

L I T E R A R Y N O T I C E S .

ETIQUETTE; OR A GUIDE TO THE USAGES OF SOCIETY; WITH A GLANCE AT BAD HABITS.
By Count ALFRED D'ORSAY. Number Six of the 'Brother Jonathan' Monthly Library.
New-York: WILSON AND COMPANY.

WE opened this little work with avidity. It is the production of one whose fame, as an accomplished leader and arbiter in fashionable life, has preceded it for some years throughout the United States, and may well impart to it the weight of grave authority. We read it to the close without interruption, and with the greater interest, from finding in it, as we went on, much more than a bare list of rules of intercourse; and we rose from our chair, gratified by the perusal; full of good feeling toward its author; and with a passage from the divine JEREMY TAYLOR hovering in our thoughts. This is it:

'THE Greek that designed to make the most exquisite picture that could be imagined, fancied the eye of Chione, and the hair of Pægnium, and Tarsia's lip, Philenium's chin, and the forehead of Delphia; and set all these upon Melphidippa's neck, and thought that he should outdo both art and nature. But when he came to view the proportions, he found that what was excellent in Tarsia did not agree with the other excellency of Philenium; and although singly they were rare pieces, yet in the whole they made a most ugly face.'

Now it is the exactness of proportion, and what the painters call the *good keeping* of a picture, that in real life designate the well-bred man. It is that quiet exemption from unnecessary display or prominence, in any single feature of character, while all are beautifully sustained; it is that style of existence which in the *Venus de Medicis* makes her appear to the eye to enlarge as you approach near and more near that miracle of art; it is that nice adaptation of conduct to momentary occasion, dictated by a cool judgment, a determined will, perfect self-possession, and a kind heart; that mark the character and manners, and give a tranquil and yet pervading and an unforgetten charm to the intercourse of the true and well-born gentleman:

—'it is not in the power of monarchs
To make a Gentleman, which is a substance
Only begot of Merit.'

COUNT D'ORSAY has this innate perception throughout his chapter on Conversation, and he has well illustrated it in that on Dress; indeed throughout his work he writes *as from a SOURCE*: 'It is bad taste to dress in the extreme of fashion; and, in general, those only do so who have no other claim to distinction; leave it, in these times, to shopmen and pick-pockets. Avoid wearing jewelry, unless it be in very good taste, and then

only at proper seasons. This is the age of Mosaic gold and other trash; and by dint of swindling, any one *may* become 'flashy' at a small expense. Recollect that every shop-boy can coarsely imitate your 'outward and visible sign' if he choose to save his money for that purpose. If you *will* stand out in 'high and bold relief,' endeavour to become eminent for some virtue or talent, that people may say, 'There goes the *celebrated* (not the *notorious*) Mr. So-and-so.' In the same chapter are some valuable hints on dress to the other sex, too applicable, alas! too applicable! As our life is not long enough to do anything but praise them, we beg to refer our fair readers to the work itself; the whole of which they may read with advantage, and we doubt not with pleasure. We were much struck by the noble author's chapter on DINNERS in several of its passages, one or two of which we are disposed to cite. The following is eminently just: 'Well-bred people arrive as nearly at the appointed dinner hour as they can. It is a very vulgar assumption of importance purposely to arrive half an hour behind time; beside the folly of allowing eight or ten hungry people such a tempting opportunity of discussing your foibles.'

With *us* indeed, this 'vulgar assumption of importance' on an occasion of dinner is rarely imagined, and would never be tolerated at all; but we have among us some men of genius, (Heaven save the mark!) to whom the flight of time seems never to be a matter of account. We remember having had our whole dinner spoiled (except the game, which providentially was not put down) by one of this class to whom the entertainment was given; and when at last, after being sent for, he made his appearance two hours beyond time, he remarked very blandly, 'I thought the hour upon your card was five o'clock.' The clock was striking SEVEN while he spoke!—yet it was impossible to look into his face and not forgive him. But the annoyance of the *guests* is not much less than this to the host, when, as is too frequently the case with us, they are kept waiting on their part an unreasonable time beyond the hour fixed for the repast. They have arrived in due season, have paid their compliments, and are ready for your soup; and Time wears leaden wings until they are seated and occupied with it. It is also at all times to be considered, that *Launch* is by no means in America a thing of course; and a man may easily, with the kindest intentions in the world, by mere want of punctuality in his establishment, disarrange the gastric juices of eight or ten of his best friends!!

'Nothing indicates a well-bred man more than a proper mode of eating his dinner. A man may pass muster by *dressing well*, and may sustain himself tolerably in conversation; but if he be not perfectly 'au fait,' *dinner* will betray him.' How true! How infallible has this criterion ever been! We were surprised at the following observation, coming from such a source: 'It is a matter of regret that table napkins are not considered indispensable in England; for with all our boasted refinement, they are far from being general. The comfort of napkins at dinner is too obvious to require comment, while the *expense* can hardly be urged as an objection. If there be not any napkins a man has no alternative but to use the table-cloth, unless (*as many do*) he prefer his pocket handkerchief—a usage sufficiently disagreeable.'

Shade of GRAMMONT! can it be, that at any table in England at which this true gentleman, this accomplished nobleman 'observed of all observers,' this cynosure, could be induced to sit, there can remain such a vestige of barbarism as this want implies, and this high authority establishes? No table napkin! No 'alternative but the table-cloth or the pocket handkerchief!' Good Heavens! can it be a possible thing, that these 'haughty Islanders' should rail at us upon both shores, come over the sea and compose their 'Notes on America' at tables where they have been invited as honored guests, and friends, and then go home to deliver their venom, and make market-money out of their coarse detraction of the domestic manners of their hosts, and spitting-boxes alike of their stomachs and their printing-presses; and this at a time when it is their practice to defile, with their soiled fingers, the drapery that covers a board that should be sacred in the eyes

of all Christian men, as it is in those of the Mussulman and the Moor! Oh England! England! and yet, Fatherland! Fatherland! — to think, that from thy prolific and exhaustless bosom, thou shouldst send forth, almost in the same season, to us, warmed into life and golden being, the gentle, the accessible, the illustrious MORPETH — whose visit hath left a trace of light along the path he trod upon our shores — and that the same Sun should, ‘kissing carrion,’ give motion from Thee to these maggots of a dead dog! that crawl their way across the same blue deep to mark us with their slime! But enough of this; at least we use napkins at our dinners throughout the Union, thank God!

Two other short extracts shall be made, in order to establish with our readers the author’s right to the rank he holds in society:

‘THERE is no better test of a man’s claim to be considered ‘a Gentleman,’ than a scrutiny of his conduct in money transactions. A man may possess rank and fashion, and, by an assumed frankness of character, deceive the multitude; but the moment his purse is invaded, if he be not of the true caste, he will display the most contemptible meanness; he will take advantage of the liberal; *evade*, by every miserable subterfuge, the claims of those he dares not oppress, and unblushingly *defy* those unfortunate persons whose poverty is likely to prevent the due assertion of their rights. Such a man may possess station in society — he may be an ‘élégant’ — he may be a *prince*! — *but if he be not honest, he is not a gentleman.*’

‘Gentility is neither in birth, manner, nor fashion — but in the MIND. A high sense of honor; a determination never to take a mean advantage of another; an adherence to truth; delicacy and politeness toward those with whom you may have dealings — are the essential and distinguishing characteristics of a GENTLEMAN.’

The work concludes with an admirable and elaborate analysis of the WALTZ; and it is with earnest pleasure that we recommend it as a whole to the readers of the KNICKERBOCKER.

SINCE preparing the preceding notice for the press, the following *Rules à la D’Orsay*, adapted to the meridian of New-York, have been handed to us under the highest fashionable sanction, to be appended to the future American editions of this interesting production. We leave to the publishers the charge of arranging them under the various heads to which they respectively belong.

‘I. If your entertainer hand you his box, help yourself immediately to snuff with the fore-finger and thumb of the left hand; close the box at once and return it him with a demonstration of thankfulness for the compliment he has paid you. There is no need, if you should not be in the practice of regaling yourself in this way, to taste the snuff; you need raise the pinch only once to your olfactories, and may then let it fall. Neither affect the mastery of the box, by offering it to any one else; or by passing it round the table without an intimation from your host. Never breathe over it; nor, while you aspire to the character of a gentleman, *SMELL* from it and say, that ‘you wish you could indulge yourself in this way.’

‘II. Instruct your servants, that at all times before *the course* of GAME be served upon your dinner-table, every dish of Vegetables be removed from the apartment. There are among us, grave men and of honest extraction who are yet capable of eating cooked vegetables even with Game; and who, with sallad at hand, and a woodcock before them extended upon his proper toast, would yet, (if permitted to practice such an enormity,) ask the servant for a potatoe without a sense either of humiliation or of remorse!!

‘III. Abjure all dinner-communion whatever with the host, who, for the second time, places you at his table upon a cushionless chair; the bottom of which is formed of those hexagons of misery made out of split rattan, and known in New-York by the appropriate title of Cain-bottoms, doubtless in honor of the first murderer of man: the most charita-

ble construction that can be placed upon such conduct being, that your entertainer compasses your death during the ensuing winter :

‘ You ’re there in double trust :
First as his Friend ; his Entertainer, oft ;
Strong both against the deed. And he, your Host ;
Who should against the sharp Wind close the door,
Not bare the knife himself ! ’

‘ IV. Never again send a card of invitation to the young person — gentleman we could never call him — however great ‘ his expectations ’ may be, who at your ball or evening party where ladies are your guests, has had the insolent temerity of lighting his cigar before leaving the house.

‘ V. Until you thoroughly understand, and can gracefully accomplish in perfect time, the varied steps of the Waltz, never venture upon the experiment, even of a *single tour*, with one of those precious beings, whose feet are formed to touch the earth only *par courtoisie* ; for — shall I tell you ? — the very hyena might have uttered cries of real grief, during more than one morning last winter, over the bruised and discolored spots — traces of the last night’s movement — upon a small, plump, eloquent foot, where the instep fades with a quick descent into the narrow and imperceptible plain, and the heel is lost at the moment an upright posture is assumed : and over which nature, until then, had gazed, entranced by the dimpling and ever-varying beauty of her Work !

‘ Practise yourself until perfect with some female professional Teacher, who can describe to you the effects of your *gaucherie*, and instruct you how to remedy it ; or if, as is the case with many a worthy young man well received in society, you be come of a numerous, clumsy family, go it often with some of your strong-armed maiden aunts, or good-natured sisters, who can honestly and vigorously kick you in return, and break you in by degrees ; and teach you feelingly what you are ; and what pain you may impose, and absolute lameness you may inflict, upon that irradiation of light and joy, which, (as no language *can* express the pleasure that she gives,) we call by the pain she sometimes causes ; and, in our tears, have named her Wo-MAN !

‘ VI. Do not entertain the thought, that as a young gentleman ‘ of large expectations ; ’ or from your being one of those ‘ admirable waltzers ; ’ or one of that class of favored persons whom for whatever cause, the ladies rank immediately next the music when they tell the *père de famille*, or the future manager, ‘ We must immediately engage So-and-so’s band, and here is a list of the indispensable *beaux* without whom our party will be a failure ’ — do not, although your name be first upon that list, imagine you have nothing more to do, than go to the ball ; enjoy yourself as much as you can ; leave a card during one of the three following days ; give a passing recognition in the street to the lady of the house ; and then cut the family like a watering-place acquaintance until they give a ball again, or new-year’s day come round to prove you ready for another night of pleasure. Leave such a course to the half-bred vulgarian. It is the part of the true gentleman on the contrary, after observing the other forms of etiquette toward a family whose hospitality he has chosen to accept, to take opportunities occasionally at the houses of their mutual acquaintance to renew his cheerful compliments to the lady, as he meets her undergoing the routine — alas ! how often the laborious, the devoted, the unsatisfactory routine — of attending night after night upon those in whom her maternal wishes are centered and at stake ! Do not believe, (if you require an incentive,) that this will be lost to you. It is among those amenities of life in which pleasure increases as the heart dispenses it. Your bosom’s lord shall ‘ sit more lightly on his throne ’ for this employment of his gracious faculties ; and — for there are many attentions that the sex love to see exercised toward each other — Eyes shall follow you approvingly, that may contain *the untold treasure of your future hope*.’

BANKRUPT STORIES. EDITED BY HARRY FRANCO. 'THE HAUNTED MERCHANT.' In one volume. pp. 381. New-York: JOHN ALLEN, 139 Nassau-street.

SOON after the work entitled 'Harry Franco' had made its appearance, we took the liberty to send it, together with several other late publications of the day, to our eminent contributor, Mr. WASHINGTON IRVING, then at his charming 'Sunnyside Cottage' on the Hudson. In acknowledging his reception of the books, he took especial occasion to speak of 'Harry Franco' as a work replete with natural description and quiet humor; and on learning that the author was a regular correspondent of the KNICKERBOCKER, he added: 'Cherish him; he is a writer of excellent parts, and great promise.' 'The Haunted Merchant' was soon after commenced in these pages; and after gradually increasing in interest, until the interval of a month in its publication was deemed by many readers a very painful *hiatus*, it was suddenly suspended by the author, owing to overwhelming business avocations, which engaged his undivided attention. When, after many months, he was once more in the enjoyment of the necessary leisure to finish the work, it was not deemed advisable to resume it at so late a period in the KNICKERBOCKER, but to complete it in a volume, in which it should form the first of a series of 'Bankrupt Stories;' and this is the volume before us, more than two-thirds of which will be entirely new to our readers. We have once or twice referred to the work, while in the process of publication in numbers; but having re-perused it entire in its present form, we cannot resist the impulse to counsel our readers to secure the enjoyment of the same pleasure. Aside from the numerous 'palpable hits' at men, manners, and customs, in our commercial metropolis, there is in the story itself, in its incidents and characters, a pervading interest, which increases, not fitfully, but in regular and natural progression, to the dénouement. The curiosity of the reader, stimulated but not satisfied, continues unabated to the end; an opinion on which we pledge our critical judgment, and the correctness of which we desire our readers themselves to test in the only way in which it can be tested. Meanwhile, leaving the story untouched, we proceed to select a few of the 'palpable hits' to which we have adverted, which we shall arrange under indicative heads, after the manner of certain of our English contemporaries:

FASHIONABLE PHYSICIANS: SEALING-WAX.

'WITH his accustomed ingenuousness, Jeremiah proceeded directly to the house of Doctor Smoothcoat when he went in pursuit of a physician, for he knew that that personage was celebrated for his high charges, and he thought that no physician could have the conscience to value his services at a higher rate than the rest of the faculty unless he were conscious that they were worth more to the patient; and as there were many other simple-minded people beside Jeremiah, Doctor Smoothcoat had a good many rich patients who enabled him, by their contributions, to live in great magnificence, and occasionally to refresh himself by a visit to Europe, which brought him more patients than even his high charges, for an European reputation is a great help to one's progress in the New World.

'Jeremiah's heart sunk within him when he reached the doctor's house, and was informed that the great man was out on a professional visit; he waited a long time expecting him to return, and at last came away without seeing him, but left a note on his office-table requesting him to call at Mr. Tremlett's house. He sat by the old gentleman's bed-side until past midnight watching with great anxiety, but no physician came; and then, growing alarmed, he went again in search of Doctor Smoothcoat. This time he found the professional gentleman at home, but he was astonished to learn that he had been for more than an hour in bed and asleep. How could he sleep when a patient lay sick almost unto death, waiting for his assistance?

'But the Doctor said he had not received a call.

'Did you not get the note that I left for you?' asked Jeremiah.

'The note!' said the Doctor; 'I have received no communication from you.'

'But I left one upon your office-table,' said Jeremiah.

'Oh! ah! I do remember that I observed a bit of paper lying there directed to me, but I did not think that it could be of any moment,' said Doctor Smoothcoat; 'gentlemen having communications to make to me usually seal their letters with wax.'

'Wax!' exclaimed Jeremiah, with unusual warmth; 'wax! O, true; it should have been wax; and here it is sealed with a wafer; and it has not been opened! Well, well; I am very sorry. But, surely the life of a human being is of more consequence than a bit of wax!'

'The doctor thought otherwise. He had not been to Europe for nothing. Moreover, he was a conservative, and consequently a great stickler for forms. So wicked a departure from established