

that if the rev. gentleman had been alive at the time, the challenge would not have gone unanswered. I second therefore the vote of thanks most heartily. Proceedings closed with a vote of thanks to the Most Rev. Chairman, proposed by Mr. John Carroll.

RANDOM THOUGHTS.

CHARLES LAMB says that "the smell of a theatre is worth all the money," and for my part I quite agree with him. It may cause head-ache and nausea and has not seldom done so with me; but nevertheless to complete my happiness in witnessing a good play well performed, a most necessary element is that peculiar odour which is the combined result of escaping gas, nuts, oranges, lemonade and dust. Now the smell of gas and dust in a church is hateful to me and causes serious derangement to that proper disposition which one should possess in such a place, and the smell of gas in one's own house leads to all sorts of disagreeable consequences—it is worse than a chimney going on fire.

Indeed, with some prudent and economical housekeepers the latter event is looked upon in any way but as a calamity. I remember when, shortly after I found bliss in this world by joining my fate to that elderly party who sits opposite assiduously working some article of attire for her dear scapegrace of a son, who, heaven bless her innocent soul, is, I have no doubt, at this present writing, breaking the very heart of some hard-worked usher by what he joyously terms a lark. His fond and deluded mother thinks that her darling has too much heart to play pranks on his master—that he is too like his father. Dear woman! she had not the misfortune to meet me until my larking days were long over. I remember, I say, that our one chimney took fire through a too generous use of firing material by a member of that much-abused class—the maid of all work. What a row there was, to be sure!—How that stout lady opposite did scamper and flit about!—How she and Mary-Jane, the aforesaid cook, laundress, butler, and chambermaid did get in the way of a certain active young fellow who shall be nameless, and how that agile young man—now to my certain knowledge 15 stone weight and to whom a stick is an absolute necessity—got buckets, water and ladders as if by magic; what gallons of water he poured down the flaming throat of that fiery furnace at the imminent risk of being burned or scalded to death. What a battle it was—how the flames leapt at first higher and higher, and how he also leaped backwards and forwards like one possessed in the presence of all his frightened but admiring household;—how at last after a desperate conflict valor—true valor—as it always should do—won the day;—how the victor was duly rewarded, according to the custom of "the brave days of old," with a pewter pint of foaming beer, tendered to the champion by the trembling hands of a lady whose admiring and fluttering heart said as plainly as eyes and heart could say it—"such another deed and such another champion this world did never witness," and the champion, I assure you, rested well satisfied with his deed—but not for long.

This world is full of crosses. In the words of the song which "Madame Bishop" made so popular, "The fire was gone out, the house was all dark, and we were kept waiting for tea;" in plain prose, we had no fire to cook our humble evening meal. Our neighbor Brown's fire, therefore, was put into requisition, and Brown himself came down to look at the dying ashes of my enemy. He could only put his head inside the kitchen door, to go any further would necessitate wading ankle deep in water. But what was it caused the lines of Brown's satirical face to deepen? He knew there had been a fire and a terrible one, for I, the extinguisher, had told him so—he could not be ignorant, therefore, of what to expect; he was too old a stager not to know, I thought, the appearances of such a battle-field after the conflict. True, I had not gone into details—I had with difficulty left them until we reached the scene of the conflict. Then I thought, like the man with the panorama, who used to descant in my youth so eloquently on the moving pictures and tell us of the battles, sieges, fortunes that the various illustrious persons depicted therein had passed, and who never failed to inform us that that figure on the left of the picture, ladies and gentlemen, mounted on the white horse is the great *Napoleon Bonaparte*. In like manner I determined to reserve my full description for Brown until I could illustrate it by pointing out the scarp and counter-scarp, the exact spot where the battle raged most furiously, where the scaling-ladder was placed, etc. I merely remarked to Brown, on the way down from his house, whether he was aware when Rome was burning and Nero fiddling, any attempt had been made to stay the fire; Brown did not recollect, but he rather thought not, as it would have been efforts thrown away. His companion was of a different opinion, and rather inclined to the belief that it would have been a good thing for Nero's reputation if Brown's companion had been an ancient Roman of those days. It also passed through his mind that things might have turned out differently if he had been alive two centuries ago at the great fire of London, but he said nothing of this to Brown.

But why did the latter smile so pleasantly when he saw the kitchen floor concealed entirely from view by a lake of water. The usual ghastly sight I surmised was there after such an event—perhaps, indeed, a little more intensified in my case, I thought, on account of the violence of the struggle. There were swimming on the surface various culinary articles (all new and paid for) too numerous to mention, the elements—half cooked—of as comfortable a dinner as a young couple could sit down to (the only alloy to that moment in my otherwise perfect contentment in the thought of an heroic action gallantly performed was the destruction of this dinner), little islands of suet from which graceful spiral wreaths of yellow, thick smoke floated upwards to blacken everything above water-mark. And the smell—well, Brown did not like it. He drew back his head, and remarked in a gentle,

half pitiful, half surprised tone—"Well, you didn't, I see, set this chimney on fire yourself."

"Set in on fire myself! no; don't I tell you that it went on fire and I put it out."

"Yes, yes; but you certainly took a funny way to do it; when I look in at that kitchen it reminds me of a story told of a man setting fire to his house for the purpose of roasting a pig."

"What do you mean?—I do not understand you."

"Well, Smith, my verdant young Benedict, let me give you a wrinkle. Whenever my chimney goes on fire—but it seldom does, for I generally anticipate that by setting it on fire myself—but in either case, I simply put a wet sack across the grate, shut close the doors and windows of the room in which the chimney is, and let the fire rip—you will find it the most effectual, the most cleanly, and certainly the most economical method to clean chimnies. You have made a nice mess, and you yourself, I perceive, have not escaped. I presume it is to the fire you owe the loss of half your left eye-brow and the dingy appearance of your whiskers."

Instinctively my hand darted up to the parts indicated, and down tumbled a handful of fire ash—the remains of a carefully-cultivated whisker, which had been the pride and admiration of two young hearts. For the first time in my short married career I harbored feelings of anger against the young partner of my life—where had been her eyes that she had not perceived this terrible calamity? Had not these ornaments been a source of constant wonder and admiration to her? How, then, had she allowed me to present myself before that cool, cynical Brown in such a plight? I was touched in a tender point; all my love was suddenly turned into wrath; but Brown, perfect master of the situation, went on, "there's no help for it now, however; so you had better come and take tea with us; Mrs. B. won't mind the loss of your whisker." I replied, barely thanking him, and informed him that we had a prior engagement—that, in fact, I had to take Mrs. Smith over to her mother's. A look—the first time my wife had seen it in my eyes, and it must have been rendered doubly severe by the loss of the before-mentioned adornments—quelled any expression of surprise at this awful crammer. It was the first time, and I protest it was also the last, that I ever looked at that being except in the way of kindness; but then it must be remembered that since that evening we, or rather she—for I never would have any hand in it—has invariably set fire to our chimnies whenever they required that operation.

After excusing myself as above to Brown, that gentleman did not say too much, but his eyes said as plainly as they could—"well, you are a pretty object, certainly, to go into the presence of a mother-in-law; I should think the best place for you is bed," and took his departure. Then ensued our first matrimonial breeze, in which I am proud to say I had considerably the best of it. Over that first experience of every man I shall draw a veil—suffice it to say that abundant tears were shed, and that the writer said some very cutting things, as for instance, in reference to the tears, that he could not see the necessity of them, as there had already been enough water needlessly expended. I think it is from this scene that I first date the use of the term *Madam* when addressing my other half. It sounded, I remember, strangely in my ears then, but it is wonderful what habit does for one. It comes trippingly off the tongue now, I assure you—but alas! it has not the same effect.

The married man can measure the intensity of my disgust with Brown, when I voluntarily, without any pressure from without, offered to take my wife to my mother-in-law's (how my flesh creeps when I write the words down). As we were new-comers in the place I had no other family to fall back upon, or I would not willingly have walked into the lioness' den. It is curious how little love there is between these two classes of the human family—the mother and the husband of her beloved child. But as there are exceptions to every general rule I know of one son-in-law who absolutely invited his wife's mother to his very house with himself, and strange to say that man still lives outside the walls of a lunatic asylum—I mean outside the walls of a professed lunatic asylum; but there must be some rare old scenes inside that house. And such a mother-in-law! one of those malicious old fribbles, who three-fourths of her time is talking drivel and the other fourth devotes to inflicting sly, malicious prods on the people who are apt to turn rusty at her everlasting flood of wishy-washy nothings. Active bodied, also—giving no sign of caving in—holding out a hope only that her ceaseless rushing about the house, interfering by hand and tongue in everything, may cause her to fall some day and tumble down stairs.

That is what my friend has brought into his house, and that not in the first gush of his married life, when everything is seen through roseate hue, but after some years of that state had passed over his head. Verily he will have his reward. X.Y.Z.

There is to be a second "Pan-Anglican Synod." It will probably be much worse than the "Comedy of Convocation." What can these unfortunate bewildered prelates attempt? They cannot repeat any of the creeds together, at least with honesty—they dare not cut off the Ritualists, as a body, by any sentence such as that of excommunication used by the Church of God—they dare not trifle, on the other hand, either with the free-and-easy, the Broad, or the Low Church. They will have nothing to do, these respectable old gentlemen, but to dally, to trifle, and to hope themselves well out of it. We shall have from them a pastoral letter full of unmeaning nothings, deploring all sorts of evils, both in clergy and laity, but offering no manly or intelligible remedy. And for the simple reason that they are not bishops, and that Protestantism is only a civil association arranged by the State, of larger proportions indeed, but no more spiritual in its character than is "the Farmers' Defence Association" or the "Beef-steak Pudding Club."