

THE MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

What Englishman has not heard of Dolly's? What citizen of Montreal does not remember its homonym, on St. James Street? The small, cleanly room always hidden in a half-light by the curtained windows, the faintest odor of the kitchen floating in the atmosphere and tickling the sense, the carpeted settees at right angles, the marble table, and looking down serenely upon all, the florid picture of Father Dolly, looking like Jack Falstaff, less the obstreperousness, or like Uncle Toby, quietly telling his stories to Tristram and Corporal Trim. One year ago last May, the old landmark was swept away by the retirement of its proprietor, Mr. Privett, and the substitution of a tailoring and furnishing shop. There were many regrets expressed thereat, and it was generally felt that a model institution of its class had passed away. Whenever Mr. Privett, then suffering from ill-health, was met by his friends, the first question was—when would he open again? For a long time that gentleman remained undecided, but, at length recovering his health, and in response to the invitation of his numerous friends, he resolved upon resuming his business.

The place chosen by him was Hospital Street, between St. François Xavier and St. John. There he found a large and commodious building suited to his purpose. His aim was to establish a restaurant of the first class, right in the heart of the mercantile community. His further object was to found in this city one of those quiet, high-toned, and genteel resorts such as the English Exchanges, where men of business may meet together, consult on their affairs, read the papers, and make themselves at home, without being disturbed. They are always welcome to his place, whether they take anything to eat or not. The rooms are for their use, and they are expected to frequent them without fear of intrusion. The bar with Mr. Privett is a secondary consideration. He means it principally as an appendage to his restaurant. His reputation for the purity and excellence of his wines and liquors is only equalled by his fame as a caterer. Many a hungry man has gone out of his way to get a chop at Privett's, where it is done according to Charlotte Bronte's severest rules. The service is prompt and cleanly, and with Mr. and Mrs. Privett superintending the arrangements, every customer may feel as comfortable as at home. Such houses are beneficial in many senses, and we greet the inauguration of the Merchants' Exchange Refreshment Rooms.

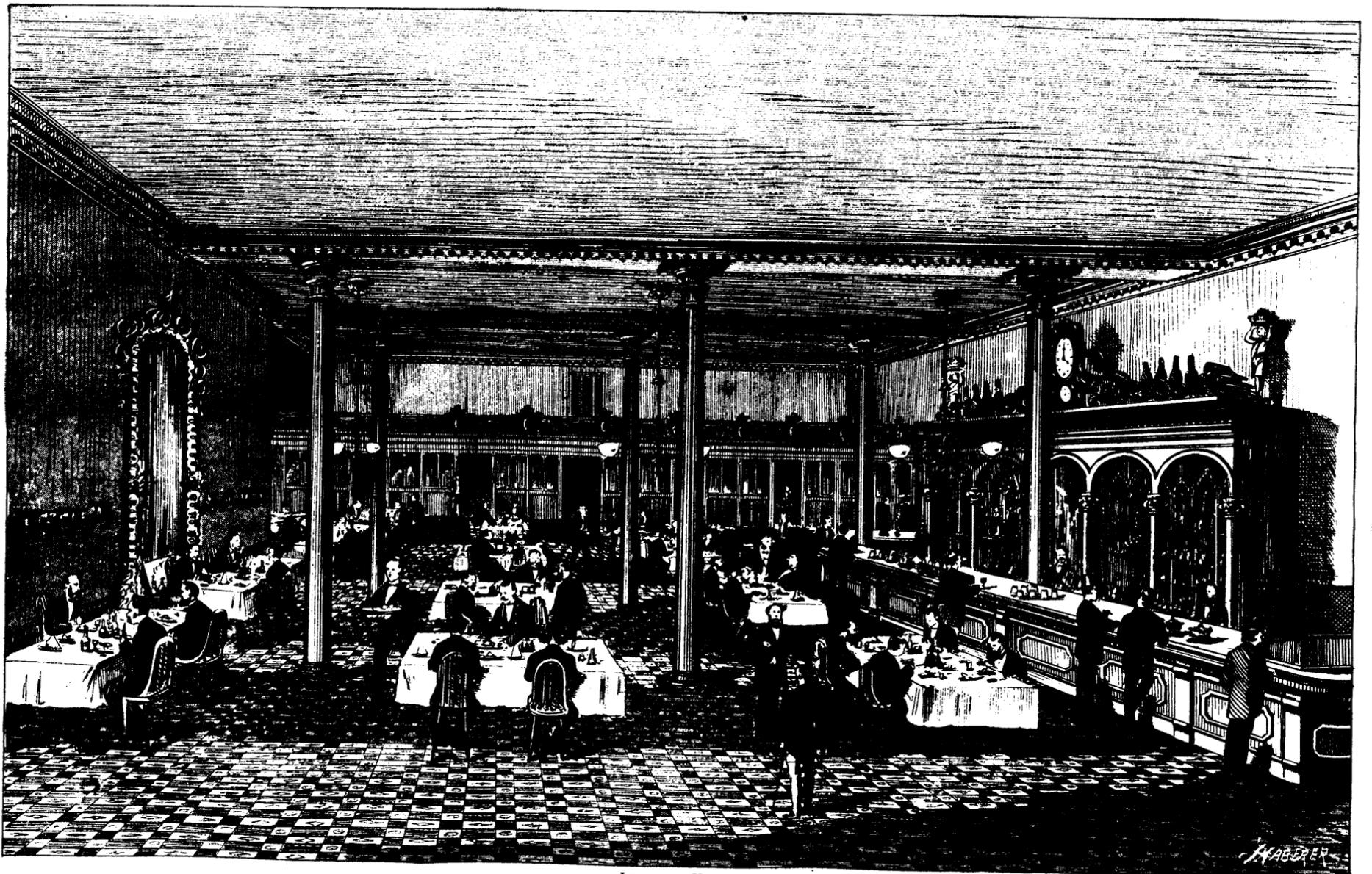


EXTERIOR VIEW.

THE GREATEST PICTURE IN THE WORLD.

The late Charles Sumner, a consummate connoisseur, was of opinion that the "Marriage Feast of Canaan" was the greatest picture ever painted, and M. Thiers, another authority in art, to whom Sumner spoke about it, said that it was the greatest of its kind. Artists will, therefore, be concerned to hear what the fate of this picture now is. A correspondent of the London Times says: "In passing through Paris I noticed two ruins of which I have seen no mention. I allude to two pictures in the Louvre. One is a Murillo—but let that pass, the world can, perhaps, spare a Murillo or two—the other is, alas! the celebrated 'Marriage of Cana,' by Paul Veronese. It is utterly ruined; it is no exaggeration to say that the beauty of the picture is gone. I asked of a student in the gallery what had happened, and he replied with the usual readiness and precision of diction of a Frenchman that the persons who had the charge of the preservation of pictures had caused it to be restored. The 'Marriage of Cana' stood alone among pictures; its enormous size enabled the painter to employ harmoniously all the resources of his palette; every note of the painter's gamut was struck; it contained, so to speak, a symphony in every key. Of colour in its highest sense there is now nothing left; instead of it the painter's eye is struck by the crude aspect of familiar pigments. What was once of a lovely blue is now of an earthy green; the white draperies, the clouds, and the architecture, which used to be suggestive of the hues of opal, of silver, and of the pearl, now remind one of ashes and sand. 'Quid color albus erat nunc est contrarius albo.' And, as though the painter had intended to point out the completeness of the miracle of Cana, most of the wedding guests are depicted with vermilion noses. In fact, in the process of restoration the painting has been ruthlessly rubbed down to its first coat. Masterpieces were never many in number; some have perished utterly, of others only a few shattered fragments remain; it is more than sad—it is exasperating to see the work which time, fire, or the sword will ultimately accomplish—forestalled by the meddlesomeness of that restless zeal which does not fear to tread upon any ground."

Pictures of such value as the masterpiece of Veronese should be guarded with scrupulousness, as they are the property not only of one nation, but of the world. A few years ago two pictures of Ruben's were well nigh effaced at Antwerp, but happily chemical means were found to restore them to their original brilliancy of colour.



INTERIOR VIEW.

MERCHANTS' EXCHANGE REFRESHMENT ROOMS.
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