides himself more distinctly upon the variety and universality of his genius. The two tragedies of which we are speaking mark his first departure into a field in which at the time Marlowe was unequalled, and which it required no small confidence on the part of a young author to enter. But not content with having at his first effort made this field preëminently his own, by a fresh departure upon entirely new lines, he is yet determined that correct as these lines are, and as he feels them to be, yet the best effort in the same direction shall be the strongest of contrasts as different from the former, to use a popular expression, as chalk from cheese.

Still, apart from this similarity of general plan, made the most visible, it may be, by these purposely heightened contrasts, there is yet a central point of resemblance between the characters of Romeo and Hamlet, and indeed between their actions, which, if understood rightly may help us to form a just estimate of the former.

"The love story of the world" as our tragedy has been aptly termed, familiar as a black letter ballad to our early ancestors, embodied in a play, to which Shakespeare is largely indebted, by Arthur Brookes, besides being the theme of Masaccio Bandello and Luigi Groto in Italy, of Lope di Vega in Spain, and of Pierre Boistain in France, it has, I conceive been more generally the custom to criticize it solely upon its merits as a love story.

"The course of true love ever did run smooth."

There is the moral of the play, there the main spring of its action.

That this is true to the intent to which Lysander or Shakespeare himself intended it, is no doubt true, and the reasons for it are well enough given in Sir Walter Scott's *Percival of the Peak*, whose history was thought by many to have been inspired by the author's recollection of his own.

This description, however, as Mangin has well pointed out, cannot be said properly to apply to Romeo. So far as the prosecution of his suit with the lady of his love is concerned he has little to complain of. His love, conceived on the instant is as quickly returned, and the possession of the beloved object is assured to him within a few hours of that first meeting. Even the difference between the families which forms the chief bar to the union, is in a fair way of being dissolved. The respective mothers of the young couple are introduced at the very beginning as endeavoring to make peace between their husbands, and Romeo's own reception at the banquet in Capulet's house, gives under the circumstances promise of a speedy reconciliation, which the marriage might be supposed likely to consolidate. And I remark, this difference is scarcely thought worthy of consideration in the case of Rosalind, who was also nearly related to the Capulets, and whose rejection of Romeo's addresses was a purely personal matter.

No, if Romeo is unlucky in love it is only as an incident of the more general sense in which he is an unlucky man altogether. This is one of the main points on which his resemblance to Hamlet rests. Both are in a remarkable degree the playthings of fate. Neither has the power to bend circumstances to his will; both stand aghast and unnerved in the presence of a call for decisive action. And to confine ourselves to our own hero, whenever such action needs to be taken it is almost always the result of an impulse to be regretted may be the moment afterwards.

Romeo is in fact throughout the creature of impulse and emotion. It is a noticeable feature of his impressionable nature that he is introduced as already in love with Rosalind. "Ro-