

NOTES OF THE DAY.

of any other world, and if he has a conception of any other code of conduct he goes out of his way to flaunt it. Yet I have heard this book praised for its "exquisite art" and its "astounding knowledge of life."

Suggestion in Stones and Sex in Everything.

The art and the knowledge consist in describing the world as peopled exclusively by licentious men and faded women, whose life is a round of intrigues, betrayals, and "irregular connexions," who have no thoughts, interests, occupations, friendships, or pleasures except such as are involved in one particular relation between the sexes. Every "man of the world" is supposed to share this view, and the writing is generally in the manner of the precocious school-boy who desires to impress you with his knowledge of this wicked world. A Philistine could laugh at a great deal of it, were it not for a certain nasty quality which comes of mixing this man-of-the-world, French-novel business with that morbid analysis of sex already noticed in the new fiction. The sex idea possesses Mr. Street; he discovers it even in inanimate things. The sight of Mayfair in twilight brings back to him "an indefinable romance, a suggestion of Georgian days and distinct sexes," which is sheer nonsense in itself, except that it introduces (quite irrelevantly) the decadent note.

"I'm a Horrid Cad."

But the worst offence of this kind is in the story called "The Reclaiming of a Reprobate." We are introduced here to a young Guardsman (Henry) living with his wife (Eleanor) and his sister (Grace). Their chief visitor is a friend and cousin of Henry's (Jack), of whom it is said that "he did nothing but hurry about between London and Paris, giving supper-parties and making jokes," and that "he was morbidly artistic, and revelled in the humours of British morality." Jack, being Henry's friend, naturally pays court to Henry's wife, and on the evening in question, Henry being detained with his regiment, is going to take her alone to a new place to dine at—"quite respectable, he says." The sister-in-law, Grace, ventures humbly to remonstrate, whereupon this conversation ensues:—

ELEANOR: Now, I don't know why, I am inclined to say something very plain to you. You will loathe me for it, but it is good sometimes to go to the root of things. I like Jack more than I can say. He is the dearest boy in the world, and always understands me. But I love Henry!

GRACE: My dear! I beg—

ELEANOR: Wait. Listen, and you'll hate me. But you won't understand. Jack appeals to all there is good in me—all that is fine and artistic and intellectual. My love for Henry is merely sensual.

GRACE gave a little exclamation.

ELEANOR: Yes, it is. I don't—never mind. It is simply because he is handsome and big and strong. Oh, I wish I were dead.

That is Scene I.; in Scene II. we are introduced to Jack, who comes in to make love to Grace. "She looked at him with cold impudence. Jack's lustreless eyes gleamed for a moment, and his sensual mouth twitched." Notwithstanding that "he had been intimate with a thousand and one women, and had one of the worst reputations in Europe," he easily persuades the prudish Grace to accept him. That is Scene II., and it is thoroughly nasty. Scene III. is an explanation between Jack and Eleanor:—

JACK: "Well, Nell, you've often known things about me, and not been insulted. You know my nature. You remember last year in Paris? You are my friend; worth all the rest of the world put together to me. Other women—you understand. Accident makes the consequences of this very different, but really it is just the same."

ELEANOR: "My husband's sister, Jack?"

JACK: "Bah! I know myself, Nell. She will always be treated as though she were the only woman in the world, but the attraction is simply sensual."

ELEANOR: "Oh, Jack! I was the bungling then; of course I knew it. I don't suppose she understood what she did, but I can see. Our British morality, Jack! Isn't it curious? You know it's the same, conversely, with Henry and me. Isn't it strange? People look upon you and me as at best two worthless butterflies, and at worst a sort of Roman Empire people. They think our intimacy at best eccentric, and at worst criminal. Henry and Grace are two rigid, virtuous, conventional people. And I am married to Henry, and you are going to marry Grace—just because of what is animal in us. And we are friends in everything that is more than that."

I am obliged to quote this story to show my meaning, but if any Philistine can read it without a rising gorge and a growing disgust, he deserves never to read any healthy literature again. Here is a revolting situation decked out with a show of literary antithesis. A cad and a scoundrel proposes to a "virtuous and conventional" woman, and being accepted by her, goes straightway and explains to her sister-in-law that his feelings towards his *fiancée* are in all essentials the same as to any woman of the street. ("The attraction is simply sensual.") "Other women—you understand. Accident (*i.e.*, marriage) makes the consequences of this very different, but really it is just the same." The sister-in-law, instead of showing him the door, reciprocates this burst of confidence by declaring that her relations with her husband are precisely of the same kind. Having thus analysed their disgusting natures, they pledge friendship to each other, and agree to treat the situation as one of "life's little ironies."

"I'm a horrid cad, Nell, and I wish I were dead."  
"It's an odd world, Jack."  
"It's the damndest world I ever saw, Nell."

That he is a horrid cad, and that the whole thing is grotesque, is, I should hope, obvious. A Philistine notes with regret that the penalty of "looting out" appears to have disappeared in the new fiction. In this world a "gentleman" can apparently commit any conceivable offence against taste and manners—I say nothing about morals—without incurring any risk of being booted out.

(To be continued.)

[The preceding articles of this series appeared on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 5 and 6.]

"SHALL WE GERRYMANDER?"

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN LIVERPOOL.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. A. BILLSON, M.P.

It has been put forward on behalf of those who would "gerry-mander" the Aldermen that they are only proposing what has already been done in other towns. The case of Liverpool has had special prominence. In order to find out the truth of this matter, a representative of THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE had an interview yesterday afternoon with Mr. A. Billson, M.P., who has had a long and honoured connexion with Liverpool municipal affairs.

"Is it true that you used this power when you had the chance?"

"Before I answer that, I must say that our case is somewhat peculiar, and entirely different from that of the County Council. We are governed by the old aldermanic law, which allows to all the existing aldermen on a Council a vote for the chairman or mayor. The Conservatives have always used that power ruthlessly. Eight years ago we had a tie—that is to say, we had a majority of eight at the election, but their elected minority was swollen by eight aldermen. They got a majority of one on the critical day, elected all the aldermen, and dished us for six years! This vote carried with it the mayoralty, with a salary of £2,500!"

"In this and other ways," went on Mr. Billson, "we were kept out of power for thirty years by the Tories, until two years ago we got a bare majority of one over the elected Tories *plus* aldermen staying in—*i.e.*, a majority of nine on election. It is true that we did then use our full powers, elect a Liberal Mayor, and gain a bare majority of seven by electing all our possible aldermen."

"Is yours a fair precedent?"

"No," answered Mr. Billson earnestly, "it is not a fair precedent at all. We could do nothing else to get a majority, and we simply followed a custom existing for thirty years. You have to create a custom, and you work under another and a more enlightened Act."

The rumours of disagreements between a patriotic Admiralty and a supposed obstinate and chess-playing Chancellor fizzle out with the production of the Naval Estimates this morning. The Admiralty is not only free to go ahead with its quinquennial programme, but there is also this year an adequate provision for men and works, whereas in past years the most patriotic of Tory Governments has been content to go on with the ships, while leaving the men to chance. Nor, indeed, is this all. Over and above the net amount of the Estimates, there is to be a loan for carrying on the permanent works necessary at Gibraltar, Portland, Hong Kong, Dover, and Portsmouth. When the *Times* regards this programme as "eminently satisfactory," we do not suppose that even the Navy League will find much to complain about. Taking the three years of Lord Spencer's administration together, it may fairly be claimed that the Admiralty is not the least notable example of the administrative success of the present Government.

The fact that the pulse of half England has been quickened over a cricket match at the Antipodes is in its way a sign of the times, and a pleasanter and healthier one than some others. It goes to show that we are not universally upon the physical down-grade, nor all of us absorbed in spiritual megrims and sexual dilemmas. The athlete still has his vogue in spite of the decadent. We are reminded of the old days in Hellas when every Grecian eye was turned upon the athletic struggles near a little village of Elis: only that to-day the breathless circle of a few thousand spectators is multiplied into millions by the telegraph, which has enabled us almost to hear the click of the bat and see the stir at each turn of fortune among the crowd. Cricket is no joke under these circumstances for the performers. We have heard men of varied experience declare that to go to the wicket in a big match tries their nerve as much as anything they ever did; and to bat before the civilised world gives the performance a dignity and responsibility apt to make a man perhaps over-cautious in his strokes. Such an innings as Brown's, therefore, is a feat not only of scientific skill, but of plucky and determined self-confidence.

We have often spoken of "Federation by Cricket": it is a striking fact that the great British game is at this moment the only connexion in which there really is such a thing as "All Australia." Our Colonies of the far south are divided by Customs barriers, by political jealousies, by much else, and in spite of Federation Conferences there are some who would back South Africa to be united first. But on the cricket pitch these divisions are non-existent, and All Australia confronts All England with the best men it can put into the field. We note a parallel from India. There is, perhaps, some difference of opinion about the success of Lord Harris's Governorship of Bombay; but it is agreed that his cricket has stood him in excellent stead with the natives. All classes there are keen upon "kericket," as one of Mr. Kipling's swarthy youths calls it; and as Oxford and Cambridge know, the young Babu is becoming a man of his hands at it. Lord Harris played cricket with them, and they liked it. The racial social gulf still yawns for the average Anglo-Indian in most other departments of life—only not on the cricket-pitch. The captain of the eleven is the Marcus Curtius, who has leapt into it and closed it up.

If we do not pay our M.P.'s, we do at least partially adopt Mr. Keir Hardie's principle of free-feeding them so long as they are within the precincts of the House. The Kitchen Committee's balance-sheet just issued shows that Parliament votes about £1,750 a year towards feeding itself. In other words, it pays about 20 per cent. of all dinners, teas, lunches, and etceteras, consumed within the House. Or, taking a concrete case, we may say that while an M.P. pays for his own chop, the country throws him in his vegetables. Which of us will grudge him that bounty? It is, of course, true also, as Sir Willard Lawson will note, that the country helps him to pay for his waffles and sodas. The Temperance Party should really propose a bounty on mineral waters, for the balance-sheet reveals the shocking fact that the M.P. only drinks £261 worth of these, to about £2,500 worth of wine, beer, and spirits.

The Progressives captured the Shoreditch Vestry, and are at once proceeding to make themselves unpopular—with certain people. For they are destroying the sacred institution of "Perks." Well may the *Standard* blanch and mutter of barricades. Nothing is sacred: When the usual vote came up for providing the Valuation Committee, for the space of six weeks during its labours, with dinner and tea and coffee, also (according to one accusing spirit) whisky, which "did not stop at one bottle," the Progressive majority rejected it. The old gang were simply astounded. The chairman of the committee gasped and resigned on the spot. A member declared that under the old régime "only about five of the committee used to turn up to do the work in the morning, but towards dinner there was a remarkable influx." Another member said that "disgraceful and disgusting scenes had gone on at the Town Hall, which would startle the ratepayers if they knew of them." The Shoreditch Moderates ought to have appealed to the case of the Commons. If an M.P. gets his vegetables free out of a grateful country, why should not a poor vestryman get something also?

Among the incidental comedies of the County Council elections is a leaflet issued in connexion with the Progressive split in Whitechapel, on behalf of Mr. Charles Tarling and Dr. Ambrose. It appears that the influence of Toynbee Hall was thrown against Mr. Tarling: upon which the leaflet asks:—

ELECTORS OF WHITECHAPEL, will you tamely submit to be domineered over by Toynbee Hall and their allies?

Rural districts have complained of being cowed by the parson and the squire. Whitechapel electors, are you prepared to submit to the same degradation?

Will you allow a clergyman and Toynbee Hall to dictate to you, &c., &c.?

ENGLISHMEN, show your detestation of this miserable persecution against your old member, C. Tarling, and show that you love fair play.

IRISHMEN, WHO HAVE FELT AND WHO KNOW THE EVIL INFLUENCES OF COERCION, put your foot down on this cowardly tyranny of Toynbee Hall and its allies.

LIBERALS, WHO HAVE FOUGHT UNDER THE BANNER OF FREEDOM AND LIBERTY, tell Toynbee Hall and its students from the country that Whitechapel electors are too hard-headed and sensible to be taken in by this miserable assumption of theirs, and resent this dictation

with the contempt it deserves, and further ask, when we have two such splendid candidates as C. Tarling, L.C.C., and Dr. Ambrose, M.P.,

What sinister influence has been brought to bear to gag the Press, so that they ignore and refuse to publish all our communications?

In the ardour of their rhetoric the writers of the leaflet even drop into the inevitable Whitechapel adjective, and wind up by an appeal to the constituency to carry on Freedom's Battle "bequeathed from bleeding sire to son!" It was an appropriate close to this comedy that the Tory let in by the split was a music-hall proprietor.

We cannot, in all our political experience, call to mind anything quite so ludicrous as the return just issued by the Independent Labour Party of its estimated voting strength in the 128 constituencies in which it has branches. This precious document is dated, "March 2," the very day of the London County Council election; and, as luck would have it, it includes the five constituencies in which I.L.P. candidates ran against Progressives. Here is the comparison between the I.L.P. voting strength as calculated by the party itself, and as revealed at the polls:—

	I.L.P. Estimate.	Actual Poll.
Chelsea .....	2,355	218
Greenwich .....	2,019	391
South Islington .....	1,517	73
North Kensington .....	1,699	147
Limehouse .....	1,032	84

We fear that this sample batch of five rather destroys the value of the I.L.P. calculations with respect to the remaining 123 constituencies. But why, in the name of discretion, did not the Independents wait one day longer before publishing their estimate, so as to correct it in the light of Saturday's experience? It should, however, in fairness be added that the strength (or rather weakness) of the I.L.P. for County Council purposes is not necessarily a correct index to the Parliamentary situation. Many I.L.P.'s are zealous Progressives.

HOW LONDON IS WATERED.

II—HOW THE WATER IS FILTERED.

In our first article on the watering of London we described the sources and the agencies which feed us with water. We have now to describe the means by which the supply is purified. "Best of all," says the Greek poet, "is water"; but "the corruption of the best is the worst," and water, though the greatest of blessings, may also be the worst of curses. It is, as is well known, the greatest of all distributors of plague and disease. The water companies have first of all to catch their water; but next they have to purify it, and the health of London depends in the last resort on a few thin beds of sand:—

The water supplied to the different districts of London no doubt varies to some extent as regards purity; but, taking it all in all, it is the opinion of those who should know that few large towns are in this respect as fortunate as the Metropolis. In the case of at least one of the companies, which, as we have already seen, draws its supply entirely from chalk wells, there cannot possibly be any fault found. And as regards the others every precaution is taken by filtration to render the water which they distribute as free from impurities as possible. Some particulars as to how this filtration is carried out can hardly fail to be of interest. We will deal more particularly with the system of the New River Company—that of the other companies being, we believe, conducted on similar lines.

The New River water, as already explained, comes partly from the Lea and partly from wells, and is brought a distance of some twenty-five miles to London. The company have filter-beds and service pumping stations at Hornsey, near the Alexandra Palace; at Green-lanes, Stoke Newington, and at Clerkenwell. The most important are at Green-lanes, where to a representative who visited the works there the other day the operations were kindly explained. At Green-lanes there are first two large reservoirs, each covering an area of about twenty acres, and containing ninety millions of gallons, where the water from the river "subsides" on its way to the filtering beds. These beds are nine in number, and cover each an area of about an acre. They may be described as brick basins, containing first a layer of shingle, and above that a layer, about 2ft. deep, of sand. The water to be filtered is allowed to flood the bed to a certain depth, and slowly finds its way first through the sand, and then through the shingle, leaving on the surface or in the sand the impurities it contained. There is a depression in the centre of the bed, to which the water gravitates, and beneath the shingle are pipes into which it goes, and so on into the culverts connected with the pumping station.

Ideas change on filtration as on other matters. The purification of water was supposed at one time to be purely a "straining" process, but the contention now is that bacteria have largely to do with it, and that the bulk of the filtration is completed on the surface of the sand by the gelatinous film which is formed there by vegetable and animal life which settles from the water. Acting on this idea, the filter beds, after being cleaned, are not immediately set to work, but are allowed to stand for some time in order that a certain amount of deposit may take place on the surface of the sand. Although the New River water is pure originally than the water of some of the other London companies, the filtration process renders necessary the cleaning of the beds about once a month. The surface of the sand is skimmed off and wheeled out of the bed, the remaining sand smoothed down, and the bed again set to work. After this process has been repeated several times, the thickness of the sand gets reduced, and then fresh sand has to be added, some of that remaining in the bed always being placed on the top. When taken out the sand is thoroughly washed and again used. A certain percentage of it, however, is lost, and a fresh supply has to be obtained.

The washing of the sand from the filter beds is an interesting operation, and is carried out on an adjoining piece of ground. The sand is emptied into a hopper, and acted upon by numerous jets of water at a very high pressure. It next flows into a bed, where it is further played upon by a fire-hose until the water flowing away from it is perfectly clear. The clean sand is then banked up in a corner of the filter bed for use as may be required.

When the water passes through the filter beds it finds its way into culverts which conduct it into huge wells at the adjoining pumping station. Here a number of tremendous engines are at work night and day, pumping the water from the wells to the reservoirs situated on various heights in the district supplied by the company, where it is stored till required for use. From the time the water leaves the filter beds till it reaches the consumer it is not exposed to the light at all, so that there is no chance whatever of its getting again contaminated. One of the engines at Stoke Newington pumps a thousand gallons each revolution, and it alone is capable of raising from eighteen to twenty million gallons a day. The station is connected by telegraph with the different reservoirs, and the quantity of water pumped regulated by the amount in store.

The water at the New River works is tested daily. One of the instruments used is what is known as the "colour meter"—a most ingenious invention, the work of the late Dr. Tidy. By means of this meter a daily register can be kept of the exact colour of the water. Samples are also drawn daily from the mains in London, and subjected to analysis by independent chemists. Then there is the analysis conducted regularly by the medical officers of the Local Government Board. Altogether there seems to be no lack of precautions taken to ensure for this vast Metropolis a pure and wholesome water supply.

EVERY DAY increases the popularity and sale of CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS. The reason is that, when once used, relief is sure to follow. Is. 1/6d. British Depot, 46, Holborn Viaduct, London.