ANDERSEN.

HIS LIFE IN OLD AGE.

HONORS BESTOWED ON HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY —SIMPLICITY OF CHARACTER—WALKS AND CONVERSATIONS WITH FRIENDS—HIS STORIES FOR CHILDREN.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

LONDON, Aug. 21.—A short five months ago every rank of society in Denmark, from the King on the throne to the poorest peasant on the rough coast of Jutland, vied with each other in paying homage to their much-loved poet and writer, Hans Christian Andersen. It was the occasion of his 70th birthday, and the grand closing public scene of a long and adventurous life. On that day deputations from all parts of the country arrived in Copenhagen to express their admiration for their highly-gifted countryman. The theaters performed his plays, the King added still another honor to his already much-decorated subject and friend, money for a statue to be erected to his memory was raised, it was decided that a plate inscribed with his name and the date of his birth should be put in the little cottage in Odense where he was born, and last, but not least, money was collected to found a home for "poor children," bearing Andersen's name, as a lasting and affectionate tribute of love to this world-famed writer of children's fairy lore. At the close of that day, when the old man was weighted with all the public honors that his grateful countrymen could shower upon him, he met in private, at the house of his dearest friend, all those whom he personally loved and called, in his own quaint language, his "daily friends."

Here he shook hands in his simple childlike manner with all those assembled, and told them how supremely happy he was to see how dearly they all loved him, that their sympathy for him warmed his heart and made him feel grateful to the "dear God," who had given him the talent and genius which the whole world with one voice had agreed to consider "so good." Later on, when the honored guest's health had been drunk, when the grand and simple "Skoal" of the North had been rung out in hearty voice by every tongue around the hospitable table, the old man rose, his tall, gaunt frame slightly bent forward, and, raising his hand, his musical voice broken by emotion, the tears of deep feeling running down his cheeks, he made his reply, uttered his thanks for all the kindness shown to him, and then, in his characteristic, simple fashion, spoke of the wonder he felt within himself that he had been able to write so much and so truly the beautiful thoughts the good God had been pleased to put into his mind and soul. "The dear God loves me specially, and that is why I love little children, and have tried all my life to write the stories I knew would make them happy and good to hear," he added, stretching out his hands toward the young ones present, and dropping his voice to the tender tone of pathos which with him was no art, but the result of inward pure and true feeling. Ere he retired to rest that night, he said to the few who were still around him: "I am tired, dear friends, very tired and weary; but my heart's wish is gratified. My own country thinks me great, and every other nation loves me."

A few days ago nearly all those who had met to congratulate and honor him on that happy occasion gathered together again to mourn over his loss and to follow him to the grave. "Dear Andersen," as he was generally called by all those who personally knew him far and near, had closed his eyes in death, and quietly departed in the midst of every luxury and comfort that the loving attention of friends could procure, to that realm of the happy land where all his beautiful dreams were to be realized, according to his own ideas of Heaven. He suffered a great deal from weakness and general debility for months before he died, and often when feeling worse than usual he would exclaim: "Ah! if I could only die and go to the dear God!" But then as soon as he recovered again, and felt a little stronger, he would say: "Yes, it is pleasant to live. I do not want to die now!"

HIS PRIDE AND SIMPLICITY.

A few Summers ago I spent several weeks at a charming country house just outside Copenhagen, where this gifted author was also a guest. He and I grew in time to be very great friends, and naturally I had constant and continual opportunities, both in private and public, of reading the simple but peculiarly contradictory character of this king of fairy tale writers. He was a tall, gaunt man, very spare of body, and stooped very much when walking, though when sitting he held himself much more erect. His head was remarkably small in proportion to the size of his figure, the back part looking as if a slice had been taken from it, while the forehead was extremely high, and the only point approaching to beauty in his face. His nose was very large and prominent and his cheek-bones very marked, but his gray eyes, though small and wanting in fullness, had a bright sparkle and good humor in them which redeemed their diminutive size, and his mouth generally wore a smile which was very winsome to the little folks. As a whole, his appearance was neither handsome nor attractive, but his manners were genial and pleasant, and soon won the interest of all those who came personally in contact with him. No man in Copenhagen was so well known as Andersen. When in fine weather he sauntered along the streets, for one could hardly call his peculiar shambling method of dragging one foot before the other walking, every man, woman, and child would salute him as he passed, and receive in return either a smile, a wave of the hand, or a touch of his hat; and when he entered the theater his reception was of the same universal kind. In fact, he accepted this public homage as his right, and appreciated it to a degree that any one who did not understand the man's childlike simplicity in expressing his feelings might have been inclined to think arose from vanity. I once accompanied a party to the old opera house where Andersen had a seat of honor in the stalls given him by the Government as a reward for his public services, to hear a new piece performed for the first time. The theater was so close to my friend's house in town that our party walked across the road without any trouble of carriages or servants. At the entrance to the theater we missed Andersen, but presently when we were all in our places, and expectation to hear the new music was at its highest, Andersen's tall figure appeared going toward his seat. He paused half way, turned awkwardly round, glanced over the crowded house, and then as calmly as if he had been a royal prince about to receive a welcome from his people he bowed to the audience right and left, and waved his hand to the orchestra, after which he went over to his chair and sat down. The first act over I ventured to remark to him:

"But what made you stay behind and not enter the theater with all of us, dear Andersen?"

"Ah, I see," he responded in his simple, straightforward way, "you are a foreigner, and don't know that the people here like me to smile and look at them, for they all love me for my stories—and how could they look at me if I came in with so many young ladies?"

Day after day when my English letters arrived he would ask me if my friends were not delighted that I was staying in the same house with Andersen, the poet, the fairy-tale writer, beg me to read and translate to him what they thought of him; and if, unfortunately, there was no message for him from my correspondents at home, he would become quite dejected, and mutter half aloud, half to himself, "That is strange, for the English, they love me!" And then, on the contrary, if one of my friends did mention his name, and speak kindly and affectionately of him, he would go from one to the other of our circle, and, with a childish naiveté that was most amusing, repeat to them the contents of my letter, always adding: "You see all the world loves me, and is glad when its friends know me personally."

HIS SENSITIVENESS.

Living under the same roof with him, and watching with intense interest and curiosity the way he bore himself in the small details of daily life, I was often surprised at the strange contradictory nature and disposition of the man. One hour he would charm and fascinate me with his forbearance and good humor under provocation that would have annoyed many a sweeter temper; the next he would complain in an aggrieved tone of some slight, some personal offense which no one else would dream of imagining to be intentional. Two or three days after my friends had left their country residence and returned to town for the Winter, according to a friendly Danish custom every one they knew in the little capital came up one evening to greet them and express delight at their return. The large, handsome drawing-room was thronged with bright faces. For the first half hour conversation was eager and animated; every one was inquiring about and listening to the plans for amusement, study, or work for the Winter, and the much-loved glass of punch was handed round and sipped by young and old in welcome to the last comers to town. Presently the company settled into groups of twos and threes, and our accomplished hostess began to play the piano. Just as she was rising from her seat Andersen entered the room, and instantly became the center of attraction. After talking to him for a while I slipped away from his circle and amused myself by playing a game of chess with a gentleman at a table on one side of the immense salon. My opponent did not know much of the game, and I was just checkmating him when a voice behind me said pleasantly:

"May I try my luck with you?"

"Certainly, with pleasure," I replied on turning my head and seeing who was my new opponent. He was a middle-aged man; had been a very distinguished tragedian and writer of plays, though he had now retired from public life, and he had the rare and peculiar gift of making his simplest action a matter of interest to his friends. How it all came about I cannot tell, but the game had only proceeded about a quarter of an hour when from one to another a large group formed around us and watched our every move. At first they were silent, but as the contest on the chess-board grew exciting those around began to speculate as to which of us would be victorious. "England or Denmark," was whispered from ear to ear, till at last, on venturing to look up for a moment, I observed, to my dismay, that the whole of the company, headed by our host, were eagerly watching the progress of the tiny battle before them. My heart made a jump. "I must win," I thought, when a moment later I felt a hard, bony hand on my shoulder, and a trembling, compressed voice whispered audibly in my ear:

"Why do you play that? Come, I want to read a story and no one will listen."

I started, for I had forgotten Andersen completely, and in my foolish excitement about the result of the game, I replied: "Presently, dear Andersen; do let me finish," to which several other impatient voices added: "Yes, don't disturb them, hush, silence!" I made a false move, and a few moments later my antagonist triumphantly checkmated me. After the buzz of comments and remarks on our game had subsided into other channels of conversation, dear Andersen was missed from the salon, and could not be found; but at last some one of the family discovered him sitting in a corner of a tiny boudoir, all alone, in an attitude of deep dejection. On being entreated to return to the drawing-room he refused, saying that he was hurt and wounded; that he had been forgotten; that his heart ached, and that he did not like to be treated in that way; and it was only by excessive coaxing, and many assurances that no slight had been intended toward him that he finally allowed himself to be led back to the drawing-room. When I shook hands with him at parting that night he said: "Music and talking are nice to have in a drawing-room—but chess, bah! It is uninteresting. Besides, dear friend, they all wanted to hear my little story, and it was not quite kind of you to prevent their listening to my beautiful new thoughts; but, dear friend, I forgive you; why not? Good night."

COUNTRY LIFE.

The country seat where I was staying was a delightful, straggling house, surrounded by beautiful scenery, and about a dozen miles from Copenhagen. Here we lived a simple, charming life, rising early to bathe in the sparkling waters of the Sound; sitting under the cool shade of the trees during the noonday heat, and in the evening taking long walks or rides over the mountains and through the grand forests which abound in dear little Denmark.

Andersen was a tolerably early riser, but he never took any trouble to dress until later on in the day. After his cup of coffee it was his custom to sit in his room and write, though many and many a time he would creep down in his old dressing-gown and slippers and join our group on the veranda; sometimes if he felt well enough he would read aloud to us the story he was weaving, or a fresh idea about an old one, and ask us to give him our opinion on the subject. One morning, finding me alone, with a delight that was truly boyish he read to me several letters of praise and thanks that he had received from two or three of the reigning sovereigns of Europe, and from various men of mark in the literary world, and one that he cherished tenderly, in a large child's hand, evidently English, thanking him "for his pretty tales." As he hid it back in its place, he said: "It warms my heart when the little ones tell me they love my tales, for my tales they are me."

And he spoke justly; for his writings are full of the exquisite beauty of thought and feeling which only a pure, true genius could bring forth, and with the appreciation of all that is lovely in nature, which makes one involuntarily love the man who could write such exquisite descriptions of all the common things that surround us. Andersen lived in a world peculiarly his own; all his thoughts and ideas and actions being as different from those around him as is the pearl from all other precious stones. A writer in *The Temple Bar Magazine* for February says of him:

> I spent many a delightful hour by his side, drinking in the wondrous fancies of his brain, and listening to his quaint talk, which seemed to come from some far-away world into which he alone had gained admittance. In the cool of the afternoon he liked to walk in the fields with any of our party who were so inclined. For the first quarter of an hour he would not talk much, but shamble along, poking his stick into every hole and corner, or touching with it every odd thing that lay in his path. Then something would attract his notice—a bit of glass, a faded flower, a half-eaten insect; no matter what it was, he would stoop and pick it up, touch it tenderly, bend over it caressingly, and then in a kind of low, half-regretful tone, he would begin and tell the story of its life, its joys and sorrows, and the sad destiny which brought it to the spot where he had found it, till I would stand listening in hushed awe, looking at the thing in his hand, and then at the dreamy face speaking so earnestly, and wonder if the man had really a soul and body belonging to this same earth that all the rest of us dwell in so prosaically, or if he would vanish into the spirit realm from whence he gathered his fanciful ideas, and be no longer by our side.

HABITS AMONG FRIENDS.

Andersen not only wrote a story well, but he was a delightful reader. Often and often, when friends from town were gathered together in our pretty house by the sea, when the music and laughter were beginning to decline, I have watched Andersen rise from his seat, draw a paper from his pocket, and say:

"Dear friends, you have had music, you have talked and joked; now, I too will give my talent to amuse you, and read you a story."

Immediately voices would be hushed, and every head turned toward him, for all knew that, whether old or new, it would be worth hearing. At first, in a low musical voice, he would explain the meaning of his story. Then beginning softly, as if to entreat the attention of his audience, his voice would grow louder and deeper till its full melodious tones reached the pitch necessary to fill the room. As he read on, the air would whisper to you its secrets, or the flowers and plants would tell the troubles or sorrows of their life, or old furniture would have a pleasant chat with you; the room you were sitting in, the very people around, would all be forgotten in entranced interest in the history being read by that marvelous, slightly sad voice, and ugly stooping man.

A rare talent of Andersen's was his power of arranging flowers. On fête days he would decorate a room or a table with a taste and simplicity that were perfect. He allowed no one to help him, saying it disturbed his ideas, and that he could not work if others were looking on; so as a rule the children would gather him heaps of flowers and then leave him alone to weave his own fancies. He was a great favorite with all classes; he had his peculiarities, but all humored him, even to the ladies who would yield their rights of being served first at table, because this childlike man fancied that, if the servants did not hand him every dish first, in some way unknown to himself he had offended them! He was a true and genuine friend. He was grateful to all those who were kind to him; expressing his affection sometimes in a remarkably quaint form, as the following incident will illustrate. One morning during my stay in Denmark we had a particularly bright and amusing breakfast party. Andersen enjoyed himself exceedingly, was in good spirits, and had eaten his breakfast with great appetite. Just before we all left the table, up rose his tall figure. Bending over the table, shutting his eyes, and stretching out his hands, he said grace in a low, reverential tone:

"I thank Thee, O God, that thou hast permitted me to enjoy a breakfast as charming as those I often enjoyed in Sevenoaks in the home of the dear Mr. Bentley. Amen!"

His manners at table were rather trying to strangers, as he had a habit of pulling his food about with his hand, and taking far more on his plate than he could possibly want, and to hide this peculiarity, which he never seemed to care to overcome, he always covered his plate with his napkin as soon as he had finished what he wished to eat. Andersen was always willing to give a helping hand to all the young men of talent who came to him for advice. If he had nothing else to give, he would speak kindly and encouragingly to those who were anxious to become known, and no one ever applied to him in vain. Many a household has been made happy, many a dull heart brightened by hearing Hans Christian Andersen discourse in his earnest manner on the goodness of the world, if we will only see it as it really is with the eyes that truth and Nature gave us, and not through the dark spectacles of despair and dismay. Andersen lived and died a bachelor. He had no relations and seemed alone as regards his family. He rarely ate a meal in his own rooms—except, of course, his early cup of coffee before rising. Wherever he went he was a welcome and dearly beloved guest, and several of his "daily friends" always had a knife and fork laid ready for him at their table, in case the fancy seized him to dine at any particular house. It was a habit too of his to go and call on a certain number of his friends every day. Often he would not sit down, nor take off his heavy fur coat, remarking, when urged to stay for half an hour:

"No, no; I merely came to touch your hand and say good morning. I have no time."

"Will you dine with us to-day, dear Andersen?"

"Yes, perhaps; but they want me at ——. I'll see later on." And with a friendly nod he would disappear. An hour after, he would put his head inside the door again.

"Don't be disappointed, my friends; to-morrow I will come to you; but I could not refuse Mrs. ——," and, without waiting for a response, he would disappear again. As a rule, he dined with the same people on the same day of each week, holding himself, however, at liberty to accept any impromptu invitation that pleased his fancy at the moment.

HIS WRITINGS.

The poverty of his childhood, the straitened circumstances of his early manhood, his travels and successes in later life are all exquisitely depicted in "The Story of My Life," which he wrote a few years ago. In foreign countries he is most known by his wonderful fairy tales and his Tales for Children, but in his own country he is honored as a poet and for his large prose works, wherein the rich poetic vein of his master mind finds vent in gorgeous descriptions of scenery and beautiful dream-land pictures. His "O. T." and the "Improvisatore" are perhaps the most popular of his romances, though "The Two Baronesses" is considered by some as one of the best novels he ever wrote. Even if he had given unlimited attention to novel writing, I doubt if Hans Andersen would ever have become a favorite writer with the "devoted novel-reader." His own life was too pure and too simple for him to understand the strong, deep passions of an intense nature. In my daily and hourly intercourse with him during a period of two months, he gave me the impression of being an individual whose body had grown up into the proportions of a man, but whose mind and feelings and sentiments were those of an intensely dreamy, imaginative child. His mind was indeed without guile, for in conversation he would handle subjects with all the simplicity, ease, and naïveté of a child, that few men would venture to approach without extreme reserve and evident constraint. He passed his daily life in his own imagination, taking very little heed of the people around him, whose actions he could not fathom, because he himself had never experienced the wants and desires peculiar to their stronger and more passionate natures.

Although he wrote extensively his works never realized to him anything like a sufficiency to enable him to live comfortably on the proceeds of their sale. He once said rather sadly to me, "My translators have grown rich, while I who gave the thoughts and words have remained poor." He enjoyed a small pension from the Government of Denmark, and his wants were so simple that he did not need to be rich to satisfy them. Children worshiped him; as soon as he appeared in a drawing-room they would gather round him, kiss and embrace him, clamber on his knees, hold his hands, hang to his coat-tails, and take complete possession of him to his own amusement and intense satisfaction. "A story, dear Andersen, a story, only one," they would shout as they dragged him to the nicest arm chair, and planted him in the warmest corner of the room. The dear old man would smile, his eyes would twinkle, and lifting the youngest to his knee he would begin to tell how the little fir tree became a Christmas tree; or how old Lukoie holds his umbrella over sleeping children's heads and makes them dream of pleasant things if they have been good, or perhaps he would for the thousandth time tell the tale of the Ugly Duckling, or the sad history of "The Little Mermaid," who longed for a soul. He understood children in all their wondrous and varying moods, for he was but a child himself—for them he sung his sweetest and wrote his best; for them his brain was ever active, ever searching, and bringing forth the marvelous and wondrous that a child's mind revels in. His plays lack fire and power, his novels are passionless, his poetry is forgotten as soon as read—but his stories for children, his fairy lore, contain a charm in their mystic beauty, and a dream-like truth which will hold their own and live for ages long after his other larger works have been lost in oblivion. And no inscription could be more appropriate to this king of story-tellers, who never wearied a child or repulsed him by talking of things too deep for his understanding, than the one so touchingly entwined in laurel, and laid the other day, among others, on the dear old man's coffin: "Thou art not dead though thine eyes are closed. In children's hearts thou shalt live forever." No man in Denmark will be so sincerely regretted as this simple, genial, childlike messenger from Heaven, Hans Christian Andersen. Not a household but will mourn him; hardly a child who will not often cry itself to sleep because "dear Andersen" has gone away forever, and will never again be able to tell a story.

THE HOME LIFE OF KING ALFONSO.

Madrid (Aug. 17) Correspondence of The London Times.

The Ministers find the King alone when they come in; they leave him alone when they are dismissed. Private, intimate counsel he has none, for his sister seldom or never crosses the threshold of the King's apartments, and most of her time is spent in long visits to the Madrid nunneries. The King's household has been chosen for him, and the friends who came with him from Paris, if they have access to him, are debarred from their former familiar intercourse.

On a recent occasion, it is said, the young King, being on the point of retiring to rest, with no other attendant than his old friend and servant Murphy, now Conde de Morphi and Gentleman of the Bedchamber, was fidgetting about the room in his night-dress, rummaging from corner to corner, looking under and behind the bedstead, as if he could summon no resolution to turn in. Morphi, greatly surprised, asked his Royal master "what ailed him, or what cause he had for alarm or uneasiness?" "Ah, no!" exclaimed the King, "I am not afraid: I was only looking to see where Alcañices had hid himself; but it seems he is really gone; and," he added with glee, "we are rid of him till to-morrow."

This trifling anecdote, which was at the time the theme of general talk, whether authentic or not, is not without serious significance. Alcañices, or the Duque de Sexto, familiarly known in Madrid under his second title, is a good-natured, popular nobleman, a grand seigneur, who keeps a good stud of horses, and employs a Yorkshire groom; and he is by no means personally obnoxious to the young Sovereign, to whose cause he has been consistently devoted. It was only a harmless joke that Don Alfonso indulgen in when he thus hinted that even the company of his Mayordomo Mayor could be *toujours perdrix* to him. But it would be no matter for wonder if the perpetual watch and restraint the Government deem it expedient to put upon the King's movements should prove somewhat irksome to him, and he should wish now and then to be released from a companion, however amusing, who seems commissioned to follow him as his shadow.

LIFE IN PARIS.

LETTER FROM ARSENE HOUSSAYE.

ATHENIANS AND SPARTANS—THE DUKE OF GRAMONT —NORTHERN FRANCE AND SOUTHERN FRANCE—THE LEGEND OF PEACE AND WAR—WHY GOLD HAS NO PREMIUM IN FRANCE—THE FRENCH BANK AND THE FRENCH VINTAGE—ANCIENT AND MODERN COURTS OF LOVE—MERIMÉE AS JUDGE —THE MORALE OF WOMEN.

[FROM A REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

PARIS, August 19.—Paris is never discouraged. Talk to it of war and revolutions, and it answers with fêtes. It goes into exile, but only for amusement. If it has money, it spends it. If it has none, it spends still more.

The Duke of Gramont who was Minister of Foreign Affairs under Napoleon III. and who declared war against Prussia, was talking to me yesterday, in a walk in the Champs Elysées, of that indifference of the Parisians which almost amounts to Oriental fatalism. "We have become too Athenian," he said. "All our Spartans died with Napoleon the First." He confessed that he lost his illusions in the war of 1870; not that he did not admire the heroism of our soldiers who were killed at Reichshoffen, Mars-la-Tour, and other places; but he had thought that France would rise as one man. Only Northern France did its duty. Southern France folded its arms and admired its grape crop. There is more than one France. Everything here below must be paid for. Southern France has been cruelly punished by the disaster of the inundations. And still it is the North which has consoled her by sympathy and subscriptions, not choosing to remember that it was dying with hunger during the war while the South was secure and luxurious.

The Duke of Gramont is not only a gallant gentleman of Old France, but he is also a modern man full of the newest wit, speaking always with French logic and diplomatic shrewdness. You know he is a brother of the celebrated Count D'Orsay, and like him, is one of the handsomest men of his time. Tall, well set up, a proud and delicate profile, a luminous eye and a charming smile. He has gone through all the embassies at the several Courts of Europe, always at home wherever he might be, welcomed everywhere as a distinguished specimen of the highest aristocracy of France, as a most pronounced type of the old national character.

On what slight threads hang the destinies of nations! The Duke of Gramont did not have all the good fairies at his cradle. There came one who said, "You are too handsome. You can never refuse anything to a woman." Here is a legend which is related in the most exclusive diplomatic circles, under the mantelpiece of M. Thiers where all the Embassadors, ordinary and extraordinary, are wont to assemble.

After the more or less pacific explanations of the last interview at Ems with Count Benedetti there was a council at night at the Tuileries, at which peace was peremptorily decided upon by the Emperor, who was the most prudent of the party, because he hated bloodshed, and who did not think a gory baptism was necessary to the consecration of the Prince Imperial. But there were two sovereigns at that time on the throne. Beside the Emperor, reigned the Empress. When everything was peacefully decided, the Emperor, who was then ill, went to bed, like Titus, content with his day's work. But the Empress was more wakeful. In her turn she held a council. Here the evil fairy of the Duke of Gramont made her appearance, for he consented to this council through pure gallantry. And through pure gallantry he left too much of the talking to the Empress, who thought that war was the only salvation of France, and who, when she said France always meant her son. She took possession of every one. She was really eloquent in talking of the national dignity; she said that the Emperor's good heart would gain both France and the dynasty. Besides, all the newspapers and all the deputies were for war. It would not do to swim against the current. They would gain the Rhine with one battle; they would chastise Germany, and return triumphal with the peace of Europe secured for a century. Everybody was convinced; the Duke of Gramont alone, perhaps, having doubts of all these fine things. But as it was a woman who was speaking, he had the gallantry not to oppose her. They waked up the Emperor, who was already sleeping the sleep of the just, and extorted from him the declaration of war.

This is the way that the evil fairy who visited the cradle of the Duke of Gramont, and who might be called the Fairy of Good Graces, helped to lose for us two provinces and five milliards. The Duke had not that day the courage of his opinions, because a woman was speaking before him.

France is the poorer for her two provinces, but she has paid the five milliards as Prussia would pay five dollars. An American said to me, "How do you manage to have so much money? And how is it that your paper is worth as much as gold?" It is because we have the Bank of France, the great bank of the world, with so much money that they have not the time to count it. It possesses the confidence of every quarter of the globe. It is so strong that the Commune, with its 300,000 scoundrels, did not dare rob it, though absolute mistress of Paris for three months. A note of the Bank of France is, therefore, ready money, and better than gold in many instances.

But after all the prime thing in France is its wine crop. As long as the palate of man retains its cunning France will never know how rich she is. Germany threatens to swallow France. If this cataclysm could arrive, never fear but that France will swallow Germany. Such is the will of the Patriarch Noah.

Among the men of the Court born to gallantry, like the Duke of Gramont, there was the story-teller Mérimée, of whom they are publishing a new volume, "Letters to Another Unknown." The author of "Columba" commenced like me by being Inspector General of Fine Arts. It is a good school which I cannot too highly recommend to young men. Nothing forms the mind like the contemplation of masterpieces. You do not understand the women of the day until you have studied the women of antiquity. It is the true catechism of a fashionable life. Mérimée was therefore greatly appreciated at Court, although he retained always his somewhat rustic and trivial countenance. It exasperated him that women accepted his compliments and paid him only compliments in return. He would like to have played the Don Juans and the Lovelaces, but he could never get beyond the noble fathers. He was like an old man even in his youth. But he was none the less full of pretensions, and hated all men of fashion. In the little reunions at the Tuileries he would have liked to have none but women.

It was in one of these reunions that he attempted to revive, for the amusement of the Empress, the, Provencal Courts of Love. He appointed himself President of a Court; but before coming to the famous case upon which he sat in judgment, I will say a word about those medieval tribunals and give you a copy of a decision once rendered in them, with but slight changes in the phraseology.

"Before the Marquis of Flowers and Violets of Love comes the suit of a lover plaintiff, of the first part, and of a young Friend, defendant, of the second part:

"The aforesaid lover claims that the greatest good of love is to retain the hearts of lovers in perfect alliance and union; and that each and every time that the Lady seeks to be agreeable to another than her Friend, it is a sign that her heart is not wholly loyal, and that she is not to be trusted:

"This being presumed, the lover adds that the young Friend had sworn to him eternal fidelity while life endured, and he in like manner to her, with solemn oaths befitting the case:

"That notwithstanding, the said Lady has not failed to hold conversation with other gentlemen, and other forbidden female friends, going so far as to wear at her girdle new bouquets and strange flowers, which had not been given by the said lover, from which he has suffered headaches and sleepless nights.

"On the part of the Lady defendant it is answered, that promises made by ladies should be taken as subject to their good pleasure, and that whatever claims one might have upon them, nothing should prevail against their will or caprice, for that they are Ladies; and that they are not to be expected to renounce in advance good things unknown; that their natural privilege is to be agreeable to all so as not to pass for prudish or ill-tempered.

"Finally, both parties being heard by the tribunal of love, the defendant is acquitted and absolved from the claim of the plaintiff, and permission is given her, in virtue of her trade as woman, to talk, laugh, salute, wear bouquets of all colors and kinds, without criticism, let, or hinderance; costs to be assessed on plaintiff."

'Tis ever thus.

Now what was the famous case of that Court of Love presided over by Mérimée? They started this excessively ticklish question: whether it is permitted to a queen to save the dynasty by violating her conjugal faith. The Prince Imperial was then in the world, so that the question had no personal application. All the ladies were called upon for their opinion. One of them thought it was a *coup d'état* like any other. The Emperor came in unexpectedly. "Sire," said the Empress, with her charming smile, "we are playing with fire, but we shall not get burned, for we have a safe President." They then told him the question before the meeting. The Emperor entered gayly into the proceedings, and proposed the corresponding question whether a husband's infidelity could be excused when committed to save the public peace. After some lively discussion it was decided that the proposers of both questions should be turned out of court by different doors.

Those were the good times. No one thought of anything but the pleasures of Paris, of Compiègne, and of Biarritz. When sovereigns are happy, the people are also happy.

Mérimée has described himself in his letters, but still more faithfully in speaking of his master Stendhal, the author of *Rouge et Noir*, a skeptic who was beyond skepticism: "He was impious, an outrageous materialist, a personal enemy of Providence. He denied the existence of God, and yet he hated Him like a master." All atheists are like this. They deny God because they do not love Him, rather than because they do not believe in Him.

But I preferred the skepticism of Stendhal to that of Mérimée. As Henry Blaze happily said, "Stendhal, a man of imagination and originality, had that ideal skepticism which takes on all the iris hues and prismatic fires of the rainbow;" while Mérimée had the cold skepticism of a gray sky. You perceive no sun and no blue heaven in his spirit.

They were once praising his "sober style" before Victor Hugo. "Yes," said the great poet, "it is the sobriety of a bad digestion." Never did two writers have such contempt for each other; for Mérimée said that Victor Hugo, imitating the frog of the fable, had puffed himself up to such a point that he was a grotesque, rather than a great writer. Hugo often laughed at the native sterility of Mérimée. For instance, when he speaks of Charles IX. in his "Chronicle of 1572," instead of painting his portrait, he says: "You will do better to look at his bust in the Museum of Angoulême. It is in the second hall, No. 98." It is like those play writers who allow their finest scenes to take place behind the curtain.

If Mérimée did not believe in God, if he bragged too much about his damnation, like the great Frederick, in compensation he had the good sense to believe in woman.

But women did not believe in him. He said, like Henry Blaze, "he who does not wish to grow old should love women, and to love them well you must love them all."

ARSENE HOUSSAYE.

GENERAL NOTES.

In Jefferson, Texas, they catch fish by exploding nitro-glycerine in the bayou.

There isn't a house to rent in New-Harmony, Col.; but then there is only one house there.

Ham is the name of a boy arrested in Hudson for stealing eggs. They usually go together.

A Council Bluff doctor hangs out a sign inscribed "Dr. H. O. Greeno, Medico Electricio." O!

They cure chicken cholera in Georgia by smoking the birds with pine tops, tar and feathers.

Tiger Tail, sub-chief of the Seminole Indians in Florida, has three wives and two black slaves.

A number of cattle have been killed in Nicollet County, Minn., by getting into the sorghum fields.

Alfred Dowd of Parkersburg, Iowa, has a three-legged colt, three months old, and it is both healthy and spry.

At Des Moines, during the visit of a circus, $2,342 in money, papers and watches, were the spoil of the pickpockets.

It was observed that a hail-storm at Omaha knocked all the lights out of the houses and scared the livers pretty badly.

The Masonic authorities of Iowa have decided that dancing in the lodge-room is inconsistent with the good of the craft.

Mollie Allen of Lakeport, Cal., has received $26 50 from the Supervisors, for the tails of squirrels shot by her own rifle.

A dog who was epicurean in his ideas of mutton, at Franklin, Ind., tried eleven sheep before he found one to his taste.

A mine of honey has been discovered at Cajon Pass, Cal. It is a quarter of a mile long, and contains 1,000 tons of the sweet.

Brunswick, Ga., Aug. 8, had thirteen prisoners in her jail—four Chinamen and nine negroes. All the white men of that region are good.

When at a trial match of sausage-making machines in Cincinnati, one of them amputated the hand of its exhibitor, a heartless bystander remarked that it took the palm.

A man, who broke jail in Texas, was running away beautifully, when he was bitten by a rattlesnake, and being obliged to go to a doctor for treatment, was restored to his old quarters.

While tunneling into the side of Mt. McLellan, Colorado, recently, the explorers came upon ground solidly frozen 90 feet from the surface. The question is how the frost got in, as there was no crevice through which it could enter.

A small yellow-spotted lizard, about four inches long, was found inside a watermelon at Dallas, Texas. Apparently lifeless when taken out, it was soon resuscitated, but lived only a few moments. It had no eyes. It is to go in spirits to the Smithsonian Institution.

A museum in Nashville, Tenn., has come into possession of a large number of Indian curiosities, lately found in Lewis and Maury Counties—spear-heads, arrow-heads, scrapers for dressing hides, stone knives, stone awls, all made of fine flint, with a great many hoes made of sandstone.

A model farmer is reported in Elberton, Ga. His somewhat singular name is Deaduyler. For thirty-five years he has never bought a single pound of meat, and only eight barrels of corn. This Spring he thrashed 300 bushels of wheat, but his last year's crop is not yet exhausted. He has more oats than he knows what to do with, and raises his own stock.

Mrs. Robert Taylor, living near Greenville, Va., has been insane for some time past; but lately, complaining of a pain in her head, she drove a large nail into it. She concealed the fact for some days, and when it was discovered, the doctor had great difficulty in getting the nail out; but Mrs. Taylor's mind has been entirely restored by this extraordinary operation.

A goose in Lynchburg, Tenn., has revenged her race upon the devourers of the costly *pâté de foie gras*. It was in a warehouse. The Government storekeeper had just placed a tax-paid stamp worth $31 on a barrel of Moore County staple, when the grass green of that stamp attracted the attention of the goose and she gobbled it down. After the resumption of specie payments it is hoped that she will lay a golden egg.

The last battle of which we have heard, was a little but fierce one; and it was all about a woman. Twenty wagons were en route for Dallas, Texas. In the train was a young widow to whom one of the pilgrims paid his devotions. She rather encouraged him until he became too ardent a wooer, when she denounced him to another admirer. The caravan was divided in sentiment. One party sided with the widow; one with the poor man; and one was neutral. The peaceful brigade left determined to have no hand in the affair; but they had not gone far when they heard the sound of pistol shots, the battle having begun, while the screams of the fair sex rent the air. About 15 men engaged in the combat. Three were killed; several wounded; it was a drawn fight after all; but what became of the widow is not recorded.

We find chronicled in *The Kansas City News* the suicide there of Algernon C. Manin. He was one of a party of four fast young Englishmen who last Winter rented the Old Denver Theater, and engaged for it a variety troupe. These amateur managers pawned their wardrobes, jewelry and hunting equipage to carry on the theatrical speculation which proved disastrous. Their creditors wrote to their references in England. Their aristocratic relatives paid their debts, cut off their allowances and disowned them. Manin was the first to leave Denver, but at the North Platte Station he was arrested and his baggage seized. Going on to Kansas City he secured an engagement at the Olympic Varieties, and made a failure. He then turned up under an assumed name at the Lindell Hotel, where he obtained employment in the kitchen. When the establishment closed he was cast adrift moneyless and helpless, with all desire also lost to help himself. Leaving a letter directed to the Earl of Shaftesbury, with an old English woman, he plunged into the Missouri, and not even his body was rescued.

POLITICAL MOVEMENTS.

IDEAS THAT NOW AFFECT ELECTIONS.

DREAD OF A SUDDEN RETURN TO SPECIE PAYMENTS —ARGUMENTS ADDRESSED TO FARMERS BY THE INFLATION LEADERS.

[FROM THE REGULAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE TRIBUNE.]

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12.—"Why don't you write a letter of Presidential gossip?" suggested a friend who holds an official position and whose room in the Department I had entered in my daily round of news-hunting. "If I were to spend a week at Saratoga, Long Branch, or the Virginia Springs, I might do so," was my reply, "but how to gather any political gossip here in Washington, during the month of August, is a problem I am unable to solve. The President has been here only once since May and then he did not stay over night; the Cabinet is scattered to the four winds—not one of them is at his post; the politicians avoid Washington as though it was infected with epidemic cholera or yellow fever instead of being one of the healthiest and pleasantest cities on the continent for Summer residence; if a Senator or Representative is driven in here by stress of any kind, he either knows nothing or talks for effect on the Ohio election—which is worse than not talking at all—so that the correspondent is reduced to the dire necessity of writing his own conclusions arrived at under difficulties, pumping such men as you or remaining silent. Now, since you suggest that I write a letter, just tell me what you know."

"Well, I don't know much, that's a fact," he said, "but I've been thinking matters over of late, and have received some private letters from men in whose judgment you and I both have confidence, and I have reached one conclusion, and that is that the New-York hard-money plank won't form a part of the next National Democratic platform."

"How do you arrive at that conclusion?"

"In the first place, I take it that the Democrats will carry the Ohio election. I have never thought that our chances of success were very good there, and I find now that this opinion is shared by many of the leading Republicans of the State. Of course they don't say it out loud, and they don't let the newspaper men know that they believe the chances to be against them, but it is so all the same. Our folks made a fatal blunder; they allowed the Democrats to get into the field about two weeks ahead of them, and to lay out the plan of the campaign. Really this Fall's election in Ohio ought to have turned on the school question and on the maladministration of the Democrats in the State. Had they been forced to go before the people on these issues, we should easily have whipped them. They understood that, and, by their superior tactics, forced the Republicans to accept the currency issue, and will win upon it."

"Then you think that inflation is popular with the people of Ohio," I remarked.

THE FARMERS AND INFLATION.

"Well, if inflation is not popular, the idea of forcing the country back to specie payments within any given time is, I am convinced, very unpopular. If I were going on the stump and had to confine myself to the discussion of a single question, I would want no better one on which to win votes than this same currency question. I believe that it is generally conceded that stump speeches affect very few votes in the cities, and that if an election is lost or won by the efforts of the party orators, the votes that are brought out or changed are nearly all polled in the country. Now the farmers, like the rest of us, are experiencing hard times, and it is very easy to convince them that this is not a proper time to increase their burdens. States, counties, towns, and individuals have been very extravagant during the last fifteen years. The States have, in many cases, granted very liberal aid to railroads, and many of the counties and towns have followed their example. Public improvements of every kind have been made faster than they have been needed, and faster than the people could afford them, and very rarely have they been paid for in cash. While the people were prosperous and credit was easy the burdens that accumulated were not noticed, but now, when their credit is gone, and money hard to get, taxes and interest form no small part of the farmers' annual obligations, and when you propose to increase these burdens ten or fifteen per cent, as you do by bringing the paper money of the country in which they are payable to par with gold, the farmers are sure to rebel. Returning to specie payments has only one meaning for the farmer; it means that he will have to give more wheat, more corn, more pork, more beef to the men who hold State and county bonds and his notes, while his farm products will be worth no more than they are now, since the prices of them are now fixed by their gold value in the European markets.