LETTER XX.

Thursday, May 12. My dear I.:--

Yesterday, what with my breakfast, lunch, and dinner, I was, as the fashionable saying is, "fairly knocked up." This expression, which I find obtains universally here, corresponds to what we mean by being "used up." They talk of Americanisms, and I have a little innocent speculation now and then concerning Anglicisms. I certainly find several here for which I can perceive no more precedent in the well of "English undefiled," than for some of ours; for instance, this being "knocked up," which is variously inflected, as, for example, in the form of a participial adjective, as a "knocking up" affair; in the form of a noun, as when they say "such a person has got quite a knocking up," and so on.

The fact is, if we had ever had any experience in London life we should not have made three engagements in one day. To my simple eye it is quite amusing to see how they manage the social machine here. People are under such a pressure of engagements, that they go about with their lists in their pockets. If A wants to invite B to dinner, out come their respective lists. A says he has only Tuesday and Thursday open for this week. B looks down his list, and says that the days are all closed. A looks along, and says that he has no day open till next Wednesday week. B, however, is going to leave town Tuesday; so that settles the matter as to dining; so they turn back again, and

try the breakfasting; for though you cannot dine in but one place a day, yet, by means of the breakfast and the lunch, you can make three social visits if you are strong enough.

Then there are evening parties, which begin at ten o'clock. The first card of the kind that was sent me, which was worded, "At home at ten o'clock," I, in my simplicity, took to be ten in the morning.

But here are people staying out night after night till two o'clock, sitting up all night in Parliament, and seeming to thrive upon it. There certainly is great apology for this in London, if it is always as dark, drizzling, and smoky in the daytime as it has been since I have been here. If I were one of the London people I would live by gaslight as they do, for the streets and houses are altogether pleasanter by gaslight than by daylight. But to ape these customs under our clear, American skies, so contrary to our whole social system, is simply ridiculous.

This morning I was exceedingly tired, and had a perfect longing to get but of London into some green fields--to get somewhere where there was nobody. So kind Mrs. B. had the carriage, and off we drove together. By and by we found ourselves out in the country, and then I wanted to get out and walk.

After a while a lady came along, riding a little donkey. These donkeys have amused me so much since I have been here! At several places on

the outskirts of the city they have them standing, all girt up with saddles covered with white cloth, for ladies to ride on. One gets out of London by means of an omnibus to one of these places, and then, for a few pence, can have a ride upon one of them into the country. Mrs. B. walked by the side of the lady, and said to her something which I did not hear, and she immediately alighted and asked me with great kindness if I wanted to try the saddle; so I got upon the little beast, which was about as large as a good-sized calf, and rode a few paces to try him. It is a slow, but not unpleasant gait, and if the creature were not so insignificantly small, as to make you feel much as if you were riding upon a cat, it would be quite a pleasant affair. After dismounting I crept through a hole in a hedge, and looked for some flowers; and, in short, made the most that I could of my interview with nature, till it came time to go home to dinner, for our dinner hour at Mr. B.'s is between one and two; quite like home. In the evening we were to dine at Lord Shaftesbury's.

After napping all the afternoon we went to Grosvenor Square. There was only a small, select party, of about sixteen. Among the guests were Dr. McAll, Hebrew professor in King's College, Lord Wriothesley Russell, brother of Lord John, and one of the private chaplains of the queen, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Dr. McAll is a millenarian. He sat next to C. at table, and they had some conversation on that subject. He said those ideas had made a good deal of progress in the English mind.

While I was walking down to dinner with Lord Shaftesbury, he pointed out to me in the hall the portrait of his distinguished ancestor, Antony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, whose name he bears. This ancestor, notwithstanding his sceptical philosophy, did some good things, as he was the author of the habeas corpus act.

After dinner we went back to the drawing rooms again; and while tea and coffee were being served, names were constantly being announced, till the rooms were quite full.

Among the earliest who arrived was Mr.----, a mulatto gentleman, formerly British consul at Liberia. I found him a man of considerable cultivation and intelligence, evincing much good sense in his observations.

I overheard some one saying in the crowd, "Shaftesbury has been about the chimney sweepers again in Parliament." I said to Lord Shaftesbury, "I thought that matter of the chimney sweepers had been attended to long ago, and laws made about it."

"So we have made laws," said he, "but people won't keep them unless we follow them up."

He has a very prompt, cheerful way of speaking, and throws himself into every thing he talks about with great interest and zeal. He introduced me to one gentleman, I forget his name now, as the patron

of the shoeblacks. On my inquiring what that meant, he said that he had started the idea of providing employment for poor street boys, by furnishing them with brushes and blacking, and forming them into regular companies of shoeblacks. Each boy has his' particular stand, where he blacks the shoes of every passer by who chooses to take the trouble of putting up his foot and paying his twopence. Lord Shaftesbury also presented me to a lady who had been a very successful teacher in the ragged schools; also to a gentleman who, he said, had been very active in the London city missions. Some very ingenious work done in the ragged schools was set on the table for the company to examine, and excited much interest.

I talked a little while with Lord Wriothesley Russell. From him we derived the idea that the queen was particularly careful in the training and religious instruction of her children. He said that she claimed that the young prince should be left entirely to his parents, in regard to his religious instruction, till he was seven years of age; but that, on examining him at that time, they were equally surprised and delighted with his knowledge of the Scriptures. I must remark here, that such an example as the queen sets in the education of her children makes itself felt through all the families of the kingdom. Domesticity is now the fashion in high life. I have had occasion to see, in many instances, how carefully ladies of rank instruct their children. This argues more favorably for the continuance of English institutions than any thing I have seen. If the next generation of those who are born to rank and power are educated,

in the words of Fenelon, to consider these things "as a ministry," which they hold for the benefit of the poor, the problem of life in England will become easier of solution. Such are Lord Shaftesbury's views, and as he throws them out with unceasing fervor in his conversation and conduct, they cannot but powerfully affect not only his own circle, but all circles through the kingdom. Lady Shaftesbury is a beautiful and interesting woman, and warmly enters into the benevolent plans of her husband. A gentleman and lady with whom I travelled said that Lord and Lady Shaftesbury had visited in person the most forlorn and wretched parts of London, that they might get, by their own eyesight, a more correct gauge of the misery to be relieved. I did not see Lord Shaftesbury's children; but, from the crayon likenesses which hung upon the walls, they must be a family of uncommon beauty.

I talked a little while with the Bishop of Tuam. I was the more interested to do so because he was from that part of Ireland which Sibyl Jones has spoken of as being in so particularly miserable a condition. I said, "How are you doing now, in that part of the country? There has been a great deal of misery there, I hear." He said "There has been, but we have just turned the corner, and now I hope we shall see better days. The condition of the people has been improved by emigration and other causes, till the evils have been brought within reach, and we feel that there is hope of effecting a permanent improvement."

While I was sitting talking, Lord Shaltesbury brought a gentleman and lady, whom he introduced as Lord Chief Justice Campbell and Lady Strathheden. Lord Campbell is a man of most dignified and imposing personal presence; tall, with a large frame, a fine, high forehead, and strongly marked features. Naturally enough, I did not suppose them to be husband and wife, and when I discovered that they were so, expressed a good deal of surprise at their difference of titles; to which she replied, that she did not wonder we Americans were sometimes puzzled among the number of titles. She seemed quite interested to inquire into our manner of living and customs, and how they struck me as compared with theirs. The letter of Mrs. Tyler was much talked of, and some asked me if I supposed Mrs. Tyler really wrote it, expressing a little civil surprise at the style. I told them that I had heard it said that it must have been written by some of the gentlemen in the family, because it was generally understood that Mrs. Tyler was a very ladylike person. Some said, "It does us no harm to be reminded of our deficiencies; we need all the responsibility that can be put upon us." Others said, "It is certain we have many defects;" but Lord John Campbell said, "There is this difference between our evils and those of slavery: ours exist contrary to law; those are upheld by law."

I did not get any opportunity of conversing with the Archbishop of Canterbury, though this is the second time I have been in company with him. He is a most prepossessing man in his appearance--simple,

courteous, mild, and affable. He was formerly Bishop of Chester, and is now Primate of all England.

It is some indication of the tendency of things in a country to notice what kind of men are patronized and promoted to the high places of the church. Sumner is a man refined, gentle, affable, scholarly, thoroughly evangelical in sentiment; to render him into American phraseology, he is in doctrine what we should call a moderate New School man. He has been a most industrious writer; one of his principal works is his Commentary on the New Testament, in several volumes; a work most admirably adapted for popular use, combining practical devotion with critical accuracy to an uncommon degree. He has also published a work on the Evidences of Christianity, in which he sets forth some evidences of the genuineness of the gospel narrative, which could only have been conceived by a mind of peculiar delicacy, and which are quite interesting and original. He has also written a work on Biblical Geology, which is highly spoken of by Sir Charles Lyell and others. If I may believe accounts that I hear, this mild and moderate man has shown a most admirable firmness and facility in guiding the ship of the establishment in some critical and perilous places of late years. I should add that he is warmly interested in all the efforts now making for the good of the poor.

Among other persons of distinction, this evening, I noticed Lord and Lady Palmerston.

A lady asked me this evening what I thought of the beauty of the ladies of the English aristocracy: she was a Scotch lady, by the by; so the question was a fair one. I replied, that certainly report had not exaggerated their charms. Then came a home question--how the ladies of England compared with the ladies of America. "Now for it, patriotism," said I to myself; and, invoking to my aid certain fair saints of my own country, whose faces I distinctly remembered, I assured her that I had never seen more beautiful women than I had in America. Grieved was I to be obliged to add, "But your ladies keep their beauty much later and longer." This fact stares one in the face in every company; one meets ladies past fifty, glowing, radiant, and blooming, with a freshness of complexion and fulness of outline refreshing to contemplate. What can be the reason? Tell us, Muses and Graces, what can it be? Is it the conservative power of sea fogs and coal smoke--the same cause that keeps the turf green, and makes the holly and ivy flourish? How comes it that our married ladies dwindle, fade, and grow thin--that their noses incline to sharpness, and their elbows to angularity, just at the time of life when their island sisters round out into a comfortable and becoming amplitude and fulness? If it is the fog and the sea coal, why, then, I am afraid we never shall come up with them. But perhaps there may be other causes why a country which starts some of the most beautiful girls in the world produces so few beautiful women. Have not our close-heated stove rooms something to do with it? Have not the immense amount of hot biscuits, hot corn cakes, and other compounds got up with the acrid poison of saleratus, something to do with it? Above all, has not our

climate, with its alternate extremes of heat and cold, a tendency to induce habits Of in-door indolence? Climate, certainly, has a great deal to do with it; ours is evidently more trying and more exhausting; and because it is so, we should not pile upon its back errors of dress and diet which are avoided by our neighbors. They keep their beauty, because they keep their health. It has been as remarkable as any thing to me, since I have been here, that I do not constantly, as at home, hear one and another spoken of as in miserable health, as very delicate, &c. Health seems to be the rule, and not the exception. For my part, I must say, the most favorable omen that I know of for female beauty in America is, the multiplication of water cure establishments, where our ladies, if they get nothing else, do gain some ideas as to the necessity of fresh air, regular exercise, simple diet, and the laws of hygiene in general.

There is one thing more which goes a long way towards the continued health of these English ladies, and therefore towards their beauty; and that is, the quietude and perpetuity of their domestic institutions. They do not, like us, fade their cheeks lying awake nights ruminating the awful question who shall do the washing next week, or who shall take the chambermaid's place, who is going to be married, or that of the cook, who has signified her intention of parting with the mistress. Their hospitality is never embarrassed by the consideration that their whole kitchen cabinet may desert at the moment that their guests arrive. They are not obliged to choose between washing their own dishes, or having their cut glass, silver,

and china left to the mercy of a foreigner, who has never done any thing but field work. And last, not least, they are not possessed with that ambition to do the impossible in all branches, which, I believe, is the death of a third of the women in America. What is there ever read of in books, or described in foreign travel, as attained by people in possession of every means and appliance, which our women will not undertake, single-handed, in spite of every providential indication to the contrary? Who is not cognizant of dinner parties invited, in which the lady of the house has figured successively as confectioner, cook, dining-room girl, and, lastly, rushed up stairs to bathe her glowing cheeks, smooth her hair, draw on satin dress and kid gloves, and appear in the drawing room as if nothing were the matter? Certainly the undaunted bravery of our American females can never enough be admired. Other women can play gracefully the head of the establishment; but who, like them, could be head, hand, and foot, all at once?

As I have spoken of stoves, I will here remark that I have not yet seen one in England; neither, so far as I can remember, have I seen a house warmed by a furnace. Bright coal fires, in grates of polished steel, are as yet the lares and penates of old England. If I am inclined to mourn over any defection in my own country, it is the closing up of the cheerful open fire, with its bright lights and dancing shadows, and the planting on our domestic hearth of that sullen, stifling gnome, the air-tight. I agree with Hawthorne in thinking the movement fatal to patriotism; for who would fight for an

airtight!

I have run on a good way beyond our evening company; so good by for the present.