

susceptibility to the influences of beauty; but how far more loveable did the gentle Agnes seem in his memory! It was as the thought of the fragrance-breathing spring violet, beside a grand scentless lily of the Nile.

She was pleased to see him; had a dozen inquiries about the little unknown nephew and his mother; was charmed to hear of the prospect of their living in London. Mr. Wardour could perceive that a warm heart existed under all that velvet and costly lace.

"I shall be at home to-morrow night. You must come and dine with us quietly, and there will be a few people here in the evening; promise me that you will come." She was so cordial that he could not refuse. Euston Ferrol entered: thenceforth her demeanour was proud and cold, and still as a frozen midnight. What a confession of domestic dullness and discord did Mr. Wardour decipher by the reflected light of his own home happiness.

Next evening he read further and deeper into the book of her life. All its encompassing splendour was as the arctic glitter of moonlight on the columned iceberg. Oh, his own cottage home, and its sunshine of thorough confidence and love! He found no cause to change his aspiration by-and-by, when the handsome rooms became crowded with "the best" people then in London; when title after title was announced, interspersed with other unornamented names, some more full of honour than any hereditary nobleness could confer. Mildred looked equal of the highest, as she stood receiving her guests: he was near her much of the night, as she wished; occasionally they exchanged a few words.

But he ascertained by experience, if he knew it not before, that "the cream of the cream" of society could be as insipid as the veriest blue-edged London milk of inferior circles. Nay, he was certain that he had witnessed more enjoyment at one of Mrs. Cardamon's cosmopolitan *soirées* than among this prodigiously select company of the *beau monde*. As for a harvest home—the amount of hilarity and happiness at one, would stock the languid gentility here present for an entire season, to dole it out in driblets at each fresh excitement.

Euston Ferrol rather liked this honest brother-in-law, whose transparently clear nature could yet be strong and solid, and withal sufficiently polished to be pleasing. When the brilliant rooms were again empty (by Mildred's desire he had waited to the last), she came up to him, where he was looking into a book.

"Now I want to know what you think of all this?" she said. "Your face was a study."

"I am honoured"—he bowed—"to have been so observed. As to what I think"—he laid his hand upon the handsome copy of "Friends in Council," which he had found.

"Yes, I am sure your opinions just coincide. It struck me when I first read the book. Yet I do not think you are quite a Timon."

"I should hope not. I would fain believe myself a benevolent person rather. But then, that is just the cause of my opinions."

"How?"

He was looking for some page in the book, and

read a passage. "'How often in society a man goes out from interested or vain motives, at most unseasonable hours in very uncomfortable clothes, to sit or stand in a constrained position, inhaling tainted air, suffering from great heat, and his sole occupation or amusement being to talk—only to talk.' And listen further: 'For want of the boldness which truth requires, people are driven into uncongenial society, into many modes of needless and painful ostentation, into various pretences, excuses, and all sorts of vexatious dissimulation.' Here's my indictment against fashionable society: is it true?"

"That's a sensible book," remarked Euston Ferrol; "but what can people do?"

Mr. Wardour had no satisfactory solution for this problem in the mass; universal truthfulness is not to be expected till universal Christianity. He had indeed a theory, by which every man was to work into his own life as much of the glorious quality as possible to his opportunities; to eschew all double-dealing of action or of word, all foundationless pretensions, all exaggerations—every shadow of that commonest form of insincerity, "keeping up appearances."

"You say you are coming to live in London, Wardour; I shall watch how you are able to illustrate these principles in practice," quoth Euston Ferrol. "For even the quietest *ménage* in town requires *some* pretension about it, if a man would be noticed at all."

Richard Wardour laughed as he shook hands. "We shall see; perhaps it would not be so miserable to be *unnoticed*," he said. "I shall see you at the bank to-morrow; I leave for home in the evening, I hope."

A DAY IN CONGRESS;

WITH SKETCHES OF AMERICAN NOTABLES.

FEW edifices have an aspect more imposing than that which the American Legislature presents. Situated at one extremity of Pennsylvania Avenue—one of the noblest avenues in the world, extending nearly two miles in a straight line, and two hundred yards in width, with an amplitude of space and elegance of design which cannot fail to render it one of the first of existing streets, when the other buildings are completed on the same splendid scale as the palatial hotels which now decorate its principal side—it contrasts in simple yet lofty grandeur with the well-known "White House," or residence of the President, at the other; while the Potomac flows placidly in front, and the gigantic, four-sided, chimney-looking monument to Washington raises its vast height (two hundred and fifty out of six hundred proposed feet) at the distance of a mile and a half parallel with the centre. The edifice itself, without being highly ornate, is impressive. The original wings are plain, though elegant; but a series of lofty pillars, continuing the Corinthian with the Ionic styles, decorates the centre. New extremities, however, have recently been added, and the effect of these is in the highest degree striking. Unlike the primitive building, which consisted of free-stone

painted white, they are of marble, and must afford ample accommodation for the committee-rooms which they are destined to form; though a committee of the American Legislature is by no means so formidable as one of the House of Commons, the most important part of the private business being carried on in the lobby, giving rise to a species of manœuvring, happily as yet unknown in the British parliament. The posterior part of the house is, in our opinion, finer still, and was originally far more attractive than the front. Here are brought into relief those chastely arranged and stately semi-lunar colonnades which form such a conspicuous and attractive feature in American architecture. A quiet garden, rarely traversed, extends in the distance behind. The whole is approached by a lofty flight of steps, and, on entering, the visitor suddenly finds himself in a vast central hall, named the Rotunda. In dimensions this is nearly twice the extent of the celebrated octagon which separates our two houses of parliament in Westminster; but it is far inferior in decoration and design. The interior is comparatively plain, though possibly it may yet be highly adorned. The walls were originally merely white-washed; but there has been a talk of high artistic achievements from Europe. On our visit, a wretched painted statue of Washington stood in the centre, but assuredly did not adorn it. Several curious paintings, however, decorated the walls, representing some of the most remarkable of his deeds, and events of the country—the Declaration of Independence, on the 10th of July, 1776; the surrender of Cornwallis to the American general at Yorktown, in October 1781; the submission of Burgoyne to Gates at Saratoga, in 1771; and finally, the great aspect which the patriot himself presented when, with equal dignity and modesty, he eventually resigned his commission to Congress at Annapolis, on the 23rd of December, 1783. Other pictures—of the baptism of the Indian Pocohontas, in 1613; the departure of the pilgrim fathers from Delft Haven in Holland, July 21st, 1650; and the landing of Columbus, in October, 1492—with a few more of inferior importance, range round the hall, and, though imperfectly executed, attract attention.

The halls of the Legislature branch off from each side of the Rotunda, which is now surrounded by a lofty dome, nearly four hundred feet in height. That of the Representatives, or popular branch, corresponding to our Commons, is on the right; while the Senate extends to the left. The former is a spacious semi-lunar apartment, much more extensive than our House of Commons, though affording accommodation to but little more than three hundred deputies; but an immense space is unnecessarily taken up by the absurd practice of allowing an arm-chair, spittoon, and desk to each member, which but encourage idleness, inattention, protracted discussion, writing, and devotion to every other business save that of the country, and tobacco-squirting. The members are not divided into Ministerial and Opposition ranks as in England, but ballot for the choice of seats at the beginning of each session, and hence are seemingly less under party control. None of those stimulating cheers and trained supports which a British

audience affords to a favourite orator are to be heard. But, though the scene is consequently less animated, it is not perhaps inferior in dignity—the members by no means presenting the appearance of an assembly of Ojibewahs. Though callous, however, they are not unsusceptible to emotion; and newspapers, it is well known, occasionally report scenes of effervescence wholly unprecedented with us, in which other organs than the vocal are brought into requisition. These are topics, however, on which we do not desire to dwell; and we must own that, on the whole, the demeanour of the speakers, and their courtesy to each other, are superior to those of our House of Commons. No coughings, cat-calls, or cock-crowings are heard. How tedious soever be the speech, the members generally sit and hear it out with placid attention. The bowie-knife and revolver hold interruption in check. If tired, the Yankee only chews his quid, whittles his chair, or drives his quill with greater assiduity. Politeness, indeed, to excess, is becoming the main feature of the American people, though what they gain in refinement they are apt to lose in sincerity. This remark especially holds good in the Legislature, and doubts may be entertained whether, on the whole, it is an improvement on the more noisy British practice. The President of the Chamber sits on a lofty platform at one extremity (the straight one) of the edifice, with four elevated pillars of gray marble on each side. Diverging from the sides, and opposite to him, are sixteen similar columns, with white tops, semi-lunarily arranged round the hall. External, and superior to the whole, are elegant galleries, which the public enter at pleasure, without, as the phrase is, either let or hindrance. One of these is allotted to reporters, and they are rarely disturbed, save by the fair sex, who seem to have a special pleasure in hovering around the enclosure, though, with the usual gallantry of the nation, they are provided with a gallery of their own.

The aspect of the American Chamber of Representatives is considerably more juvenile than that of the British House of Commons. Jonathan has little respect for age, and is disposed to prefer vigour to experience. Most of the members, accordingly, are young, or in the prime of life. They have a much less distinguished, but far more buoyant, appearance than their English compeers. But let it not be supposed that they are superior in morality, or inferior in the ordinary knowledge of the world, that is, so far as it is confined to 'cuteness and to American topics. Many of them are farmer-looking in aspect; but they are all wonderfully sharp. Yet they are industrious, too, and often indefatigable as men of business, devoting many hours after those of the regular assemblage to the affairs of their constituents, and of course their own. Scandal whispers that on these occasions they are not unmindful of their interests; and what is termed "lobbying," or private influence and intrigue, is certainly carried to an extent wholly unprecedented with us. The extent to which an American Congress man is beset by his nominees, for their own private purposes, is indeed inconceivable, even by a silent member

of the British Legislature, who is constrained to atone by personal industry for rhetorical inefficiency, and to propitiate his constituents by acting as their agent in individual concerns, when he must despair of ever succeeding as an orator. No American who participates in public life is ever deficient in this point; each and every representative of the Stars and Stripes in the Legislature generally contrives to "stump it" on almost every subject: all of them, for the most part, acquitting themselves with vigour, though often with a signal contempt for grammar. But there are comparatively polished members, too; and if their countrymen, as typified by the press, are to be credited, they yield to none whatever in corruption, profligacy, and prodigality. Some of them, when business is over, do their best to cultivate elegance of aspect; but the invariable black long-tailed dress-coat, affording full access for the wearer's hands to the profundities of the "pant" pockets, is assuredly by no means conducive to our notions of taste. Gambling is carried on to such an extent that more than one of them, it is said, will lose ten times the amount of his annual salary (3000 dollars) in the course of a session. The southern gentlemen especially—descendants, for the most part, of the cavaliers of England and France—carry these peculiarities to great excess, though no one would readily surmise this from the evident veneration with which they regard the portraits of Washington and Lafayette, the only pictures which decorate the Legislature Hall.

The debate, on the day when we first entered Congress, (that is, its popular branch,) was devoted to the "Know-nothing" question, as it is termed—that foolish name, bestowed upon a still more foolish political movement, which, unless arrested, will shake America to its centre, and can have no other issue than to precipitate her fall. Nothing, in fact, can surpass the short-sighted views of some of the leaders of this "native" party, who, utterly heedless, and seemingly ignorant of the sources of their country's origin and power, would exclude from the privileges of citizenship all save those born on the soil. And it is not an aristocracy they would establish in lieu of the present system, but a bureaucracy, and the most odious of all bureaucracies—a bureaucracy of birth. A community of headles would be far more desirable; and yet, three-fourths of the native Americans are, or were lately, in favour of this species of Bumbledom—bent upon excluding from office every citizen of foreign birth, and even of depriving him of a vote until he has been twenty-one years in the country. They would, in reality, establish a new species of slavery—a slavery of Europeans. They are wholly oblivious of the fact that it is to the brawny arms of Cis-Atlantic men that they are indebted for all their railways, and an almost equal proportion of their trade, army, navy, and public works. The adherence of some good men, in the hope of checking the Popish element imported from Europe, gave for a time a certain respectability to the "Know-nothing" agitators. They lately extended their ramifications over greater part of the land, and, though momentarily checked, may ultimately recover their power by means of their secret

organization. Extensive orders of these men are yet in existence, united with all the secret confederacy of Ribbon or Orange clubs. That they will ultimately realize their views we cannot believe. Sooner than submit to helotage such as this, foreigners of every description—Irish, German, Scotch, English, French, Italians, etc.—would all unite, divided though they now are on innumerable points and equally divergent interests.

The main secret of the success and popularity of the democratic party in America is, that, notwithstanding its slavery peculiarities, it is hostile to this indiscriminate attack upon emigrants, and would, even in less than the prescribed period of five years, extend to them all the privileges of citizenship. This, consequently, ranges around it almost every European on his arrival; and, how much soever he may disapprove of some of its tenets, self-interest, and, we must add too, self-respect, induce him to continue standing by that party, which indeed insists on maintaining slavery amongst the blacks, but has never had the audacity to think of extending it to the whites. The Know-nothing faction is well aware of this, and hence its members have lately modified their policy. They no longer talk about their overwhelming numbers, and will probably shrink from a physical trial. But for this change of opinion, or at least of tactics, we should in all probability have witnessed, within a few years, one of the most ferocious and desolating civil wars the world has ever seen. Some parties still anticipate such a result, from the movement being in some degree artfully coupled with the late abolition proceedings. But, for our part, we look for no such issue. Five or six elections which we have seen in the United States convince us that, however Jonathan may hector and swagger during the heat of the canvas, he invariably sobers down when the struggle is over. On each of these occasions the constitution, he vowed, was to be destroyed at last; but it emerged from the conflict unscathed, notwithstanding all the previous bluster about "breaking it up."

The opposition to this obnoxious (Know-nothing) movement, on the day we first heard the question discussed in Congress, was taken up by an Irish member, or a member of Irish descent, Mr. Barry, from the banks of the Mississippi. It was easy to perceive, by the richness of his brogue, from what quarter of the world he originally sprang; but he advocated his views with really considerable force. The orator was a man seemingly well-to-do in the world, and he expressed himself with equal cordiality and feeling, though perhaps not much originality or address. And it was curious to witness the sort of man who rose to answer him—a Mr. Banks, from Boston, who had raised himself from a very humble position—working spinner—to be one of the most conspicuous leaders in his party or State. Contrary to all expectation, this man, the humbleness of whose origin would otherwise have entitled him to regard and respect, announced himself on the side of aristocracy and exclusivism. He did so with superior ability too—so much so, that we could not refrain from watching him a little more closely. And it may be well for the reader

to keep him in view, inasmuch as he has since been Governor of Massachusetts, and may yet prove a formidable candidate for the presidency of the entire Union. Mr. Banks, when we saw him, was seemingly between thirty-five and forty years of age, but so juvenile in appearance that he might have been taken for ten years younger. Small in stature, fair in complexion, with fiery red hair fiercely brushed up from a small but compact brow, (most of the Americans have small heads, but they boast that, unlike the Britishers, they have much in them,) he is evidently a vigorous man, loud, fluent, and well-informed in his talk, ready and sonorous with his voice, but insidious, sophistical, and unscrupulous. The speech was really powerful, though it had evidently been carefully prepared beforehand, and kept, we were told, for a month, ready for explosion. Still, one could not but admire the athleticism with which the little man entered the arena, and the acuteness with which he maintained the right of the Americans to act by secret movements and secret vote. The only matter of surprise was, that he was not arrested by the gigantic figure of Justice or Liberty, which frowned from above the president's chair in front of him, but on which he sedulously turned his back. Mr. Banks was subsequently Speaker of the Assembly, and is said in this capacity to have shown a remarkable power for controlling men.

The AMERICAN SENATE, which we next entered—for Banks's speech closed the interest of the day in the popular branch of the Legislature—is constructed on the same model as the House of Representatives, but on a much smaller scale. Only sixty or seventy members are present, two from each State in the Union. Its aspect is much more dignified, and its members in general look much more patrician, or at least obese. Here, a few years ago, might have been seen the stalwart figure of Daniel Webster, whose mind and body seemed to have been constructed on a scale equally gigantic, though he eventually destroyed his political influence by his fatal temporizing or tergiversation on the subject of slavery—bolting at once from abolitionism to steadfast support of the noxious institution, in the delusive hope of thus bounding to the Presidency. Here, too, you might then have seen the tall wiry frame of his great opponent, Henry Clay, who was in like manner balked of like expectations, though he might possibly have ultimately consoled himself by his popularity with the fairer portion of his fellow-citizens, whom we afterwards saw kissing him by the dozen. Here, too, was a large, heavy man, whose subsequent fate impressed us more than that of even Webster—General Rusk, of Texas—who amassed a colossal fortune during twenty years of savage adventure in the wilds of that territory, but was so singularly sentimental that he committed suicide on the death of his wife. Clayton, of the Delaware, was there too: possibly he may be a member still. But he was at this moment in his zenith, and, once a minister, was looking to the influence of the Know-nothing power for raising him to the Presidency. Pettit, from Indiana, succeeded him in a short twenty minutes' speech, though in this time he contrived to pour, or rather bubble forth, a

torrent of words almost incredible. Each of these gentlemen weighed on an average twenty stone, and seemed equally prepared for an argument or a game at fisticuffs. All of them spoke several times in the course of the debate, as well as General Cass and "Judge" Douglas, the "little giant," whom we have afterwards to mention.

The remainder of the senators were all what is usually termed well-conditioned men; not even excepting Broadhead, the Quaker member from Pennsylvania, who spoke that day, and in much more animated strains than our "friends" at home usually indulge in. Hunter, the representative of Virginia, was still more impulsive, though his matter was heavy as his corporeal aspect. All of these men exhibited, like most Americans, a wonderful plethora of words, though their ideas were assuredly by no means commensurate.

We subsequently revisited the Senate as well as the other House, however, and became a little better acquainted with some of the American notables.

The most conspicuous of these decidedly was General CASS—then a member of the Senate and now Chief Secretary of the United States—a brief sketch of whom may be interesting.

It was in the year 1836 that we first had the good fortune to see General Cass in Paris, where he was then ambassador. The General was at that time a fierce Anglo-phobias, and it doubtless required all Louis Philippe's unctuous influence to prevent him from then attacking England, and possibly swallowing, or at least "chewing" her up. Years, however, had now exerted their mellowing effect upon the once fiery republican; and the General, in reply to all overtures or addresses from disaffected Irishmen, as well as European republicans still more eager for a fight, now maintained a dignified moderation.

Cass commenced life in very humble circumstances; but this only entitles him to superior merit in the estimation of his countrymen—as it does in ours, and indeed ought to do everywhere. He was originally, we believe, a school-usher, and in this capacity emigrated to Michigan, now one of the thirty-three States which at present make up the American Union, but then almost a desert. The General, however, was a man of determined energy. He manfully set to work as a wood-cutter, to clear the territory, a great part of which he subsequently acquired; and we hold he is well entitled to its possession.

Cass, who is now nearer eighty than seventy years of age, soon became conspicuous for his hostility to the English in the war of 1812. A stout, stalwart, and active man, he then acquitted himself with much distinction. The only alloy to his fame, perhaps, was that he continued to evince undue hostility to the British after the struggle was over; but this was deemed a superior merit in the estimation of the greater part of his countrymen. Policy and calculation were possibly at the bottom of this course; for it immediately secured him public employment, and he has been in the Senate or in office almost uninterruptedly ever since. It were vain to deny that he is a man of considerable ability, much experience, and great address.

Strange as it may seem, the General is a dandy, still good-looking, and doubtless was a beau in his younger days. He still "makes up" remarkably well, though he is scarcely so agile as Palmerston. In his mind, however, he is slow and heavy. Age has told upon him, and he is now great only at a despatch or a protocol, in the concoction of which, so far as longitude and weight are concerned, he may be backed to beat our Premier hollow. Palmerston will groan when he sees the enormous state-paper which Cass has prepared upon the subject of the San Juan difficulty. Notwithstanding, we look upon the General as one of the ablest and most honest of the American statesmen.

LORD CLIVE.

On the 23rd of June, 1857—the centenary of the Battle of Plassey—a meeting was held in London to take steps for erecting a monument to Lord Clive. Great were the congratulations then heard, as to the mighty empire which had been consolidated during the century that had passed. Not many days after, the startling tidings came that the whole Bengal army was in revolt! But though the fabric of British power in India seemed to totter to its fall, not the less was the founder of that power worthy of monumental honour.

The statue of Clive was inaugurated on the 19th of January, at Shrewsbury. Among the notables assisting at the ceremony, were Earl Stanhope, (Lord Mahon,) Sir Charles Wood, and Colonel Herbert Edwardes, who made a speech worthy of the occasion.

"Some people," said Edwardes, "deprecate such memorials and call them hero-worship: in my judgment they are wrong. The giver of empires is, indeed, God; but God works through human means, and when he pleases to give empire to a people, he gives them a man like Clive, and, in honouring the instrument, we do but honour the Providence that yields it. Others there are who say they are quite willing to pay honour to a hero, provided that he be perfect, and that Clive was a man of imperfections; that they have read history, and know that his errors were as glaring as his services were great. They doubt if it be right to honour such a man. These objections I respect, though I think them hard, and leaning not only towards uncharity but ingratitude. Let us look along the ranks of our great patriots, or the defenders of our country by sea and land. I name no names, but ask you to review them in your memories, and say to whom should we have paid honour, to whom should we have given the public monument and the household niche, had we reserved our gratitude for a man without a flaw? The best of them could only have carved beneath his bust, 'I was a man!' If we, too, are men, let us honour what is good and great in our fellows, while we sorrow for their faults."

Here we catch the echo of Lord Macaulay's splendid essay, where he says: "Clive committed great faults; but his faults, when weighed against his merits, and viewed in connection with his temp-

tations, do not appear to us to deprive him of his right to an honourable place in the estimation of posterity."

From the same brilliant work of Macaulay we extract the account of the Battle of Plassey, and the summary of the character of Clive with which the essay concludes.



"The day broke, the day which was to decide the fate of India. At sunrise the army of the Nabob, pouring through many openings of the camp, began to move towards the grove where the English lay. Forty thousand infantry, armed with firelocks, pikes, swords, bows and arrows, covered the plain. They were accompanied by fifty pieces of ordnance of the largest size, each tugged by a long team of white oxen, and each pushed on from behind by an elephant. Some smaller guns, under the direction of a few French auxiliaries, were perhaps more formidable. The cavalry were fifteen thousand, drawn, not from the effeminate population of Bengal, but

from his income, which would compel us to be sordid and screwing in other expenses. We keep up no appearance, you observe; that makes it greatly easier to live comfortably for ourselves; for Richard says the most expensive item in housekeeping is 'our neighbours' eyes.'

"Everything that Richard says is right, I suppose?" laughed Mildred, as she rose to depart. "It is a pleasant delusion, little Agnes. Remember that you and your paragon husband are engaged to dine with me and mine to-morrow evening at seven. Come as early as you can, and we will have a chat."

Mr. Wardour would greatly have preferred one of the usual quiet evenings at home, but was sufficiently under wifely control to see the propriety of accepting the invitation. He acquiesced with a feigned groan.

"I hope it is not a company night."

"Oh no, only ourselves. Mildred and I want to have a talk; and you can settle your favourite topic of the currency with Mr. Ferrol. I suppose he understands it, being a banker."

Her husband stirred the fire thoughtfully. Certain rumours astir in the city—like dark mists creeping silently about over marshy grounds, but skulking from daylight—occurred to him disagreeably.

"A letter from my mother," Agnes said, a minute after the postman's knock was heard. But until the king-baby took his departure, it could not be read: he was a little monopolist, and would admit no sharer of public notice with himself. Agnes's soft laughter by-and-by attracted Mr. Wardour's attention from the review which he was reading.

"What's the matter, dear?"

"Only an idea of mine," she answered, composing her face. "A foolish thought that struck me. Mama writes a pleasant letter; she speaks a good deal of that Major Currie, who seems a constant visitor at Aunt Loftus's."

"Oh, the old East Indian? I wonder whether it is Honoria or Bidelia he fancies?" Mr. Wardour remarked, thinking himself extremely penetrating.

"Neither, you foolish man. But do you know an idea *did* occur to me." Agnes laughed and blushed again; the obtuse Richard still comprehended not till she told him that, for a wise and learned head like his, he was wonderfully dull.

"Oh—your mother! Nonsense! impossible!" Agnes, having the woman's art of vaulting over mental obstacles, soon demonstrated that the circumstance was hardly unlikely, much less impossible. "You know that mama is not well off, and this old gentleman has, she says, a reasonably good income; and as to him—you remember what a fine woman she is, even yet, and her manners are most engaging."

Mr. Wardour had his own opinion respecting other qualities of the Ferrol *mère*, as calculated to make Major Currie happy, but held his peace.

"From the whole tone of her letter I should say it was intended as a preparative to some further communication;" and she read it for him.

"Is that all?" he said, rather despairingly; "love, you are a very wise little woman if you are able to discover lurking matrimony in that."

"Wait," she replied, holding up her finger; "wait a few posts more. I understand these matters better than you, though you are such a dear clever man;" and the review, with copious extracts, of an important new statistical work, which Mr. Wardour would persist in reading aloud, was, we fear, little heard by her during the rest of the evening; for a series of abstracted smiles passed over her countenance, which certainly could not be attributed to either that learned production or to the stocking she was mending.

A DAY IN CONGRESS;

WITH SKETCHES OF AMERICAN NOTABLES.

[Continued from page 153.]

A VERY different man, both in aspect and in manner, was the present American foreign secretary's predecessor, Governor MARCY. While Cass is eminently suave and courteous, though somewhat stately and pompous in his address—and, as we have already remarked, still an old beau in his attire—Marcy was a sloven in his appearance, and a pig, or at best a bear, in his demeanour. Quite as tall as the other, you could never have surmised his vast height from the crouching way in which he sat on a low chair before you, and, with his huge limbs somehow marvellously stowed away beneath his writing-table, when they were not elevated upon its top, scowled up on you with savage and glaring eye-balls, glowering from a face which seemed a stranger to soap, and through huge shaggy eye-lashes which, equally with the rough-looking mass of hair that surmounted them, appeared never to have known of the existence of either brush or comb. Yet Marcy was perhaps a man of greater depth of mind than Cass, and he had the merit of being faithful to the British alliance, as well as of being professedly an admirer of the British system of government. But he apparently had been crossed somehow or other in his love for man, in early life, and it was only the most objectionable parts of our constitution that he was accustomed to extol. A repulsive cynic, one would almost have fancied that he was sardonical when he expressed his regret that he could not introduce into America the aristocratic system of government, with all its vices, and that the influence of wealth and position could not be brought to bear in the United States with the same efficiency as in England. It is difficult to imagine any native of the Republic, even in its present days of comparative degeneracy, sincerely entertaining such opinions; yet Marcy was in the habit of broaching such sentiments to strangers as well as his intimates. Equally despotie in carrying them out, it may readily be conceived in what unpopularity he involved the presidency of General Franklin Pierce, a really well-intentioned and good-natured man, who, by one of those odd selections frequently made on the other side of the Atlantic, had suddenly been chosen from the humble position of a second-rate attorney in a third or fourth-rate

town, to fill one of the highest magisterial seats in the world. Little wonder, then, that poor Pierce—"Frank," as he was one time fondly termed—was sacrificed by him. With an eye possibly on the succession himself, the whole aim of the secretary seemed to be to involve his chief in obloquy, so as to prevent him from appearing as a candidate for re-election. He failed in his aim, however, for he was himself struck down by the hand of death without in the slightest degree attaining his object, shortly after Pierce's downfall; but in the meantime he had by his brutality, violence, and ferocity, succeeded in accomplishing the barbarous destruction of Greytown, and by his repulsive cynicism had divested his principal of every vestige of popularity, as well as secured for his administration that character for vacillation, incompetence, and impotency, which, even in the estimation of the most charitable judges, rendered it the opprobrium of American annals.

Still more dissimilar from the notables already named is "Judge" DOUGLAS, as he is termed—for every American, from the rank of a barber and a bar-keeper upwards, has a handle to his name. The Judge is also frequently termed "the little giant," in consequence at once of his bodily configuration and his mental power. Scarcely five feet in height, he seems to be all head, chest, and arms, his legs being somewhat on the attenuated scale of our noted dwarf, Harvey Leech, the "Gnome Fly," or "What is it?" whom he closely resembles. And as Harvey was potent in appearance when he sat in his gig, and was potential also with his arms when so elevated—for we remember him fined at Guildhall for horsewhipping a huge farmer on Ludgate Hill—so Douglas looks remarkably well when sitting chewing on his chair, and on rising is equally terrible with his tongue. The vituperative powers of the Judge almost surpass belief, and would be offensive were they not constantly interlarded with allusions to his origin and early career—that of a journeyman cabinet-maker—and his consequently acquired ability for overturning all sorts of cabinets, and undertaking all sorts of cabinet work. These allusions would provoke a smile from us, but they are not without their efficacy with the great majority of the American people, who carry to excess this passion for men who have risen from the ranks. The Judge, however, possesses intellectual abilities which should render him superior to such clap-trap; and he might be a formidable candidate for the presidency, to which he now aspires, were it not for the anomalous position he at present holds on the subject of slavery—being an Abolitionist, he declares, on principle, while he persists in holding slaves by reason of some "right" which he says he acquired from a former wife. We have said "former wife," for, notwithstanding his by no means prepossessing personal appearance, and abominable habits of tobacco-squirting, which he carries to a greater excess than any other man we ever saw in the Union, he has lately—such is now the frenzy of American fine ladies for office as well as fashion—been married to one of the loftiest belles in Washington; reversing the remark which was made concerning the late Sir Walter

Scott (son of the great Sir Walter) and his wife, in Dublin—

"He looks just like a mile in height,
And she like a mile-stone."

A great man made his appearance in Congress while we were there—Mr. WILLIAM B. ASTOR, of New York, son of the founder of the Astor Hotel and Astor Library in that city. As he inherited a fortune of upwards of twenty millions of dollars, (£4,000,000 sterling,) which is supposed to have since been almost doubled by saving and successful investment, great was the excitement caused among the members by his arrival, it being surmised that, having some bill or legislative object in view, he intended buying up the whole of them. The careful son, however, of a prudent sire set out without even nibbling at a stray member in financial difficulties, being possibly terrified by the astounding price demanded by the gentlemen of the Lobby.

This system of "Lobbying," as it is termed, is the great blot upon American legislature. It is neither more nor less than a foul institution of corruption. Members do not take bribes openly, as they did with us in the days of Walpole, or in the shape of shares and fancy prices for surrendered pieces of land, as in more recent railway proceedings; but through the medium of a friend, generally a member of the press, they receive a certain sum for carrying a certain measure through; the interests of these journalists, who at the same time contract to puff the scheme in their respective papers, being thus enlisted in the custom, there is no probability of its speedy or eventual termination. And the worst of it is that, even when these worthies are paid, there is no reliance to be placed upon them. One of the most noted of them, editor to a well-known New York paper, actually walked off, a year or two ago, with a 1000 dollar bill in his pocket, declaring that his conscience would not allow him to complete the unrighteous compact; like one of his compeers, a rigid Abolitionist, who, having had some slaves bequeathed to him, instantly sold them in the nearest market, being determined, he said, to get rid of the unholy thing.

Returning from this digression, we next notice a far different man, and far more entitled to our respect. He is occasionally to be seen in the streets of Washington, though rarely within the purlieus of the legislative halls. We allude to General SCOTT, a veritable General, (no mere militia or self-dubbed man,) who has recently so entitled himself to British regard for his admirable conduct at San Juan. The hero of Acapulco, we believe, or some successful engagement in the Mexican war, he looks every inch a soldier; and from his tall figure—upwards of six feet four—it may be imagined his inches are not few. Straight as a cypress, and sturdy as an oak, with large massive features, stout and Roman nose, eyes keen though tranquil as an eagle's in repose, a stern cast of countenance and yet a singular expression of mildness, General Scott is the very *beau idéal* of a soldier, possessing much of that calm devotedness which was found in Washington, and that disinterested sense of duty which we ascribed to Wellington. Like Bugeaud, too, a man

of kindred spirit, though a fierce *sabreur*, whom we have seen and admired on the field of battle, the General bears in mind the weaknesses and the passions of men: he is one of those who, if elected to the presidency, as we think and hope he will be, will teach his countrymen how well it becomes majorities to observe moderation.

But, in passing, we must pay a slight tribute of regard, due also to truth, to the character of the officer whom he was lately appointed to supersede. We had the pleasure of seeing General HARNEY but once—a tall, stout, stern, tranquil man—but we believe he is wholly incapable of the negro or woman-flogging imputations lately attributed to his charge by the ultra-abolitionist portion of the New York press. An Irishman by descent, if not by birth, and perhaps imbued with a deep sense of his country's real or imaginary wrongs, he possibly, in his recent descent on San Juan, showed an undue disposition to assert his native or adopted country's rights, and to involve it in hostilities with England. But we believe that he acted in a sense of honour; and, now that he is defeated, or at least recalled in humiliation, we gladly acknowledge this the more, and defend him from the flagitious portion of his countrymen, inasmuch as a good cause requires not, and a bad is not improved by, calumny.

Few notables are to be found connected with the lower or popular branch of the American Legislature; for the electors of the United States, with more foresight or forecast than we in Europe usually give them credit for possessing, generally send their rising young men to the Chamber of Representatives first, and transfer them to the Senate so soon as they have evinced a due efficiency, and are eligible in point of age. With the exception, perhaps, of the Mr. Banks to whom we have already alluded, and Mr. JOHN COCHRANE, one of the representatives of New York city, who exhibits considerable powers as a fluent speaker and a very unusual (with his countrymen) knowledge of history—especially in so far as relates to our Commonwealth—no more promising speaker has presented himself in recent years than Mr. DANIEL E. SICKLES, who has recently, as a criminal, excited such an extraordinary degree of public attention both in the old world and the new. We are unwilling to introduce such an individual into our pages; but Mr. Sickles is a good representative of the more "rowdy," unscrupulous, or "fast" order of American politicians. The son of a working printer, and originally an apprentice in that branch of industry himself, he at first attracted attention by one of those acts which in this country would be deemed wholly objectionable. Having, with his father, suddenly exchanged his original handicraft for the law, in conformity with one of those strange mutations so common in American life, Mr. Sickles first distinguished himself by breaking into the post-office of New York, and carrying off the whole of the balloting papers of an opposite faction, on the eve of voting. His political adversaries were thus defeated, and in return he was rewarded with a wealthy civic office for an action which, with us, would have consigned him to the hulks. Trained, as we should imagine, thus to vice—for his father

avowedly reared him with a view to "smartness," according to the American phrase, or, as we should term it, villainy—Mr. Sickles soon rose into higher offices by similar achievements; the secretaryship of the London embassy first, next a senatorship of the state of New York, and eventually one of the district seats of that city in Congress. All these advantages have unhappily been spoilt by his own bad conduct, of which the act for which he was tried was but an incidental consequence. It remains to be seen how far political cleverness will in his case compensate for the want of moral character in the public opinion of America.

Before this untoward catastrophe, there was no office to which he might not have aspired. In the opinion of his father, and also in that of others more capable of impartiality, he was "booked" for the embassy to France or England first, and the presidency of his native country within a few years.

A great opponent of Mr. Sickles was JOHN VAN BUREN—"Rosy John," as he is sometimes termed, in consequence of his jolly hue; or "Prince John," a title said to be given in consequence of having one evening, during his father's presidency of the United States, danced with Her Majesty, shortly after her accession, at the court of St. James's.

But one of the most conspicuous amongst all the notables of America is MARSHAL or CAPTAIN RYNDERS, the great Warwick, or president-maker of the United States. When our eyes first lighted on the Captain, he had shouldered his rifle for the purpose of waylaying Mr. George Thomson on his anticipated arrival from Boston as an Abolitionist, and shooting him at the railway terminus ere he commenced the somewhat hopeless task of converting the citizens of New York to a sense of equity. The gallant Captain, however, has since become as sound upon this topic as ourselves, and we have no doubt that, in so far as depends on him, his big gun (a brass six-pounder, which at present sorely afflicts the inhabitants of that city) will ultimately sound the doom of slavery in America. A few years later, however, we had the felicity of making the Captain's acquaintance under circumstances the most agreeable, and we must affirm that we found the Marshal (as he then was) a strictly honourable man.

We cannot, notwithstanding, admire the gallant officer's style of oratory, though it is highly esteemed in New York, and he is considered one of the most formidable "stump-orators" in the Union. In his style of speaking, the Marshal is digressive as the Italian poet Ariosto himself; making it a point of honour to answer every interruption, and never resting satisfied until he has struck down every opponent. It may easily be imagined how wide a range the Captain's orations are thus apt to take; and, sooth to say, a noted "big stick" which he carries, and the brawny arms of a club, named the Empire, of which he is the head, are frequently brought into play in the course of an evening's eloquence at Tammany Hall, the democratic head-quarters in New York, or the "Pewter Mug," an elegant hostelry to which the civic Ciceros afterwards adjourn. But the Captain, on the whole, is a useful member of society, though

the sound of that gun—discharged on an average once a week, (100 rounds on each occasion,) in commemoration of some democratic triumph—still rings in our ears. The Christian name of our mild and meek friend is Isaiah.

We don't think he will himself ever be president, but he may yet live to elect many such chief magistrates of the model republic as the present Mr. BUCHANAN, who, we believe, was chiefly indebted to the Captain—his big stick, his bigger gun, and, above all, the Empire Club, who got up on the occasion the most astounding nocturnal procession ever witnessed—for his nomination. It is astonishing, we may add, *en passant*, how fond the Americans are becoming of imperial titles. They have an Empire Club—that already mentioned—an "Empire City," (New York,) and an "Empire State," the State of that name. We shall not be surprised to learn that some morning the Captain awakes to be saluted as an emperor himself.

Whilst we are writing these recollections of the Congress and of American notables, we read in the "New York Herald" the following description of a "scene" in the House of Representatives, on the 20th of January this year, the House having previously spent many weeks in vainly attempting to get to business by the election of a Speaker:—

"The proceedings to-day were characterized by language of the most vulgar Billingsgate, by appeals to the wildest passions, by propositions and denunciations unparliamentary, discourteous, and disgraceful. The galleries are daily appealed to in general terms by inflammatory arguments, and often in language direct. So loosely was the business of the House conducted, that the members themselves presented more the appearance of a disorganized mob in a low pot-house than that of a great deliberative body; and, under the impulsive retort of a member from Arkansas to the remark of a member from New York, the galleries, from the example set them by the members, caught up the fever of disorder, and broke out into the loudest cheers. The clerk appealed to the people in the galleries to preserve order, rebuking the House at the same time for setting the example. Unless those who profess to represent the people can give better evidence that they are capable of governing themselves than they have done thus far, they had better not attempt to govern others. A few more weeks of such bear-garden scenes as have been witnessed at the national Capitol will be sufficient cause for the people to rise, and, with a Cromwell at their head, drive the present disorganizers from the Capitol. The House is really no nearer an election than it was weeks ago."

RAG FAIR.

"You seem much interested with your book, Harry," said Arthur Ellis to his friend Thompson, as, one summer morning, he entered his chambers in the Temple. "What is the absorbing subject of your author's lucubrations?"

"Well, I am reading at this moment," replied Harry, "a strange chapter in a volume called

'Mildred Norman,' which I picked up at a book-stall yesterday. The writer is an artizan, and though he has not much artistic skill in making a book, he seems to have seen many scenes of which professed book-makers could make good literary capital. Will you hear his description of Rag Fair?"

"Go on," said Arthur; "I have often heard of Rag Fair, but haven't the slightest idea what it is or where it is."

A stranger, on a Sunday morning, is in company with a superintendent of police, in this scene of the story.

"They turned up a broad paved court from Houndsditch, paid a halfpenny each to a man in a sentry box, at an iron gate, and stood within the Exchange mentioned.

"It was an almost indescribable scene. There were Jews, male and female, young, middle-aged, and very old, taking part with so-called Christians in buying and selling, each adding a share to make up a clamour that was perfectly deafening. There were oaths resounding on every side, the utterers calling on the God of heaven to witness to the truth of what they themselves knew perfectly well were lies, their hearers knowing it at the same time. There were clothes of every shape and colour for men, women, and children, from the almost unsoiled coat of the west-end exquisite, to the unmentionables patched up with green baize, for which sixpence might be named as the uttermost value. There was upper and under-clothing for women and children, in large sacks with their wide mouths open, and large piles upon the damp and dirty ground. Over these, worn women with pale faces, and eyes which spoke of pinching want, bargained eagerly; while men, and boys whose greatest ambition was to be thought men, looked with keen and cunning glances for what might suit them. All sorts of expression in the human face was to be seen in that confined space. The bright and yet but half-corrupted boy, who was thus paying his first stolen visit in company with the more experienced and colder-featured lad at his side, was half timidly glancing round, almost lost in wonder at the scene. The *very* young man, whose resplendent waistcoat was to be the envy of the 'Judge and Jury Club' some evening, where he was to be defendant in some slashing case, was there to purchase the waistcoat then. The older young man, whose blotched face and swollen features told too plainly a heart-sickening tale of dissipation, was there for a bargain of a coat to be sported along City Road, a cigar, and blue glass-headed stick. Plain mechanics were there, many of them unwashed since the labour of the week was ended. Thieves, known to half the police of London, were exhibiting for sale goods well understood to have been stolen. Dealers in second-hand clothes from all parts of London had agents there, with keen eyes and hands, for bargains on behalf of their employers. All these, and many a score of other types of character, were seen and noted by Edward and his friend as they passed round and out of the Exchange.

"They emerged into 'the Lane' (Petticoat Lane), where matters were tenfold worse, in the very sight