

... May accepted it, much to his private delight, and Ernest's mortification. Colonel Seaburne offered his arm with great gallantry to Ernest, with the view of restoring the good humour and harmony of the party. And away they all marched together.

"I would give a trifle to know why you are staring so sternly at that sucking pig," cried Colonel Seaburne, as he saw Captain De Lisle surveying the dish before him with considerable ferocity; "has it ever injured you?"

Ernest was compelled to reciprocate the Colonel's laugh at this humorous sally. Captain Villiers smiled sarcastically, and was more lavish than ever in his attentions to the thoughtful May, whose apparently gracious acknowledgments of them, induced Villiers to believe that they were highly acceptable to her, and gave some pleasing finishing strokes to a variety of airy castles, in the erection of which his imagination had for some weeks past been industriously engaged.

"Upon my life," exclaimed Colonel Seaburne when the cloth had been withdrawn, and May had retired, "this is about one of the grimmest dinner parties it was ever my misfortune to preside over. Am I to monopolise the whole of the conversation, or will one of you be good enough to say something?"

"In compliance with your kind permission to speak, sir," said Captain Villiers, rising, "I shall beg to be allowed to withdraw myself; and by so doing, afford my excellent friend Captain De Lisle, an opportunity of resuscitating those brilliant conversational powers, the use of which, it pains me to observe, my presence has for a time, been the unfortunate means of depriving him. He will doubtless shortly make known to you the cause of the embarrassment under which he is now labouring, and render you a satisfactory explanation why—though I have a high appreciation of the charms of your society, as well as that of your daughter—I am induced to decline the pleasure and distinction of his further acquaintance."

"Eh, what is this?" cried Colonel Seaburne, now rising also; "Ernest, boy, speak!"

"What little I have to say in reply, I would rather be spoken while Captain Villiers is with us, as it very intimately concerns himself," replied De Lisle with calmness.

"Come, come, I comprehend the whole matter now," said Colonel Seaburne, cheerfully resuming his seat; "how stupid of me to be sure. I have heard the story, and laughed at it. The fact is Ernest, you were rather particular in your attentions to some very pretty damsel last night; and the thing having got wind, has created a harmless little bit of scandal at your expense—come, such things will happen. Pass the wine—it was what we may term a lapsus lingua, eh?" and Colonel Seaburne poked Ernest in the side with his forefinger, and throwing his portly figure back in his chair, chuckled himself nearly black in the face.

"And would you receive at your table then, sir, and into the society of your daughter, the man who spends his midnight in such a manner?"

"No boy, no," replied the colonel, growing supernaturally solemn all at once, and putting down his glass with a trembling hand. "You set the thing before me in a different light. You always get the better of me in an argument; how is it?"

"Simply because, my good friend and father," replied Ernest, gazing affectionately at the old man, "you generally contrive to be upon the wrong side of the argument, and I upon the right one."

"I am sure of it," replied the colonel; "I know it. I have often thought so. Sit down, boy. Villiers, be seated. De Lisle is right, and you must have been mistaken."

"Am I to believe the evidence of my own eyes and ears, sir?" exclaimed Captain Villiers, with apparently honest warmth. "Do not grant such ready credence to this impostor. I will ask Captain De Lisle one question, and let him answer it."

"With all my heart," replied Ernest.

"Pray, sir, who was the virtuous and esteemed young lady that I saw leaning upon your arm, and in whose company you entered a certain house last night, in the Rue St. Gabriel?"

"The unfortunate and unhappy Therese Lamontagne, the innocent victim of your heartiness and treachery."

"After a vain effort to speak, Captain Villiers turned deadly pale, and sunk helplessly back in his chair."

"Therese Lamontagne," continued Ernest De Lisle, "whom you, under the sacred promise of making your wife, seduced from the path of purity and peace, and have now cast dishonoured and penniless upon the charity of a censorious world; and whom I providentially chanced to encounter in the streets late last evening, in time to snatch from the brink of the precipice down which the misery and hopelessness of her state had nearly plunged her. Rise to your feet sir, now, and tax me with hypocrisy or falsehood if you dare."

The countenance of Colonel Seaburne assumed a severer expression than it had hitherto done; his eye fell upon that of Captain Villiers, and his finger pointed to the door.

"Captain De Lisle," said Villiers, "a friend of mine will vouch for you shortly. Colonel Seaburne, have I your permission to retire?"

"Yes, sir," responded Colonel Seaburne, seizing the bell, "and never to return." Then, as the door closed upon the retreating figure of Captain Villiers, he continued, "Ernest, my boy, I have wronged you. Forgive me. You are about to be called out, and will want a friend. You shall not lack one while I live."

"I believe, in case of need, I am already provided with one," said De Lisle.

"I meant to imply sir," that I should go out

with you myself," replied Seaburne. He is a dead shot."

"You go with me," cried Ernest with a stare; impossible! nay, the idea is positively ludicrous!"

"I have said that I shall attend you," returned Colonel Seaburne, "and will keep my word. But the hour is growing late, and doubtless some sanguinary hero will be anxiously awaiting you at your room. The moment the usual preliminaries—which, for a reason, mark you, you must yourself arrange—have been adjusted, advise me of the time and place. Now go."

Ernest arose and left the room.

"May," reflected De Lisle with a sigh, "is yet in ignorance of the truth, and believes me the impostor Villiers has painted me. I must not see her, and yet, at such a moment, I am loath to leave her, without one kind word in exchange for the affection and attachment of years." As he paused, in hesitation how to act, he heard a light step behind him, and, turning round, May herself, with dishevelled tresses and eyes filled with tears, fell into his arms.

"Stay, I beseech, implore you!" cried the terrified and weeping girl, clasping her hands, and gazing wildly up into the face of her lover. "I have heard all, and know you to be innocent. How could I ever have believed you otherwise, dear Ernest? My maid caught the tones of angry voices, and rushed down, fearing something had happened. She has acquainted me with what passed, and saw Villiers hasten away vowing deadly vengeance on you. You will not meet that perfidious man, —you who have so often denounced the hideous practice of duelling. You will avoid him. Promise me that you will not seek the meeting he evidently purposes to force upon you."

"Fear nothing on my account, dearest May," said Ernest. "I have a duty to perform, and must fulfil it. I was about to leave you with a heavy heart, but it will now be a comparatively light one; and tearing himself from her embrace, Ernest hurried from the house, and to his apartments in the Rue Notre Dame."

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE PRESENT AGE.

ITS CHARACTERISTICS AND REACTIVE TENDENCIES.

The last characteristic to which we shall refer, though without attempting to dwell upon it, is, that the present is

V. An age of political intelligence.—This is closely allied to, and yet distinct from, the last mentioned; men are turning their thoughts to the great question of government, are studying political philosophy as a science, and are declaring that while they are perfectly willing to be ruled, seeing that social order and happiness depend on government, yet they must be ruled fairly, ruled with intelligence, ruled as reasonable and reason-loving men, who believe the proper object of such rule to be the well-being of the many, and not the aggrandisement of the few.

Curious as our remarks have been upon these characteristics, they show that we live in no common age, that great advance has been made, that greater still may be expected, and that never was their a period in which individual character and effort could exert such influence as now. Never before could knowledge be obtained so easily; never could the seeds of thought, of principle, of action, germinate so rapidly and it is in the power of the busiest, the poorest, the least influential, not only to acquire knowledge himself, but to impart it to those with whom he associates in the engagements of every day. Let each aim to bring something into the common stock, to add his quota, be it small or great, and then will he have the satisfaction that he has not lived in vain.

The reactive tendencies of the present age next require notice. In every age of progress there will necessarily be reaction. There cannot be movement without some disturbance of existing relations; by this disturbance some must apparently or in reality be inconvenienced. How natural that by them the movement should be disliked, and that, tracing it to recent causes, they should look back with regret and sigh over the good old times! It will generally be found that no parties are content with the present; for while some are eagerly looking forward with hope, others are crying for a return to former times. Hence it follows, as is the progress so will be the reaction; and, like the resistance of the atmosphere, which increases in geometrical ratio with the velocity of that which passes through, opposing forces will be excited in proportion to the advancing speed. But as the atmospheric resistance will be greatly heightened if the motive force present to it a broad and unyielding front, so will the reaction of which we speak, if there be a rude, a dogmatic, an unyielding spirit, accompanying this social progress. In this case, not only will the opposition be increased, but the minds of many alienated, who would otherwise join in the onward course. If we foolishly denounce the past in toto, if we speak as if the wisdom of our ancestors were folly, and throwing away all the charts by which they steered, and loudly boasting emancipation from ancient prejudices, no wonder if many take the alarm, and, fearing lest much that is really valuable be lost, should cling tenaciously to views, practices, and customs which the majority have laid aside. As in our individual history we often invest former days, the days of childhood and of youth, with an unreal halo of beauty, and forgetting the childish griefs

Continued from the Gleaner of April 1.

and youthful disappointments which then marked our joy, contrast those days with the present, in which, mayhap, the world's anxieties are depressing, and the stern battle of life is almost too much for the strength; so in the minds of many who are keenly alive to the inconveniences and incidental evils of present progress, the past ages are associated with all that is beautiful, while their real and greater evils are overlooked; this fact teaching a lesson which we must keep in mind if successfully we would lead our fellow men forward, that it is unwise and unphilosophical to be impatient, or to aim at dragging them on too rudely whether they will or no. Who can tell in how many cases the great principles of progress—those which have prompted the various social movements adverted to—have been damaged, and the movements impeded, by the sincere though ill-timed and rash efforts of their advocates?

Among the evidences of this reaction, we might refer to the evidences of those who wish to restore the ecclesiastical usages of the middle ages, imagining that the restoration of these will bring back that reverential and confiding spirit which the people should cherish toward their spiritual guides. To a kindred feeling we must attribute what is called the revival of church architecture; thus preserving forms of beauty and proportion in structure which the utilitarian spirit of the present age had discarded. Akin to this, again, are the resurrection, from the dust-covered folios of our libraries, of legends, partly mythological, partly monkish, and wholly absurd; and the bringing back once more before the people symbols, useful perhaps when first they were invented, but wholly unsuitable now, as superseded by the wide diffusion of the truth they only shadowed forth. Other parties, again, mourning the disruption of social ties which formerly obtained, and disliking the spirit of independence which leads the poor man to think for himself and to act according to his views, would restore in part the genius of feudalism, viewing it theoretically as linking all classes together in graduated dependence, and wholly forgetful that, as a system, its chief characteristics were violence and wrong. These parties are they who wish to promote good feeling, and to unite all classes, by a return to old English mummeries, to the sports and pastimes of the seventeenth century, as if the dance round the Maypole, and the elegant amusements of grinning through horse-collars, jumping in sacks, ducking through halfpence in a bucket of water or a chest of meal, eating scalding hazy pudding for a wager, and fattening prize pigs, as if these and sundry other accomplishments would make this 'merrie England' once more. But while we laugh at these efforts at reaction, and while we may be tempted to condemn them as foolish, we may see in them an indication that the hard and bare spirit of utilitarianism has been carried too far, or pursued too exclusively; that in our rightful independence of thought and feeling we may have too rudely cast aside the respect due to those who lived before us, have lost in some measure the deep reverence for spiritual and unseen realities; that, in a money getting and Mammon-worshipping age, the keen perception of the beautiful has not been cultivated; and that, amid scientific pursuits, the relish for the fine old ballads or historical traditions of our country has decayed. Hence, to a certain extent, is this reaction useful; it is the break upon the wheel which prevents too great velocity, and it reminds us that other views than those we hold are held by men as earnest and sincere as ourselves. The reaction of the present day is from utilitarianism to beauty, and it is well that we should be reminded that the beautiful must be studied as well as the useful. It is so in nature; all things subserve their purpose, but all things are not dressed in drab; there are a thousand different tints all harmonising in the landscape, and creating the beauty of the whole. It may be said that for all practical purposes there might be one uniform color; that the ornaments of the field, the sweet songs of the birds, and the infinite variety of their plumage, are not absolutely needful; but who shall tell the fountains of happiness opened, the deep gratification afforded to man by these? So in social progress, if we think only of the useful, if we value nothing which we cannot fully understand, or which will not aid in the filling of the purse, no wonder if others go to the opposite extreme, and wish to bring back a wonder-loving, unreasoning, subservient, and yet picturesque age.

Enough has been said to indicate our meaning as to the reactive tendencies of the present time. One other observation and we dismiss the subject: These tendencies must not be confounded with or rank among the age's characteristics. Viewing them from some positions, we may fancy that they are so widely diffused and have taken such hold of society that they seem to characterize it; but if we take a more extensive view we shall find that they are partial in their development, and will be but comparatively short-lived in their existence. They are but as the retiring wave of the rising tide; the wave which no sooner retreats than it is forced to a greater height upon the strand than before.

Who that has visited the coast and watched the tides rising among the rocks has not marked a strong current rushing seaward with such force as to overpower the advancing wave? In some cases this may cover such an extent that the observer might imagine that the tide was ebbing fast. The more rapid the tide the more violent the rushing current, until the tide has reached a certain height, and then the current ceases to be observed. So with the reactive tendencies of which we speak. We need not fear that the ecclesiastical legends, the feudal customs, or medieval practices now in vogue, will be much more than ephemeral.

The tide has set in too strongly to be long retarded, and they, so far at least as they are puerile or erroneous, will soon be overwhelmed. In the meantime, let us be careful so to advance that as little reaction as possible may be caused, and that those who hesitate to accompany us may have no real ground to complain or to gainsay.

From the London Atlas.

THE SECRET POLICE.

Much emotion has been created amongst certain circles in Paris by the announcement of the speedy publication of the Memoirs of M. D—z, for more than forty years President of the Commission of Police. These memoirs will, indeed, possess an interest far exceeding that of any publication which has appeared for many years. The stories which M. D—z can relate, the deeds to which he has been witness, the revelations which he has in his power to make, have caused his book to be viewed with ill-disguised terror in the great world, wherein lay his associations. Many and many a gay votary of the fashionable world of Paris, who is received with open arms by the aristocratic circles of which very often his high name entitles him to form a part, has had for years no other means of existence than those afforded by the salary of the secret police for services rendered in the way of denunciation against those who, guileless and unsuspecting, have opened their doors and hearts to him. M. D—z is a sharp witted, caustic old man, of highly polished manners and great penetration. His retirement from office is entirely voluntary, as no Government has ever dared to turn him off, for fear of the great difficulty of replacing him. He was the inventor of the guichet, so well known now, by which all secret denunciations are passed to the director, who sits on the other side of the trap door, unseeing and unseen, and thus the betrayer and his employer remain unknown to each other. The ingenious method which he adopted for the discovery of the conspiracy of Georges Cadoudal rendered him a great favorite with the Emperor, and caused him to be viewed with the greatest consideration at the imperial court. A reward had been offered for any information concerning the offenders, and the secret police had, of course, been most liberal in their promises. Much valuable information had been collected in a very short space of time, and yet the police agents were still in the dark as to the source from whence it issued. The communications were made in the same hand writing, and the clerk seated at the trap door had declared his opinion that they were all presented by the same hand. There was reason to believe that the documents thus obtained emanated from some one about the palace. To betray openly any curiosity on the subject would have been to ruin the cause for ever. Nothing but stratagem could succeed. D—z was applied to, and undertook the discovery. It was the custom, when the manuscript was handed through the little trap door, to give in exchange a cachet, or card stamped with a red seal, into the extended hand which had delivered it. This cachet was presented with the like mystery at the caisse, and the price awarded by a certain number on the seal immediately handed over to the applicant. On this occasion D—z, who personated the clerk usually stationed at the trap door, feigned to have some difficulty in obtaining a fair impression of the seal upon the card; he fumbled and hesitated, and at length, thrusting the cachet into the hand which lay passively waiting on the board, he managed to let fall a tolerable portion of the scalding wax upon the fingers. A slight shriek greeted his ears, the trap was let down with a sudden bang, the applicant withdrew hastily, and D—z immediately set about discovering who in the palace would appear with blistered fingers. This was soon accomplished. Young Ferrus, one of the under secretaries, was compelled to send an excuse for not appearing at his post the following morning, owing "to a bad scald which he had received from upsetting some boiling coffee over his hand." He was arrested and examined, discovered to be in love with the mistress of one of the chief conspirators, and had betrayed through jealousy his rival's guilt.

From "The World in a Man-of-War."

THE AMERICAN SHIP'S CHAPLAIN.

He had drank at the mystic fountain of Plato; his head had been turned by the Germans; and this I will say, that White-Jacket himself saw him with Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria" in his hand. Fancy, now, this transcendental divine standing behind a gun-carrage on the main deck, and addressing 500 salt-sea sinners upon psychological phenomena of the soul, and the ontological necessity of every sailor's saving it at all hazards. He enlarged upon the follies of the ancient philosophers; spoke of the Phædon of Plato; exposed the follies of Simplicius's Commentary on Aristotle's "De Celo," by assaying against that clever Pagan author the admired tract of Tertullian—De Prescriptionibus Hereticorum—and concluded with a Sanscrit invocation. He was particularly hard upon the Gnostics and Marcianites of the second century of the Christian era; but he never in the remotest manner attacked the everyday vices in the nineteenth century, as ever vividly illustrated in our man of war world. Concerning drunkenness, fighting, flogging, and oppression—things expressly or impliedly prohibited by christianity—he never said aught.

"A heavy pressure in the money market," as the mouse said when the keg of dollars rolled over it.