Basic Detail Report

SUPPLEMENT, AUGUST 31, 1872.] HARPER'S WEEKLY. 683

CHAPTER X.

IN THE SEASON.

NHEED, a good—a thorough—day in the Season means hard work. The early canter, when the pale emerald glories of the spring foliage and the misty blue of the sky make a cool, invigorating morning, dispers the weariest for breakfast, the morning papers, and the inevitable pile of letters.

How shall we spend the morning? My fellow-pilgrim declares for the Park again; for a lazy cigar, and a study of Fashion in the Ladies' Mile, where, he says, we can get over the fatigues of yesterday.

"This is London: this, and the East End."

The high-bred, delicate, rose-tinted beauty of women and children; the courage and comeliness of the commons; the calm, solid air of their excellency; the perfect houses; the severe simplicity and perfect appointments of the dwellings around Mayfair; the grand air of the Park—high, grassy glade which is open all the year—are strange to the mind of the habitur of the Bois de Boulogne under the Second Empire. He returns to the Park again and again; is never tired of the stateliness of Kensington Gardens, with the rosy children, haughty dames, and demure nurses under the noble trees; and will have his afternoon tea along the Ladies' Mile, let his companions say what they may.

"Let us have an hour in the Royal Academy before lunch; we shall see some types of true British beauty," is the second suggestion of the day. "As many as I saw last night at Holland House." So it is. And here, in their morning freshness, we find troops of the partners of last evening. Perhaps they look at their best in their early toilets, and with their homelier expression. We drop in at Christie's, and find other types: the old connoisseurs, political celebrities, dowagers of severe features pronouncing loudly on china, a bishop or two, and artists and critics, and reporters and petters.

Indeed, Christie's has become a fashionable London institution, in which, when the repository of the rarest and most exquisite objects of art, they may see, in a few moments, all that is brilliant and distinguished in English society.

The Thatched House—more hospitable than their high mightinesses of Pall Mall—gives you a good luncheon. The pilgrim tires of Verey's, and the Burlington, and the Pall Mall; even of the St. James's when under the dainty care of Francatelli. After an hour in the venerable Abbey, filled with a splendid wedding-party, lunch, a little laziness, and a little letter-writing, bring us to the hour for calls: to a fusty house; to a garden-party; to a talk and tea in the Temple; to a stroll along the Thames, which the old Lollard's Tower is packed with laughing girls; to Fulham and the green banks of our beloved river, with old Putney Church and the quaint wooden bridge for background; or to a dancing, flirting, or argumentative tea!

And the day is far away still from its close!

We are at the point of the great solemnity of the day—dinner. Dinner, encompassed with ancient and modern circumstance, as when the Goldsmiths of London dine—or light and lively, as at Greenwich or Richmond.

In England it is an institution—whether

"Bishop's copes,
To crown thy open table, doth provide
The purpled pheasant with the speckled side—"

or the plainest fare be your fate. We are told that the celebrated Mrs. Howard (Lady Suffolk) sold her own beautiful tresses to enable her husband, then in very narrow circumstances, to give "a dinner of state" to the Prince of Wales. Lady Jane Grey, wife of Lord Hardwicke, wife of the Lord Chancellor! That "uncertain as was the time of the Lord Chancellor's dining, and the company that would attend him, yet if it should happen that he brought with him an embassador, a person of the highest rank, he was forced a dinner or a supper to be ashamed of." A great American authority writes: "In all fashionable life, whether in London, Paris, Madrid, Vienna, Washington, or New York, this meal is the one above all others to which is invited the distinguished stranger or the beloved friend. To this meal are invited nobles, knights and squires, lawyers and priests, have each and all attached a high importance. 'How shall we dine to-day?' is the first thought in every rank of life in every room, beings every where." It is not the meal at which people eat, but at which they criticise, eating and talk the day over. Mr. Thackeray's gastronomic experience at the Duchess of Sutherland's: "At lunch every thing is placed upon the table at once, and ladies sit down without removing their hats." It is true they eat—as we ate some hours ago at the club.

But this is not my fellow-pilgrim's habit; and he is carrying a robust appetite whither we are bound—to a "man's dinner" of notable political leaders—at Greenwich.

A few shades of opinion meet at a handsome table for a quiet, over-elaborated dinner. Mostly they are Liberals, of course. A few Radical outsiders, too powerful not to be asked, drop conversation, as ladies. The Beauchamp Tower Radical is agreed that during the sitting of Parliament no man (man meaning male) a member of the House of Commons) should live further away from St. Stephen's than Richmond. Parkyns does, it is true; but then Parkyns has a good night's rest in the cabins before he goes home. "Yes, he and Macpherson, who regularly turns in, and curls himself up." Macpherson represents a State Department in the Cabinet.

Will the dining be improved? Between four and six you can dine well; after that you meet wait late. Dining-room—a horrible place; but no hope of altering it now. Not a crumb to be had; nor a glass of sherry without paying for it. A secretary to a Minister of State must pay for his sandwiches, and no credit. Lowe keeps a vigilant eye upon the sandwich-boxes. One of the Radicals observes that he is glad to see property and order making their

THE GOLDSMITHS AT DINNER.

THE WEST END DOG-FANCIER.

A WEDDING AT THE ABBEY.

THE FLY-PAPER MERCHANT.

No title, from "London: A Pilgrimage"

Date

August 31, 1872

Primary Maker

Gustave Doré

Medium

Electrotype from wood engraving and text

Dimensions

Sheet: 15 1/2 × 11 in. (39.4 × 27.9 cm) Image (a): 3 3/4 × 2 1/8 in. (9.5 × 5.4 cm) Image (b): 4 7/8 × 3 5/8 in. (12.4 × 9.2 cm) Image (c): 4 1/4 × 2 5/8 in. (10.8 × 6.7 cm) Image (d): 8 × 3 9/16 in. (20.3 × 9 cm) Image (e): 4 7/8 × 2 1/4 in. (12.4 × 5.7 cm)

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