

"Liquid Courtesies."

American After Dinner Toasts and Speeches Compared With Those of the Old World.

In "The Nineteenth Century Review" for the current month there is a clever article on the subject of American after dinner oratory. It is written by that able Irish journalist and reviewer, Daniel Crilly, who formerly edited "The United Irishman," and, treating the subject from a transatlantic point of view, he gives a long series of samples of postprandial humor in the United States, in order to show how superior it is in brilliancy of wit to the after dinner speaking in England. But while he calls attention to the contrast, he fails to give any satisfactory explanation for the difference between the laughter which marks the utterances of a clever after dinner speaker here and the solemnity which characterizes the remarks of the postprandial orator on yonder side of the ocean. It is perfectly true that after dinner speeches, not only in Great Britain, but likewise on the continent of Europe, will be searched in vain for the piquant banter, the witty and amusing anecdote, the playful satire and the general tendency to humor that forms the feature of the postprandial oratory in this country. Lord Beaconsfield, it is true, was given to epigrams, but the latter were usually of a somewhat ponderous and sardonic nature, and the almost universal trend of eloquence at festive boards abroad is earnestness.

This is due to several causes. The American, trained from his youth to public speaking, and instructed, even as a boy, in all the arts of elocution, is not only accustomed to after dinner oratory, but likewise enjoys it. He is seldom at fault, and no matter how sudden and unexpected the summons to "make a few remarks," it never fails to find an expert in the art of illustrating the possibility of saying "a wise thing, though he say it with a laugh," provoking mirth and cordiality. In Europe, on the other hand, the boys receive no instruction of this kind. Elocution is to them a closed book, and it is not until they join debating societies at the universities, where, as a rule, heavy political subjects are discussed, that they become inured in any degree to the art of public speaking. Then, too, there is that self-assurance which the American lad breathes in with the very air of his native land, but which is strangely lacking, not only in youths, but even in grown and experienced men of the world, in Europe.

Many of the most practiced speakers in the British Parliament, in the French Chambers and in the German Reichstag suffer cruelly from nervousness when about to address the house or their fellow guests at some banquet, and even those most eloquent of Englishmen of the nineteenth century, John Bright and William E. Gladstone, were often all at sea upon their speeches when well under way. None of them that I can recall spoke because they found any satisfaction in so doing. Clever men abroad deliver speeches only because it is exacted of them, or else because they consider it as a public duty, while mediocrities are prompted to public addresses by motives of vanity and of self-importance. But there is none of that manifest enjoyment on the part of the American who gets on his feet to roll off a number of witty things, appealing to the sense of humor of his hearers, and from the telling of which he derives as much pleasure as they do in listening.

Speaking only when he is obliged to do so, the after dinner orator abroad is nearly always grave. His remarks may be punctuated by "cheers," but unless he happens to be an American Ambassador or a globe trotting United States Senator there is certain to be a notable absence of any record of "laughter." And while every one abroad looks for wit, and brings every risible muscle into action, from the very moment that an after dinner orator from the New World opens his mouth to speak, it is doubtful whether levity of this kind would be welcomed with as much readiness and enthusiasm if offered in the shape of native eloquence.

Abroad almost all after dinner speeches are of a political character, and it speaks well for the sobriety of the present epoch that postprandial oratory should have become one of the principal instruments of statecraft. After dinner utterances are often all at sea upon their speeches when well under way. None of them that I can recall spoke because they found any satisfaction in so doing. Clever men abroad deliver speeches only because it is exacted of them, or else because they consider it as a public duty, while mediocrities are prompted to public addresses by motives of vanity and of self-importance. But there is none of that manifest enjoyment on the part of the American who gets on his feet to roll off a number of witty things, appealing to the sense of humor of his hearers, and from the telling of which he derives as much pleasure as they do in listening.

It must not, however, be gathered from this that the postprandial political addresses are spoken on the spur of the moment, or that the sentiments expressed are wholly due to the promptings of a contented digestion. With the solitary exception of Emperor William, an ever ready and eloquent after dinner speaker, there is not a ruler, and there are only a few statesmen, who deliver speeches of this character without mature reflection and preparation. Thus, all the toasts of the present Emperor since his accession have been read by him from a slip of paper, and the terms employed therein have been invariably well weighed and discussed beforehand, usually with his Foreign Minister. This may serve to explain why they are so brief and formal in tone, conveying the impression that Nicholas is anxious not to say a word beyond what is absolutely necessary. The King of Italy, too, is cautious and reserved in his after dinner utterances, and so, too, are Emperor Francis Joseph and King Leopold. King Edward, before his accession to the throne, was known as an eloquent and practiced after dinner speaker. Since he has been burdened with the cares of course, much more rare, being usually on the occasion of his meeting at table with some brother monarch. But while it is apparent when one sees his speeches in print that every word has been carefully weighed and pondered be-

forehand, yet they are delivered with so much bonhomie and geniality as to convey the impression to all present that his remarks are uttered in fulness of heart and on the impulse of the moment.

Although it is only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that after dinner speeches have come into vogue as a factor in politics, yet it must not be imagined that the custom of toasts is of modern origin. It played an important role during the eighteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic, and many a British and American gentleman in the early part of the reign of King George III (the great-grandfather of Edward VII), incurred imprisonment, confiscation of his estates and even exile for declining to drink the health of "the King," a toast "de rigueur" at every dinner table. In those days there were not a few in England, as well as in this country, who refused to accord their allegiance to King George, and his health was proposed with the object of putting to the test the political sentiments and loyalty of all present. In Great Britain many ingenious devices were adopted by the adherents of the banished Stuart princes to avoid doing honor to the toast. One in particular was amusing. Whenever "the King" would be proposed they would hold their glasses of wine over the finger bowls before them, with the object of satisfying their consciences as well as their friends that they were drinking the health of the king "over the water"—that is to say, of their Stuart king, in exile on the Continent—without exposing themselves to indictment as traitors to King George and to the penalties consequent thereon. In course of time this little trick became known at the English court, and a rule was instituted prohibiting the use of finger bowls at any dinner at which a member of King George's family

pushes together a low heap of mud and decayed reeds. Here on this waterlogged islet—the mere semblance of a nest—she broods her eggs. A moose splashing among the nearby lily pads may send floods of water over the sitting bird, or the winds may disentangle the little raft of reeds, sending it scudding to the farther end of the lake, but the bright eyes of the mother bird never falter. She carefully covers her eggs with decayed leaves whenever hunger forces her to leave them. Although she does not weave the reeds, yet in some way they have gathered until the last little globe crawls to the edge and plunges on head first. Or he may leap upon his mother's back and thus slide proudly into the world, exchanging the soaked, decayed leaves of his cradle for her feathers.—(Recreation.)

TELEPHONE ETIQUETTE.

How Subscribers Are Expected to Demean Themselves.

The Southern New-England Telephone Company, despite the attempts that have been made by the Connecticut Legislature this year to break up its monopoly of the telephone business in that State, has just given the public's forbearance another stretch by venturing to dictate to them manners as well as rates. "Telephone Etiquette," an anonymous publication, but acknowledged by the company as its product, has just appeared and been distributed to the subscribers. This is the excuse the pamphlet gives for itself: "As the telephone is a very recent addition to our methods of social intercourse, there are necessarily some questions of mere manners in connection with it that have not been settled. In fact, there are too many people who are inclined to act as if they thought manners had nothing whatever to do with telephone conversation. This is, therefore, an attempt to state definitely some things which an experience of twenty-five years in the business has shown would be desirable if generally practiced. This is written in the interest of the subscriber rather



A TRIBUTE TO DEAD COMRADES WHO PREFERRED DEATH TO CAPTIVITY.

Not many Japanese have been taken prisoners, but our illustration deals with a little batch of Japanese soldiers who were captured and sent into Russian territory. Some of them committed suicide rather than endure captivity, and their comrades are here shown decorating their graves. One of the great differences between the Japanese and Western troops is that the former do not regard suicide as a crime, but in certain circumstances as an honorable ending for a brave man.—(The Graphic.)

was present. In English society the rule is observed to this day, and in the event of the presence of any British prince or princess of the blood at dinner, no one is allowed to use a finger bowl except the royal guest.

The word "toast," used for describing the proposal of the health in an after dinner speech, dates back to medieval times, when the loving cup was still regarded as an indispensable feature of every banquet. The cup would be filled to the brim with wine or mead, in the center of which would be floating a piece of toasted bread. After putting his lips thereto the host would pass the cup to the guest of honor, seated on his right hand, and the latter would in turn pass it on to his right hand neighbor. In this manner the cup would circulate round the table, each one present taking a sip while drinking toward his right hand neighbor, until finally the cup would come back to the host, who would drain what remained and swallow the piece of toast in honor of all the friends assembled at his table.

History teaches us that the ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Assyrians and the Egyptians were in the habit of drinking one another's health at dinner. Indeed, at Athens the etiquette concerning what may be described as the liquid courtesies of this kind was very strict and elaborate, being known by the name of phlothis. The participants of the repast were in the habit of drinking to one another until they could carry no more, and then they would pour out the remainder of the wine on the altar of any pagan deity that might happen to be handy. At Rome the same custom prevailed. Postprandial oratory, however, was severely condemned as out of place, and while the Greeks contented themselves with exclaiming, as they put the cup of wine to their lips, "I salute you; be happy!" the Romans restricted themselves to the exclamation "Propino!" which is the Latin for "I drink to your health."

In conclusion, it may be suggested that in view of the important role which after dinner toasts have played throughout the reign of Emperor William, who is far and away the most eloquent and brilliant after dinner speaker at the present moment in Europe, and who has repeatedly availed himself of banquets for the enunciation of new theories and new policies, there could be no more fitting climax on his tombstone when, in the fulness of years, he is gathered to his fathers, than the single and epigrammatic word "Propino." EX-ATTACHE.

FLOATING NESTS. When mother grebe is ready to lay her eggs, she searches out some retired spot among the reeds and rushes of a lonely lake, and there scrapes and

Advertisement for R. H. Macy & Co. featuring 'Macy's' and 'Continuation of the Series of Old-Fashioned Macy Sales'.

Advertisement for 'Continuation of the Series of Old-Fashioned Macy Sales' listing various clothing items and their prices.

Advertisement for Simpson Crawford Co. featuring 'Rough silk colored shantings 59c' and 'Finest French & Persian lawns 19c'.

Advertisement for 'GUARDIAN STORAGE AND TRANSFER CO.' and 'NERVE FORCE'.

Advertisement for 'ANTIQUE CURIOS-SILVER' and 'E. WEISS, IMPORTER'.

Advertisement for 'WILLIAMS' CARPET CLEANING CO.' and 'J. & J. W. Williams'.

Advertisement for 'DESKS AND OFFICE FURNITURE' and 'OFFICE AND BANK FIXTURES'.

Advertisement for 'RESTAURANTS' including 'WHEEL TO DINE' and 'HEALY'S'.

Advertisement for 'MRS. CHRISTINA OLSEN' and 'MRS. FLAHERTY'.

Advertisement for 'MACHINE' and 'DUMBWAITERS'.

Advertisement for 'OSTEOPATHY' and 'OLD GOLD AND SILVER'.