

shoulders; the hands are in some quiet position; the fingers curve gracefully, with slight partings between the first and second and the third and fourth." So stood the herald Mercury, new-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill. But this gentleman is not all a gentleman if he does not remember that "intellectual conversation is not advisable at the dinner-table, it is more appropriate at tea," and that "onions taint the breath too much for general society. If all eat onions, it is different."

If such directions do not make gentlemen and ladies, the situation is indeed desperate. Mrs. Beeton and her fellow-ministers are evidently of opinion that as pigs are roasted by recipe, so may the character and manners be formed. But the standard raised by her and Dr. Nichols is so high that nobody can hope to attain unto it except the exquisite figures that live in unfading wax in the barbers' windows. They do not scratch themselves, nor "eat bacon, or sausages, or pork in any form," nor blow their noses in company, nor venture upon unprepared repartees, nor make fun of their mothers-in-law. In the world of barbers' blocks and of "wax figgers" such manuals of behavior are sacred books, but among mere men and women their counsels seem altogether too good to be true.

WHEN Thomas Hughes, the author of *Tom Brown*, was in this country he saw much of college boys, and was surprised that none of them thought of public life as a career. In England, he said, we always suppose that the first scholars are thinking of Parliament, and secretly meaning to be Prime Minister. The English stories and the French vaudevilles are full of the same view, and the curtain falls upon the hero as minister or ambassador, the cup of his glory running over. De Tocqueville observed with curiosity that the best men in America were, as a rule, neither in public life nor anxious to be there; and a shrewd young European who was recently in the country said, "Every thing went well until I came to Washington, and then Congress staggered my faith in America." He explained that in a representative republic it was fair and unavoidable to judge the people by those whom they selected to represent them; and if the judgment was incorrect, it could only be because the system itself was a failure. It would have been more correct to say that the system was abused, for it could properly be accounted a failure only when its purpose was quite defeated. Now the purpose of a representative system is not to designate the best men in the community, but to secure good government; and from that point of view the American system can no more be called a failure than the English or the Continental. If good government be the test, what shall be said of English rule in Ireland?

There are two obvious but powerful reasons why the class of men of whom De Tocqueville speaks does not turn to public life in this country, although many of that class are conspicuous in it, from Washington, the Adamsons, Jefferson, Hamilton, Jay, and others, down to Calhoun, Webster, Clay, Seward, Chase, Sumner, and their associates. Indeed, with all its truth, there is much that is illusive in the statement. The village Hampden might shrink upon a larger theatre, and the mute Milton turn out a Tupper.

The remark of De Tocqueville has the advantage of *omne ignotum pro magnifico*—the obscure is apt to seem magnificent. But then a shirt on a clothes-line seen in the twilight has startled the whole village as a majestic ghost. With all reservations made, however, it will be conceded that the choice of the representative of a constituency full of admirable and able men often falls very oddly. There is, for instance— But the gentle reader shall supply his own illustrations. What, then, are the two obvious reasons that, as a class, the men whom we should prefer to elect are not anxious to be elected?

The first is the uncertainty of the career, and the second is the small salary. This last is not a noble reason, and it is powerful only in connection with the first. An able man, ambitious to serve the state, but wholly dependent upon his profession for the support of his family, naturally hesitates to throw away the income that he has secured to enter public life for two or four or six years, with no certainty of continuance in it. Were he sure of remaining, the sacrifice would be comparatively small; but the conditions of continuance are often such as honorable men disdain. In England, the only other constitutional country, the conditions of public life have hitherto been essentially different from ours. The peers are hereditary legislators, and many of the seats in the Commons were virtually the property of noblemen, given continuously at their pleasure, while the organization of parties is such as to afford a permanent career. Yet even in England a competence is essential to a successful public man. The fact observed by De Tocqueville, therefore, is not due to the disinclination to public life of the men of whom he speaks, but to circumstances which they can not directly control. And if it should be said that those circumstances are the condemnation of the system, we should reply that the disadvantages of the absence of those men are due to abuses rather than to the system. Among such abuses are the limitations of locality, and of what is called rotation, by which a good man is removed for the sole reason that he has become better by experience, while his place is filled by a new man who must be selected from a particular county or district. Other abuses are those which arise from patronage, and which give the nomination and the power of the party machinery to merely mercenary and selfish schemers. Such abuses are not inseparable from the system, which must not, therefore, be judged by their results.

Meanwhile there are those who make the sacrifice, and enough of them to suggest a doubt whether the remark of the shrewd Frenchman is well founded.

A LATE military order of the King of Prussia would naturally suggest that the army is a kind of religious body. The officers are exhorted to observe strictly the laws of honor, and to be always courteous and dignified. They are not to gamble either at the club-house or at the Stock Exchange. They are not to live for luxury and material welfare, but for the glory and safety of the state. To be a Prussian officer, it seems, is to practice abstinence, self-denial, simplicity, and obedience. The order is not unbecoming the Emperor who, after detailing to his Augusta the slaughters and captures in the late war, al-

ways piously perorated with a glory to God. But his order of military saints is subjected to another and very curious regulation. Carlyle, in *Sartor Resartus*, ridicules Bulwer's *Pelham* by treating it as a sacred book of the Dandiacal body or sect, and says that among the lofty laws of human conduct recorded in it he finds that it is permitted to man, under certain restrictions, to wear white waistcoats. By the royal rescript to the Prussian army it is permitted to officers, under certain restrictions, to fight duels.

This has been always a military practice and vice, but hitherto it has not been the subject of a direct regulation. The Prussian monarch is evidently very much concerned about the honor of the officers. The object of his order, indeed, is courts of honor, and honor is enjoined as the perpetual rule of conduct. It certainly should be so, but the effort at mechanical determination of what constitutes honor is very amusing. By precept, example, instruction, warning, and command the senior officers are to promote a behavior which will render a resort to the court of honor as infrequent as possible. But when these fail, and some officer thinks that he has been aggrieved, and that his honor requires satisfaction, he is not to castigate upon the spot, nor silently to disdain, nor to consider that his honor is in his own keeping, and that he alone can stain it, nor even is he to challenge the offender, and go out in the morning and settle the matter by killing or being killed, but an officer who sends or receives a challenge is to submit it forthwith to a court of honor. The court will then consider the circumstances, and will decide whether they require a duel. If they do, "either the president of the court or one of the members will be present on the ground to see and bear witness that by the accomplishment of the duel the requirements of honor have been satisfied."

By this arrangement the Prussian officer is no longer the guardian of his own honor, nor the judge of offenses against it. If a fellow-officer gives him the lie, or throws a glass of wine in his face, or posts him as a poltroon, he must repair to a court of honor and submit to it whether he has been insulted in a way and to a degree which authorizes his being shot for it or his shooting the offender. But this proceeding deprives dueling of its sole plea. For the argument gravely urged by the young and old gentlemen who frequent club windows is that there are social of-

fenses of which no court takes cognizance, or which no gentleman will submit to a court, and which are to be restrained only by the consciousness that the offender will be promptly summoned to answer at the point of the pistol. When, however, a tribunal is established to which "men of honor," that is, duelists, will submit the propriety of their challenge, it is a court which may properly punish the offense. For, as a matter of fact, it prejudices the question which it is the object of the duel to settle. It distinctly declares that a serious offense against honor has been committed by one officer against another, and then condemns the other to an equal chance of punishment. When a man of honor goes so far as to pray a court to decide whether he has been insulted to a degree which authorizes him to challenge the offender, he may certainly take the next step, and ask the court to punish him.

It appears that duels are to be allowed only when some serious point of honor is involved. This makes the whole business only the more absurd. For a serious point of honor means some serious offense. Now the cynical view of duels for giving the lie and generally for knocking off chips from the shoulder is that they are of public service by weeding the scamps out of society. But when a man commits a real offense against another there is nothing more preposterous than giving him the opportunity either of being punished in what is called an honorable manner or of killing the person whom he has offended; while the theory that dueling tends to nourish mutual respect in society or a true sense of honor is disproved by all experience. The King of Prussia declares, with warmth, "I will no more tolerate in my army an officer who wantonly attacks the honor of a comrade than one who does not know how to defend his own." The ethics of an absurd custom are past finding out. If his officers do not know when their honor has been insulted to a degree demanding defense, why should he expect them to know any thing upon the subject? From our point of view no man of honor could without a tingling cheek hear another man speak of him in the way in which the King of Prussia here speaks of his officers, as if they were automatons or children in frocks. A paternal government requires an immense swallowing of true manly pride upon the part of its children.

Editor's Literary Record.

TRAVELS.

Campaigning on the Oxus, by J. A. MACGAHAN (Harper and Brothers), is an exceedingly interesting and a really valuable book of combined adventure and history. The Oxus is a river flowing in a northerly direction through Turkestan, and emptying into the Aral Sea. The campaign described is that conducted by the Russians against Khiva and the Turcomans (1873). The author is the correspondent of the *New York Herald*, and his book, besides other and more important elements of interest, affords a graphic account of the experiences, hardships, adventures, and characteristic qualities of a suc-

cessful New York "special." The book is divided into three parts. The first is one of purely personal adventure. The author describes very briefly in a single chapter his long monotonous ride over the Kirghiz Steppe, which intervenes between Orenburg, on the frontier of European Russia, and forts Aralsk and Petrovsky, on the Syr, and near the Aral Sea. He gives a very graphic picture of the station-houses—"nothing but a hole in the earth, completely covered with reeds and earth," so that, "but for the black and white post planted in the earth, you might easily pass one of these stations, never suspecting its presence, so completely is it