

remnant, probably not five per cent of the whole black population, which retains so much of the primitive brute that it cannot be turned to account."

There is much to be had from such a book as this. Literature in the narrower sense it is not; nevertheless, it is within the bounds of possibility that it may appear more true to Nature as this age sees it, more suggestive of "the really vital and powerful currents" of modern life than most of the pretty things we succeed in producing in the name of pure literature.

LETTERS, DIARIES, AND REMINISCENCES. 1800-1850

FEW men well known in the social and political life of their time — a time abounding in published memorials of all kinds — had been till the other day so entirely forgotten as Thomas Creevey. Since the publication of the *Creevey Papers*¹ the editor has told of a visit paid by him to a lady who had just completed her hundredth year, and who at once greeted him with: "People keep asking me, Who was Creevey? Why, dear me! I recollect when I was a young woman, seventy or eighty years ago, everybody was talking about Creevey, and speculating what office he would get when the Whigs came into power." Not that he had remained quite unrecorded, for Greville drew a pen-portrait of him, which has excited the curiosity of at least a few readers of the *Journals*. The subject of it, a man of obscure origin, was educated at Cambridge, read law at Gray's Inn, entered Parliament in 1802 as member for the pocket borough of Thetford, and the same year married a widow, well connected and of comfortable fortune. This fortune passed from him on the death of his wife in 1818. But Creevey had excellent health, unfailing good spirits, and a wealth of friends and acquaintances. He passed from one great house to another,

always a welcome, indeed a sought-for guest. "He is certainly a living proof," writes Greville in 1829, "that a man may be perfectly happy and exceedingly poor, or rather without riches, for he suffers none of the privations of poverty and enjoys many of the advantages of wealth."

Occasionally for brief periods a diarist and always the most indefatigable of correspondents, — especially in the letters which he wrote almost daily to his step-daughter, Miss Elizabeth Ord, for nearly a score of years, — Creevey is a very lively and complete chronicler of the political and social gossip of his time. Broadly speaking, literature, science, or art interested him not at all, though of course a diner-out in such request often met, with more or less pleasure, personages of other worlds than that which governs and that which amuses itself. Politically he was a Whig of Radical proclivities, and a thoroughgoing partisan. "I scarcely know an earthly blessing," he writes in 1804, "I would purchase at the expense of those sensations I feel towards the incomparable Charley;" such devotion to his leader being mingled with virulent abuse of Pitt, even when the hand of Death was upon him. But not all the epithets in Creevey's rich and varied store of vituperation were reserved for the party in power; there was never-ending strife among the members of the Opposition, — one cause that it remained the Opposition through so many weary years. Like his friend Sheridan, Creevey was among the habitual guests at the Pavilion while the Prince was the hope of the Whigs; but his liking for "Prinney" speedily vanished when the Regent retained his father's ministers. His former adherent's disgust at the whole squalid business of the Queen's trial was sincere enough, though his letters show plainly that the desire to make political capital out of the miserable affair was the sole aim of Caroline's leading

by the Right Hon. Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Bart., M. P. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1903.

¹ *The Creevey Papers*: a Selection from the Correspondence and Diaries of the late Thomas Creevey, M. P. Born 1768 — Died 1838. Edited

advocates. As an extreme Whig, Creevey of course "hated" (and attacked) the Wellesleys, a hatred that personal intercourse dissipated. He was living in Brussels during the Hundred Days and when the battle of Waterloo was fought, and was treated then and later with the utmost friendliness by the Duke, who apparently, like so many others, found this aggressive Radical an agreeable companion. Creevey's vivid, unstudied record of the Duke's conversation and conduct before and after the battle shows the literal truth of his summing up years later: "Nothing could do a conqueror more honor than his gravity and seriousness at the loss of lives he had sustained, his admission of his great danger, and the justice he did his enemy."

Whatever his theories as to political reform, socially, Creevey was content to take the world as he found it, to amuse and be amused. The side-lights he throws on men and manners are always of interest. One single instance of a change in two directions may be quoted. Writing of Lady Darlington, — a Second Mrs. Tanqueray of 1820, — he finds her faultless in dress and demeanor; but happening to have with her a somewhat prolonged tête-à-tête, he says "the cloven foot appeared. I don't mean more than that tendency to *slang*," which he thinks a person of that sort can never entirely get over. Mr. Creevey and some of his friends often used great license in language, but, as the editor comments, "if swearing was reckoned a grace in male conversation, slang was pronounced a disgrace among ladies." When the day of the Whigs finally came, Creevey was past sixty, and had lost his seat in Parliament, but offices were conferred upon him which made easy his last years, and quite softened his tone regarding those in authority. He was keenly curious respecting "our little Vic," and bears testimony to her amiability, simplicity, and homeli-

ness in private, her dignity and distinction in public, her good sense and strong will. "What is to become of her, or how she is to turn out, who shall say?" The height to which she was destined to raise the Monarchy from the seemingly hopeless disrepute in which the sons of George III had left it would have appeared a wild imagination to the writer.

Sir Herbert Maxwell's work as editor, in selection, comment, and annotation, is exceedingly well done, and wins the gratitude of the reader. In one case we note that he fails to correct Creevey's misspelling of a name, that of Eliza Linley, and indeed shows an imperfect acquaintance with the history of Sir Joshua's St. Cecilia, whose beauty has been transmitted to the fourth and fifth generations, for he confounds that lovely singer with her successor, Hester Ogle, the Mrs. Sheridan of these memoirs.

Lord Francis Leveson Gower (later Lord Ellesmere), the younger son of that great Highland chieftainess, the Countess-Duchess of Sutherland, very early in life became a devoted admirer of the Duke of Wellington, and various circumstances promoted an intimacy between them, which continued unbroken till the Duke's death. Lord Francis had many attractive personal qualities, and undoubtedly won from the elder man so unusual a degree of confidence and affection as to give to his *Reminiscences of the Duke*¹ a quite peculiar interest and value. He drew not only upon his recollection, but often from a diary whose records are vivid and to the point. There are bits of illuminating detail as to the great man's habits, manners, tastes, sentiments, and beliefs, occasional reminiscences of his own, and a full account of his oversight of the article written by Lord Francis for the *Quarterly*, in "refutation of Alison's nonsense on the subject of Waterloo." It is amusing to note that Wellington had jumped to the conclusion that the historian was a Whig

Ellesmere, by his daughter ALICE, COUNTESS OF STRAFFORD. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1903.

¹ *Personal Reminiscences of the Duke of Wellington*. By FRANCIS, FIRST EARL OF ELLESMERE. Edited, with a Memoir of Lord

“hired to depreciate and defame him,” and the reviewer had some difficulty in convincing him that Alison, “that pompous compiler from gazettes,” sincerely admired the Duke, but admired himself a good deal more. The brief introductory sketch of Lord Ellesmere, and especially the too few letters of his quoted therein, give a most agreeable impression of a man, whose literary and artistic tastes and manifold good works would probably have made him the subject of a much more extended memoir, if he had died nearer to our day of the ever ready biographer.

A sometime companion - in - arms of Colonel Arthur Wellesley in India was Captain George Elers, who late in life wrote memoirs¹ covering the years of his military service, which ended in 1811. Captain Elers was a nephew of the Miss Elers with whom Richard Lovell Edgeworth, at the age of nineteen, eloped to Gretna Green, and their daughter Maria seems to have remembered her cousin kindly, as letters here given show. His father having lost his fortune, young Elers had neither money nor influence to assist him in his profession, wherein he differed, as in most other things, from his friend Colonel Wellesley, and he finally, in a fit of pique (or, as he says, despair), was foolish enough to resign his commission, while the great war was still overshadowing Europe. He doubtless would have proved a brave soldier had chance ever given him an opportunity to show his mettle, and his descriptions of military life have sometimes a good deal of interest, though the scribe is the most commonplace of men. An officer's life in India a century ago seems curiously like the accounts of it to-day, with one important difference, — the custom of dueling. Concerning this, the tragic tales Captain Elers tells almost rival those that come to us from the German army of to-day.

¹ *Memoirs of George Elers, Captain in the 12th Regiment of Foot (1777-1842)*. Edited by Lord MONSON and GEORGE LEVESON GOWER. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1903.

Perhaps a hundred years hence those may seem as strange to German readers.

Very pleasant glimpses of English society in early Victorian days are given in the home letters of Mrs. George Bancroft,² written during her husband's service as American Minister. The lady is quick-sighted, sensible, open-minded, and intensely interested in the new world opened to her under such favorable auspices, and she writes easily, unpretentiously, and always readably. It is largely a record of that abounding and delightfully well-ordered English hospitality in town and country shown to her by new friends whose names are a part of the history of their time, political, social, or literary. The visitor finds that for the thorough enjoyment of the great world, “mere fine ladyism will not do, or prosy bluiism,” but “a healthy, practical, and extensive culture” is needed, as well as an easy use of several languages, and she is rather surprised at the number of women she meets having such qualifications. She notes, too, the simple, unaffected manners of personages of high position, which makes society something like a large family party; also the subordinate position held therein by the young, — a contrast to all American usages. She describes with some humor the etiquette of the servants' hall, finally realizing the enviable position and privileges of the butler and lady's maid, but never quite mastering the division of labor between the upper and under housemaid, though the upper patiently explains that she does only “the top of the work.” She finds there are Anglicisms as well as Americanisms, but she goes on to say, “The upper classes here do *speak* English so roundly and fully, that it pleases my ear amazingly.” On reaching the last page the reader is sorry that Mr. Bancroft's term of office should have been so brief.

S. M. F.

² *Letters from England, 1846-1849*. By ELIZABETH DAVIS BANCROFT. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1904.

THE CONTRIBUTORS' CLUB

VICTUALS AND DRINK IN JANE
AUSTEN

HAVE you ever observed, in reading Miss Austen, how frankly and frequently people eat? They are unashamed of food, soberly putting through a full day's victualing. They breakfast none too early, for Catherine Morland on her first morning at Northanger is awakened by the sun at the cheery hour of eight; and it is a hardship worthy of note that William Price, entering on his lieutenancy, must be up and off by half-past nine. The breakfast menu is slurred over for the most part. In the leisurely breakfast-room of Northanger Abbey, that humorous old scoundrel, General Tilney, sips his cocoa and reads his newspaper. At Mansfield they breakfast on eggs and cold pork, for William and Crawford are breezily off and away, after the manner of gentlemen, leaving their cluttered plates of shells and bones for Fanny to cry over.

If breakfast is a somewhat unemphatic meal, not so the mid-morning collation, always served to visitors. These refreshments vary in kind and quality. While Miss Crawford plays away the morning, harping to Edmund Bertram, her attendant brother-in-law assiduously plies the sandwich-tray, — love is not above bread and butter. Even the indecently humble Miss Bates can offer a caller sweet cake or baked apples from the buffet. But this is mere sit-about-as-you-please refreshment; at Pemberley, the abundance of the feast calls for more decorum. The "entrance of the servants with cold meat, cake, and a variety of all the finest fruits in season," interrupts a most awkward and chilly call. Yielding up the ghost of conversation, the company cheerfully gathers around the table loaded with "beautiful pyramids of grapes, nectarines, and peaches," well worth the price of a bad half-hour.

Dinner is a meal of which the hour is not exactly determined, seeming to be shoved at pleasure to one side or the other of four o'clock. At dinner the stand-by is mutton. There is a surfeit of mutton in English literature. It is boiled mutton usually, too. Now, boiled mutton is to my mind a poor sort of dish, unsuggestive, boldly and flagrantly nourishing — a most British thing; it will never gain a foothold on the American stomach or imagination. But the Austenite must e'en eat it. Roast mutton is a different thing. You might know Emma Woodhouse would have roast mutton rather than boiled; it is to roast mutton and rice pudding that the little Kneightleys go scampering home through the wintry weather.

The manner of serving dinner arouses some questioning. Mrs. Bennet does not invite Bingley to dinner impromptu, "for though she always kept a very good table, she did not think anything less than two courses could be good enough for a man on whom she had such anxious designs, or satisfy the appetite and pride of one who had ten thousand a year." The two-course dinner with which Jane's lover was afterward honored comprised venison, soup, partridges, and, I surmise, dessert. One queries at just what item in the menu the dinner was broken into two courses.

Dinner over and the gentlemen's wine-drinking done, the company must have tea and coffee in the drawing-room, served with substantial accompaniment of cake. Coffee would appear to have been an unfeminine thing, for it never appears in the after-dinner equipage unless there are gentlemen present. The tea function varies in formality. At ceremonious Mansfield it is ushered in by "solemn procession, headed by Baddeley, of tea-board, urn, and cake-bearers." It is all much prettier and cosier at Long-