

PARLIAMENTARY PEN PICTURES.

THE FIRST DIVISION.

The first time the Yeas and Nays are recorded in a new parliament not only definitely decides anti-election wagers as to the relative strength of the parties, but presents to the public an amusing and instructive performance. The people of Ottawa seem to have an intuitive perception of the approach of an important division, so that on the occasion of the first test in a new parliament the galleries are always full.

The debate on the double return in Kings County, Prince Edward Island, approaches, and as soon as the last speaker is finished "Vote, vote," is shouted from all parts of the chamber. Mr. Speaker from his chair looks about him to see if any one wishes to make a last parting remark. But of course nobody does, and when "Vote" is pronounced in such tones the House means business. It is after ten o'clock. This is only the second night-sitting that has occurred, and members not being accustomed to this kind of work, are bent on adjourning. "Call in the members," says the Speaker, and away goes the Sergeant-at-arms, followed by the whips to gather them in. Slight pressure on an electric button sets bells ringing all over the House, so that whenever the whips stray in corridor, library, or reading room, they find the rattling clang has heralded their arrival. Soon the members begin to enter, the majority particularly of new members coming by the side doors, whence they can reach their seats without having to bow to the Speaker. Those coming from the front entrance nod, bow or bend in acknowledgment of the chair and file right and left to their places. The new members do seem rather dubious about the matter, as if they feared they had laid themselves open to pains and penalties for giving the whips the trouble of looking them up. Others look as if they had been chased by the police, and had dodged into the chamber to escape their pursuers, but were anxious that nobody should suspect them. A look of care on the face and a furtive movement of the hands to the side coat-pocket on the part of one or two honorable members, tells of a quiet smoke in some sequestered corner rudely interrupted, and the spark in the fragrant pipe-bowl hardly suppressed before the Speaker is faced. Meantime the eyes and ears of those in the gallery are occupied with the movement on the floor. The back seat members are having a good time. They chaff each other, cheer their friends as they enter, hum snatches of songs and generally act like a lot of school-boys when the master is away. Now a general cheer announces that the whips are entering, and as the last of these gentlemen makes obeisance to Mr. Speaker, the Sergeant-at-arms closes the door, comes forward, bows and takes his seat, first getting his sword out of the way of the arms of his chair.

"Order!" says the speaker impressively, as he rises to put the motion. The question before the House having been stated, the Yeas stand up and their votes are recorded by the clerk. The Nays follow. In the course of the voting each "independent" is derisively cheered by the sides against whom he votes, the clamour being responded to by a cheer from the other side as well. The manner of voting differs with the different members. Solid conscientious conviction is expressed by the few who stand bolt upright with faces as grave as a church. On the contrary many believe it a good joke. They "come up smiling" in the language of the classic prize-ring and nod appreciatively at the clerk when he pronounces their names. Many of the old stagers merely remove their hats. Then there is the conscientious-modest new member. When the votes on his side are called for he rises with his leader. But his leader is counted first and his turn—for he occupies a back seat—will not come for some minutes. He realizes this after a time and sits down. But he takes an anxious interest in the progress of the record and seems afraid the clerk will try to take him by surprise and name him before he is on his feet. After a time he rises again with not a little hesitation, and then sits down suddenly as if a brick had been hurled at him with good aim from the gallery. Those near him are being named as he half rises expectantly, but half in fear that he is doing wrong again. He is about to fall into his chair again when his neighbour prods him in the ribs, he stands bolt upright, his name is called and he sinks back with a sigh of relief. But while the votes are counted further trouble trouble is his. There is a rule that no member shall leave his seat during a Division. But the modest conscientious new member knows nothing of this, and feeling that he has done his full duty, he rises and starts for the door with the tread of an honest man. He is espied and in a moment the chamber is a pandemonium of yells and cries of "Order! Order!" The offender is apprised of his wrong-doing by a tug at his coat-tails by some friendly hand. He knows no more than that typical acme of ignorance, the Man in the Moon, in what he has offended, but his knees weaken and he sinks into the nearest chair overwhelmed with confusion, while every body except himself and the Speaker laugh heartily. Now the notes are summed up, the clerk reads the figures, showing the Government to be in a large majority, the announcement is received with cheers by the ministerialists, after which the House settles down to business again.

DR. SALMI MORSE, the author of the "Passion Play," was the conductor of "Good Words," in London, when Charles Dickens was its nominal editor. He was also proprietor of the San Francisco *Wasp*.

PILLOW SMOOTHING AUTHORS.

BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Cotton Mather says of our famous and excellent John Cotton, "the Father and Glory of Boston," as he calls him, that, "being asked why in his Latter Days he indulged *Nocturnal Studies* more than formerly, he pleasantly replied, *Because I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep.*" Hot in the mouth, rather than sweet, we of to-day might think his piece of Calvin; but as a good many "night-caps" are both hot and sweet as well as strong, we need not quarrel with the worthy minister who has been with the angels for more than two hundred years.

It is a matter of no little importance that the mind should be in a fitting condition for sleep when we take to our pillows. The material "thought-stopper," as Willis called it, in the shape of alcoholic drinks of every grade, from beer to brandy, has penalties and dangers I need not refer to. Still greater is the risk of having recourse to opium and similar drugs. I remember the case of one, who, being fond of coffee, and in the habit of taking it at night, made very strong, found himself so wakeful after it that he was tempted to counteract its effects with an opiate. It led to the formation of a habit which he never got rid of. We must not poison ourselves into somnolence.

Still, we must sleep, or die, or go mad. We must get a fair amount of sleep, or suffer much for the want of it. Among the means for insuring peaceful slumber at the right time, and enough of it, the frame of mind we take to bed with us is of the highest importance. Just as the body must have its ligatures all loosened, its close-fitting garments removed, and bathe itself, as it were, in flowing folds of linen, the mind should undress itself of its daily cares and thoughts as nearly as its natural obstinacy will permit it to do, and wrap itself in the lightest mental night-robes.

Now there are books that make one feel as if he were in his dressing-gown and slippers, if not as if in his night-gown. I have found a few such, and I have often finished my day with one of them, as John Cotton wound up his with Calvin. From a quarter to half an hour's reading in a book of this kind just before leaving my library for the bed-room has quieted my mind, brought in easy-going, placid trains of thought, which were all ready to pass into the state of dreamy forgetfulness, and taken the place which might have been held by the dangerous stimulant or the deadly narcotic.

FASHION GOSSIP.

There is a slight change visible in under-clothing. It is no longer quite as rich as it was a year or so ago. But it is a notable fact that as crinoline comes in fashion there is less luxury in underclothing than when tight dresses are in fashion. There is more poetry in a tight dress than in a crinoline, and an instinctive feeling arises to drape the body in the finest and thinnest of textures, and wrap it round with lace, as if the soft cambric and lace could be seen through the clinging robe above. Thus, we see less fine linen during the first hoop days than during the *Directoire*, with its Grecian robes; also, there was less luxury during the light rain of tight dresses, when underclothing attained a luxury never before known in the annals of fashion. And now that crinoline is again coming in, a decrease of luxury in our underclothing is visible; and this decrease of luxury is hailed gladly, to a certain extent, as we see disappearing from fashion the colored underclothing that had invaded our wardrobes. Underclothing should be a repose to the eye from the colors worn in the outer dress. It should be calm and candid. It cannot be too snowy. White underclothing is the poetry of dress. If you make it red, blue, or black, you deprive dress of all the delicacy and purity that should enfold woman. Underclothing is woman's own personal luxury; it is an egotistic satisfaction if you will. But a woman who unrobes herself over a cloud of white feels better pleased with herself, and respects herself more, than when she sees herself covered with colored underclothing.

The fashion of colored silk underclothing is dropped entirely now by elegant dressers, and every woman of taste, with any artistic feeling in her, is enchanted that it is. Instead, therefore, of red, pink, blue, green, yellow, and black silk chemises, we have chemises of the finest linen, or cambric, which look like the foam of the sea from which Venus was born. They are trimmed with lace as much as ever, but this adds beauty to the chemise, for there is nothing so beautiful and becoming for underclothing as lace.

Stockings alone are worn colored. Some are black embroidered with gold, some striped blue and yellow and some red, with the instep of black lace. But the prettiest and most becoming are of plain silk, and the prettiest of these are white, black, or flesh color.

For day wear worsted and even cotton stockings may be worn; they are but little seen with the old English shoe, or boot, that is worn for walking. In the evening, with shoes, or Pompeian, or sandal strap boots, silk stockings are indispensable. A cotton or a worsted stocking with them would not look well, nor be in keeping with them.

Crinolines are an accomplished fact, ladies. If you can do without steel you will look all the better, but then you must wear an underskirt flounced at the back only, right up to the waist, and you must tie the flounces together under the skirt to make them stiffer still and more puffy. Steel is less expensive than flounces, but flounces are more graceful.

Long white skirts, covered with flounces and edged with lace, are worn under morning dresses, and the chemises to be worn with these also are made long and high to the throat, with long full sleeves to the wrists, like the most elegant night robes. The morning dress itself is mostly white, of a soft, silky, woollen texture, and is made long and wide and closed up to the neck, or left to flow open over the handsome underskirt as the wearer may prefer. One of the loveliest matinees I have seen for some time is composed of a skirt of cream colored plush, and a long jacket of the same material lined with Surah flannel, and trimmed round with lace of the same color.

CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT PRECIOUS STONES.

In his lecture on precious stones, Professor Egleston, of the Columbia School of Mines, says there is in Paris a diamond so hard that the usual process for cutting and polishing made no impression upon it. The black diamond is mostly used for tools. In Russia it is broken into flakes, polished, and worn as court mourning. The historic diamonds have no more luster than a piece of glass. The sham diamond was more beautiful than the genuine stone, but it has a tendency to decomposition and does not retain luster.

The diamond mines of Brazil were first opened in 1727. It is estimated that since that time they have produced at least two tons of diamonds. In England, a stone weighing one carat and of the purest water is worth, when cut and polished, about \$30. The dealers in rough stones acquire the habit of distinguishing the water of a rough stone by simply breathing upon it. Among the historic diamonds, the Rajah weighed 367 carats, and the Great Mogul 280. Before it was cut the latter weighed 900 carats. From the composition of the diamond we see what costly things Nature makes from common material. All the diamond fields of the world are not worth the anthracite fields of Pennsylvania.

A ruby of five carats is double the value of a diamond of that size, and one of ten carats is worth three times as much as a diamond of corresponding size. A perfect ruby is the rarest of all stones. Rubies are often imitated with real stones, the most common being spinel. But it is not difficult to distinguish the imitation, as the ruby is the only stone having a pigeon blood color. Another precious stone is the sapphire, which is like the ruby, with the exception of the color. He had seen a small stone which was ruby on one side and sapphire on the other. The emerald is a deep green, the deeper the better. It loses no brilliancy in an artificial light, but its color may be expelled by a gentle heat.

Most of our emeralds come from New Granada, and will always have flaws. In imitations it is not the hardness nor the color that is sought, so much as the flaw. The first eye-glasses were made in England of emeralds.

TEN DOLLAR A WEEK.

Some of the papers have been discussing the problem of living on \$10 a week, and an Ohio girl takes a hand in the debate asserting that the thing can be done, and that she is the identical Lily of the valley who does it. She says her husband makes \$10 a week; they pay \$3 a week rent for four rooms; \$4 a week for table supplies; \$4 a month for washing; rent a piano; she has dresses costing 50c. to \$1 50 a yard; has some of her sewing done out; and so on. Let us see about the truth of what this geranium gives us. Husband makes \$320 a year, against which are to be charged, by the hollyhock's own account, the following items: Rent, \$3 a week, \$156 a year. Piano, not less than \$10 a quarter, or \$40 a year. Table supplies, \$4 a week, or \$208 a year. One black satin dress, not less than \$40. Two suits at \$1 50 a yard, \$40. Two suits 50c. a yard, \$20. Kid gloves (she is well supplied, she says), four pairs at \$1 25, or \$5 per year. Three hats (got plenty of these, too), \$18. Shoes (has lots of them), three pair, at \$3 50, or \$10 50 a year. Wraps (says she is well supplied, which means not less than three), at an average of \$13 or \$14 apiece, say \$40 a year. Washing done out, \$2 every two weeks, \$26 per year. All these, tabulated, show these figures:

Piano.....	\$ 40 00
Rent.....	156 00
Table supplies.....	208 00
Black satin dress.....	40 00
Two dresses, (\$1 50 a yard).....	40 00
Two dresses (50c. a yard).....	20 00
Kid gloves.....	5 00
Hats and bonnets.....	18 00
Shoes.....	10 50
Wraps.....	10 50
Washing.....	26 00
Total.....	603 50
Husband's wages.....	320 00
Deficit.....	\$283 50

No coal, no lights, no table or bed linen, no underwear, no crockery, no corsets, no ribbons, no jewelry, no brooms, no amusements, no street car rides, and not a stitch of clothing or a cigar for the poor devil who is the husband of this remarkable sunflower.

THE HEROINE OF THE NOVELISTS OF TO-DAY.

May I be pardoned the impertinence, but I have of late taken some pains to ascertain the age of the heroine—the heroine of the contemporary novel. Examining carefully in several instances, the data furnished by her sponsors, I have sorted out and tabulated certain general facts. These facts show her age to be, never under twenty; rarely two-and-twenty; usually from twenty four to twenty-seven, twenty-eight, and even there-above, giving an average of twenty-five (plus). While pursuing these numerical calculations, I am closely observing the heroine's face. There are no "telling lines" upon the brow or about the eye, and her color is still faultless. It is to be noted, moreover, that she retains in her manner a wonderful measure of youthful vivacity and frankness. I am far from caviling at the happy ease and gracefulness with which she carries the weight of her years. This is as we would have it; but the singularity of the case appears, when her age is contrasted with that of her predecessor, the heroine of the old-fashioned novel. The latter is always a *jeune fille*, who, when the narrative of her fortunes is concluded, has scarcely more than crossed the threshold of the twenties. Rustic and unschooled, or accomplished and sophisticated; phlegmatic and piquant, timid or audacious—whatever her temperament and behavior, she is invariably lovely and of tender age. What writer of fiction in its early days would have presented, or what reader would have accepted, a heroine who did not possess the two chief requisites, beauty and youth? Of beauty, it is still expected the heroine shall have a certain allowance, as a pair of fine eyes or a "sensitive mouth." As to youth the restriction no longer holds. Why the changed fashion? I account for it in only one way: the metaphysical tendency of the modern novel seems to require that the character of central importance shall interest us subjectively. This character must be subtended by actual experience, ripe feeling, settled convictions, and a clever vein of casuistry. Now, as these do not consist with the idea of extreme youth, and as consistency and realism are the special jewels of the present fiction school, it follows that we have a heroine who, to say the least, is "no longer young." Again, conversation is, as every reader knows, an essential element of the contemporary novel; and analysis would probably show the following ratio: Conversation, including speculative interpolation by the author, three parts; incident, one. What, in the present exigency, were a silent or monosyllabic heroine? The heroine is she who converses subtly, saying far more than "meets the ear," adroitly touching both the heights and depths of experience. The conversation of school-girls is not wont to be of this order; hence the reigning heroine's maturer age.

April Atlantic.

THE LAST HOURS OF CHOPIN.

The Paris *Le Figaro* furnishes some hitherto unpublished details respecting the last hours of Chopin's life, which were communicated to the writer in that journal by the late M. Clesinger, the sculptor, who was on terms of great intimacy with the composer for many years.

According to this account, some days previous to his death, Chopin had been removed to the *salon* of his apartment in the *catacomb* of the house, No. 12 Place Vendôme. There was but little furniture in the room beyond a Pleyel grand-piano-forte. Kwiatkowski, Guttman, and Clesinger had for some nights past been sitting up by turns with the dying man.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, when the last moments approached. The composer was scarcely any longer able to speak. Casting his looks upon the beautiful Countess Delphine Potocka, he said faintly: "The Ave Maria, by Schubert."

She understood his meaning, and sang the song referred to, Chopin holding Kwiatkowski's hand the while, pressing it from time to time, and whispering softly,

"How beautiful, Mon Dieu, how beautiful is this!"

Shortly before midnight he died.

THE ANCESTORS OF THE DOG.—Professor Cope in an article on the "Extinct Dogs of North America," in the March number of the *American Naturalist*, says that the origin of the canids is doubtless to be found among the forms of the creodonts—flesh eating animals of various degrees of power, without scapular bone; with well-defined canine teeth; with low type of brain, and generally imperfect ankle joint. They stand in nearest relation to the insectivora, but have points of resemblance with the marsupialia. Professor Cope originally included them as a subdivision of the insectivora, but subsequently placed them with the latter and several other sub-orders in a comprehensive order which he termed *caninotheria*. This view of the origin of the carnivora has since been reaffirmed by Huxley.