



Editor's Drawer.

IF the historian took more account of the frivolous, he would doubtless lay down the proposition that the strongest of all forces in human affairs is "Society." It is all the more powerful because it acts indirectly and apparently aimlessly, with no serious intention except that of amusing itself. It is perhaps not conscious that it is the flower of human existence, and that all other things are made for it, and that it is above laws and letters and science. But, compared with its pursuits, what is literature, or the investigation of science, or the efforts of the statesman? What neither legislation nor decrees can establish or destroy, it can set up or abolish

without seeming effort. Its fashion is stronger than any organized government. What city authorities can make one end of a town fashionable and another unfashionable, or decree that it is good form to live on one street and bad form to live on the one next to it? What but Society can dictate with inexorable rigor the evening drives and the monotonous file of carriages following each other round and round in tiresome display? And how cruel Society often is in its appropriations! The artist, the lover of nature, the seeker of quiet and repose, find out from time to time a charming spot of retirement in the mountains or by the sea, attractive for its beauty and the simplicity of life. Are they left long to enjoyment of it, say in the White Hills, or at Bar Harbor, or some cove on the Massachusetts coast? Alas! they have no rights which fashion is bound to respect. A report of its good air or its pleasing situation or its healthfulness gets abroad, and Society begins to flock thither, with its whims and its artificial conditions, and speedily the whole place is transformed. Society makes it over in its own image. Display and expense take the place of simplicity and moderation. It should matter little where fashion goes, for its life is the same everywhere. The elements of its enjoyment do not change—the ostentatious drives, the lawn-tennis, the polo, the race-course, the balls and dinners, the afternoon teas and toilets and gossip. Why can it not leave a lovely spot here and there unspoiled?

When the Khalif of Granada returned from the conquest of Cordova, in which he had humiliated a rival khalif by the aid of Christian allies, and rode in triumph through the streets to his palace, the Alhambra, he was hailed as a conqueror by the populace. "Alas!" said the weary monarch, with a pathetic recognition of the fact that he had only aided the downfall of his own religion in the subjection of a rival—"alas! God is the only Conqueror." The pious monarch had no experience of another force which is neither Moslem nor Christian nor pagan, and whose deities are of this world. He would understand the matter better if he could be in Egypt in the year of grace 1891. He would see that Egypt is for the first time conquered, but not by arms, and not by religion. What was accomplished neither by the Hyksos nor by the Ethiopians; neither by Nimrod nor Shishak nor Tiglath; not by Shabek or Esarhaddon or Sardanapalus, by Psammetichus, by Cambyses, or Darius Hystaspes; not by Alexander the Great or by Ptolemy Soter; not by Cæsar or Anthony; not even by Omar and Ali; not by the Memlooks or the great Napoleon, nor by Mohammed Ali—what none of these illustrious warriors could accomplish has been effected by the fashionable young women and the delightful young men out of England. It is not any Gladstone or Salisbury or Sir Garnet Wolseley who has done this thing, or ever could do it, any more than Cambyses or Haroun al Raschid. The As-

syrian, the Persian, the Arab, have conquered Egypt, and overrun it and occupied it and enslaved it time and time again for five thousand years, and Egypt has always remained essentially the same, conquering its conquerors by the inertia of its traditions and the persistence of its customs. And the English, most stubborn to resist anything not of their own island, might have encamped here and absorbed the riches of the land, as the invaders of Egypt for ages before have done, and left not so much impression on the country as the annual rise and fall of the Nile. But one day English society conceived the idea that Egypt would be a good winter resort, and the young man and the young woman, with their fixed ideas of the enjoyment of life, descended on it, and set up the worship of their goddess beside the ancient temples and the sacred mosques. In ten short years they have accomplished what the great conquerors could not effect in centuries before. The English tax-gatherers could not have done it, nor the railways, nor the electric lights. Both Fellah and Arab are powerless before the new goddess Fashion. The invaders have brought their smart equipages, their eccentric clothes, their polo, their cricket, their "drives" of fashion, their balls and receptions and teas of ceremony, their contempt of everything foreign and Oriental. Society is what it is in London, Newport, New York, the Rivière. It does not care for the antiquities, for the history, for literature, for the customs picturesque since the days of Cheops. It cares for the little round that it cares for everywhere. Give it only a little more time, and it will take all the romance and all the flavor out of Cairo. It cannot exactly ignore the Pyramids, but it can set up a race-track close to them, and let forty centuries look down upon the triumph of the winning pony. It does not even respect recent Moslem custom. The books still say that the Shoobra Road is the fashionable drive before sunset. But fashion will not have it so. One must drive at the proper hour to the Gezereh Palace with all the world. One's reputation would not be worth a button if he were caught driving on the Shoobra. The Khedive tried to set the fashion back by driving there himself, but it would not do, nobody would follow him.

But perhaps the most singular change of all has happened to the donkey, that ancient servant of prince and peasant, the oldest of all institutions, more ancient in Egypt than the camel. For all ages the donkey has been the means of locomotion. This patient, enduring, easy, willing, obstinate, pathetic beast has survived all chance and change. He was the favorite of the most ancient Egyptians, as he was of the Moslem conquerors; his graceful ears enliven the hieroglyphic writing in the tombs, as his bray wakes the echoes in the bazars. Of all agreeable, cheap methods of getting over the ground in short distances, the donkey is pre-eminent. But the new-comers have de-

cidated that it is not good form to ride the donkey, at least not in daylight. And this edict has affected everybody. Even the government clerks and people not in society feel its withering effects. The grave dignitaries, in flowing robes and turbans, who used to amble about with so much comfort, must now take a carriage; the clerks must walk if they cannot afford two horses and a victoria; and the travellers, to whom the donkey and his irresponsible yelling attendant was one of the chief attractions of the city, scarcely dare face the English contempt for this agreeable and handy method of getting about. The donkey boy perhaps does not yet know what has happened to him, nor the extent of the calamity which relegates him to the society of the vulgar only. But the donkey evidently feels it. He is rarely seen with the gay caparison, the saddle-cloth of silk and silver. There is a sadness in his pathetic face and mien which is not the ancient melancholy, but a new hopelessness. Cambyzes, no doubt, sat on him, but in a very different way from what the English do. The joy and hilarity and adventure that were found in his use, fashion has set down on. He is subdued for the first time, because he is neglected. He knows now that Society has reached Egypt.

CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER.

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

PROFESSOR C—, a Green Mountain Boy, who stood six feet six inches in his stocking-feet, desiring to take passage for London, went to New York for that purpose. While standing on the dock, he got into conversation with a stranger, asking him by what route he had better go on his contemplated voyage. "Well," was the reply, "if I were you, I would put a loaf of bread on top of my head, and wade!"

ALPHABETICAL.

Mrs. J— was telling a story to a group, among whom was one who was very deaf.

At its conclusion, observing that he did not laugh, she turned to the person next her and whispered, "He didn't see the point, and it's as plain as A B C."

The whisper reached our friend, though the ordinary tone had escaped him.

"Yes," he said, turning to Mrs. J—, "plain as A B C; but I am D E F."

A FAULT OF NATURE.

"It is a very dark night," said Cator to one of his colored brethren, as they were both staggering home from a frolic one evening recently. "So yo' better take care, Cæsar."

But the caution came too late, for Cæsar, striking his foot against a stump, measured his length on the ground. "I wonder," said he, rubbing the mud off his clothes—"I wonder why de debil de sun don't shine in dese dark nights, Cator, and not keep on shining in de daytime, when dere is no need of him."