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FRENCH AND ENGLISH BY PHILIP G. HAMERTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH

A COMPARISON

BY

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AUTHOR OF "THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE," "MARMORNE,"

ETC. ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TEMPERANCE.

THE French are supposed to be a much more temperate nation than the English, and, in fact, there used to be few drunkards in France. The country has, however, a peculiar characteristic as to drinking. It is a country where moderate drinking is itself immoderate. The reader understands what this contradictory statement means.

Moderate Drinking in France.

Men are called moderate drinkers so long as they do not show any outward sign of being "the worse for liquor." But there is an education of the body by which it may be made to absorb great quantities of alcoholic stimulants without exhibiting anything in the nature of drunkenness. In France it is considered shameful and disgusting to be drunk; but no blame is attached to the utmost indulgence in drinking so long as it keeps on the safe side. This leads to that artful kind of drinking which is well known to all French physicians, and which produces, in the long run, that peculiar state of body which they call *"l'alcoolisme des gens du monde."* A peasant may get perfectly drunk once a month and yet be a very small consumer of alcohol; a gen-

The Education of the Body.

Artful Drinking.

Peasant and Gentleman.

tleman, without ever being even tipsy, may consume five times as much alcohol as the peasant.

Possible Allowance of a comfortable Frenchman.

The following account of what a comfortable Frenchman *may* consume in the twenty-four hours is founded on actual observation, but is not intended to represent temperate habits in France, which will be dealt with later. The first description may stand for the habits of a drinker who lives in a state of constant stimulation only.

The Morning Drink.

On rising in the morning he will probably take either brandy, or sherry, or white French wine. The working men now prefer brandy. In former times white wine was more drunk, especially in the wine districts. If French wine is preferred the moderate quantity will be half a bottle, but it is easy to go beyond, and a lover of wine will finish his bottle without stopping half-way. He will eat a crust of bread with it, and perhaps a morsel of Gruyère cheese. There is no pleasanter early breakfast; it is much pleasanter than the sickening English combination of sweet coffee and fat ham; the wine is exhilarating, and by its help the day opens cheerfully; its pleasures seem attractive and its duties light. Unfortunately, the white wine habit is known to tell on the nervous system in course of time. Before *déjeuner* the moderate drinker will go to a café and take his *apéritif*, usually a vermouth, and perhaps something else. Vermouth is simply white wine in which aromatic herbs have been infused. At *déjeuner* he will drink a bottle of red wine. Immediately after he returns to the café and orders coffee, which is invariably accompanied by brandy, and of that he

Un apéritif.

Déjeuner.

takes a large dram. If inclined to rest some time in the establishment he will order a little glass of *liqueur,* and if he meets with friends they may perhaps treat each other to different kinds of *liqueurs* for the sake of good fellowship and variety. At five o'clock he returns to the café for his absinthe. In ordinary times he will be content with one absinthe, when inclined to exceed he will take two, or possibly even three, or a mint in the place of the third. Just before dinner he may think it necessary to "open his appetite" with an *apéritif,* say bitters and curaçao. At dinner he drinks a bottle of common wine, and possibly some good wine at dessert if he dines with friends. After dinner come liqueurs, and then he drinks ale in a café all the evening whilst he smokes. This lasts till eleven o'clock, when he goes to bed. He has never shown the slightest sign of tipsiness all day, and is ready to go through the same course on the morrow. Meanwhile, in case he should feel thirsty, he has a *"verre d'eau,"* in his bedroom, which means a very pretty little glass tray with a glass, a small sugar-basin, a decanter of water, and a small decanter of pure cognac.

Café. Absinthe. Bitters. Dinner. Ale. *Un Verre d'eau.*

The state of this Frenchman is one of incessant alcoholic stimulation. If he takes hard exercise he may bear it for many years, if not, he will feel the effects of it, and the physician will privately note his case as one of *alcoolisme des gens du monde.*

Now, with regard to the common people in France, the old habit of drinking large quantities of wine in the wine districts seems to have done wonder-

Habit of drinking French Wine.

fully little harm. As the subject interests me I have asked for the opinion of several physicians, and they all say that the drinking of *pure* French wine is harmless if accompanied by exercise. Without exercise it may establish gout. The physicians dread the effects of spirits even in small quantities; they look upon wine as a kind of safeguard, and on spirits as a terrible danger. The reader may remember a passage in Lewes's *Life of Goethe*, where the biographer says that the illustrious German "was fond of wine, and drank daily his two or three bottles. The amount he drank never did more than exhilarate him; never made him unfit for work or for society. Over his wine he sat some hours." Lewes appended to this passage a quotation from Liebig in which he says that amongst the Rhinelanders "a jolly companion drinks his seven bottles every day, and with it grows as old as Methuselah, is seldom drunk, and has at most the Bardolph mark of a red nose."

Spirits.

German Wine-drinking.

Wine has never been much of an evil in France except as a cause of useless expense. A Frenchman's wine bill is usually out of proportion to his income, especially in the present day, when common wine is no longer cheap enough to make the quantity consumed a matter of indifference, nor yet dear enough to impose the other and still more effectual economy of abstinence, except in the poorest classes. For my part, I am convinced that to grow sound light wine, as the French once did at marvellously cheap rates (a penny a bottle or even less in years of great abundance), is an immense blessing to a

Wine a useless Expense.

Advantage of very cheap Wine.

community, because it is the most effectual rival of strong spirits.* Sound light wine exhilarates, but it does not brutalise; brandy, acting on excitable brains, drives many literally mad. The effect of dear wine in France has not been favourable to temperance, but the contrary, by increasing the consumption of poisonous spirituous liquors. That has now reached such a pitch in the working classes that drunkenness of the most dangerous kind—the kind unknown in wine countries—is established amongst them as it is in the lower orders of London or Glasgow. In fact, the worst form of Scotch dram-drinking is common in the great French cities.

Consequence of dearness in Wine.

Dangerous Drunkenness.

If a French workman buys wine he must buy it at a low price, and in Paris, where the octroi duties are so high, it is impossible that cheap wine can be unadulterated. I will not presume to say what the "wine" is made of, I do not pretend to know, but at present prices it cannot be the juice of the grape.

Adulteration.

Now, let us pass to the pleasanter subject of French temperance. It is very commonly believed in England that every Frenchman must have his café to go to and his theatre. As a matter of fact provincial French people go very little to the theatre, and the cafés, though flourishing, are maintained by a remarkably small number of *habitués*. Many

* There have been years in the memory of living men when anybody who would take two barrels to a wine-grower might carry away one of them full of wine (the wine being worth less than the wood); and when for the payment of one sou a man might drink wine as if it were water.

How the Cafés are maintained.

Differences in drinking Habits.

Frenchmen never go to a café at all, unless perhaps occasionally when travelling. Amongst the daily visitors there is an immense difference in drinking habits. I remember a middle-aged gentleman who confined himself to one tiny glass (like a thimble) of pure cognac per day, an allowance that he never exceeded. Another visits the café every day regularly at six in the afternoon and takes his absinthe, a third drinks only ale, a fourth confines himself to coffee with the *petit verre*.

The half-bottle Persuasion.

With regard to the consumption of wine, there are great numbers of half-bottle drinkers at each meal. The women generally belong to this sect, and half a bottle of light wine, taken whilst eating, is but a gentle stimulus, especially if mixed with water. The use of water with wine varies very much. I never in my life saw a French peasant mix his wine with water; there may be peasants who do it, but I have never met with one. The peasant will drink water abundantly by itself, but when he gets wine he seems to think that to water it would be a sin against the rites of Bacchus. When there is wine on a peasant's table, the water-bottle is not to be seen.

Peasants like pure Wine.

Wine and Water.

On the contrary, in the middle and upper classes, it is the general custom to mix water with the *vin ordinaire* whilst people are eating, but the finer wines are never watered. Then you have all degrees of watering. You have the gentleman who puts three drops of water in his wine in deference to custom, though it is a mere form; you have the conscientious man who mixes the two liquids carefully

in equal quantities; and you have the drinker of *eau rougie*, who would probably be a water-drinker, like an English teetotaller, if he had not before his eyes the dread of the French proverb *"Les buveurs d'eau sont méchants."*

"Reddened Water."

I remember, however, one of those drinkers of "reddened water," who used to maintain that a few drops of wine almost infinitely diluted gave the taste of the grape-juice far more delicately and exquisitely than the unalloyed grape-juice itself. The reader may try the experiment, if he likes. Let him take a glass of water, and just redden it with claret. If he fails to appreciate the exquisite taste of the beverage, it will, at least, inflict no injury on his constitution. Unless, indeed, as the old bacchanalians affirmed, water brings on the dropsy; for what saith the good Maistre Jean Le Houx, the gentle singer who immortalised the *Vau de Vire?*

Jean le Houx.

"On m'a deffendu l'eau, au moins en beuuerie
De peur que je ne tombe en une hydropisie
Je me perds si j'en boy
En l'eau n'y a saueur. Prendray je pour breuuage
Ce qui n'a poinct de goust? Mon voisin qui est sage
Ne le faict, que je croy."

French total Abstainers between Meals.

In France there is a large class of total abstainers *between meals*. These observe rigorously the rule of never drinking except at meal-times. They have a set phrase by which they are known, their shibboleth. This phrase is *"Je ne bois jamais rien entre mes repas."* They are not teetotallers, as they drink at *déjeuner* and dinner, but between these periods they observe a strict abstinence, like the

Mahometans in the Ramadan fast between the rising and the setting of the sun. They pretend that they are never thirsty, but I do not believe them; it is merely the pride of their sect.

English writers are often on the look-out for subjects of accusation against the French (this attention is reciprocal), and they generally hit upon immorality. May I give them a hint that may be of use, at least in affording the refreshment of change? Why, do they not accuse the French of gormandism? There are a hundred proofs of that vice for one of the other. It is visible everywhere in France, and in some parts of the country it predominates over all other pleasures of life. Most well-to-do French people who live in the rural districts and are excessively dull find a solace and an interest twice a day in the prolonged enjoyments of the table. There is no country in the world where so much thought and care, and so much intelligence, are devoted to feeding as in France, and the reward is that the French govern the world of good eating, and their language is the language not of diplomacy only but of that far more important matter the *menu*. They will talk seriously for an indefinite length of time about the materials of dinners and their preparation. When the English newspapers give an account of a royal feast, they do not tell you what the distinguished personages had to eat, but French reporters give the *menu* in detail. Some French newspapers present their subscribers with a *menu* for every day in the year, others announce what will be the dinner at a great hotel.

French Gormandism.

The Solace of dull Lives.

France the Land of good Living.

Importance of the *menu*.

The love of good cheer in France has all the characters of vulgarity and refinement. In former times *gourmand* meant a judge of eating, and *gourmet* a judge of wine. We find those interpretations still in the dictionaries, even in Littré and Lafaye, but custom has given the words a new significance. *Gourmet* is now universally understood to refer to eating and not to drinking. *Gourmand* has acquired a lower sense between *gourmet* and *glouton*. The *gourmand* of the present day is a passionate lover of good eating, who gives it inordinate attention, and usually eats more than is good for him. The *glouton* is the quite unintelligent animal feeder who stuffs himself like a pig; and there is a still worse word, the *goulu*, which means the voracious man who throws eatables down his throat. There is also *goinfre*, the man who is very disagreeable to other people in his eating, which he does to excess and dirtily.

Gourmand and *Gourmet.*

The *Glouton.*

The *Goulu.*

The *Goinfre.*

The *gourmet*, on the contrary, is a product of high civilisation. He enjoys with discrimination, and is above the vulgarity of estimating the quality of dishes by their elaboration or their costliness. He values the commonest things, if they are good of their own kind; he will praise well-baked bread or pure water. He is entirely on the side of temperance. A French *gourmet* once said to me, "I am excessively fond of oysters, but never exceed one dozen, being convinced that after the first dozen the palate has become incapable of fully appreciating the flavour." A real *gourmet* preserves his palate in the healthiest and most natural condition. He would

Temperance of the true *Gourmet.*

not cover an oyster with pepper, nor even squeeze a lemon over it. Plain things are often preferred by a true gourmet to richer things. The uninitiated drink wine and eat cakes at the same time. A *gourmet* would not do that unless the wine were unworthy of his attention; with a wine of any quality he would eat a crust of bread. A *gourmet* prefers the simplest meal, such as a fried mutton chop, if it is really well cooked, to an elaborate banquet where the cookery is less than excellent. In Thackeray's imitation of Horace *(Persicos Odi)* he expresses contempt for "Frenchified fuss" in the first stanza, but in the second he exactly hits the taste of a French *gourmet* in praising the good qualities of a simple dish—

Thackeray a *Gourmet.*

"But a plain leg of mutton, my Lucy,
I pr'ythee get ready at three:
Have it smoking, and tender, and juicy,
And what better meat can there be?"

A Parisian *Gourmet.*

I knew a Parisian who was a *gourmet* in Thackeray's manner, and his way of living was to order one dish of meat, one of vegetables, and a little dessert, at an excellent and expensive *restaurant à la carte.* He did not desire the more abundant feeding at the *restaurants à prix fixe* and the *tables d'hôte.* He drank very moderately also; in a word, he lived as a gentleman ought to live, without excess, yet with perfect appreciation.

The *Gourmet* keeps up Prices.

The influence of the French *gourmet* on the price of eatables is remarkable. The dealers know that extravagant prices will be given for anything that is exceptionally good. The result is that the Parisian

connoisseur in good living feeds very expensively, and his tendency is to maintain a high standard of costliness.

The accusation against the French that they are a nation of gormandisers is to be understood with the reserves that I have now indicated, but I must add, in justice, that France is a country of plain living as well as of rich and elaborate living. The peasants, a very numerous class, live with extreme sobriety and simplicity; the soldiers, also a numerous class, live just sufficiently and no more; the priests live simply as a rule, though they are said to enjoy a good dinner when invited to a château, the only pleasure they have. Then you find large classes in which simple living is a matter of necessity, such as the members of religious houses and young people in educational establishments.

France also a Country of Plain Living.

Nevertheless, I believe it is true that the love of good living in the middle and upper classes amounts to a serious evil, and actually operates as a restraint on population since it would be as cheap to feed a large family in a very plain way as to feed a small one on luxuries. My opinion is that luxury in food and dress are the two great parents of evil in France.

Good Living a Restraint on Population.

In drinking, England is a country of extremes. It has the misfortune of not being a wine-producing country, with the usual consequence that the consumption of ardent spirits is very great, and drunkenness of the most dangerous and most brutal kind very common. On the other hand, this horror has

England a Country of Extremes.

Ardent Spirits in England.

produced a reaction going as far in the other extreme, so that there are far more water-drinkers in England than in France. What is called "moderation" is also much more moderate in England. I lunch with an Englishman in London, and observe that he takes perhaps a single glass of claret and nothing after it; a Frenchman equally moderate would take half a bottle, with coffee and cognac afterwards. The same Englishman will never drink in a public-house from January to December; the Frenchman sees no harm in visiting his café every day.

Abstinence and Moderation.

English and French Moderation compared.

Vulgar French people delight in accusing English ladies of dipsomania. Some of them drink, I have known several instances, and I have known instances of the same infirmity in France, but I am quite convinced that Englishwomen in the middle and upper classes are usually more abstemious than French. Comparing people equally sober, equally removed from all suspicion of drunkenness, a bottle of claret would last the English lady a week and the French lady a day. It is true that the English lady might take a glass of port after dinner, but that answers to the Frenchwoman's occasional *liqueur*.

Female Drinking in the two Countries.

I am writing of the present, that is, of the ninth decade of the nineteenth century, when excessive drinking has come to be considered vulgar in England. French accusers delight in taking the worst examples of the past and in representing them as the average of the present. I was reading lately a French book of travels in England, including an account of a visit to a large country house. There are

The Present and the Past.

A French Traveller in England.

certain signs by which an English critic knows at once whether narratives of this kind are genuine or fictitious. A Frenchman who invents anything about England, and pretends that he is recounting a real experience, is sure to invent clumsily. In the present instance, I know by two pieces of evidence that the writer has been drawing upon his imagination. He makes the men in the smoking-room, after dinner, talk about the absent ladies in a style absolutely incompatible with English breeding, and he describes these gentlemen as having all got nearly or completely drunk before they were helped to bed by the domestics. This Frenchman has read that such things happened under the Georges, and as he is not describing a real experience he makes our contemporaries drunk to gratify the malevolence of French readers.

His Inventions.

England is now a country of very temperate, very intemperate, and very abstemious people. If a man belongs to the refined classes he will probably take wine in moderation, perhaps in great moderation; if he belongs to the humbler classes he may be a besotted drunkard, a sober workman who appreciates a glass of beer, or an apostle of total abstinence with a blue ribbon in his button-hole. The country spends too much in drink, but its expenditure is gradually diminishing, and the burden of it falls very unequally on the citizens. Looking to the future, which is more interesting than the past, I may add that it is hopeful for England, which is improving, and discouraging for France, which is going from bad to worse.

Present Condition of England.

Eating in England.

As to eating, the English are rarely either *gourmands* or *gourmets,* but they have a rooted belief in the value of an abundant flesh diet, which cannot be good for health unless accompanied by hard exercise. Although the English are not extravagant like the French from a love of expensive delicacies, they are extravagant in the display of great abundance. Immense pieces of the finest meat in the world appear on English tables, and then disappear to be replaced by others equally imposing. People tell you of the quantities eaten by their servants with a smile of indulgence. In the poorer classes there is waste of another kind from simple ignorance and want of culinary economy and art. In a French household the smallest fragments make a little dish, and nothing is lost; in England this kind of economy is practised least where it would be most required. In the French middle and lower classes the daily use of soups is an economy, as the soup is the final save-all of the little establishment, and it presents the materials in the most nourishing and digestible form. As to extravagance, the well-to-do French and English may be equally extravagant, but in different ways, and as to temperance in eating, there is little difference. The French eat heavier meals, but they eat less frequently. Each nation accuses the other of over-eating, and doctors say that the accusation is merited in both cases.

Peculiar Form of English Extravagance.

Waste in the Poorer Classes.

Utility of Soups in France.

Both Countries Extravagant, but in Different Ways.

Stately Service and plain Table.

One is sometimes struck in England by the combination of a very stately service with a very plain table. Fine linen, expensive plate, formidably dignified servants, and all this ceremony about a leg of

mutton and some boiled potatoes. Thackeray amused himself with noting this contrast. It is a revelation of English character, which is deeply attached to state and style, but is really not given over to sensual pleasures. Occasionally the English go rather far, perhaps, in the direction of plain living. The total abstainer gives you pure water, the *very* moderate drinker forgets to pass the decanter, and so do his servants. I remember being invited once to an early dinner in the country and riding to it several miles in drenching rain. I was cold and wet, for it was winter, and I looked forward confidently to warm old English hospitality; but my host had *principles,* and principles are nothing if you do not act up to them, so he gave me a slice of cold beef with a glass of cold water. That *menu* was easily and long remembered.

English Asceticism.

CHAPTER V.

THRIFT.

Why Thrift is a Social Virtue.

THRIFT is classed as a social virtue, because in a thrifty society few people fall upon others for their support. The thrifty man looks to his own independence during sickness, and to that of his wife and children after his death, so that he is never burdensome either to public or private charity.

Thrift associated with Meanness.

Socially, then, the thrifty man is an acceptable member of the community; but when we inquire closely into the nature of thrift we often find it associated with meanness, and therefore the esteem for it has never been quite without reserve.

French Qualities favourable to Thrift.

To apply this to the English and French I may begin by admitting, quite frankly, that the French are incomparably superior to the English in thrift. The natural talent for thrift is far commoner in France than in England. The French are prudent as a rule, and very capable of limiting their desires; they have also a great love of independence, a horror of debt, a readiness to accept and avow a modest social position, and they have (in spite of apparent frivolity) a foresight that looks a long way into the future.

French Defects favourable to Thrift.

That is the good side of the French character as regards thrift, but there is a bad side at least equally favourable to it. There is a pettiness in the French

mind which adapts it well for dealing with details, and gives it a keen zest for very small economies. An Englishman is astonished by nothing so much as this pettiness when he first knows the French as they really are, and begins to perceive what close and earnest attention they will give to what seem to him ridiculously small matters. In many French people, I do not say in all, there is something worse than pettiness, namely, downright meanness, and this too is highly favourable to thrift. This meanness is not confined to the poorer classes, or to the *bourgeoisie,* it may be found in all classes.

French Meanness.

In England the qualities and the defects which are favourable to thrift are much rarer. The English are not so prudent as the French, not so capable of limiting their desires, not so ready to accept humble positions contentedly, and if they have foresight they too often find reasons for not acting according to its dictates. But, on the other hand, the English have a hearty contempt for pettiness. An Englishman who is mean is a very rare exception. The English nature finds no satisfaction in paying less for anything than it is really worth; it does not wish to pay more, but in consideration for its own self-respect it wishes to give the full value.

The English have less both of the Qualities and the Defects.

A further examination of the conduct of thrifty people leads to the conclusion that thrift may be either self-denying or denying to other people. A man has a family; he feeds himself luxuriously and his family as poorly as possible; at the year's end he will have saved more than if he had lived on potatoes and kept his family well. In large families

Egoism and Altruism in Thrift.

thrift often means refusing things to the wife and children whilst the master is self-indulgent, like the Sultan of Turkey, who wallows in luxury whilst his ragged soldiers starve. The commonest English form of this selfishness is to spend in drink whilst denying necessaries to the children; but this is not thrift, as there are no savings.

A pretty Instance of Unselfish Thrift.

Thrift may be one of the noblest forms of altruism. I know all the details about a very pretty instance that occurred in England two generations before mine. A lady, well-to-do and childless, had three little penniless nieces. By pure self-denial she saved three fortunes for them, enough to keep them in comfort all their days. This self-denial was all the harder in her case that she belonged to an aristocratic family, and might have excusably spent her income for the maintenance of her rank.

Dowries for Daughters.

The strongest motive for French thrift is to provide dowries for daughters. It being an accepted rule that every girl must have a dowry, a Frenchman is not discouraged by the smallness of the sum he is able to put by. This enables him to begin, and if a little prosperity comes to him it is a satisfaction to make the dowry larger. Whilst saving the dowry he learns the art of saving, and applies it afterwards to other purposes.

The Dowry an Education in Thrift.

Two English Discouragements to Saving.

In England there are two terrible discouragements to saving. The first is the exacting character of English opinion with regard to style of living, the contempt felt for people who are not gentlemen and ladies, and the vulgar belief that one cannot be a gentleman or a lady without leading an expensive

life. "It costs a great deal of money to be a gentleman," says an English writer, "and a great deal more to be a lady." Well, if this is so, why not leave gentlemanhood and ladyhood to rich people, and why not be content with simple manhood and womanhood? Nothing can be more admirable than the life of an Englishman who saves money from a sense of duty when the saving implies the great renunciation, the renunciation of the title of "gentleman." A Frenchman, who may live as he likes, knows nothing of that sacrifice.

Gentlemen and Ladies.

The Great Renunciation for an Englishman.

The second great discouragement to saving in England is the English contempt for small sums of money. "The Englishman," says Bagehot, "bows down before a great heap and sneers when he passes a little heap." The sneer is perhaps more frequent than the bow. The mention of a small fortune often excites a smile. And the heap need not be a very little one to be sneered at. You may be almost ridiculous for having an income that places you far above want. Three hundred a year is an income that seems really amusing to the well-constituted English mind. I myself have heard a man with five hundred a year called a "beggar," and have seen people smile good-humouredly at more than twice as much. The consequence is that unless an Englishman has the natural instinct of avarice he may think, "What is the good of saving when all I can put by will only be contemptible?"

English Contempt for small Sums of Money.

£300 a Year.

£500 a Year.

It is worth noting, as a contrast, that the idea of thrift has not always been general in France. The present French rural aristocracy is thrifty; but the

Thrift not always general in France.

old ideal of a French nobleman included largeness and even prodigality in money matters, which led to the ruin of many a noble house. To be careful and exact was, in the old days, a middle-class virtue, the consequence being that there are so many *nouveaux riches* in France at the present day. Even now it is not thought well to be too thrifty in high situations.

Grévy and Carnot.

That was President Grévy's fault; President Carnot saves nothing out of his allowance, and is liked for it. The millions claimed by the Orleans family seemed to them a good kind of ballast in troubled waters, but they sank the royal ship.

An Example of French Carefulness.

The following may be taken as a rather extreme example of French carefulness. I knew an old bachelor who had £800 a year and not at all an ungenerous disposition, but he enjoyed making little savings. He drove frequently to the neighbouring town, and was quite delighted with an arrangement he made there, by which he was allowed to put up his pony for a penny a time on condition that he harnessed it himself and that the animal had nothing to eat. The pony was avenged by the old gentleman's cook, who was thriftier even than her master, and kept him on short commons.

Effects of Extreme Thrift.

The spirit of small economies may take a character of positive meanness. Servants may be, and sometimes are, so wretchedly fed that they will not stay in the place. Relations, as eating beings, may be so inhospitably received that they finally cease their visits. All hospitality may come to an end, invitations being declined in dread of the obligation of reciprocity, till at last the thrifty household realises

its perfect ideal of spending nothing on anybody. French tradesmen are well acquainted with this class of customers, who are incessantly trying to get something out of them. The ingenuity of such customers goes beyond anything that would be believed in England. French novelists sometimes amuse themselves by depicting the petty craft of the meanest natures. The novelists cannot go beyond the truth, with all their inventiveness.

Tradesmen and Thrifty Customers.

As a contrast to this you have English improvidence, especially in the genteel professional class, where the whole energy of the master of the house is devoted to earning fairy gold, the gold that immediately vanishes. He spends that he may succeed and succeeds that he may spend. He brings up a family with genteel habits and no capital. Apparently prosperous and enviable, he enjoys in reality nothing that prosperity ought to give, since he has neither leisure to think, nor liberty, nor peace of mind, nor any hope of rest except in the grave.*

English Improvidence.

The final results of French thrift, for the nation, are as follows;—

Results of French Thrift.

* An interesting example of English improvidence came to my knowledge recently. A professional man of great talent, who had been eminently successful, died, leaving a widow and a large family of children. At the time of his death the children were all married. The widow was left without a penny, and was anxious to find a situation, because the married children *all living up to the extreme limit of their incomes, as their father had done*, were unable to subscribe an annuity. In France they would probably all have had savings, and, with the national love of the mother and sense of filial duty, would have cheerfully hastened to provide for her old age.

The Poorer Class.

1. The poorer classes are better fed and better clothed. This is a real good, because they needed it. They are probably stronger than they used to be.

Increase of Idlers.

2. The idle class is constantly increasing in numbers, not because it is prolific, but by the accession of *nouveaux riches*. This is not perceptibly a benefit.

Effect of Thrift on Population.

3. The *extreme* spirit of thrift will not allow population to increase with riches. It operates as a powerful restraint on procreation even in wealthy families. This weakens France relatively to England and Germany.

Effects of Luxury.

4. Thrift has produced wealth, wealth luxury, and luxury also acts as a restraint on population, because, in a luxurious age, children are too expensive.

Weakening of the Warlike Temper.

5. As for national defence, the wealth of France is of use for all material things, such as ships, fortresses, and guns, but by increasing the love of comfort and commerce it has enfeebled the warlike temper of the nation.

Temptation to Enemies.

6. As the wealth of France continually increases, and her defenders do not increase with it, she becomes every year a more tempting prize for an enemy.

CHAPTER VI.

CLEANLINESS.

ENTERING London one day with a friend in the railway train, I asked him what, in his opinion, would have been the impressions of an ancient Roman if he could have accompanied us. What would an inhabitant of Augustan Rome think of English civilisation in Victorian London? English Civilisation.

My friend at once answered, "He would think we were a very dirty race, and this impression would be so strong and so unfavourable that he would be slow to perceive our superiority in other respects."

This is not the general English opinion. The English believe themselves to be a clean people. Foreigners are dirty, Englishmen are clean; that is one of the most obvious distinctions between them. Belief in English Cleanliness.

The English upper classes are clean, but cleanliness of any high degree is a very modern virtue amongst them. It is an invention of the nineteenth century. I am just old enough to remember the time when the use of the morning sponge-bath became general amongst boys and young men of my own generation. Men and women born at the close of the eighteenth century did as French people do to-day; they took a warm bath occasionally for clean- The Morning Sponge-bath. Earlier Habits.

liness,* and they took shower-baths when they were prescribed by the physician for health, and they bathed in summer seas for pleasure, but they did not wash themselves all over every morning. I remember an old gentleman, of good family and estate, arguing against this strange, newfangled custom, and maintaining that it was quite unnecessary to wash the skin in modern times, as the impurities were removed by linen. However, the new custom took deep root in England, because it became one of the signs of class. It was adopted as one of the habits of a gentleman, and afterwards spread rather lower, though it is not yet by any means universal. It is chiefly upon this habit that the *present* English claim to superior cleanliness is founded. In former times the English were proud of using more water than the French for ordinary ablutions, and they pretended to believe that the French were unacquainted with the use of soap, because they did not provide public pieces of soap in the bedchambers of their hotels.

Present English Claim to Cleanliness.

The cold sponge-bath is perhaps used in England more for health than for cleanliness, as a prolonged stay in a warm bath cleans much better, and the treatment by perspiration according to old Roman or modern oriental usage is incomparably the most effectual cleanser of all. It is characteristic of the English to have set hardihood above the ideal perfection of cleanliness, and to have avoided the

The best Cleanser.

Hardihood above Cleanliness.

* This is rather too favourable to the English of that day, as they certainly did not take warm baths so frequently as French people do now. They had not the conveniences. Few private houses had a bath-room and few towns had public baths,

luxurious and enervating bath in which the ancients took delight.

English Pride in Hardihood.

Englishmen are proud of being able to sponge themselves with cold water all through the winter. I have known one who used to lie down in ice-cold water every morning; others boast of a morning plunge in sea or river at Christmas time, and they continue the habit as long as their constitutions will hold out.

Concealed Dirtiness.

English physicians are severe on the concealed dirtiness of many people in the middle classes, who seem clean with their false collars and cuffs and their washed faces and hands. One does not expect much cleanliness amongst the labouring population of any modern country, but the working classes in England deserve great credit for every effort they make in the direction of cleanliness, because they have not the facilities of the rich. I myself have often seen colliers in Lancashire naked to the waist and giving themselves a thorough wash in plentiful hot water with soap, and when greater facilities are given in the shape of public baths they make use of them. It would be easy for manufacturers to encourage cleanliness by having baths at their factories. Some have actually done this.

Efforts of the Poor towards Cleanliness.

The state of England with regard to personal cleanliness may be considered as partially satisfactory, and it is improving. As to the French, their strong point is their excellent institution of warm baths, which are to be found even in the smallest towns with a complete service. A tired Frenchman, arriving at anything like a town, looks to his

French Warm Baths.

Effects of the Warm Bath in France.

hot bath as the best restorative. If these baths are a pleasure to a man he will be clean; if he does not like them he will not be so clean as the Englishman who sponges himself by way of discipline, whether he likes it or not. However, English example has had a wonderful effect in improving the apparatus of cleanliness in French private houses. English baths, ewers, basins, and other complicated toilet arrangements are copied extensively in France. If you visit a pot-shop in a small provincial town, quite remote from the Channel, you will find English washstand services of full size, or good French copies of them; and if you go to the ironmonger's you will find all kinds of baths for domestic use, including English "tubs." In French houses, where the old small ewers and basins are retained, they are now almost invariably supplemented by a capacious tin water-jug on the floor. In fact, the French are becoming a cleaner people, thanks to the example of their neighbours, who are about forty years in advance.

Consequences of English Example.

A French crowd (I am not the first to notice this) always *appears* cleaner than an English crowd. This is due to the self-respecting habits of the French lower classes. In England the poor people in towns will wear old and dirty things that have belonged to middle-class people; in France they wear cheap things of their own and take care to have them clean, especially on Sunday or a fête-day. Peasants' and workmen's wives look as clean as ladies; in fact, their washed caps, prettily ironed, have a fresher appearance than ladies' bonnets.

Cleanly Appearance of French Crowds. Reasons for it.

The men, too, in their new blouses, appear cleaner than a *bourgeois* in a black coat. In summer, all the young peasants look as if they put on a new straw hat every Sunday.

Much of this external cleanliness is due merely to the absence of coal-smoke. In London and Manchester it is difficult and expensive to be clean. The cheery and bright external appearance of French houses is due to the same cause, and now the common use of coal is spoiling it in some places. As for English houses in large and smoky towns, the melancholy dinginess of the outer walls is accepted as a matter of course, but cleanliness has its revenge in the interior and even on the whitened doorstep. There is one point as to which the English are greatly superior to the French, especially to middle-class provincial families,—they renew paper and paint. The good old-fashioned French way was to neglect papering and painting till further neglect could make it no worse, and then to think no more of the matter. There is a strong conventionalism about these subjects everywhere. In the inside of a room English people are more particular about the walls and ceiling, French people about the floor. There is many a middle-class French dining-room where the only beauty is the extreme cleanliness of the bare boards. The English like carpets, which are more favourable to comfort than to cleanliness, the French prefer the healthy waxed oak *parquet,* and often content themselves with a deal *plancher* or red tiles.

Effects of Coal-smoke.

English Towns.

Paper and Paint. The old-fashioned French Way.

Carpet and *Parquet.*

English Love of White-wash.

The humbler classes in England have a great

superiority in their love of whitewash. The passion for whitewash which has been so disastrous in churches is excellent in farm-houses, and I have known many a farm-house in Lancashire that was kept fresh and pleasant by the use of it. In French farm-houses it seems to be perfectly unknown; and although their interiors are admirably adapted for pictorial treatment, and have been charmingly painted by Edouard Frère and others, the rich browns of the coarsely-plastered walls are really nothing but dirt, though delightful in colour and texture from an artist's point of view.*

Whitewash unknown in French Farmhouses.

French Bedding.

The French are very careful about the cleanliness of their bedding. I have often in my travels slept in very poor country inns, but was always sure of clean, if coarse, sheets, as well as a clean tablecloth and napkin.

English and French Watercloset. French Neglect.

The English are incomparably superior to the French in their care and cleanliness about watercloset and everything of that kind. French incompetence, stupidity, and neglect of this matter are indefensible. The only possible explanation is that when people have once got into the habit of neglecting any particular thing the habit of neglect becomes fixed, even when it is attended by great inconvenience. To borrow an illustration from a pleasanter subject, I may observe that many French farmers, and, I believe, more Irish, have a fixed habit of neglecting the repair of harness except with bits of

* Especially in combination with the beautiful colour of the waxed walnut furniture and the red hangings of the beds.

string. Certainly, in the better class of French houses, an attempt is made to keep the water-closet in order; but as it has always been badly organised at the beginning this is very difficult. The French might learn all about these inventions from the English, who thoroughly understand them.

In conclusion, France and England may be ranked amongst the tolerably clean nations, England taking the lead; but real cleanliness is not general in either. What there is of it is confined to limited classes, and anything like an ideal perfection of cleanliness is the peculiarity of individuals who have a natural genius for it and find a pleasure in it. The majority prefer a moderate degree of dirtiness as being more conducive to their true comfort. A certain English poet used to wear a dirty shirt for comfort, and a clean one over it for show. That exactly represents the feelings of ordinary mankind, who have no objection to a little cleanliness in deference to custom, provided that it is only external, and that they may have the satisfaction of dirt beneath, like a cherished secret sin under a mantle of piety. As for the really poor, who are miserably clad, it has been pointed out by Mr. Galton that dirt is a necessity for them in cold weather; it is the poor man's under-shirt.

Comfort of Moderate Dirtiness.

The Poor Man's Under-Shirt.

CHAPTER VII.

COURAGE.

Seeming Decline in National Courage.

I THINK it must be admitted that there has been an apparent decline in national courage both in England and France during the latter half of the nineteenth century. They now, both of them, shrink from war as they did not shrink in former times, and when the *casus belli* would have been clear to the Englishman and the Frenchman of more heroic days their descendants prefer to wink at it. We are no longer quite certain that national courage was a great virtue, and there are certain considerations that may console us for its real or apparent diminution.

Personal Risk.

In the first place, Did the men who decided upon former wars *risk their own lives?* When a cabinet of civilians declares war, or when it is declared by a king who is not really a soldier, the act is not one of courage at all, but of political wisdom or folly. Or if a military king with a standing army declares war, the act is not one of national courage; it is only a demonstration of the military caste. When the nation itself is the army, and when it declares war through its freely-elected representatives, then the act is one of national courage; but how often has a war been declared in that way?

Nations do not desire war, and the better they are educated the less they wish for it. The only French war in our time which really excited the enthusiasm of the nation was that for the liberation of Italy. The French had no enthusiasm whatever for the Crimean War, which they looked upon as an English enterprise; they had none for the Mexican, and there was only a little noisy surface excitement in favour of the war of 1870. Since then the nation has really had the control of its own affairs, and has shown no warlike tendencies. The Tonquin enterprise was ministerial, and ruined the minister who undertook it. The French people would not even support a vigorous Egyptian policy. Its only national courage is that which takes the form of waiting calmly for the German onslaught.

Nations do not desire War.

Rarity of Warlike Enthusiasm in France.

Tonquin.

Egypt.

Neither England nor France now ventures to attack a really first-class Power; but they exercise their military strength against weak, half-civilised peoples. England breaks the Zulu power, but not the Russian. France advances her African frontier, but not her European. France now exactly imitates the English policy of expansion out of Europe, and of doing nothing in Europe until she can find an ally.

Turning against Weak Peoples.

They are still nominally Great Powers, but they now belong in reality to a second class which might be defined as that of the nations that do not fight without allies except against feeble potentates. Neither one nor the other preserves those illusions about its own strength which are necessary for heroic action. What is more, the other nations have lost the old fear of England and France, whose

France and England now Second-class Powers.

mutual distrust breaks forth on every possible occasion and deprives them of the one source of real strength—association.

The kind of national courage which consists in offering a determined though hopeless resistance to a successful enemy was very nobly displayed by the French after Sedan, especially during the siege of Paris. Some English writers called this mere obstinacy, and had nothing but contemptuous blame for it, yet I venture to say that if an invading army surrounded London the English would show exactly the same kind of noble obstinacy themselves. In such a case a nation does not fight without a purpose, though it may struggle without hope. It fights for its self-respect.

The Siege of Paris.

This is the sort of courage that second-class Powers may still retain, they may reserve themselves for a fierce and prolonged defence. There remains for them a peculiar danger. It might happen that two Powers, not quite of the first rank, might fight each other because they dared not assault the greatest Powers. A superfluity of unexercised courage might explode in a war between England and France, because one dared not fight Russia, nor the other Germany. There have been moments when this seemed very likely to happen. The dangerous effects of bottled-up courage were curiously displayed in the time of the Paris Commune. The National Guards had been expecting to be led against the Prussians in a grand sortie, but were always put off till the peace came. They had their rifles and their

Courage possible for Second-class Powers.

Danger of bottled-up Courage.

The Paris Commune.

bottled-up courage, so they rushed into conflict with the "Versaillais."

Individual Courage.

For individual courage the two peoples are nearly on a par, but they differ in their training. It is unpleasant to have to confess that brutal and barbarous customs are favourable to the development of courage, yet some of them unquestionably are so, and a higher civilisation might have a difficulty in replacing them. Football, as practised in English public schools, is a brutal pastime, but it is an excellent discipline in courage. French duelling, though infinitely more refined in its forms, is in principle thoroughly barbarous, but as a school of courage there is nothing to equal it, and the great advantage of it in that respect is the constant possibility of an encounter that hangs over the head of every Frenchman, and accustoms him to the idea of danger. He goes through life like an armed knight riding through a wood. In saying "every Frenchman" I exaggerated, because, in fact, men are very differently exposed to the danger of duelling in France. Peasants never fight duels, workmen hardly ever, but there is not a gentleman, or an officer, or a deputy, or a journalist, who is not ready to go on the field of private battle at a moment's notice. It is true that these encounters rarely end fatally, yet there is always danger, if only from accident. An intimate French friend of mine, when he had a duel on his hands, would go home to his wife and say, "Now, my dear, I must be left very quiet, as I have to fight to-morrow morning;" then he would go to bed and sleep till four o'clock, when he

Football.

Duelling.

Danger in Duels.

drank nothing but a glass of water before facing lead or steel.

I have a poor opinion of the sort of courage which consists in looking on with tranquil nerves whilst others suffer. However, this base valour may sometimes be of use. The English may acquire it Boxing. to some extent by witnessing pugilistic combats, the Bull-fights. French of the south by seeing bull-fights in the arenas of Nîmes and Arles; but it is only a very small proportion of the population in England and France that now witnesses these things, the spectators are not comparable in numbers to the vast Roman public that hardened its heart in the gladiatorial shows.

Field Sports. As for field sports, those practised in England require little courage except in horsemanship for English hunting. In France there are dangerous boar-hunts. It is, however, only in some parts of France that this amusement is to be had, and it is practised by comparatively few persons, chiefly amongst the richer gentry. Field sports are good for keeping up the energy of semi-barbarous aristocracies, which, in the absence of war, might lapse into indolence without them.

Courage in the Common People. Courage is kept up amongst the common people chiefly by dangers repeatedly incurred in their ordinary avocations. This discipline of experience with boats, horses, bulls, and other dangerous things or creatures, is common both to England and France. In a word, as to the lower classes, they are in the same situation in both countries, except that the Military Service. humble Frenchman has to undergo military service,

which is a fine school, especially in the cavalry and artillery. Young English boyhood, in the middle and higher classes, is in a better situation for acquiring manliness than French boyhood, because it has more liberty. I have not, however, noticed that French boys were timid for themselves (except in talking), it is their parents and teachers who are timid for them.

French Boys.

PART VI.

CUSTOM.

CHAPTER I.

CHRONOLOGY.

Dissimilarity between French and English.

IT is a commonplace that the French and English of to-day are extremely unlike each other—wonderfully unlike each other, considering that they are such near neighbours, and the two principal representatives of western civilisation in Europe.

Has the unlikeness always been as marked as it is now, or has there been a time in the past history of the two nations when they resembled each other on some points now marked by trenchant differences?

Varying Degrees of Dissimilarity.

The answer appears to be that the French and English have at certain periods of the past been much less unlike each other than they are now, but yet that the extreme of dissimilarity has been reached at a later period, and that, in the present day, the slow but sure action of causes that may be indicated is bringing about a diminution of that extreme dissimilarity, without, however, giving grounds for any belief or hope that the two nations can ever be very like each other in the future.

Recent historians, especially Mr. Freeman, have taught us to realise much more clearly than we did thirty years ago the truth that the kings of the

House of Anjou were French kings, and that the governing classes in the England which they ruled were essentially a French *noblesse*. The Frenchifying influence of kings and nobles was resumed in another way by the Stuart dynasty, and might have gone on gradually approximating the entire English nation to French customs, had not a great mental revolution occurred in England and Scotland, which made the British thenceforward a peculiar people, strongly differing not only from the French but from all the other continental nations whatever. The result of that revolution, as it affects our own time, is that England resembles no nation in the world except her own colonies, including, of course, the great kindred nation in America.

A French *Noblesse* in England.

That revolution was Puritanism, a far more important thing than the change from a monarchical to a republican form of government, because it really changed the mental habits of the nation, making English people more peculiar than they themselves know, and quite incomprehensible by the French; making English customs differ from continental customs more widely than they had ever differed before; changing even the fundamental character of the English mind by chastening and repressing the light-hearted gaiety of merry England and substituting for it a gravity often deepening into gloom; replacing the old morals by severer morals, establishing a strict censorship even over language, substituting for the old religion of Europe a faith less picturesque and less indulgent, consequently less in harmony with French feeling.

Puritanism.

Its Effect in making the English unlike the French.

There is a temptation to exaggerate the importance of historical influences when once they have been perceived, but one can hardly exaggerate the importance of Puritanism in the history of the English people, especially in the history of the middle classes, where it is still predominant at the present day. Both the qualities and the defects that distinguish the British middle classes are for the most part directly traceable to the influence of Puritanism, and so are those feelings and opinions of which they themselves have forgotten the origin.

Puritanism in the British Middle Classes.

It may be thought that Puritanism ought to have been spoken of in the chapters on religion, but I am not sure that it ought to be classed as a special creed. It seems rather to be a reform of custom in the direction of severity and austerity which might be carried out under any creed that permitted rigorous moralists to obtain a great social power. The Wahhabees are the Puritans of Islam, with their particular prohibitions, their gravity of demeanour, their employment of pious forms in language, their severity of social espionage, and control by a vigilant public opinion. But although we may find Puritanism in the most unexpected places, it has never accomplished a work so extensive in its consequences, or likely to be so durable, as the transformation of British sentiment and custom. Only a dispassionate comparison with custom still alive on the continent, but extinct in England, can enable us to realise what that transformation is. A middle-class English family goes to Paris.* In due course of time a Sunday

Not a Special Creed.

Transformation of British Sentiment and Custom.

* What follows is sketched from life.

comes; or rather, not a Sunday, but a *Dimanche*.

An English Family in Paris.

The English family has heard of a French Sunday before, but has hitherto been unable to realise it by mere force of imagination. On actually *seeing* it, the impression received is that the French are all intentional Sabbath-breakers—that the amusements which go forward on that day are a clear evidence of French wickedness. Some good English or Scotch people are so shocked by what they see that they recognise in the defeat of 1870 a just punishment for the national sin of Sabbath-breaking. They do not realise that what they see is not the French Sunday in particular, but the continental Sunday in general; still less do they remember that it is also

The old English Sunday.

the English Sunday of pre-Puritanic times—those times now so remote in memory, and yet historically still so near, when the English had not yet become a peculiar people, but lived like the other nations of western Europe. The English of Shakespeare's time went to the theatre on Sunday,* and after morning service in the churches they enjoyed many active games and recreations, including dancing, archery, and leaping.** Now, as there is nothing more visible than external differences of custom, and as people are separated even more by visible differences than

Sunday a Cause of Separation between English and French.

by those which are invisible, and as on one day out of seven those differences are now strikingly apparent

* Plays were performed on Sunday at the court of Queen Elizabeth.

** Dancing, archery, leaping, May-games, and morris dances, were expressly permitted by James I. on Sunday in his Book of Sports. He forbade brutal sports only.

between the English and French peoples, it is evident that on the day when they differ most they cannot but feel infinitely more estranged from each other than their ancestors would have felt on the same day.

English Roman Catholics.

The modern disapproval felt by British visitors for the behaviour of the French people on Sunday is due in great part to the cautious conduct of the Roman Catholic minority in England, who do not venture to show openly what kind of Sunday it is that their Church would hold to be innocently employed. To avoid scandal in a country where the influence of Puritanism is still powerful, they keep a Sunday that is outwardly almost a Sabbath, and are careful to avoid many recreations that the Church of Rome has always freely permitted.

The Catholic Sunday.

In fact, that Church permits all recreations on the first day of the week that she sanctions on any other, including the most active exercises. What she really forbids is lucrative professional labour. A lawyer should not study a case on Sunday, unless there is urgent necessity, but he is perfectly free to amuse himself, however noisily, in sawing and hammering. A professional artist may do better not to paint (although there is a kind of special toleration for artistic and intellectual pursuits, as being different from mere drudgery), but an amateur, working for recreation, may take his apparatus into the fields.

Studies on Sunday.

Disinterested studies of all kinds are permitted by the Church on Sunday. It is not in a Roman Catholic country that geologists would be in danger of being stoned, as

they have been in Scotland, for hammering at rocks on that day.*

A French Sunday.

Here is the way in which some very religious French people spent a Sunday in 1886, I being one of the party. They went to mass early in the morning, in the chapel of the nearest *château;* then they made preparations for receiving their friends. The friends came after *déjeuner,* two families, in addition to seven guests staying in the house. Some of them remained in the garden, sat about in camp chairs and talked; others went to the village *fête,* where, of course, there was a great deal of dancing and other amusements, which they looked upon quite benevolently. Now, it so happened that those who went to the *fête* were the most religious people of the whole party. On their return we had dinner, and the most pious were by no means the least merry. After dinner the young ladies gave us some music, and one of them played a waltz. This set the young people dancing, and so a dance was improvised which lasted till eleven o'clock, when the guests drove away in the moonlight.**

* The idea that governs the action of the Church of Rome with regard to the observation of Sunday in countries where she is free to do what she thinks best, appears to be simply the protection of toilers from their own drudgery on one day of the week. She herself keeps the day as a festival, and requires the attendance of the laity at one mass, which may be short and early.

** I made inquiry afterwards to ascertain what the parish priest thought of these proceedings, and discovered that he made a distinction. He did not approve of dancing on the public dancing-floors in the village, especially at night, because it some-

Perhaps the English and Scotch might have given up Sunday dancing more readily than if they had been by nature as saltatory as the French are, but the British have given up many things that they cared for passionately. They gave up salmon-fishing, for example, which was not readily put down in Scotland, and the new legislation attained in the end that supreme success of the legislator when he establishes a very durable custom that would survive the repeal of his law. The power of the dead Puritans is shown in nothing more wonderfully than in the abstinence of British sportsmen when the twelfth of August occurs on a Sunday, and every fowling-piece in the British Islands remains unloaded till Monday morning.

Success of the Puritan Legislation in Scotland.

This history of the divergence from continental custom may be written in two sentences. Puritanism obtained power to legislate, and made recreation illegal on Sunday. By laws of great severity it established new customs which have now, by lapse of time, become rather old customs; and these have completely obliterated from the ordinary British mind all traces of any recollection that the still older British customs were like those of the continental nations.

New Customs.

Opinion has gone even beyond legislation itself, by a process of growth and development. Here is an example. An amateur violinist was staying in an English house for a few days, including the first day

Development of Opinion.

times led to wrong, but he was not opposed in any way to Sunday dancing in private houses.

of the week. He took his violin out of its case and began to play a little in private. The lady of the house immediately entered the room and begged him to desist. "I am playing sacred music," he answered; "this is a part of Handel's *Messiah*." "That does not signify," was the rejoinder, "the music may be sacred, but the instrument is not." Here is a new development in the distinction between sacred and profane instruments, and a very subtle distinction it is. The organ, the harmonium,—in default of these, even the commonplace piano,—these are sacred in-

The Violin. struments, but not the voice-like violin. Yet the violin is but the lyre—"Jubal's lyre"—made capable of far more perfect expression.*

Rowing and Sailing on Sunday. When I lived in Scotland I had occasion to observe another very subtle distinction. It is forbidden to labour on the Sabbath-day, yet I found that the toilsome work of rowing was looked upon as innocent in comparison with sailing. This was because a white sail had rather a festive appearance. I was especially blamed for not removing the flag from my sailing-boat, for the same reason, though it might be argued that there can be nothing unholy in the crosses of St. Andrew and St. George. In France, sailing regattas are usually held on Sunday, with the full approval of the Church.

* The distinction between sacred and profane music is fictitious, merely depending on the title that a musician chooses to give to his composition. The distinction between serious and light music is real, whatever the title. This is so well understood in the Church of Rome that the priests allow any music to be performed in their churches which is the expression of a serious or sublime idea.

The establishment of Sabbatarian customs in Great Britain had an unforeseen effect on literature. It prepared the way for the success of theological books and periodicals by leaving the day, in the most pious families, without any other recreation than religious reading. The British read ten times as much about theology as the French, and therefore have a much more extensive knowledge of the subject. In France pious people read the *Imitation*, the mass-book, an abridgment of sacred history, and some printed sermons by the most celebrated ecclesiastical orators; but this is not to be compared with the range of English theological reading, both in the Bible itself and in all kinds of elaborate commentaries. As for French unbelievers, who are very numerous, they live outside of theology much more easily and completely than their English brethren, and often know so little about it that references to the Old Testament familiar to every Englishman would be unintelligible to them. The modern English political use of the cave of Adullam puzzled Frenchmen exceedingly, as they did not know anything about Adullam. One very curious and unexpected result of Sabbath strictness in Great Britain is that the British are much better prepared for German exegetic criticism than the French; so that the British often arrive at unbelief by laborious theological reading, whilst the French, as a general rule, come to it with much less trouble through Voltaire, and retain the Voltairean spirit. Of late years, however, certain scientific influences, especially that of Darwin, have been common to both countries, and

Effect of the Sabbath on Literature.

French Ignorance of the Bible.

English prepared for German Criticism.

the effect of theological studies counts for less, relatively, even in England.

Duelling an old English Custom.

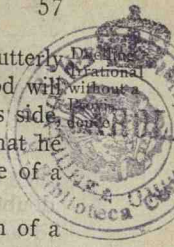
The best example of a difference of custom that is simply chronological is that of duelling. The English, by a real progress, have passed out of this custom; the French have not yet passed out of it, though it is probable that they will do so ultimately. Like all fashions very recently discarded, it seems absurd to those who thought it a part of the order of nature a little time ago. And so completely do we forget the reasons for discarded customs that the English now look upon duelling as quite contrary to reason, having forgotten the ancient reason on which the single combat was founded. Yet it was a very good reason indeed, according to the ideas that our fathers held about the government of the universe.

The old Religious Reason for Duelling.

The old belief, in France and England equally, was that the appeal to arms was an appeal to divine justice, and that God himself would interfere in the battle by protecting the combatant whose quarrel was rightful against the power and malice of his assailant. So long as this belief prevailed, a duel was incomparably more reasonable than is an action-at-law in the present day, for it appealed to infallible instead of to fallible justice, and in addition to being reasonable, it was distinctly a pious act, as the combatant proved his faith by staking his existence on his trust in the divine protection. "He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." The faith of David was the faith of the Middle Ages.

The custom lasted longer than the belief, even in England, and in France it has long survived all

faith in supernatural interference. The duel is utterly irrational when people do not believe that God will protect an inferior swordsman, with right on his side, against a better swordsman in the wrong, or that he will spare the innocent by deflecting the course of a bullet well aimed by a wicked adversary.



There has been, however, the intervention of a sort of secondary religion between the old one and modern unbelief. There has been the religion of honour. According to this, a man of honour was bound to expose his life on certain occasions to the rapier or pistol of a private enemy, and, if he fell, he fell a martyr to this religion of honour, leaving a name unsullied by the stain of cowardice, which was the equivalent of infidelity or apostasy. The Religion of Honour.

This religion survived in England even so late as the first half of the present century, and it still survives in France. The old English sentiment,—I say the old sentiment because contemporary Englishmen have got so far past it, though it is very recent in mere date,—the old English sentiment was expressed by Thackeray in the challenge sent by Clive Newcome to his cousin Barnes, and in the gratification it afforded to Sir George Tufto and to the Colonel, both of them elderly men. Nevertheless, as Thackeray knew that the religion of duelling was already dead in England when he wrote, he took care to make the action of Clive acceptable by assigning to it filial affection as a motive. The French sentiment about honour was described with disapproval in the case of de Castillonnes and Lord Kew. "Castillonnes had no idea but that he was The old English Sentiment. The French Sentiment about Honour.

going to the field of honour; stood with an undaunted scowl before his enemy's pistol; and discharged his own, and brought down his opponent, with a grim satisfaction and a comfortable conviction afterwards that he had acted *en galant homme.*" And so, no doubt, he had, not only according to modern French ideas, but according to old English ideas also.

The New-comes.

General Tufto was of the old school when he said of Sir Barnes Newcome, after he had received Clive's challenge, "At first I congratulated him, thinking your boy's offer must please him, as it would have pleased any fellow *in our time* to have a shot." And the Colonel himself, instead of reprimanding Clive for wishing to commit murder, "regarded his son with a look of beautiful, inexpressible affection. And he laid his hand on his son's shoulder and smiled, and stroked Clive's yellow moustache.

"'And—and did Barnes send no answer to that letter you wrote him?' he said slowly.

"Clive broke out into a laugh that was almost a sob. He took both his father's hands. 'My dear, dear old father, what an—old—trump you are!' My eyes were so dim I could hardly see the two men as they embraced."

All this is much more French (even down to the embracing and the tear-dimmed eyes of the spectator) than the opinions professed about duelling by the English newspapers of 1886. According to them, a man who sends a challenge is ridiculous, and no more. This marks the final extinction of the old sentiment.

Extinction of the old Sentiment.

Another indication of this change is the ridicule

of duelling on the ground that it is not dangerous. French duelling is constantly represented in English newspapers as a very safe kind of ceremony, in which a slight scratch only is to be apprehended. As to this, perhaps I may be allowed to give an instance that was brought very near home.

I had been away for several days, and on my return journey dined at a railway station. The waiter had known me for years, and, according to his custom, enlivened my solitary dinner with a little talk. He asked if I had "heard about M. de St. Victor." I had heard nothing. "Because, sir," the waiter continued, "he was killed this morning in a duel in the wood at Fragny." Now, it so happened that my wife and daughter were to have lunched and spent that afternoon with Madame de St. Victor; but as her husband's dead body had been brought back to the château of Montjeu, where he lived, with a sword wound through it, Madame de St. Victor did not receive her friends that day.* A French Duel.

A single event of that kind, occurring in a family not altogether strange to you, does more to make you feel the grim reality of duelling than many newspaper paragraphs. In this particular case the incident arose from a correspondence between two proud and brave gentlemen about their game preserves. One of them had written in a manner that Cause of the Duel.

* M. de St. Victor managed the estates belonging to the Countess de Talleyrand, and he lived at her old château of Montjeu, one of the most romantically situated places in France, in the midst of a large well-wooded park upon the hills.

offended the other, and had refused to withdraw his letter. The code of honour then made a duel almost inevitable, and the correspondence being continued very soon led to it. An especially significant thing about this duel was that the conqueror was known as a remarkably expert swordsman, which the victim was not to the same degree. This demonstrates the real unfairness of duelling, as we see that the weaker or less expert antagonist goes down, whatever may be the righteousness of his cause.

The sense of this unfairness is gradually tending (in spite of appearances) to the abolition of the duel in France. There are two signs that the custom is growing weaker. The opinion that duels are contrary to reason is more frequently expressed in conversation, especially by women, than it used to be, and the duellists themselves are generally satisfied with the degree of deference to custom which goes as far as the first wound, and do not vindictively thirst for each other's blood. The difficulty in abolishing the duel strikes an intelligent Frenchman in this way. "The duel," he thinks, "is evidently a most irrational institution; but when there is a quarrel between two high-spirited men I cannot see how it is to come to an end otherwise." Then he will say, "I know that the duel is obsolete in England, which is a happy thing for your country; but I cannot imagine how an English gentleman behaves when he is insulted." To this difficulty I usually reply that public opinion in his country condemns the insolent man for his bad manners, and puts itself on the side of any gentleman who conducts himself with simple

Difficulty of abolishing the Duel.

dignity, so that the latter is free to treat his enemy with silent contempt.

Changes of custom in one of the two nations, which have had the effect of separating it still further from the other, may be traced in several minor habits that are now considered especially and characteristically English. I can remember the time when the middle classes of England hardly knew the taste of French wine. Port and sherry were the wines of the middle class. The upper classes, in those days, offered French red wines at dessert under the general name of "claret," without distinguishing between Bordeaux and Burgundy, and consequently without mentioning vineyards, unless the host happened to be, or pretended to be, a connoisseur. The taxes on French wines were afterwards reduced, and just before the reduction the kind of middle-class people who prided themselves on being especially national often declared that John Bull would never take to those light French wines, implying that he was a personage of more manly tastes, and writers in the press quoted a dignitary of the Anglican Church who had declared that "claret would be port, if it could," which is like saying that port is anxious to become brandy. These good middle-class people, who made it a part of John Bull's character to despise their French wines, seem to have been perfectly unaware that their ancestors, not less English than themselves, had for centuries been hearty appreciators of French wines, and that, in old times, casks of Bordeaux or Burgundy were to be found not only in the cellars of the rich, but

Wines.

French Wines in old England.

in country hostelries. This may be a trifling matter, but to have the same taste in wines is not altogether unimportant as an aid to good-fellowship. A Frenchman looks upon an incapacity to appreciate the best wines—by which, of course, he always means the best French wines—as the sign of the outer barbarian. What he most likes in the Belgians is the just value they attach to the produce of *"les meilleurs crûs"* and their excellent, well-filled cellars.

Another great change of custom in England, separating her from France, is of quite modern introduction. There was a time when both countries were total abstainers from tea-drinking, and, so far, exactly alike; now England is a great tea-drinking country and France is not. Here is a new subject on which they are not in sympathy. It may seem a trifle; but has the reader ever observed Englishwomen in France deprived of tea or supplied with the beverage in a weaker condition than they like? At such times they have a very low opinion of Gallic civilisation. Far-seeing Englishwomen who are accustomed to the continent take their own teapots with their private supplies, and make the indispensable decoction themselves. When drinking it they feel like Christians in a pagan land. Is that nothing? Does it not produce a perceptible sense of estrangement from the French? Tea-drinking has now become one of those immensely important customs, like smoking and coffee in the East, that have connected themselves with the amenities of human intercourse, and to brew your cup in the solitude of a foreign hotel is to feel yourself an alien.

Tea.

English-women in France.

Yet how long is it since the English began to drink tea? They began tasting it experimentally, as a few Englishmen now smoke hashish, about the middle of the seventeenth century. Compared with ale and wine, it is a novelty. The greatest of Englishwomen, Queen Elizabeth, who was of English blood by father and mother, and thoroughly national, never drank a cup of tea in her life, and did her work energetically without it.

Novelty of Tea-drinking in England.

The use of tea has produced a special meal in the English middle classes which is unknown in France as it was unknown in England two hundred years ago. The French way of living, under other names, bears a near resemblance to old English habits. The *déjeuner à la fourchette* is the early dinner, the *dîner* is the supper. The French first breakfast is modern, when *café au lait* is taken, but great numbers of French people take soup or a glass of white wine with a crust of bread, and many take nothing at all. Breakfast and tea are the peculiarly English meals, and they are modern. The one great English innovation which the French have never been able to accept is that of eating salty and greasy food, such as fried bacon, and drinking hot and sweet tea or coffee at the same time.

The Peculiarly English Meals.

As an example of an old English fashion that is now looked upon as French, I may mention the way of treating the beard adopted by Napoleon III., and in imitation of him by many French soldiers and civilians. The moustache in combination with the *barbiche* was looked upon as a French fashion by the English, and very few contemporary Englishmen

The Beard and Moustache.

adopted it for that reason. They forgot that it was an old English fashion,—much older than the pair of whiskers with the shaven chin and upper lip which used to be looked upon as national in the highest degree. At the same time the English did not notice that the way of shaving the chin and upper lip which they believed to be so much the national mark of an Englishman was a rigorous contemporary French fashion for two classes, namely, magistrates (with barristers) and domestic servants. This is now somewhat relaxed, the tendency in both nations being towards complete liberty about the wearing of the beard.

Shaving.

CHAPTER II.

COMFORT.

The English character on this very important subject, for the English are at the same time one of the hardiest peoples in the world and quite the most self-indulgent up to that point which is defined by the national word "comfort." The English hardy yet Comfort-loving.

By "comfort" an Englishman understands perfect physical ease and something more. The state of perfect comfort is partly ideal. Tapestry on a wall is comfortable, yet we do not touch it, we do not wrap ourselves up in it. The mind is cognisant of its presence as a warm, soft tissue, and that is all. Carpets are a little nearer, physically, as we walk upon them; but nine-tenths of the comfort they give is also purely ideal, for it can matter very little to us that a whole floor should be clothed with a soft pile when we can get as much softness on bare boards by wearing slippers. Real and Ideal Comfort.

An Englishman's passion for comfort is also closely connected with his love of despatch, and his ingenuity in devising little conveniences that diminish friction. In this ingenuity he has no rival, but it sometimes defeats itself by making the conveniences themselves an embarrassment. Little Conveniences.

This is one of those matters which exhibit in a striking light the powerlessness of education, as the English of the comfortable classes have received their highest teaching from Greek philosophers and Christian apostles, two classes of teachers who, both by example and precept, inculcated the value of self-denial and simplicity of life. We do not know very much of the life of Jesus, but the little that we do know is entirely in favour of the belief that it was almost destitute of physical comfort, and that he lived amongst a class of poor people to whom comfort was unknown. On one occasion, as we all remember, he expressly discouraged anxiety about eating and dress; and as for lodging, there is no evidence either that he had a dwelling of his own or that he ever intentionally sought the hospitality of the rich. The lives of Socrates and Epictetus show an equal indifference to comfort; Socrates lived just as it happened, caring only for the life of thought; Epictetus, in a passage of splendid eloquence, rejoiced in his mental freedom, and demonstrated that it was compatible with the hardest and barest life.*

Example given by Jesus.

Socrates and Epictetus.

* The passage is very well known, but I may quote it for the convenience of some readers:—

"And how is it possible that a man who has nothing, who is naked, houseless, without a hearth, squalid, without a slave, without a city, can pass a life that flows easily? See, God has sent you a man to show you that it is possible. Look at me, who am without a city, without a house, without possessions, without a slave; I sleep on the ground; I have no wife, no children, no prætorium, but only the earth and heavens, and one poor cloak. And what do I want? Am I not without sorrow?

The English answer to Epictetus would be that he lived in another age, that he was unmarried, and therefore had not to satisfy the claims of others, and finally, that he did nothing notable except philosophising. If a modern Englishman tried to live like Epictetus he would inflict a kind of social paralysis upon himself, he would deny himself his due share in English life. That is the great practical difficulty in the way of hard living and high thinking. It is well for the philosopher, but he cannot require the same austerity of his family and his guests. No individual Englishman is responsible for the national standard of comfort. It has grown as custom grows, and is now so firmly fixed that Wisdom herself has to submit to it.

Practical Difficulty of plain Living.

Individuals not Responsible.

There is even a marked difference of opinion between the present generation and that which has just passed away. I have known people, born at the close of the eighteenth century, who still retained an antique prejudice against self-indulgence. They still had the idea that there was something shameful in excessive comfort, that a certain discipline of hardness was necessary to manly dignity, and, in a

The old Prejudice against Self-indulgence.

Am I not without fear? Am I not free? When did any of you see me failing in the object of my desire? or ever falling into that which I would avoid? Did I ever blame God or man? Did I ever accuse any man? Did any of you ever see me with a sorrowful countenance? And how do I meet with those whom ye are afraid of and admire? Do not I treat them like slaves? Who, when he sees me, does not think that he sees his king and master?"—*Epictetus*, Long's Translation, Book III. chap. XXII.

minor degree, even to womanly. I have known an English gentleman of the old school, a vigorous and rich old man, who never would use a railway rug or a travelling cap; such things seemed to him concessions to the weakness of the age. At seventy, he would sit upright through a long railway journey, and he preferred second-class carriages, as being less luxurious. His sister belonged to the same school; she never would lean back in a chair, and she disliked lounging habits of all kinds, as being associated with the idea of laziness. People of that kind maintained a strict discipline over themselves; the body had to obey the will. I have since found the same stoicism in full strength amongst the French peasantry. If any of their class betray too much care for their own comfort the rest laugh at them. They are hard with themselves, too, on principle, though there is certainly now a tendency to admit comforts which were formerly unknown.

Old-fashioned Stoicism.

Stoicism in the French Peasantry.

The idea that it is better not to be too comfortable is now, I believe, extinct in the richer classes in England. They have not become effeminate, but they think that it is well to accept all pleasant things in the right time and place. Why not be snug and warm in a railway carriage? Why not lounge in an easy-chair in the drawing-room? The effect of such indulgences has not been, hitherto, so softening as the austerity of a severer age apprehended. Extreme comfort, in an energetic race, produces healthy reactions. It leads directly to *ennui*, and *ennui* leads to a desire for a more active physical life. The age of the first-class carriage is also the age of the velo-

Modern Acceptance of what is Pleasant.

cipede. The most comfortable classes in England are also the most addicted to field sports.

Comfort favourable to Health.

The truth is that the kinds of comfort most appreciated in England include several things which are very favourable to health, especially spacious habitations, pure air, plenty of water, thorough cleanliness, and good food. The increase of comfort has been accompanied by an increase of temperance. It has led to no serious evil, save one.

The Strain of Expense.

The one evil is the trying strain of expense to which an extremely high standard of living subjects all except the rich. It keeps all current expenses high, and therefore weighs pitilessly on those who must be refined and have not large independent means. A prudent young Englishman may well hesitate before he enters upon marriage with the prospect of a large house full of children and servants in which no shabbiness, bareness, or imperfection is to be tolerated. So far as pecuniary prudence is concerned, he would probably do better to fill a stable with fine horses. The Archbishop of Canterbury, whilst lamenting the early marriages of the improvident classes, has declared that the young men in the comfortable classes "are giving up the idea of marriage." This is the visible result. There is another consequence not so visible to the world in the harassed lives of unnumbered heads of families, the men whose days and nights are a combination of bodily comfort with mental toil and anxiety, the men to whom physical hardship would come, if they could only have it, as a counter-irritant and relief.

Comfort combined with Anxiety.

There has been little about the French in this

chapter, and what there is to say may be expressed in few words. They have not naturally a genius for comfort like the English. Their natural way of living is hard in poverty and luxurious in riches, austerity and luxury equally belonging to the French nature. Of comfort they know what they have imperfectly learned from their English neighbours. At Versailles, in the days of Louis XIV., there was dazzling splendour, but comfort was utterly unknown. Modern French country houses (I mean those built for rich people in the second half of the nineteenth century) are planned as intelligently as the English, but the older châteaux were incredibly rough and wanting in the most elementary arrangements. Even yet, in the old provincial towns, French people put up with lodgings so awkwardly planned that an Englishman would not rent them. New town houses are better contrived, but still deficient in space.

Comfort little known in France.

French Habitations.

The question of expenditure is favourable to the French in this way, that they do without luxury more easily than the English do without comfort. The Frenchman in adversity falls back on the austere side of his nature; being both Sybarite and Spartan, he has the Spartan half of himself always ready for hard times. An impoverished French gentleman lodges in bare small rooms and lives principally on soup.* It is ten times harder for an Englishman to

Luxury less Indispensable than Comfort.

* A friend of mine knows an impoverished French Marquis, the head of an old family, who lives like a peasant in a bare old house that is never repaired. He and his sister consume one bottle of common wine between them each week, and they are served by one old faithful female domestic. Their

give up his spacious house with carpets on the floors.

The expenses of those who can afford to live largely are the same in both countries. Comfort, in the ideal English degree, is not less costly than luxury, though a careful analysis of details would prove that it is not precisely the same thing.

Comfort and Luxury equally Costly.

ruin was caused by lavish uncalculating generosity, by what Herbert Spencer would call the culpable excess of altruism.

CHAPTER III.

LUXURY.

Want of a common Standard.

It is most difficult to fix any common standard of luxury in two different nations. In a single nation the question whether an indulgence may be considered luxurious or not is settled by the national public opinion. There is no public opinion common to France and England.

Difficulty of Definition.

Even the definition of the word "luxury" is not so easy as it seems. In practice, people define it for themselves according to their own characters. An austere person would condemn as luxury what another would call "comfort;" a very luxurious person would be proud of luxury as a proof of taste and cultivation.

Littré's Definition.

Littré defined luxury (*luxe*) as "magnificence in dress, in the table, in furniture, an abundance of sumptuous things." He made a curious distinction between luxury and sumptuousness. In his opinion sumptuousness expressed the costliness of things, whilst luxury was the taste for what is sumptuous.

Lafaye's Definition.

Lafaye, in his valuable dictionary of French synonyms, carried out the same idea further in the region of morals. He said that luxury might belong to all conditions of life, whereas magnificence and sumptuousness can only belong to lofty posi-

tions. In Lafaye's opinion luxury is a fault or a vice which consists in the want of simplicity, or in offending against simplicity in one's manner of living, or in his way of doing things, or of showing himself. Magnificence and splendour in great personages or in great cities are not vices, according to Lafaye, but the expression of generosity and grandeur.

Cheap Pleasures not considered Luxurious.

In private life the idea of luxury is connected more nearly with expense than with enjoyment. Very cheap things are not considered luxuries, though they may be delightful. A shepherd on a hillside has access to a cool fountain, and in a hot summer he delights in drinking the water and in resting under the shade of the trees. These are clearly enjoyments of sense, and exquisite enjoyments, but they are not luxuries for the shepherd. Iced water and green shade are luxuries in the heart of Paris. In a good fruit year peaches, however delicious, are not luxuries in central France, neither was wine in the happy times before the phylloxera. The former abundance of wine has led to the free employment of it in French cookery. This always strikes English people as luxurious.

Necessaries fixed by Custom.

Independently of cheapness and abundance, the exigencies of custom often determine that an indulgence is to be considered necessary, and not a luxury, when in reality it is quite superfluous. Thus, carpets are a necessity in England, in and above the middle classes, and a luxury in France.

Various Developments of Luxury.

Luxury develops itself in different directions, even with reference to the same enjoyment. The rich English and French both spend freely on the

pleasures of the table, but in England there is more pride in the luxury of the service, and in France in that of the cookery.

Exotic Indulgences of the English.

One difference in the luxury of the two countries is that the English are much more exotic in their indulgences than the French. Nearly all English luxuries come from abroad, whilst by far the greater part of French luxuries are procured at home. This may be connected with the broad, far-reaching, world-embracing character of the English intellect in its contrast with the narrower and more national French mind.

A religious theorist has maintained that Divine Providence gives to every nation, in the products of its own soil, whatever is best for the inhabitants. If that is so, the French carry out the intentions of Providence much more completely than the English, but they are more favourably situated for conformity. The English, however, have so completely adopted some foreign luxuries as almost to believe them indigenous. In this way tea has become an English beverage, and it used to be more English to drink port than claret, though port was equally foreign and came from a greater distance.

Domestic Servants.

Supposing an Englishman and a Frenchman to be in the same rank of life, and in a rank requiring servants, the Englishman will have twice or three times as many domestics as the Frenchman, and their service will be more accurate and minute than that in the French establishment. The English domestics will be more showy in liveries, and there will be altogether more visible grandeur about the service.

In France domestics are kept because they are useful; in England, because they are ornamental.

The key to the luxuries of the two nations may be found in two words, *state* and *elegance*. The desire of the English heart is for *state*, implying size in the house and numbers in the retainers. French ambition contents itself with a few small rooms and few servants; but it seeks distinction in elegance. French elegance, like that of antiquity, begins with the person, especially in women. In all kinds of feminine luxuries, particularly dress, France has kept the lead and gives the laws to England. The Church of Rome has settled that matter in her own authoritative and decided way by imposing simple and permanent uniforms on all women who belong to religious congregations; but her power, alas! is unequal to the far greater task of imposing a simple and rational dress upon all women whatsoever. The true French female mind, when left to its own devices, loves neither permanence nor simplicity in costume; it desires the utmost elaboration combined with incessant change. It employs thousands of *couturières* in cutting valuable materials into shreds to be worn for a few days or hours. This modern changefulness has one good effect, it is certainly on the side of cleanliness. The French luxury of to-day is far more closely associated with cleanliness than that of preceding ages. It is especially the luxury of *renewal*, first in dress, and also in furniture and habitation. The reconstruction of Paris has substituted clean streets, well lighted and well aired,

State and Elegance.

Luxury in Dress.

French Feminine Tendencies.

The Luxury of Renewal.

CHAPTER IV.

MANNERS.

National and Class Codes.

CODES of manners have a very restricted rule. They are national, and in the nation each class has its own code. If, therefore, one nation judges another by its own standard, it is evident that abstract justice must be impossible; yet it is difficult to find any other criterion.

The reader may try to discover some criterion outside of national peculiarities, but he will certainly meet with this difficulty, that although people of different nations might be induced to agree about some virtue that manners ought to have, they are not likely to agree about its practical application and expression.

Courtesy.

For example, let us take the virtue of courtesy. Are people to be courteous or discourteous? We should find an almost universal agreement on the general principle that courtesy is a part of good manners; but we should disagree on the application of it. As a rule, the Frenchman would be likely to think the Englishman's courtesy too restricted and reserved. Much of it, and that the best, would even escape his notice, whilst the Englishman would consider French politeness overdone.

Difficulty of inter-

The great difficulty in judging such a question

as this is that we require to have been long accustomed to manners of a peculiar kind before we can estimate them at their precise significance. If they are new to us we do not understand them, we are not able to read the thoughts and intentions which express themselves in forms as in a sort of language. Interpreting Manners.

The words used in epistolary forms are the most familiar example of the *second* meaning, the only true meaning that there is in forms of any kind. If a superior in rank subscribes himself my obedient servant, I know that this meaning is as remote as possible from the dictionary sense of the words. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to suppose that the words, as he uses them, are meaningless. Such a form, in English, is intended to convey the idea of distance without contempt. It is as much as to say, in familiar English, "I don't know you, and don't care to know you; but I have no desire to be rude to you." The form *Dear Sir,* in English, has nothing to do with affection. It means, "I know very little of you; but wish to avoid the coldness of *Sir* by itself." *My dear Sir* means something of this kind, "I remember meeting you in society." Epistolary Forms.

A literal translation of these forms into French would entirely fail to convey their significance. You must be on the most intimate terms with a Frenchman before he will venture to address you as *Cher Monsieur.* There is absolutely no form of address in French that translates the meanings of *Dear Sir* and *My dear Sir.* They can only be translated No French Equivalents for English Forms.

It is very difficult for a non-ceremonious people to understand the precise value of old ceremonial forms. Even the poor and meagre survivals of them seem devoid of meaning to those who do not practise them at all, yet assuredly they had a meaning which was not exactly that of the words employed. After much reflection and much studying of the matter, as a barbarian, from the outside, I have come to the conclusion that a great repertory of formal phrases would be valued as a means of decently concealing the emptiness of genteel intercourse. To us they are embarrassing because we have not learned our lesson well, but the French upper classes of the eighteenth century knew them all by heart, and could repeat them without thinking. When people take any serious interest in a subject worth talking about, polite phrases are forgotten, the only instance to the contrary that I remember being the pretty one of a French professor lecturing in the royal presence, when he announced that two gases would "have the honour of combining before His Majesty."

Convenience of Formal Phrases.

The real embarrassments of social intercourse are awkward silence, stiffness, ignorance of conventional usages. As for the degree of affectation or falsity that there may be in the expression of so many amiable or deferential sentiments that one does not exactly feel, everybody knows that they have only a secondary signification.

Embarrassments of Social Intercourse.

In any attempt to judge of manners, especially in a foreign nation, we are liable to two mistakes. We are likely to think that a degree of polish inferior to our own is rudeness, whilst the refinement

Our Opinion about Foreign Manners.

that surpasses ours is affectation, we ourselves having exactly that perfection of good breeding which is neither one nor the other. An Englishman is particularly liable to think in this way, because the present English ideal of good manners is a studied simplicity. We come to think that a simple manner is unaffected, whilst high polish must have been learned from the etiquette-book. However, in a perfectly bred French gentleman, a somewhat ceremonious manner with a vigilant politeness is so habitual as to be second nature. It remains constantly the same; if it were only assumed, it would be involuntarily forgotten in privacy or in moments of fatigue or vexation.

English Simplicity.

The history of the relation between English and French manners may be conveniently divided into three periods.

In the eighteenth century manners were ceremonious in both countries. English people used "Sir" and "Madam," they bowed and were punctilious, they went through complicated little performances of graceful attitudes and expressions. In the first half of the nineteenth century the English laid these old fashions aside and became simple in their manners. The French kept to the ancient ways, and so there was a great contrast. In the second half of the nineteenth century the French tendency is towards English simplicity, so that the two nations may ultimately be as near each other in simplicity as they were once in ceremony.

Manners in the Eighteenth Century.

The French retain old Fashions.

Another point of resemblance may deserve notice. When the English were very ceremonious and polite

Politeness co-existing with Rudeness.

the ordinary manners of the nation were rude, with occasional explosions of coarse anger between gentlemen.* So the French have been, and still are, at once a very polite and a very rude nation. Their politeness and their rudeness are now decreasing together, which leads to the conclusion that ceremonious politeness is a defence against surrounding barbarism, and therefore the mark of an imperfect state of general civilisation. There may come, in the future, in both countries, a uniform mediocrity, when everybody will have tolerable manners, when a sort of informal serviceableness will be the universal rule, and all graces, delicacies, and refinements will be forgotten.

A Future of Mediocrity.

The reader may remember a passage in John Mill's autobiography, where he makes a contrast between English and French manners in connection with his early residence in France at Sir Samuel Bentham's house near Montpellier. "I even then felt," he says, "though without stating it clearly to myself, the contrast between the frank sociability and amiability of French personal intercourse, and the English mode of existence, in which everybody acts as if everybody else (with few or no exceptions) was

Mill on French and English Intercourse.

* I am myself old enough to remember how, when I was a boy, two gentlemen of good family quarrelled over their port wine after dinner, and one of them shouted to the other, "I'll pull your nose, sir, I'll pull your nose!" Some highly polished young reviewer of the present day will say that I had fallen into low company, but those gentlemen of a past time were quite as good as he is likely to be with all his polish, and it is probable that the aristocratic spirit was far more genuine in them than it is in anybody now.

either an enemy or a bore. In France, it is true, the bad as well as the good points, both of individual and of national character, come more to the surface, and break out more fearlessly in ordinary intercourse, than in England; but the general habit of the people is to show, as well as to expect, friendly feeling in every one towards every other, wherever there is not some positive cause for the opposite. In England it is only of the best bred people, in the upper or middle ranks, that anything like this can be said."

This judgment is at the same time bold and true. The English do not care about any reputation for politeness, but do greatly care about their dignity, and are extremely afraid of compromising it by being *incautiously* amiable. When, however, an Englishman knows you, and has come to the conclusion that he can be amiable with safety, that you are not the pushing person he dreads and detests, then his undemonstrative politeness will go much further than that of the Frenchman. You may know Frenchmen for twenty years without getting beyond that first stage of Gallic sociability that gives such a charm to the beginning of intercourse with them. One cause of this difference is that the English are an extremely hospitable people, and the French just the reverse. Acquaintance with French people is therefore very frequently limited to short formal calls, in which everybody acts a part in repeating polite commonplaces, leaving any mutual knowledge of minds and hearts exactly where it was before.

English Dignity.

English Hospitality.

Here is another point of contrast that may be worth mentioning. French gentlemen in their inter-

Excessive Politeness as Defence.

course with the middle classes often use an *excessive* politeness as a defence against intimacy, and this is perfectly understood. English habits would make excessive politeness unnatural, so the Englishman defends himself by a chilling reserve. The purpose is the same in both cases.

The Personal Intention in Manners.

Manners always represent an ideal of some kind. The English way of behaviour seems to stand for dignity, the French for grace. Manners in both countries are more the representation of self in outward forms than any evidence of real consideration for the person to whom they are addressed. The Englishman wishes to convey the idea that he himself has dignity, that he is a gentleman; the Frenchman is anxious to show that he is a witty and accomplished man of the world. In England dignity is maintained by coldness, by repose, by the absence of effort, including low-toned, indolent enunciation; in France the notion of polish requires, above all things, brilliance. The English criticism on a Frenchman's manners is that he lays himself out too much for admiration, and seems to beg for sympathy too much. French criticism on an Englishman's manners is simply that he is destitute of manners. It is almost idle to compare two styles of behaviour that are founded on different principles. Without pretending to pronounce upon the merits of either, I should say that the virtues of English behaviour are chiefly of a negative kind, and those of French behaviour positive. An Englishman is pleasant because he is *not* noisy, *not* troublesome, *not* obtrusive, *not* contradictory, and because he has the tact to avoid

Dignity and Polish.

Virtues of English behaviour negative.

conversational pitfalls and precipices. The Frenchman is agreeable because he *is* lively, *is* amusing, *is* amiable, *is* successful in the battle against dulness, and will take trouble to make conversation interesting. Those of French Behaviour Positive.

Bad manners in England are simply boorish; in France they are noisy, insolent, and full of contradiction. A thoroughly vulgar Frenchman is overbearing and menacing in his tone, he is loud and positive, and if you attempt to speak he will interrupt you. In his presence one has no resource but silence. Even his own more civilised countrymen consider him unendurable. Bad Manners in France and England.

Manners change greatly with localities in Great Britain and France, and it is remarkable that they are often worst in the most industrious and advanced parts of the country. In the Highlands of Scotland, where industrial civilisation is almost unknown, popular manners are excellent; in some parts of the Lowlands they are rude, repellent, and unsympathetic. The best popular English manners are to be found in certain rural districts, the worst in thriving and energetic Lancashire. Too much energy seems unfavourable to the best behaviour, which grows to perfection amongst idlers, or in agricultural and pastoral communities, where folks work in a leisurely fashion and have many spare moments on their hands. Manners and Locality. Industrialism.

In the course of this chapter I have avoided exceptions for the sake of clearness, which makes it necessary to add that there are people in both

Non-national Exceptions.

G. H. Lewes.

nations whose manners are not national. It is not an English characteristic to be a lively and brilliant *causeur,* yet there are Englishmen who have that quality and that art. The manners of George Henry Lewes were more French than English; he had the openness and ease of a Frenchman, his frank welcome, his gay cordiality, his abundant flow of words, his natural delight in conversation, his unhesitating self-confidence. There is also a small class of Frenchmen who have those qualities in manners which are believed to be exclusively English. They are quiet and reserved, they listen well, they never interrupt, they do not attempt to shine. When they talk, they talk deliberately, and in the purest language, never condescending to use the slang which is now rapidly corrupting the French tongue, and they employ terms accurately without French exaggeration. They are polite, but with an intelligent moderation, and they make no show of politeness.

These are exceptions on the favourable side. There are also innumerable exceptions which are nothing but a variety of individual failures to approach the national ideal. It is useless to attempt the description of these. All comic and satirical literature takes them for its own.

CHAPTER V.

DECORUM.

THE French laugh at the English for their *"décorum anglais,"* as if the English were alone in having a strict rule about what is becoming. The French themselves are equally strict, but in other ways, nor is this strictness confined to the upper classes, for the French peasantry have it in a marked degree.* *Le Décorum anglais.*

The maintenance of decorum as a principle and a rule is compatible with astonishing oversights and omissions which strike a foreigner so forcibly that he thinks there is no decorum at all. In these cases, the foreigner's mistake is usually to be unaware of some powerful conventionalism by which decorum is theoretically maintained whilst it is practically violated. Travellers in Japan are astonished by the old Japanese system of bathing. One asks for a bath in a Japanese inn, and it is prepared, perhaps, in the common room or the kitchen, in the midst of the usual move- Oversights in Decorum. Japanese Bathing

* For example, in the French neighbourhood best known to me it is contrary to peasant decorum for a farmer and his wife to walk to church together. He must go first with his male companions, and she must follow with the women. It is also contrary to decorum for a man to be seen giving his arm to his wife, under any circumstances.

ment of men and women. Here, if anywhere, is surely a gross violation of decorum. No; it appears that by a convenient fiction a bather is not seen, and the same fiction allows the Japanese themselves to bathe together without any separation of sexes.

English Bathing in former Days.

When I was a boy there existed a certain conventionalism of the same kind in England. In those days bathing-dresses were only used by women, men always bathed in a state of complete nudity, and they were frequently close to the sea-shore whilst ladies were walking about and looking on. A French author gave, at that time or a little later, an account of his embarrassment when bathing in a lonely place on the shores of England. He had left his clothes on the beach, when some ladies came and pitched their camp-stools on the spot. He splashed to attract their attention, but they sat on, impassible. At length he quitted the water and made a bold advance, but with no effect. Finally he marched past, like a regiment at a review, and the ladies kept their places. Nothing, in this little adventure, violates the English decorum of former days. The Frenchman could not have presented himself, like Adam, in a garden, but on the sea-beach *il n'y avait rien à dire.* The ladies bravely acted on the fiction that a *sea*-bather is invisible, and they consistently carried out that fiction to the end. The Frenchman knew not that he had the ring of Gyges, the talisman of invisibility.

A French Bather in England.

The French have a conventionalism about bathing-dresses which does not exist in England to the same degree. French decorum permits men and women to bathe together freely on condition that

French Bathing.

they have a costume. At the seaside a "full costume" is required, but that is not much, and the feminine form of it is very pretty—rather too pretty, in fact, as it is too obviously intended to attract eyes rather than turn them away. Besides being pretty, the feminine bathing-dresses are extremely varied, leaving free play to the inventive fancy. A puritan legislator would feel tempted to replace those charming costumes by the plain old English bathing-gown, which was doubly useful, as it concealed both ugliness and beauty with equal impartiality.

The Frenchman in his *Caleçon.*

French decorum always requires a man to bathe at least with the minimum of dress. Attired in his *caleçon de bain* a Frenchman seems to think that it covers the whole body, and he does not lose his self-possession in any society, but will exhibit his short and muscular person to all observers.

Cantabridgian Actors.

It may be noted as a curiosity of modern English decorum, that when the young men at Cambridge played the *Birds* of Aristophanes, their legs and feet were bare in the Greek fashion. This would certainly not have been done or tolerated in contemporary France, though the imitation of antiquity went equally far under the first Empire, for example, in the costume of Madame Tallien and her imitators.

The Decorum of Classes.

Every class has its own decorum. Amongst artists' models there is a kind of professional dignity which makes it disagreeable for the better class of them to be seen by any one who is not an artist. A French girl who was posing in an *atelier* before thirty students

screamed and wrapped herself in a sheet because an unprofessional man had entered the room. In this case there was some reason in the model's conception of decorum. She was there for her own hard work, but not to be stared at by strangers.

Natural Necessities.

There is a very important practical question of decorum with regard to natural necessities. Although no human being can escape from that law, and although by mere healthy living we all openly confess that we have conformed to it, a foolish decorum refuses to recognise it. In England this foolish decorum has long been tyrannically prevalent, but railways have done much to break it down by accustoming travellers of both sexes to acknowledge without shame the existence of the need, and it has now become customary in England to provide for it, both at railway stations and in exhibitions. This is a triumph of reason which acknowledges the whole of human nature over a conventionalism which would set up a false and impossible ideal. There still remains the inconsistency by which a need provided for by all railway companies and organisers of exhibitions is ignored in the streets of the great English towns. This way of treating the matter is, in truth, directly contrary to its own purpose of an ideally decorous life, as these lower wants occupy a very small space in a man's time and thought when they can be immediately satisfied, whereas they become intrusive and importunate when the satisfaction is denied. In obedience to this unreasonable decorum the English still inflict upon themselves very frequent

Foolish Decorum.

An English Inconsistency.

inconvenience, occasionally amounting to torture, and in some cases to serious physical injury.*

French Simplicity.

The French have always been more simple and natural in regard to these matters; but they may be justly blamed for cynicism in the sound original meaning of the word. They are now beginning to imitate the English by establishing a proper degree of privacy. This is one of those numerous cases in which the two countries may improve each other's customs.

English Decorum chooses French Words.

English decorum has a weakness in its choice of French words to express what it will not venture to say in English, as if the French words were not either equally plain for anybody who knew the language, or useless for one who did not. There is a good old English word for a woman's shirt, the English for it is "shift," which gives the cleanly idea of a thing that is to be often changed. This word has been abandoned from an unpatriotic modesty or prudery, and replaced by the French word "chemise," as if "chemise" were more decorous. In the same way "nude" and "nudity" (French words) are somehow believed to be much more chaste than "naked" and "nakedness," and "enceinte" purer than "with child." This fancy for French terms is the more remarkable that the English translation of the Bible, which is considered a model of pure and dignified language, does not give the slightest encouragement to it, but says everything in the plainest native way.

Plain Language of the Bible.

* I have heard of two cases that ended fatally, simply in consequence of obedience to English decorum.

Liberty of language in conversation is very much a matter of dates. In Queen Anne's time people said things at English tables that would be thought monstrous under Queen Victoria. In fact, at the present time, the purification of talk has gone so far in England that people will neither utter nor listen to what they constantly read in the newspapers which lie about in their own rooms. In France there still remains a certain old-fashioned tolerance, an inheritance from the eighteenth century; but with this reserve or proviso, that every infraction of strict decorum must be witty. On that condition it is likely to be pardoned. The most astounding instance I ever heard of was the song of the Mayor of Eu. That functionary was invited to the Château of Eu, in the days of Louis Philippe, so he made or learned a song about his mayoralty, and sang it to the royal family at dessert according to the old-fashioned French usage. The composition had two senses, one perfectly innocent and on the surface, the other not immoral but prodigiously indecorous. The royal family understood, laughed, and forgave. Such a thing might have been done in England at the court of Queen Elizabeth. A President of the French Chamber, being annoyed by one of the members, saw an opportunity for a witticism like those of the audacious mayor. It was a pun on the member's name, and all parties in the House received it with unanimous appreciation.

Purification of Talk.

The Mayor of Eu.

Recent Character of present English Decorum.

To estimate these breaches of decorum justly, we must remember how extremely recent the present English decorum is. It belongs almost exclusively

to the present century, and is the mark of maturity in the public mind. In the youth of nations, as in that of individuals, grossness of a certain kind seems amusing. It makes school-boys laugh, even when it is quite devoid of wit; and I have said that in contemporary French society it is tolerated only on condition of being witty. English society is older and graver, older by a hundred years, just as it is more experienced in politics and religion, having got through its great political and religious crises earlier.

A sign of Maturity.

Here, as in other things, there are inequalities that quite put out the inexperienced observer. He is likely to imagine that the French have no decorum because he believes them to be immoral. He forgets that decorum is often of itself the morality of immoral societies, as going to church is the religion of the worldly. Venetian society, in Byron's time, was extremely strict, not as to the realities of conduct, but in regard to certain outward appearances. French society, in the present day, is more strict in some respects than either English or Scotch. The behaviour of English girls, and still more that of American girls, is not positively wrong or immoral in French opinion, but it is indecorous. Even married ladies, in French country towns, have to be extremely careful not to incur the censure of public opinion, and in some towns they live in a kind of half-oriental retirement that English readers could not realise or believe. Before marriage anything more intimate than respectful politeness on the part of the gentleman, and reserve on that of the lady, is looked upon

External Strictness of Immoral Societies.

French Reserve.

as a sign of ill breeding. After the marriage the husband's masculine friends may remain for twenty years very distant acquaintances of his wife. It is certain that, in general, French decorum keeps up a much stronger barrier between the sexes than English decorum does.

French Decorum in regard to the Dead.

The French, too, are stricter observers of decorum in regard to the dead. They are very careful about funerals, and about subsequent references to the dead, either in ceremonies, such as visits to the tomb and services for the repose of the soul, or in conversation. The obligations felt by the living in consequence of a death are more stringent and more widely spread in France than in England. A French lady who knew her countrymen well enumerated a few things which were essential to any one who lived amongst them; and one of the chief of these was attendance at funerals, just as in Scotland one would recommend the observance of the Sabbath.

Decorum and Democracy.

The principle of decorum being the study of external appearances, it is not likely to be much observed by an excited and turbulent democracy. Still, a kind of artistic instinct desires decorum, and re-establishes it even after the most violent commotions. It is interesting to see how regularly and inevitably it has been re-established in France, so soon as a new form of government has been settled. M. Mollard, the Introducer of Ambassadors, was the Grand Master of Decorum for the Élysée, and had as much to occupy him as a Lord Chamberlain.

Decorum in Literature.

Decorum in literature and the fine arts is quite

distinct from morality. A book may be irreproachably decorous, yet very immoral at the same time, and this is a combination that many readers seem to approve of. I could hardly mention a better instance of it than the famous little novel *Manon Lescaut,* by the Abbé Prévost, a French classic made still more famous in recent times by the opera which Massenet founded upon it. That is one of the most immoral books ever written; the situations are doubly and triply immoral; there is no sense of conduct in the leading personages, who are vicious and unprincipled in all their dealings; yet, at the same time, the author is much more decorous (according to modern ideas) than either Swift or Sterne. Critics who condemn modern novels as being "filthy," because the sexual arrangements in them are lawless, are inexact in the application of their censure. In the French literature of the present day the combination of decorum with immorality is very common; and decorum is so far from acting as an effective restraint upon immorality that under certain circumstances it positively favours it. Immoral writers know how to conciliate the slaves of decorum, and win not only their tolerance, but even their protection.

Manon Lescaut.

Modern French Literature.

The English deserve great respect for the general decency of their modern literature, and certainly they get this respect even from the French themselves. But there are some curious anomalies in connection with this subject. English decorum permits the publication of details in the reports of divorce cases which French decorum absolutely for-

English Decency.

Divorce Reports in France and England.

bids. The French tolerate certain matters provided that they be fictitious, the English on condition that they be real. The French admit disgusting art, the English disgusting nature. The French novelist may be more attractive, but the English newspaper reporter is a thousand times more impressive, having all the force of reality on his side. The fictitious adulteress is but a phantom in comparison with the living beauty who is seen and heard in a court of justice; and what fall of an imaginary hero ever impressed us like that of the gifted and ambitious politician who barred his own path to the premiership of England?

English Indulgence towards indecorous old Books.

It strikes one, too, as rather surprising that the English, whose sense of decorum is so easily offended by modern authors of books, should still be so indulgent to those who wrote before modern decorum was invented. Young maids and old maids read Shakespeare in unexpurgated editions; but what is still more surprising is that many English people should go out of their way to express admiration for Rabelais. Have they read him? Can they understand his old French? If they can, and read him still, they need not be afraid of Zola.

Being in the house of an English clergyman, I found on the shelves of his library a copy of Byron's works in the one-volume edition. That edition includes *Don Juan*, but my clerical friend had excluded the poem, I found, by cutting every leaf of it out. I do not question his right to spoil a volume he had paid for, but what struck me as inconsistent was the reverent preservation, on the same shelves,

of a complete Shakespeare in large print. Byron is incomparably the more decorous poet of the two, but he is not protected, as Shakespeare is, by a date. Shakespeare wrote before the invention of decorum, and therefore could not offend against that which did not exist. Byron wrote after its invention, and offended against it consciously and deliberately. The indecency of old authors is not only pardoned in a decorous age, but valued as a release from contemporary strictness. Some of them, particularly in France, are now reprinted in luxurious editions *for* their indecency, which is highly appreciated now.

In spite of these and other inconsistencies, and notwithstanding the recent efforts of some English poets to recover a certain licence, it is certain that decorum is better observed in English literature than in French. One of the best signs of matured health in the English mind is its capacity for wit and humour without the coarse and facile expedient of indecorous allusion. The far superior decency of the English comic papers is combined with superior wit. The inanity of the French illustrations of the *Demi-monde* is equalled only by their excessive sameness. Men like Leech and Charles Keene have attained far more variety by studying respectable Englishwomen, who are occupied in a thousand ways, than Grévin could ever get out of the monotonous lives of his French *lorettes*. Nor is the reason for this difficult to discover. The life of vice is essentially dull, because the women are usually uneducated; and the men themselves become half idiotic, not

English and French Comic Papers.

only through excesses of all kinds, but in consequence of their frivolous waste of time.

The Naked Figure in Art.

In serious art the naked figure is more frequently presented in France than in England, and it is quite customary in England to look upon it as a French evil. I need hardly remind the reader that the country where the naked figure was first studied with attention was not France, but Greece, and that every nation where art has been a serious pursuit has sedulously revived that study. It is trying to the patience to attempt any reasoning with people who can see nothing but lasciviousness in the higher forms of art. It seems to me natural that men who have devoted years to the study of the human form should desire to express their knowledge in works more important than the studies they make for their private use, in works that may have some possible chance of immortality. The study itself can never be repressed. The clothed figures in pictures that the Philistine does not object to can only be drawn well by a student of the nude. Many artists, like the President of the Royal Academy, first take the praiseworthy trouble to draw every figure naked, even when it is draped afterwards. Why the objection should be so specially raised against French art I do not know, unless it be for the same reason which makes people cry aloud against French immorality and pass in charitable silence Italian and Austrian immorality. As a matter of fact, with a few exceptions, the French school of sculpture is as dignified as it is learned.

Study of the Figure.

Sir F. Leighton.

French Sculpture.

French Painting.

French painting is less dignified because nearer

to ordinary nature, but the fault to be found with it is chiefly that the nude figures of the present day are insufficiently idealised; it is not indecency as such, but a low prosaic realism that has established itself in this art; you do not meet with a nymph or a dryad, but with a portrait of some model. I remember hearing a French artist (himself an exhibitor of severely ideal nude figures) maintain that the nude by itself was decent, and so was clothing, but he abominated the two in the same picture. There have been plenty of examples of this unnatural union in past times, and in pictures which are now the pride of the great galleries; however, the most important contemporary instance is not a French picture but an Austrian, the *Entry of Charles the Fifth into Antwerp,* by Hans Makart.

Realism.

PART VII.

SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

CASTE.

ENGLAND and France are alike in this, that caste is not yet abolished in either country, and they also resemble each other in passing through a state of false caste which appears to be intermediary between true caste and a future casteless condition of society. The two nations differ, however, in the kinds of false caste through which they are passing, and the purpose of the present chapter will be to examine the nature of the difference. Caste not abolished.

True caste is a social condition existing by authority and general consent, in which every human being has, by birth, his fixed place in the social organism, and receives exactly the degree of respect or contempt which is accorded to the place independently of his personal efforts or qualities. True Caste.

The state of false caste is a condition of things in which there is still a sort of social hierarchy, but the positions in it are neither fixed nor well defended, so that impostors may get possession of them and enjoy the consideration which formerly belonged only to those who were born in the caste. This is the present condition of England and France, in dif- False Caste.

ferent ways and in different degrees. It is better than true caste in giving openings to ability, but worse in offering temptations and prizes to imposture.

The caste spirit is not by any means confined to an aristocracy. The social state of true caste includes all classes of society, fixing the relative inferiorities of the humble as strictly as the superiorities of the great. It will be convenient, however, to consider the aristocratic spirit first and by itself. Are there still genuine aristocracies in England and France?

The Aristocratic Spirit.

I have observed elsewhere that England has been able to pass through a highly convenient intermediate stage, that of an aristocratic republic, preserving monarchical appearances, and that France has not been able to do this, not having the kind and quality of aristocracy that was necessary for the work. I said this, but I did not say (what some Englishmen believe) that France has no real aristocracy at all.

On the contrary, I agree with Littré in the belief that the real aristocratic spirit still lives vigorously in France, but only in the aristocracy itself; and I should say that the great difference between England and France in this respect is that *what there is* of the aristocratic spirit in England is shared by classes outside of the aristocracy, whereas in France very few people have the aristocratic sentiment unless it has been implanted in them by the traditions of an aristocratic house, and cultivated by a training apart from the ordinary training of Frenchmen.

Aristocratic Spirit in France.

Again, it does not appear that the aristocratic spirit in England, though widely diffused, is of a pure or elevated kind. Perhaps it may be for this very

English Aristocratic Spirit.

reason, perhaps it is just because it is not pure or elevated, that it is so general and so commonly understood.

The want of purity and elevation in the present English ideal of aristocracy is evident from the undeniable fact that title is now little more than a supreme sanction given to the popular adoration of wealth. From the idea that it is inconvenient for a peer of England to be poor, a further advance has been made to the idea that a very rich man has a sort of claim to a title; and when peerages are bestowed on obscure men as a reward for having enriched themselves, the proceeding is thought so natural as to excite no comment, except, perhaps, from Mr. Labouchere. When, on the other hand, a distinguished man, not exceptionally rich, is made the recipient of a peerage, his promotion is a surprise to the public, unless it can be explained as a reward for political services to the party that happens to be in power. The Tennyson peerage is a curious example of this. Some friends of the Poet Laureate thought it rather a degradation for a man of genius to accept the prize of a lower ambition than that which they had believed to be his, whilst his enemies made quotations from *Maud,* applicable to new titles and new mansions. If Tennyson had been a successful brewer or banker, nobody would have made a remark; his peerage would not have been considered either above him or below him, but simply the natural English consecration of new riches.

Title the Sanction of Wealth.

The Tennyson Peerage.

Forty years before the elevation of Tennyson to English peerage, his contemporary, Victor Hugo,

Victor Hugo's Peerage.

was made a peer of France. It is probable that not a single Frenchman perceived anything incongruous in that promotion, or wondered whether the new peer had money enough to support his dignity.

Matthew Arnold on Aristocracy.

The reader may call to mind a few strong words of Matthew Arnold about the present condition of aristocracy in England: "Aristocracy now sets up in our country a false ideal, which materialises our upper class, vulgariseses our middle class, brutalises our lower class. It misleads the young, makes the worldly more worldly, the limited more limited, the stationary more stationary."

These evils are due to the transformation of the English aristocracy into a plutocracy that is not, as in America, a plainly avowed plutocracy, but disguises itself in aristocratic costumes.

Distinction of a true Aristocracy.

The distinction of a true aristocracy is that it is *not* a plutocracy, but a noble caste, including poor members as well as rich, and having certain ideals which, however foreign they may be to the spirit of the present age, did certainly, in their own time, tend to lift men and women above vulgarity. The most ennobling of those ideals was the notion that money was not the highest object of pursuit. The poor gentleman could be contented with ill-paid service in the army or the Church, because he did not serve for money; and it was believed within the caste, rightly or wrongly, that to labour for pecuniary rewards as the main object had a degrading effect upon the mind. The army was a chosen profession, because it was the school of courage, obedience, and self-sacrifice; the Church, because it was the school

Money not the highest Object.

The Army.

The Church.

of piety and morality, as well as the home of learning. I know that I am describing a narrow ideal, but most ideals that have had any power in the world have been narrow, and I am anxious to show how in the old aristocratic prejudices there were elements of real nobleness, which may have given them dignity and vitality. Those prejudices were hostile to some things that we now value. They were hostile, for example, to the pursuit of the fine arts, but it was from an apprehension, which I now see to have been only too well founded, that in struggling for the acquirement of brilliant manual skill, the student might spend his efforts on a low object. Those prejudices looked doubtfully upon commerce; it was thought that a gentleman did better not to go into trade; but the reason was because a heavy business ties a man down so much, and leaves him so little leisure for study or society, so little liberty for travel, that it is really somewhat of a misfortune to be fastened to such a business during the best years of youth and manhood. This aristocracy was selfish, but its selfishness was of a high kind. It was not given up either to avarice or to self-indulgence, but it valued what is best in life.

Hostility to the Fine Arts.

Commerce.

The reader may remember how Mr. Bagehot defended titles on the ground that they counterbalanced in some degree the power of wealth by setting up something else to be respected, and he even argued that title was a roundabout means of making intelligence respected:—

Mr. Bagehot's Defence of Titles.

"Nobility is the symbol of mind. It has the marks from which the mass of men always used to

Nobility the Symbol of Mind.

infer mind, and often still infer it. A common clever man who goes into a country place will get no reverence, but the 'old squire' will get reverence. Even after he is insolvent, when every one knows that his ruin is but a question of time, he will get five times as much respect from the common peasantry as the newly-made rich man who sits beside him. The common peasantry will listen to his nonsense more submissively than to the new man's sense. An old lord will get infinite reverence. His very existence is so far useful that it awakens the sensation of obedience to a *sort* of mind."

Objection to Mr. Bagehot's Theory.

This passage contains, I think, a condemnation of the very use of nobility that the author intended to eulogise. If the common peasantry will listen more submissively to the nonsense of an old squire than they will to a new man's sense, it is hard to see how aristocracy, in this instance, can be really on the side of mind. Again, if the old lord gets infinite reverence, whether he is wise or foolish, it is a mere chance whether the reverence is favourable to the influence of mind or against it. If the old lord is a fool, and there is a wise man in the neighbourhood who is not listened to because the lord has the ear of the peasantry, the strength of title is not the candlestick of mind, but its extinguisher.

Frenchmen who write about England usually remark that mind is overshadowed by aristocracy; that mediocrities with titles get more consideration, and are listened to more respectfully, than better men without them. The exact truth is more as follows. Political celebrity in England is quite as

Value of Political

strong as title. Any one who has the ear of the House of Commons, however humble his birth, is listened to in the country quite as attentively, quite as respectfully, as a lord. But title certainly overshadows literary and artistic celebrity. Not that this is of any real importance, for literary and artistic celebrity is not in its nature powerful, except over the intelligent, who are a minority in every population. Fame in England.

If the aristocracies have not done much for the intellectual life, or for art, they have been serviceable in setting up a model of generally refined life, not for people of culture specially, but for all who had means enough to copy it. This is not to be despised. A real aristocracy is a school of national refinement, and nations that are destitute of an aristocracy have to look to some fluctuating upper class, less perfectly regulated than aristocracy is by hereditary custom. Aristocracy a School of Refinement.

Again, an aristocracy is a school of contentment. In conjunction with its natural ally, the Church, it encourages in every one a spirit of contentment with his lot in life, an acceptance of the lot as a settled thing, which, though it is not favourable to progress, is unquestionably favourable to happiness. A genuine aristocracy is also favourable to simplicity of life in every *noblesse* that has poor, yet honoured members. Also a School of Contentment. Aristocracy favourable to Simplicity of Life.

The faults of the French *noblesse* have not led to its absolute destruction, for it still survives, but they have deprived it of political power. Unteachableness, rigidity, want of sympathy with the rest of the nation, lack of practical sense,—these are some Faults of the French *Noblesse.*

of the defects that have reduced the French aristocracy to a plight which, politically speaking, is pitiable and without a future. Since they allowed themselves to be enslaved by Louis XIV. the nobles have been out of sympathy with the common people, and since the Revolution they have been hostile to them, except in the way of charity to the poor. It would, perhaps, be expecting too much of human nature to hope that an ancient *noblesse* could forget the rough treatment it received in the first unreasoning outburst of popular vengeance; but it would not have been so dealt with if it had lived less selfishly, and cared for other interests than its own. It had brilliant intelligence, it had charming graces, and all the *éclat* of personal bravery, in combination with the rarest degree of polish, yet it lost the due rewards of its admirable superiorities by its unkind scorn of the *manant* and the *roturier*. The *"manant"* and the *"roturier"* avenged themselves roughly when the time came. The people have improved their condition wonderfully, but it has been entirely by their own efforts, the consequence being that the aristocracy survives only as a caste, and has no political leadership.

It has lost Political Leadership.

The present influence of the aristocratic caste in France is an evil influence in its discouragement of work. The caste includes a great number of people who have all been brought up to despise and abstain from the labour that earns bread. If the harm were confined to the caste itself it would be only a limited evil—unfortunately, it extends to all aspirants to aristocracy, to all the would-be genteel.

Contempt for Work.

This throws a degree of relative discredit on all money-earning occupations which certainly exceeds the prejudice of English gentility against them. Even literature and the fine arts become degrading as soon as they are lucrative,* a sentiment quite opposed to the more intelligent modern opinion in France. All the forms of trade are despicable for aristocrats, and when they hear of a family that has been in trade they say, with an air of genteel ignorance about the nature of the business, *"Ils ont vendu quelque chose."* Their manners towards shopkeepers are often unpleasant, and exhibit a degree of *morgue* that is peculiarly irritating to a French tradesman.

Contempt for Trade.

An aristocratic caste may be an institution for which there is no further necessity, it may be a survival that has become useless, but one likes to see it genuine of its kind, even in its latter days. Unfortunately the present French aristocracy, whilst encouraging idle habits by its contempt for work, encourages habits of imposture by the fatal facility with which it permits the encroachments of the false *noblesse*. I have often wondered how the old noble families ever tolerated these intruders, and I believe the only explanation to be that the intruders are such sure and subservient allies in politics and religion. It is really a system of recruiting.* The

The False *Noblesse*.

* A French gentleman wanted to let me a country house, and said, with an air of conscious superiority, "It would be quiet and convenient for the prosecution of your—your *industry*."

* As a system of recruiting party adherents, it has the great advantage of catching rather rich and influential people, especially landowners. Very poor families would gain nothing by the "de," and, in fact, they drop it when it is theirs by right,

false noble fortifies his position by all available means, and there are none better than an ardent profession of those opinions that the genuine aristocracy approves. I said long ago in *Round my House* that the particle "de," which is popularly supposed to indicate nobility, was extensively assumed by families belonging really to the *bourgeoisie,* but I was not fully aware at that time on what a prodigiously extensive scale these usurpations have been made. Here is a single example. A public functionary, whose duties required frequent reference to registers in a particular locality, told me that he had at first been embarrassed by the changes of name in certain families. Plain names of the *bourgeoisie* had been laid aside for territorial designations with the "de" before them, and it was difficult at first sight to understand and remember these transformations. Having a curious and investigating disposition, the functionary amused himself by tracing out as many of these cases as he could discover, and he told me that in a single neighbourhood he had found no less than fifty families who had raised themselves into what is ignorantly but generally considered to be the noble caste by the addition of the "de." Amidst such an influx of new recruits the authentic old nobility is, in these days, completely overwhelmed. There being no strictly-kept peerage, as in England, there is nothing authoritative to refer to, and an injurious doubt is cast upon real coronets by the perplexing abundance of false ones. Besides the "de," the most positive titles are coolly assumed and worn. You may meet with people who live in an

Great Scale of Usurpations.

New Recruits.

old château and are very *comme il faut*, very simple and well bred, without any appearance of false pretension whatever, yet they have just one little bit of false pretension—their title. They call themselves Count and Countess, yet are not Count and Countess at all. Their fortune was made in business two generations ago, and the château purchased, and the title of the old family that once lived there gradually assumed by a too familiar process.

The French *noblesse*, as a caste, is spoiled by this intrusion and acceptance of false nobles, but if there were not this fatal objection it would be much more truly a caste than the British nobility and gentry. There is, in fact, no pure and well-guarded upper caste in England except simply the holders of titles. You may belong to the highest nobility in England by descent, and there will be nothing to distinguish you from a plebeian unless you are a son of the representative of the family. In every genuine *noblesse* noble blood continues to bear some distinctive mark of caste. The English way is more convenient, because it constantly throws off the poorer branches into the general mixture that we vaguely call "the middle classes"; the continental way of preserving a noble caste, even in its poorer members, is more faithful to the principle of descent. The way of selecting new men for the English peerage is also a violation of the caste principle. They are not usually taken from well-descended families, but from the new rich, and in this way we constantly see men of low birth elevated to a position which instantly gives them precedence over the most ancient untitled

Absence of a pure Caste in England.

Younger Branches.

New Peers.

families in England. In short, we live in a time of confusion between the true caste principle and the true democratic principle, a confusion that will ultimately be cleared away by the abolition of titles, though that is still in the distant future. Meanwhile the new rich in France may fairly argue that as they have not, like their English brethren, a sovereign to ennoble them, they have no resource but to ennoble themselves.

Abolition of Caste by Poverty.

A moderate degree of poverty does not abolish caste in France, provided that the nobleman is just able to maintain external decency of appearance without working. In England it is impossible to maintain high caste without a complete staff of domestics. In both countries real poverty abolishes caste.

Armorial Bearings.

It is impossible in England to assume and maintain falsely the position of a titled nobleman, but coats-of-arms are constantly assumed without right, and it is not uncommon in these days for people to take a name that does not belong to them by inheritance. If a plebeian Englishman chooses to adopt the name, and the arms too, of an old family, he can do so in perfect security.

I pass now from the noble to the professional castes.

The Clergy.

The clergy in England are said to form part of the aristocracy, but this is true only of the Anglican clergy. The Dissenting clergy form part of the middle classes. The Anglican clergy itself is less aristocratic than it was in the earlier part of the nineteenth century; in fact, its position has

varied greatly from one century to another. It is now said to be rather declining, as the clergy are recruited from an inferior class, both as to position and ability. A father may put his son into the Church because the lad is not keen-witted enough to be a successful attorney, or because there is not capital enough in the family to set him up as a manufacturer. There are also ways of entering the Church without the training of Oxford or Cambridge. Nevertheless, in spite of this decline, the Anglican clergy are still, as a body, incomparably superior to the French Roman Catholic clergy in the social sense. The French clergy are now almost exclusively recruited from the humble classes. Nine out of ten are sons of peasants, the tenth may be the son of an artisan or a gendarme. It is curious that the French aristocracy, which *professes* such deep respect for the Church, should no longer supply recruits for the clergy. Fewer and fewer of the sons of the *noblesse* become priests every year, and those who do now become priests shut themselves up in the religious orders, and are of no use for the common work of the parishes, many of which are left empty, in country places, for want of working priests to fill them. It would seem as if it were no longer thought *comme il faut* to be a parish priest, whilst it may be *comme il faut* to belong to one of the recognised orders, such as the Marists, the Jesuits, etc. The practical result is that in the country parishes many of the priests are burdened with extra duty, sometimes far from their homes, merely from an insufficient supply of ecclesiastics. This plain fact—

Superiority of the Anglican Clergy.

The French Clergy.

The Religious Orders.

which I do not give merely on my own authority, but on that of a French bishop who deplored it lately in an episcopal charge—is a valuable commentary on that devotion to the Church which the French aristocracy still professes so long as it entails no greater inconvenience than a perfunctory attendance at mass. There is, consequently, a *social severance* between the clergy and the aristocracy, though there may be a *political alliance*. The priest may have patrons in the château, he may have real friends there, but his relations and his equals are generally in the farm-houses.* The reason lies no deeper than the obvious fact that the duties of a parish priest are irksome and his life is austere. He is confined to one place, without amusements, and with society limited to peasants and to the few gentry who happen to be there for a part of the year only; his work is a continual servitude, and it is never done. He is allowed by law to marry, but not by the rules of his Church or the opinion of society, and his conduct is watched with the most jealous and unceasing scrutiny. To devote oneself to such an existence requires not merely the pretence to religious belief but its reality. That, and that alone, can make a human being happy in a life which is deprived of all worldly pleasures, and has no earthly rewards.

Social Position of the French Clergy.

Bishops.

The difference between the parish priest and the bishop, though great in England, is much greater in France. In England it is the difference between

* This is stated simply as a fact and not in depreciation. There is not a more respectable class in France than the peasantry.

a gentleman and a peer, in France it is that between a common soldier and his colonel. Since royalty is dead, and the great nobles politically paralysed by universal suffrage, the bishop seems all the greater as the sole survivor of the splendid personages of the middle ages. The grandeur of the Church is represented by the bishops, both in their social position, which, in the absence of royalty, is much higher than any other, and also in externals, such as the stately residence, the violet and gold of the costume, and the customary carriage and pair. It must be remembered, too, that the "Church" in Catholic language means the bishops, who are alone summoned to Œcumenical Councils, and not the inferior clergy, who have no vote, direct or indirect, the bishops not being elected by them.

Since the French army has become national, the military caste is not so much an aristocratic caste as it is in England. It is difficult for an Englishman to realise the position of officers in a French garrison town. They live very much amongst themselves, and spend many of their leisure hours in a café chosen specially by them, and called *"le café des officiers."* Some of them are admitted into local society, but on their individual merits or in consequence of family connections; the uniform is not the passport that it is, or used to be, in England. I remember how, on the arrival of a new regiment, the English squires in the neighbourhood would go and call upon the officers to give them a welcome, and would very soon ask them to dinner. Before long the officers were on sufficiently friendly terms

French Officers.

Position of Officers in England.

to join in country amusements and invite themselves to lunch. If there was a ball, they were invited as a matter of course. This intimacy between military officers and the local gentry was strongly marked in the English society of the Wellingtonian age. In a French town there is no such ready welcome on the part of the leading inhabitants. The officers are treated like strangers staying in the hotels until some accident brings about an acquaintanceship.

The Army as a Career.

Still, although the military class in France is not one with the aristocracy, it is quite true that the military profession is the only career, in French opinion, for a gentleman of birth, unless he studies for the bar, which he generally does without any intent to practice.

The Official Class.

The official class of prefects, sub-prefects, and other members of the administrative hierarchy, form a caste quite apart from high society, which will not recognise office-holders under the Republic. I have known several of these officials who were thorough gentlemen, and had good private fortunes besides, but the higher classes ignored them as completely as if they had been personally unfit for society. The fact that the prefect is by virtue of his office the greatest personage in the department only makes him the more disliked. His rank is officially equal to that of an English lord-lieutenant, and he is more important in the sense of having more work to do and more real authority to exercise.* When,

The Prefect.

* He also takes precedence of the bishop. An intimate friend of mine was appointed to a prefecture. On his arrival the archbishop sent to say that he would receive him at his

however, we compare the social position of the two we see how France is divided. England is not yet divided in the same way because the Crown makes the great official appointments, or at least seems to make them. There is not now any political authority left standing in France which commands the respect of the upper classes. They do not respect authorities emanating from the people.

Contempt for Republican Officials.

Now, with regard to the professional and trading classes I should say that they are nearer to one another in France than in England. The old division of *Noblesse, Bourgeoisie, Peuple,* is still in constant use, and is extremely convenient as a general division of French classes. The *noblesse*, true or false, lives on its means, and has generally landed property; the *bourgeoisie* lives in more or less comfort, either on private means or on the gains of professions and trades; the *peuple* lives by manual labour and on wages. An artist, a solicitor, a doctor, belong to the *bourgeoisie,* and they are all three nearer to the shopkeepers and more familiar and friendly with them than are men who belong to the liberal professions in England.

Noblesse, Bourgeoisie, Peuple.

Professional People.

A distinction of the greatest importance between England and France is indicated by the untranslatableness of the word "gentleman." The English reader knows what the word means. It is the sign of an ideal which may constitute caste or something

Gentlemen.

palace. This was an attempt to put the prefect in an inferior position, so he answered that it was not further from the palace to the prefecture than from the prefecture to the palace. The archbishop then came.

else, for it often traverses caste. You frequently, in England, meet with men who are not of high birth, who are not very rich, yet whom all recognise as gentlemen, and this simple recognition places them on an equality, of a certain kind, with people of higher rank. In France, this peculiar kind of equality is unknown. The *bourgeois* is never the equal of the noble, though he may be the better gentleman of the two. It is undeniable that, in this peculiar sense, English society is more *égalitaire* than French.

The Teaching Class in France.

The teaching classes are in some respects a lower caste in France than in England. This difference may be in part due to the clerical character of English education, which gave a dignity and almost a sacred character to schoolmasters. In France the numerous professors in the University are not well paid, and often eke out a slender income by private lessons. Many of them are cultivated gentlemen, others are much less refined, as may be expected in a very mixed class, and an old principal tells me that the body as a whole has less *tenue* and self-respect than it had formerly. "In my time," he said, "you might always recognise an *universitaire* by the correctness of his appearance and bearing, but to-day he is not distinguishable from anybody else." In England university degrees confer some social position, especially if they have been gained at Oxford or Cambridge; in France they confer little or none, certainly they do not make the recipient *du monde*. The consequence is more and more a severance between the fashionable and the educated classes, and it may

Severance between Fashionable and Educated Classes.

even come, in course of time, to this, that a high degree of education may be taken as evidence that a man does not belong to "good society."

There is a difference between England and France in the strictness of rural caste. Amongst the French peasants we find a set of rigid caste-customs separating the class completely from the *bourgeois* and the *ouvrier*. There is nothing answering to this with the same universality and rigour in English rural life. The English farmer answers more to the French rural *bourgeois* of different grades; his life is more the general life of the nation, it is not peculiar and behind the time. There are signs that the true peasant life, with its austerity, its self-denial, its patriarchal rules and traditions, will not, in France itself, very long survive the influences of the town, the railway, and the newspaper. It will be a severe loss to the country when it passes away. The peasants do not themselves know how superior they are to the classes they are beginning to imitate.

Peasant Life in France.

The strength of caste may be measured by the degradation of the Pariah. As the caste-principle declines he rises, and when it dies he is no longer distinguishable by his vileness, but is lost in the general equality.

English intolerance having been chiefly religious, its Pariah has been the infidel. France is the country of political intolerance, and there the Pariah is the Republican. "What!" I may be asked, "you speak of the Republicans as Pariahs at a time when they hold all the ministries and receive all the ambassadors?" The answer to this objection is that they

The Pariah in England.

have never been more under the ban of high society than since they won political power. In England the Infidel is not quite the Pariah that he used to be when Deists were "pestiferous vermin." To-day, under his new name of "Agnostic," he is beginning to be tolerated. On the contrary, the French intolerance of the Republican is more intense than ever. *Canaille* is the mildest term that the charity of the *bien pensant* would apply to him—

The Pariah in France.

"E cortesia fu lui esser villano."

CHAPTER II.

WEALTH.

ENGLAND and France are the richest countries in Europe, and, of the two, England is generally believed to be the richer. I believe the same, and yet am unable to give evidence of an entirely satisfactory character. Considering each country as a vast estate, composed of land and house property, we meet with our first difficulty in the uncertainty of the estimates. The French Government is at the present time (1888) employing its agents in a new and elaborate valuation. External trade is not a certain guide, as the two populations are differently situated, the French living much more on home produce than the English. The revenue is sometimes taken as an indication of national wealth, and it is so no doubt when nations are extremely unequal; for example, the vast difference between the revenues of France and of Greece is good evidence that France is the wealthier of the two countries. When, however, we make a financial comparison between two states as nearly equal as France and England, the revenue ceases to be a criterion. It is true that the French people pay more money into the national treasury than the English; but they may be doing it only to their own impoverishment. What we call

Comparative Wealth of England and France.

The Revenue.

"revenue" is not like a private income, it is a burden or a charge, proving only the power to bear the burden, and such a power may be but temporary. It is only the most foolish Frenchmen who are proud of the enormous taxation that afflicts the Republic as a consequence of monarchical errors and of its own.

Newness of Everything in France and England.

The wealth, both of England and France, has been vastly increased by the prodigious creation of new things which has taken place in the present century. They are both of them very old countries, yet almost everything in them is new. A man of sixty, travelling about, is constantly seeing and using things that did not exist when he was born. The railways he travels upon, the hotels where he stays, the great industrial buildings, the shipping, are of his own time. The towns are either recent or in great part reconstructed. The industrial activity of the present age is so enormous that in the course of a single generation it has done more in public and private works than all the previous generations had left behind them. Then there is the industrial plant; both nations have increased their producing powers by multiplying *tools* of all kinds, from colossal steam-engines down to sewing-machines. England took the lead in this direction, but France has followed. In some things France has been the leader, notably in the construction of war-ships with defensive armour, and in the manufacture of breech-loading cannon. England set the example of huge industrial exhibitions, and here again, as in railways, France has been a successful imitator.

Industrial Plant.

War-ships.

Exhibitions.

The industrial development of both countries has led to a state of things in which the producing power surpasses the actual wants. To keep the working populations in full employment it would be necessary to do over again all that has been done; but the works accomplished remain as impediments to future labour. Paris does not need to be reconstructed every twenty years; a network of railways has not to be made in every century. Thus industrialism produces both riches and poverty. First, it creates an army with appliances too elaborate and too efficient for any permanent need, and then it fails to pay its own soldiers. The present condition of England and France is discouraging, for the reason that it is the skilled workman who is so often without employment. The evil has attracted more public attention in England, but the roads of France are covered with miserable tramps and vagabonds, many of whom are well-trained *"ouvriers sans travail."*

Excess of the Producing Power.

Ouvriers sans Travail.

Success in industry is proved by the attainment of wealth, so that it becomes, in an industrial age, the evidence of something greater than itself. It is taken as the proof of ability, of the kind of talent most valued, and so it comes to pass that people of the most simple habits, who have really no need for riches, often desire to make a fortune as a proof of their own energy, and from a dread of being classed amongst the unsuccessful. This is one of the strongest reasons for money-getting when the genuine instinct of avarice is absent.

Success in Industry.

There is a most important difference between England and France in the necessity for wealth in

The Necessity for Wealth.

certain positions, quite independently of the desire for money as a possession. The expression "a large income is a necessary of life" is an English expression, and is true in the country and classes in which it originated. What it means is not that the Englishman cares much for personal self-indulgence, but that if his income is not large he finds himself exposed to vexatious or humiliating consequences, unless his position is otherwise so insignificant as to escape attention. It is entirely understood that all titled persons in England ought to be rich, and not only all titled persons but all who belong to the upper classes. On inquiring into the causes of this belief we do not find them in the love for money for itself, as a miser loves it, but in the English passion for style and state, and in the contempt which is felt for those who cannot afford to maintain an expensive standard of living.

Title and Wealth.

The Passion for Style.

Wealth is not only more necessary in England than in France, it is also more valuable socially; it does more to elevate its possessor, to give him rank and station. In England the condition of things is, for the present, singularly agreeable to the rich man who is also ambitious. It is not like a country without an upper class, and it is not like a country with a closed and exclusive upper class. England has a brilliant and attractive upper class that the rich man may aspire to enter, and which receives him with encouraging cordiality. He has something to desire, which is at the same time well worth desiring and not beyond his reach. A true aristocracy would keep him at a distance; in a genuine

England agreeable for the Ambitious Rich.

democracy he could never become more than a wealthy citizen; in the present very peculiar condition of English society there is still an aristocracy for him to enter, and it receives him to be one of its own.

The Middle Classes and the Rich.

He has the advantage, also, of living in a country where the middle classes are proud of the wealth of the rich. They talk of the large incomes of the nobility with an interest that may be a survival of ancient feudal sentiments, a vassal's pride in his liege lord. It is a pleasure to them to think that the Duke of Westminster can drive out with his guests from Eaton Hall in a procession of his own carriages. Even the freaks of the last Duke of Portland are not displeasing to them, because his mole-burrowing was done on such a costly scale. The vast estates of Sutherland and Breadalbane seem to give every Scotchman a superiority over the comparatively landless French *noblesse*. The British nature is so inclined to be happy in wealth that when the individual Briton has little of his own to rejoice in he generously takes pleasure in that of the nearest lord. This pleasure is the more pure for him that he is almost incapable of envy.*

* George du Maurier attributes this happiness in the wealth of others to what he calls "The British Passion for inequality," illustrated by him in *Punch*. An Englishman is walking with a Frenchman in Hyde Park, and gives utterance to that passion in these words:—

"*Sturdy Briton.* It's all very well to turn up your nose at your *own* beggarly Counts and Barons, Mossoo! But you can't find fault with *our* nobility! Take a man like our Dook

French Feeling about Riches.

The state of French feeling about riches is more difficult to define with perfect accuracy. It varies very much with different localities. In a trading town money is everything, being the sign of superiority in trade, and the biggest capitalist is the greatest man. In an aristocratic centre money without caste counts for very little, and the rich *bourgeois* keeps his place, retaining the most simple and unpretending manners. I should say that rank and wealth are much more separate, or at least *separable,* in France than in England. People are accustomed to see nobles of high rank with very moderate fortunes, and they are also accustomed to meet with rich *bourgeois* who do not aspire to aristocracy either for themselves or their descendants. Amongst the *noblesse* themselves money is regarded merely as a great convenience, and rank is respected still, and fully recognised, even in combination with very narrow means. This is the purely aristocratic as opposed to the plutocratic sentiment.

Separableness of Rank and Wealth in France.

French Equality.

French equality does not bring together the *noblesse* and the *bourgeoisie,* as the *noblesse* is exclusive, except towards the false *noblesse* that has once got itself adopted.* But equality often pro-

o' Bayswater, now! Why, he could buy up your Foreign Dukes and Princes by the dozen! and as for you and me, he'd look upon us as so much dirt beneath his feet! Now, that's something *like* a nobleman, that is! That's a kind o' nobleman that I, as an Englishman, feel as I've got some right to be *proud* of!"

* The want of money, in these days, very frequently induces a French nobleman to marry an heiress in the middle

duces a degree of familiarity, astonishing to an Englishman, between the rich *bourgeoisie* and the common people. This may be explained by the absence of the word "gentleman" and of that separation of title, which the word "gentleman" implies. The rich *bourgeois,* in France, is nothing but a *bourgeois;* he has never thought "I am a gentleman," and the difference between him and a common man is but a pecuniary difference.

Sanctity of Wealth in England.

Wealth has a dignity and almost a sanctity in England which seems to be connected with religious beliefs, and especially with the familiar knowledge of the Old Testament, almost an unknown book in France. In this respect the English hold a middle place between the French and the Jews. I certainly have myself known rich English people who believed that Divine Providence had appointed them, personally, to have authority over the poor, and that the poor owed them much deference for that reason. It is a kind of divine right, and it is even capable of a sort of scientific proof, for wealth is one of the natural forces, and, in the last analysis, an accumulation of solar energy given into the hand of a man.*

Sentiments of the Poor towards the Rich.

It is sometimes asserted, and perhaps still more generally believed, that the sentiment of the poor classes. This is the most powerful cause of infractions of French exclusiveness.

* The essential difference between the scientific and the religious views is that the one sees a special Providential commission, where the other only perceives an undesigned accumulation of natural force.

towards the rich is one of adoration in England and of hatred in France. The truth about English sentiment I have endeavoured, in a general way, to tell. The peculiar advantage of wealth in England is that it so soon confers caste—that the rich are so soon believed to have rank, even without parchments and the royal signature. They become "gentlefolks," when in France they would be only *"gros bourgeois."*

French Respect and Indifference.

The French sentiment about wealth varies generally between a kind of respect that is not at all servile, and unfeigned indifference. The English have a great difficulty in understanding this indifference. I

Matthew Arnold.

find, for instance, in Mr. Matthew Arnold's article in the *Nineteenth Century* for February 1885, the statement about France that "wealth creates the most savage enmity there, because it is conceived as a means for gratifying appetites of the most selfish and vile kind." There may, of course, be instances of such feeling amongst poor French anarchists and radicals. It exists even in England itself, and was expressed long ago with sufficient vigour by a poet of the people in fiery stanzas all ending with the refrain—

Gerald Massey.

"Our Sons are the rich men's Serfs by day,
And our daughters his Slaves by night."

Those two lines express *exactly* the sentiment attributed by Mr. Arnold to the French; the last of them, especially, is a precise translation into poetic form of what Mr. Arnold says about "gratifying appetites of the most selfish and vile kind." *

* There is more English poetry of the same order, for example the following, also quoted from Mr. Gerald Massey—

When I read very comprehensive statements I always adopt the rather prosaic method of looking back on my own experience, if I have any experience that can throw light upon the subject. In this case, having lived much in the country, both in England and France, and known poor and rich people in the numerical proportion that they bear to one another in real life, I may perhaps be accepted as a competent witness. My testimony is as follows.

The Author's Testimony.

When I was a young man in Lancashire the population of mill-hands was not in a state of "savage enmity" towards the rich, but its sentiments were not in the least deferential, and they were not friendly. We cannot call those sentiments friendly which express themselves in jibes and jeers. It is the simple truth that well-dressed ladies and gentlemen avoided meeting the hands when they came out of the factories to escape personal annoyance. They were not in bodily danger, but they were liable to be openly criticised by the lower classes, whose tongues were both sharp and merciless. The factory hands had unbounded natural impudence and a very

Lancashire.

Aggressiveness of Factory Hands.

"Oh! this world might be lighted
With Eden's first smile—
Angel-haunted—unblighted,
With Freedom for Toil:
But they wring out our blood
For their banquet of gold!
They annul laws of God,
Soul and body are sold!
Hark now! hall and palace,
Ring out, dome and rafter!
Ay, laugh on, ye callous!
In Hell there'll be laughter."

Their Wit and Sarcasm.

aggressive disposition. Some of them had the gifts of wit, humour, and sarcasm, to which the Lancashire dialect is highly favourable; and it was their delight to exercise these gifts at the expense of any unfortunate gentleman or lady who fell in their way. A telling hit at the victim, whom nobody pitied, was hailed with shouts of satisfaction. A lady, who was a neighbour of ours in Lancashire, happened to be walking in a muddy street, so she lifted her skirts a little. This unluckily occurred near a group of factory girls, whose sharp eyes, of course, noticed the lady's stockings, which were of some unbleached material. Thereupon one factory girl cried out, "Well, afore *Oi'd* don stockin's na better weshed nur them theere!"* and there was a general explosion of laughter, before which the lady was glad to drop the curtain of her skirts. Nor was this critical disposition confined to the factory operatives. I happened one day to be wearing a new topcoat, and was passing near some houses in course of erection. One of the masons shouted out from his ladder something very coarse and ill-natured about my topcoat; so I stopped to reason with him and said, "Why cannot you let my topcoat alone? I came by it honestly; it is paid for." *"Paid for, is't?"* he answered, with a sneer of ineffable contempt. "It woddn't 'a bin if th' ad 'ad t' addle th' brass."** So I went away defeated, amidst the jeers

Masons.

* "Well, before *I'd* put on stockings no better washed than those!"

** "Paid for, is it? It would not have been if thou hadst had to earn the money."

of the other workmen. I may perhaps trouble the reader with an anecdote about another mason, in which there is more real hostility to wealth and refinement. When I was a boy, an old Lancashire mason was making an alteration in a room that was to be my bedroom. This involved the blocking-up of an old window; and instead of building the wall of the full thickness, the mason contented himself with a thin wall, leaving a recess. "I shall be glad of this recess," I said, "it will do to put the washing-stand in." The mention of such a luxury irritated the man's democratic sentiments, and he swore at the washing-stand and at me with many a bitter oath, although he was working for my uncle, who too kindly employed him.

Sense of Equality in Lancashire.

Even when the Lancashire people did not intend to be uncivil, their manners often asserted a sense of equality that I have never met with from the corrresponding class in France. I have often stayed in Lancashire with a friend, now no more, who was one of the richest men in his neighbourhood, and in Lancashire this means great wealth. As there was an old intimacy between us, we called each other by our Christian names; he was Henry, and I was Philip. This was natural in our case; but what seemed less explicable was that when we walked out together and met the wage-earning people in the neighbourhood, the men would keep their hands in their pockets, and sometimes, as a sort of special favour, cock their heads on one side by way of a bow, and say, "Well, 'Ennery!" in token of friendly recognition. Assuredly there was not, in such a

A Lancashire Salute.

salutation, any trace of "savage enmity" against wealth, but neither was there any special respect for it. Either because rich men were common in Lancashire, or because the people were extremely independent, wealth used to get but a very moderate amount of deference there.

Lancashire Familiarity.

I lived at one time close to Towneley Park, and remember that although we always called the then representative of that very wealthy and very ancient family Mr. Towneley, till he became colonel of the local militia regiment, after which we gave him his military title, the peasantry spoke of him either as "Tayunly" or as "Charles," and his brother they called "John." This was not hostile, and it was not insulting, but it cannot be considered deferential.

The Author's Experience in France.

In France I am known by sight to many hundreds of people in the poorer classes, perhaps I may say to thousands, and they believe me (erroneously) to be what they call rich, because I live in the manner of a very small country gentleman. More than that, they all know that I am an Englishman, a difference of nationality that would not generally tend to repress any tendency to popular satire. The simple truth, however, is that I have never once been insulted, never once even jeered at, by these poor French people, because I had a good coat on my back. On the contrary, numbers of people, whose names I do not know, are in the habit of lifting their hats to me; and if I drive along the road on a market day, when the peasants are returning to their homes, I have to keep my right hand free to answer their salutations by lifting my own hat, ac-

cording to the courteous French custom. One of my friends, a Frenchman, is really a rich man, and when we walk out together in the town where he is best known, he is constantly raising his hat. I find this practice to be much the same in other towns with well-to-do men who are local notables, and I know an important village where any one who looks like a gentleman will be saluted by every inhabitant he meets. French Rural Civility.

In the French rural districts the aristocracy are very well known individually, and esteemed or not according to their personal qualities. When they are just to their tenants and kind to the poor, these merits are fully acknowledged, and the great folks are regarded with respect and even affection. *"C'est un bon Monsieur"* the peasants will say of the squire, or, if they include his family, *"Ce sont de braves gens, c'est du bon monde."* I know an honest French gentleman and his wife who are always ready with kindness and money when there is any case of real distress, and I do not believe that there is any country in the world where they would be more esteemed than they are in their own neighbourhood.

I have never known, in France, anything like the Lancashire familiarity in speaking of the rich. The greatest landowner is always either called by his title or at least gets the usual "Monsieur." He is "Monsieur le Marquis" or "Monsieur de——," and often, with a mixture of local feeling and respect, he is "Notre Monsieur," to distinguish him from other people's Messieurs. I never in my life Absence of Familiarity in France.

heard a French peasant call a country gentleman by his bare name, or by his Christian name only. I know all the tenants on an estate where the rents were raised in a manner that created the greatest dissatisfaction, but, whilst expressing this dissatisfaction in just and straightforward language, the tenants never infused any hatred into their talk, nor did they abandon the usual respectful form in speaking of the landlord. They said that he was hard with them, and that he was acting against his own interest, which he did not seem to understand, as it was impossible for a tenant to work the farms permanently on the new terms. This is the whole substance of what they said, the complete expression of their "savage enmity."

Wealth not an Objection in Parliamentary Candidates.

At election times I never found that it was a ground of objection to a republican candidate that he was a rich man. There has been a sort of understanding amongst many reactionary rich people in France, of late years, to give as little employment as possible to the wage-earning classes in order to punish them for voting in favour of republican candidates. The poor resent this attempt to starve them into political subservience, a feeling which is entirely distinct from hatred to the rich as a class. Rich men who continue to give employment are, from contrast, better liked than ever.

Wealth and National Defence.

I cannot close this chapter without some reference to the wealth of the two nations from the military point of view, that we are all compelled to consider. To be rich is of no use in actual warfare unless we are also ready. The French had plenty

of money in 1870, as they proved shortly afterwards by paying two hundred millions sterling to Germany, yet that money could not win the battles of Gravelotte and Sedan. At the same time the luxurious establishments of rich French people, the wines in their cellars, their collections of pictures, their beautiful books, their pretty carriages, all the pleasant things that are commonly associated with the idea of wealth, were of no more practical value than the embroidery on the mocassins of a Red Indian. The truth is unpleasant, but we have to face it, that wealth itself is valueless for warlike purposes *unless it has been employed in time,* and that it is not the richest nation, but the most prepared nation, that lives best through the day of trial.*

Unorganised Wealth Valueless in War.

* Just before returning the proof-sheet of this chapter I heard one French peasant describing his landlord to another in these terms:—

"Monsieur le Comte is one of the best landlords in this neighbourhood. He thoroughly understands agriculture, he looks after everything on the estate, but he never presses his tenants, never asks them for rent. On the contrary, he is always ready to help a tenant in any reasonable outlay."

The landlord in question is a rich nobleman, living on his own land, and not by any means regarded with "the most savage enmity," though he happens to be a Frenchman. I have seen his château and estate, a fine property, beautifully situated.

CHAPTER III.

ALLIANCES.

Marriage as an Alliance.

THE notion of marriage as an alliance is more generally prevalent in France than in England, where it belongs only to the upper, or at least the wealthier classes. The ideal of a French marriage is the practice of princes in the middle ages and at the Renaissance, when they were affianced to ladies whom they had never seen, merely on the ground that their social position was suitable. The ideal of an English marriage is that the social position of both parties must be suitable, but that they ought previously to have some acquaintance with each other and some appearance of affection. There are, however, many exceptions in the practice of both countries. In both, there is a strong disapproval of the *mésalliance,* which goes so far that even in England it is said that society will condone a seduction more willingly.

The French Ideal.

The English Ideal.

Definition of *Mésalliance.*

The dictionaries say that *mésalliance* signifies marriage with an inferior, but they fail to explain the kind of inferiority indicated. Would moral or intellectual inferiority in one of the parties constitute a *mésalliance* for the other? It would most assuredly in reality, and bring its own daily and hourly punishment; but opinion overlooks these

trifles, which only concern the parties directly interested. Does a *mésalliance* result from a difference of rank? English opinion is very elastic about rank; we see marriages between titled and untitled people every day. Does it result from inequality of wealth? That inequality is far more frequent between married people in England, an aristocratic country, than under the French Republic. The rule against *mésalliances* in England amounts to no more than this, that the parties to the marriage ought to belong to the same *monde,* that is, they ought to have been seen in the same houses. In France it is a *mésalliance* for a noble to marry a commoner, and this certainly marks a more trenchant line than any that exists in England, where a commoner may belong to the aristocracy, which he cannot do in France, unless he succeeds in making himself a false noble. Marriages with rich commoners are not infrequent in France, but they are always confessedly *mésalliances.* On the whole, I should say that so far as marriage is concerned, ideas of class are decidedly more rigorous in France than in England. The woman's name and condition survive more after the marriage in France. Great numbers of French people put their wife's surname after their own, and even if this is not done formally, the linen and silver may be marked with the two initials. A Frenchman will sometimes use his mother's surname instead of his father's, if it seems to him more euphonious. In formal announcements of deaths and marriages the wife's surname is frequently preserved. The habit of saying Madame de B. *née* de C. is a French habit, and she may be

Mésalliances in England.

Ideas of Class in France.

Preservation of the Wife's Surname in France.

called in legal documents Jeanne de C., wife of Gaston de B., as if her name survived after marriage, which it really does in the French conception of marriage.

Pecuniary Value of the French *de*.

After careful observation I have arrived at the conclusion that the French *de* before a name, whether rightly or fraudulently borne (for that makes little perceptible difference), is equivalent to about ten thousand pounds in the marriage market and will often count for more. It is wonderful that it should be so, considering that all French people know how frequently the *de* is assumed; but it seems to be valued as a mark that the bearer belongs to the gentry, which, in fact, he generally does. The genuine nobility who have become too poor to keep a place in genteel society, and have to work for their living, seldom retain the *particule,* or retain it only for a short time. If they did not drop it themselves the world would drop it for them. I have met with several instances of this. To be able to retain the *particule* is therefore a sort of practical evidence that one belongs to the upper classes. It is also a kind of guarantee that he will not profess liberal opinions. As a rule the new and false noble is more royalist than the Pretender himself, and certainly more clerical than the clergy.

Loss of the *Particule*.

The New and False Noble.

The rule that marriages are made from inclination in England and from interest in France requires to be understood with very great reserves. When English writers have France in their minds they assert the rule very positively, but when the repellent French influence does not deflect their judgment

they become exceedingly frank about the hunting after rank and fortune in the great London marriage market. It would be easy to quote novels and essays and social sketches of all kinds which paint London society as a vast field of rivalry, where matrimonial ambition lays itself out continually for high prizes, and either triumphs in the winning of them or has to taste the bitterness of defeat. Even the novelists who describe country life appear to believe that worldly motives operate frequently in the provinces.

The London Marriage Market.

Worldly Motives elsewhere.

This is one of the many instances in which the same thing is called by different names. There is no exact translation of *"mariage de convenance"* in English. *"Convenance"* would be most nearly translated by "suitableness," but the word *"convenance"* has a certain connection with what is right and proper; *"c'est inconvenant"* means "it is improper." The *"mariage de convenance"* is a marriage that appears to be suitable, I mean *that other people consider to be so.* Of course they are often egregiously mistaken; they think it perfectly "suitable" to fasten two people together for life who are quite unfitted for anything like companionship. Byron's marriage was a very perfect *"mariage de convenance,"* and we know what came of it.

Le Mariage de Convenance.

Byron's Marriage.

In England these are called "prudent marriages," but when they occur in France the English speak of them with strong disapprobation as "business transactions." This is an example of the great art of "putting things."

A prudent marriage is not necessarily a business

Prudent Marriages.

A real Case.

transaction either in France or England. Let us consider a real case. A young gentleman (French or English) dislikes the idea of permanent celibacy, yet his income, though rather more than sufficient for a bachelor, is inadequate for the expenses of marriage. He marries a woman with some fortune. This cannot be described as "a business transaction" unless he gains by it, and in most cases he gains nothing, he only protects himself against social *déchéance* or financial ruin. He acts without a view to profit, purely in self-defence. He wishes to marry without injuring himself; he does not wish to turn marriage into a profitable transaction. Nine-tenths of French marriages are made exactly in this way.

French Marriage Customs.

French customs in contracting marriage differ from the English customs chiefly in this, that the French know so little of each other before they are betrothed (often nothing whatever), the marriage having been arranged by other people. Here is a real instance. A young gentleman of my acquaintance was engaged to one of two sisters before he had seen either, and when he met them together in a drawing-room he asked his mother which was to be his wife. This is a supremely perfect example of a genteel arrangement in France, where the less people know of each other before marriage the more are they *comme il faut*. I remember being much amused by the indignation of a very beautiful young French lady about a rumour that she had been wedded for love. She reiterated her assurance that it was a baseless fabrication, that her husband had only seen her once before their betrothal, and then quite formally

The *Comme il faut.*

in the presence of other people, and that their marriage had been entirely one of *"convenance."* In short, she repelled the idea of love as if it had been a disgraceful and unmerited imputation.* English writers who wish to depreciate French people can scarcely exaggerate the mutual ignorance in which genteel French marriages are usually made. There are, however, occasional exceptions, and I myself have known a few French people who condemned the system strongly. As to the lower classes, especially the peasantry, courtship goes on almost after the English fashion. There are *"mariages d'inclination"* in all classes, though they become less and less frequent as you ascend the social scale. That such marriages *must* exist will be evident to any one who reflects that in France there are dowerless girls who get married nevertheless. Neither does a dowerless girl invariably accept the first young gentleman who proposes himself. I myself have known several poor French girls who refused good offers; a very striking instance came within my knowledge during the composition of this volume.**

Mutual Ignorance of French *Fiancés.*

Dowerless French Girls.

* Probably her chief reason, unexpressed, was that to have been asked in marriage for her good looks would have implied a deficiency of dowry, or, at least, left room for the supposition that there had not been dowry enough, of itself, to attract an offer of marriage.

** I was permitted to read a letter from the young lady's father, in which he said, "The offer was quite beyond anything that my daughter could have hoped for, but after full consideration she decided to decline it, and I think she acted wisely, as money is not everything in this world." The girl was left entirely free, as if she had been in England.

A French mother said to me, "I have never regretted not to have been able to give dowries to my daughters. They had several offers which were addressed to themselves and not to their purses, and they married most happily." The expression "marry for money" would apply, no doubt, to some cases (as in England, for there are fortune-hunters everywhere), but it does not apply to the great majority of French marriages. The accurate way of stating the case is this. *A Frenchman generally expects his wife to bear part of the household expenses.* As it does not often happen that the wife can follow a profession or a trade, such an expectation amounts to the expectation of a dowry. In most cases the amount of this dowry is so moderate that an Englishman would say the girl had nothing—he would not take such a sum into consideration, one way or the other, when he married. For me (who know a great deal more about the inside of French life than can conveniently be printed), I have come to the conclusion that with the present rate of expenses a dowry must be much larger than French dowries usually are to give the young husband the satisfaction of having made a good financial speculation by his marriage. A few hundreds of pounds or a *very* few thousands are the ordinary dowries in the middle classes, and neither the hundreds nor the thousands are any compensation for the pitiless pecuniary exigencies of married life. No young gentleman in his senses imagines that he can improve his financial position by marrying a young lady of elegant tastes endowed with two hundred a year. Yet that income, at five per

The Truth about French Marriages.

Moderate Expectations.

Ordinary French Dowries.

cent, represents a capital of a hundred thousand francs, which is an exceptionally large dowry for a French girl in the middle classes. A girl whose father can give four thousand pounds has probably been brought up in a family living in some style, and she will expect a considerable expenditure.* It might be a better speculation to take an industrious housewife of simple tastes, without a penny in the world. The small dowries and the very large ones may be useful to two different classes of men. The small dowries are often valuable to people in the struggling classes because they may enable the husband to advance his trade. A journeyman joiner marries a girl with five hundred pounds and becomes a master, a very small shopkeeper may take a larger shop. But what is the good of, say, a thousand pounds to a poor physician or professor? The money by itself might be acceptable, but a wife with it can only mean an increase of his poverty. Yet this is the kind of "marrying for money" that is constantly practised in France. It is no more than a sort of partial prudence in cases where complete prudence would be not to marry at all.

Small Dowries.

In England this sort of *moderate* deference to prudential considerations is comparatively rare. An Englishman marries for affection decidedly, or for money with equal decision. He despises a small dowry. The same man may marry for pure love

Moderate Prudence rare in England.

* A girl with £200 a year will expect, in marriage, a household expenditure of £800 a year. I proposed this theoretical proportion to a French gentleman of much experience, and he said that the estimate was moderate.

with absolute disdain of money, or he may sacrifice affection and seek for a wealthy heiress. He would not, like a Frenchman, be turned aside from a love-match by five or six hundred pounds.

Imprudence in the English Lower Classes.

Nearly all ranks in France are moderately prudent with regard to marriage, but in England it is only the comfortable classes that are so. The imprudence of the lower middle classes and of the people is almost without limit. They talk about marriage, and they enter upon it, exactly as if pecuniary difficulties had no existence. One of my friends was invited to a wedding where rather genteel appearances were observed, but nobody except himself had any cash. At the end of the ceremony the young bridegroom approached him and borrowed fourteen shillings to pay the fees. The money was never returned.

Marrying for Marriage only.

I think it may fairly be said that there is more marrying *simply for marriage* in France than in England. What I mean may be made clearer by a particular instance. A French lady once told me and several other people that her son was going to be married. "Who is the young lady?" I inquired.

A decision to Marry.

"Oh," she answered, "I only mean that my son has decided to marry, he has not yet fixed upon any young lady; that is a matter for future consideration." This, I should say, is very characteristic of French habits of thought about marriage. A young Frenchman will live on for some years without troubling his head about the matter, when suddenly, nobody knows why, he will come to the conclusion that he ought to get married, and then he will very likely

ask some old lady to manage the business for him. In the clerical party marriages are often made by priests, who have great influence in finding rich girls for young men likely to be dutiful sons of the Church. Open unbelievers cannot hope to benefit by these influences. In England also a reputation for strict orthodoxy is very valuable to a young gentleman at the time of marriage; it is, in fact, or certainly was some years ago, more valuable than a reputation for morality. I myself have known instances of young Englishmen who married well and were known to be immoral, when they would not have had the most distant chance of "marrying money" if they had not been regular attendants at divine worship.

Clerical Influence.

Orthodoxy.

Morality.

My own opinions on these matters are of little consequence to any one, but as a writer is constantly exposed to misrepresentation, I will state them very briefly in self-defence. It seems to me that marriage may be undertaken from a variety of motives and be fairly happy, either in France or England, but that the only foundation of the best happiness is companionship. How this ideal is to be realised every one must judge for himself. In my opinion it depends much more upon mental sympathy than on equality of fortune or rank, or even on identity of nationality. Marriage is a lifelong conversation, and I have never found that conversation with any lady was more interesting because she had money in her purse.

The Author's Opinion.

Again, with regard to the use of the words "prudence" and "prudent" concerning marriage, I should

Partial Prudence.

say that these words are employed far too exclusively, both in France and England, with reference to pecuniary considerations, which are not the whole of prudence but only a very limited part of it. To marry a person whom you have never seen, or of whose character, gifts, and tastes you know only what can be learned in one or two short and formal interviews, is an act of the wildest imprudence, however wealthy the person may be, and this kind of utter rashness is exceedingly common amongst French people, who are prudent to excess in all that touches fortune.

Rashness of "arranged" Unions.

One consideration, especially, exhibits this rashness in its true character. To marry a woman of whom you know nothing is to entrust your children to a woman of whom you know as little.

CHAPTER IV.

INTERCOURSE.

Comparative Sociability.

ONE of the most prevalent popular errors, for it is prevalent both in France and England, is the belief that the French are the more sociable people of the two. The truth is quite the contrary; the English are much more sociable than the French; the English associate together much more readily for purposes of business, of culture, and of pleasure; the force of fellowship is greater in England, and so is the feeling of subordination towards leaders.

Repellent English Manners.

The error seems to have taken its origin in the outwardly repellent manners of the English towards persons whom they do not know. They look with suspicion on new or accidental acquaintances; they hate to be intruded upon, and they have an undefined dread of having acquaintances forced upon them who may be a little inferior in rank. But towards all whom they consider safe, that is, well bred and unobtrusive, and belonging to their own class, they exhibit a degree of sociability which far exceeds the sociability of the French.

The English very rarely have the temper that can amuse itself with a little unrestrained intercourse of an accidental kind. Novelists and philosophers have that kind of openness of interest, but they are

French Liking for Talk.

a small minority. It is much more common amongst the French. The ordinary Frenchman amuses himself with studying human nature, and likes a conversation with a temporary acquaintance. It serves to pass the time better, he thinks, than "putting his nose into a book." Most of what the French know they have got by conversation, and so far as readiness to talk is concerned they are sociable. But

French Reserve.

with all his apparent openness and frankness the Frenchman has his own reserve too, and fences his life round in his own way. People say that "the Englishman's house is his castle;" if so, the Frenchman's house may be described as his armoured turret. *"On ne donne pas la clef de sa maison"* is not an English expression, and it means more than the material key.

Restaurant and Home Hospitality.

A Parisian invites you to dinner, and will probably take you to an expensive restaurant; a Londoner will offer his roast-beef in his own house. The separation of the sexes is much greater in France than in England. You may know a great number of married Frenchmen and have a very slight acquaintance with their wives, perhaps not enough to recognise them in the street. Nay, you may even habitually visit Frenchmen in their own private apartments without ever seeing their wives and daughters

Seclusion of French-women.

at all. Frenchwomen (I do not mean in Paris, but in the provinces) often live in something like oriental seclusion, but beyond this there is in the feminine mind an extreme tenacity about real or imaginary rank. The husband may have intimate friends, whom he respects for their character or admires for

their talents, whilst his wife rejects them because they have not the *particule*, or because their grandfathers have been in trade. We know that character, talent, culture, count for nothing whatever in the aristocratic estimate,* and we must remember that in France the spirit of aristocracy, where it exists, is extremely pure, and does not allow itself to be seduced from its own principles either by merit or wealth, nor even by such offices and honours as a republic can confer. It is not exactly convenient for me to give special instances, because these pages may be translated and the cases recognised, but I will say, speaking generally and without special application, that if M. de B. is the intimate friend of M. C., and if the two call each other Jules and Jacques, it does not at all follow that Madame de B. will recognise Madame C., or allow their children to associate.

Their Aristocratic Sentiments.

Social Separation of the Sexes.

There is really very little necessity for this kind of *morgue* in France, as the French are not pushing, and care very little about distinguishing themselves by having fine acquaintances. It might be more necessary in England, where people are proud to know a lord, yet in England I have not observed that extreme difference between the sexes which certainly exists in France. I should say that in England, as a rule, a man and his wife, in whatever rank, will either repel you or accept you together. You would hardly, in England, be on terms of

Less of it in England.

* Of course I mean with reference to aristocratic rank. A duke who has talent of his own is likely to recognise it in others.

affectionate friendship with a man, and on terms of the most formal and distant acquaintanceship with his wife—acquaintanceship remaining equally formal, equally distant, for an unlimited number of years.

Distance does not diminish.

This distance between the sexes does not diminish in provincial France. I am not speaking of the great cities like Lyons and Marseilles, which may have something of Parisian openness and ease, but of the country and especially of the aristocratic parts of it. I should say that if there is any perceptible change it is rather towards a still wider separation of the sexes. The French have a very keen sense, perhaps an exaggerated sense, of what is feminine and what is unfeminine. Englishmen of the last generation were French in their feelings about this; they would have considered it unfeminine for a woman to make political speeches, to deliver sermons, to be a leader in the Salvation Army, and to press for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts. They would even have thought it unfeminine to want a grand classical and mathematical education. All that feeling of objection to the "unfeminine" is essentially French, and it remains in France whilst in England it is passing away. I remember talking to some French people about George Eliot's extensive education. It did not exalt her in their eyes, but the contrary; they thought it unfeminine. There is a partial reaction against this opinion in France, of which one symptom is the establishment of *lycées* for girls; but it is only one party, and but a section of that party, which advocates this, and the real object is not so

The Dislike to what is "Unfeminine."

Essentially French.

much to educate girls as to deliver them from clerical domination. All the tendencies of modern amusements and occupations separate men and women in France. As examples I may mention the increase of smoking and gambling, and the decline of conversation and dancing. The increase of smoking has the effect of leaving men together after dinner "to smoke a cigarette." In former times they went to the drawing-room with the ladies, and looked upon the English as boors for doing otherwise. Now, under pretext of a cigarette, Frenchmen will remain away from ladies almost the whole evening. The increase of gambling makes the card-table more interesting than feminine small talk. Young Frenchmen are now becoming too old, too *blasés*, to enjoy dancing, which is one of the pleasures of healthy and natural youth. As to conversation, it is difficult to maintain it with ladies in a country where they have such a small share in the political and religious opinions of men, and where literature has little interest for either. In Paris there are the theatres, and the Salon whilst it is open. Perhaps the best subject in common between men and women in modern France is business, for which the women often have a natural aptitude.

Education of French Girls.

Further Separation of Men and Women.

The great want in French provincial life is amusement of a cheap and innocent kind, that might bring people together. The men have their *cafés*, but they are only frequented by one sex, and not universally by that. The clergy, of course, avoid them, and so do the gentry who pretend to some degree of rank. They are frequented by the middle,

The Want of Amusement in France.

The *Cafés*.

including the professional, classes; and the very existence of *cafés* is evidence of the small amount of intercourse going on in private houses. They are at the same time an effect and a cause of the separation of the sexes. So far as I know, the upper classes are more sociable in the sense of having more intercourse amongst themselves than the middle, but they are exclusive, and even amongst the richer nobles I doubt if there is as much hospitality as in England.

Balls and Theatres.

An idea is prevalent in England that Frenchwomen are constantly going to balls and theatres. In Paris, no doubt, rich women have these amusements, but in the provinces, where most French people live, there is very little of them. The provincial town that is best known to me is situated in an aristocratic neighbourhood, and although the theatre is very pretty and very well kept, the gentry will not patronise it at all, and are never to be seen there. Even the middle classes are by no means regular in their attendance, for the actors often play to empty benches. There are never any public balls, and those in private houses are very rare. The only public entertainments patronised in any way by the upper classes are the charity concerts, which occur perhaps twice in three years.

Rarity of Public Amusements.

Lunch.

The English institution of lunch, to which any friend may come uninvited, is a great practical help to social intercourse in the country. It is pleasant from the absence of state and pretension, both in host and guest, and it gives a convenient excuse for paying a long call in the middle of the day. There

is nothing answering to it in France. You must be very intimate indeed with a French family before you could venture to *"demander à déjeuner;"* in fact, that is hardly possible without relationship. It is astonishing, to an Englishman, how very much of French social intercourse is absolutely limited to the formal call between three and six in the afternoon. People go on calling upon each other in that way for all their lives without an invitation on either side. The Formal Call.

Another great difference between France and England concerns invitations to sleep. In England, all your friends' houses are open to you. It would not occur to an Englishman to go to the hotel in a town where he had intimate friends. In France the narrowness of town lodgings acts as an effectual preventive to this kind of hospitality, except amongst the very rich, and so the habit of it is lost. This is one of those small matters which have great consequences. The most unrestrained social intercourse in England takes place when guests are staying in a house, and the most valuable moments for the interchange of masculine confidences occur very late at night. Invitations to sleep.

I have said elsewhere that the increase of luxury in France acts as a restraint upon hospitality. People shrink from the disturbance, the trouble, and the expense of the state dinner, and so they end by giving no dinners at all. In former times hospitality was more a thing of the heart than of the purse, more of gaiety than ceremony, and was so common as to be a weekly, and in some houses almost a Increase of Luxury an Impediment to Hospitality.

daily habit. Now it is a solemn function occurring at rare intervals.

Want of Intercourse amongst the French Peasantry.

My attention has been drawn by the French themselves to the decline of hospitality amongst the peasantry. I believe that this varies greatly in different parts of France. So far as I have been able to observe, the peasants never invite each other except to marriage-feasts, and then their hospitality is excessive and extravagant. In my neighbourhood, not only do the peasants abstain from invitations, they do not even meet for an evening's chat in each other's houses. The farmhouses may be a mile from each other by measurement; socially, they are a hundred miles apart.

The Club and the *Cercle*.

The club is, in a certain sense, a more sociable institution in France than in England. It exists in France for conversation and gambling, in England for the individual convenience of the members who may want a rest in an easy-chair with a newspaper or a review, or who desire a convenient place for dining in a kind of semi-privacy. The purpose of the English club is answered in some degree by the cafés and restaurants in France. They have no privacy, but they are to be found everywhere. The difference of title between "club" and *"cercle"* is an indication in itself. "Club" implies an association to meet common expenses for individual convenience, *cercle* is a circle of talkers.

Effects of Religious and Political Bigotry.

The effects of religious and political bigotry in restricting social intercourse are lamentable enough in both countries, and especially because the more intercourse is needed the less it is likely to take

place. Real toleration of differences in opinion is possible only for a few. It comes from largeness of mind, but there are few large minds. It is dictated by the highest reason, but few people are reasonable. The ordinary and practical social solution of the difficulty is to break off intercourse when differences of opinion manifest themselves. In this way it comes to pass, almost involuntarily, and as if by the operation of a natural law, that people who visit together have usually the same political and religious opinions, or, at least, profess them, which is equally conducive to harmony. And the few who have true liberality of sentiment, and could bear with the gentle and considerate expression of a different opinion, are often compelled to adopt the usual custom that they may not have to resent rudeness. So it happens that people in the same nation are divided even more trenchantly than if they belonged to different nations, and you find English people who will receive Catholic foreigners but not an English dissenter, or French people who will receive Americans but not a French republican. The evil resulting from this increases with the smallness of the place. In London and Paris it condemns nobody to solitude, because every one may find others who agree with him, but in provincial towns where petty class distinctions restrict people already to a very limited circle they may find themselves entirely shut out from social intercourse if they are even suspected of holding opinions not tolerated there. A want of delicacy and of hospitable feeling may even permit people to attack the known opinions of a guest at

Internal Division in France and England.

Effects of Division in the Provinces.

their own table, a proceeding not unexampled in civilised countries, though it would be thought barbarous in the tent of a nomadic Arab. Or, without going so far as that, a host, in mere weakness, may fail to defend his guest because it would be impossible to do that without establishing the forbidden principle that every one has a right to his own views.

PART VIII.

SUCCESS.

CHAPTER I.

PERSONAL SUCCESS.

THE estimate of what constitutes personal success varies so much in the two countries, and in the different classes of each, that it is very difficult to arrive at any common standard. There is hardly any kind of success that a French gentleman desires and which is at the same time possible for him. He cannot desire success in trade, or even in any lucrative profession, because all the trades and professions are beneath him; his former possibilities of success lay in Court favour, but now there is no Court. It is *bon ton* to despise official posts under the Republic. The gentry do not enter the Church, except occasionally the regular orders, and therefore cannot look for bishoprics. The fine arts and professional work in literature are of course infinitely beneath them. Nothing remains but the army and navy, with the drawback that both of these are already crowded with plebeian ability.

Success difficult for a French Gentleman.

A class that has nothing to look forward to in life, nothing to aim at, but only to live from day to day in dignity, often on very narrow means, is de-

prived of the possibilities of success, and cannot really know the delightful meaning of the word. The middle classes know it,—the shopkeepers, manufacturers, professional men. Even the peasant knows it when he has fought his way to the purchase of a little farm.

Success in the Middle Classes.

Middle-class French-women.

The women in the French middle classes, as is well known, often understand business quite as well as the men, and show quite as much energy, and govern great commercial houses with quite as much capacity both for large affairs and for details. Madame Boucicaut, of the *Bon Marché* in Paris, will probably remain the typical Frenchwoman of business of this century. She attained undeniable greatness, not merely as the possessor of I know not how many millions, but as an untitled queen actually reigning over a great number of human beings and constantly applying a most powerful intellect to answer one question satisfactorily, "How can I do most good to all these people who work for me?" A lower nature would have tried to get above the shopkeeping sphere; her ambition was satisfied with remaining where she was and being a great worker and a great philanthropist.* Her life was indeed a

Madame Boucicaut.

An untitled Queen.

* The public knows something of Madame Boucicaut's acts of public beneficence (though they were so numerous that it is impossible to remember such a list), but I have learned through several different private channels how thoughtful her kindness was to individuals. By long practice she had become quite an artist in goodness, having cultivated her talent in that way as another might have learned to paint or to sing. There was an inventiveness about her beneficence that made it as original as poetry, and as beautiful in its originality.

An Artist in Goodness.

success, not only in the exercise of power, but in the development of character. It has sometimes appeared possible that studious philanthropy may have its origin in a kind of remorse. In the case of Madame Boucicaut it may have been at first suggested by regret for the injury done to thousands of petty tradesmen by a colossal cheap establishment like hers. A true Success.

The influence of ancient philosophies, and also that of Christianity (so far as it has been taken seriously), have both been hostile to money-making; but the influence of all visible realities is so constantly in its favour that the word "success" in the middle classes both of France and England means money and nothing else. The phrases *"Il a réussi, il est arrivé,"* and the expressions "He has done well, he has risen in the world," do not mean that one has attained any ideal excellence, but simply that he has netted money, and in certain classes a man is considered a poor creature if he has not realised a fortune. This view of success has led, especially in France, to increased gambling in all kinds of speculations, because there is hardly any kind of real work that a man or woman can do which brings in more than a pittance. The increased cost of living, both in necessary expenditure and in the useless expenditure that is imposed by the foolish customs of society, has made the payment for honest work seem even smaller than it really is. The desire for a little money is an incentive to work; the desire for much is an incentive to speculation, except in the few cases where there is capital

Success in Money-making.

Speculation in France.

The Desire for Little and for Much Money.

enough for one to become a leader of industry on a large scale. The same cause has led to the success of lotteries in France, and it is this spirit which of late years has so much increased the amount of private gambling. These tendencies are not likely to diminish, since professional incomes, instead of increasing, have gone down as a result of competition. Physicians tell me that the facilities of cheap general and professional education are now overcrowding their professions by an immense influx of young men who settle anywhere, as birds do where they are likely to find food. An old physician who formerly had a good rural practice in a part of the country very little known, told me that he was now surrounded by active young doctors in the adjacent parishes, and saw his income reduced to £160 a year. Yes, that is about the figure to which competition is bringing down the gains in the liberal professions. The fine arts, both in England and France, offer a few very valuable prizes; and as a few artists live very luxuriously and with considerable ostentation in their showy houses, they give a false idea of the prosperity of their profession. As a matter of fact, the majority of artists form a peculiarly and especially anxious class, whose gains are so precarious that next year's income is like the hope of a prize in a lottery. Nothing is more curious in the history of the nineteenth century than the prodigious increase in the number of artists both in England and France. A well-known French painter told me there were twenty thousand of his profession in Paris, working, of course, chiefly for exportation,

Lotteries in France.

Private Gambling.

Crowding of the French Medical Profession.

The Fine Arts as a Profession.

Great Numbers of Artists.

as France produces painting to sell rather than to keep. The number of sculptors, though not nearly so great, is even more remarkable, because sculpture is so little bought. An English academician has an interesting theory about the intentions of Nature with regard to the fine arts; he says that pictures are produced now as coal was in prehistoric times, to serve long afterwards for fuel. Seriously, it appears that Nature follows in this matter her usual principle of "a thousand seeds for one to bear." She produces a thousand workmen in the fine arts that there may be found amongst them a single artist of genius whose work is truly precious to the world. In France the great number of semi-artists has had the effect of infusing an artistic element into several of the handicrafts, and of disseminating artistic ideas, chiefly amongst the population of Paris. Artists who have failed as makers of pictures or statues fall back upon decorative painting or sculpture, upon designing for manufactures, and upon teaching elementary drawing in public schools. Painters often have recourse to another of the graphic arts when painting fails. There is hardly one of the French etchers who has not desired to be a painter.

The Intentions of Nature.

Uses of the Unsuccessful.

From the point of view which regards worldly success, and which we are considering for the present, the French clergy is very inferior to the English. The highest pay of a parish priest is sixty pounds a year, the lowest thirty-six. There are some extras for wedding and funeral fees. There is also a priest's house, and these dwellings have

Small Worldly Success of the French Clergy.

Presents given to Priests.

been much improved of late. When the parishioners are rich and generous the priest receives many presents of eatables, and in some parishes his cellar is kept well supplied with wine; but when the population is stingy he has to live strictly on his income or even on less if he is of a charitable disposition. In towns, a favourite priest is often embarrassed with gifts for the comfort and elegance of his rooms; in rural parishes his rooms are likely to be bare. Each priest keeps one woman servant, usually plain, and, of course, invariably of mature age—his "rancid virgin," as one *curé* wittily called her. It has always been an insoluble problem for me how the two manage to live so decently on so little money. A canon has sixty pounds a year, a bishop four hundred, and an archbishop six hundred, but in the case of prelates there is the *casuel* (different fees), which may increase their means considerably. In England the lowest ecclesiastical incomes are twice what they are in France, and the highest more than ten times as much. There are no *prizes* in the French Catholic Church answering to the richer English livings; even a bishopric (from the pecuniary point of view) is not so good as many an English rectory. We hear of the wealth and splendour of the Church; she is, no doubt, magnificent in display, but her priests are poor officials, and their celibacy is not a matter of choice but of necessity, which (from a sense of prudence) has been converted into a rule. It is only after fully realising the poverty of the Catholic priesthood that we can estimate the overwhelming

French Canons.

Prelates.

Poverty of the Catholic Priesthood.

importance of the Pope with his unlimited command of money. The difference between him and his prelates is not at all that between an English king and his great nobles, but rather that between the Emperor Napoleon and ordinary regimental officers, whilst the priests are relatively in the position of private soldiers and no more.

Importance of the Pope.

In England ecclesiastical incomes range between eighty pounds a year and fifteen thousand. Incomes of two or three hundred a year are common, and many exceed seven or eight. In fact, the Church answers with tolerable exactness to other liberal professions, such as medicine, the law, and painting. A splendidly successful lawyer, doctor, or painter has the income of the Archbishop of York, and there may be one in each generation with that of Canterbury, whilst the unsuccessful layman may equal the earnings of a small incumbent or a poor curate, and between the two we find all the degrees. It is more difficult, however, for an energetic man to make his own way in the Church than in more open professions.

Ecclesiastical Incomes in England.

The army, in both countries, is a poor profession except in the highest grades. It is essentially a bachelor's profession. In France, officers are not permitted to marry any woman who has less than a certain dowry, and in England marriage is restricted to a few amongst the private soldiers.* Here we

The Army a Bachelor's Profession.

* In any case a French officer cannot marry without an authorisation emanating from the Ministry of War. A military friend told me that the following mishap occurred to an officer in his regiment who thought he would like to marry a certain

have an approach to the enforced celibacy of the Roman priesthood.

Public Offices in France and England.

Almost all public offices in France are paid, but ill paid. In England they are either well paid or gratuitous. English Members of Parliament, in both houses, are unpaid; in France they receive a moderate salary. In England magistrates (except a small special class) are unpaid; in France they all receive a few thousand francs a year. On the other hand, English judges are splendidly paid in comparison with French judges, even when they sit only in the County Courts. The magistracy, in France, is so little lucrative that judicial functions usually imply private means.

The Magistracy.

Trade.

The ordinary trades are perhaps equally lucrative in the two countries, and, with the exception of old landowners, most of the prosperous people are either tradesmen or the descendants of tradesmen. An antiquary in a certain neighbourhood told me that the local aristocracy there was descended, almost exclusively, from tanners of the Middle Ages. In the wine districts gold is chiefly consolidated, directly or indirectly, from grape-juice, as in Lancashire it is a concentrated form of cotton, and in Lyons of silk.

girl in a certain town. He applied for permission, which was refused. The regiment was sent elsewhere, and the sensitive officer was smitten a second time, so he applied for permission again. It came in the form of an authorisation to marry not the second, but the first young lady. The officer did so, and discovered, when too late, that she was one of those governing women who order about their husbands like children, so he has leisure to deplore the decision of the authorities.

Many fine new houses have been built in France since the Empire, and almost invariably by tradesmen.

The English Manufacturing District.

For rapid increase in wealth and population there is nothing in France comparable to the manufacturing district within a radius of forty miles from the Manchester Exchange. The population of that region is greater than that within forty miles of Charing Cross; and notwithstanding times of depression it is probable that the wealth in it far exceeds that of any similar area in France. Manchester, and the congeries of minor yet still populous towns that crowd round it, are an example of rapidity in the increase of wealth and population together which is rather American than European, and there, at least, an American would find proofs of material success. I, who have lived in Lancashire, have known many surprising instances, and it is not so much this or that particular example that strikes one there as the prevalence of a plutocratic atmosphere. Money is as much in the air of Lancashire as the smell of flowers about Cannes and Nice, with this difference, that whilst flowers are delightful to most noses, the odour of money is so chiefly to those who possess it.

Manchester.

A Plutocratic Atmosphere.

The reader may perhaps imagine that small professional incomes must be relatively larger in France than in England because living is cheaper there, but these ideas are founded upon a former state of things. Before the Second Empire, when there were few railways, living was very cheap in some out-of-the-way parts of France. Railways

Cost of Living in France and England.

equalised prices, and since then various other causes have combined to raise them. At present, living is quite as expensive in France as in England. An Englishman, now settled in Kent after a residence in Burgundy, tells me that he finds it more economical to live in his own country. At the same time that prices have risen, the customs of society have become both more exacting and more costly, so that married people feel what has been called "the pinch of poverty" on means that would have seemed an ample competence to their fathers. The one conclusion to which accumulated experience seems now to be driving mankind is that without a large income there can be no success, and that a man's life is a failure unless he can afford to live in society, to travel, and to provide handsomely for all the members of his family.

Necessity of a large Income.

Another estimate of success is held by some, and I think by more people in France than in England. It is, and always has been, my own view, and I have never seen any reason to change it.

Real Success.

Real success is nothing more, and it is certainly nothing less, than the happy exercise and development of each man's faculties, whatever they may be. Hence the error of supposing that one can be truly successful by following in the steps of another. Each man has to win his own happiness, or, in religious language, to work out his own salvation. The world's estimate of him is important only just so far as it enables him to do this, or hinders him from doing it; beyond that it is no more to him than the wind on a distant sea. Now, this happy

exercise of gifts may no doubt sometimes depend on money, but it usually depends far more on suitableness of situation. I have mentioned the poor incomes of French priests, the miserable incomes as they will appear to the English reader. The very poverty of these men is, in the best cases, a part of their success. If they want to leave all and follow Christ, a bare subsistence is all that they require for that. Their poverty is a part of the dignity and reality of their office. Success, for a priest, has absolutely nothing to do with money, or even with preferment; it consists in moral and religious influence, and in nothing else. The famous *Curé d'Ars* had immense success, and remained a poor village priest to the end of his saintly life; what need had he of wealth and dignities? In the army, as elsewhere, success is to be fit for the rank one occupies, and to attain exactly the rank that one is fit for; it is not to get up into a rank above one's capacity. In literature, success is merely encouragement to express our genuine and best selves; it is not to be splendidly rewarded for producing work adapted for the market. In painting, success is nothing more than encouragement to paint the pictures that form themselves in the mind; it is not successful commerce. Corot, the French landscape painter, produced his own work and succeeded late, yet it was a pure success for him, and he could wait for it patiently on fifty pounds a year. Another instance of real though not apparent success is that of the Englishman David Cox, whom some have commiserated because he did not pocket the thousands that his drawings

The true Success of a Priest.

Corot.

Cox.

afterwards attained. One who knew him intimately said there was no occasion for pity, that Cox had enjoyed his life and work, and earned as much as was necessary for his independence.

Epicurean and Stoic Views of Success.

There are two sides to the question whether a successful life must be in every case a pleasant one. The Epicurean philosopher would say that without happiness there can be no success; the Stoic would see the possibility of a high kind of success without anything like happiness; the Christian thinks life successful if it leads to heaven, though it be wretched and miserable upon earth. Both Christian and Epicurean agree in taking happiness as the measure of success, though one places it on the earth and the other elsewhere.

All three are to be found in France in their complete development. The dominant philosophy is the Epicurean, but Stoicism and Christianity have their small and great places with their own theories of success. It is the tendency of the French mind to follow every scheme of life to the extremity of its logical consequences. France is the country of the woman of the world, *la mondaine*, and of the Carmelite nun, the one living in the utmost luxury, the other in the hardest austerity, and a gleam of hope or a cloud of disappointment in the life of a young lady may determine for her which of the two she is to be. France is the country of conversation and of the silent trappists, the land of wine, and dance, and song, yet at the same time a land where life is often most dull, and dreary, and prosaic.

Strong Contrasts in France.

Still, if we consider the French nation broadly,

after having given its due place to asceticism, catholic or parsimonious, I think it is evident that the dominant tendency is to make the present life agreeable, even to study to make it so, and to take trouble in order to enjoy a succession of little pleasures. In the care for the agreeableness of the present life there is a very strong contrast between the French and the Highlanders of Scotland, for example. The Highlanders are unsuccessful in making life agreeable, partly on account of their climate, which discourages effort, but also from their temperament, which prefers discomfort to trouble and forethought. The same contrast, in minor degrees, exists between the French and some other inhabitants of the British Islands. The Frenchman's object is to make life *a succession of little pleasures.*

French Tendency to make Life Agreeable.

Life as a Succession of little Pleasures.

If he is able to do this, does that constitute success? It is success of a kind, if it can be carried on indefinitely and without any perceptible injury to health. The judicious Epicurean, who knows the necessity of moderation, arrives at a kind of happiness, and he includes mental pleasures, such as those of art and elegance, in his list.

The Judicious Epicurean.

Whether a life of little pleasures is a successful life or not, it seems plain that, from the simply rational point of view, a life of *felt* privations is a failure. The ordinary gifts of nature are sunlight, pure air, pure water, and some degree of natural beauty. These are the natural refreshers of human life, and without them it is impossible for it to be complete. The establishment of the industrial sys-

The Natural Refreshers of Human Life.

tem is not a true success, because it has deprived great populations of these benefits. In this sense Manchester and Lyons are unsuccessful; they have not solved the problem of healthy and pleasant existence. Paris is apparently successful, because there is much external brilliance, if not beauty, but when we come to examine Parisian life in its details we find that it is wanting in space and freedom, that only the rich have elbow-room, and that ordinary existence is fatiguing as well as narrow. Londoners are rather more at ease, as their town covers more territory; but it is a dismal place, and if its inhabitants never left it they would not know the natural colour of the sky, or that of a flowing river.

Manchester and Lyons.

Paris.

Dismal London.

If we compare the two countries, the most successful quiet life, with moderate expenditure and some enjoyment of unspoiled nature, combined with the conveniences of advanced civilisation, is to be found, I think, in the French provinces. There is, however, a drawback to that success, otherwise unquestionably considerable, in the intellectual dulness which afflicts French provincial life as with a kind of torpor. There is nothing in the French provinces answering to the intelligence of the English manufacturing districts, with their mechanics' institutes, their lectures, concerts, and picture exhibitions. In Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire people are scarcely more cut off from the intelligent world than if they lived at a short distance from a metropolis. That perfect life which is so difficult to attain in modern times would require the union of

Dulness of French Provincial Life.

Lancashire and Yorkshire.

natural beauty (including unsullied skies and healthy vegetation) with intellectual society and opportunities.

Public and Private Success.

The question may be simplified by remembering that although public success may be measured by outward results, private success is always strictly personal, and is to be measured, at any particular time, only by the good mental and bodily condition of the man himself. All else is merely external. A

Mental Condition.

good mental condition includes just as much culture as is necessary to the development of the faculties, but not any burden of erudition heavy enough to diminish (as erudition so often does) the promptitude or the elasticity of the mind. A good bodily con-

Bodily Condition.

dition includes health and the training which gives a similar promptitude and elasticity. Sufficient material well-being for the maintenance of body and mind in these favourable conditions is essential to true success, all beyond it is superfluous. Fame, or

Fame.

the opinion of others, is of no use except as an encouragement or a stimulus, and it has nothing to do with the reality of success.

Industrial Civilisation.

On applying these tests to our modern industrial civilisation we find evidences of failure on all hands. The poor are not in conditions of existence favourable to the body, and they have not leisure enough for the activities of the mind. The rich leaders of industry have far more wealth than would be necessary to perfect human life, but they have not enough leisure for intellectual attainments; and they are prevented, by the presence of the multitudes that industry has called into being, from leading a life

independent of great social cares. In short, from the purely human and private point of view, without reference to material results, industrialism has not hitherto proved itself a success. It is successful in the produce of commodities, but not in the government of life.

Not a Complete Success.

Cheerfulness.

Mere cheerfulness of disposition is an element in every private success, and it might be argued that if any one is cheerful, say in the horrible English "Black Country," he is living more successfully than a despondent spirit surrounded by the light and colour of Italy. The French consider themselves happier than the English because they have more external gaiety, but I do not accept this gaiety as good evidence of a happy life. Without looking upon it with any puritanical disapproval, I think it is very frequently no more than a reaction against the troubles that beset human existence everywhere, and of which the French, like others, have their share. A gay philosophy may seem wanting in seriousness, but a man must have a very superficial acquaintance with French people if he has not discovered that their gaiety often conceals many a private anxiety and care. One reason for it is the feeling, which is certainly healthy, that we ought not to trouble other people with private causes of sadness, but make an effort to be cheerful as a social duty. Another and a deeper reason is that a light philosophy seems wiser and more intelligent than a melancholy one, because the miseries of life are not worth dwelling upon unless they can be practically alleviated. The natural gravity of Englishmen causes

External Gaiety of the French.

French Gaiety on the Surface.

Wisdom of a light Philosophy.

English Gravity not Incompatible with Happiness.

them to be misunderstood in France, where it is taken for sadness. English gravity is not incompatible with happiness. The grave mind is happy in its gravity as the light mind in its levity; and the English are not so grave as the French believe them to be. Cheerfulness (a word for which there is no equivalent in the French language) is an English characteristic, though the English have not the champagne in the blood that bubbles up in merriment and nonsense on the top of a Frenchman's brain. They had it long ago, in Shakespeare's time.

CHAPTER II.

NATIONAL SUCCESS AT HOME.

Private National Success.

THERE is a private national success as well as a public one. Private success, for a nation, is to have got the kind of religion and the kind of government that are suitable to the national idiosyncrasy, to have sufficient wealth and at the same time a light burden of taxation, to be free from civil discord of any dangerous acuteness, to pursue the arts and sciences fruitfully, and to live without dread of an enemy.

Conditions of it.

Which of the two, France or England, has hitherto reached the highest point of success in these several ways?

On the suject of religion and government enough has been said already in this volume. I think it is clear that on these important points England has been the more successful nation of the two. The Gallican Church was a failure, it has had to give way to Ultramontanism; the Anglican Church has been a great success, it has not only preserved, it has intensified its national character. It is true that Anglicanism is surrounded by Dissent; but Romanism is only suited to a part of the French people, and lives in opposition to its guiding secular principles. England has also enjoyed a more complete political

Religion.

success than France. Her system of government has not, as yet, excluded or alienated any class. Patricians and plebeians sit in the same Cabinet, speak from the same platforms, appeal to the same public in the same ways, and that whether they are Conservative or Radical. In England a popular leader may be associated with great nobles and received by the Sovereign; in France he would not be recognised by the smallest aristocrat. No Frenchman with any pretensions to aristocracy would be seen on the same platform with a French Gladstone. The French "Conservatives" have not the faintest hope of forming a Cabinet so long as the Republic lasts. To them the Republican power is like a foreign occupation, and their only hope is to plot against it and enfeeble it; for them it is not a national, but only a party government. All that can be said of the internal success of France, from the political point of view, is that since the overthrow of the Paris Commune she has maintained both liberty and order. No previous French Government has ever maintained *both*. The Republic has done this, but without being able to effect any reconciliation between parties which live in a state of latent civil war. The English system of government is accepted by the whole nation; it is national; whereas the French system is accepted by a part of the nation, and is national only in the sense of having the majority on its side.

Government.

Divisions in France.

Partial Success of the Republic.

The subject of wealth has been treated in another chapter. It is not wealth that is wanting. Both nations are enormously rich, France having the

Wealth.

advantage of a more even distribution, England the advantage, if it is one, of possessing a greater number of prodigiously rich men.

Taxation.

With regard to taxation, both countries inherit vast debts accumulated by previous wars. The Franco-German War cost France altogether about as much as England had to pay for the great contest with Napoleon the First. Taxation is heavier in France, and every year there is a deficit. Even if the present peace were to continue indefinitely, it is so costly that French finances must succumb beneath the strain of it. The difference between the two nations is that England can go on indefinitely as she is living now, in times of peace, whilst France cannot. A great conflict for national existence might utterly ruin both. Imagine an additional debt, for each, of a thousand millions sterling, the possible cost of the next European war!

Difference between English and French Finances.

Freedom from Civil Discord.

The next condition that I mentioned as essential to national happiness was freedom from civil discord of any dangerous acuteness. Now, although the French have shown considerable, even admirable self-restraint since 1871, so that civil war has never broken out amongst them in spite of much suppressed excitement, I think it is evident that there has been, and that there is yet, much less danger of civil war in England. Such an evil is still possible in France, though with the present orderly French temper it is not probable; in England, during this century at least, it seems absolutely out of the question. Civil discord exists in France to the degree of dangerous acuteness, in England only to

the degree that makes it bitter and unpleasant. French political dissension leads to personal rancour, which is constanty breaking forth in insults and in duels; in England the forms of courtesy between parties are still in some measure preserved. If a distinguished English statesman dies, or is seriously ill, his opponents express and feel regret for his loss, or sympathy with his sufferings; but French political hatred follows a man even to the grave. In a word, Frenchmen of opposite political tenets are really enemies; Englishmen who sit opposite to each other in the House are political adversaries only, and may meet pleasantly at the same dinner-table.

English Courtesy.

French Political Hatred.

The superior amenity of English public life is clear proof of its more successful working. It shows that both parties have something in common—their country—and that they do not lose sight of the national welfare, though they differ as to the measures supposed to be most conducive to it.

My next point was that a successful nation would pursue the arts and sciences fruitfully. Both France and England may look back with satisfaction to all that has been done during the last fifty years. There has been absolutely no sign in either country of decadence, notwithstanding frequent self-depreciation. Of the scientific progress that has been made I will say little, from simple incompetence to deal with a subject so vast and so much beyond my grasp. I only know, as an ignorant yet interested spectator, that hardly any enterprise now seems to be too great for the intelligence of English and French engineers, or for the skill of the workmen

The Arts and Sciences.

Applied Science.

whom they direct. If they do not build pyramids greater than those of Egypt and hippodromes more substantial than the Coliseum, it is only because there is no demand for them. Ours is the age of communication, and here England takes the lead with her railways, France with her admirable system of common roads and her complete inland navigation. France has made the Suez Canal, has attacked Panama, and is looking forward to a ship canal from Paris to the sea. Lancashire is making Manchester a seaport, and Scotland is bridging over the Firth of Forth. A gigantic project for a bridge from Dover to Calais is on the list of things that French engineers consider possible. It is difficult to state fairly what has been contributed by each country to the improvement of the railway and the telegraph; it is plain, however, that the practical art of railway travelling first originated in England. The first balloon rose in French air, and a balloon was for the first time successfully steered in France. The French are generally a little ahead of the English in military inventions, as in the use of breech-loading cannon and improved rifles and gunpowder, as well as other explosives, and now in the strength and perfection of armour-plating. Almost all the improvements in scientific agriculture are of English origin, and so are the machines used in it which are now extensively sold in France. Whilst the English are the greater maritime nation of the two and have an incomparably larger carrying trade, improvements in ship-building have usually originated either with the French or the Americans. In the

Railways.

Balloons.

Military Inventions.

Agriculture.

Ship-building.

construction of pleasure-boats, the English are ahead of the French for sea-going yachts (though inferior to the Americans), but the French with their great rivers have studied and brought to perfection the small centre-board sloop which tacks rapidly. Pleasure-boats.

I am not a good judge of any kind of manufacture except those connected with literature or the fine arts, so I will pass by the cottons of Manchester and the silks of Lyons with the simple observation that Lancashire has produced the spinning jenny and Lyons the Jacquard loom. With regard to the printing of newspapers and books, which I understand better, the French are admirable in the exquisite, but their common work is not so good as the English. French *éditions de bibliophile*, such as those of Lemerre, Jouaust, Tross, and the Société de Saint Augustin, not to mention many publications by Quantin and others, are equal to the best work of English printers in the mechanical qualities of type-cutting and clearness of impression, whilst they are, I think, a little superior to it in taste. All the French *éditions de bibliophile* that I possess or have examined are scrupulously correct in their freedom from typographic errors, whilst with common French editions it is just the contrary. There is a very well known Parisian publishing house that issues an immense quantity of volumes so rich in typographic faults that no English publisher would own them; yet ordinary French readers, who are very inattentive and also very patient, either do not notice or do not object to them. The fact is that there are two distinct classes of book-buyers in France—*les* Manufactures. Printing. French *Editions de Bibliophile.* Common French Editions. French Book-buyers.

amateurs and *le vulgaire.* The first are hard to please, and will have nothing to do with ugly or faulty editions, whilst they will give any price for exquisitely perfect work; the second neither know nor care anything about the matter, and in producing for them it does not signify how bad the work may be, provided only that the price does not exceed three francs fifty centimes per volume. The carelessness of the French about cheap work used to be very conspicuous in their newspapers, but these have improved during the last decade. I well remember the time when it was almost impossible to find a single English name or quotation, however brief, correctly printed in a French newspaper. English critics always attributed these faults to the writers of the articles, but they were more frequently due to absolute carelessness in correcting.* The press-work, too, used to be disgraceful; it is now fairly good in the daily papers and excellent in the illustrated weeklies. France is not a good country for presentable editions at moderate prices. The two most popular poets—Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset—are not to be had in anything answering to the readable current editions of Tennyson. There are the big octavos and the little exquisite Elzevirs for amateurs, and the vulgar editions for the public.

French Carelessness about cheap Work.

Careless Correcting.

This contrast between the exquisite and the

The Exquisite and the Vulgar.

* French carelessness in correcting is especially lamentable in school-books. I have before me a French school edition of *Childe Harold*, abounding in gross typographic blunders that must be most puzzling to French boys. M. Taine's *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise* is very faulty in this respect.

vulgar is usually very strong in France. We find it in the most visible form in French painting, which leads us to the conclusion that art does not refine a nation, but only expresses, and expresses equally and indifferently, whatever natural refinement and whatever inborn coarseness and vulgarity may already be existing in the race. If all the refined work in a French *Salon* could be put into an exhibition by itself it would be delightful; but the *Salons* as they exist at present are quite as much an annoyance as an enjoyment. A student with plenty of physical energy may by sheer hard labour arrive at a kind of noisy performance which attracts attention to his name, but the delicate and tender spirit of true art is absent from such work. Painting having been understood in France very much as a matter of apprenticeship, like the handicraft trades, all the technical part of it is taught by the straightest and surest methods to any lad who will be at the pains to go steadily through them, and the consequence is that a great number of men in France possess the handicraft without either intellectual culture or poetic invention, and it is they who have vulgarised the art. The English have been, and are still, inferior in manual force; they cannot attack a large canvas with the same certainty of covering it in a workmanlike manner, and some of their artists, like gifted amateurs, have not technical ability equal to the realisation of their ideas. Still there is less of coarseness in the English school, and more amenity and tenderness; its art is more gentle and nearer to poetry and music. There was a time when the

Qualities of Painting in France.

Qualities of English Art.

French had such a horror of crude colouring that, to avoid it, they took refuge in dull grays and browns, but that time is now so completely past that the most glaring colours are admitted into the *Salon*. English painting, on the contrary, has beome more sober than in the early days of uncompromising naturalism. An art critic who understood the English and French minds, and who was not himself turned aside from justice by the perversions of vulgar French or vulgar English patriotism, would probably say that, on the whole, the artists of both nations had been equally successful with regard to the interior of their own countries. As for foreign success, that is quite another thing, and I reserve it for the following chapter. At present I mean simply that English artists delight and instruct English people as much as French artists delight and instruct the French, and that the modern renaissance of the fine arts has been as effectual, nationally, in one country as in the other. On the ground of pure merit (always without reference to foreign estimation) an impartial critic would probably say that there were more draughtsmen in France and more colourists in England. Technical comparisons are difficult, because the art of painting contains, in reality, several different arts according to the ways in which it is practised, and they cannot be compared with each other. The popular comparison of Landseer with Rosa Bonheur is foolish, because they have nothing in common. There is no English artist who might be profitably compared with Meissonier; he is comparable only with the Dutch. Several clever French-

Crudity of Colour.

Home Success of Artists.

Landseer and Rosa Bonheur.

Meissonier.

men have taken up water-colour of late, and some of them have done interesting work; but not one of them has either the aims or the qualities of Turner. A comparison can be usefully established only between artists who paint the same class of subjects in the same technical manner. The comparison of Turner, as an oil-painter, with Claude is one that no intelligent critic would ever have made if Turner had not himself provoked it. Turner proved only that he could imitate Claude with a part of himself, as a very clever English Latinist might studiously imitate Virgil. The complete Turner is so much outside of Claude that the comparison stops short for want of material in the Frenchman.

Turner and Claude.

The revival of etching, which has been the most remarkable phenomenon in the artistic history of our own time, has been common to England and France, but more vigorously pursued by Frenchmen. This is due to the great superabundance of young unemployed painters in France who are happy to turn to anything that does not compel them to abandon art. It is the peculiarity of etching that men are better trained for it by the education of a painter than by the hard manual discipline of the engraver. Line engraving has now died out in England. In France it still maintains a feeble and precarious existence by the encouragement of the State (through the *Chalcographie du Louvre*) and a society of lovers of art who are trying to keep it alive.

The Revival of Etching.

Line Engraving.

All the photographic processes for the reproduction of works of art have been carried to perfection sooner in France than in England, and France

Photographic Processes.

always keeps the lead. Photography, itself, is due to efforts made by Niepce for the production of engraved plates.

Literature in the two Countries.

Literature is probably more influential in England than in France, because the English read so much more. A great proportion of the reading done in both countries is, however, only rest, or an escape from surrounding reality, so that it does little for the true success of authors, which is the dissemination of ideas. I do not know the name of any English author who has exercised so much direct power as either Rousseau or Voltaire. That of Carlyle is thought to have been considerable, because his personal energy was of the imperative order; but the English world does not follow his teaching. He was hostile to the fine arts, and they are more appreciated than ever; he condemned fiction, and novels were never more diligently read; he preferred despotism to popular government, and we see the rise of the English democracy; he was without scientific ideas, and science is penetrating all the departments of thought and action. The influence of John Mill is said to be great amongst thinking men in the English lower classes; but it is purely rational, and can awaken no enthusiasm beyond the disinterested love of truth. Mr. Ruskin's influence on art has been powerful in praise, but feeble in consideration. He did much for the fame of Turner, but little or nothing against Constable and Claude; and notwithstanding his open hostility to etching, that art is now better appreciated than ever. Contemporary artists go on their own paths without deference to critical

Carlyle.

John Mill.

Ruskin.

advice. A more interesting and important subject is Mr. Ruskin's influence on working men. He appeals more to the feelings than Spencer or Mill, and is welcome to many wanderers in search of a moral authority and master. They like the strength of faith in the master himself, which is ready to carry theory into practice, even when the theory is ruinous. Matthew Arnold, though a poet, was more rational, cooler, less fitted for popular leadership. His influence was directly felt by cultivated readers only; but it will have consequences not always traceable to the source. I think he erred in taking certain things to be specially English which are only English forms of something to be found elsewhere. The best criticism of this mistake in Arnold was made by Herbert Spencer with reference to nonconformity.* And Arnold's celebrated division of the English into Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace, though it

Matthew Arnold.

Barbarians Philistines, and Populace.

* "Mr. Arnold's studies of other nations, other ages, and other creeds would, I should have thought, have led him to regard Nonconformity as an universal power in societies, which has, in our time and country, its particular embodiment, but which is to be understood only when contemplated in all its other embodiments; the thing is one in spirit and tendency, whether shown amongst the Jews or the Greeks—whether in Catholic Europe or Protestant England. Wherever there is disagreement with a current belief, no matter what its nature, there is Nonconformity. The open expression of difference and avowed opposition to that which is authoritatively established constitutes Dissent, whether the religion be Pagan or Christian, Monotheistic or Polytheistic. The relative attitudes of the Dissenter, and of those in power, are essentially the same in all cases, and in all cases lead to vituperation and persecution."—*The Study of Sociology*, ninth edition, p. 234.

throws a light upon the nation, has the defect of making it seem an English peculiarity to be so divided, whereas you find the same characteristics in the three great and very distinct French classes. The French aristocracy is more ignorant than the English, the French *bourgeosie* more narrow in its concentration of thought upon money matters, and the populace less easily led and influenced by the possessors of wealth and culture.

J. Morley. Of Englishmen now living (1888), Mr. John Morley has the best equipment for a literary influence upon his countrymen; because he is at the same time a born writer and a man versed in affairs. Unfortunately a political career like his must have the effect of limiting a writer's influence to a single political party. John Morley might be useful to all Englishmen at the present time because he unites complete intellectual freedom with a vigorous moral sense. In this he is the Englishman of the future, the Englishman who will be intellectually-emancipated, yet who will preserve the moral sense of his forefathers and hate, let us hope, as they did, "that horrid burden and impediment on the soul," as Morley describes it, "which the Churches call Sin, and which, by whatever name we call it, is a very real catastrophe in the moral nature of man."

Poetry. Of the literary influences which consist chiefly in giving æsthetic pleasure, that of poetry maintains itself more than was expected in the middle of the century, and it is better understood now than it was then that poetry must remain itself and not get entangled in the actual. A poet may, like Victor Hugo

and William Morris, be in sympathy with advanced radicals, but in his verse he is likely to go back to the past as in the *Earthly Paradise* and the *Légende des Siècles*, or to pure mythology with Lewis Morris in the *Epic of Hades*, or to dim traditions as Tennyson to the Court of King Arthur, or even project himself into the future state like Sully Prudhomme in *Le Bonheur*. The office of poetry in the modern world is still its ancient office of deliverance. It delivers us from the actual by the imagination, and the older we get the less completely satisfactory does the actual become for us, and the more we need poetry to help us out of it. Those who do not read verses may receive their poetry through other channels. They may receive it in great purity and strength through religion, which is always successful in exact proportion to the sum of poetry that it contains, and unsuccessful in proportion to its rationalism. Or, if not consciously religious, men may get their poetry through music, architecture, and painting, of which it always was and always will be the mysterious vital principle, the immortal soul.

Office of Poetry in the Modern World.

The immense popularity of Victor Hugo was not so much due to the love of poetry in Frenchmen as to their gratitude for his fidelity to the popular cause, and admiration for his steady resistance to Napoleon III. Had he remained a royalist to the last, his fame would have been of a quieter kind. The French have a way of taking up a man and making political capital out of him, increasing his reputation as much as possible for that purpose. Hugo's name and his portraits were familiar to multitudes

Victor Hugo.

who knew nothing of his poetry. This deprives the observer of what might have been otherwise a good opportunity for appreciating the degree of interest that the French take in poetry on its own account, but even without political popularity there remained Hugo's celebrity as a novelist. The case is a very complex one. Great vigour in old age is deeply respected and admired in France, and Hugo was a very fine old man. I am told that the generation now passing away took a much keener interest in literature than the present. As for poor Lamartine, his fame has been for a while completely eclipsed, but there are now some signs of a revival. Alfred de Musset is read by all French people of a literary turn, especially by young men, who delight in him as young Englishmen delighted in Byron before Tennyson became the fashion. The minor French poets of the present day are numerous, and the tendency amongst them is to a great perfection of technical finish, which is praiseworthy as a proof of labour and self-discipline. But it is the novelists and the playwrights who have the substantial success. They earn ten times more money than that hard-working man of genius, Balzac, would even have dreamed of as a possibility in his then wretched profession. There is a young school of philosophers, very sane and very sage, who are trying earnestly to win some nearer approach to the hidden truths of life and the universe, but they only reach the small intellectual class. Renan has literary qualities of the highest order, but like the majority of first-rate men of letters he is disgusted with the sight of practical

Lamartine.

Musset.

Young Philosophers.

Renan.

politics, and more inclined to make the combatants a subject for sarcasm than to help them out of the sloughs they fall into, either on one side or the other. Practical influence with the pen appears now to belong, in France, almost exclusively, to journalists, and they are constantly under the temptation to get up sensational excitements, to make a fuss, and convert every little crisis into a great one. As English journalism is anonymous, the writers cannot aspire to make themselves personally conspicuous, and are somewhat quieter. That which, in England, now answers in some degree to French journalism is review-writing with signed articles.

Journalists.

As for the dread of war, which is the most important of all drawbacks to national happiness, the inferiority of the English in land armies subjects them to occasional panics about the possibility of a French invasion, and has led them, as all know, to forbid the execution of the Channel Tunnel, though they would not have been more exposed by its means than the French to an English invasion. Since then, it has been conclusively proved that the use of the steam-engine in war-ships has made the offensive stronger than the defensive by permitting the choice of a landing-place, and therefore much of the former security of an insular kingdom has been taken away. The feeling that invasion was possible formerly afflicted only the timid, but now the bravest are fully aware that it is so, and sleep, like good watch-dogs, with an eye open.

The Dread of War in England.

The position of France is still more precarious. On both sides of a perfectly artificial frontier two

The Dread of War in France.

armies have been watching each other for seventeen years as they watch for a night in war-time. The slightest imprudence of one or the other Government, even the zeal of some subordinate official, may at any moment precipitate that conflict which both alike look forward to, and which both nations equally dread. It is impossible, under such circumstances, that life in France can be happy. The war cloud is perpetually visible on the eastern horizon. Sometimes it swells and covers half the sky and darkens the land with gloom, then it lessens and seems to be more distant, *but it never wholly disappears.*

CHAPTER III.

NATIONAL SUCCESS ABROAD.

THE kind of success is of importance only so far as it affects the wealth or the independence of a nation. Otherwise, success abroad is merely a subject of national vanity of a very empty kind. It is not the same with nations as with individuals. Personal celebrity is really a legitimate object of ambition for a wise man, because it makes life pleasanter to him in various very practical ways, and especially by bringing him into contact with people interested in his own pursuits. There is no national reward of that kind. It matters nothing to the English people whether their authors and artists have a continental celebrity or not. We shall understand the subject better by considering, at first, the case of England separately, and her celebrity in France, for different achievements of genius and industry. Certainly, if English genius is visible in anything it is in poetry, yet no Englishman who knew the French would attach the slightest weight to their opinion on the English poets. They often know the language well enough to read prose of a clear and simple kind; I quite believe that some Frenchmen of cultivated taste may appreciate Addison's prose, or Goldsmith's prose, and a few, a very few, may perhaps enjoy some verses

Vanity of National Success.

The French as Judges of English Verse.

of Byron or Pope; but English blank verse is usually quite beyond French appreciation as to its technical qualities, and so indeed are the more delicate and subtle cadences of English rhymed metres such as those which occur, for example, in the "Lotos-Eaters." I should think it highly improbable that there are ten Frenchmen with ear enough to seize upon the very different qualities that artists so different as Milton, Wordsworth, and Tennyson can give to a metre, blank verse, which *appears* to be identical in the three cases, or who would know the difference between the heroic couplet as employed by Pope and the same measure in the hands of William Morris. There is the Spenserian stanza, too, as its inventor used it, and as it has been used by Thomson and Byron. Try to explain these differences, which in reality are enormous, to a Frenchman. Try to explain to him anything about the musical qualities of the English language. He will laugh at you for your "patriotism"; it being a received opinion in France that English never is and never can be musical. There is Vice-Admiral Jurien de la Gravière, for example, probably the most cultivated officer in the French navy, an Academician, a scholar, a charming and very instructive writer, altogether a man who would do honour to any nation. Of course he knows English, and he certainly has no narrow prejudice against Englishmen, yet in his touching reminiscence of Lieutenant Gore, in the last *Figaro Illustré,* I find the following passage. He is telling about an evening on board a French ship of war near Rhodes, spent in Gore's society after a separation.

Blank Verse.

The Heroic Couplet.

The Spenserian Stanza.

Jurien de la Gravière.

"La soirée passa comme un songe. Un seul orage faillit la troubler. *Je soutenais que la langue anglaise était rude, complètement dépourvue d'harmonie.* 'Elle est rude pour vous, qui ne savez pas la prononcer,' ripostait l'insulaire avec véhémence." Anecdote of Lieutenant Gore.

Here we have first the impression of the uneducated French ear, then the truth about the matter from the Englishman. Another Frenchman (whose name is not worth mentioning in connection with that of Mr. Jurien de la Gravière) says that the English language is scarcely intelligible when spoken, even for the English themselves, and that is why they are so taciturn. Another calls English *"cet idiome sourd."* How are these Frenchmen to appreciate the "mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies"?—how are their ears to hear the "God-gifted organ-voice of England"?

What really happens is this. English authors are known in France by translations, and as neither the music of verse nor the style of prose can be reproduced in a translation, the author is judged by a criterion outside of his literary workmanship. His reputation is constructed over again, without reference to his mastery of language, on the grounds of thought or invention only. Herbert Spencer has a great reputation in France as a thinker, Dickens as an inventor. Thackeray is little appreciated, because the French can never know how superior he was in style to Dickens. Of English writers on art, Sir Joshua Reynolds is appreciated in France because his doctrine contained nothing particularly English, and French Opinion on different English Writers.

his style was simple and clear; Ruskin has no French readers because his views on art are English and his style complex, elaborate, ornate. The name of Byron is known to every educated Frenchman, that of Tennyson is known to students of English literature only. All the chief English and Scotch philosophers are familiar to French students of philosophy, and in fact accepted by them as their great teachers and guides, but they are utterly unknown to the French public.

The Philosophers.

Independently of literary merit, foreign literatures are sometimes called upon to supply an element of human interest that is wanting in the home productions. The French are aware that Russian novels are not so well constructed as their own, yet there is a poignancy, a profundity of feeling, and a strength of primitive barbaric nature in the Russian novel that are wanting in the French, and this has given the foreign novelist a great success even through translations. The desire for *more nature* always brings on a reaction against any conventionalism, and the foreigner who brings more nature has his assured success. A modern English conventionalism, quite unknown to our forefathers, forbids the complete portraiture of men and women in fiction. This has created a desire to see another side of life, and the French novelist supplies the want. The English want immoral literature and buy French novels; the French want moral literature and buy English novels —in translations. It would be better, perhaps, to have for both countries a kind of fiction that should

Russian Novels in France.

More Nature.

Demand and Supply.

be simply truthful, rather than the English novel that makes life better than it is and the French that makes it worse.

Painting not Cosmopolitan.

It has been erroneously affirmed that painting is cosmopolitan because the fame of certain artists is universal. That of others is purely national. There may be national elements in painting repulsive to other national elements in the mind of a foreigner. If the reader could have before him all the French criticisms of English art that I have read, or all the French allusions to it, nothing would strike him so much in them as the attitude of stubborn resistance in the French mind to English artistic influences. Such notices bristle all over with antagonism. It is not simply that the French usually consider the English bad artists, they resent the attempt of England to enter the domain of art as if it were an unwarrantable intrusion, or a ridiculous attempt to do something for which Englishmen were never qualified by nature. As *Punch* looks upon a Frenchman trying to play cricket or venturing on horseback after English foxhounds, even so the French critic looks upon the misguided Englishman who attempts to paint a picture or carve a statue. In a volume of French art criticism on my table I find two or three allusions to English painters, to Reynolds, "who imitated everybody," and to Turner, "the copyist of Claude." The latest French critic of London says that in the National Gallery, with the exception of some portraits by Gainsborough and some dogs by Landseer, there are no English pictures to detain a visitor. No French Government

French Resistance to English Art.

French Estimates of English Painters.

M. Chesneau.

has ever yet dared to purchase an English picture for one of the French galleries. M. Chesneau says that a French collector would never think of having one in his house otherwise than as a curiosity. He would not have it "comme une satisfaction esthétique, encore moins comme un motif d'élévation offert à son âme."

L'Art.

The one great and honourable exception to this narrowness has been the illustrated art journal *l'Art*, which has certainly done all in its power to overcome the narrowness of French prejudice against English painting, but *l'Art* is not a purely French enterprise. One of its editors is a Belgian who speaks English and visits England very frequently.

Opinions of French Artists.

The most cultivated French artists are not insensible to the qualities of English art. Those who know Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilkie, Turner, Constable, see that there are some interesting qualities in their works. Flaxman, too, has considerable reputation in France through his designs in illustration of Homer. English engravings after Landseer have been bought in France rather extensively by lovers of animals, and *la vignette anglaise*, such as the vignettes after Turner, has long been esteemed as rather a favourable example of the pretty in art as distinguished from what is serious and elevated.

Constable in France.

Constable alone, of all English artists, has had a practical effect in France. For readers unacquainted with the fine arts I may say that two of Constable's pictures, exhibited in Paris during his lifetime, produced such a revolution in French ways of looking at nature that they founded the modern French

school of landscape. They were, in fact, much more influential in France than in the painter's native land.

With this unique exception, due to French weariness of conventionalism and thirst for freshness at that particular time, there has never been any English force in art comparable, beyond the frontier, to that of the French school which radiates all over the world. The fame of an English painter is insular, that of a Frenchman, of the same relative rank, is planetary. Even the United States of America, bound as they are to England by close ties of language and literature, follow, almost exclusively, French direction in painting. The Americans appear not only to have accepted all French painters who have any celebrity at home, but they have adopted, almost without question, the antagonism of French critics towards everything that is English in the fine arts. This is the more remarkable that the inhabitants of the United States certainly look to English opinion in other matters much more than to French. They do not greatly respect or esteem the French, and they *do* certainly respect and esteem the English, in spite of occasional differences.

Celebrity of French and English Painters.

American Opinion.

The most signal triumph of French art has not been its influence on the continent of Europe but in England itself, where it has modified the tendencies of the existing school both in choice of subject and in technical execution. Through French influence English painting has been brought nearer to continental painting. At the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1878 there was not that shock of surprise on

Influence of French Art in England.

passing from foreign sections to the British that seized the spectator in 1855. It is safe to predict that in 1889 the sense of strangeness will have still further diminished.

Absence of Narrowness in England.

The English are not narrow in opposition to French artistic influences. Rosa Bonheur's reputation in England was made quite as easily as if she had been an Englishwoman. The French Gallery in London has extended the fame of many a foreign artist. Meissonier, Gérôme, Edouard Frère, are appreciated in London as in Paris. So it has been with the best French etchers, Méryon, Rajon, Waltner.

C. R. Leslie, R. A., on Continental Art.

Still, there exists or has existed amongst some Englishmen a prejudice against French art. The older Leslie was so patriotic as to believe that before the peace "the British school had possessed the wine and the other schools the water only of art, and that the peace, by mingling these, had strengthened the art of the continent exactly in the degree in which it had diluted art with us." The French got the wine of art from England and mixed it with their water. Leslie thought too that it would be time enough for the French to talk of "high art" when they produced pictures that would bear even a distant comparison with the works of the great old masters, whereas those of a dozen English painters,

Haydon.

including Fuseli's and the best of Haydon's, could "hang with credit amongst those of the greatest painters that ever lived." Haydon himself said, "The present French artists have immense knowledge, but their taste is bad, they know not how to avail themselves of what they know, how to marshal,

order, and direct it." Etty said of the French, "It is lamentable, the narrow nationality of their school; Titian, Correggio, Paolo, Rubens, throw down their pearls in vain. The husks of their own school are preferred." In the five volumes of *Modern Painters,* modern French painters are treated as if they did not exist. Etty on French Painters.

Italian and Dutch masters had the immense advantage of belonging to nations that excited no political jealousy. If Titian and Correggio belonged to the Italy of to-day, the Italy that has a fleet and an army, and a place in the councils of Europe, they would be judged in the same hostile spirit as the English. In like manner it was an advantage for Italian musical composers, as to their fame in France, that they belonged to feeble principalities. No English musical composer has a chance of recognition in France. When Germany was feeble her music was judged on its own merits; since she became strong it has been found impossible to represent the works of her most recent musical genius on the French stage; and when an attempt was made to do so there was almost an *émeute,* whilst his talents and even his morals became objects of violent attacks in the French press. Advantage to Artists of belonging to weak States.

The powerful effects of the French patriotic bias have been noticed already by Herbert Spencer. He observed, as examples, that in the picture by Ingres of the "Crowning of Homer" French poets are conspicuous in the foreground, while the figure of Shakespeare in one corner is half in and half out of the picture, and the name of Newton is con- French Patriotic Bias.

spicuous by its absence from those of great men on the string-course of the *Palais de l'Industrie,* though many unfamiliar French names are engraved upon it.

Prejudice diminishes with the Dignity of the Work.

The intensity of these prejudices always diminishes with the dignity of the work to be judged. As the French admit the superior quality of English varnishes for carriages (their coach-builders will use no other), so they appreciate English cutlery and broadcloth, they even go so far as to copy English fashions in masculine dress. Most of the agricultural machines employed in France are of British make. The horses that run on French racecourses are of English blood, and English grooms attend to the best French stables. The British, on their side, know the merits of French gloves, silks, and champagne, and the French cook is as much a recognised personage in England as the English groom in France.

It is a mistake in the people of any nation to suppose that by any kind of magnificence and splendour, however artistic it may be, they can exalt their country in the minds of foreigners. The foreigner perceives the attempt to subjugate him, and resents it. There is that gorgeous building, the British Houses of Parliament. I do not wish to laugh at it myself, being one of the few who believe that it has artistic merit, that it is even a kind of architectural poem intended to glorify the greatness of England. The foreigner, however, does not want the greatness of England to be glorified, and no sooner is he aware of the attempt than he immediately begins to

Effect of the Houses of Parliament on Foreigners.

sneer at the building and to belittle it in every way as much as he can. In reality, the House of Lords is a chamber of noble dimensions, all the materials used in it are of the best quality, and the workmanship is thoroughly and unsparingly good. Although the ceiling is decorated, the wainscot is simply of carved oak. Well, one French writer compares the House of Lords to a shop where coloured glasses are sold for a shilling, another says it is as small as the public room of the *mairie* in a French village, a third likens it to a *café concert*, a fourth receives an impression of *ferblanterie*, that is, of tinner's work. These French critics are angry at the costliness and excellence of the sound English work, and do all they can to cheapen it. In the House of Commons the Speaker's chair is compared to an organ in a Dutch beer-house, and the Speaker himself, when adorned with his wig, to an actor in a comic opera. If the French will not venerate the Speaker's wig, what is there on earth that they will venerate?

The House of Lords.

The House of Commons.

There is but one unquestioned and unquestionable superiority in great things—that of a victorious army. And that brings other superiorities with it. Nothing could be more encouraging to the spirit of conquest than the exalted moral eminence which the Germans attained in Europe after Sedan, and the moral degradation of the French when they had been compelled to pay two hundred millions sterling. God had rewarded German virtue with victory and had chastised the wicked Frenchmen for their sins. And not only does victory exhibit moral worth, but

A Victorious Army.

Moral Eminence of the Conqueror.

it glorifies the intelligence of the victorious nation, making all its statesmen wise. Their mistakes are all forgotten; the evidence of their sagacity remains.

Napoleon III. and his beaten Army.

It is now almost unimaginable that Napoleon III was held to be the profoundest statesman in Europe until he had been beaten in the field. After Sedan there was an immediate discovery of his weakness, dreaminess, ineptitude. All the faults of the beaten army, in all ranks, became suddenly apparent in the same way. During the Crimean war, and the campaign that ended in Solferino, the absence of stiffness in the French soldiers, and the comparatively easy relations between them and their officers, were considered signs of the practical qualities of the French. After Sedan the same characteristics were treated as evidence of a want of discipline.

Military Displays in Time of Peace.

It is an error to suppose that displays even of military power in time of peace will produce a subjugating effect on the imagination of foreigners. The only utility of them is to make the taxpayers at home believe that they have something for their money. The foreigner carps and sneers. The English made a great naval display at the time of the Queen's jubilee, and there have been English naval manœuvres since. The effect of the review outside of England was to provoke a depreciating analysis of the shipping, by which it was shown that most of the vessels were either badly armed or of an obsolete construction. As to the manœuvres, they demonstrated, to the satisfaction of foreigners, how easily the English coast might be ravaged by a hostile fleet.

There is this difference in the present situation of England and France, that whilst the defeat of England has hitherto, at any rate since the Norman Conquest, been nothing more than a subject of prophecy welcome to the jealousy of other nations, that of France has actually taken place. England is always *to be* humiliated, France really *has been* humiliated. The difference is considerable — it is that which exists between a vase that has been broken and another that might be broken if it were not properly taken care of. And the French have no longer the consolation which cheered them a little after Waterloo, of having yielded to Europe in arms. They have been beaten fairly in a duel with one nation, or at least with one people that became a nation before the war was over, and they have submitted, not willingly, but in fact, to all the consequences of the war. The situation will be equalised whenever a foreign Power shall surround London with an impassable ring of troops and dictate terms of peace in Windsor Castle, holding the English Sovereign as a prisoner in some fortress or palace on the continent.

Difference between England and France.

The English are in a very peculiar state of mind with regard to the possibility of a great national disaster. They have not anything like the blind confidence, the foolish security in ignorance, that the French had before 1870. I well remember how the French in those days looked forward to European wars. They felt as safe as if God Himself had guaranteed the inviolability of their frontier. A war

Former French Confidence.

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meant sending troops out of the country with affectionate kisses and hand-shakings, and receiving them with the honours due to a victorious army on their return. The present English temper resembles that kind of anxiety which troubles people in private life when their money matters are not satisfactory or they have a painless but incurable disease. The anxiety comes on at odd times, one cannot say when or why, and occupies the mind for a while. Then, as no real remedy presents itself, the anxiety is thrust aside and forgotten as much as possible, till it becomes importunate in the same accidental way again. The common English people alternate between times of false security, or forgetfulness, and panics, the intelligent English know always that the situation is precarious, and do what they can to remedy it, regretting that they can do so little.

Present English Anxiety.

The Common and the Intelligent English.

It is useless to argue about success in literature with people too uneducated to read English. It is useless to affirm the greatness of English art, for that can be systematically denied. There is but one kind of greatness that need give England a thought or a care in reference to foreign countries, and that is her power of offence and defence by sea and land. The only unanswerable superiority is superiority in arms. Commercial and colonial greatness is but the filling of the sponge; a victorious enemy would squeeze it. If ever the day should unhappily come when an enemy clutches England by the throat as Germany held France in 1871, he will make her sign away the Colonies, and India too,

The only unanswerable Superiority.

What a victorious Enemy would do.

and Malta, and Gibraltar, as France made "proud Austria" sign away Lombardy and Venice, and as France herself signed away Alsatia and Lorraine. Commercial prosperity, at such a time, is as vain as poetry and painting, or that insular music that French ears will not listen to. It is useless as a showman's profits when his skull is cracking between the lion's jaws.

PART IX.

VARIETY.

CHAPTER I.

VARIETY IN BRITAIN.

EUROPEAN travellers in the more benighted parts of Asia, such, for example, as the interior of Arabia, have sometimes had to contend with a peculiar difficulty in making their nationality clear. The ignorant Orientals class all Europeans together as one nation. Mr. Palgrave even found, in his Eastern travels, that the people imagine all Europeans to be citizens of one town. "Europe they know to be Christian, but they conceive it to be one town, neither more nor less, within whose mural circuit its seven kings—for that is the precise number, count them how you please—are shut up in a species of royal cage to deliberate on mutual peace or war, alliance or treaty, though always by permission and under the orders of the Sultan of Constantinople." These ideas, it may be supposed, could exist only in the most unenlightened regions of central Arabia, where the European traveller hardly ever penetrates. Not so. Mr. Palgrave tells us that this admirable geographical and political lesson was inculcated on him "not once, but twenty times or more, at Homs, Bagdad, Mosool, and even Damascus." In central Arabia ignorance about foreigners went a little

Europe one Town for Orientals.

further, as might be expected from the ignorance of that part of the world. There he was often asked, with the utmost seriousness, "whether any Christians or other infidels yet existed in the world."

English and French one People.

This is an extreme case, but we find in the writings of other travellers the statement of a natural difficulty in distinguishing English from French, for example. English and French are men of the same nation; they have the same character, the same habits, the same faults, and when one of the two peoples has committed some injustice, the other is held responsible for it.

In England and France a sharper distinction is established. In both these countries it is clearly understood that the English are people of one nationality and the French of another. When, however, we pass from the nations considered only as two great masses, and try to find what each knows of the other in detail, we discover the existence of a quiet conviction that there is no variety in the human species on the opposite side of the Channel. Each nation is well aware that there is now, and always has been in past times, an infinite variety of character within its own borders, but it fails to imagine that a like variety can exist in a foreign country. Not only is this inability common amongst those who have travelled little and read little; it may also be found in writers of eminence, who frequently fall into the error of describing the inhabitants of a foreign country as if they were all alike, especially when the description is intended to be unfavourable.

No Variety across the Channel.

I propose to point out a few of the chief causes of internal difference which act both in England and France. The first and most obvious is that neither of the two nations is homogeneous. They are formed by the joining together of old nations, they have not grown as single nations from the first. Causes of Internal Difference.

The power which acts politically in Europe, and which is called *l'Angleterre* or *la Grande Bretagne* in diplomatic correspondence, is composed of four distinct nationalities. If we take one of these, the most northerly, we find that it is inhabited by two distinct races, the Highlanders and Lowlanders. They are spoken of equally as Scotch, yet the difference is not less marked, in reality, than if they were separate nations. The Highlanders still retain, or did retain when I knew them, many of the characteristics of a social state from which the Lowlanders have long since emerged. They were noble rather than industrial in their tastes and instincts, disposed for field sports rather than for the improvement of their condition by labour. Dr. Macculloch's description of their inertia at the beginning of the century was still applicable. The people did not move, of themselves, towards a better condition; they had not the spirit of improvement. They were surrounded, it is true, by natural circumstances of some difficulty, especially those caused by the severity of their climate, but they were far from making the most of such opportunities as they possessed. For example, in gardening, they did not grow, and they could not be induced to grow, the vegetables which the climate allows, even although the want of them brought on *La Grande Bretagne.* The Scotch Highlanders. Their Inertia.

scurvy. Their habitations were wanting in every comfort, being almost in the lowest stage of cottage-building, irregular walls of rude stone, with a small hole (glazed, however) for a window, and a low thatch, the fire very commonly on the floor, and the peat reek escaping through an opening in the roof.

Lack of Enterprise.

There was no spirit of enterprise to improve the ground about the habitations, or to make communication easier when the public road (itself due to English military energy) did not happen to be close at hand. In a word, there was nothing of that fruitful discontent which leads the advancing races to incessant improvements. Without the neighbourhood of the Lowland Scotch and the visits of the English, the Highlanders would certainly have remained in a very early stage of civilisation. That early stage has its qualities and merits. The Highlanders have good manners. Poor or rich, they are naturally gentlemen, and they show a fine endurance of hardship which, from the stoic and heroic side, is evidently superior to the love of luxury that develops itself so wonderfully in the South.

Highlanders naturally Gentlemen.

Absence of the Fine Arts in the Highlands.

The Highlanders have, of themselves, no fine arts. Their degree of civilisation has developed no ecclesiastical architecture; they got no further than the building of a few rude small castles. They have not any graphic arts, and in those industrial products which are akin to art they have never got beyond the design of a brooch or the arrangement of the crossing stripes in a plaid. Their vernacular literature consists of little more than a few poems, said to be touching and pathetic in their simplicity. The one

Poverty of Highland Literature.

literary success in connection with the Highlands has been Macpherson's *Ossian*.

Now, on all these points, let us compare the Lowlanders. We see at once that the difference of race is accompanied by a difference of aptitudes and of traditions. Good manners are not inbred in them, though they are acquired in the superior classes as a part of culture. In the lower classes there is a sluggish indisposition to be polite, a sort of repugnance to polish of manner as if it were an unmanly dandyism, a feeling that answers to a plain man's dislike to jewellery and fine clothes. Even in religion the difference is discernible. It is true that the Highlanders are not Roman Catholics like the Irish, but they have little of the Protestant Pharisaism which is common in the Lowlands. If a map of Scotland were shaded in proportion to the malignity of Sabbatarianism, the darkest places would not be far north of the Clyde, nor west of the Kyles of Bute.

The Lowlanders.

Repugnance to Polish.

Sabbatarianism.

The Lowlanders are intensely industrious and of a very constructive genius. They have made the Clyde navigable up to Glasgow, they are bridging over the Forth and the Tay, they build great manufacturing towns, and are famous for all kinds of shipping. On the side of intellect and art we all know what they have done. In proportion to their small numbers, they are the most distinguished little people since the days of the ancient Athenians, and the most educated of the modern races. All the industrial arts are at home in Glasgow, all the fine arts in Edinburgh, and as for literature, it is every-

Industrial Triumphs of the Lowlanders.

Their Intellectual Distinction.

Fine Arts at Edinburgh.

where. The contrast with Highland indolence, apathy, and neglect, could scarcely be stronger if London itself were transported to the banks of the Clyde. Yet a Frenchman lumps together Highlanders and Lowlanders and calls them *"les Écossais,"* and thinks that they all wear the tartan and the kilt. It is true that he knows little else about them except that their beautiful Queen was beheaded, and that *"en Écosse l'hospitalité se donne."*

French Ideas about Scotland.

There is a greater difference, in the essentials of civilisation, between the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland than there is between the Lowlands and the county of Lancaster.

Lancashire.

Lancashire has so strong a character of its own that it may almost be considered a nation. The accident by which it is a Royal Duchy, as Wales is a Principality, may be an additional excuse for considering Lancashire, for the present, as a little nation within its own frontiers. It is fairly comparable in wealth and population, not only to the Lowlands but to the entire Kingdom of Scotland. The population of Lancashire in 1881 was to that of Scotland as thirty-four to thirty-seven, and to that of Switzerland as thirty-four to twenty-eight, in round numbers.

Population of Lancashire.

All the characteristics that mark southern Scotchmen reappear in Lancashire, whilst those characteristics that belong especially to the Highlands are absent from Lancashire. The Lancastrians, like the Lowland Scotch, are a most energetic race, that would never rest contented with a low degree of material civilisation,—a race with a remarkable genius for industry and trade, having a great love

Lancastrian Characteristics.

of comfort, and yet at the same time a remarkable willingness to sacrifice personal ease for the attainment of greater wealth. I suppose there are more rich men in Lancashire with resolution enough to get up at five o'clock on a winter's morning than in all the rest of England. Again, although Lancashire has not produced authors and artists of such fame as the greatest that have illustrated Scotland, it has given warm encouragement to literature and the fine arts, especially to modern painting. If you pass to the comparison of religion and manners, you find manners independent and often rude, as amongst the Lowlanders, and religion inclining to the severer forms of Protestantism, with a marked Sabbatarian tendency. I visited London once with a friend from Lancashire, who was truly representative of the county, which he had hardly ever quitted, and I well remember that he was quite as much put out by the London Sunday as a Scottish Lowlander could have been.

Energy.

Encouragement of Literature and Art.

Protestantism in Lancashire.

Some light may be thrown on these similarities by the recollection that the western Lowlands of Scotland and Lancashire are parts of old Strathclyde, so that the inhabitants may have an ethnological affinity, like the descendants of the true ancient Scots, who equally inhabited the West Highlands and the north of Ireland. Again, the Roman occupation of Britain included the north of England and the Lowlands of Scotland up to the firths of Clyde and Forth, so that the men of Lancashire and the Lowlands had the benefit of the same Roman example, whilst the Highlanders were left to develop

Old Strathclyde.

The Roman Example.

a social state of their own. In later times Lancashire and the south of Scotland were equally open to the influences of European civilisation, whilst the Highlands remained completely outside of it, like the interior of Arabia to-day.

European Influences.

If Lancashire has many of the characteristics of an independent nation, is there no other part of England which in recent times has developed characteristics of its own? Yes, there is the great nation of London, more populous than Scotland, Holland, or Switzerland, and destined to surpass Belgium in population before the end of the century. In London the English character has certainly undergone a great and astonishing modification. London is geographically in England, but intellectually one can only say that it is in the world. A provincial coming to London has not quitted the island, yet otherwise he hardly knows where he is. At first he does not belong to the place at all; after some experience of it he finds out whether he belongs to London naturally or not—that is to say, whether there is the degree of adaptability in him which may enable him to breathe the open intellectual atmosphere of the place. Physically, London may be as big as Loch Lomond; socially and intellectually, it is larger than Russia, and may well form, not only a county by itself, but a state within the State. I have said that in London the English character has undergone a modification. It has become more open, more tolerant, better able to understand variety of opinion, and much more ready to appreciate talent and welcome thought of all kinds. The

The Nation of London.

A Provincial in London.

London a State within the State.

nation of London is essentially modern and democratic, not caring who your grandmother may have been if only you yourself are to its taste; but at the same time it does not desire to be a coarse and uneducated democracy; it values culture and taste far too highly to sacrifice them to a low equality. In a word, London clings to its own standard of civilisation. If you come up to that standard, if you have refinement and just money enough for housekeeping of unpretending elegance, you may be an infidel and a radical, yet London will not disown you, London will not cast you out into the cold.

London a Democracy. Its Standard of Civilisation.

Although London happens by chance to be situated on an island it is not insular. The nation of London is of all nations the most cosmopolitan, the most alive to what is passing everywhere upon the earth. It seems there as if one were not living so much the life of a nation as the world's life. You speak of some outlandish place at a London dinner-table, and are never surprised if somebody present quietly gives a description of it from personal knowledge. There are more people in London who have travelled and are ready to start on travels than in any other place on the whole earth. It is there that all the ocean telegraphs converge and steamers are arriving daily from all parts of the world. Switzerland is London's playground, Cannes and Nice are its winter garden, and so comprehensive do our ideas become in London that those places seem actually nearer to us there than they do in the heart of France.

London not Insular. Number of Travellers in London.

The railway system is having the effect of making all the English aristocracy Londoners. I am old enough

Effects of the Railway System.

to remember the time when there were still provincial people of rank in the north who spoke sound northern English, not dialect, but English with vowels and consonants, including the letter *r*. Their successors talk the half-articulate London language. It is said that some young Highland chieftains of the present day speak southern English only too beautifully.

National Differences.

Irish. Scotch. Welsh.

Still, the national differences remain deep seated in the people and show no sign of losing their ancient strength. The Irish may become friendly fellow-subjects, but they will not be Anglicised. Neither will the Scotch be Anglicised, nor the Welsh. The present tendency is to accentuate nationality, not in hostility to England, but from the sentiment of a special patriotism. This is most significant, for hostility to England might pass away, but special patriotism is not likely to pass away.

Variety of Individual Character. Shakespeare.

In addition to these causes of variety there must ever remain the infinite differences of individual character. Shakespeare lived only in the English midlands, then scantily populated, and in the little London of his time. He had not travelled abroad, nor learned Italian,* nor talked like Milton with the *literati* of the Continent; he had not, like Spenser, lived in the north of England and in Ireland; yet the diversities of character in his plays are as

* The French in Shakespeare has been said (never by French critics) to prove that he knew the language. It proves just the contrary.

numerous as the *dramatis personæ*. Scott lived at the northern end of the island, in or near a minor capital city; he could speak no foreign tongue,* he knew England and London only by brief occasional visits, and hardly anything of the Continent, yet his novels abound in a variety like that of Shakespeare. These writers got their knowledge of human nature from the variety visible around them. Imagine, then, what must be the presumptuous *outrecuidance* of the Frenchman who thinks that all the inhabitants of Great Britain have one character, and that he—the Frenchman—has got to the bottom of it, and can describe it, and tell his countrymen all about it, though he knows neither the land, nor the language, nor the people! Scott.

Besides the denial of any æsthetic quality to English art, we find in French critics a peculiar disposition to describe it as being all alike. Eminent English artists (Reynolds, Gainsborough, De Wint, Müller, Cox, and many others) have preferred breadth to detail, yet French critics delight in representing the English painter as studying nature with an opera-glass, and representing all details with a wearisome and unnatural minuteness. Patriotic hostility, in art criticism as in the criticism of character, closes the eyes to variety.

There used to be a ridiculous monument of the Duke of Wellington on Constitution Hill, and now

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there is a very noble one by Alfred Stevens in St. Paul's. The same terms of utter contempt were applied by a French critic to the work of the man of genius that Frenchmen formerly applied to the monstrosity. He could not endure any kind of monument to Wellington.

CHAPTER II.

VARIETY IN FRANCE.

THE *Rue de Rivoli,* the *Champs Elysées,* and the *Boulevard des Italiens* are familiar to the travelling English, but they know little of provincial France, and they reciprocate, in a great degree, the French indifference about provincial England. Both nations prefer travelling in Switzerland and Italy to visiting each other. This encourages the notion of uniformity which would be greatly modified by a more detailed acquaintance with the provinces.

Physical Geography.

The variety in the physical geography of France, and in the climate, would be enough already to lead one to expect a corresponding variety in human characteristics. We find in the British Islands that the mountaineers are unlike the inhabitants of the plains, that the people of the north, whose climate is severe, are in some respects unlike those of the south, whose climate is milder, that the maritime population differs from the inland population and the manufacturing from the agricultural. The Englishman is familiar with these contrasts in his own country, yet instead of expecting them in France he supposes French people to be all alike.

Effects on Population.

The Size of France.

The mere size of France might lead one to expect diversity. It is about three times the size of

Great Britain, so that the distances in France are greater and the parts of the population more separated. It is not the custom in England to think of France as a mountainous country, because English impressions of it are chiefly derived from railway journeys across the French Lowlands. I may therefore remind the reader that the French Highlands cover an area equal to the whole of Great Britain, that they include fifty peaks above eleven thousand feet, and a much greater number higher than Ben Nevis, a dozen of them in the department of the Ardèche alone. On the other hand, the French plains are so vast that they include the area of three Irelands. Here is evidently one great cause of variety in the conditions of human life, but France has also nearly two thousand miles of sea-coast, with two very distinct maritime populations, one brought up on the shore of the Channel and the Atlantic Ocean, subject to the same influences as those on the English and Irish coasts, the other by the tideless Mediterranean, under the same influences as the sailors and fishermen of Genoa. Now, with regard to climates, French meteorologists tell us that there are seven distinct climates in France. The most northerly differs little from that of the south of England, whilst the most southerly is Spanish towards the west and, to the east, Italian. You may write a list of French towns, Paris, Tours, Lorient, Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, each of which has a climate perfectly distinct from every one of the others. I believe it is not an exaggeration to say that all these towns differ from each other as much as Amiens does from London,

The French Highlands.

French Coasts.

Atlantic.

Mediterranean.

Varieties of French Climate.

for example, and in some cases the difference is much greater. The difference between Marseilles and Lorient is greater than that between London and Inverness.

Brittany and Provence.

It would be difficult to imagine two modern nations more different from each other, both in country and people, than are Brittany and Provence. Brittany has a rainy, temperate climate with sea-breezes; Provence, a fierce dry heat, with almost perpetual sunshine and very strong and lasting continental winds. Brittany is the land of the apple-tree, Provence the land of the olive. The shores of Brittany are washed by the tides of the Atlantic, those of Provence by the waves of the tideless Mediterranean. It is like comparing Wales with Italy and the Welsh with the Italians. The Bretons have their ancient language still, the Provençaux retain their beautiful soft modulated Latin, one of the most exquisitely perfect instruments for poetry in the world. The Bretons preserve their costumes; their ways of living, their temper, their ideas, are all different from those of Provence.

Diversity in Neighbourhood.

The great distance between north-western and south-eastern France may lead us to expect wide differences. The variety that exists in great nations is still more striking when we observe the trenchant differences that often divide populations which, geographically, are near neighbours. The Morvan is a district about fifty miles from north to south by thirty from east to west. It is not marked on the maps of France, but the reader will understand its situation when I tell him that it embraces portions

The Morvan.

of four departments: the Yonne to the north, the Côte d'Or to the east, the Nièvre to the west, and Saône-et-Loire to the south. In shape it resembles the Isle of Man, but it includes about five times as much territory. Autun is just outside of it to the south-east, and Avallon just inside it to the north. This district, or region, is marked by a peculiar physical character. It is a land of hills (not mountains), woods, and running streams, and the inhabitants, until their country was opened by good roads, were scarcely less a people apart than the Bretons. They have a language of their own, which, though akin to French, is not French, and the people are now for the most part able to speak French or Morvandeau at will (just as in the Highlands of Scotland they speak English or Gaelic), and their French is remarkably pure.

Les Morvandeaux.

Now, if you compare the people of the Morvan with those of the plain of Burgundy and the Saône, which is quite near, you find the most striking differences. First there is a difference of race and of physical constitution, the Morvan race being the smaller of the two, the women more frequently pretty and well made on their small scale, with a predominance of dark hair and eyes, and a rich rather than a fair complexion. Besides this, there is a great disparity in material civilisation. The art of cookery has been accounted one of the most effectual tests of human advancement; when the people are clever cooks they are usually, it is said, clever in other arts besides, and they set a value on civilised life generally, and will be at great pains to maintain

The Morvan Race.

Material Civilisation.

it. Such an art as cookery may have nothing to do with the intellectual side of life, and the Muse may exist on a little oatmeal, though she generally does her work better on a more varied and more interesting diet; but cookery is of great economic importance, because a cooking people will appreciate all the alimentary gifts of Nature and master the arts that procure them, whilst the non-cooking races are negligent and careless providers. The French are reputed to be a cooking race, but the Morvan people scarcely understand cookery better than the Scottish Highlanders. Servants from the Morvan are often sharp and active, honest, willing, laborious, cheerful, contented, amiable, yet with all these fine qualities invariably unable to cook a dinner. In the Burgundy wine district and the plain of the Saône a talent for cookery is very common in both sexes, and there are plain unpretending wives of small inn-keepers or wine-growers who would be perfectly capable of serving a royal feast, and not in the least disconcerted by the undertaking. All the Saône bargemen are said to be clever cooks, and they live extremely well. In the Morvan the peasants live with severe self-denial, chiefly on potatoes and thin soup flavoured with a morsel of bacon. Their drink is often a poor kind of perry or cider; they indulge in wine on market-days and sometimes sparingly at home, but then it is of a meagre quality. Near the Saône the people are a gardening as well as a cooking race; the Morvan people are not gardeners; a rich man may have a garden as a matter of luxury, but the

Cookery in Burgundy.

Gardening.

peasants do not cultivate vegetables or fruit-trees. In some parts of the Morvan the spring comes six weeks later than at Chalons on the Saône.

The Fine Arts.

Lastly, in the Morvan there are no fine arts. There may be occasional artistic genius, like that of Gautherin, the sculptor, who began life as a poor Morvandeau shepherd boy, but such gifts find no natural development in the district. The Burgundy wine country, on the other hand, has always been favourable to art of all kinds, and to learning. Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and all kinds of scholarship have flourished at Dijon in an association (perhaps not altogether accidental) with good cookery and the richest of all French vintages.

I have dwelt somewhat disproportionately on this contrast, because I know the country well. It is offered to the reader merely as one example out of many. I am told by those who know other parts of France familiarly that contrasts equivalent to this are to be found in various other regions and districts of that extensive country. There are three ways of dividing France, into departments, provinces, and districts. The departments, although taking their names from physical geography, as a help to the memory for locality, are in reality nothing more than artificial divisions for administrative convenience. The provinces (Burgundy, Normandy, Guienne, etc.) are convenient in another way, because of their connection with history, and also because it is believed still that the population of each province has a character of its own. Districts, though without any

Departments.

Provinces.

Districts.

definite political or historical character, and often with rather vaguely defined limits, are useful in fixing local characteristics in the mind. Only local antiquaries could enlighten us about their obscure history; but one thing is always noticeable about them which is that the characteristics of each district are of a special nature. For example, the Morvan is a land of hills, woods, and streams; the Sologne is a woody plain, perfectly flat and interspersed with sandy pools and marshes; Les Dombes are an insalabrious region, full of fish-ponds; and Rouergue (in Guienne) is a land of hills and streams, like the Morvan, but with greater altitudes and wilder scenery. The population of each of these districts takes a certain character from the nature of its suroundings and from the climate, which in one place may be dry, in another rainy, in one very equable and mild, in another extreme in heat and cold. Even within a distance of fifteen or twenty miles you discover, from the meteorological registers kept by the road surveyors, that twice as much rain falls in one village as in another. You have the wet and woody regions, the arid, hot, rocky regions, the lands of pasture and meadow, the vine lands, the country of extinct volcanoes, the peat morasses, the unprofitable sand countries by the sea where only the maritime pine can resist the invasion of sterility.

Local Climates.

Then there is the spirit of towns; each town has a certain individuality, each has a spirit of its own derived from its historic past, and from its occupations in the present. One town may be a clerical and aristocratic little centre, where a republican

The Spirit of Towns.

An Aristocratic Centre.

(even under the Republic) has not the faintest chance of getting into society; a place where all public functionaries under the Government are socially boycotted; a place where all modern ideas are quietly ignored or despised, where reputations have no currency, and nothing is valued but conformity to a narrow local standard of the *comme il faut.*

A Commercial Town.

Thirty miles away, there is, perhaps, a busy commercial town, where all ideas are centred upon a pecuniary success, and people are esteemed exactly in proportion to their capital without regard to other considerations,—a town where all the fortunes are recent, and all have been acquired in trade.

Extremes in the same Place.

Another variety, very little understood out of France, is that of extremes meeting in the same town. This is sometimes especially striking in the southern towns, and it may be of very long standing, like the conflict between Protestantism and Roman

Nîmes.

Catholicism at Nîmes, a city that cannot be correctly described as either Protestant or Catholic; and yet there is more of each religion in it than there would be if the rival faith were extirpated. But the best example in France of a city combining the most

Lyons.

opposite characteristics is Lyons. It is at the same time most republican and most clerical. "There is

Michelet's Description.

one town above all," wrote Michelet, "where the antagonism of two ages, of the spirit of old times and the new spirit, strikes even the eyes in all its grandeur—that town is Lyons. . . . I leaned on the parapet on the steep of Fourvières, and said to myself, as I looked upon the opposite hill, gloomy, black below, under the cypresses of the Jardin des

Plantes, colossal above in its piles of work-people's houses, ten or fifteen storeys high,—I said, *These are not two hills: they are two religions.* The two towns of Lyons, that of the convents and that of the work-shops, are the goals of pilgrimage for the poor. Some of them come to the Lyons of miracles and seek charity; these come to Fourvières.* But thou, good workman, wilt come to the hill of labour, the serious Croix Rousse. The part in the banquet which thou desirest is bread won by thine own hands." I was reminded of these words of Michelet when, at Lyons, I said to a mechanic who was working on Sunday, "This task prevents you from going to mass." The man paused an instant in his labour, looked up at me seriously, and answered, "It is not my custom to go to mass. He who works prays." He then resumed his prayer with hearty strokes of a hammer.

The Nation of Paris.

As in England, London is a kind of nation in itself, so in France we have the nation of Paris. The word is so little of an exaggeration that Paris has often, on the most momentous occasions, acted quite independently of the country, and did actually proclaim its right to autonomy under the Commune, whilst the constant effort of the municipal council ever since has been to erect itself into a parliament at the Hôtel de Ville, and have its own way in spite of the assemblies at the Palais Bourbon or the Luxembourg.

* The place on the steep on the right bank of the Saône, behind the cathedral. Since Michelet wrote, a gorgeous new church has been built there for the miracle-working Virgin.

Character of Paris Local.

The Parisian nation has not the same characteristics as the nation of Londoners. The distinguishing character of London is to be, not local, but world-wide; the character of Paris is to be as local as ancient Athens, and as contemptuous of all that lies outside. It is commonly believed that Paris is France, but how can it be France when it is so utterly unlike the provinces? This error comes from the foreigners' habit of staying in Paris only, so that Paris is very really and truly all France to them, being the only France they know. Yet the character of the French capital, so far from being representative, is all its own.

Paris Artistic.

France is not, generally speaking, an artistic country. In the provinces few care for art or know anything about it, whereas Paris is the most artistic city in Europe; and that not simply as the place where pictures and statues are produced in the greatest numbers, and architects find most employment, but as the place where art sentiment is most generally developed, so that it runs over into a thousand minor channels, till the life of the capital is saturated with it.

France is not, generally speaking, an intellectual country. The people are quick in small things, and they are very intelligent up to a certain point, but life in the French provinces is far less intellectual than in England or America. Parisians say that provincial French life is absolutely and hopelessly stupid. They may think that sincerely, for such an opinion would only, in their case, be a natural effect of contrast, but it is an exaggeration. Provincial

life is not exactly stupid, French people can hardly be that under any circumstances, but it is mentally very small and narrow, owing to the extreme isolation of the few superior intelligences, and the prodigious ignorance by which they are surrounded. Unless tied down to provincial life by property, professions, or kindred, an intellectual Frenchman gravitates naturally to the capital, which in this manner drains the provinces of the best men. It is an exaggeration of French vanity to believe that Paris is the light of the world, but it is really the light of France. The provincials believe themselves to be more moral and more serious than the Parisians, but they admit that provincial life is dull without making any effort to enliven it, and the clever provincial speaks of Paris as that paradise from which he is an exile. Notwithstanding their apparent levity, I am told by all who are competent to form an opinion, that the Parisians study better than the provincials. The ordinary level attained in all studies is much higher in Paris than in the provincial cities. The Parisians are the most laborious and best disciplined art students in Europe. In the French University the best professors are reserved for Paris, or promoted to the capital in course of time, and they all say that the boys work better there than in the provinces.

French Provincial Life.

Intellectual Paris.

Level of Studies in Paris.

The difference between the Parisian and the provincial mind is shown in nothing more conspicuously than in its different estimates of human superiority. In Paris the question is what you are, in the provinces what your family is, or what you possess.

Reputation in Paris and the Provinces.

Reputation in literature, art, or science, is relatively more valuable in Paris than it is even in London, though it is very valuable there; in the French provinces it counts for nothing, or next to nothing. Many Parisian reputations never reach the provinces. The provincial habit of respecting the idlest people most, is in itself antagonistic to fame, which is usually the consequence of hard work. Then there is the indifference, or semi-contempt, towards the pursuits that lead to fame, towards literature, science, and the fine arts. The fame of political celebrities penetrates everywhere like an unpleasant noise—unpleasant, at least, to all but their own following.

Parisian Manners.

The French temper is not generally very sociable, yet in Paris there is great openness of manner, and a charming readiness to enter into that kind of intercourse which is lightly agreeable without involving much beyond the passing hour. For the free play of the mind, without any pretension to make it more than play, there is no place in the world like Paris. It is a great art or a great gift to make social intercourse bright and truly a relaxation equally removed from pedantry on one side and the dulness of indifference on the other. There is an ease, an apparent simplicity, and a clearness of expression in Parisian talkers that we rarely meet with in provincials, yet these same provincials acquire the Parisian polish after a few years' *frottement* in the capital.

The Moral Contrast.

I have said elsewhere that there is a contrast in the moral code between Paris and the provinces. Paris now resembles, at least in some degree, the

Italy of Byron's day, where illicit *liaisons* were tolerated if there was a certain deference to appearances; provincial France, as a rule, resembles provincial England in the severity of public opinion.

Aristocracy in Paris and the Provinces.

Aristocracy is of immense weight in the French provinces, even when accompanied by very little wealth; in Paris it counts for nothing unless accompanied by great wealth. Like London, Paris is democratic, and takes each man for what he *is* (famous, rich, talented, witty), without inquiring what his ancestors were.

Contrasts of Individual Character.

Besides these local differences there remain in France as in England all the contrasts and varieties of individual character. Some of these varieties are known in England through the historians and novelists, but many more are totally unknown there. It is useless for me to refer to them in an English book without elaborate descriptions for which there is no space in this volume. I need only say that as the Frenchman's Englishman is not an exact representative of all Englishmen taken individually, so it is with that curious ideal type that may be called the Englishman's Frenchman. In my own limited experience I have known a certain number of French people of whom English writers would say, if I described them accurately and elaborately in a work of fiction, that they had not a single French characteristic, and the less the English critics knew of France the more positive they would be. So, if you were to describe a talkative and genial Englishman, such as G. H. Lewes, for example, French readers who had never been in England would tell you that

The Englishman's Frenchman.

French Notions of English Character.

he was not English, that they knew better, that the real Englishman is stiff, grave, proud, awkward, and reserved, so that he can never have the flexibility of mind that Lewes possessed, nor be, like him, an amiable and delightful *causeur*.

Causes that diminish Variety.

Notwithstanding the great variety that still exists in France, certain modern tendencies are steadily diminishing it. The army is silently making the peasantry more national, less local. Railways take people from one province to another, and from all provinces to Paris. Public education is the same for all France. The University is not a local institution, like Oxford or Cambridge, but ubiquitous in the nation, like the Anglican Church in England. Cheap postage and telegrams make the nation itself seem smaller, and Parisian newspapers penetrate everywhere. External habits are now almost the same in all French towns; the hotel system is the same everywhere, the cafés are all alike. Besides this, the French nature is not very tolerant of individuality in character, but tends to reduce it to one dead level of uniformity. *"Être comme tout le monde"* has long been the rule of French civilisation, and there is nothing more contrary to its spirit than to be "singular" or "original."

EPILOGUE.

Changes in English National Character.

WHAT is called the "national character" of the French and English has never been fixed, and it is now perceptibly changing.

The English were at one time not in the least Puritanical. They afterwards became moderately Puritanical in the upper classes and intensely so in the middle classes. They are now slowly but steadily passing out of Puritanism.

The English were at one time more European than insular. After that they became intensely insular, truly a peculiar people. Now, again, they are slowly becoming, chiefly through the influence of London, less insular and more European.

The most powerful agents of change in recent times have been scientific and artistic ideas. These ideas are continuing their work unceasingly, and are even entering into the education of the young. To judge of their importance as new powers we have only to remember that artistic and scientific ideas formerly lay almost entirely outside of aristocratic and middle-class thinking, and were confined to persons specially devoted to artistic or scientific pursuits.

Artistic and Scientific Ideas.

The change may easily be under-estimated. The love of art and science may be called a taste for pictures or a fancy for shells and minerals, and so made to appear no better than an amusement. In reality, however, the change is most momentous. Science has taught a new way of applying the mind *to everything*. It has affirmed the right and duty of investigation and verification, it has set up a new kind of intellectual morality which has substituted the duty of inquiry for the duty of belief. The immediate result has been, in England, a sudden and amazing diminution of intolerance, a wonderful and wholly unexpected increase of mental freedom. The people of England have now become tolerant to a degree which could have been hoped for by no one who knew the formerly oppressive and aggressive character of religious majorities in that country. The boast of the national poet, that England was a country where men freely said their say, is now losing its apparently ironical aspect and may be true for the coming generation. The bigotry that still remains is only an inheritance of the past, it does not really belong to the present, still less to the more enlightened future.

Extent of Scientific Influence.

Its Result.

The Influence of Art.

The influence of art is less visible than that of science, and seems inferior in this, that art is associated with ideas of pleasure and relaxation in the public mind, though it is more associated with ideas of study and hard work in the minds of artists. However this may be, the influence of art is important in England as one of the forces which are weakening the spirit of Puritanism. Art and Puri-

Art and Puritanism.

tanism are antagonistic forces. The true Puritanical spirit always instinctively feels and knows this; for example, it shuts up the National Gallery on Sundays, and would shut up the Louvre if it could.

Another important influence of the fine arts is in directing the national mind more to the love and study of nature. Art and nature are not the same, yet art gives a new delight in nature. I am not aware that this goes much beyond a refreshment of the faculties, yet, in an age when men are jaded by over-work and by the peculiar fatigue of life in large towns, a refreshment of this kind may be, and is, more important than in simpler times. One of the modern modifications of English character is that it seeks for natural beauty with a new desire. The modern love of nature is connected with a certain independence of conventionalism, and this is important, because conventionalism includes so much.

The Study of Nature.

As the English character is changing in these and other ways, so the French character is changing by its passage from the military to the industrial. It is unfortunate that the enterprise of the Panama Canal seems doomed to failure, because it afforded exactly the outlet that was desirable for French industrial ambition. It was by treating it as a patriotic enterprise and playing upon the patriotic chord that M. de Lesseps attained a delusive appearance of success. The exhibition of 1889, the Eiffel Tower, and the proposed bridge over the Channel, are also proofs of French industrial enterprise on a scale intended to attract attention. The ambition to excel is still in French imaginations, but it is diverted in

Changes in the French Character.

Modern Industrial Enterprise.

great part from military to peaceful pursuits. There is no reason why French democracy, which is really averse to war, should not take a legitimate pride in undertakings that require as much science and energy, and almost as much treasure, as the greatest military operations.

Common Sense in Education.

Another change in the French estimate of things is the increasing tendency to apply common sense to education in spite of old habits and traditions, to discard what cannot be mastered, and to learn more thoroughly what is practically possible and worth learning. The French are also inclined to attach more value to physical exercises. The English have lately become aware of this in consequence of M. Paschal Grousset's very laudable efforts as a journalist in favour of more active amusements in the *lycées;* but the movement began several years earlier, and that writer would not have succeeded as he did without a public opinion already prepared to be favourable. I have shown elsewhere that the French are by no means indisposed to gymnastics and military drill. They are ignorant of cricket, as were the ancient Greeks, certainly not the most inactive people of antiquity.

Desire for Physical Improvement.

Dominant Tendencies.

The dominant tendencies in the two countries appear to be these. The English are becoming more open-minded and the French are gaining in practical sense and prudence. The English are advancing in religious, and the French in political liberty. Material progress of all kinds is obvious and conspicuous in both.

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