

# THROUGH A MONOCLE

## A CONTINENT OF COPYISTS?

I DO not know whether you are interested in where New York dines or not; but I was interested the other day to noticing a half-page of "Where to Dine" advertisements in the New York *Evening Telegram*, than which there is no more "New Yorky" paper published. Right across the top of the page were the following big three restaurants—"Parisien," "Hofbrau Haus," and "Colaizzi's." That is, you could dine in French fashion or in German fashion or in Italian fashion. But the poor American cook didn't seem to get even "honourable mention." Then, as you ran your eye over the page, you found such names as these: "Have Dinner at Maxim's," "Faust," "Cafe Revue," "Navarre Grill," "Marsullo," "Florence," "Baroni," "Abbey Inn," "Moretti," "Luechows," "Far East Tea Garden," "Ye Olde English Coffee House," etc. and so forth. One American idea did seem to promise to emerge in the black-type phrase—"Genuine Old Fashioned Beefsteak Dinner, \$1.25"; but you found by reading the advertisement that you had to eat it at "Reisenweber's." Then there was a restaurant called "Old Maria's," which had an American ring to it; but it had a lunch for 40 cents "with wine," and its specialty was "spaghetti with garlic." Foiled again! Then there was a place called "College Inn," with a "Cabaret Entertainment." Latin quarter—not America.

\* \* \*

WHERE, oh! where! does the good American go to get his griddle cakes and his pie and his doughnuts and his fried chicken and his hot biscuit and all the other national dishes which help to make dyspepsia a Republican institution? I confess that I earnestly hope that these purely American dishes will always be obtainable in New York, for I love to live on them myself when down there. If there is anything better to eat than the American breakfast, with an orange, and then a beefsteak smothered in onions with Saratoga chips, and then a plate of hot "wheats" with maple syrup, and all washed down with several cups of rich coffee with real cream in it, I do not know where to find it. It has the usual London breakfast—weak tea, cold fish or fat bacon, stale toast and marmalade—"beaten to a frazzle." So I do not want the American dining-room to be crowded out by all the imitation "Cafes."

## BACK TO HIS LIBRARY



Rt. Hon. Arthur Balfour leaving the Guildhall after announcing his resignation as leader of the Unionist Party and Opposition.

and "Rathkellers" and "Abbey Inns" in the world. But why don't the American purveyors of food advertise in New York?

\* \* \*

I GO down to the Maine Coast some times for a little holiday; and one of the best parts of it is the New England food. I think it is the breakfasts I like best, because of their marked contrast to that dismal function in most other corners of the world. You know the Continental breakfast, of course—coffee, a half-moon of pastry and some tasty butter. You can get a roll or two if you insist, but they regard you as a vulgar glutton when you do. It is very nice—what there is of it. And you get accustomed to it, and it becomes enough. Then the other meals more than make up for the meagreness of the first. When it comes to a French "dejeuner," you have the American or Canadian luncheon—a rehash of last night's dinner—badly beaten, while the Continental dinner is a thing apart. We ought to translate "dinner" into banquet in our language. But still you mourn for your pie, and you long for just one dish of "hash-brown potatoes."

\* \* \*

BUT there is something funny about this transplantation of European names to this continent. Emphasis should be put on the names; for little pains is taken to give the names even plausibility. A man will open a drinking-place in a cellar which otherwise he would use as a store-room, and call it a "Rathkeller," ignoring the fact that a "Rathkeller" should be under a "Rathhaus" or City Hall, and is so called for that reason and for that reason alone. Then the "Hofbrau Haus" is the "house of the court brewery"; and I don't believe that there is a court brewery at the corner of Broadway and 30th Street. And I am even more certain that the scene there does not in the remotest degree resemble what would meet your eyes if you walked into any one of the several large beer halls which go to make up the genuine Hofbrauhaus of Munich. As for "Maxim's," there is no reason why that should not be reproduced in New York. Maxim's in Paris is by now largely run for Americans.

## ONCE KNOWN AS "TORONTO THE GOOD"

SOME of our Canadian cities are almost impossible as to stage. Four days H. R. H. "the Duke"—with half a column of extraneous titles—was in the second largest city in Canada. He visited all the leading public places, including the City Hall twice, and the leading hotel once. Several hundreds of people who were down town and in the heart of the city every day and all day saw neither the Duke nor any of the signs of his visit except the flags and bunting. Toronto has no stage centre. Again and again festivals have been tried in that city; always with a large element of failure. We remember the first dazzling fiasco; the four days' carnival in 1890, which happens to be just the date of the Duke's other visit to Canada. Never was such an opera comique of village blunders. We remember the centenary celebration in 1903, when Toronto had a home-comers' assemblage on the basis of an Old Boys' Re-union to celebrate a hundred years of incorporated existence. It was a humdrum, incoherent muddle with no centre and no circumference; no place where a pageant could come to a head. Toronto is wrong by topography. The city has no stage centre; no public square. Even Montreal is better—and bad enough; though the Place d'Armes Square is at least a meeting-place. Winnipeg is much better—but none too good. Ottawa has Parliament Hill and one big downtown park which does very well. Quebec, of course, is unrivalled. But Toronto leads them all as the city of pure unmitigated prose where no Lascelles or any other master of pageant could contrive a spectacle capable of being seen by half the population at once. Perhaps the real centre of Toronto is the Exhibition grounds?

Now the unstageableness of the first English-speaking city in Canada may be set down to mere accident or lack of foresight on the part of city fathers, or parsimony or lack of imagination—or

THIS is, perhaps, a more serious question at bottom than selecting fancy names for alleged restaurants where few go to eat but many to imagine that they are having a bold, bad, dizzy time. This Continent cannot respect too greatly or study too deeply the culture of the most cultured of the Continents; but, when that has been conscientiously done, it must at last express itself in its own terms if it is to play any permanent part in the world. For too long, American literature was no more than a pale reflection of English writing. Hawthorne, Longfellow—in spite of Hiawatha and a Puritan point of view—Holmes, even Poe, were English authors living in exile. Even Lowell used "American" like a dialect. But men like Howells, Aldrich, Hamlin, Garland, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Will Carleton, James Whitcomb Riley and others of that school, established a worthy American style. The "best sellers" to-day, however, are seldom American; that is, modern American. The uncultured reader of fiction, who is naturally in an immense majority, prefers his romance rose-tinted and his adventures in a world where there is no bothersome limit of the probable.

\* \* \*

I FRANKLY confess that I read too small a portion of the enormous output of the regiments of new authors, whom American publishers are presenting to an astonished world, to be able to generalize about them; but I can say that I have met nothing in this army comparable with such men as H. G. Wells, William de Morgan, or even W. J. Locke who are comparatively recent productions in England. As for Canada, there seems to be an impression here that literary photography is art. It is no more art than "kodaking" is; and yet, if you will strip recent Canadian literature, so-called, of its preaching and its photography, you will have precious little left. Yet we have had some promising failures. Norman Duncan promised to be an artist until he went to the Labrador and became a missionary. Arthur Stringer still is an artist when he chooses to be one. The late Dr. Drummond was always an artist; and his French-Canadian types will never die. However, this is an unprofitable subject. We are still awaiting the writer who shall reveal Canada; and, when he comes, he will do more for this country than all the immigration agents and all the "made books" on our resources and history that have ever existed.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

almost anything that looks like good newspaper explanation. But we presume that the beginning of this malady conventional goes very far back in the history of the city and of the country to which it belongs. The people who made Toronto anything but a transplantation of British society and a college centre came up from the villages and the towns and the concessions and side-lines of Ontario. They were people who had to skimp their lanes down to wagon-width because they couldn't afford to let lie idle so much land that had cost the blood of sweat to clear up from the bush. Land to these people was a luxury. Work was a habit. A village was only a cross-roads with farms all round, and it took on the character of the land. A town was only a bigger village—and the same again. The so-called little cities of ten thousand and more were, and still are, outgrowths of the concession; honest, industrious market places where a strong-hearted, hard-working, conscientious populace gathered together once in a while—but with no big moments except on circus days and Twenty-fourth of May celebrations.

What these places are in little, Toronto is in big, though it will not be forgotten that several of our smaller Ontario cities such as Guelph, with its post-office square, Brantford with its centre-town market, Chatham with its Tecumseh Park, Hamilton with its "Gore," and Goderich with its radial system of streets from a hub as a centre, are all much better suited to stage effects than the chief city in Ontario. Toronto has never had any really big moments. She takes her holidays rather grudgingly and goes about things with a sober mien; only once a year breaking loose at Exhibition time. Toronto is one of the most diligent and useful cities in the world. She will never lose her head. And the Guild of Civic Art will never be able to propound a scheme that will make her look like a great city. A. B.