

## A CANADIAN ANGLLO-MANIAC.

## An Able Defense of the Individual Briton and His Idiosyncrasies.

BRANTFORD, Ont., Aug. 27.—I am very glad my nativity privileges me to admire what is admirable in the English people without losing my self-respect. It is a very comfortable reflection that we Canadians are under no bonds to our national vanity to establish an identity separate and distinct from our transatlantic relations and bearing a well-defined stamp of superiority. We have one, of course, and so, no doubt, have the Australians; but, as features are notably apt to differ in a family, nobody finds it necessary to assert his own particular nose as typically excellent. Our gratitude for this irrefragable proof of our superiority is increased tenfold when we observe the laudably frantic efforts of the great American nation to disentangle its individuality from everybody else's and to disclaim all admiration for other civilizations as inconsistent with the spirit of true independence. Especially is any recognition of the modest merits of the English promptly extinguished by the American press.

No more vigorous sanitary regulations against the cholera could be recommended than it would enforce against the dread disease it calls Anglo-mania. Most of us will have among the rest of our unpleasant sensations, when the Asiatic scourge does come, a feeling of positive personal responsibility to the public press for our own particular attack, after the frequency of its warnings, the impressiveness of its telegrams, the candor with which it pointed out our special liability to the disease in persistently throwing the dish-water into the back yard. The remorse of the conscientious American just home from the grand tour, upon finding himself down with Anglo-mania and the prospect of the whole family taking it, may be faintly imagined by the assistance of this illustration.

It would be interesting to know what the British aristocrat, the imperturbable object of most of the unamiability that attacks his country, has done to be thus boycotted in the affections of the American nation. We who are privileged occasionally to touch the hem of his garment and to pass an elaborate criticism upon his wife's whole wardrobe find him an exceedingly inoffensive person indeed, with a surprising fund of common sense and particularly good manners. He is, conversationally, a little dull perhaps, and he may never have heard of Thanatopsis, but he is very unpretentious, and if he does embellish his remarks with an occasional "aw" it doesn't come through his nose, and really means nothing personal or aggressive. Prominent among his characteristics appears a fondness for protoplasmic cheese, not an endearing trait, but hardly objectionable enough to bring upon its unlucky possessor the concentrated hatred of several millions of people not in the habit of dining with him, and, curiously enough, it is only in the abstract that you abuse him. Theoretically well-regulated Americans hate a lord, and in print. Practically they dine him and wine him and even occasionally marry him. Verily, you are a peculiar people, and your ways are past finding out.

A good deal of compassionate compliment has been lavished lately upon one Lady Granville Gordon, who has afforded a spectacle for gods, Americans and ordinary people by sublimely disregarding the traditions of caste and emblazoning her coat-of-arms upon a sign, which is to say that this "daughter of"—possibly—"a hundred earls" has descended from her high estate and opened a bonnet shop. Much credit has also been bestowed upon a certain family of Vane Tempests who have permitted their ancient name to be superscribed upon London coal carts, and have even drawn public attention to it in local advertising columns. And there is more rejoicing over these two aristocratic sinners that have repented the luxurious ways of their forefathers than over a whole nation that has walked peacefully in the paths of commerce all its days. It is an unmistakable indication of the sapient ones that an arrogant nobility is beginning to recognize the inherent dignity of trade to clothe itself with humility as with a mantle, to take more than an ablutionary interest in soap, to long to add to its hereditary privilege "License to sell wine, beer and spiritous liquors," with or without a grocery attached. We are a cheerfully optimistic people, and our little delusions are beguiling. It is greatly to be feared that these aristocratic bonnet-trimmers and coal dealers have not taken the commercial departure from a sense of its glorious possibilities of reducing class distinctions, but from a stern virtue known as necessity. If Lady Gordon's lily fingers could have won her a livelihood in any way more acceptable to society—by painting on china, for instance, or thrumming the piano at private musicales—be sure that London might go hatless and unbanned forever before the dame in question would adjust so much as a feather, and we may be equally certain that Vane Tempest is not a coal merchant by preference. As to commiserating these noble tradesfolk, when the coal mines give out and her ladyship's bonnets prove unsalable it will be time to do that. So long as they are prosperous it is simply ridiculous to pity them for choosing poverty's only honorable alternative—work. Among the recorded impressions of an Englishman returned from Canada and the United States, given to the public in a prominent London paper, I find much that is flattering to my self-esteem as a *Canadienne*. We are complimented *en masse* upon our common sense and various other matters, but we are informed that we want tone. This impalpable and elusive quality we are recommended to import in the persons of a number of cultivated Englishwomen, who, set down in our midst, are to diffuse enough sweetness and light and dignity and decorum to make the experiment pay. They could hardly be expected to undertake it in a missionary spirit, and it is not quite in the nature of a private enterprise, so I suppose an indulgent government must be induced to look after the financial part of it, while its mothers and daughters sit at the square-toed feet of the fair apostles and absorb the correct thing for all occasions. The importation referred to, the writer avers, would be at once a "benefit to Canada and a relief to England." The apparent inconsistency of this statement strikes a note of alarm in our otherwise acquiescent breast. It suggests that the cultured characteristics of these ladies may be counterbalanced by qualities less desirable to become acquainted with. The "relief" of England! The proposed deputation must be made up of decayed gentlewomen, given to tea and marmalade, and living upon their relations; much starch in their cuffs and conversation, a chronic habit of disapproval, temper uncertain, architectural caps, ritualistic tendencies, possible "goloshes!" In that case, thanks, we prefer to leave our civilization to the mellowing influences of time. We are quite convinced of being "new," barbarously, intolerably new. Our customs glare like our white brick houses, and the fact of their being clean and well ventilated shrinks into insignificance beside their appalling crudity. But we are doing very well and are already several degrees removed from the aborigines. In some places we have assimilated the chaperone to the last degree, and it is rapidly becoming unfashionable to flirt until after one is married. On the whole, the simplicity of our social relations is going fast enough. If they would teach us how to talk, though, these old maids, I wish they would come. I don't mean what to say, for we are not lacking in ideas; nor do I presume to criticize my nation's syntax, or pronunciation, or the strictly vocal quality of our talking. I mean that it is not notable for appropriateness or gracefulness. We have a great and unwarrantable contempt for small talk, and our fashion of exchanging ordinary remarks is decidedly brusque. We do not elaborate enough or smile enough, and we are at absolutely no pains to throw around our common discourse that halo of vivacious interest that goes far toward helping a bore to feel himself intellectual; and we are all in need of this service sometimes. We can be emphatic but not *empresses*, a distinction with all the difference of a blow and a caress. There is a charm, a lightness of touch, a delicate discrimination,

a flattering devotion of interest and inquiry, an indefinably delightful quality that is subtly stimulative to one's own eloquence that we have all experienced, chiefly in foreigners. It isn't a national characteristic. If the English antiques can impart it with the odor of their gentility we will consider the delegation a blessing in a disguise of alpaca and welcome it accordingly.

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