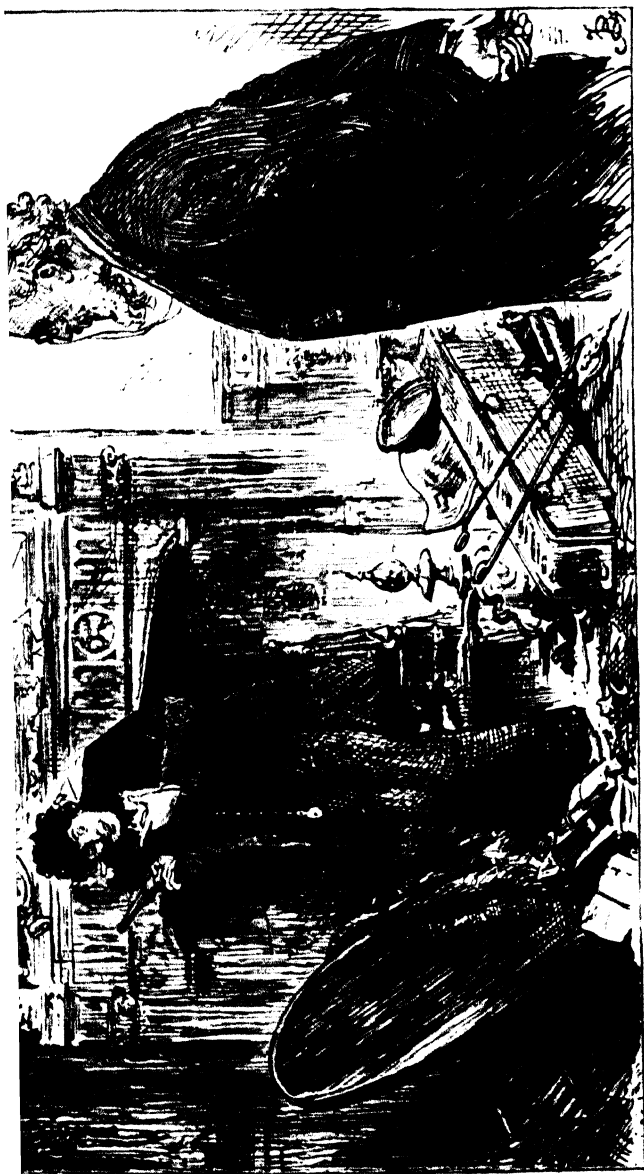


PEOPLE I HAVE MET

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THE DOCTOR.

"My lord was gibbering over a pistol, and the great glass above the mantelpiece in the state drawing-room was freshly shattered."

PEOPLE I HAVE MET

BY

E. C. GRENVILLE-MURRAY

AUTHOR OF "SIDE LIGHTS ON ENGLISH SOCIETY," "UNDER THE LENS,"
"THAT ARTFUL VICAR," ETC.



NAWAB SALAR JUNG BAHADUR.

LONDON

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PREFACE.

“PEOPLE I HAVE MET” is one of the results of a consistent endeavour on the part of its author to master that study which Pope ~~has~~ pronounced to be the one of all others proper to mankind. For this study it is scarcely too much to say that the writer enjoyed advantages of no ordinary kind, thanks to a long and chequered experience of life, during which he had opportunities of seeing a great deal, and formed the habit of keeping his eyes open. Hence he was able to glean an ample store of material for a class of writing which, since the days of Addison and Steele, has ever been a favourite one in England—namely, that of contemporaneous portraiture.

The figures in the present gallery have been drawn, it will be perceived, from a great variety of sources. The Town Mansion and the Country House, the Belle’s Boudoir and the Servants’ Hall, Clubland and Capel Court, the Ball Room and the Usurer’s Office, the Don’s Study and the Devotee’s Oratory, the

Editor's Sanctum and the Physician's Consulting Room, the Board Room and the Bankruptcy Court, Westminster and Oxford, the Law and the Church, Trade and Finance, have all been laid under contribution. The author has striven to sketch, graphically and succinctly, some of the myriad shifting atoms that go to make up our general society, and to introduce his readers to a tolerably wide circle of acquaintances, whom it is trusted will be found, if not invariably agreeable, at any rate interesting.

PEOPLE I HAVE MET.

THE OLD EARL.

THERE is not an old-established tradesman of any credit at the West-end of London who does not know Lord Rackland, and who is not proud to have the Earl's name upon his books; a judicious reverence for the hereditary nobility, combined with high prices and long bills, having ever been considered by the retail dealer one of the truest principles of British commerce. There is no better customer than his Lordship, for he suffers his scores to accumulate without examination or remark, letting interest grow upon interest till they form quite a feature in the ledger of many a respected householder of Bond Street and Piccadilly. It is true that the Earl never pays in vulgar coin if he can possibly avoid it, and that it would ruin any fashionable shopkeeper to go to law with him; but the old-established tradesmen like him better for that. It is sufficient for them that his Lordship never objects to any item in their accounts.

They are perfectly content to pay large vails every Christmas to his steward, his cook, and his valet to preserve so valuable a customer ; for as to his means of paying, were he so inclined, there is no doubt whatever.

The amount of the Earl's rent-roll is as well known as the rest of his private affairs. It is at least fifty thousand a year, and very probably twice as much ; therefore the old-established tradesmen, who are seldom averse from good investments, are glad to see their bills get into the hands of the lawyers after years of waiting, and ultimately become transformed into bonds bearing his Lordship's signature, with five per cent. interest, clear of income tax. Then they open a fresh account, and have the satisfaction of watching it grow larger and larger, as before, while the interest on their bonds accumulates just as that on their bills had done. Thus everybody is pleased, and his Lordship most of all, for he has observed, with quiet amusement, that, if he can only hold out long enough, West-end tradesmen's affairs not unfrequently get into Chancery in consequence of a death or a dispute in the firm, when nothing more of their claims is likely to be heard of during his lifetime.

What may happen afterwards is, of course, no concern of Lord Rackland's. He is a philosophical nobleman, and thinks very calmly, and even with some comfort, of his demise under these circumstances. Besides, the tradesmen lose nothing in any case, for his

custom of itself is as good as a fortune. Rank has so many imitators to follow its lead into a shop, that magnates of shoddy and even red-hot Radicals pay his Lordship's debts without knowing it.

The style and title of the Old Earl set out at full length are a joy for ever to conveyancers, who muse pleasantly on their bills of costs every time they recite it. "The Right Honourable Harry-Hotspur-Ellen-Heerman-Guy-Fox-Soccage-Smalsole-Petty-Smalsowle, Earl of Rackland and Mortmain, Viscount Escuage and Baron Advowson of Overall Manor, in the county of Middlesex," make up a considerable sum when engrossed many times over in large old English letters upon bonds and parchments. Certain of these names, too, have a meaning which stretches far back into our history—a meaning based upon what is most immutable in our national character. They signify that his Lordship is remarkable for that fine impetuous disposition common to favourite children and beautiful ladies who are accustomed to have their own way—that his noble parents despised conventionalities binding upon the vulgar, and evinced a proper regard for money by having him christened after an aunt whose will had provided that her property should only go to a namesake. The rest of his highly interesting appellations reveal the antiquity of his family, their devotion to Church and State, the elevation of their moral character, and their indissoluble connection with their native soil. The noble Earl may well be a

true Churchman, since he is patron of no less than twenty-nine livings, which he inherited from an uncle on his mother's side, who was a Nonconformist.

Reasons are not wanting to make it desirable to keep on good terms with Lord Rackland. There are old maids with interminable tongues who glory in their cousinship nineteen times removed from his Lordship. There are mellow dowagers who have married Honourable or Honourable and Reverend Smalsowles holding precedence in Society because of them. There are correct curates, whose waistcoats button as high up as possible, and who are oracles of many tea-tables; hot-headed subalterns in the Army and Navy; venerable deans and apoplectic generals, who boast that they are Smalsowles whenever they can get any one to listen. All these excellent people are ready to take up the Earl's cause as a family feud in which their birthright is concerned; and there is no dearer thing than pride of birth to any well-conditioned person with a proper sense of self-respect. Moreover, no inconsiderable portion of the adult population of these islands, who are acquainted with the names of their grandfathers, could establish their kinship with the Earl by diligent search for a generation or two backwards; and relationship with a peer of his rank has so many solid advantages that searchers with time and means at their command are very much to be envied.

The Earl, for his part, has no wish to quarrel with

anybody, and it would require much perverse dexterity to put him out of temper. He has generally had what he wanted, owing to the glorious equity and pure justice of our laws, which never deny an ultimate verdict to those who can afford to wait and pay for it. His desires, too, have been all confined to material things, and now in the sunny autumn of an agreeably spent life he is perfectly satisfied. His digestion is wonderful; his health, such as makes his existence one long festival. He never feels angry, because common people do not interest him enough to trouble him with any concern for their affairs. He honestly believes that they are outside his world altogether, and have no rights contrary to his humour. His code of honour, strict enough, according to club law at White's and the Travellers', among his own set, does not apply to the people out of doors.

The Old Earl never had but one downright public row, and that arose from a mistake of a raw policeman, who did not know who he was, and incautiously arrested him while he was amusing himself after dinner in his salad days. Being let out instantly on bail, however, he sent his servant next morning to explain the case to the metropolitan magistrate before whom he was required to appear, and, of course, his Worship immediately quashed the proceedings. Indeed, his Lordship was himself accustomed playfully to observe that English people of title never do get into scrapes. "There are about four thousand of us," he

would add archly, "yet never within living memory has any one of us committed a crime known to the law. Statistics must be quite at fault as regards *us*. Peers of the Sovereign can do no wrong; that must be accepted naturally as a truism. But I am glad that all our connections should be so perfect." His Lordship generally sips his wine slowly after making this remark, and, perhaps, is lost in admiration of the virtues of his order. He would be a bold Judge who should ever question them in our day.

Lord Rackland is a Whig in politics, because when he was young the Whigs were coming into fashion, and he had backed "little Johnny" against Peel, who was kindly called the "Ratecatcher." Accordingly, he is put down in almanacks and parliamentary guides as a "Liberal." The Radicals even boast of him as an enlightened reformer, though he has never cared enough for public affairs to face the draughts of the House of Lords, and is far too clear-sighted to wish for any change in a system of government which suits him so excellently. All he regrets, when he regrets anything, which is only during the prevalence of easterly winds, is, that the hand of Time does not move backwards. He remembers the days when he was even better off than now. The Duke of York gave him two commissions on the same morning to quiet some people who had found out means of annoying him, and he had sent his butler to Parliament by the vote of his steward in order that he might keep

one of his rotten boroughs warm till his agent had got the regulation seven thousand pounds for it of a nabob fresh from India. Now he is obliged to bring in his dependents, and can only cut off their supplies when they don't vote straight. "If that's what you call progress," remarks my Lord drily, "*I think the sooner we hear the last of it the better.*"

The Old Earl is fond of old fashions, even in speech and costume. He says "The Suv'rin," when alluding to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, and "obleeged," on the authority of that type of fine gentlemen, the late Prince Regent. His well-trimmed face has none of the modern fripperies. It is clean-shaven, save for a neat side-whisker, primly curled. He has always the same cool, high-bred look and leisurely saunter. Age has not bent his shape or taken much from its elasticity. His eyes are bright and bold, and a phrenologist would note that his perceptive faculties are enormous, though his forehead is low and narrow. He is a man of action, not of thought. Other people have always been at hand to think for him.

His dress is neater and primmer than that of the new generation. He wears the peculiar broad-brimmed hat much turned up at the side, which was introduced into London by the late Lord Pembroke. A starched cravat of check pattern, in fine cambric, props up collars like the blades of hatchets. His boots are polished as brightly as mirrors by blacking made from

a recipe only known to his valet, whose father served Beau Brummell, and who comes from a family of valets who are Roman princes. He wears straps, and a frock-coat of the royal blue, well buttoned over a very stately figure upright as a dart, and still showing signs of the capital drill he was put through in the Guards before he came to his title. There is not a crease nor a wrinkle in his dress from top to toe. All his appointments are marked by cost and grandeur. His watch is a unique and beautiful piece of mechanism, the work of a maker who lost his sight in completing it. His rings and jewellery have an historic value, and are very expensive and handsome. Were he to give anybody more than the tips of two select fingers in shaking hands, a gushing acquaintance might inflict a severe wound upon him with the splendid ancestral ruby on which his signet is engraved. His equipages are faultless in taste. The quiet, unobtrusive brougham which waits for him of an afternoon at White's is a model of easy carriage-building, and the bays with black points, which match to a hair, and have such perfect manners, would be cheap at twelve hundred guineas.

The Old Earl has half-a-dozen or more fine places in the country. Among them is a feudal castle in the North, which came into the family through a scrivener's widow, who married the seventeenth peer; an Elizabethan hall in Warwickshire, which was part of the portion of a rich goldsmith's heiress; a marine villa

on the south coast, which was a grant from the Crown in the time when Lord Bute was Premier ; a place in Perthshire, which was the dower house named in the settlement of the late Lord's mother, and about which there has been a lawsuit for nearly eighty years ; also a small shooting-box in Norfolk, which was gained over the dice at Newmarket from Lord Yarmouth, that nobleman having himself won it only three hours before from a dumpling squire, who shot himself next day. The late Lord and his father lived almost entirely on their beautiful estate in the valley of the Avon ; but the Earl has never been there since one Warmenough, a man from Coventry, bought up his neighbour Devereux's place when its former owner went through the Bankruptcy Court to Monaco, and back again.

He would not sell any of his places if he could, because he likes the credit of them ; besides, they are tied up fast in the entail which the goldsmith's lawyers took care to have well signed and sealed before the daughter's wedding, considering that her bridegroom was married from the sanctuary of Holyrood while only heir-presumptive to the earldom. Otherwise, my Lord has no interest in his son, whom he does not even know by sight, and has not spoken to these twenty years. They have not quarrelled ; but Lord Escuage took up too much room in the Earl's life, and bored him. He was always getting in my Lord's way, and turning up in the wrong place ; so the Earl

asked him candidly one night behind the scenes at the Opera, "What he would take to be bought off? We had better, perhaps, settle it between us," added his Lordship dubiously; "it isn't worth while going to the insurance offices, is it?" "That depends on who of you will give most for my reversions," answered the young nobleman with equal frankness. "Well, my dear boy, try 'em," rejoined the Earl, much relieved; "try 'em, only please go away somewhere as soon as you can;" and his Lordship considered ever afterwards that he had got well out of that difficulty.

Lord Rackland has none of the modern crazes about going to Paris, and is only too glad to hear that his son lives there, well out of his way. He prefers his light and airy town house in Arlington Street, on the sunny side overlooking St. James's Park. He likes to be near his own medical man, Sir Emultius Placebo, who knows his constitution well, and always puts a pleasing face on things, so that he is half cured before he knows what is the matter with him; besides, he never has any illness to signify, the hereditary gout of his great-grandfather having skipped over him "to pounce," as he gleefully says, "on Lord Escuage, who at thirty-five has often feet like an elephant." To say the truth, too, the Earl feels a much greater man in London than in Paris, which he truly declares is "overcrowded with heirs-apparent out of work," and he adds "that he does not half like the ways of frogs since the break-up of the Second Empire, when the club in the

Avenue Gabrielle, with Caderousse and Citron, was really amusing."

The Old Earl has also a carefully-reasoned objection to dining out. He likes his own judiciously aired wines, and his own cook at home. He likes to have agreeable people to amuse him, but he has no notion of amusing anybody else. He looks upon mankind pretty much as puppets. He pulls them by some string which he has found out will move them when he feels disposed to do so, and when they will be moved. If not, he turns coolly aside, and thinks no more of them.

It is quite refreshing to note the Old Earl's placid scorn of difficulties and consequences. He has never met any obstacles which he could not overcome, and has seen gates of brass and iron yield to his touch, though they remained inexorably closed to others. Whenever the law courts or the newspapers have pretended to carp at him, he has had only to wait a short while and see the world come fawning back to his feet as meekly as ever. He despises unsuccessful people, for he has a well-founded idea that the main-spring of power is money, and he believes that people who do not know how to get money and keep it are beneath notice. He has himself an almost comical idea of its value, having seen it work such miracles. He will brood over a sixpence before his fingers loose their hold on it, although he will give five thousand guineas for a race-horse, and chirp with his familiars

over the bargain ; for the horse will be a bargain if he buys it. Being a keen judge of value, he will give nothing for nothing. He never purchases a picture or a work of Art : why should he ? There are many scores mouldering on the walls and slumbering upon pedestals, or in glass cases, at his country houses. He likes to *live* through his income, getting personal enjoyment out of every guinea. He is not to be coaxed or cajoled or bullied or argued out of a single shilling ; and would astonish an Old Bailey lawyer by his acquaintance with the seamy side of human nature where money is concerned.

Lord Rackland's information upon most subjects is astonishingly precise and accurate too, for although he never tires his eyes or wastes his time on books, he has travelled by a thousand easy high roads to knowledge, and has heard the latest word of the foremost of men of his time on the subjects which they best understand. He cannot be hoodwinked or deceived, and is a match for all sorts of sly hypocrisies. Yet, there is nothing free and easy about him ; there is no taking liberties with him. He has none of the hail-fellow-well-met manner belonging to out-at-elbows Lords who have seen too much of the world's wickedness. He never associates on equal terms with any persons but those of his own caste and their sworn adherents. He would as soon think of smoking tobacco as of driving a hansom cab, and his manners have an exquisite polish.

The Old Earl's contempt for what are called "hon-ours" would be cynical, if it were not so unaffected and sincere. A Premier—who wanted his proxy, before proxies were abolished, and the votes of his trenchermen in the House of Commons—once offered him the Garter. My Lord got the Minister's letter while sitting over his dessert and cracking a filbert, for it was brought by a mounted messenger and marked "Immediate." So he merely pencilled on the back of the offer, "Can't you give it to some one else?" and asked Placebo to put it into another envelope and direct it. Then he took the filbert out of its shell and ate it without giving further thought to the subject. For similar reasons he could never be persuaded to go to Court.

Lord Rackland does not understand why he should be required to take trouble about anything. He regulates his life on perfectly intelligible principles. When enjoying his usual excellent health, the Earl has a dinner of eight covers every day at his own table. One very seldom meets another Old Earl among them, or yet a young one, save now and then a scapegrace nephew who is lucky on the turf and whom the Old Earl rather likes. Indeed, his Lordship knows too much of the private history of his own noble family to feel overmuch reverence for others. So his guests are all useful people. He does not throw away his cook's triumphs, and he perfectly comprehends the value of a nobleman's invitation.

It is astonishing how many useful people will go to dine with a peer, and how very useful they will make themselves in order to get asked. A metropolitan magistrate for the district in which the Earl resides, the smartest cross-examiner out, a manageable editor, a man about the Court, a sharp attorney not too much in view, a club gossip, a theatrical manager, and a popular clergyman, are among the guests surest to turn up at Lord Rackland's.

Thus my Lord gets the cream of everything, and feels delightfully safe from molestation from without. Moreover, he supplements his dinners adroitly when he wants to use any particular person, and sets aside a certain sum for clever charities, ferreting out useful men in straits, and sending them a twenty-pound, or even a fifty-pound note at an opportune moment, if they are worth it. He is well aware that their goodwill and partisanship have a solid value, and that public opinion requires a system of well-devised checks when it is likely to be troublesome. Little Jenkins manages that kind of thing; and when the Old Earl wishes to pull the wires in any direction, Jenkins does it for him. The Earl himself is never seen or heard of, seldom even suspected, in that business.

Each and all of these discreet arrangements have their purpose; for my Lord's family is so ancient and illustrious that many pleasing things have grown up around it, and cling to it in a picturesque fashion,

close as so much ivy. For instance, Lord Rackland holds several profitable Crown leases. He has an annuity two centuries old, to which his right of inheritance by the female side is open to dispute. He is trustee of a forgotten charity, and no one has ever heard what becomes of its revenues. He is hereditary Grand Registrar of Waste Paper for Scotland, which obliges all litigants north of the Tweed to pay him for keeping a clerk to receive fees on the sale or transfer of lands and tenements above the value of five pounds. He has something unexplained to do with the Duchy of Lancaster, and which weighs heavily upon legatees. He has a right of toll over a bridge in Ireland, and is Lord High Free Forester of the Shetland Islands. The jetsam and flotsam on a part of the coast of Wales is assigned to him under a charter granted to Hugo de Smalsoulés by Edward III. He is trustee of a rich hospital, and has a perpetual charge upon the revenues of a college. He has a sinecure connected with the Excise, another attached to the Cinque Ports, another in which the Trinity House is concerned. He receives an annual payment in compensation for a lighthouse given to his grandfather by George III., and blown down long ago. He has also a compensation allowance from the India Office, and another from the representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. His name turns up mysteriously at the Heralds' Office in conjunction with fees on titles and public honours; and again at the Enrolment Office.

His Lordship's revenue is indeed the growth of many snug and comfortable off-shoots of Fortune, which have become luxuriant with careful fostering. He does not get so much as he might by any one of them, for he prudently leaves a large share to the deputies who do what little has to be done, so that scandal is always hushed up. In official returns and parliamentary papers the salaries of his sinecures look too small for comment, or are omitted altogether. Such highly respected people are mixed up with them that no glimpse of the truth ever comes to light.

Besides, the Old Earl is a good man of business, though people who do not know a great deal of him would hardly believe it. He is a consummate master of all the arts of his order, which foil an adversary and put inquiry off the scent till it goes hunting elsewhere in sheer weariness. He never says either Yes or No distinctly. He knows the irresistible spell which lies in courteous delay. He has a convenient solicitor, who will never act without the Earl's instructions, and the Earl will never act till he has consulted the convenient solicitor. He will on occasion write formal letters about nothing, containing polite references to other letters of the same purport, till his correspondents find themselves in an inextricable maze, and no one can show them the way out of it. He is never guilty of sharp practice himself, but his opponents find monstrous keen things done in his Lordship's interest through third parties; and if

they are so wrong-headed as to get angry they find themselves face to face with a led captain and his attorney, my Lord standing outside the wrangle altogether.

Thus, on the whole, it will be seen that the Old Earl is a fine ripe production of that admirable social and political system which exists in our free and great country. He is certainly free and great, and in times of foreign war or public trouble would sincerely desire that his tenants and dependents should fight for his ancient liberties. He might not think it necessary to fight himself, now that the Army is officered by means of competitive examination, but he would be unreservedly of opinion that others should fight, for he decidedly gives preference to his own country as the most convenient place of residence now left for a nobleman throughout the whole world.

THE DOWAGER.

REMEMBER that the noble family of Sydewynde were all much impressed by Anne, Marchioness of Boltington. Any reference to that gorgeous lady was sufficient to command their attention even in times of toothache or five minutes before a hunt breakfast in the country. The present Marquis was but a very small party compared with his overwhelming relative by marriage, and, except that he had occasion now and then to bless himself because his father had made so judicious a choice on his second nuptials, his hereditary estate of nineteen acres had nothing in common with the grandeur of "Beechwood," which ill-informed people sometimes called Lady Boltington's dower house. After mentioning the tokens of respect paid to her by a peer of the Marquis's exalted rank and his belongings, it is needless to add that the Marchioness Anne possessed a large fortune, entirely under her own control. Her Ladyship's father (Tom Bilkins, of Manchester, who did so sharp a business with Japan when it was first opened to British enterprise) rather encouraged her idea of enlisting in the

ranks of the aristocracy when she first made this bold idea known to him ; but he took care that she should do so under easy conditions. He looked, therefore, for the right sort of coronets, and as there was only one fat middle-aged Duke in the market, rather out of fashion, too, he bid for the best Marquis in stock just then.

Bilkins did not grudge what he paid for the nobleman, though it was, as he often observed in after days, "rather beyond the price current," but he insisted that the cash once handed over to his Lordship, there all financial transactions between them should end. Grip, Holdfast, Clench, Binder, and Grip, the eminent conveyancers, drew the settlements, which were unusually stringent in their provisions ; and when the Most Honourable Altamont-Savory-Keane-Sydneynde, third Marquis of Boltington, had spent his own purchase-money he departed upon foreign travel, as had been the custom of his predecessors since the first Marquis had paid the debts of the Prince Regent and ruined himself.

Fortunately, the Lord who had given a title to the pretty Manchester girl died within a reasonable time. She had behaved very kindly to him, paying his tailors' bills now and then, and allowing him quite enough for pocket-money ; but he was an incurable gambler, and when he departed this life, after a run of ill-luck at hazard, it was certainly a relief. The new Marquis was a much more reasonable person.

He had, luckily for himself, not been an eldest son, and only dropped into the succession by accident, as collateral heir. He was then a decent sort of fellow, who had a small appointment in the Customs or the Excise, and kept fowls in a back garden at Kentish Town. Of course, when he came into the family honours, his pursuits were modified.

The Dowager knew far too well what was due to herself not to be good to her stepson. She sent for him, indeed, to call upon her the day after he had taken his seat in the Legislature, and promised to continue the weekly allowance which she had made to his deceased parent, till she could do something still better for him. Shortly afterwards, too, on the eve of a borough election, where the votes of her tenantry were much wanted, she got him made commissioner of something, which was in reality a snug sinecure worth fifteen hundred a year. She always felt generously towards the man who bore her name, helped him to rear his numerous offspring; and even after he was provided for she continued his allowance to his eldest son, and promised it should go with the title if he behaved himself. All she exacted was obedience, and she got it to her heart's content.

She never cared to marry again, or, with her property, she would not have wanted for offers among the upper classes. She wisely chose to remain free, and went a great deal into Society. No party recorded in *The Morning Post* was ever considered complete

without her ; and her stately carriage, with three footmen in bag-wigs hanging on behind, made an imposing figure on drawing-room days at Court. People in high places were fond of her, because she wanted nothing, and had a great deal to give away. Besides, she was not young enough to be a flirt, and not old enough to be a bore. Her dinners were admirable, and she gave a great many of them. Her country house at Beechlands, which Tom Bilkins had bought after glorious news from the China seas, was one of the finest show-places in England, and the Dowager had made it thoroughly comfortable.

General Sydewynde, an elderly military officer who was a competent judge of wine, managed the Marchioness's cellar, and performed the delicate duties of her chief butler ; his brother, a Yorkshire squire, replenished her stables ; and Lady Selina Sydewynde, daughter of the second Marquis, and still unmarried at fifty-five, was lieutenant over her household, she only acting on judiciously selected occasions as commander-in-chief. So the world had nothing to say against her. She surrounded herself with Sydewyndes, and dealt so impartially with them that not one could pretend to be greater than his fellows, or to hold an undue share of her favours. She gave ecclesiastical benefices in her patronage to three of them ; she put one in the Army, two in the Navy, as the more patriotic service, and there was a whole company of little Sydewyndes scattered about on the foundations

of public schools, through her influence with trustees and head masters.

Thus, gradually, she came to wield a real and permanent authority over the great world of London. Both Court and Ministries found her useful, for she learned how to bring together people who wanted to see each other, and was a charming hostess. An invitation to her house was everywhere recognised as a brevet of social rank, and her introduction could open many of the best drawing-rooms in Europe. Cabinets were formed in her boudoir over the caravan tea, which was served in Sèvres cups, of an afternoon; and matches by the dozen were made in her conservatory. Her town house was one of the best in Carlton Gardens, and lay right in the midst of the world of fashion and politics. Every politician also knew that it was quite safe to visit her, and that Boltington House was neutral ground. They could go there without being pestered to do anything unreasonable, and if a negotiation had to be gingerly managed between rival Premiers or Secretaries of State, they could talk over the hotter questions without compromising themselves; and an intelligent good-natured woman, who is rich, free, and at home when wanted, can perform wonders in such cases.

The Marchioness (Anne) was truly grand as a pacificator. She could use just the arguments wanted for reconciling people who are offended with each other. She could make point-blank appeals to the

interest of one person and to the feelings of another. It was known that her influence was powerful enough to do anything in reason, and that which could not be done through her could hardly be done at all. She was perfectly well aware of the tone and temper of Society concerning all social disputes, and had heard the opinions of the highest personages in the realm about them. Her advice, therefore, was worth having when she could be persuaded to give it; and it sometimes astonished her to see how many illustrious people were glad to know what she thought of their affairs. Prelate and judge, captains of great renown, place-hunters, who would not have spoken of their hopes to their own brothers or sons, talked over them with her, for one of the secrets of her power was that she was always loyal to the trust reposed in her.

Once—and it was said to be the rarest thing that ever happens in this country—there was a murmur of enthusiasm when the Marchioness appeared at a Royal garden-party, for as she entered, a very model of gracious dignity, the First Lady in the land advanced some steps, then took her by both hands and kissed her. It was whispered that something had happened in connection with one of the Princes; but this was mere surmise, and nothing ever transpired to confirm the rumour. All the world saw or heard was that Royalty was pleased, and that whatever the Marchioness had done had been well done.

So two generations of her friends and admirers

passed by, and she who had been always wise and gentle became venerable also. As extreme old age came upon her she went out less, but her reception-days were thronged by all that was beautiful and renowned in England. She began to give away several of the most splendid of her jewels and personal ornaments. Her famous pearls from the Potemkin collection went to Mabel Sydewynde on her wedding with Lord Gale. A great Brazilian diamond, which had belonged to the princely Chandos, was a bridal gift to her sister, who married Mr. Tempest, the rich Australian. Some of the finest of her Indian shawls went to others of the race whose title she bore. But it came at last to be noticed that a little girl, with wondering blue eyes and golden hair, was always with her. She was known as plain Miss Alice Smith, a distant relative of my Lady's father, till people came to speak of her as the great heiress. When the present Lord Boltington's eldest son won the Victoria Cross in Zululand, the Marchioness (Anne) made a match between them.

THE RECTOR.

HIS style and title was the Reverend David Guy, Rector of Muchmore-cum-Pluribus, in Berkshire. It was at his parsonage in that lovely southern county that I spent one of the pleasantest months of my life. The time was July and August; and I, having, like most of my fellows, idled away the summer term at Oxford, meant to make up for wasted hours in the Long Vacation. So I readily accepted an invitation from Guy (my father's friend) to come and look him up. There, thought I, I shall be quiet. I was very young then—hopeful nineteen—or I might have guessed that three pretty girls, all marriageable, do not conduce to that serene frame of mind best befitting the serious study of the Ethics and the Republic.

Guy was about fifty-five, of the right sort of height, with thin greyish hair and sandy whiskers turning to grey. Of a rather flabby face and peaked nose. They used to call him “Snipe” at Eton, where, by-the-way, he had been flogged twenty-three times, being second in flagellatory honours to none of his contemporaries, excepting Mr. (afterwards the Duke of) Beresford.

After dinner, over a glass of fine old madeira, when the ladies had retired, he loved to recount the story of his floggings; and succeeded in leaving on his hearers the impression that he richly merited twenty-two of them.

What a capital fellow he was! And how utterly unlike the popular conception of a country parson! He had travelled in all sorts of places, and seen all sorts of things, and had even gambled at Crockford's as a young man. He took in the *Fortnightly*, and had dipped into Rénan; he respected Catholics as "gentlemen," but spoke of a Baptist minister "as my dear old friend Dewsbury." There was no narrowness, no bigotry, about him; and, possibly, there were no very deep convictions. He never talked Theology, unless you started the subject, when he was ready enough to examine it from a philosophic point of view; always provided you had the tact to look respectful—to show that your doubts were honest, and to hint that you rather wanted to be convinced towards his way of thinking.

For, whatever might have been the Rector's own innermost thoughts, he never quite forgot that he was an officer in the spiritual army. The cause might or might not commend itself to him, but he had taken the Church's pay, and felt bound to fight the Church's battle. In a word, he was animated by professional spirit, if not by zeal, for the saving of souls. Honour, rather than religion, was his guiding principle. He

would have disliked being burnt for the *Filioque*; but then he would have been almost equally averse from taking mean advantage of a polemical foe, and could scarcely have been induced to say hard things to a knave, or even to a fool.

This happy disposition made him pleasant at Quarter Sessions and Vestry meetings; it kept him out of unseemly discussions with his churchwardens. He had that conciliatory way of getting over difficulties which is as oil on troubled waters, and is so essential to a clergyman's dignity. He was on good terms even with the doctor, a follower of Joanna Southcott, and with the solicitor, who was electioneering agent for the Whigs. He even managed to please the Squire's wife, who considered herself patroness of religious things in general; so that it was really an improving sight to mark the honest pastor come out of church when sermon was over and greet his parishioners without an unkind or bitter thought for any one of them.

In the old days, when priests were forbidden to marry, a man of such polished manners, such winning words, and such clear-headed ways of thought would have risen high in Church and State—have been a Bishop and Lord Privy Seal, maybe, and a King's confidential Minister. But David Guy was born in a commonplace age, and freighted with a wife and eight children—four sons and four daughters. He had, therefore, completed half a century of existence

before his friend the Tory Chancellor appointed him to the first good living he ever obtained—a snug berth—£1,050 a year, as the “Clerical Directory” put it, with glebe-house and a population of only 457. The meaning of a living of this sort is that it happens to be one of the few rescued from Henry VIII.’s courtiers. That excellent monarch loved to assign the tithes of a parish to any dependent who might happen to be in temporary difficulties. The layman consequently became Rector and drew the rectorial tithes, while a poor Curate was named his Vicar, charged to perform his routine duties, and endowed with the vicarial tithes only. Muchmore, however, had always remained under clerical Rectors; and so Guy received both Rectorial and Vicarial tithes, to his great comfort.

As is too often the case, fortune came to the Rev. David Guy a little late. He had to keep one son at Oxford; another, who was qualifying to become a tea-merchant, in London; and two more at Cheltenham. Then he was bound to dress his daughters, at least the three eldest, in some sort of style; and to dispense quite as much hospitality as he could afford on their behalf. To crown all, he must needs invest a few hundreds he had saved in the Washowaigh Mining Company, Limited. “Yes, do you know,” he would say, “I never could understand that term ‘limited liability.’ Ever since the Washowaigh came to grief, they have been making periodical ‘calls’ on

me. The first two or three times I went to my lawyers about it. Blush and Dolittle—that's the name of the firm. Blush always ended by saying, 'You'd better let me settle that,' which I found meant I was to pay, without even a protest. So I left off calling on Blush, who, as you may imagine, did not forget *me*. About the time his bill came in I heard he had expressed 'the deepest sympathy for Mr. Guy' to a friend. I suppose he meant well."

The conversation then turned on the subject of commercial morality. Guy had been Rector of a metropolitan parish, and had again and again been sent for to Newgate by respectable persons who had imperfectly studied the laws of their country. One of the first things a fraudulent director would do after his arrest would be to give the clergyman of his parish as a reference. It mattered not that he had never seen him, and had never been to church. The thing looked well, and the poor detected rogue had a vague idea that the parson might in some mysterious way interfere in his behalf. Of course, Guy could do little or nothing for them. "Had any of them ever seemed touched by grace at such moments?" I asked, as the decanter became lower and lower. "Not one. And I never talked religion to them. Had they spoken to me, it would have been another matter." Whether Guy was right, or whether it be better to speak in season and out of season, I leave others to decide. Perhaps Guy was too much of a gentleman

to make a good priest, who must be something higher than a gentleman. Very likely Demas had more *savoir vivre* than St. Paul, whom he forsook.

And yet Guy should have seen enough of the things of this world to despise them, seeing that to him at least they had hardly proved discountable. He was once parson at Wheatlands, where by immemorial usage the Lord of the Manor paid £100 a year as his share of tithes. An exception, however, had crept in. If the Lord happened to be "a Royalty," he was exempt from tithes, as being better able to pay them than most men. When the Princess Bona was assigned Wheatlands as a residence, she sent for Guy and gave him a cheque for £50, adding that she should repeat the donation annually. Her Royal Highness was careful to impress upon Guy that this was a gift, and not the payment of a due. She might have given the full amount, and more graciously. Still, she made some attempt to square generosity and justice. Her successor was Prince Augustus of Klein-Pfennig, who occupied the most exalted position in the empire next to the Sovereign. His Serenity had long observed a discreet silence on the subject of tithes, when Guy, nothing daunted, wrote to ask him if he meant to follow the precedent laid down by the Princess Bona. The Prince replied that he was very sorry, but could afford nothing. Guy applied to a friend at Court, who answered, "Ask for £25." But the smaller sum was likewise refused. Augustus had everything

found him by the nation, *plus* £30,000 a year pocket-money; the incumbent had £300 a year, with his own tea and sugar to buy.

Did Guy turn Radical? Not a bit of it. He posted eight hundred miles from the Continent in '74 to vote for a Tory candidate, and went nearly wild with joy at the results of the general election. Not that there is any particular merit in his conduct; the fact is, he has no influential friends among the Whigs, and, if he had, ratting would appear to him "bad form." But his opinion of the Serene Family is a poor one. Nor did he think much of the Earl of Beaconsfield, though he greatly admires the Duke of Richmond and Lord John Manners. Still these are questions of taste into which it is useless to inquire.

One curious intellectual defect has the Rev. David Guy. He knows nothing of any nation but his own, and judges all political and social institutions by a rigid English standard. It is to no purpose that he has travelled in France, Italy, Germany, Russia. His French is slight in quantity and execrable in quality. Not long since we were at a dinner-party in Paris, he sitting on the right of a fair Republican. Guy wishing to make himself agreeable, hastened, before the soup had been dispatched, to furnish his neighbour with an exposition of his views on the situation in France. "Je crois," he began, plunging straight *in medias res*, "que le plus bon gouvernement pour la France est l'Empire. Je ne crois pas que vous pouvez

avoir une République dans votre pays. . . . Napoléon, il était notre allié—vous savez.”

The lady smiled and assented, hoping, perhaps, that the Rev. David would soon have done. But he speedily returned to the charge; till, by a superhuman feat of gymnastics, I managed to tread on his gouty toe. The admonition proved effectual; and when I explained to him afterwards, he was unfeignedly sorry for the blunder he had committed. It was not his fault, unless crass ignorance is to be accounted such. To this day I doubt whether he understands that M. Gambetta was not a Communist; and feel certain that if admitted to an audience of the Empress Eugénie he would take the first opportunity of singing Prince Napoleon’s praises in her presence.

The truth is, that wherever he has travelled he has met Englishmen, and lived amongst them, as patriotic tourists can, in every climate under the sun. Hence, in his wanderings, he has seen foreign churches and palaces, but not foreign men and women; the Rhine and the Iron Gates, but not Germans and Hungarians. Since we English all turned rovers, we have deprived travelling of half its enlightening effects, as far as we ourselves are concerned.

I must add that David was what the French call “a good child”—good-natured to a fault, if that can be. He was very kind to Mrs. Guy, and so had come to like her pretty well; yet I knew she had com-

pelled him to marry her. She had been the daughter of a clergyman to whom David was curate. Miss Stickler, from whom Heaven had removed the temptations incidental to beauty, set her cap at a handsome cornet of dragoons, who was so bored that he exchanged into a regiment ordered to India. Then Miss fell ill, but recovered just in time to hear that David had got a living, and was to leave next week. She declared it was heartless of him—the one man she had ever loved. On that hint spoke an astute mother, and poor David capitulated without striking a blow. “Afraid to say No.” These four words form the key-note to many a life.

THE CURATE.

ON a recent occasion I was travelling from London to Brighton, when my sole companion in the carriage was a young gentleman who could at once be recognised as a Ritualist, a priest, and a member of the "E. C. W.," or some other equally edifying society. He wore a crucifix suspended from his watch-chain, and his attire consisted of a black suit, which would have sent Brummell into a fit—so long and queerly cut was the coat, so high the waistcoat. In the latter there was no room left for shirt-front, or even for white tie. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.* The dog-collar which rose above the black cloth was of spotless purity, and the grey gloves which the young ecclesiastic allowed himself—his only deviation from strict black and white—seemed to have been purchased of Jouvin that very morning, so well did they fit and so unclouded was their hue.

The cloth, too, of that hopelessly-made coat was of the finest, and I soon remarked that my companion's boots were patent-leathers. The crucifix was of gold, suspended from the bar of a gold chain of solid and artistic workmanship.

He looked so odd a fish that as soon as we were off I began to think how I could manage to get into conversation with him; but it was he who began "Do you object to smoking, sir?"—"Not at all." His was the question, mine the (untruthful) reply. He had already produced a cigar-case in Russian leather, with a monogram in gold letters, surmounted by a coronet.

Though I don't like tobacco, I must acknowledge that rarely did a cigar breathe less unfragrant odours than that which was being smoked by the Rev. George Wildair, for such was my fellow-traveller's name. In fact, everything about his outward appearance and adjuncts—save the cut of the coat, but then he was a parson—spoke the prosperous English gentleman of the last quarter of our century, with a well-filled purse and an empty head.

We were soon fast friends of fifteen minutes' standing, and I learnt all about him. George Wildair was fifth son of a Norfolk baronet, of limited means and a large family. They were also counts of the kingdom of Portugal—hence the coronet on the cigar-case. I fancy a former Wildair had earned the gratitude of Dom Pedro XXIV. by consenting to espouse one of that monarch's wards; nor had his Majesty proved ungrateful.

People who belong to the recognised titular nobility of two countries have generally a good deal to say for themselves. So, naturally, the Wildairs were

intensely proud of their honours, especially the Continental ; and George had inherited from his Catholic great-grandmother a tendency to the Romish views of things in general. At the same time, as he grew up from being a pretty boy to be a handsome young man, with curling hair and a silky moustache, he became more and more convinced that it could be no true Church which forbade any of its sons to enter upon the holy estate of matrimony. On all other points George agreed with Rome. The pomp of her ceremonial worship appealed at once to the spiritual and sensual elements, which were about equally mingled in his nature. The *Ave Maris Stella* touched his heart, which was tender and not altogether wanting in lofty impulses ; the lighted candles on the altar pleased his somewhat childish fancy ; while the perfume of the incense was grateful to his nostrils.

Meanwhile he had taken things easily at Cambridge, had run £800 into debt, and had come out seventeenth Junior Optime in the Tripos. "He has never had a taste for mathematics," he explained, which meant that he had never taken the trouble to learn them. Still he did know something of Shakespeare and Scott, and even of Dante (through Cary's version) ; nor had his debts been utterly ignoble—the bookseller's bill amounting to £150 of the whole sum. George's worst faults were that he hated trouble, work, cold mutton, dingy rooms, composite candles—in short, that, to be a happy as well as

useful member of Society, he required a comfortable income.

And this he had not. Sir Wilful Wildair, having in his youth committed every sin except those that the law punishes, and having fooled away much of the property not strictly entailed, was doing his best to amend by an old age of thrift and strict severity in all dealings with his own family. While George was at Cambridge he received an allowance of £200 a year; when named Curate at £100 a year, his paternal allowance to him was reduced by that sum. Had not a kindly aunt intervened, it is difficult to conjecture what would have happened to George, who had no idea of denying himself anything. Probably he would have gone to the bad in one of the usual ways. Lady Rachel Macbiarn helped him for a year or two; then died, leaving her nephew an annuity of £500—just enough to enable George to live comfortably as a bachelor. It was an unfortunate bequest—too much for mischief, and too little (in his hands) for good.

Unless another aunt leaves him more, I fear George will scarcely conquer Fortune. Still, he manages to lead an outwardly respectable life, has paid most of his college ticks, and is a favourite of the Vicar under whom he serves. High Church ladies, too, approve of him, though not so much as might be fancied. George is weak; and women soon discover that failing, which is one that they rarely pass over.

Even Mrs. Goodhart, the Vicar's wife, says with a sigh to her thirty-year-old daughter Amy, "I've no patience with Mr. Wildair; he is such a muff." And Amy sighs too.

In truth, the man's conscience—perhaps but a fitful, hysteric thing at best—torments him for his backslidings. It is not strong enough to prevent him from muddling away his life; but it is sufficiently restless to make him suffer for doing so. At times, therefore, it will so goad him that he may be seen buckling to his parish work and doing something like his duty for a brief season. He will then walk the rounds all day with high-souled Frank Strongitharm, his fellow-worker in the same vineyard; or seek to do good unostentatiously with the Reverend Septimus Godwin, their colleague in a neighbouring district. He will attend to the Sunday schools and hear flocks of poor children, not too quick-witted, their catechism, in a patient spirit; or he will carry the last and greatest consolation of all to the sick and dying in miserable, overcrowded alleys, and in fever hospitals. But these spasms of benevolence and good works never last long; and really Mr. Wildair's most congenial element can only be found at the tea-tables of select companies of spinsters on the wane, who regard him as an oracle on vestments.

There are minutes, though they are minutes only, when George Wildair rises to the full stature with which the celestial powers endowed him. He does

not practice what he preaches, and yet he does believe what he professes. As he reads the Communion Service, you understand that the man's speech quivers with emotion, that he is (for the few minutes) a true priest, ministering in the Holy of Holies. He will argue earnestly, too, with unbelievers; and at one time, men who had heard him telling stories more witty than wise, at hours commonly devoted to rest, were wont to chaff George Wildair, and playfully address him as "you old humbug"—words which would make him sulky in company, and melancholy when he thought over them alone.

Now, no one chaffs him to his face. He is simply accepted by the society in which he moves as a new example of an old type—Dick Steele in a cassock. Men rather like him, for he is a pleasant fellow, and becomes gentler tempered every year. They know, too, that if he ever had ten pounds to spare, he would willingly lend five to the first comer with a tale of distress. Women are kind to him, with that most cruel of kindness which leaves nothing to hope. And as he can hope nothing from himself, nor from the faith which it is too hard to him to exercise in its essential points of self-denial and active exertion, some find it difficult to understand why George Wildair was created. Not for his own happiness; not for the help of others. For what, then? Possibly to give Amy Goodhart a chance of doing the noblest work that can fall to a woman's lot. Nor, if Amy is

wise, will she shrink from the task, difficult as it is. George is grown very humble now, and dreams no longer of young heiresses, or other rare birds likest to black swans. He would make a docile husband under an absolute government; and it is said that ladies love to rule their household with a firm hand.

THE FAMILY SOLICITOR.

IN a large bare room, on the first floor of a shabby old house in New Square, Lincoln's Inn, is passed most of the daylight which falls to the share of Mr. Harry Makepeace Vellumson, who is a prince among conveyancers. He was not born with a gold spoon in his mouth, and worked very hard before he rose to the pleasant heights of his profession. There are marks of obstinate labour and patient thought on every line of his somewhat delicate face, and in the deep furrows which long years of care and struggle with adverse circumstances have ploughed across his massive forehead. Now he takes things easily. Business pours in upon him like a perpetual stream of milk and honey; but he only takes the cream of it, leaving the churning, potting, and all the petty bother to his clerks, and to his partners, who are also convenient helps.

A stately, kind old gentleman, with quite a sufficient sense of his own importance, is Mr. Vellumson. His voice is extremely agreeable, his manners have a punctilious courtesy, which at once tells an observer

that his clients are among the salt of the earth. There is a notable dignity in his tall spare figure, bent, not ungracefully—in the steadfast look of his dim blue eye, and white beard. It might be better, perhaps, if he did not take snuff, and if his clothes did not look as though he slept in them. The fact is that, although this chief of the eminent firm of Vellumson, Deodand, Heriot, and Vassal has at least half a million sterling placed, according to Lord Thurlow's advice, in the elegant simplicity of the Three per Cents, and is a member both of the Carlton Club and of the Athenæum, being at heart a fine gentleman, he never had a valet in the whole course of his life. He has lived for six-and-thirty years on the basement floor of the same house where his office is situated, and a charwoman "does for him," as her mother did before her. Why should he change his lodging? He is very little there, and any place is good enough to sleep in, he argues; though he and his physician differ in opinion on that point. For the rest, he is a temperate man, who takes a considerable quantity of exercise, keeps his mind well occupied, has abundant rest, and may be said to be never ill.

Many of the very best houses in London are open to Mr. Vellumson. He dines quietly with Lord Richlands whenever that cosy nobleman is thinking of adding to his estates. Mrs. Smoothly, the opulent widow, discusses all the alterations of her will with him over truly admirable madeira, capons, and pastry.

She makes a pudding for him on these occasions with her own plump hands, because he once praised it. Henry Trimmer, the king of the Court wits; Dr. Goodman, the famous physician; Lord Probate, C.J.; Bishop Bloomer, the tremendous pamphleteer; and Sir John Mellow, the Astrologer Royal, who is wise in the ways and management of bees, meet together every Saturday at a beefsteak dinner, which comprises all the delicacies of the season. It is refreshing to hear their simple and homely talk when these old friends get together in the winter evenings. The opponents they have had to face and fight with all day would marvel at every one of them.

So it is hardly going too far to say that Mr. Vellumson knows everybody, more or less, who is worth knowing, and has a general acquaintance with the world so extensive as to qualify him admirably for an adviser in difficult cases. The proudest men or women in the kingdom might safely leave their honour in his hands, assured that he would place them before the world in a proper light; or he would recommend them to consult somebody else. He will not touch either a shady case or a queer client.

"Tell me everything, and I will advise you," is the form of address he adopts to a disingenuous person who consults him with half a story, cutting allrodomontade and shuffling quite short. Then he takes a huge pinch of rappee, and blandly awaits the result. He has observed that attempts to extort money give

the grandees who take counsel from him most trouble. Some rogue has found out a family secret and is determined to turn it into hard cash, or has done so till the tax has become intolerable; and Mr. or Mrs. Croesus, in danger of being utterly ruined, has rushed to him in despair for relief. Then the cruel truth has to come out to him also. Alderman Worthington, who has twice passed the chair, had to confess something so startling that he fell down in a fit before the grievous tale was done. The Lady Ermine Wintersnow, Lord Zero's daughter, visited him in such ghastly anguish, that when she had unburdened her tortured heart she tried to kill herself. It was all hushed up. The Alderman is now one of the Governors of the Bank of England, and a baronet. He dozes on the magisterial bench in plenary worship, free from all alarms. The Lady Ermine married the eldest of her six daughters but a month ago, and Mr. Vellumson drew the settlements. She has been the Right Hon. Countess of Plumbunenough these last twenty years.

Mr. Vellumson knows all about sharp practice in decorous ways. He will not resort to it himself. His firm never touch criminal business, but Fifay and Latitat, of Scaly Place, are terribly active when instructed by the great firm of Lincoln's Inn. It would be a dauntless rogue, indeed, who could venture to confront them. There are so many ways of scaring a rascal, and Latitats know them all. So does Casay, their chief clerk for criminal business.

On ordinary occasions Mr. Vellumson's firm adheres strictly to the nicest forms of professional etiquette. Their cases very seldom go into the law courts. They end by compromises and amicable settlements when they do end, but these eminent lawyers are never in a hurry. A few words from Mr. Vellumson personally to any other solicitor of his own standing will always stop active proceedings on both sides, save such as are taken by common consent. Both gentlemen then know perfectly well what they mean to do, and their clients have to submit. It is far better to employ Mr. Vellumson than a sharp attorney, for no legal black sheep ever attempts to butt at his clients. He can do really grand things for an honest man in trouble. He will accomplish wonders in the way of delay. Even usurers consider his name a sort of implied guarantee for ultimate settlement, and shrink from using harsh measures in a case where he is concerned. Judges, too, and the lights of the law, know that when his name is on a brief everything is fair and above board. His cheque would pass as current as a bank-note, even with a sheriff's officer on a Saturday and after business hours, all usage to the contrary notwithstanding—a fact that saved the commission of "handsome Jim Foley," who was arrested just as his regiment was about to leave for India.

The only cases the great firm dislikes are official cases. "You see," Mr. Vellumson is wont to remark to any new victim of irresponsible power who consults

him, "we may have an excellent cause, but we have no tribunal." Then, after taking a prolonged pinch of snuff, and using a bandana handkerchief to mitigate an explosion, which only takes place when he is moved to voiceless anger, "I would rather that a son of mine broke stones upon the road than that he entered the public service in the present state of the law. Neither his fortune nor his character is ever safe there, for he may be condemned to utter ruin without a trial."

Mr. Vellumson has nothing of an ordinary attorney about him, and often feels a true friendship for his clients. When this happens, he talks poetry to them rather than law, and delights in reciting whole passages from Wordsworth, who was his friend. His elocution is beautiful; he would have made a remarkable orator; and, after whiling away hour after hour in learned talk, he will gradually give modest glimpses of his own inner life, telling how he secretly delights in gardening, and has a niece who was his dead sister's child and will be his heiress, though she does not know it, but now blossoms like a heath-flower at a cottage in Cumberland. Thus client and solicitor become fast friends.

Mr. Vellumson has advised generation after generation of fine old English households, being considered almost as one of themselves. He is welcomed in a hundred halls and manor-houses. He arranges dowers and settlements so as to conciliate the interests of expectants with those of possessors. He knows the

real amount of poor Lady Lackland's slender jointure, and exactly what will be left to Lord Toplofty when he has reduced his tenants' rents thirty per cent. Mr. Hunckx, too, of Lostwithiel, has confessed to him that the Ruby-Wheal is but vanity and vexation of spirit; so that sixty years of curmudgeon tricks have disappeared into a little worthless machinery, which is all that remains of his great mining property. 'Tis a bad business; but then sweet Lucy Wyvil, the Cornish heiress, who is in love with her cousin, Mr. Hunckx's son, has consulted him as to how she can come to her uncle's rescue—"without his knowing it," she adds in a pretty womanly way. So Mr. Vellumson can give even the ruined miser some comfort, and before he returns to town will try to make two lovers happy, though it is scarcely in the ordinary practice of solicitors. He will do all this, and more even, during his holidays, or when on a chance visit to the country; but he will not get Lord Tantivy, the local magnate, out of his debts for ten shillings in the pound, though that shrewd, magniloquent peer strongly urged him to do so, having got wind of an unexpected reversion being about to fall in to him, and being desirous to begin life's game anew on the strength of it.

Far different was the case of Mrs. Freshfield, who caught him while he was fishing one autumn day at Windermere. She was just about to have the bed sold from under her for one of the late Duke of

Scampington's acceptances which her deceased husband had unfortunately endorsed, and his present Grace naturally refused to pay a penny in the first instance. Mr. Vellumson, however, chanced to meet the Duke travelling up to town in a railway carriage soon afterwards, and they had some conversation which nobody heard, after which his Grace went on his way with a face quite livid. Then Widow Freshfield's furniture was saved, Mr. Vellumson merely remarking that "he had paid his father's debts, and he thought that the Duke should do likewise, or give up the title he had inherited, with the obligations belonging to it." He said this in his usual measured and high-bred tones; but one or two well-informed persons added significantly, "Just so," and remembered that there was a claimant to the Scampington estates who might be rather difficult to deal with should the great firm of Vellumson, Heriot, Deodand, and Vassal take up his cause, for they always employed Sir Job Daniels, whose word was law in Equity.

"Hush!" said Mr. Vellumson, with a quiet smile, when his friends discoursed in this way; "the great art of retaining power is *not* to use it." It would be surprising to find out how powerful Mr. Vellumson is, were it not that all real power in such a community as ours tends to get into the hands of lawyers. He could foreclose mortgages, thereby bringing misery and disaster on some of the most illustrious families

in the country. He could harass trustees and executors. He could press for charges on land and life annuities and cognovits, instead of waiting for convenient seasons. As it is, he holds all sorts of securities, which seem to lie fallow in his hands; but which might be used at any moment as screws and levers of amazing force. His costs are, indeed, an item in his receipts, and the younger partners look eagerly to them to keep up their broughams and villas; Mr. Vellumson does not.

The reason is, that Mr. Vellumson has many other sources of income. He is trustee of numerous estates, the legal ownership of which is not decided. He holds funds belonging to other trustees and executors in the same position. He is solicitor for the representatives of persons who have died intestate, and immense sums of money are confided to his care, by reason of his high character. Most of it pays the usual legal toll of five per cent. before it passes out of his hands, and, besides, there is the interest which his bankers allow in the ordinary course of business on this deposit account, which is enormous. He does not speak of these things, nor is there any reason why he should do so; but it is a treat to see the cheques he will draw for any public or private object which appeals to his love of his profession, to his patriotism, or to his heart, which is very warm and kindly towards all who have once found the way to it.

THE CHAPERON.

LADY SELINA MIZZLE had many strings to her bow, which was, indeed, sadly in want of them ; and perhaps the best of all these strings was that hung on to a wire which pulled the Lord Chamberlain. It is very likely that his Lordship did not know by whom or through whom he was pulled ; possibly, he had only the very vaguest idea that he was even pulled at all ; but whenever Lady Selina gave a vigorous jerk to her own particular part of the mechanism by which he was set going, the Lord Chamberlain unconsciously went through the stateliest of his paces. The underlying reason of this edifying behaviour was always hidden beneath superfine manners and refreshing compliments. For, if the best strings are kept too dry and pulled too hard, they break. However, several people in good society knew that the secret of Lady Selina's influence lay in the fact that she had a cousin who was a permanent person of great authority in the Royal household, and that she held certain documents which placed that permanent person of great authority at her mercy.

She made a very good income out of her social position, though there was a brisk competition in the business to which she had devoted her high birth and vigorous energies ; for it was that of the professional Chaperon. Lady Selina, however, had many advantages over her rivals. In the first place, she was the daughter of a peer of the highest rank, Fulke de Were Everard Nortiman, sixth Duke of Nomanswill, which always counts for something ; then she had married into a family which had been behind the scenes of public life time out of mind, her defunct husband, Mr. Backstairs Mizzle, having been the useful friend of some of the most important personages of his generation. He would have died rich but for this, and Lady Selina, who had married him for his supposed wealth, might have turned out a very different sort of person ; but when his assets were examined it turned out that he had lent his money to the important personages as fast as he made it, or even faster ; and his widow, to her infinite mortification, inherited little but a bundle of bonds and annuity deeds, which were hardly worth the paper they were written on.

It was then that she was obliged to live by her wits. Fortune she had next to none ; but of intelligence she had a very fair share indeed. A fine impressive woman, too, was Lady Selina, with no nonsense about her. Her voice was a clear, shrill, breezy voice, quite invigorating to weak nerves. Her

stature was grand, her eyes bright and resolute, her nose had something of the bold arch which distinguished that of the late Duke of Wellington, and which is generally considered a mark of high breeding as well as of firmness in character. She had required that and more to keep her place in the world when she was left to do battle with all comers, a noble female pauper, aged forty-three.

Luckily, or as she thought luckily, she had no children of her own, and therefore was tolerably free to do as she liked. In the early part of her widowhood, therefore, she went to Florence, where living is cheap, and queened it over the Anglo-Italian colony there. She dined out every day, and gave letters of introduction in return. She also made a little by signing certificates of cure to some venders of patent medicines, who advertised her as having been miraculously healed by their nostrum; and though this was but a limited field for her ambition, she liked the Italian people and their climate, and led a convenient life among the Florentines. She also found many wealthy travellers worth her attention constantly moving about in Italy; and she could open the gates of the Vatican as easily as those of St. James's Palace. But when the new regulation came out, commanding the personal attendance of every one who made presentations at the Queen's Courts, Lady Selina was of course obliged to reside in London during the season. "I must get my Court dresses out of them now," she

said curtly to a poor relation who lived with her; "and so shall you, my dear. You must see Madame Mauve about it, and say I shall expect a handsome commission on the foolish people I bring to her."

It was a trade which required a good deal of shrewdness, for not even the ducal flag of the great house of Nortiman would have passed people really objectionable into the throne-room of Majesty. Lady Selina had to pick and choose among her customers; and it is due to English loyalty to add that she had an extensive choice. There were no end of people who had acquired property, and who wanted to show it in company where they could never feel for a moment at ease. Even when they were too old, or too fat, or too consciously vulgar to venture themselves into the great world of fashion, they were anxious that their daughters should do so; and those young ladies were invariably all a gog to set out on that risky enterprise.

Then Lady Selina made her terms. The highest price she ever got in one lump was from the blooming wife of a great railway speculator, who paid her three thousand pounds in hard money, besides perquisites, for the honour of her escort to a Drawing-room. But in this case there was a good deal of negotiation necessary; and it was whispered that Lady Selina had an illustrious coadjutor, who had also a large finger in the pie. In ordinary cases her terms were five hundred guineas. It must not be imagined that so great

and brave a lady ever condescended to ask for cash. Her poor relation managed that part of their business. Did Mrs. Loanly, the wife of the stock-jobber who had made that awful pile of money out of Egyptian loans, desire to display her own charms or those of her daughters at Court, Lady Selina Mizzle, whose birth gave her access to every society she cared to make a hunting-ground, found means of becoming acquainted with Mrs. Loanly; and when the game was once flushed her Ladyship generally bagged it. Her dresses, her carriage, her footmen took all the breath out of a middle-class matron, till there was no more spirit left in her; and once under Lady Selina's tuition, the intercourse of the pair might have been found recorded step by step in Loanly's banker's books, though not a cheque bore her Ladyship's indorsement. She dealt entirely in cash payments, and it was always politely understood that the cash was a voluntary contribution for the benefit of my Lady's poor, which made things more agreeable on all sides. "It is nice to make a large income out of one's benevolence," she was wont to say on these occasions when she and her poor relation, to whom she was very kind and cordial, sat down, as they sometimes did, after a well-spent day, to a private and confidential supper.

A kind-hearted woman was Lady Selina Mizzle, when it was possible to get under the triple armour of worldliness, rapacity, and pride in which her affections were encased. Her poor relation's lines had

fallen in pleasant places; and few dowerless widows of mature age had so many friends. Her clients did not consider their obligations at an end when they had handed over the cost of their entrance into the presence of their Sovereign; nor, to do her justice, did Lady Selina. She always took a supercilious but sincere interest in them ever afterwards. After a proper understanding, she would even send out invitations to their balls and parties, filling their fine new houses with company fit to figure in *The Morning Post*. She would supervise their garden parties, and correct the florid exuberance of their taste in banquets and ornaments. She would even choose their carriages, horses, liveries, and jewellery. She could get them the first offer of her brother Lord John Nortiman's famous yacht, or of Lord Charles Nortiman's villa at Ascot during the race week. Nothing was beyond the reach of her highborn arm, if she found good cause to stretch it out. What she could not do herself somebody else could; and whoever that somebody might be, Lady Selina could pull a wire that moved him.

There was another branch of her profession which required very discreet and nice handling but under her dexterous management it was extremely lucrative. She was the confidential referee of some of the very largest money-lenders in this metropolis. His Grace the Duke of Nomanswill, chief and head of her noble family, who had at various times in his social and political career entered into relations with every one

of them, had dropped a hint that his sister might be consulted with advantage in certain cases of delicacy, and thenceforth her advice was very frequently in request. No safer guide in pecuniary transactions with the aristocracy than Lady Selina. She knew not only the rent-roll of nearly every man who had a rent-roll, but she also knew what were the charges on it, and what the landed gentleman did with his time. She had news from every club at home or abroad, from every racecourse, from every polo and pigeon-shooting match, from every gambling-house, and from the side scenes of the theatres, through one or other of her noble relatives. She could command precisely that sort of information which is most precious to the fashionable bill discounter, and he had to pay for it. She used to boast that she had never given so much as a mutton-chop to any human being without an equivalent, which left her, upon the whole, a winner, and she was wise in her generation.

She would sail into a ball, or a fancy fair, or a horticultural show, where the flush and the fair meet together, looking like a line-of-battle ship at a regatta. A dozen of the prettiest girls present might be under her splendid convoy, and she had an attentive eye on all their doings; but she never allowed them to embarrass her course. She did not permit them to fluster her, or to whisper at her, or to mob her. Each girl commanded her own vessel under judicious sailing-orders, and seldom indeed did one of Lady Selina's

gallant fleet come into port without a galleon in tow as lawful prize. "What do you want, child?" she would say, in a hard, prosaic voice, to any girl who was not fittingly armed for conquest, or who manœuvred awkwardly, while her squadron was under canvas. "You want rank or money, or both, if you can get them, don't you? Well, then, do as you are told."

And they did as they were told, or Lady Selina took the nonsense out of them in mighty quick time. She was bluff as a man, keen as an attorney in criminal practice, droll, amusing, jolly and good-humoured too. She "trained fine," as they say at Newmarket. She would have no nerves, no faintings, no lackadaisical or melodramatic ways on any pretence whatever. Her nominations for the great prizes of the season were all heroines and martyrs. Their drill, to an experienced eye, was beautiful. They spoke exactly in the language of the day; they dressed in the loveliest fashions of to-morrow. Not a dowdy was ever seen among Lady Selina's lot; the get up of every one of them was absolutely perfect. Not a mistake in gloves, ribbons, or colours; not an ornament too much from crown to heel. The arrangement of their hair was a study; their walking was among the fine arts; their dancing was grace consummate. Every tone and inflexion of their voices, the turn of the head, the trick of the hand, had been rehearsed, and there was no more exquisite piece of acting in London than

Lady Selina marshalling her victorious Amazons on a presentation-day. The band should have played a triumphal march in honour of them; and hautboys and clarions with a silver sound should have acclaimed her.

The Honourable Miss Pettie, who had taken four virgin nieces about to all the pleasure haunts of Europe, hated Lady Selina with all her heart, now nearly full of verjuice. "Old fool," snorted her great rival; "does she expect young men are to be caught by prowling about after them. They have to give chase to my girls. The woman is a wallflower, my dear," Lady Selina would add to her poor relation (long since on the way to be rich). "She sits stock still with those pale, lanky girls beside her all of a row, and goes wherever she can get asked in a fly. Her coachman has a cold in his head, my dear. I have seen him with it. My girls only go to the best houses, and are never seen out unattended by powdered footmen, and a barouche with proper match-making horses seventeen hands high. A young man of birth and spirit who has got something in his pockets won't marry a Frump. Why should he? He has generally seen enough of them in his low connections. How do you like these ortolans? Drink Johannisberg with them, my dear, not claret-cup, as you were going to do; good hock brings out their flavour.

"There is that owl, my brother Frank's widow, too, whose girls will take root at Leamington, I

believe. They have thrown themselves, all four, mother included, at the second-rate hunting-men who go down there for the season. The fellows dine with them, flirt with them, and morris off to town in spring for better amusement. Lady Meanwell, too, our prim cousin, has never given her niece a single chance of establishing herself in a proper manner. She never lets the poor girl get out of earshot, and is always leaving her drawing-room door ajar that she may see what is going on through it. Going on, indeed! Just as if young women did not know their own business best, and how to manage it. Men get scared when they see steel traps and spring guns all about people's houses. Look at my conservatory. No better place in Belgravia for morning callers; and morning callers cost nothing. On the contrary, I make them bring round their drags and give us a good dinner.

"Then, of course, as you have seen fifty times, what they call their 'spooning' in the conservatory, with all those heady exotics, and the Orleans Club champagne afterwards, puts them in such a condition that any girl of sense and courage can have her own way with them. Mabel May caught Lord Lightfeatherly by a wild prank which scared us, you remember, a little, at first; and I hesitated to give my consent to so bold a venture till she satisfied me she had nerve to go through with it. Now she is a Marchioness, with the right sort of settlement, and

keeps her husband from making a goose of himself. A Chaperon, my dear, means a hood or a cape; it is an old word we have kept from the gay times of knight and troubadour. She should be a girl's cloak to mask her merry witcheries, while she tries their effect; she should not be the glumpy jaileress of a prisoner at large."

"Just so," answered the poor relation, for she was always of Lady Selina's way of thinking, and assented agreeably. It is a nice way of talking to superiors, and makes a dressing-room fireside, in the half-hours before going to bed, quite cheerful and cosy, especially after a supper of ortolans or oyster toast and pineapple salad, which is a diet at once light and nourishing.

THE ORNAMENTAL DIRECTOR.

THE Marquis of Mistylands was a truly magnificent creature, who married the heiress of A. Shoddyman, merchant clothier, of Bradford and San Francisco ; but Lord Augustus Shortcasshe, one of his younger brothers, had no money at all, nor would the most honourable Marquis give him any. His junior Lordship, who had a pleasant wit indeed, was wont to compare himself to an acorn, which is, he remarked, the same thing as an oak tree, only not so big. Lord Augustus and his brother were wonderfully alike. They had the same features, the same hair, even the same proud noses, and, above all, the same pure, unadulterated love of themselves, and want of feeling for each other.

“ Come, Bustibus (Bustibus was the form of Augustus used in familiar intercourse by the peer in addressing his kinsman), if you were in my place, would you give me a tanner to save me from drowning ? Out with it, man ! ‘ Yes,’ or ‘ No ’ ? ”

And to this straightforward appeal the younger brother, who never wasted an untruth, answered with

candour and spirit, "Not one"—whatever else he was going to say, however, was happily stopped by the entrance of the most honourable Marchioness; and the party dined together very cheerfully off hominy, pumpkin-pie, American oysters, and other Transatlantic delicacies which her sprightly Ladyship had opportunely introduced into the domestic cookery of the ancient house of Shortcasshe.

"I'll tell you what it is, though, old man," chirped the Marquis, while the beauty who adorned his home had retired to make herself more captivating for her opera-box on the grand tier, where she was about to pass the fag end of the evening before she went the round of balls upon her list, "I don't mind doing anything for you that costs nothing."

"Honour bright?" asked the young Lord, looking up from his dessert-plate, where he was peeling a walnut that required attention.

"Well, I don't know about 'honour bright;' that's a little rough on a man after dinner. Let's hear first what you want," said the Marquis, who had a practical mind, and was fond of inquiring into details affecting his interests.

"I want you to breakfast with me to-morrow at the Albany," replied his brother, lighting a little rose-coloured cigarette, which he drew from a silver-gilt case engraved with his crest and coronet. Our impecunious nobility have ever a haughty contempt for expense, and Lord Augustus was in constant inter-

course with many creditors who understood his feelings and appreciated them.

The Marquis of Mistylands made no answer, but sipped his wine slowly, and once held it up to the light. Then he winked, closing his right eye gently, almost imperceptibly; but he certainly did wink, though in no other respect did his noble features depart from their calmness and gravity.

"Well?" said Lord Augustus, with a note of interrogation in his voice, as he inhaled the fragrant tobacco of the true Odessa make.

"I hear," observed the Marquis drily. "What then?" The peer as he spoke cast his eyes up at the ceiling as though absorbed in contemplation.

"Some City men are coming to call on me at one o'clock. If they see you with me they will think we are on good terms, and I can get what I want out of them," explained Lord Augustus with perfect sincerity.

"Ah, I am to act as decoy duck. It is a simple plan," replied the Marquis demurely. "You don't expect me to say anything, I suppose?"

"Not much; you'll have to be civil, you know, as if we were no end of good friends," said Lord Augustus; "and hang it, Fred, my Lady shall have my Maltese dawg if you'll go through your paces cleverly. It will save you buying one."

"Send the dog. I'll come," answered the Marquis; and he went.

They were important people who called on Lord Augustus Shortcasshe; and the Marquis even found his own account in making their acquaintance, for one of them subsequently put him into a way of doing a great thing in building lots, with a worthless part of his estate that had never before yielded a guinea. Another obtained him some shares which rose to a startling premium before he paid for them. A third taught him how to deal with a railway company which wants to run through the ornamental part of a gentleman's park, or interfere with his plans for remunerative improvements connected with suburban villas.

Indeed, they belonged to that bold and enterprising body of men who just now possess most of the nerve and energy to be found in England. They were contractors for public works on a large scale; men who ranked with Brassey and Peto, Waring and Betts. Lord Augustus and his most honourable brother naturally looked down upon them; but they might as well have looked up. They knew perfectly well what they were about. They had come to buy Lord A. Shortcasshe merely because he was worth buying. They had no doubt about that in their minds; and they were hard-headed men of business, not at all likely to deceive themselves. They could not afford to be duped, rich as they were. The public like Lords; and they had to deal with the public. The public was their master, and no better policy can be

pursued in trade than to satisfy a customer. Shareholders might grumble now and then, and did grumble, about promotion-money ; but they never grumbled about having Lords among the directors. Indeed, if there was not a Lord somewhere they would not take shares ; and a Lord could only be made a director. His colleagues would take care he did not go far wrong. He would have no real power ; he would be merely ornamental—and useful when it was necessary to use him. There must be always a margin on any contract worth working ; and a few hundred pounds to the right people were never thrown away.

Lord Augustus had no idea how accurately his worth had been estimated before he was definitively purchased. A Duke's uncle had run him very hard, and would have broken his chance but for a docket of bankruptcy which was struck against him by a tradesman who owed him a private grudge arising out of some affair of gallantry twenty years before. Such things will happen ; and vulgar men take inconvenient revenges. The Duke's uncle was at once put out of the running, not because contractors are more rigid in their code of morals than other people ; but because directly a nobleman gets into a scrape there is such a hubbub round his name that it loses all value in the open market. An Earl, in like manner, had his little game spoiled by a riot in a police court. The business world is strangely touchy on such questions.

Besides, there is a good deal of competition for this sort of outdoor relief for the upper classes; and whenever one competitor can put a spoke in another competitor's wheel he is sure to do it. Now, Lord Augustus had never been mixed up in any public scandal. He had been caught young, and under shrewd training ultimately became one of the most Ornamental Directors in this Imperial city.

It was a red-letter day for Lord Augustus Shortcasshe when he first attended the meeting of the board of directors who had negotiated for his services. The Marchioness, his sister-in-law, who was fond of fun, put it into his head that he looked too young for a man of business, and had amused herself all the morning by imparting a judicious tinge of powder to his hair, that it might seem to be growing grey at the temples. He had also ordered a complete suit of snuff-coloured clothes from his tailor, that he might appear in a garb of becoming gravity, having observed in several comedies he had witnessed at theatres that City men were usually dressed in brown. On the other hand, several of the directors had arrayed themselves in attire of great splendour to meet him, and were festooned with gold chains and brilliant-hued cravats. But all passed off satisfactorily on both sides; and everybody present, from the chairman to the assistant secretary and the solicitor (who naturally happened to be there) shook hands warmly with their titled colleague, who was now one of themselves,

and reflected the lustre of hereditary rank on their establishment.

Some of them shook hands with him more than once, and the Ornamental Director, who had forgotten to take off a rather unbusiness-like collection of rings which he wore on his right hand, suffered some inconvenience. Indeed, warned by his sufferings, he always shook hands with members of the boards to which he belonged in after life by extending his forefinger only. He came to belong to a great many boards in due time, for the Lord Mayor's dominion contained no better figure-head for a new enterprise; and before he was forty years old the name of Shortcasshe was known on every Exchange in Europe.

It was favourably known, too. The City men had no cause to repent of their bargain. Lord Augustus would have been worth his price if they had given twice as much for him, and all the parties concerned in this transaction had equally good reason to be content. He had precisely the qualities which his employers wanted; for ordinary men of business, practised as they are in the methods of making money habitual to them, are mere children in the ways of the world. They are like people who have lived all their lives in a mine and seen nothing of the upper earth. Moreover, although men of business know very little of Courts, Cabinets, Parliamentary wire-pullers, and influential ladies, those high and mighty personages take a very keen interest in them, and are for

ever prying into their proceedings and making vexatious rules and regulations about them.

The ways of the governing classes all over the world have never altered; and men of business fare ill who confront them unprotected. Did not one of the sharpest money makers in Europe get the finest concession to be had for love or gold out of his Majesty the King of Kings, who is known to our Stock Exchange as the Shah of Persia, and was he ever able to make anything of it? Have not the Pashas of Turkey and the Tchinovniks of Russia driven every man of business to despair who has had dealings with them on commercial principles? Lord Augustus would have piloted them through all their troubles into the smoothest of waters had they but consulted him.

The official world has its secrets as well as Change Alley and Threadneedle Street. It has manners, language, and a code of ethics all its own. A virtuous engineer, with his clear head full of useful facts and scientific truths, will make nothing of a peer of the realm, or of a Secretary of State, or of a foreign diplomatist, prince, or general. All these illustrious personages will receive him on stilts, and talk mere words and wind to him; yet the virtuous engineer and his backer the eminent capitalist cannot get beyond the influence of any one of those occult and vigilant influences which rule all sublunary affairs. It is here that the Ornamental Director comes in.

Suppose the Government of All the Tartars has not fulfilled its engagements with scrupulous accuracy, and a company of enterprising Britons have ten thousand men employed on a railway to pay every week out of their own pocket. What are they to do? A letter to *The Times* will not bring the Grand Tartar to reason; it will only make matters worse. Two sides can play at writing to the papers; and, if the truth must be told, perhaps the Tartaric Government has a strong *primâ facie* case against the company, together with much influence over the press. The Tartaric Ambassador, probably, is one of the first journalists living, so strangely are diplomatic appointments made abroad. Moreover, the company cannot back out of the contract, because the Tartaric Government has got their caution-money and will not let go its hold. Besides, the contract is a lucrative and a valuable one, if only the difficulties which stop the way could be got over. They seem trumpery enough; but the local manager of the company has committed suicide while in a state of brain fever, and the chairman's nephew, a golden youth on his travels, has just wired to say that his successor is always drunk, having grown quite reckless at the hopeless character of the obstacles placed in his way. All is loss, confusion, and disorder.

It changes by magic when Lord Augustus appears on the scene. The Aide-de-Camp-General Governor-General His Serene Highness Knaz Dontoumosch-

Tüpplingoff, who has played such an unapproachable, mysterious, abominable, perplexing, diabolical part in the telegrams and letters of the poor men of business; and who has seemed to the board of directors and the secretary, sitting glumly over the prospect of next half-year's dividends, as Satan incarnate, turns out to be merely a jolly dog, somewhat used up by devotion to tobacco, champagne, and ladies. He and Lord Augustus go off to shoot in the Caucasus, and when they come back all is settled. They understand each other directly by the freemasonry which belongs to their class. And did not Lady Hermione Nortiman, Augustus Shortcasshe's own aunt, marry Count Krankswilsky-Smokitoff, the Governor-General's own uncle?

His Serene Highness and the Ornamental Director called each other by their Christian names before they finished dinner on the first occasion they met. "Those confounded Engineers and their 'Co.,'" complains the Governor-General, opening his whole heart to Lord Augustus and letting out the cares of office abundantly, "write me sometimes two letters a day. I never read them. Once several of these fellows were impudent and I had them pumped upon. I hope it did them good. By-the-way, who is 'Co.,' mon cher? They sign their letters, 'Humpty, Dumpty, Grumpy, and Co.' I know Humpty, who bought my yacht, and Dumpty, who sent my brother some cigars from the Havannah. Grumpy was here lately. But who is 'Co.?'"

Lord Augustus explains that he is "Co.," and the Aide-de-Camp-General Governor-General goes off into fits of laughter. "You know as well as I do," he adds, "that I can do nothing for you. But I tell you who can. There is a Polish Jew named Dashmivig, who has the ear of the Minister of Public Works. Luckily, he is Peruvian Consul. So I can ask him to dinner to-morrow. He will put it all right for you. But you will have to take him into your boat, I fancy, if your cargo is worth anything. He is a reasonable man, however, and manages one of my estates. I never found him dishonest. You may have what you like of him if you get the Marchioness, your sister-in-law, to be civil to his wife. All these people are bitten by a taste for noblemen's tea-parties." So that business is settled.

Lord Augustus is also wanted at times nearer home, for nobody can handle one of the real shifters of the scenes on our own pure stage of public life so well as his Lordship. He and his set could make London too hot to hold any one who determined on a resolute stand against them. Besides, the scene-shifters are mostly made of the same stuff as themselves; and these people won't offend each other. Indeed they cannot do so conveniently, because they meet half-a-dozen times a week, and must be civil or have a row, which none of them fancy. Our governing classes are a very judicious community, and keep themselves wonderfully close.

There was yet another quality which men of business liked in Lord Augustus and other Ornamental Directors who resembled him. They really did the work for which they were paid; and they showed admirable discipline under instructions. There was nothing obstreperous and kicking about them. They went perfectly quiet in harness. They did not babble, they did not sell themselves twice over, as certain men of business have been known to do. They were loyal and true to their employers; and such was the spell of their nobility over the substantial British shareholder that they could be trusted to make an awkward statement on dividend-day much better than the most experienced chairman or secretary. They really did it better, too. It was quite an improving sight to see my Lord handle a body of perplexed shareholders at a critical meeting; and if any malcontent so far forgot himself as to stand up and challenge a statement overloose or vague made on such authority, cries of "Order" soon gave evidence of the respect in which the nobleman was held, and some happy allusion to the usages of polite society at once put the laughers on his Lordship's side and confounded the politics of his opponents. Even his lisp and the jargon of fashionable life in which he spoke seemed to have a charm for them, and many of them stored up his words and phrases for after use with amazing fidelity.

In plain truth, Lord Augustus was the dummy of

the great capitalists and contractors who had set him on high, and he acted becomingly in that capacity. In their turn, too, they were very kind to him, and often put him up to a good thing. "But," observed Sir Whistleton Fluke, one of the most prudent of them, "whenever you want to make a trick for your own private game, employ Chyssel! He is the best man-of-all-work I know, and not too greedy of the plunder." So, while Lord Augustus Shortcasshe made a good profit by his profession, every company which employed him might safely be congratulated on their Ornamental Director.

THE PROMISING SON.

HE was sitting on one of the public seats on the Place de la Madeleine in Paris. Some nurses and babies of the commoner sort were around him; the children playing or asleep in the cool shadow, with a fountain in the midst of them. Here and there a flower-girl, with a bunch of roses or carnations, offered her gay merchandise to the passers-by. The omnibuses from all quarters of the great city came and stopped, and went upon their way again. It was a bright and busy scene, full of life and colour, in the capital of fair France, at high noon on a midsummer day.

But the man who had attracted my attention never looked up. He kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, not as one who mourns or thinks deeply, but as though all things in the world were simply indifferent to him. He was dressed in a coarse, old, brown great-coat, which did not fit him; his trousers were too short, and they appeared as though they had never been properly brushed since they were made. His shoes were of a

neutral tint; they had been dirty over and over again perhaps, but the mud had worn itself off; then new dust and soil had collected till they also had been partly rubbed away. There was no sign of any shirt about his attire, probably he had none. He wore a cap which might have been picked up anywhere, even in a gutter.

He sat quite motionless, neither reading nor musing, as far as could be judged. He did not seem bored, however; his aspect was that of somebody who was waiting, but did not care particularly what happened. His attitude was absolutely passive and careless. Presently a spare sad-faced man, with an expression of a sorrow past hope or comfort, walked hurriedly up to him as though he had been summoned in haste and from a distance. No greeting passed between them, but the man who had been waiting rose silently, and they went away together. His walk, his bearing, the manner of the grave melancholy traveller who had joined him, showed at once that they were gentlemen, and a sharp pang came to my heart at this moment, for I remembered who and what they were. I had seen for the first time since ten years General Beaudesert and his son Auriol, whose fag I was at Eastminster.

I had heard of him only occasionally since, for, though we "knew each other at home," as the school jargon describes the intimacy between the families of students, General Beaudesert had for some time past

retired from our set. It was reported in the vague way in which such things are talked about that he had been ruined by some foul play in high quarters; and that he was obliged to live in exile at Paris. People said, however, that his hopes were all garnered up on his son, who was preparing for the Bar, and that there would probably be a great State trial, in which Auriol Beaudesert would figure as junior counsel, immediately after he had eaten his terms. There seemed nothing improbable in such a calculation on the part of his family, for Auriol had been *facile princeps* at Eastminster, and had left that famous public school a captain of his year with all the honours he could carry off with him to Christ Church; and for the rest, his father was one of those men who say little, but who think deeply, and he was not at all likely to sit down quietly under a wrong. His wife, too, who had been very kind to me when I was a boy, was a lady of high courage, joined to a patience most sweet and wise.

For these Beaudeserts came of a grand old stock, who had over and over again given illustrious patriots, successful statesmen, and valiant captains to their country. A prudent, far-sighted race, of steadfast hearts and rare fortitude, who claimed alliance with the blood Royal of Plantagenet and Tudor, and who had the kingly gift of waiting, watchful, alert, and in prayer, till the Lord of Hosts was with them. Their friendship was a precious thing for all who sought it,

and it was frankly given. Their enmity was hard to rouse, and it was both generous and placable towards the weak. But if braved or mocked, the day came when their foes were made to lie down in sorrow. It was, perhaps, natural that such a family should have had the failing of pride. The General had so true a respect for his name that it was well known he had sacrificed his birthright and his fortune for it; and his wife had looked on approvingly while he did so.

If ever a young man appeared to justify the high hopes centred in him it was Auriol Beaudesert. He seemed to have no part or share in the weakness of humanity, and yet his conscience was almost morbidly tender. He would accuse himself bitterly of peccadilloes which the rest of us hardly knew we had committed, or thought but lightly of in any case. His love of books amounted to a passion. He honoured learning for its own sake, and his ideal of excellence was high and pure even for a collegian who had taken to his studies in classics and theology quite earnestly. A reverence for all that is sacred, an inborn love and sympathy towards all that is pure and good, seemed a part of his nature. In all our boyish transactions he kept his word faithfully, and no one had ever heard him prevaricate or tell a falsehood. He took little part in our games, indeed, for books were his favourite companions; but his decision on any moot point was final, and we were always con-

tented to appeal to an authority animated by an unvarying spirit of truth and justice.

If he was popular at school, he was almost idolised at home—his heart was so tender, his aspirations so high and honest, his conduct so dutiful and affectionate. Moreover, as he grew towards manhood, his whole mind was bent on the subject of Constitutional law; and his mother would kiss his forehead, giving thanks to God, as he bent over his books (she stealing in upon him tiptoe and gliding noiselessly away); while his father collected cases and precedents, nothing doubting, for the great State trial which was to come. Before the beard was dark upon his lip, the letters of Auriol Beaudesert read like those of a future Lord Chancellor. He seemed predestined to lofty fortunes—fit to become a Lanfranc or a Bacon, as time and chance should serve. He had none of those drawbacks and impediments which often mar a career. He had a mild love of good eating indeed; but that never ruins an ambitious man; and it was noticed early that he had an abrupt contemptuous way of tossing off wine, as though he were glad to have done with it. When he went up to Oxford, with an immense box of prize books and a scholar's wardrobe somewhat slender, he was as noble a type of student and gentleman as any that the University contained. His mind seemed the abode of candour, uprightness, and piety.

What happened afterwards could only be told in

fitting language by an enemy of mankind. All at once the mind of Auriol Beaudesert stopped growing. It shrunk up and shrivelled, becoming stunted and narrow. It seemed as though some blight had fallen on him, or that an evil spirit had taken possession of him, body and soul. The first strange thing which occurred was when his father visited him on his mother's birthday—which was kept as a family festival. It was one of the rare holidays which the General ever allowed himself after his ruin; so he wished to spend it among the Christ Church meadows, in hopeful talk with his son, and take his wife the freshest news of him. He thought they would lunch together afterwards at the Mitre, where his father had put up in his own student days; and he had scraped together twenty pounds to give the boy before he left, as he meant to do (unless hard pressed to stay) by the first afternoon train, so as not to trespass on his son's studies.

In Auriol's rooms, however, there was a table laid for thirty guests; and the young man explained with some embarrassment that he was obliged to give a sort of semi-official breakfast to the old Eastminsters of his year, as their former captain. He said that he regretted he could not ask his father to such a party, and the General agreed cordially, taking hasty and loving leave of him. But when he had gone away, and sat down to a solitary biscuit at a new hotel—for he did not care where he went now his son was not

with him—he felt dejected, and had an uneasy foreboding that all was not quite right. When term was over, too, Auriol came home for the first time without any prize or other record of his studies. He said briefly that he had tried and had failed, which was quite true; and both his father and mother were secretly overjoyed at his frankness and modesty. His mother thought also that he worked too hard about this time, for he was seldom with his family, and passed his holidays in the library of Lincoln's Inn, pursuing his legal and University studies simultaneously, as is the custom.

On returning home Auriol would retire to his bedroom, and lock the door, to read in quiet; but it was noticed that when called to tea he was long in answering, and came down with flushed cheeks and dazed eyes, as though he had been sleeping heavily. Both his parents anxiously warned him against over-work on these occasions; but he assured them, rather impatiently, that “he took good care of himself,” and evaded all further conversation on the subject. After awhile, too, he grew angry when interrogated, and withdrew himself more and more from his kindred. The second and third vacation he did not come home at all, passing the summer on a Scotch island, and his winter holiday at a farmhouse in Berkshire, where he declared that he could read better, being less liable to disturbance of any kind. Still he took no prizes. He passed his “little go” in the ordinary way; but

hand in hand, their faces very pale and wan. A big tear from the old soldier's eyes fell upon her forehead like molten fire.

“O papa! papa!” she cried, in a very ecstasy of grief, “I am come home. I will never leave it again. *I have married him because I knew he would never dare to contradict you!*”

THE COLLEGE DON.

A PLEASANT gentleman, and a dear friend of many whose friendship is not lightly given, is Dr. Goodfellow, Master of Muriel College, Oxford. Most notable, indeed, is the change which has come over University men within these last few years. The old traditional scholar in all the antique glory of untidiness is rarely seen within hail of the Bodleian. A smarter set of men than Christ Church tutors can hardly be found. The freshman who goes to one of them for lecture of a morning will have his eyes refreshed by long lines of fashionable boots as he ascends the stairs leading to the Don's sanctum. These boots are all of sorts, polished to a nicety; among them are, probably, top boots, for the tutor is often a hunting man, though the combination of clergyman, bookworm, and hard rider seems strange to folk with old-fashioned notions. If the tutor happens to be in holy orders, and the time is winter, he will perhaps be arrayed in a sealskin waistcoat of the true gold colour and most orthodox pattern. His neck-tie is likely to be of light blue and white, and the rest

of his attire of a light grey. He certainly means riding, bold riding, and fast riding on a horse that can show the way to half the sporting squires in the county ; yet he is as surely deeply versed in syntax and prosody. He has dodged the Greek language into all its aorists ; he has doubts about some of the meanings given by Liddell and Scott ; and his words are heard with respect in the schools, for he has won two scholarships and taken a double first easily.

Till very recently members of the University were bound by oath not to wear any garments but of "a dark or subfusk" hue, and not a few readers of these lines may remember having been gravely reminded of the academical proprieties if they even ventured on a shooting-coat before breakfast-time. Now every man dresses after his own fancy ; and an imaginative person of great erudition has sometimes a taste for such fluffy clothes that he can scarcely be distinguished from a large untrimmed poodle, save for the precious stores of information revealed in his discourse. The get-up of undergraduates is at times irresistibly funny. It is often the latest fashion conceived by some imaginative tailor, absurdly exaggerated by boys who have unlimited credit with him.

Dr. Goodfellow, who is one of the great lights of the University, will never admit that he knows anything. "Pooh !" he exclaimed, good-humouredly, after giving a cursory sketch of the world in all ages, and parenthetically explaining the origin of electricity,

with the squaring of the circle, "Pooh! I know nothing. I am but a weak-kneed traveller on the frontier of the great realm of learning. I shall die without having crossed it. The kingdom beyond stretches far and wide, out of the range of my feeble vision. You tell me I have done something here. Granted. Hope and labour joined in brave alliance will always make their mark, though but a small one. Fortune, too, whoever that lady may be, perhaps took a fancy to me. When I look back on my career over the Attic and Latian fields, every step appears delightful to me. Every book I read was a conquest won from the future. Once the thought of mighty spirits mastered, they became a portion of my own mind. A new province of knowledge was annexed to my dominions, and was mine for ever. It needed no defenders, but strengthened instead of weakening the rest of the empire. I am using no figure of speech when I say this, or rather the figure I employ truly expresses my feeling. Every thought, every image, I gathered from written or unwritten books filled me with I know not what exultation at each fresh accession to my power. Such, I have often thought, must be the most constant and lively pleasure of those souls which are freed from the restraint of this earthly tabernacle. Never, I suspect, do men realise more than in youth the force of the axiom that knowledge is power. Now I know that I have done and can do nothing. My good thoughts, if good they be, are, as far as

the outer world is concerned, no better than good dreams."

"That is of course the common lot," I said. "We were taught some three thousand years ago that power does not belong to men."

"Exactly," answered the Don; "I am only stating a fact, not making a lamentation. What I mean is, that we live in a mental atmosphere of our own up here. The echoes of our voices are not heard in the busy world outside. I breakfasted with the Vice-Chancellor this morning. There were five of us in all. What a stillness there is about Oxford life! Thompson, who is an excellent specimen of an Oxford man, of the best sort too, talked so quietly, looked at things so calmly, that nothing could stir his composure; yet poor Mr. Bradley, of New College, was drowned yesterday while rowing on the Isis, and I know Thompson was his friend; but when did any private calamity seriously affect a party of people whose material interests it left untouched? Not even the recent scandal, for so it is counted, of four converts going over to Rome aroused anything like excitement among us. Yet there were three men from Balliol, the crack college for clever fellows, with us. Balliol, you know, carries off by far the largest share of the firsts and scholarships. The truth is, that the authorities will have none but reading men within its walls."

"When I went home," continued the Master of Muriel, noting that his talk about dear Alma Mater

interested me, "a man who has just been elected to a fellowship at University College called on me. He had curious manners and a simplicity of mind which rather surprised me; for my visitor was an old chum from Westminster, whom you may remember to have met at my 'wines' in our salad days. I expressed a hope that he liked Oxford better than London. 'Yes,' he replied meditatively, 'he thought he did, because there were more theological books at Oxford than could be got in London.' Were it not for this circumstance, he added, he would have preferred the latter city. That he said these things is a positive fact; whether he meant them is, perhaps, another question. I suppose even good and wise men are not wholly free from affectation. It has been even alleged that affectation is a cardinal sin of Oxford."

"You yourself won a fellowship, I think, did you not?" I inquired, to set my old friend on his hobby again.

"Won?" replied the Master of Muriel, with a demure sort of drollery, as though there were something to be said that it was not quite fair to say on that subject. "It is characteristic of Oxford that I was first informed of my success by the bellringer of All Souls', who came for his fees. The bellringer was perfectly conscious of the value of bringing good news, and chirped over it in an expectant manner, as one who had an immemorial right to handsome perquisites. He was a mellow old man, with a face

like a winter apple ; sharp as a ferret, too ; and with a sly look of demure merriment which I think belongs to all college functionaries. He paid respect to the cultured youth of these realms, so to say, with his tongue in his cheek. I dare say he could have sung a capital comic song ; but University etiquette is very strict, and forbids the mixture of classes, so that I never heard him. The fellowships at All Souls' are not worth much, but the honour is great, and I was proud of it. It is quite the crack thing to be a Fellow of All Souls', for you get into the most pleasant club in Oxford by this stroke of luck. The qualifications are generally understood to be good birth, a good coat, and a moderate amount of knowledge. I had them all. My family have been settled in Stirlingshire time out of mind, and Scotch cousinship has a long arm. My tailor is, was, and I trust ever will be, an artist of great merit, and I have never even pretended to have the materials necessary for setting the Thames on fire. Out of thirty Fellows of All Souls' when I was elected one was a peer, Lord Bathurst, and seven others were sons of peers. Whether this system of election was strictly in accordance with the intentions of the founder is not for me to say. One of his unrepealed statutes requires that the Fellows shall pray for the souls of those who fell at Agincourt.

“ A story current about the All Souls' fellowships is, that the candidates are all asked to dinner and given cherry-pie, that the old Fellows watch to see

what they do with the stones, and that the discreet or ungentlemanly disposal of those superfluities is the real test of fitness, examinations in classic authors being gabbled through merely for form's sake. With respect to this legend, I can only say that I had no cherry-pie, though I have often asked myself nervously what I should have done with the cherry-stones."

We walked along the meadows silently for some minutes, enjoying the lovely English landscape softened by the haze of a mild afternoon late in autumn, and then the Don remarked, as though in answer to an unspoken thought of mine which he may have divined intuitively, so strong was the magnetic sympathy of our esteem and friendship—

"Satirists have been always fond of saying that we are a little more disposed to bend the back to rank than is becoming in sober schoolmen; and, indeed, we are a loyal company. But those who make a sin of our civility would do well to reflect that we are the instructors of youth, and therefore bound to teach what is good for them. Now, and at all other times, in England it is and has been a very wise thing to be on prudent terms with persons of quality. Rank has many methods of exalting itself at other men's expense in these islands, and very small scruple in using them."

There was a pungent humour in the Don's manner as he said this, but he was quite in earnest. I then asked him to tell me what were the enjoyments of the world in which he dwelt. He paused before replying,

as one who muses deeply ; and then, laying his hand affectionately on my arm, as he used to do in our school days, he said simply—

“ One Sunday, I well remember, while still doubting what career I should choose, I experienced a pleasure which the luckiest of us cannot often enjoy. It was that of listening to a great mind pouring forth its thoughts with eloquent utterance. For on that morning I went to St. Mary’s Church to hear the University sermon. So large was the congregation that there was hardly standing room. The Regius Professor of Hebrew was to preach. He alone could command such a crowd of disciples. The organ was playing slowly as we entered, and soon appeared a gorgeous procession of Doctors, robed in scarlet and black. It was preceded by vergers bearing maces and wands of office, and closed by two Masters of Arts in their simple habits of black and white. They looked to the eye of fancy like Dominican friars, and doubtless some present about to go over to Rome wished they had been.

“ As the procession stopped, the whole congregation sang the Hundredth Psalm, and the simple words of the old version sounded wondrously sweet and cheering. By the time it was finished I looked up from my book and beheld a venerable, to me a glorious, form, for it was lighted up with the glow of eloquence and learning. I looked with a loving respect on the illustrious Pusey, ‘ the Doctor,’ as we affectionately

called him—for his influence over the hearts and minds of the young men of that day was very great, and I was not the least enthusiastic of his admirers. As the strains of the music died away, he bade us ‘pray for Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, our Sovereign Lady the Queen, the Right Honourable Edward Geoffrey—then Earl of Derby, our Lord and Chancellor—and many others whom he mentioned by name. His text was taken from the beautiful words of St. Peter to our Saviour when He asked the apostles, ‘Will ye also go away?’ ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal life.’

“On this text the Doctor preached the finest sermon I ever heard. In these times, when many even well-meaning people who profess themselves friendly to the Church seek to refine away her holiest doctrines, it was inspiriting to hear the great preacher so boldly proclaiming the truth. For nearly an hour Dr. Pusey preached, addressing us as ‘My Sons;’ and many remained standing the whole time so still that a pin might have been heard to fall. I have known few happier moments than that in which I knelt down and received the blessing of this great and good man, who, I felt, really did give us, for however brief a space of time, ‘the peace which passeth all understanding.’ That day decided my choice of a profession—eyes, ears, heart, and mind were all satisfied. I have never regretted it; I have never looked back. But it is time to dress. Come and dine.”

THE RETIRED COLONEL.

To live a brave, honourable, self-denying life, to get little praise, less money, and occasional snubs—such is often the lot of a British officer; and when he has served his time, when old age, or one of our hundred colonial fevers, has sapped his strength, where do you find him? What becomes of the hero who led his men up the heights of the Alma, or charged with the Six Hundred?

Frequently he may be discovered in some obscure Continental town where living is cheap, the country for which he fought being too dear for him. He has married, and has a family. The task of bringing up all his sons and daughters honourably, like ladies and gentlemen, exhausts his resources of energy and money, and leaves him but a slender surplus for indulgence in such small luxuries as he may well be said to have merited at his age. But, perhaps, a moralist would say that there was a Nemesis in this, for officers start on their careers by being clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every

day. What wonder that, if, having eaten up the seven fat kine when they are young, they should be reduced to the seven lean and tough kine when they are old and toothless?

Assuredly it was on the leanest of kine that poor Colonel De Crepyte was living when I encountered him in an old Flemish city some years ago. He used to hobble down every afternoon to the club which this curious town boasted, and read *The Times*, which was taken in for the convenience of English residents. There was nothing very military in the old warrior's appearance. He walked with a stoop; his clothes, which were none of the newest, hung loosely about him; and his face derived a scrubby look from an unkempt beard of pepper-and-salt hue. Few of the Colonel's fellow-countrymen in the town I mention knew to the full what his services had been; and none of the Belgians did. One day I saw a ridiculous creature in the uniform of a Belgian Major put a public affront upon the hero—an affront soon repented of, however. The Colonel had come rather later to the club than usual, and *The Times* happened to be in the grasp of the Major in question, who was holding it before his face to keep the flies off whilst he dozed in a besotted condition produced by drinking too much Flemish beer. Colonel De Crepyte waited a quarter of an hour to see whether the Belgian would make a show of reading the paper; but, finding he did not, he approached and asked him for it. The Colonel's

voice, even in its softest tones, was always gruffish ; and it may have been this circumstance which excited the Belgian's fury.

"Sare!" he cried, flourishing *The Times* as if he would brush off the Colonel with it as he had done the flies. "Sare! I vant de *Tims*. I read him. Cannot you see?"

"I saw that you were not reading it; that's why I asked you to use some other paper as a fan," replied De Crepyte, looking his aggressor hard in the face.

"I do vat I please," screamed the Belgian Major. "I read ze *Tims*, I play vith him, I sit upon him, I dance upon him"—and suiting the action to the word, he successively pressed the newspaper to his nose, brandished it, sat upon it, and finally trod it under foot. When he had thus distinguished himself, this swashbuckler, who had never faced any fire but that of his own cigar, defied the old officer who had borne himself stoutly in a hundred fights, putting his arms akimbo and grinning under his nose.

Of course there was an exchange of cards, and on the morrow De Crepyte would have had to go out with the Belgian Major if some friends had not interposed, and explained to the latter who it was that he had insulted. The General in command of the garrison, too, heard of the matter, and for the credit of his cloth commanded the Major to make an apology. It was then, and then only, that many of the English who had been accustomed to elbow the Colonel every

day heard that he was *the* De Crepyte—the De Crepyte of the Balaclava charge and the relief of Lucknow. He had been one of the most dashing cavalry officers in the English army. He himself hardly knew how often he had ridden in charges, been unhorsed, picked himself up, and ridden onwards again. He had been six times wounded and twenty times mentioned in despatches ; in fact, if he had served in any army but the British he would have been a General, and have sported in his button-hole the ribbon of some Order of Knighthood. As it was, he was a mere Lieutenant-Colonel on half-pay, and the only tokens of honourable service which he could show—not on his coat of course, but in a shagreen case on his drawing-room table—were medals.

There was a disposition to make much of Colonel De Crepyte among the English colonists in the foreign town, once the hero's true status was known ; but it wore off after a while, for the Colonel's urbanity did not equal his valour. He was, in truth, a bit surly. His respect for civilians was not great. If he played whist at the club he sometimes forgot that he was not sitting down among subalterns, but would lecture men of his own age about the laws of the game with a frankness that was unacceptable. So it came to pass that on a certain occasion when a churchwarden was about to be elected by the pew-renters of the English church, a large section declared that they would not have this "bear" to rule over them. Colonel De

Crepyte happened at the time to be interesting himself in church affairs, being minded to put down some Ritualistic proclivities of the chaplain's, and he had allowed himself to be nominated as candidate, regarding it as certain that he would be returned. There was something at once ludicrous and pathetic in the scene that took place when he rose in the vestry-room to explain why he was inclined to accept the office, which a few of the pew-renters (the most respectable few too) had pressed upon him. As a soldier talking upon church matters he was, of course, very solemn. He had put on his best clothes, and looked upon the chaplain's nominee, who was opposed to him, with an expression of severe displeasure. However, it was of no use, for when a poll was demanded the Colonel got scarcely any votes, and was made, as he somewhat incongruously but bluntly put it, to cut "a deuced ridiculous figure."

"Yes, sir," he said, drawing on his gloves and frowning terribly at Mr. Maunders, an earnest Low Churchman of small stature, who had nominated him, "I've been made to look an utter fool through your fault. What did you mean by bringing me forward to receive this affront?"

"I'm sure there's no affront intended, Colonel," pleaded Mr. Maunders, quite abashed. "I suppose these gentlemen have simply voted according to their consciences."

"Consciences be hanged!" growled the Colonel.

“What consciences do you think there can be among a beggarly lot of refugees who have all outrun the constable in their own country, and come here to hide their heads in bags? No, sir, those rascallions wished to put a slight upon me because I am one of the few gentlemen in the place.” Saying which he turned on his heel and flustered off.

It will be seen that the gallant Colonel had no very high opinion of his fellow-countrymen abroad; but this outburst of his at the vestry formed a solitary exception to the rule of silence he observed respecting his opinions about other persons, for he was no tatler, and thought too well of himself to attend to the concerns of other people. It should be added that, from the day when the “affront,” as he pleased to call it, was put upon him, Colonel De Crepyte mixed less than ever with the English, and confined himself chiefly to the society of a brother military crony of his—Major Bullfinch.

This Bullfinch was quite a different man to De Crepyte; for he was a big, bluff, jolly, and talkative fellow, who was on friendly terms with everybody; but he, too, in his way, was an oddity. To begin with, he was a man with a “grievance”—though you would scarcely have thought so from his cheerful manner—and this grievance had cost him £4,000.

This heavy fine had been the result of a lawsuit. There is a race of persons in the East who unite in their own persons the double privilege of being

Levantines and British subjects. *Græculi esurientes et civis Romani*—they can lie, and they cannot be whipped. One of this comfortably circumstanced race chanced to be Vice-Consul at Pseudopolis, where he realised a nice income by protecting smugglers. In an evil hour for himself, Major Bullfinch, who had been sent on a military mission to Pseudopolis, exposed the malpractices of this gentleman. The Foreign Office, with its usual sagacity, thereupon wrote to Mr. Gastrimargos (the name of H.M.'s representative in question), asking him whether these things were so? Mr. G. replied that he was innocent, and the Secretary of State declared that he was satisfied; but Mr. Gastrimargos was not, for he wished to be revenged on Bullfinch, and he resorted to a very simple expedient for attaining this object. He wrote to a brother Vice-Consul, also a Levantine, to warn him against the Major, whom he, Gastrimargos, "believed to have been implicated in a fraud on the Stock Exchange." The contents of this epistle getting abroad, as they were intended to do, the Major began by vowing that he would strangle Gastrimargos; but, yielding to good advice, he decided to institute an action for libel and to claim heavy damages.

After many months' delay, the trial came on in London; but the Court decided that there was no case for the jury, the Vice-Consul's communication being privileged. Two appeals followed; but the law was dead against the Major, insomuch that bar-

rists began to jeer about him as "poor Bullfinch." Then he tried to get at his enemy by some mysterious proceedings in Chancery, but was thrown heavily with costs; the Vice-Chancellor observing, with some asperity, that never in the whole course of his judicial experience had he seen the time of the Court wasted with so frivolous a motion. Bullfinch now bethought him of the press, which is the palladium of British rights, and addressed a communication of portentous length to *The Morning Liberal*, in which, as his ill-luck would have it, he made two mistakes in grammar and spelt the word receive with an i in the wrong place. The editor inserted portions of the letter, not omitting those which contained errors, and commented, in a jocular article, upon men with grievances. Worse than this, the Major, who was now in a chronic state of litigation, had committed a gross contempt of Court by writing at all, because he had a fresh motion pending. Two Lords Justices in succession admonished him, and hinted that they were acting kindly in not inflicting a penalty—which, by-the-way, was the only piece of kindness the Major ever did get from the Bench.

After losing his cases on appeal, Bullfinch tried what writing a pamphlet would do, and consequently found himself saddled with a printer's bill in addition to his other losses. Then he gave up the whole affair, rather to please his wife than to satisfy himself, for he had a combative spirit that would have impelled him

to fight on till he had not a halfpenny left in his purse. However, having got straitened in his circumstances through his struggle with Gastrimargos, the Major, who had some time before thrown up his commission, went to live in Belgium ; and there soon became noted among the English residents as "The man who had had some ugly business in the law courts."

When questioned, however, about this ugly business, the man with a grievance would rather astonish his hearers by saying, "And do you know what that rascal Gastrimargos meant by saying that I had been concerned in a fraud on the Stock Exchange? Why, I was one of the shareholders of the Rio Brigande Loan, and got swindled out of ten years' savings in the affair. That's how I was implicated in it."

"And that is why I am now smoking a four-centime cigar in Belgium, instead of a sixpenny weed at the 'Rag,' " poor Bullfinch might have added.

THE BACHELOR.

MR. RICHARD WYSE was a man of good family and fortune, and he lived entirely for himself—a mode of dealing with the world and its belongings which seemed to him best calculated to make the most of his advantages. Indeed, he had few duties which public opinion considers binding upon inferior beings. He was not handicapped by a title, so that the beautiful ethics of hereditary legislation had no claim on his attention, and the newspapers were not concerned with either his merits or defects. He was a man of creditable birth, for he had among his papers a letter from the Duke of York, addressed to his father, and beginning “Dear Tick.” Ned Wagstaff, who had some grudge against him, indeed, set about a story that old Wyse kept a pastrycook’s shop near Carlton House, where his Royal Highness and Mrs. Clarke were wont to take credit, and that the Duke playfully alluded to this circumstance in his epistolary correspondence, which was of the briefest.

But the present Wyse met this story by the dry

retort that Princes were not especially remarkable for their devotion to orthography, and that everyone was aware the reigning dynasty of Great Britain and Ireland were of German origin ; so that an uncertainty might well exist in their minds relating to the interchangeable value of the letters D and T. Besides, in any case, the late Mr. Wyse had not only been named Richard, but Richard-Ticknor, a common English name enough ; and this argument would have been a clincher could it have been supported by clear proof. Parish registers, however, were not very faithfully preserved a century ago, and it vexatiously chanced that one Wise or Wheeze—for the name was indifferently spelt—had indisputably rented his shop of Wagstaff's uncle, who was notoriously a pawnbroker, while the said Wise or Wheeze was certainly a confectioner.

This gave Ned Wagstaff an advantage ; but the annoying discussion would never have arisen if Mr. Wyse had not incautiously aired his wit at the expense of a very irritable and spiteful antagonist. It had come about in this way : Ned, who was a permanent person of much consequence in the Foreign Office, desired in the natural course of events to become a member of the Travellers' Club, and made cocksure of his election because that institution has always been known as the "cloak-room" of the department to which he belonged. Mr. Wyse, however, who at this period, to the great amusement of his former intimates, chiefly consorted with people who have handles to their

names, not only blackballed Wagstaff, but cheerfully remarked that "a man who had three balls to occupy his time could never need a club." Wagstaff at once retorted by hissing out waspishly that "Wise, or Wheeze, ought to know something about balls, for his father supplied the ices eaten there, and blanked bad they were." Hence the pastrycook story. We have all some crook in our lot, and it was only fair that Mr. Richard Wyse should have this one, for he had no other. He had been possessed of a clear seven thousand a year ever since he came of age, and did not spend more than five, though his income had trebled. His health was excellent. His age still on the sunny side of fifty. To be sure, the pastrycook affair galled him when allusions were made to it in his presence; and he never spoke of the easy terms on which the Duke of York had lived with his father after the ungenerous construction put upon his Royal Highness's letter by the ribaldry of Wagstaff. But he was too popular and too rich to be often badgered; and when after Ned had stormed the Travellers' he quietly walked off to Bootle's, little more was said to tease him. He wished it to be thought that he belonged to the historic family of Wyse, who have intermarried with the Imperial House of Bonaparte, and have furnished diplomatists of rare learning and worth to England, and sea-captains of much renown and enterprise to France; so the legend most pleasing to him was tacitly accepted in the haunts he loved,

and when the page at Bootle's one afternoon irreverently mentioned him as "that there Wheezy," he was instantly rebuked by the porter with a sound cuff on the ears. The fact was, Mr. Wyse had prudently paid his footing to the club servants when he resolved to pass his evenings and the hour before dinner at Bootle's.

Henceforth his existence was exceedingly smooth. The only active part he had ever taken in business had caused him the unpleasantness above mentioned. He never blackballed any one else; and learned a hundred convenient ways of sidling out of other people's affairs. He seemed to have become a completely round man, so entirely were all his angles worn off by well-oiled friction with polished society. There was no catching hold of him by any one salient point of character or demonstration of feeling. Ladies liked him, for he was well dressed and well spoken; besides, he had that sort of reputation which is considered in drawing-rooms. But they all felt intuitively that his thousands a year were beyond their winning by any manœuvres, however adroit. No pretty girl on her promotion had ever cause to complain that Mr. Wyse had wasted her time. No bright-eyed and courageous widow had ever been able to bring her artillery to bear upon him. A man must have a very cold and hard, a very greedy, unsympathetic nature, who can resist such charming witcheries as these; and Mr. Wyse did resist them. He

had a meek trick of putting his grapes quite out of the reach of everybody but himself, and then declaring that they were sour, in spite of protest from any watering mouth whatever.

Mr. Wyse kept the world at his feet that way, and he knew it. A married man with his income would have had a constant struggle to retain his place in Society, or must have lived a good deal in the country; whereas he, with rooms at the Albany which only cost two hundred a year, could pass all the season in London and then follow the summer. He could go where he liked, do what he liked, have what he liked, and yet keep a snug balance at his banker's, so as to hit a good investment flying when it rose before him. His margin of two thousand a year of his inherited fortune, handled after this discreet fashion for more than a quarter of a century, had given him some valuable ground-rents in the City, which he had purchased during a commercial crisis. He had also put a considerable sum into French five per cents, buying those securities at 55, and selling at 117, when he shrewdly thought they were not likely to rise any higher. Mr. Wyse never spoke of these things, he merely did them, and his thousands a year were in no danger of diminishing, though he nearly frightened himself to death when he incautiously played one evening after dinner at Monaco.

In simple truth, he had drunk too much on that memorable occasion, but he was one of those prudent

fellows who profit by their mishaps; and he immediately made two resolutions. One of them was a determination never to play at any game of mere chance, considering how well he played at whist; and the other was a firm resolve never to drink more than one pint of wine from any cellar not intimately known to him.

He was about forty-six when he ceased dining out as much as possible, and engaged a cook who had separated from the late Lord Sefton on a point of honour. He had a very good kitchen belonging to his chambers, and he paid the cook highly, so that there was never any difference of opinion between them. Monsieur Désiré merely stipulated for stabling and a coach-house near at hand, that he might have his brougham always in readiness to take him on his professional rounds to the aristocracy who sought lessons from him; and he asked for one day a year, when he patriotically superintended the culinary arrangements of a public banquet given by such of his compatriots as shared his political convictions. Being thus agreed, Mr. Wyse's diet was carefully studied, and based on the latest discoveries of alimentary science. It comprised game rather than meat. He substituted venison, when possible, for mutton, pheasants and partridges for fowls, but nevertheless gave preference to the Aylesbury duckling over the wild bird of the fens. He was fond of the lively trout which sports in running water, the rich red mullet

which is the woodcock of the sea, and the delicate fillet of the silver smelt, rather than the more heavy torpid sorts of fish. He had nourishing soups made of the juicy essence of succulent meats, and those light Austrian puddings which never lie heavy on the breast.

He thought there are but two ailments ; the one being cold, the other indigestion. When he felt a chill he took a hot-air bath, and had himself vigorously shampooed by a heathen Chinese who had no other function in his little household, occupying his leisure hours in a private tea-trade, which he carried on through an Ambassador's bag, from Peking. Mr. Wyse often thought that Tung-in-Ye-Cheke, the Chinese's name, was one of the secret police in the pay of his enemy Wagstaff, but he could not afford to part with a functionary who was indispensable to his health and comfort ; so he shut his eyes to an awkward fact, as other people do if it may be inconvenient to notice it. When his prudent dinner had not agreed with him so well as it ought to have done, he wrapped himself up in a dressing-gown, reclined on a sofa, read French novels, and drank warm lemonade till he was right again. It is a practice he learned from a personal friend of the late Prince Metternich, who lived to a great age under those conditions.

In summer his dressing-gown was of a light, gay-coloured stuff, that there might be nothing sad or

sombre about him, to give a gloomy tint to his meditations; in winter it was made of India shawls of the old pattern, soft as eiderdown, and lined with the soothing fur of the black fox. He burnt fires of well-seasoned pine logs, intermixed with fir apples, and never wearied his respiratory organs with the fumes of coal smoke. His rooms were ventilated by fresh air which had passed through tubes, that took the damp and rawness from it. The walls of his bedroom were heated with hot-water pipes, and kept at a pleasant even temperature day and night.

Mr. Wyse had no encumbrances to hunt and worry him with "kind inquiries" when he was ill; no person privileged to intrude upon his cosy privacy. His valet, who was his best friend, and had a really excellent place, received orders that he must not be disturbed by anything short of an earthquake or a general conflagration. Thus he put himself on a discreet regiment of arrowroot till he felt hungry again; and then led off judiciously with some sorrel soup and the wing of a bird, or a leveret roasted quickly. A chicken-salad would even serve his turn when the shooting season was over. Life was so good a thing for him that he did well to preserve it; his outlooks might be less exhilarating by-and-by.

Not that Mr. Wyse was a bad man. He was neither good nor bad. He was Nothing; Nothing personified. He had neither wife, children, nor friends. He had only acquaintances and amusements. When

he died, some men at his club put down the paper which announced his decease with a yawn, and said, "No news to-day. Wyse is dead at last, I see." Then one or two others standing round began to yawn in sympathy, and lazily said, "Ha!" The pastrycook story was told again; a few desultory questions were asked about his money, his will, and his heir, after which he was forgotten as though he had never been, leaving no void in any human heart, no record of his thoughts or deeds, save that he was, and is not.

THE OLD MAID.

ABOUT a quarter of a century ago, at a picturesque postern-gate, hard by an old manor-house in Berkshire, there stood a soldier and a lady. It was a pleasant summer evening, and the rooks who inhabited the tall trees overhead seemed to be enjoying themselves, if it were fair to judge of their feelings by the vivacity of their discourse. A few belated birds, who had been for news or pleasure to other rookeries, winged their flight straight homewards, and the fragrance of the fields and gardens around rose like a prayer of thanksgiving skyward. It was a pretty sylvan scene in the heart of England, and the figures which filled the foreground were as pleasingly English in their characteristics as the landscape.

The lady was a fair, graceful girl, with light golden hair and frank blue eyes. Her merry lips were as red as cherries, her teeth as white as milk ; her cheeks broke into dimples when she laughed, and she laughed very often. She had the marvellous complexion of our Island beauties, and the single word that would have described her best was "loveliness." She had

not the haughty, passionate glance of the Italian women, nor the captivating brilliancy of the French. She was a home-bred English girl of the best kind, who could make admirable puddings, and take care that her house was always bright and wholesome. She was made to be the providence of a good man's dwelling, and to rear an indefinite number of sturdy children with a healthy taste for bread-and-butter.

The young man beside her was, in his way, almost an equally fine specimen of the produce of the Midland Counties. He was six feet high, and could jump over a five-barred gate standing. He was fresh from Eton, and had just got a commission in a light cavalry regiment, which he honestly thought was the finest thing in the world; or, as he himself would have expressed it, "the best thing out by many chalks."

Millicent—which was the lady's name—and he, whose name was Oswald, were cousins, and both sprung from warm county families of good estate. They were very fond of each other, as cousins generally are when both attractive and much thrown together; so that there was no valid reason why they should not have made a match of it at once and lived happily ever afterwards. They certainly would have done so if a plentiful portion of good sense and a capital social position can content good-humoured young people who are not troubled by any silly sort of ambition. But there is always something in the way of a rational plan; and old Sir Toby Harbottle,

who had been a member of Boodle's, and had read Lord Chesterfield's Letters, got it into his eminently respectable head that his son should see the world before he settled down to his serious duties as a Master of Foxhounds.

In this manner it came about, step by step, that Oswald was gazetted to a cornetcy, and shortly afterwards ordered away with his regiment on active military service. It was the Crimean War time, when England had drifted into a riot with Russia, and Russia had stumbled into a rumpus with England, for some purpose, if there were a purpose, which none of the best-informed people on either side could understand. Indeed, the Czar, who was a loyal high-pacing sort of monarch, far above any petty deceit or mystification, passed much of his time in writing private letters to the amiable and excellent nobleman who was first Minister of the British Crown to inquire what it was all about; and the well-meaning Premier was to the full as urgent in putting a similar question to the Czar.

But the admirals, generals, and ambassadors hastened to loggerheads in spite of them, and went at each other hammer and tongs, killing off their troops and blowing up their ships in such a spirited manner that they constantly had to send for reinforcements, till the entire strength of both these gallant and highly civilised countries were engaged in a dispute which was a profound mystery to everybody. How-

ever, if such slight mistakes were not constantly happening between brave and patriotic countries, life would be much duller than it is. There would be no eminent loan and army contractors, no knightly gun-makers, no parliamentary opposition worth mentioning, and, worst of all, no special war correspondents and thrilling narratives of sieges and battles. Let us be thankful for small mercies.

Of course, Oswald Harbottle, who was as fine a young fellow as ever stepped, entered warmly into the cause of his native land, and was all agog to fight the Russians. Having been properly brought up in every respect, and being a true-born Briton with no new-fangled notions about him, he rightly thought that it would illustrate his family name not a little if he could unhorse and put to death some half-a-score of Russians as valiant as himself. The fact that he had no acquaintance whatever with the Muscovites, nor they with him, and that he should send them headlong into the next world, for motives of which he knew nothing, or for no motive at all, never entered into his well-taught mind, and his general state of uncertainty rather added to the zest of the thing. For this brave lieutenant of horse was so truly proud of his uniform, and his mess, and his long sword, saddle, bridle, and the rest of his warlike accoutrements, that his dearest wish in life just now was to charge full tilt at anything or anybody that would give him an opportunity of proving his high mettle.

Millicent was not quite so enthusiastic on the subject of charging strange Russians, who she had heard were terrible creatures on wild horses, fed with tallow, and urged to desperate combat by the knout. But she would not have held her tall cousin back from that mysterious war if she could have done so, and felt cordially with her countrymen and countrywomen. She was as full of martial fire and patriotism as though she had understood the whole quarrel, and would have been generously indignant with any one who had pretended to assert that she did not. Besides, she had a noble spirit, being descended from a long race of ladies and cavaliers, and she would have been ashamed of a lover who tarried by her side while the flower of English manhood was in arms.

A few words under the beech-tree where they had first plighted their troth, a broken sixpence halved between them, a walk hand-in-hand over the lawn, and their parting was well-nigh done. Perhaps the girl's lips trembled a little, and there was a flutter at her heart when her hero rode away that night, and she heard the sound of his horse's hoofs die on the bridle-path which led to Sir Toby's place a mile off; but she walked to her own chamber with a steady step, and slept soundly, dreaming that her lover had come back to her safe, and with honour.

They never saw each other but once again. It was when the two families journeyed to the seaport whence the transport was to carry Oswald Harbottle and his

regiment to the East. They went on board with him, unwilling to take a final leave till the last moment; and when at length the big ship lit her fires and prepared to raise her anchor, they ordered their boat to lay on her oars, and waved their handkerchiefs to the handsome lad who was so full of hope, and strength, and promise. So they waited till the paddle-wheels of the transport struck the water with a loud thud, and they heard his last cheerful "Good-bye," while the band upon deck clashed out in brazen tones "The girl I left behind me."

Sweet, sweet Millicent never saw her true lover after that. On the historic day of Balaclava, in the front of the fight, with his sword in his hand, he went down; and evermore her heart bled inwardly. She seldom spoke of him after the first burst of uncontrollable anguish was over; but she cherished a steadfast belief that by doing always well while she remained here she would be more certain to win up to him. She did not fall ill or lose a serene comeliness which had replaced her beauty and her gaiety, but she passed rapidly into another age, as though the mainspring of her existence was in some way broken.

From the quiet corner of her little world she saw the happiness of others and was glad at it. She was kind and tender to all living creatures; but did not like to speak of herself, as though the past were too sacred to be mentioned, save in her own prayers. All the country side came to love her, for she who had no

children was as a mother to all children; and it appeared as though her loneliness made her akin to every one who was afflicted. She was as the angel of the desolate. In the sick-room her voice was as soft music, soothing and melodious. Her step, her dress, were silent harmony. Her mere presence calmed and cheered and comforted.

Death had no terrors for her. When it came, she believed that she would rejoin her hero in a brighter world than this; so she was often in the chamber of suffering when others shrunk from it. But she seemed to bear a charmed life, and to go about with a strange radiance on her face at times, as though she had caught a ray of that divine light which comes through the half open gates of heaven, when a soul has entered there. Rough men found their eyes grow moist when they thought of what she had done for their children, their sisters, or their wives. They would have defended her from evil or malice with their lives. One—it was the Colonel of Oswald's regiment, who brought her back the half of that broken sixpence—tried to win her from her virgin widowhood, and she made a friend of him also, though he left her with so pale a face.

Her task was higher than that of a nun's, or she might perhaps have joined some Catholic community, and taken the veil—for she heeded little the outward forms of worship; but she liked to minister to the sorrows she understood best, and to serve her own

class and people. When Basil Mostyn, who was in the Foreign Office, got into some scrape, it was Millicent who got him out of it, coming quietly to him in his trouble and leaving what she had behind her. It was Millicent again who sat up night after night reading law with her younger brother till he passed his examination for the Bar. Sweet, sweet Millicent. Even in the perfect arch of her finely-formed head there was indicated such wondrous courage and resolution that it might have been easy from the first to foretell how she would act, and to divine that the laughing girl would have, if needs were, the spirit of a heroine, or a martyr.

There is one especial crook in Miss Millicent's lot, which is half ludicrous and half melancholy. Considering that she has been long ago popularly set down for an Old Maid, other old maids of a very different description claim fellowship with her as one of their own order. It would be unkind to tell, for instance, all she endures from Miss Tabitha Monckton, a single lady who lives in her neighbourhood, and is constantly coming to see her with three dogs, an unmanageable umbrella, and a large parcel of scandal.

Miss Monckton resembles the typical Old Maid in whom the world believes, and who is indeed most frequently met with in Society; for popular notions of things and people are seldom altogether wrong. There is something contrary and unsympathetic in her. She has a mind made up of sharp angles, which

fit into nobody else's ideas. She has a peculiar religion, which is incomprehensible to everybody. She is fidgety, crotchety, and painfully disagreeable. She finds out sore places by an instinct naturally discourteous, and pokes her finger remorselessly into the tenderest parts of them. She has a collection of disastrous omens, and sees coffins even in a sparkling fire, rather than purses, as the kindly do. She makes pickles of her thoughts instead of preserves. She has crazes about the time and about the moon. She takes her meals not only at specified hours but at particular minutes, and stands for ever so long stock still at a corner of a street turning her gold and curtseying on a fine night. She is very mysterious too, and walks precisely nine times round her dressing-room table every morning directly she gets up, for no reason that the world knows of, but, in truth, because she has a firm faith in odd numbers, and considers the number nine as especially fortunate because it is composed of three times three—a cabalistic cipher with which she became acquainted through a gipsy in her youth. Her mental furniture is an absurd pernicious jumble of odds and ends, for she has no intellectual digestion of what she reads, which is mostly silly; and she gossips perpetually, so that she seems filled with unprofitable talk and speeches wherewith she can do no good.

Still, as Tabitha and her neighbour are very old acquaintances, Millicent cannot show her a cold

shoulder ; and besides, she remembers when Tabitha was the belle of the race ball. Somehow or other, Tabitha did not get married—perhaps she flirted too indiscriminately ; perhaps she did not flirt enough, which is still more likely, for bumpkin Squires need some encouragement. Perhaps there was a difficulty about settlements, for she was very useful to an invalid aunt, who did not like to part with her, yet who bought a life annuity which died with herself, so that Tabitha had a lean fortune. Now she is disappointed and soured. She wears yellow ribbons, and bonnets which are quite distressing to Millicent, whose head-gear comes four times a year from Madam Virot in a becoming manner.

Miss Monckton grew almost ferocious after forty-five, when her last castle in the air faded into nothingness. She had captivated a widower with five daughters, and had put all the heart she had left into that venture. She would have made him a blameless wife, and would have been capable of any sacrifice for the sake of his children. But she could not shake the widower till he asked her to become his wife ; and so, after mooning about for some time in an irresolute way, he married his cook. Thenceforth she had no companions but her dogs, whom she kissed and scolded by turns. When past all hope of happiness, and brooding over her wasted life, she inherited a large property ; but it only made her more bitter with the world. She made no change in her way of

living, and torments her kinsfolk, as she herself was once tormented, by visions of legacies she will never leave them. She comes twice or thrice a week from her cold hearth to pour all these things in a continuous stream before her gentle, high-souled neighbour, and not a reputation in the county is safe from her acrid and vengeful tongue.

There is another Old Maid, too, who visits Millicent, and makes herself welcome enough, though there can be no more sympathy between them than between a Sister of Mercy and a comic singer. She is a Miss Mayfield, and a very comfortable body indeed. An eccentric relative who was very fond of her left her a considerable income on condition that she should remain single, and she made no sort of objection to the condition. Her friends even said that she rather enjoyed it, though perhaps a poor gentleman who died shortly before she came into her fortune could have told a different story, and she would have cheerfully given it up for his sake.

Now she lives for herself only. She has a capital house in that roomy quarter of London which was built in the reign of Queen Anne, and is the most commodious of all. Her dinners in the season are all distinct successes, and the pleasantest people to be found are invited to eat them. Whatever is new, whatever is pretty, is certain to be met with at her amusing parties. She is a capital match-maker, having given up all pretensions for herself, and more pro-

posals are made in her conservatory than anywhere else within the bounds of good society. She has never been able to coax Millicent to dine with her on one of her grand field-days for court and city ; but she is so genial and nice, so helpful and sympathetic, that the two ladies who played as children together among the Berkshire woods sometimes go out shopping in each other's company ; and whenever sweet Millicent is heard to laugh, one may be sure that Miss Mayfield is with her.

THE SPENDTHRIFT.

No man under the rank of a sovereign prince was ever born into the great world of England with more advantages than Mr. Richard Grandison. He was heir to one of the greatest of our historic dukedoms, and to large estates in each of the three kingdoms. He was the hope of a powerful connection which commanded an important section of steady voters in the House of Lords, and the family numbered no less than six collateral peerages. For more than half a century they had divided the chief offices of State among themselves; and they had intermarried with families so illustrious that they were entitled to quarter the Royal arms upon their escutcheon. Moreover, if anything had been wanting to their good fortune, they belonged in an especial manner to the Court party, and had ranked among the personal friends of their sovereign for several generations.

Some fairy in a good humour seemed to have been godmother to Mr. Grandison. He was, physically, as fine a specimen of the Anglo-Norman race as ever stepped. He had a frank and handsome face, with

large, bold eyes, and a winning smile. He was six feet high, with the proportions of an athlete, and could have held his own at any game of strength or skill. His mind, too, was of the same manly and vigorous character as his body. He had been educated in the best manner of the young noblemen of his time. He could write Latin verses as well as another, and quote Horace readily enough to bring down cheers from all his contemporaries at Eton in the House of Commons. He could talk French enough to read the "menu" of a dinner without stumbling over it, and he knew enough of Italian to understand the libretto of an opera.

What more could he have desired? He had, of course, that hereditary talent for politics and governing which we have long agreed to consider as a part of the birthright of high descent, and he made so prominent a figure in Parliament that the certainty of his becoming a Cabinet Minister was only a question of time and circumstance. Any Government would have been glad to have him, only the policy and traditions of his family put it out of his power to join any Government. He must either make his own Government, or a Cabinet must be specially formed for him before he could well take a seat in it.

He had but one misfortune. It was that he had been born ruined, and that neither he himself nor any of his connections had the smallest idea of this great fact. The rent-roll of the Grandison estates might

be roughly estimated at a hundred thousand a year, but the claims and charges on them were enormous. The Dukes of Midland had always been magnificent characters, and had taken no account of the cost when they wanted anything. Some of their grand parties in the shooting season had been famous in memoirs and diaries for at least a century. One Duke had paid a fortune to a songstress who sang before Louis XVIII., when he came over from Hartwell to hear her in his exile. Another had welcomed his own monarch, who visited him in state, with extraordinary splendour. Their fine house in the country was one of the marvels of England. Guide books and county chroniclers were always busy with it, and whole volumes had been written to describe the stateliness of its architecture and the beauty of its gardens. It contained one of the most notable collections of art in Europe—books of rare editions, unique manuscripts, pictures of inestimable value, prints of great price, medals, coins, arms, vases, tapestry, were all there—and the mere catalogue of the Grandison treasures filled costly folios.

The trouble was that the Dukes of Midland had no money, and that they spent a great deal. When their eldest sons came of age they resettled their estates, raised the sums that were immediately required from them, and by-and-by all, and more than all, was replaced by a fortunate marriage. They had a knack of making fortunate marriages, and the Mr. Grandison

now in question took to himself an heiress, as he thought, at the usual time, which was soon after his majority, and the little transaction with his family solicitors about the Midland entail already mentioned. He was then Marquis of Brentford, his grandfather having deceased shortly before; and in due season, when his father also died, he became Duke of Midland.

Meantime he had never wanted money. Through all the expense and waste of contested elections no sum, however large, had ever cost him more than a signature; and he had fought Parliamentary contests without number. Not for himself; his own seat and some eleven others were quite secured to the Grandison interest; but now and then there was a brisk political fight on the outskirts of his estates, and then he threw his heart and soul into it. He was always a fine, high-spirited nobleman, who would have his own way, if he could get it, and paid liberally for it. Why should he have done otherwise? He had not the smallest notion of the value of money. For all the experience he had ever had, it might have been a thing that came from lawyers when they were ordered to bring it, and was given in exchange for strips of sheepskin and blotches of sealing-wax. The lawyers were quite satisfied with the case—and so was he.

The difficulty his Grace sometimes experienced about contested elections, especially in his own neighbourhood, first set him thinking, and he thought to

such purpose that he conceived the bold idea of buying up the county in which he resided. Accordingly he set to work in his own grand way, and it was soon known to all the farmers within twenty miles round his principal estate that the Duke would purchase all the land that came into the market. Of course there was often a keen competition, and the local quidnuncs said that his Grace was borrowing money at sixty per cent to make investments which paid him two and a half. However, they surmised that dukes could afford anything; and this axiom would have been perfectly true had his Grace's heir followed the immemorial example of his illustrious race. Lord Brentford had, indeed, joined in another resettlement of the Midland estates, as he was bound in honour to do, and the usual sum had been raised upon them to meet the requirements of the tenant in possession; but when the time came for his Lordship to marry an heiress who had been kept waiting for him, in order to rehabilitate the family fortunes, it turned out that the noble Marquis had unluckily espoused his scout's daughter at Oxford.

The Duke of Midland felt naturally much aggrieved at this catastrophe, but it did not alter either his views of life or his scale of expenditure, and he was never more astonished in his life than when his solicitor assured him that the freehold of every rood of land he possessed in the world was very far from equal to the extent of his liabilities. There was also a bill of sale

on the furniture and art-collections at his ancestral palace rather over the full value of it. The lease of his town house had been sold to a club, and they were about to enter in possession of it. The Duchess's portion had already been twenty years in Chancery. His Grace at first heard the lawyer speak these dreary words as though they in no sense could possibly concern him; and the whole affair remained, he said, as great a mystery to him as it was before, though a strange look of fear and horror came suddenly into his countenance.

A Duke of Midland could not be bankrupt like a common person. Everybody thought there must be some mistake, which would soon right itself. Indeed, his Grace felt no ill effects from his position. His friends and connections lent him money whenever he condescended to ask for it; his tradesmen also did it with obsequious eagerness, gliding in something about a son who was in the Army, or a brother who was in the Church, and who would like to be helped by a potent hand up the ladder of life. By-and-by, too, the Duke granted an interview to Mr. Sadrig, the eminent bill discounter, and also to Mr. Whyfuss, who was in the same cheerful line of business. He raised enormous sums in this way, yet they seemed to dissolve into air as he touched them.

When his houses were all sold the Duke lived at an hotel, and had no expenses—not even a brougham. He breakfasted in the coffee-room off a cup of tea and

a crumpet, which cost half a crown ; he dined at the Carlton for seven shillings. He never touched a card ; he never owned a racehorse ; he neither hunted nor yachted ; yet more than half a million sterling glided imperceptibly through his hands in this way long after he had ceased to buy land and had bid farewell to politics. It was said that he had spent more money than any man living ; but there was no trace of it. His dress in his latter years came to be almost sordid ; the collar of his shirt would be often frayed, and his gloves were in holes ; though he was handsome to the last, and proud of his personal appearance. Before he died he came to have nothing ; even his star of the Garter was pawned, and he had not so much as a ring on his finger. He lived, indeed, for many years the life of a small tradesman, taking out a regular license to deal in game, and making a moor he rented pay for itself and leave a profit. His income, too, must have been always large from other sources ; and all he got or borrowed he kept, never paying anything. He had a piteous look when asked for money, as though it were a cruel thing to speak of such a thing, and, as he could neither be arrested nor coerced in the days before the Bankruptcy Act affecting peers, even Mr. Sadrig and Mr. Whyfuss at last decided on leaving him alone.

The Duke came to be the spirit of Debt incarnate. All London wondered at him, and felt a pity for the ruined magnate, a pity which was akin to awe. His

only pleasure seemed to be mooning about in a disconsolate manner through the bare rooms of his deserted palace in the country, especially during the week when he commanded his yeomanry ; for he was, as became his rank, Colonel of that loyal body. One thing seemed dear to him also : it was a black box, which he kept at the dépôt carefully locked, and he constantly wore the key of it attached to a strong chain round his neck. He died at an inn, very poor and forlorn ; his body was stopped on its way to the grave, and the tomb in which he slept his last sleep was afterwards desecrated by sacrilegious hands, the very sword at his side being carried away. But the present Duke was too well advised to institute proceedings which would have placed him possibly under cross-examination, for in the black box, and in other hiding-places in the rooms his father haunted when alive, he found six hundred thousand pounds sterling in bank-notes. Every shilling which the dead man had borrowed for years he had hoarded up untouched. The day that the lawyer had told him of his ruin, and when the strange look of horror had come into his face, had made him a monomaniac ; ever since he had cherished a morbid dread of poverty.

Another Spendthrift of a very different order was a man who had been a Colonel in the Guards, and was known about town as "handsome Charley." He never had possessed a guinea of his own at any period of his life, yet he had always lived on equal terms

with the richest men in the kingdom, sometimes in the Bench and sometimes out of it, the Bench, or King's Bench as it should have been properly called, being a place of incarceration for insolvent debtors till imprisonment for debt by summary process was abolished. Handsome Charley was known and liked, as much as it was in their nature to like anything, by all the best fellows of his day. He was welcome as healthy weather at castles and parks, whose owners might have enriched him by a word; yet none of them ever thought of doing him any serious good. They dined him, and mounted him, and betted with him, and got amusement out of his blithe, dashing ways, and that was all.

Whenever handsome Charley was seen on the shady side of Piccadilly or Pall-mall, he had a Lord arm-in-arm with him, a high-stepping horse or perhaps a pair following him; and there was a bailiff round the corner waiting till he was at leisure to be served with a writ. Even the sheriffs' officers liked him, and would not break in rudely on his conversation with a nob; besides, Charley never ran away, and they always knew where to have him. There were high times, too, in Coper's spunging-house when handsome Charley was there. Miss Judith and Miss Rachael Coper, both ladies of the showiest sort, would have him to dine with them, and Solomon Sloper himself would drive them in his four-wheeler to have tea and watercresses at Jack Straw's Castle. Charles

might have done worse than marry Miss Rachael, but he was not that kind of man. He had sold himself one morning without the smallest concern to a cousin of his who had only a thousand pounds, because he wanted it to take up an I O U that bothered him. It was wonderful to think how the pair lived afterwards ; but they did live, having a bijou house in a pretty street leading out of Park-lane, and two or three carriages, with all the best things from the best tradesmen. On an occasion when handsome Charley was before the Court of Bankruptcy he had so fine an antique ring upon one of his fingers that Mr. Commissioner Wigby raised his eyebrows in a fit of austere morality ; but Charley had his eye on him, and was possessed of a winning knack of doing little things gracefully. So he drew off the jewel and laid it down before him, as though he gave it up there and then to his creditors, whereat Mr. Commissioner smiled grimly ; and the trustee in bankruptcy courteously requested Charley to retain it for the present. There was also applause in court.

Indeed, handsome Charley was not a rogue. To the last he was more of a pigeon than a hawk. None of his tradesmen lost much by him, if they lost at all, for Charley had such crowds of friends, he was so elegant and so much envied, aped, and eyed by the guardsmen and stockbrokers who make up a great deal of the golden youth of London, that a West-End shopkeeper would not have been far out in his calculation if he had paid handsome Charley to call upon him on any

afternoon towards three o'clock during the height of the season. His fiat was supreme on all points of dress or personal ornament. His taste in equipages, dinners, breakfasts, garden-parties, picnics, balls, and private theatricals was perfect. He could confer celebrity on an artist; he could make almost any poor man rich but himself.

As for expensive tastes, as far as he himself was concerned, however, he had none save an unconquerable love for horses and carriages, of which he must have possessed an astonishing variety during his lifetime. He never could resist buying horse or carriage that was worth buying. Nor would he have done badly could he have made a reasonable trade of the business, for he was a capital judge of horseflesh; but Charley never had any ready money, and was obliged to pay in bills and notes of hand, which had to be discounted under such hard conditions that all possible gilt which might have stuck to his gingerbread was rubbed off. He would have a score of horses and a dozen phaetons, curricles, tilburys, stanhopes, broughams, and drags about at different livery stables while he was in durance at Cursitor-street, and when he came out all the horses had eaten their heads off, and all the carriages had to go to the hammer for what they would fetch.

Then Charley began again, living at Long's or Limmer's Hotel till he could find a good house; or perhaps he was at Long's and his wife at the Star and Garter, Richmond. He had running accounts at all

the best inns in town and country, and none of the landlords were sorry to see him again, because of the company he kept. He himself, too, was the quietest of guests—a pale, soft-spoken man, who dined on a rice-pudding and a lettuce, drinking no wine. He might have lived for sixpence a day if he could have only kept clear of hoof and wheels. As it was, he spent, or seemed to have spent, an amazing sum of money, for he had horses and carriages to the last, and dropped them about in pawn wherever he went, whether paid for or not. Even after his decease they clung to his memory; and on the day of his funeral advertisements might have been seen in the morning papers giving notice that unless handsome Charley took away an equipage he had left at this or that place it would be sold to pay expenses.

I have met with yet another Spendthrift, who got through thousands as other men give out pence. But he had method in his prodigality, and his profuseness brought him fine profits. He was a Government contractor, and hand in hand with influential people. He chartered steamers to take his friends on pleasure trips. He rode about in special trains. He lent houses, moors, yachts, and money uncounted and in abundance to the back-stairs ushers of his time. But he had to keep so many useful fellows company in tippling at all hours in the day that he ended by fuddling his wits with champagne, and so got lost in the law courts. He died poor.

THE USURER.

MR. BENONI CRABBE was the son of a country solicitor who had found his profession a very good business. He had been brought up to be a country solicitor himself, and had even practised for a while with his father, under the style of "Crabbe and Son." But this did not last long, for old Crabbe, who had a steady-going practice, chiefly concerned with the tenants of a cathedral close, was startled out of his gaiters by a flood of I O U's and promissory notes which were presented to the firm for payment just before the settling day after a race for the Chester Cup. Then, of course, it came out that Benoni had gone on the turf, and had gone so far that he was found hanging by the neck in the coach-house of a sporting inn, where he was cut down just in the nick of time by an ostler. To this day Crabbe junior has a slight stiffness under the chin and ears, owing to this episode in his career. His debts were all paid, the partnership was formally dissolved in the county paper to save the business; and after a few months Benoni appeared occasionally putting a blue bag in his father's

gig. At such times he wore a cowed aspect and revealed a shaved head, for he had passed through a smart attack of brain fever.

That did not last long either. As soon as young Crabbe's hair began to grow he turned up again on a borrowed nag at the cover-side, and got a lift over to any steeplechase within tandem distance ; for most of the fast young squires and horsey farmers had a sneaking kindness for him. He was a sharp fellow, who could sing a good song and make himself handy in many ways. He picked up Lord Spankington, who was his first private client, by teaching that legislator to whistle "Yankee Doodle" on a key ; and they became so intimate in half an hour that the peer condescended to borrow five pounds of him to pay for a lunch he gave to Benoni and to his jockey. The lender winced as he parted with the money, for he had not another sixpence and was thirty miles from home ; but later on, the same day, his Lordship, who had won largely on a double event and drank much, threw his pocket-book at the lawyer's head with a large vocabulary of loud-sounding adjectives. Indeed, it was this nobleman who then first gave Mr. Crabbe the nickname of "Lobster," which he retains to this day. Lord Spankington was plunging wildly at the time ; and it was not the last transaction they had together by very many.

"I don't know why he called me 'Lobster,'" mused Benoni, as he rode home on a spavined mare

which belonged to a miller. "Crabs' claws hold quite fast enough;" and the young man soon began to think that if the chance lending of a five-pound note could bring back such a thumping sum as he had then got in his breast pocket, it was just possible that he might see his way to an occupation a great deal livelier and more profitable than ordinary betting, which is, after all, mere chance work, even with the best of tips.

From that time forward "Lobster" never missed a meeting of noble sportsmen which was worth his attention; and there was no better known figure than his, either at Tattersall's or in the Ring. He had a dapper, clean-built figure, and was always dressed by the most fashionable tailor. The colour of his clothes never varied. He wore a black coat and waistcoat, with dark-grey trousers and a grey overcoat, with a black hat. The only peculiarity of his costume consisted of a white cambric neckerchief admirably starched and folded, like that of a groom. His face was clean shaven, save for about an inch of cropped whisker before his ears. His hair was of a red deep enough to justify his nickname. His eyes were small, but had the keen, awakened expression which characterize those of a pig in the wind. His nose was thin and sharp, which gave him a foxlike aspect; his lips were thin and firmly closed; his jaw square and very massive. He was a man of iron muscle, great personal courage, and uncommon activity; cool, too, as a cucumber. He hardly knew the

meaning of fatigue, and was one of the best boxers in England among the lightweights, having held his own even with such a bruiser as "Twiddle," better known as the late Most Honourable Marquis of Cuffington.

Nature had thus fitted him admirably for a fashionable money-lender, and he made the most both of his qualifications and opportunities. He was blunt and straightforward in speech, blurting out a direct "Yes" or "No" to a Duke or his trainer. His word might be implicitly trusted, and he never attempted to trap any one at a disadvantage. Those who dealt with him knew perfectly well what they were about, and so did he. There was not a point to choose between them. Both parties soon came to understand that they could not dupe each other; and "Lobster" never tried it on.

"Cruelty!" "Hardheartedness!" "Pooh!" he would say, with unruffled humour, when some slippery client was trying to shuffle out of his engagements through his parents or guardians, who put forth the usual commonplaces in his behalf. "It does not suit a man who discounts the expectations of young fellows belonging to the best clubs, and who all hold together when they decently can, to get a bad name for unkindness. I never pressed a man in my life without having all his friends behind me. *Your* principal wants to play me a dog's trick, and I don't mean to let him. I don't care how he pays, or when he pays; but he must pay. Tell him so;" and then

the keen eyes would look up with a candid and confident glance quite refreshing. Mr. Crabbe never beat about the bush.

“Don’t talk to me about usury,” he said to an eminent political economist who growled over his figures when it became necessary to square a bundle of post-obits, produced by Mr. Crabbe at the usual time. “Don’t talk to me about usury. Butchers, bakers, pastrycooks, and those most picturesque of tradesmen the florists and fruitsellers, make better use of their capital than I do, and turn it much more quickly. Besides, they hold solid value for their money, whereas I hold none. Bill discounting is one of the heroic professions. It is also the first of the fine arts. Neither a fool nor a rogue could succeed in it. A man who can lend money on personal security should be justly esteemed a Bayard for his courage, a Solon for his wisdom, and a Howard for his benevolence. Fork over, can’t you?” And the eminent political economist forked over accordingly, seeing that he could not possibly do otherwise. There was no help; the massive chin of the Usurer was so resolute, and there was such jocosse triumph in his discourse, for the post-obits were all in order, and there was no bringing the question to a wrangle.

“I say, Jack,” also observed Mr. Crabbe one frosty morning over a Melton pie to a Junior Lord of the Treasury, who was brother to a Marquis; “no, you don’t.”

"Don't what?" inquired the other sulkily, for he was just up, and hardly awake.

"Well, you don't go off in the Hospodar's yacht to-night as you meant to. That's why I ran down by the cock-crow train this morning to breakfast here. Pay up, man; you won just enough at hazard from the two Spooners. Tom Eaves saw you do it."

"Fellows who take such plunder as you do can afford to wait; and, blank it, you shall wait, blank you. You are worse than Shylock; you are Gobsac, you are Fagin," replied Mr. Crabbe's involuntary host, now driven to bay, and determined to carry off his discomfiture with a high hand. If he could only have got the money-lender into a "correspondence with the department," he might have been a match for him. But there, alone, with nothing between them but a little tender minced pork and pastry, the Junior Lord quailed as he noted the calmness of Mr. Crabbe's countenance while he prepared to reply. With one last effort, however, he growled out the word "Rogue."

"I had rather you did not make me ×," remarked the Usurer, quietly putting his two fingers athwart each other playfully. "I'm nasty when I'm angry; but then I never am angry. I am a young man from the country; but you don't come over me, that's all. Now look here, you young rascal," and here Mr. Crabbe, perhaps fancying that the Junior Lord had too much starch in his cravat, poked him familiarly

in the ribs. "Look here, I say. When I lend my money I have to give my time and wits with it. Why, your acceptance would be only waste paper in any other hands than mine. If you thought you could take it from me, even, and kick me down-stairs, you would do it. I knew this when I lent you my money to redeem the borrowed jewels you had pawned. I knew more than that, too. If you had any property either in expectation or reversion you would not have come to me. You would have got a loan through your family solicitor, or from an insurance office. If you had any two friends of respectability you might have got money at fifteen per cent. on a policy of your own life. Your father has had about three hundred thousand pounds that way. Finally, you know half London, and if your word of honour could be trusted, if those who know you best believed you were other than a scoundrel without faith or principle, there are dozens of fine free-handed lads who would lend you anything you wanted. But you played all those little games out long ago. Your sister was the last person you could cheat, and you did it. Now you want to diddle me, and are to have a colonial governorship during the recess to help you. Out with the shiners, I say, you young dog;" and here again Mr. Crabbe poked his young friend in the ribs, then tranquilly resumed the investigation of the pie.

"Bill," bawled the Junior Lord fiercely to his

valet, "wire Hospodar and say I shan't come, and, blank you, look sharp, you will have to go to the bank afterwards."

"I knew you'd come kindly to it after a little talking to," resumed the Usurer good-humouredly. "I should have no chance with you nobbs if I hadn't the gift of the gab."

"It is not all plain-sailing, though," demurred Mr. Crabbe to one who complimented him on the successful results of this journey. "I lost thirty-seven thousand pounds in one heap by the Duke of Shufflemore; and, although I have seen a good deal of the world, I think that the most complete scamp I ever saw or heard of is a peer of the realm now living. I thought I could trust a Duke safely, but I couldn't. Since then I have been more cautious. There is nothing which takes the reverence out of a man like money-dealings with the nobility. Their tricks are won-der-ful," mused Mr. Crabbe, nursing his knee in a reflective mood. "They don't answer letters. They go abroad; they do their dirty work through third parties, mostly sharp customers, and they try to come 'my Lord' over people when they are found out."

Mr. Crabbe has no objection to reveal the innermost secrets of his trade. A newly married husband once called upon him in some surprise in answer to a communication he had unexpectedly received. His wife, one of the better of the best society, had flown kites

to the height of twenty-five thousand pounds, and declared herself quite unable to explain how it all happened. She had done it, she declared, quite unconsciously. The Usurer, however, explained the phenomenon in the most natural way possible.

“My Lady,” said he, with a cheerful smile; “my Lady, like many other great ladies and fine gentlemen, is very generous. I have heard that she never denied herself anything. Few people would, if they could help it. She often wanted money at a moment’s notice; and she came to me, or sent her maid. Sometimes she sent her milliner or her jeweller; but it all came to the same thing. I knew the value of her Ladyship’s signature, and have had the honour to become very familiar with it. You see, my Lady had not to go through any formalities when she sent to me. No board of directors, no delays, no inquiries are ever mixed up with affairs transacted through me. I do what my clients ask, or I don’t do it. In my Lady’s case, I complied with her request most readily, and would do so again. Indeed, I paid a handsome commission to another lady who brought me her custom—a Countess, by-the-way, in her own right, is my fair business friend in this case, and very sharply she looks after her per-centage.”

Then the husband exploded as though a thunderstorm had been concealed in his breast. He used language that was quite awful, while “Lobster,” blandly went through the motion of washing^g his

hands, which was a cosy habit he indulged. Finally, the young married man vowed by his gods that he "would not pay one farthing. *No, not one farthing,*" he hissed between his teeth, and gnashed them quite ferociously.

"You amaze me!" answered Mr. Crabbe, with a look of genuine surprise. "Your name is on every stamp in my possession. See here, and here, and here," continued the Usurer, in excellent tone and temper, turning over the leaves of a packet of oblong papers lying near him. "There is your signature, 'Benedict,' on every one but the last, that is signed 'Lovibond,' your present title. It has been renewed five times; on each occasion for three months. When the bill again became due I wrote to you."

"I will give you a cheque," says my Lord, hoarsely.

"I never give or take cheques in business," replied "Lobster." "Such strange things happen to them. People might stop payment of them when they once got their paper back again; or might produce my own cheque against me on a trial for usury. I prefer gold."

"Send one of your clerks to the bank," gasps the tortured man.

"No, really now, I think you had better present your own draft. You will find me here for an hour more, and you will soon pick up a hansom." Mr. Crabbe touches a handbell as he speaks, and requests

that the next client in waiting may be introduced to him.

Everything becomes known, and there is no such thing as a secret in this world of ours, so full of sham secrets; so Lady Lovibond's adventure oozed out. Perhaps my Lord's bankers were startled by such a tremendous cheque as he drew that day while he stood before their counter, with a white foam on his lips; perhaps he let fall some hasty expression better unuttered; perhaps the servants overheard the dreadful words he used to the Countess over her five-o'clock tea when he burst in upon her Ladyship and the Bishop of Highdownderry, who had been her guardian and the acting executor under her father's will, keeping an austere hand, as he thought, upon her girlish whims.

But when surprise on the subject was affected in the presence of "Lobster," he laughed in a certain noiseless way peculiar to him when he was amused. "Many people," he placidly averred, "make a discreet use of forgery. Scores of the acceptances in my possession bear forged endorsements. I do not discount for borrowers who forge habitually, unless I know a great deal about their reserves and social position; but it is always safe for once. Ladies are the most impudent forgers. They use the names of their husbands, or their sweethearts, or their fathers, sometimes of their brothers and uncles when those relatives are to be managed; and they trust to a good

cry to set everything to rights. It always does so. It would be a poor world otherwise, poor in pocket, poor in affection ; and it is neither.

'Tis a very good world to live in,
To spend, or to lend, or to give in ;
But to beg or to borrow, or get back one's own,
'Tis the very worst world that ever was known.

I am obliged by the inherent difficulties of my position to take large interest. It varies, but twenty per cent., as a rule, satisfies me. It looks more because I count insurance risks besides, though I am my own insurance office and take the risks on myself. I generally know that I can manage to get paid if my client lives ; but when his breath is once gone heirs will seldom pay a farthing if they can contrive by any means, however unscrupulous, to escape legal responsibility. The question for my clients to ask themselves is not the amount of interest I demand, but what my money is worth to them. I do not hunt them up ; they come to me, and often in ghastly trouble. I have saved officers of unblemished repute—men with the Victoria Cross and the ribbon of the Bath—from being hooted out of their ships and regiments : not always by their own fault, but sometimes through mishap or evil fortune. My money has been often more than gold ; it has been life and honour. I have known a surgeon take a thousand guineas for saving a man's leg. I have saved men from blowing out their own brains by lending them fifty pounds at a moment's notice."

It has been observed that Mr. Crabbe very rarely

resorts to legal proceedings. Even then he never issues his own writs or sues for bills in his own hands. His legal acumen merely serves him to decide when a client is to be squeezed and when it is better to leave him alone. If, on the one hand, he never listens to any terms of compromise, and insists on his due to the last farthing; so, on the other, he never wastes powder and shot, or follows any track which leads to a bog. He is not vindictive, but he can wait with great patience to cry quits with any one who offers him an intentional slight. Thus, Lord Spankington, who threw those unsavoury adjectives with the contemptuous nickname at him when he was a stripling, got back as good as he gave. Long afterwards, when he was a broken-down, disreputable old creature, living from hand to mouth on other people, he went with a cock-and-bull story to Mr. Crabbe. Of course the Usurer would lend him nothing, for he had no security but his shattered word to offer anybody. The Usurer, however, chucked him scornfully an old pocket-book with a ten-pound note in it, saying, "There's your own money back again, with interest, Magpie!" Now, the magpie is the Barabbas of birds, while the Lobster is a better fish than the Crabbe; so my Lord got back at least as much as he gave.

For the rest, Mr. Crabbe is a man of simple habits. He never drank a glass of champagne in his life. He dines every day off cold meat at two o'clock. He has no weaknesses, no desires, no fancies, being utterly

devoid of imagination. But he is not ungenerous, or morose, or ill-natured. He leaves the harsh and sordid part of his calling to others—to Mark the tallyman, to Stokes the truckmaster, and to Sloper Grimes, Esq., who advertises for a constant succession of fresh dupes. The only pleasure which Mr. Benoni Crabbe really enjoys is found in breeding canaries, of which he has always an astonishing variety in full song and full feather.

THE RICH WIDOW.

It was over now. The handsome presence, the kind eyes that always smiled on her, the genial voice that never chided, and the strong man's protection, were all gone. They buried him yesterday with all the pomp of woe, and now his widow sits alone with an untasted dinner before her. She seems to be inwardly fighting with her tears, remembering happier days, which appear now to have been all festivals. There is his vacant chair, the chair which he used to draw up beside her when they dined alone. It was never at the head of the table, as it should have been, but always close to hers, that she might "be nearest his heart," he used to say. Every morning when he went out to his duty he used to kiss her and leave a pleasant word glowing behind him, which kept the house warm all day. The children used to watch for him when he came home, and run to see the porter open the great gates and take his sword and sabretache. His sabretache hangs over her head now in her bed-chamber, and his sword is kept bright by the side of his table. Her thoughts are with him morning, noon,

and night. His presence fills the house, yet all is silence. No cheerful laugh, no fresh nosegay for her now. All her life passed from light to darkness in a single week. A headache, a few days of typhoid fever, a few brief pangs, and then he died in her arms; while upon his upturned face there shone a look of love which was immortal.

Then came the lawyers—smooth-tongued men, conventionally dressed in mourning, too—and told her she was rich. Of course she was rich. The high-souled gentleman who had been the guide and guardian of her life would not have suffered the very wind to blow upon her roughly. He had left her all he had. Tower and hamlet, field and forest, were all hers—acres upon acres of the best land in England. The tenantry on his estates, which were now hers, had mustered in hundreds when they were married, and had taken the horses from the carriage while the joy-bells rung out on the summer air from the steeple of the church where they read the burial-service over his coffin, and would some day read it over hers, God willing. They had been one in life; they should be one in death.

For the present, she had to remember that she was his representative, and held in her keeping the sacred trust of his name and honour. Whatever he had done while he was with her should be done now he was gone. Whatever he had purposed to do must be faithfully tried. She was but the handmaid that he

had left behind him in charge of what was his ; and she would render him an account of it when she was permitted to see his face again. If such a trust should want all her strength and more to fulfil it, she would ask for help from on high ; so that, now her heart had died within her, her soul might live.

She passed a weary time at first, before the world learned to understand her. Her sister, who was also a widow, came to see her the day after her husband's funeral. She was a buxom, fresh-coloured dame in the forties, who had married and buried a wealthy brewer with equal satisfaction. She thought that it was good for widows to marry again ; and laughingly added that " she meant to set the example, having chosen an Italian Count to help her, after a fashion not unpopular among widows of opulent condition. She said that no good can be got even out of money unless one enjoyed it, and she had determined to make the most of hers. She had sold her dull old house in Portman-square, and bought a villa at Naples. She had had her diamonds reset, and had found a pearl in a lady's-maid who could dress her hair as she liked it, which was in the Roman fashion. She had got a telephone in communication with M. Worth. Her box at the Opera was the best on the grand tier. She had set a new fashion in bonnets ; and a couple of Royal Dukes with their Royal Duchesses were in the habit of coming to her garden parties, which were the talk of London. It was troublesome for her to

wear half mourning just now, because she feared it did not become her. However, her sister must put off her weeds as soon as possible, and then they would amuse themselves together.

She who was a Widow indeed let her talk on. What else could be done in such a case? She must receive many such visits, and endure them patiently. She could not let everybody in to see the ruins of her happiness; and relations have often far less sympathy with our innermost sorrows than the merest strangers. One of her husband's kinswomen next felt privileged to break in upon her solitude, and pointed out to her with much unction the beauties of existence under the inspired guidance of the Reverend Boanerges Mawworm. She enlarged upon the pure joys of working vestments for that deserving clergyman, and contributing from her store to the very utmost, in order to propagate the Mawworm doctrine among the benighted aborigines of the South Sea Islands. She seemed to consider it a peculiar blessing to turn up her eyes, and to speak with solemn nasal twang in the reverend gentleman's service. She dressed all in drab, with a coal-scuttle bonnet, after his injunctions, and proposed to purchase him the freehold of a chapel out of the savings in her milliner's and dressmaker's bills. She subscribed liberally to the institutions which he patronised, and in this manner became advertisementally and otherwise connected with "The Home for the Middle-Aged Bald" and "The Little

Children's Unmixed Toffy Asylum," which she praised with extreme fervour. She carried about tracts; and after she was gone her gentle hostess found one of them pinned on her drawing-room curtains. It was entitled, "Won't you take something short?" and belonged to the hot and strong sort of denunciation which is nowadays addressed to the people in the language with which they are supposed to be most familiar.

Then came the Widow of a puisne judge, whose dower had in some way gone wrong, and who abused her deceased husband roundly for not making a clearer will. "My dear," she said in the hero's home, where no ignoble thought had ever entered, "I hope you have found your settlements all right. I ought to have had nine thousand a year, and I have only six. That stupid man of mine was always putting codicils to his will; and you would hardly believe it, the last will I insisted on his making the day before he died wasn't ready for his signature, so one of his nephews has got some money that belongs to me. My husband ought to be ashamed of himself in his grave; and would I am sure if he knew it. The next time I marry, I will have all the money settled on me beforehand. Mind you do the same, my dear. I have got an excellent solicitor who knows all about it, and who will take care you do not lose a sixpence. When I marry, as I mean to do after the usual time is up, I shall have everything secured for my sole and

separate use, down even to the contents of my late husband's wine-cellar."

"It is a pity there are not public trustees to protect us poor women," she went on to say. "But I have just bought a life annuity from the City of Manchester, so that my new husband won't be able to get hold of much of my money beyond what I may choose to give him. Sell your estates, my dear, before the land panic gets worse, and put the money to the best use you can, as I have done. I will introduce you to Messrs. Ponder and Grip, my men of business, who will show you how to do it. When they have put your fortune quite right, marry again, as I shall. It is all nonsense about Widows being free and easy. They are not free at all, and can only receive lawyers, doctors, and parsons without scandal. Even those must be non-conductors and old men. The lawyer who always attends to me has a face like parchment; I feel obliged to have Sir Senex Parr for my physician; and no clergyman is ever let inside my house but the Dean of Dole, who is a married man with twelve children."

At last the worldly and the flippant, the selfish and the mean, left off tormenting her, and gave place to more congenial friends. Lord Courtly's Widow was among them. She *had* married again, and sometimes related her performances under those conditions, with a humour half comic, half sad. She had chosen a Captain of dragoons at thirty-five, and soon had

occasion to mark the contrast between her old love and the new. Her first husband, who was older than she had been, was all politeness, attention, and refinement. Her nod was law to him, her smile enchantment. He was never tired of saying pretty things to her. Her second husband, who was her junior by six months, was all bad behaviour and selfishness. He nearly drove her mad with jealousy. In 'Lord Courtly's time she had been noted for her calm and stately dignity of manner. It seemed as though nothing could ever ruffle her serene and equal temper. She was calm and cold as snow. The dragoon made her as restless as a wild cat; and one of her old friends was startled to meet her near Westminster Bridge on a stormy midnight when the bitter east wind blew a hurricane. She was quite alone, and her poor face was pale as ashes. She was watching a house where she had seen her husband enter, poor lady! Fortunately, the Captain broke his neck while hunting, before she had been tortured much longer, and she was now cured of matrimony. There was Lady Heigho, too, who had tried to marry again, and failed because her mind was full of romantic notions, and she had determined to be loved for herself alone at fifty-five. Then this happened. She feigned to be ruined. So a very honest gentleman, who would have made her a comfortable husband, withdrew for prudential considerations, and married somebody else. She was bitterly disappointed,

but took comfort afterwards, and became a more reasonable woman, wearing her weeds meekly thenceforth.

Meantime she, the gracious lady with whom this record is concerned, went on her straight path and her narrow way, being fancy free, and harbouring neither thoughts nor dreams of a second marriage. Her hair became white as silver within a year of her husband's death, and she always dressed in deep mourning for his sake, though she was not morose, or even gloomy, after awhile. It was noticed by those who knew her best that all her opinions seemed to be formed, and were immutable. Her mental progress had stopped, perhaps, and the tomb had closed over it. She could never more listen to advice. Her politics, her social creed, were precisely those of her husband. She would have considered it a sacrilege to change them in any respect. Being a large landowner, she felt a sense of part proprietorship in the county members as being in a manner responsible for her vote and interest, which were of great weight in a contested election. She entertained the Lord-Lieutenant when he passed through her property, and the Judges when they came on Circuit, bringing out choice recipes in cookery on such occasions, and holding up the traditional hospitalities of her castle.

If any one should desire to go beyond this, and care to learn how a life was passed that looked for ever heavenward, he can but give the rein to fancy.

Very little was heard or known of my Lady, though she lived to a great age. Her children all grew up to be brave, honest men, and fair, delightful women. They gathered round her upon holidays and festivals, making the ancestral home where she lived in state resound with merry words and hearty laughter. All dependent on her seemed to thrive and prosper. Her farms were well tilled; her servants contented. She went abroad in her old-fashioned equipage, drawn by four white horses, and with mounted grooms in attendance, to open the gates on cross roads, and to clear the way of blundering waggons and erratic market carts; and no sooner had gaffer Tom Bobbin, or honest Will Saddler, who were her outriders, appeared on their steady nags at any village comprised in her estate than the children began to cheer. The smith and the wheelwright stopped at their work, and the miller's wife, with her gossips, came out to their thresholds, each ready with smile and curtsey for the lady of the Manor. "God bless her!" said the Vicar to his curate, as they did their parish work side by side, and raised their hats to the great lady. "A Trump, by Jingo!" said the doctor, as he met her in his gig with the fast-trotting bay mare, for the doctor was a radical and of an irreverent turn of mind; but he knew that the grand equipage would first stop at the almshouses and then at the hospital, and was carrying that which is better than drugs for the poor and the sick, whose chief ailment is want. My Lady's pheasants

and port wine mostly went that way, as they had done in the late Lord's time. It was he who had first taught her how sublime a thing is charity, and she had got the lesson long ago by heart.

It might have seemed to those around her as though her good deeds ended there, but many far away could have told a different story. Poet and artist, soldier and priest, all the aged and the helpless of whom she knew, whosoever was in necessity or tribulation felt her silent bounty, seldom knowing whence it came. Thus, at last, there grew about her a kind of sanctity, which became more resplendent and far shining with years ; while that virtue and goodness which at first appeared but as a beacon on a mountain or an ensign on a hill, gleamed high over the stormy sea of life, bright as the loadstar.

THE NEWSPAPER EDITOR.

THE transformation of the *London Mercury* from a threepenny into a penny organ was at once a big speculation and a great event. The prophets whom the proprietors consulted predicted that the venture would fail; they said that England had enough of cheap newspapers, and that the subscribers to the threepenny journal—a faithful, square-toed phalanx—would be shocked at getting their newspaper for eight farthings cheaper than they had purchased it before. Nevertheless the proprietors persevered, and spent about £30,000 in advertising, and the purchase of new type, steam-presses, and so forth. One morning the *Mercury* appeared improved, enlarged, more readable in every way, at the cost of a penny, and it became at once a thorough success.

The old Editor, Mr. Baulker, was distressed at this unexpected stroke of fortune, for he had been among those who foretold failure. A heavy, shambling sort of person, full of wise saws and petty prudence, he was one of those men frequently met with who, while advocating progress heartily, and indeed recklessly,

in matters that do not concern themselves, dare not risk a sixpence when it may entail a loss to their own purses. He was faithful to his employers and strictly upright in all that concerned the management of his paper. He would not have bartered his conscience for millions, had any one been tempted to offer him such a price for so colourless a piece of merchandise. He thought the *Mercury* at threepence the glory of British journalism; and certainly he had contributed to give it a high character for truth by inserting nothing in it which was new, and a reputation for impartiality by the simple process of keeping out of it all that was likely to give anybody offence.

So this man was like one who drives a steady-going one-horse gig, and who is suddenly invited to climb on to the box of a flashing new drag, drawn by four mettlesome thoroughbreds. His salary was almost doubled when he ascended to his new seat, but he could not accustom himself to the change. He knew not how to hold his reins, and he could not understand what was the use of the long-leashed whip at his side. As soon as his team had started with him he felt inclined to cry "Stop!" and would have put on the break there and then if the owners of the coach had allowed him to do so.

Poor old soul, he had never imagined what a popular newspaper was! He was expected to insert telegrams as they came piping hot from the wires, without waiting to deliberate whether there was any

truth in them ; he was required to have new theatrical pieces reported on the morning after their performance ; and if an interesting trial took place he was told that he must devote six columns to it, even though he must thereby elbow out those magnificent letters from his pet correspondent at Leipsic, who used to give him such interesting and long-winded statistics on the evolution of Rationalism from scientific data in Germany. After driving the new *Mercury* for six weeks, Mr. Baulker felt that he had undertaken more than he could perform, and he wistfully appealed to his employers to relieve him of his duties, remarking, at the same time, that he was a married man with a family. The proprietors in lieu of pensioning him off prudentially set some Parliamentary influence at work, and obtained for the good old man a comfortable Government sinecure ; after which they cast their eyes about them to find a younger, spryer, and experter coachman.

There was at that time in the office of the *Mercury* a young fellow of thirty, with a shock head of hair and a pair of eyes that looked you straight in the face like those of an inquisitor. Brimmer was this gentleman's name, and he had begun life as a compositor, rising thence to the post of proof-corrector, and becoming afterwards sub-editor to the *Mercury*. He had enjoyed little education as a boy, but he had taught himself by perusing the manuscripts that passed through his hands ; and in his few leisure

hours by day he diligently studied the newspaper that he had helped to put in type over-night. A man picks up a good deal of desultory instruction in this way ; and when he makes use of it, as Mr. Brimmer did, to grasp the fact that this world of ours is for ever spinning round and requires change, he may come to great destinies. Now, at the moment when Mr. Baulker vacated the editorial chair in the *Mercury* office, the proprietors of the paper were inclined to quarrel as to who should succeed him. One wanted to appoint a professor, a second a sportsman, a third a Baptist deacon ; so, as the strife waxed hot between them, one of the disputants put in a plea for compromise, and mentioned the name of Mr. Brimmer : "He's a sharp young fellow," said he, "and has not enough opinions of his own to jostle any of ours."

All unsuspecting of the honour that was awaiting him, Mr. Brimmer was at that minute seated in a frowsy room, littered with torn paper, and was sorting telegrams for the printer. A messenger summoned him, and he entered the presence of the proprietors, not guessing what was wanted of him, but bearing himself with a certain natural dignity of demeanour which came from the confidence he entertained in his own talents. He was seedily dressed, and had a complexion sallowed from overwork ; in one of his hands he held a bundle of telegrams, in the other a pair of scissors, and there was a red pencil behind his ear.

Without much parley the proprietors made their offer to him—the editorship of the *Mercury*, with £2,000 a year; and the thing that surprised them most was to see how coolly the young man greeted their rich proposal. He did not redden or stammer; he simply replied that he should be happy to do his best! and, after a few civil words of thanks, begged their leave to withdraw for the present, as this was the time when work pressed most heavily on his hands. But who can tell what sensations thrilled in the clever young man's breast as he descended that rickety wooden stairs of the office and reflected that without any scheming or favour, but by sheer dint of hard work and punctuality in his engagements, he had won his way to the front rank in his profession? When he reached the unclean den in which he used to ply his labours, he sank into his cane chair near the table and put his hands before his eyes for a moment as if to dream. But this fit of emotion only lasted an instant, and then he went to work again, for the presses below were getting up steam, and the voices of the “devils” were heard crying for more “copy.” Mr. Brimmer soon made the *Mercury* one of the leading newspapers in England.

It was beautiful to see how quickly he understood his business—how deftly he gathered up the reins with which Mr. Baulker had fumbled, and how briskly he set this fresh coach tooling along the road to catch up the others that had a start of him. It

was no longer a slow coach now! The others in front had to accelerate their pace that it might not overtake them! and they failed, for within less than a year—which is but as five minutes in time-races of newspapers—it was abreast of the foremost of them; and, to keep up our metaphor, it added to the number of its passengers at every stage. In other words, the *Mercury*, if it did not attain to what one of its rivals boasted as “the largest circulation in the world,” had such a circulation and such a mass of advertisements as bid fair to convert its proprietors into millionaires.

What was Mr. Brimmer’s secret for thus winning success? One might define it in many ways, but this formula would always have to be reduced to one word. A Frenchman said that three ingredients were required to make a salad—oil, vinegar, and talent in the mixing; so one may say that Mr. Brimmer’s recipe for making a first-class morning newspaper was simply “intelligence.”

But, of course, intelligence required money to back it; and, luckily, the proprietors of the *Mercury* were not chary of their pounds, knowing well that the lively Mr. Brimmer would not hide them in a napkin. His maxim was to get everything of the best, and to pay for it the proper price. He disbursed in telegrams such sums as would have given Mr. Baulker a fit of indigestion. Did a war break out, he dispatched two, four, six correspondents, if need were, to the scene of action, and instructed them to send home telegraphic

letters three columns long and full of facts. For comments he did not care: "Give me news," he used to say, "and we at home will furnish opinions about them." By "we" he meant his editorial staff of leader-writers, whom he used to pay at the rate of a guinea per column more than any other penny journal.

This leader-writing department of the *Mercury* was as well managed as the other. No man was admitted into it on a permanent engagement; but writers having mastery of special subjects were at all times invited to join its ranks temporarily, until they had written all they had to say. As to Parliamentary and law reporters, Mr. Brimmer's mandates to them were invariably issued in the words, "Don't be dull," and, indeed, the *Mercury* was not a dull paper. Even when discoursing on politics it was apt to throw new lights startlingly crude on old subjects.

Naturally, it was a keenly partisan journal. Mr. Brimmer himself was too shrewd a man to believe that there are deep differences of opinion between the rulers of this earth; but he recognised the forces of party animus, and of that deadly antipathy which a statesman who sports "blue" may inspire in the bosoms of politicians who wear "red." "Men, not measures," is the real cry of every electorate in no matter what country, and so Mr. Brimmer had his *men*, and in particular his *great man*, to whom he did homage—with his tongue in his cheek, as it were, but loyally for all that. The readers of the *Mercury* were made

to read day after day glowing panegyrics on the virtues, genius, and disinterested patriotism of the statesman who led the party to which Mr. Brimmer affected to belong; and that statesman took these laudations so much *au sérieux* that in the effusion of his gratitude he offered to make the Editor a knight. The proposal was formulated one evening at an official party, and it almost took Mr. Brimmer's breath away. For the first time in his life, he was almost losing his temper, for he really considered it a degradation to be offered a reward for having rendered what he considered to be independent party service. However, he controlled himself enough to return a witty answer—"I have never worn a helmet, Mr. —, and think my silk hat more comfortable. When I discard it I shall take to a wideawake."

And he laughed, looking the Premier straight in the eyes as he spoke, as his usual manner was. The great man stammered an apology.

Mr. Brimmer is no courtier of Society. He has never attended a *levée*, nor accepted an invitation to go and shoot for a fortnight over the estate of a nobleman. He cannot shoot, nor hunt, nor dance. When he wants a holiday he runs over to Paris for a couple of weeks, or takes a month's touring in Switzerland. But he will not do this often, for he cannot tear himself away from his newspaper without being seized with fidgets lest everything in the office should go wrong. One year, when his doctor had prescribed

a little rest as a necessity, Mr. Brimmer was induced before going abroad to confide the editorial reins to a sort of friend of his, who was conductor of a weekly Society journal, and who, moreover, contributed leaders occasionally to the *Mercury*. This gentleman, named Jowler, was so prudent a writer that Mr. Brimmer thought he would make a good Editor; but, alas! scarcely had he got possession of the *Mercury* than he yielded to the temptation of editing that journal after views of his own instead of following out the instructions which Brimmer had left with him. The old stock paragraphs found their way into the paper; a correspondence on female rights invaded the columns of the second page; and a political question of importance having been suddenly started, Mr. Jowler declared that *his* party—*i.e.* the *Mercury's* party—was divided on the subject, and, lo! there was a rumour at the clubs that the *Mercury* was going to trim!

Mr. Brimmer hurried back at express speed from Geneva, and was dismayed at the confusion which had got into the office during his absence. Half of the proprietors were actually taking Mr. Jowler's side in his onslaught upon the party leader, and Mr. Brimmer had to exercise, not only great tact, but something more than common firmness, before he could get all things under his own control again. It took the *Mercury* a full year to recover the prestige and the character for loyal partisanship which it had lost

during Mr. Jowler's brief administration, and Mr. Brimmer was heard to record a vow that he would never again surrender his editorship for more than a week at a time.

Another great mishap once befell this model Editor. It was when his colleague, the City Editor, so called, who presided over the money article department, was exposed for venality. He had been selling himself to joint-stock company promoters and to issuers of foreign loans bearing ten per cent. interest. The outcry was great all over England, and the public who did not understand the difference between an Editor and a City Editor laid the blame of the whole shocking affair on the *Mercury* in the concrete. But Mr. Brimmer resolved that no such disgrace should occur again to the journal which he led; and he prevailed upon his employers to let him take the City department under his own hand for the future. The better to conduct it, he set himself to study finance; and the newly appointed City *sub-editor* had soon to reckon with the most vigilant censor, who would let not a line pass that bore the faintest resemblance to a puff. City men sneered at so much puritanism; but honest men thought well of a journal whose praises might be got from favour, perhaps, but not for money.

Thus Mr. Brimmer continues to flourish and work, and he will probably die in harness. Every night, from eleven to the time when the first copies of the *Mercury* are dispatched by the country mails, the

Editor may be seen at his office superintending the general work. He goes to bed at five on every day of the week except on Saturday, when he treats himself to the luxury of a country outing of twenty-four hours' length, and goes to bed at nine. Mr. Brimmer drinks no wine, does not smoke, seems to have no passions, vices, or weaknesses. He is all absorbed in his paper, and has gradually become a sort of intelligent machine for working it on the safest plans. Doctors, however, say that Mr. Brimmer "overdoes his work," and that he will some day repent it; to which the Editor drily answers "that if he had no work he would pine away and die." "My diet, sir, is newspapers," he said once to an astonished leech who had been bothering him. "I eat paper plain for breakfast, and paper buttered with ink for tea. When I want to soothe my nerves I chew the stump of my red pencil."

THE DOCTOR.

DR. GODWIN, member of the College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, and a physician, is a gentleman of pleasant aspect, some sixty years old or thereabouts. His upright figure seems built for hard wear and activity; his square shoulders and muscular limbs give proof of great physical strength. The calm expression of his face, his clear, blue eyes, and healthy complexion announce nerves of rare steadiness and habits of moderation in all things. His hair and beard, both somewhat thin, are white as snow; but his step is as elastic as that of a man in the prime of life; and his temper is so sunny that age seems to have come upon him merely as a genial 'autumn day, when all the finest fruits of the year are still ungathered.

No man who fuddled himself with stimulants, or who narcotised his energies with tobacco, or who was self-indulgent in any sort of manner, could get through a tithe of Dr. Godwin's every-day work, for it is that of a London physician in very large practice, who honestly does his duty by every patient he attends. From six o'clock on summer mornings, and from

seven in winter till nine, his house is thronged with the poor, who get advice for nothing, and generally the means of carrying it into effect. Dr. Godwin's mornings are very expensive; but he says this is his way of praying; and, indeed, "Laborare est orare" is an ancient device of the wise and good, who do not go to worship empty-handed.

At nine come the Doctor's regular patients, and they keep on coming till two. They are mostly important people, and find it vexatious to be kept waiting. High ladies and irritable gentlemen of fortune make impetuous rushes into the passage and waylay the Doctor's servant with corrupt offers to purchase precedence; but it is of no use. Donald—a solid silent man, who has been long in his place—is not to be wheedled or bought. The peer and the poulterer, the Dowager Duchess of Knockinthunder, and meek little Mrs. Twoshoes who comes with a ring at the area bell, have all to bide their turn. Donald writes their names on a slate with uncompromising pothooks, and shows them into the Doctor's study one after the other as long as the business can be managed; for at two o'clock his master has to escape by the back door, where his carriage is in waiting to take him on his daily rounds to the bedsides of those who cannot come to him.

He has fast horses harnessed to his plain brougham, and a steady coachman with a quick eye and a practised hand to drive them, or they could never cover

the distances they traverse between two and five in the afternoon, when Dr. Godwin must attend to the correspondence which comes to him from all parts of the world, and supply the requirements of patients who have submitted their cases to him by letter. His secretary has all matter-of-course answers ready for his signature; but there are many which he must write himself, and which require deep thought, for human life and happiness often depend upon his reply. From six to eight in the evening is the time he fixes, when possible, for consultations to which he is called in by other physicians, and professional etiquette, as well as courtesy, obliges him to keep each of these appointments punctually to the minute. At nine Dr. Godwin pays his evening visits to patients in imminent danger, and when he returns home he commonly finds a telegram calling him irresistibly to some great case in the country, so that he passes many of his nights on railways, travelling by special train if needs must; and the flashing lamps of his carriage, the quick trot of his compact thorough bred horses, are known to all the night porters on every line out of London. A little soup, a cup of cocoa, a piece of bread, taken when occasion offers, serve to sustain life. He sleeps as he can.

The Doctor sees and hears many things within the twenty-four hours, for his patients all seem instinctively to love and trust him. Lady Finnikin firmly believes that she could not exist a week unless she

saw the Doctor every day ; and the most agreeable of his visits is, perhaps, that which he pays to her house, for she is very amusing and has nothing whatever the matter with her. Dr. Godwin has only to "exhibit" a placebo of scientific gossip, and she is cured till the morrow. No man can talk more agreeably than he does, or he would never have risen so high in his art. The conversation of physicians is the most amusing of all talk, for their experience is the most varied. It is the most interesting, for it is always personal to the patient.

Dr. Godwin tells Lady Finnikin and Lady Minnikin, who is also a patient of his living in the same square, a variety of new and interesting anecdotes, and he never mentions to Lady Minnikin anything that he has already revealed to Lady Finnikin, or vice versâ, lest they should compare notes and declare his discourse to be but vanity. Thus both have the advantage of being fully primed after his visit, and can enter the list of confabulation armed cap-à-pie, without danger of being assaulted by their own weapons, which is a dismal thing in conversation. What Lady Minnikin has told to Lady Finnikin under these circumstances can only be conceived of by those who have the privilege of hearing Lady Finnikin's narratives in the presence of Lady Minnikin ; and they both lay claim to exclusive information "from the very highest quarters, my dear," on the strength of the Doctor's delightful chat. Yet, what a guard

he must keep upon his tongue ! He knows things that would make Lady Finnikin jump out of her wits, and Lady Minnikin out of her wig.

Dr. Godwin is, above all, a man of broad sympathies and a large heart, or his practice would never have become so extensive. Sir Hauton Knightly called him in when his wife was brought home by the police, after having been lost for eighteen hours. It was a case of dipsomania, which had to be hushed up ; and the world never heard of it afterwards till Sir Hauton died, and the poor lady was left to her own sad devices. The grand old Countess of Glamour, who came of a race of statesmen and heroes, sent for him when her eldest son first went wrong after his famous speech on the malt tax, which was so full of figures. My Lord was gibbering over a pistol when the Doctor arrived ; and the great glass above the mantel-piece in the state drawing-room at Belgrave-square was freshly shattered. The fragments still glittered on the rich carpet of velvet pile. The noble Lord had to be removed in safe custody to one of his estates in Scotland, and there are marks on the Countess's throat where he tried to strangle her. She wears a black band, which sustains a mourning enamelled heart surrounded with diamonds, to hide the scar. My Lord is still under the Doctor's treatment. The world is told he travels. Obscure diseases of the brain are the saddest of all the Doctor's cases.

Then people come to him haggard with despair in

delicate marriage difficulties, afraid to propagate hereditary insanity or disease. He is called to decide cases of cruel doubt and suffering for men and women half distraught by the magnitude and hopelessness of their misery. He has to settle strange dilemmas and nice scruples of conscience. Now he must tell a father that his only son, on whom many hopes and interests are centred, is smitten with an incurable malady. Now a mother with a tortured mind must relate to him the grievous story of her daughter's ruin and its consequences, that he may give her aid and counsel. Once he had to tell a dying man that his wife had been killed by an accident while hastening from their country house to nurse him, there being a question of guardianship which had to be hurriedly reconsidered for the orphan children's sake.

The saddest of the maladies which claim his skill are mental. For the rest, he himself will own most readily that all the cunning of the physician's hand is often vain. Medicine is still in many respects an experimental science. Few specifics are known, and even those cannot be implicitly relied on in all cases. Air, rest, and diet, with judicious exercise, are the great restorers; drugs more often poison than they cure. So the Doctor has come to have about him a winning kind of imperiousness, knowing that it is most essential he should command his patients' minds. Perhaps, though his manners are so perfectly courteous, he has but little inner reverence

for earthly grandeur. Pride, strength, power, fame, are but small things in the sight of one who has seen them as he has seen them. Cæsar has to put out his tongue with complete docility, if he has a headache. Hercules becomes weak as a child after a few days' fever. All the renown and authority in the world will not heal so small a thing as a wart upon a King's nose. He has observed the pomp and glory of the world without their externals;—Princes and governors who were poor feeble creatures, reigning beauties who had to pay full tribute to their mortality. A Premier with no more than a cold in the head is sometimes peevish and unreasonable; a conqueror with an indigestion is in much the same plight as a cobbler. Then, again, he has noted that persons who have led notoriously evil lives met death without terror, and thought that perhaps none of us can do very much harm in the world, if any. The evil which the wicked man works with one hand the good man repairs with another.

He has patients of whom he is, and can be, the only friend on earth; men and women who have dreadful secrets in their lives. He knows the harassing doubts which torment them, and how Augustus trembles for his reason—Lucretia for her honour. The owner of a hundred manors is a kleptomaniac. He tells the physician, and him only, and even to him with an abashed and humbled face, how the mysterious instinct of crime seizes him with irre

sistible power, sometimes in the darkness, sometimes in the light of day, giving him no peace until he has yielded to it ; and as he speaks he wipes the clammy perspiration from his brow, asking the help of science to conjure the evil spirit which possesses him ; knowing that there alone, under Heaven, can help be found for his affliction. An Archbishop confides to his ear alone how he starts wildly in his sleep, aghast with the first promptings of homicide ; such hideous nightmares has the fancy overwrought by toil or vigil, and by the fearful visit of men's sins unto the third and fourth generation of the wicked. And one has sudden fits which cast him into fire and water headlong, and one has a thorn in the flesh past praying for ; a third is a leper, a fourth has that from which his dearest turn away pallid and sickening with horror.

There are weird tragedies and sorrowful dramas—unnatural births, most startling deaths—in this commonplace world of ours, and most of those concerned in them seek such solace as is to be had from the Doctor. Wives and children, Love and Greed, come to him for the momentous secret of the sick chamber : and Love is white as ashes, most wistful, most pitiful, with faltering speech and quivering lips ; while Greed is hungry-eyed, even when soft of tongue. He has to tell the miser that his hoards are now as nothing to him ; and to bid the egotist, full of the lusts of the flesh and the pride of life, to prepare within a few hours for eternity. No calling has duties so solemn, or such cares as that of “ the beloved Physician.”

MY MAIDEN AUNT.

I HAD often heard tell of my Aunt Wiggins, but I was about eight years old before I was permitted to admire that lively, amiable person in the flesh and bones. I say bones because, when she first hugged me, I thought her slightly angular. She was then past thirty-five, and several years older than my mother, though she was a spinster, and seemed by all accounts likely to remain so, to her unfeigned regret. Her Christian name was Sarah, but as our good Aunt still hoped to catch a husband, she used for social purposes a finer and more euphonious name than the one by which she had been baptized, and called herself, on her cards, *Miss Pulcheria Wiggins*.

This was not the only little piece of affectation that revealed the human nature overlying her excellent qualities, for the good soul wore shoes and stays which pinched her, and thereby made her nose red—to obviate which inconvenience she had recourse to a free use of pearl powder and cosmetics. Her style of dressing was always juvenile, and her features frequently assumed the girlish giggle of innocence.

She generally spoke to gentlemen with her eyes cast down, and reddened if they looked at her. Then she pretended to be exceedingly timid, and squealed if she saw a mouse, a frog, or a cockroach. She declared that she would die at once from fright if a spider presumed to crawl on any part of her person.

Now boys are keen detectors of affectation; and one day, while Aunt Sally was seated alone, as she thought, in the garden, I saw her stoop and curiously pick up a stag-beetle, which, having examined with all the interest of an expert entomologist, she allowed to roam on the palm of her hand, showing all the while not the slightest sign of fear. From that day and for a long time afterwards, I set down my Aunt as a humbug; and I grieve to say that I took to playing pranks by way of making her insincerity manifest to other observers besides myself. Thus, when old Colonel Brockdown took to paying a shy kind of court to her, he being, as I knew, an admirer of the soft graces in woman, I used to regale this warrior with startling accounts of how my brave Aunt had once tackled a large rat alone in her bedroom, and had finally whisked him out by the tail from a hole in which he had taken refuge, and handed him over to the justice of the domestic cat, together with even more remarkable examples of her prowess. These unblushing fibs must have produced some commotion in the Colonel; for I can never forget how he stared whilst I related them to him with the grave volubility

of boyhood. However, they must have convinced him that my Aunt Wiggins was not to be trifled with; and when one hot summer afternoon he was coyly reproached by my Aunt for being "a gay deceiver," he turned very red, and offered her his hand, heart, &c., on the spot.

"Oh, Colonel Brockdown, you surely can't be in earnest!" exclaimed poor Aunt Sally, becoming almost violet in her turn.

"'Pon my soul, Pulcheria, never more earnest in my life, my dear," stuttered the Colonel. And he gallantly took her hand.

"And you are really not trifling with me? Do you know how old I am?" faltered Aunt Sally, raising her eyes to his this time; for it was not in her nature to be untruthful at such a critical juncture of her life.

"If you were ninety, my dear, you would still be to me what you are—that is, the dearest creature living," vowed the Colonel, upon whom the story of the rat sternly punished for trespass had evidently produced a forcible impression; and he raised my Aunt Sally's fingers to his lips.

So the pair were engaged; but the marriage did not come off somehow, though for what reason I never exactly knew—I have suspected that Aunt Sally discovered in her admirer some signs of advancing decrepitude which bade fair to reduce her duties as a wife to those of a sick-room attendant; and under the circumstances it may have occurred to her that

the gallant Colonel had not been exactly in his right mind when he made his proposal. Anyhow, the fulfilling of the engagement was adjourned without there being actually a break-off, and in the meantime Colonel Brockdown died suddenly, and was buried under a beautiful tomb, upon which Aunt Wiggins laid a wreath of violets, emblems of constancy. Being a shrewd lady, however, and not yet despairing of getting settled for life, she gave up wearing her engagement-ring, and removed the Colonel's portrait from the locket round her neck, thus proclaiming to the world that she was still open to eligible offers.

I am unable to say whether any more came. Whilst Aunt Wiggins was staying with us at Brighton, where we then resided, she seemed to me to spend a good deal of her time in amusements and much of her money in dress. She was for ever trying on some new thing, and wore costumes which I used to hear amply discussed and sometimes admired by the lady visitors who came to call on my mother. Towards my brother and me Aunt Sally was always kind in a patronising way. She took us to Mutton's, the confectioner's, that we might fill ourselves with tarts at odd moments not always well-timed; and she gave us nice presents on our birthdays. Now and then she administered small "tips;" and she was always ready to say a word in our behalf when we pleaded for a half-holiday. But all this she did without much cordiality, and as though from a mere sense of duty; perhaps

because she was conscious that we regarded her in a ridiculous light, for the reasons above indicated.

Our little sister Maggie was the only one of the family whom Aunt Sally really petted; and at one time she did so much to spoil this child by tricking her out in finery and encouraging her to babble nonsense, that Maggie became objectionable to us from giving herself airs. We called her a "little sneak," too, because she used to go telling tales to our Aunt about all our boyish delinquencies, and, in particular, about the way in which we used to mimic her—Auntie—as regards her mincing gait and simpering modes of speech. It ought to have struck me then—as it does now—that it was a magnanimous thing in the character of Aunt Sally that, although she listened to Maggie's tales, she never took advantage of them to get us punished.

Once, and once only, was I made to feel the effects of a sudden outburst of Aunt Sally's long pent-up wrath. Having a talent for caricature, I had drawn a portrait of this long-suffering relative, with a nose of abnormal length, which I coloured a deep vermillion. Aunt Sally found the drawing, tore it up, and treated me immediately to half-a-dozen such hearty slaps on the face that I sat down roaring and holding my swollen cheeks for a whole hour afterwards. I may remark incidentally that my talent as a caricaturist somewhat declined after this.

Aunt Sally had come on her first visit to us to

spend a fortnight at Brighton, and she remained three months. We saw her again in the following year, and then once more, before the time of the great transformation which suddenly occurred in her when I was about ten.

A heavy calamity had fallen on our family. Never mind what it was, for the theme is a painful one to write about; but Aunt Sally, who had hitherto come to our house as a guest, now arrived as a comforter. On a cold, cheerless winter day she alighted at our door dressed all in black; and what a change there was in her! I could scarcely realise it. All her juvenility of look, all her affectation of manner were gone. Her hair was streaked with grey; her attire was that of an elderly lady, and her voice had the quiet tone of sense and gentle firmness. No more did my brother and I feel inclined to laugh at Aunt Sally. She took, in a manner, the control of our household, for our mother had fallen ill, and during several weeks she acted as our governess. My brother and I submitted to her rule very easily when we found how judicious it was; but not so little Maggie, who by no means appreciated the change that had come over her Aunt. Maggie wanted to be spoiled, and would not learn lessons. Mere kindness would not do for her now after the sweet food of indulgence with which she had been regaled before; and poor Aunt Sally had a difficult task in taming the little rebel. But she did succeed at length; and when the day

came for the breaking up of our little family, consequent on my brother and myself being sent to school, I know we all felt the better and the happier for the weeks that our Aunt had spent amongst us.

Aunt Sally continued to be our Providence during all the period of my boyhood. She did not live under our roof; but her house in London—whither we had removed from Brighton—was not far from ours, and I always saw her during my holidays. She had quite taken up with the ways of old ladyhood by the time she was forty. Her cozy house contained a pet cat, a pug, a sleek butler, and some rosy housemaids. The tables in the drawing-room and dining-room were always adorned with fresh-cut flowers, and in winter a delicious soft warmth pervaded every chamber and all the passages. Seated in her luxurious boudoir, with a pile of the newest books on a table beside her, my Aunt used to spend one half of her leisure time in reading and the other half over her tapestry. She was one of the deftest workers I have ever seen; but though her fingers moved so busily, her tongue always spoke now in slow, thoughtful accents. She had a very sweet smile, the sweeter from its having become so rare. Her habitual expression was serene, but grave—very grave at times. She had embraced some new tenets, both religious and social, and had become both a fervent Ritualist and a warm advocate for the reform of sundry social abuses connected with women, children, and four-footed animals. A Home

for Lost Dogs which was instituted at Clapham bore her name ; she endowed a whole ward in a hospital ; and chartered a steamer for the conveyance of a thousand once depraved but now repentant chambermaids to Newfoundland. But a still wider exercise of her benevolence was seen when she supplied a mutinous Vicar with the means of defying his Bishop, and stoutly supported that ecclesiastic in three disastrous lawsuits, which resulted in his being eventually inhibited.

I happened to be taking afternoon tea with my Aunt on the day when this Vicar—Mr. Pheeble by name—came to announce the decree which the House of Lords had thundered against him. I was an Oxonian then, and could see at a glance that “the combative Pheeble,” as we used to call him at college, stood evidently in much greater fear of my Aunt than he did of his Bishop. “What are we to do now, Miss Wiggins?” he asked, with some trepidation in his voice and fearful respect in his demeanour.

“Do, Mr. Pheeble?” echoed my Aunt, fixing her calm, grave eyes on him. “Why, we must help you to set up a new church of your own.”

“But I should be in schism, Miss Wiggins.”

“Schism from error, Mr. Pheeble. If ten thousand pounds can assist you they shall be forthcoming.”

“Ten thousand is a large sum,” faltered the jaded Vicar, who looked now like a limp fish wriggling on a golden hook.

"No sum is too large for the assertion of truth, Mr. Pheeble," answered my Aunt, slightly knitting her brows; and to my deep disgust I presently saw her write out a cheque, which she described as a first instalment.

From all this it will be seen that my Aunt Sally had money. I had reason to know it, for she paid all my expenses at Oxford, and gave me a very liberal allowance of pocket-money besides—subject, however, to the condition that I did not get into debt. At the end of every term, when I waited upon her to pay my respects, she used to clasp one of my hands in hers, and, looking me earnestly in the face, say, "You owe nothing, Harry?"

"Nothing, Aunt," I used to reply.

"You are a good boy, then. Never incur debts, for they would make you the slave of other men and debase your nature." After which little sermon the kind-hearted lady would slip into my hand an envelope containing a draught more than ample to cover all my next term's expenses.

I naturally entertained much gratitude and respect for my Aunt, nor were my feelings lessened by the expectation that I was to become her heir. She had told me this in express terms, and had bidden me choose a career, according to my taste, in the full reliance that she would furnish whatever sums were necessary to start me fairly and keep me floating. Unfortunately, Aunt Sally's splendid largesses towards the lost dogs, the penitent chambermaids, and the

mutinous Mr. Pheeble ended by straitening her resources, so that, as I subsequently discovered, she took to speculation chiefly for my sake. One fine day, some honest South American State, whose scrip she had been tempted to buy, turned bankrupt, and the shock of this ruin gave my poor Aunt a death-blow. I was hastily summoned to her bedside, and found her crying, in her last moments, from grief and remorse. She actually thought it binding upon her to beg my pardon !

“Oh, my poor boy !” she wailed. “How have I lured you ! Can you ever forgive me ?”

“Forgive you for what, Auntie—for having been my benefactress ?”

“I doubt whether I have been your benefactress, Harry,” she said, shaking her head. “I ought not to have beguiled you with false hopes. What can I leave you now ?”

“You will leave me your example to follow—the example of your great goodness, Auntie. And I shall be rich indeed if I can become as good as you.” This was all I could say ; but it cheered her, and she pressed my hand.

I felt then, and I have felt ever since, that my Aunt had done more for me than if she had bequeathed to me all the bank-notes which she had distributed between Mr. Pheeble, the chambermaids, and those worthy lost dogs, who I am sure mourned for her in their own way when she died.

THE SQUIRE.

MR. D'AVENANT is the Squire of Blewberry Hall, and he boasts that his family have furnished lords to the Manor of Blewberry for five hundred years. When flippant persons ask him whether he is related to the great Earl D'Avenant, who is a K.G., he smiles, as a Guelph might do who was asked whether the King of the Belgians was not head of his house. Earl D'Avenant descends from an offshoot of the ancient family whereof John D'Avenant, Esquire, is the descendant in line direct; but, though we wish to say nothing disrespectful of a Squire so rich and of such good blood, we may point out that the worthy gentleman turns up his nose just a little too much at titles. Nobility is not lavished in England as it has been in some Continental countries; but peerages and baronetages have always been bestowed pretty generously on rich men who distinguished themselves in any way; and the fact that the D'Avenants of the elder branch have remained untitled for generations simply proves that they did nothing to deserve well of their country. They lived, ate, drank, married,

amassed money, and died—that is about all that their record consists of. And though it is certain that they were comely gentlemen, who never got themselves into gaol for debt or petty thieving, it is not so sure but that they would have been more useful in their respective generations if they had sought to add to the quarterings on their escutcheons by a few brave deeds or some displays of intellect.

To be sure, there is a story among some aged beldames of the county to the effect that these present D'Avenants only got their name by a marriage with the heiress of the great house about a hundred and fifty years ago; that prior to this their name was Brown; and that, indeed, the Miss D'Avenant who married the Brown was herself the grandchild of a lady who had married a yeoman called Jones, and had given her name to him by license of Charles II. However this may be, none can forget that Avenant in French means “charming,” so that the name has doubtless a chivalrous origin. It is not likely that it was first bestowed on a strolling tinker, a butcher, or a baker. Another positive fact is that John D'Avenant, Esq., living in this present year of grace, is powerfully rich, as his father and grandfather were before him. Part of his income comes to him from his estate; but the greater portion from scrip judiciously purchased at the right moment, through his London broker. He is reckoned to have about £50,000 a year.

This is a great fortune, for, when everything has been said about the expense of "keeping up" a large estate, it remains clear that a man who has no spend-thrift tastes can scarcely disburse more than £25,000 per annum in supporting himself and his family in luxury. A large estate keeps itself up. Mr. D'Avenant sells yearly enough corn, timber, and cattle to till his land, improve it, and leave a good balance over. Such losses as he experiences occasionally do not come so much from bad harvests or diminishing rents as from Turks and Peruvians who will not pay the interest on the money lent them. Mr. D'Avenant, whilst imbued with the wisdom of most English Squires as regards the folly of trying to get more than four per cent. for one's money, is not always so cautious in practice as he is theoretically. He has more than once nibbled at the bait of ten per cent. offered in a plausible prospectus and through the venal money article of newspapers, and been hooked by the nose for his pains. If the truth could be known, he has probably in the course of fifteen years frittered away about £40,000 in unremunerative speculation; but he has been no more reckless in this respect than other landowners, and the breezy way in which he has borne his losses only proves how well he could afford to lose. Had he been a gambler, an owner of racing-stables, a collector of paintings, china, or bric-à-brac, he might have lost even more, and got a reputation for being a silly fellow into the bargain. As it is,

he is looked upon as a highly sensible and steady-going person.

Squire D'Avenant is forty-five years old, and inherited his estates about fifteen years ago, when he was thirty. In his youth he was educated at Eton and Oxford, and did nothing at either of those seats of learning. The head master of Eton occasionally birched him, the boys kicked him; and he, when he got older, proceeded to kick younger boys. From twelve to fourteen he was the fag of a parson's son; from sixteen to eighteen he had a young Earl and a Baronet to fag for *him*, and thus he was enabled to acquire broad views on the subject of social distinctions. At Oxford, his tutor paid no more attention to his moral or intellectual welfare than it is the custom of tutors to do; but young D'Avenant had no evil instincts, and contented himself with idling and hunting to the top of his bent, until it became necessary to take his degree, when his obliging tutor crammed him for a brief season, and, after two "ploughs," got him through with a "pass."

This was all that Squire D'Avenant's heir needed, for he never opened a Greek or Latin book after he left college, and might as well have been learning Hottentot during his stay at Oxford for all the use he ever made of his attainments. But of course he had derived the usual social advantages from his stay at Eton and Christ Church, and had picked up a great many more friends than he cared to acknowledge when

he went forth into the world. During a couple of years after he left Oxford he was often bored by the painful necessity of having to cut old acquaintances, who, if encouraged, might have become too familiar with him, and have borrowed his money, for our friend John was known to be a very rich man.

Society makes no mistakes in the bestowal of its homage on the right men. Plain Mr. D'Avenant was welcomed in every drawing-room as more than the equal of any City magnate, and though many aspiring young ladies regretted that he had not a "handle" to his name, their shrewder mammas, looking only to the solid qualities of the young Squire, talked of his rent-roll and hinted at his influence, which would always enable him to get a title when he pleased. In the upshot, the heir of Blewberry Hall fell in love, as we all of us must do; and, queerly enough, he selected his wife from among the young ladies who had striven least to win his good graces. Miss Dora (or Dottie) Bell was a winsome little girl of quiet, homely tastes, who had never aspired to marry a rich man, and who, when Mr. D'Avenant asked her to dance for the first time, rather wondered whether such a "heavy swell," as her brothers called him, could dance. But D'Avenant acquitted himself fairly well of his waltzing; and, his eyes being very quick to discern where his own interests lay, he soon perceived that "Dottie" was just the girl who would make him a good, faithful wife. So he proposed, and was

accepted—not without some trembling and diffidence—got married in great pomp, and has never regretted the transaction to the present day. Nor has Dottie.

Men may not always be said to marry wisely when they take wives who are cheerful, faithful, and devoted ; for, according to some, it is desirable that a wife should be ambitious for her husband's sake, and spur him on to make proper use of his talents. This maxim only holds good, however, in the case of men who have talents. John D'Avenant's father was no eagle, and John himself was not a goose ; but that is about all that can be said for the pair. And, as John's mother had never goaded the old Squire to fly higher than his pinions could carry him comfortably, so did John's wife abstain from filling her husband with a buoyant ambition. When the old Squire died, he had been sitting in Parliament for twenty years as member for his county ; and so the new Squire was asked at once whether he desired to succeed to his father's seat ; but, hearing that there was another Squire who longed for this honour, John surrendered it to him at once without parley. How would it have benefited him to become a legislator ? He was much prouder and happier in succeeding to the post of M.F.H., which he had filled as deputy during his father's last year on earth ; and as for official rank, was he not a J.P., a Deputy Lieutenant, a churchwarden, and a chairman of half-a-dozen charities ? The year after he came into his estates he was pricked for the office of Sheriff,

and during a twelvemonth he got enough in the way of pomp to last him for a lifetime; for he had to put on a Court suit and attend the Judges when they held their assizes—a formality the more tiresome as the Judges on the rota that year happened to be the dullest old gentlemen going, who had never hunted in their lives, and could not tell a thoroughbred racer from a jackass. They did not even bestow a glance on the splendid teams of four horses which Mr. D'Avenant had provided for the pair of coaches in which they were driven about—though these eight horses had cost the Squire not less than six thousand pounds and excited the admiration of every true lover of horseflesh.

Thank goodness, there are many such in the county which Blewberry graces, and Mr. D'Avenant is never at a loss when he wants to consult a neighbour about purchasing a new hunter or effecting some improvement in his stables. But the Squire does not give up all his thoughts to horses, for he is a gentleman of his time, who likes to travel for his amusement in the summer when his boys are home for their holidays.

He has sojourned in all the best hotels on the Continent, and knows everything about foreign countries, except their monuments, which bore him. He travels, as he says, to see the people of other lands, to enjoy a change of climate, and to give his girls a chance of picking up scraps of French and German. By way of encouraging native industry, however,

wherever he goes he buys photographs, pipes, musical-boxes, cameos, and even curiosities drawn from ruins which have been excavated. There is a museum of all these things at Blewberry Hall, and it entertains guests; but Mr. D'Avenant alludes to it laughingly as his "Chamber of Horrors," by which he means that it gives him the horrors to be questioned as to whence this or that article comes, and what it means.

For our Squire is not particularly intellectual—no more so than when he was at Oxford. He reads his *Times*, the *Field*, and he has his weekly grin over *Punch*; but, except when some new work on sporting matters is warmly recommended to him, he never opens a book. He pathetically says that he has no time to read; and he might add that most new books are beyond his comprehension. Accustomed to talk in terse pointed English, he can make nothing of that affectation of scientific and technical jargon in which many modern novels are written; besides which he has not the faintest sympathy with any of the *isms* of the day. His faith in religion and in politics is that of his father; and he cannot for the life of him see why any people should be dissatisfied with a Church and a Constitution which pleased the old gentleman so well.

Mr. D'Avenant, however, for all his respect towards the clergy, once nearly quarrelled with the Vicar of Blewberry. It was when the reverend gentleman wanted to remove those high-backed curtained pews

in which the Squire's father used to sleep so comfortably during sermons. John D'Avenant was not himself given to sleeping in church, but he wanted his curtains left for old custom's sake. Nevertheless, the Vicar had his way, for this is an age of unceasing changes.

THE BUTLER.

BILL BOTTERELL, Mr. D'Avenant's butler, had never in his youth been a bad, disrespectful boy. He had been born with the vocation of service, and had his dreams of fine liveries, as other lads have of dragoon uniforms. To wear a page's jacket when he was twelve, and a footman's crimson plush when he was eighteen—such was this good boy's ambition; and it was tenderly fostered in him by his mother, who had been housemaid at Blewberry Hall in the time of old Mrs. D'Avenant, and had afterwards married "Long Harry," the good-looking gamekeeper. Long Harry would have preferred that his son Bill should be a groom, for he felt scant respect towards flunkeyism; but, like fathers in another grade of life who will not balk a studious son's inclination for the scientific branches of the military service because their own tastes happen to be for the cavalry, so the gamekeeper reluctantly gave up the hope of seeing his second boy (the eldest, Dick, was being trained to succeed his father as gamekeeper) wear breeches and tops.

There was reason the more for this resignation, as

Long Harry had no "influence" whatever in the stables. He and Mr. Britchin, the Squire's coachman, had quarrelled on a point of theology one night at The Chequers, in Blewberry village; and since Long Harry had affirmed that Jehu, the son of Nimshi, was not one of the major prophets, as Mr. Britchin declared to be the case, the Botterell family were forbidden to come near the stables. Of course, the Botterells retaliated by keeping the Britchins out of the preserves; and this deplorable family feud soon divided Mr. D'Avenant's domestic establishment into two camps; for Mr. Mallows, the gardener, chose to side with Mr. Britchin, and was continually going to the Hall with complaints about the young Botterells filching gooseberries and plums out of his orchard, until one day Long Harry turned the tables upon him by catching the two young Mallows in the act of setting a wire to catch pheasants, for which act of felony he led them squalling into the Squire's presence, each by an ear.

Happily, the quarrel between Long Harry and the magnates of the stables and gardens had a good effect in steadying Bill, who, fearing inimical eyes, avoided doing anything that might bring him into scrapes—that is to say, under the stroke of his father's black-thorn stick; and thus it came to pass, that by being always tidy, fearful of wrong-doing, and civil towards his betters, he earned the good graces of Mrs. Spry-leigh, the housekeeper. Alliances and intrigues are

formed in the servants' hall, even as at Court, and Mrs. Spryleigh could not bear the gardener, Malloves, who would not allow her the free run of his flower-beds. Knowing that this functionary aspired to get his red-headed son Barnaby appointed page to Mrs. D'Avenant, she set herself to frustrate this scheme by making a pet of Bill Botterell, whom she frequently invited to the Hall to "help" her, as she called it, though her real purpose was that the Squire's wife should see the lad constantly about the place and get accustomed to him.

Thus Bill, or "Willie"—as Mrs. Spryleigh called him—was admitted on to the staff of the Hall in an unpaid capacity quite a year previous to being officially commissioned; and during that time he was an awfully good boy, never failing to say "Sir" or "Ma'am" or "Miss" when spoken to by any of the ruling powers, even to the housemaids. He also went to school daily, and learned the three R's, besides the list of the Kings of England in chronological order; and on Sundays he yelled his part piously as treble in the village choir.

So much good conduct certainly deserved promotion, and one bright Christmas morning, as Mrs. D'Avenant was coming out of church, she kindly patted the boy's face, and told him that he was to go to the market town with his mother during the week to be measured for two suits of livery. His wages were to be £6 a year, and his duties to consist of

making himself generally useful. Bill felt as if paradise was opening to him, but his mother gloried most of all in that, through the kind help of Mrs. Spryleigh, the cabal of those "ojious" Britchins and Mallowes had been defeated. What would the good dame have said if it had been predicted to her that in his whiskered manhood her son Bill was to fall in love with a Britchin, whilst her eldest-born, Dick, would take to wife one of the Mallowes? But let us not anticipate.

Promotion did not run fast among the servants at Blewberry Hall. Bill wore his page's livery five years before he was adjudged to be too tall for it without having yet attained to the height and general proportions requisite to make a presentable footman of him. This was a trying time for our hero, as Mrs. D'Avenant was very particular about having fine footmen; and not all her graciousness towards William would have induced her to promote him to footman's rank unless he had been of a size to match John or Thomas, who both stood six feet in their stockings, and had the most satisfactory sets of whiskers—the one black, the other orange. Besides, John and Thomas showed no intention of resigning; and, ^{under} ^{the} ^{circumstances}, it was of no use to ^{thor} ^{urage} William in the ambition of stepping into ^{alway} ^{hoes}. ^{his bet} ^{ter}, Mrs. D'Avenant's aunt, Lady Dormer, ^{leigh,} ^{tl} to want a young footman at the time when

William was outgrowing his jackets, and Bill, on being sent to London to see if he would suit, was accepted at once, not so much because he pleased the Ladyship, who scarcely glanced at him, as because he satisfied the butler, Mr. Binney, by his candid looks and respectful demeanour. Lady Dormer was a rich, easy-going widow of sixty, who had a house in Park Lane and kept an establishment of seven servants—three women, a butler and footman, a coachman and groom. There was naturally but little work for these fourteen hands to do, and Mr. Binney, the butler, had, through too much self-indulgence, fallen into somewhat lazy and gross habits. He slumbered a good deal, and drank a daily bottle of port after his dinner. Five footmen had been dismissed by him in the course of two years, on the ground that they were idle, or pert, or bibulous, the real truth being that they had simply found him out in some of his little tricks, and had tried to supplant him; so now Mr. Binney was on the look-out for a subaltern who would have neither eyes nor ears, except in so far as he himself desired; and Bill Botterell appeared to him to be just such a man.

Nor was he mistaken. William, in his grey livery with silver buttons, proved to be the most docile servant alive. He did not bring to bear the rude criticism of youth on Mr. Binney's faults; he rather cloaked them with the tender compassion of experience, insomuch that the intemperate butler grew to love

him just as a retired despot loves a devoted minister, and gradually intrusted all things into his hands except the keys of the cellar. As William did not care for wine, it mattered little to him that he was debarred from ascertaining how many bottles were stored in her Ladyship's cellar; but being a sharp young man, with a taste for arithmetic, he took to scoring down in a little note-book, which he purchased for sixpence, the number of bottles which Mr. Binney brought into the pantry for his own private consumption. Meanwhile, he was diligent in all his service, and when my Lady rang the drawing-room bell it was almost always he who answered it.

Mr. Binney, flushed with his potations of port, used to say, "Bill, one of my dratted headaches is on me, and the old woman might think I'd been drinking—run upstairs, will you?" And Bill Botterell used to run upstairs. He had a fashion, all his own, for opening the drawing-room door and standing on the threshold waiting reverentially for his mistress's behests. He was never precipitate, flurried, or presumptuous. He did not bang doors nor make his footsteps sound on the staircase. He was always civil towards her Ladyship's pet pug, being careful to provide it with water and to smile sweetly at it if it snapped; moreover, he was always quick to see whether her Ladyship had a hassock under her feet, and if perchance a window had been left open, he would say, "Is not your Ladyship afraid of draughts—my

Lady, will you permit me to shut this window?" Are there such things as statesmanlike qualities among footmen? One might think so from considering the patient policy of subservience which William Botterell pursued during five years, and the promptitude which he showed in supplanting his patron, Mr. Binney, when his first convenient opportunity for doing so occurred.

One hot day, whilst all the London curs were going mad from thirst, Lady Dormer's butler took more port than was good for him, and slid helpless off his chair on to the floor of the pantry. Richelieu's face, when he detected proof positive of the treason of his benefactor, the Maréchal d'Ancre, may have worn some such expression of subtle triumph as Bill Botterell's then did. Quickly but noiselessly he ran up to the drawing-room and presented himself, sad-looking and anxious, before his mistress: "My Lady, I am afraid Mr. Binney is very ill; I fear he's dying."

"Ill? dying?" exclaimed her Ladyship, incredulous, and, after a few questions, she accompanied the footman downstairs to judge of the butler's plight with her own eyes. She was secretly beginning to get tired of Mr. Binney, whose queer goings-on had excited her suspicions; so, when she beheld this unfaithful menial sprawling on the floor and snoring like a pair of bellows, she remarked drily, "He seems to me to be tipsy. Have you noticed that he was drinking to-day?"

"Nothing besides his two or three bottles, my Lady," replied Bill Botterell artlessly.

"But where does he get those two or three bottles?"

"From the cellar, my Lady. I fancied your Ladyship gave him leave to take out what he liked for the benefit of his health."

"Oh, William, are you sure of this?" exclaimed Lady Dormer, withdrawing her skirts in disgust, so that they might not touch the wallowing Binney.

"Why, my Lady, I've kept an account of the bottles, thinking you might like to know some day exactly how many Mr. Binney had drunk," exclaimed Bill Botterell in self-exculpation, and he produced his sixpenny note-book.

This sealed Mr. Binney's fate. When he arose next morning from his vinous slumbers he received a month's wages in advance, with notice to quit within an hour. It was all in vain that he prayed, coaxed, roared, howled, sobbed, and finally threatened. William Botterell was at last reduced, by his mistress's orders, to the painful expediency of thrusting him out of the house. Then, when he had done this good piece of work, our friend received his reward, for Lady Dormer at once appointed him to the vacant butlership, with a salary of £50 a year and "everything found." Bill Botterell was then but twenty-two; so that he could boast that his fortunes, so far, had prospered.

He remained six years in Lady Dormer's service as Butler, and during that time he had undisputed mastery over the household. But he never forgot himself, or drank port, or omitted to answer the bells. Lady Dormer, growing older and more delicate in health, had need of gentle, thoughtful attendance, and William gave it ungrudgingly. But meanwhile he thought of himself too. Out of his wages of £50 he contrived to save about £100 a year; for, as above said, he was a good arithmetician, and by shrewd speculation he soon increased his capital wondrously. Then at length Lady Dormer died, and her will was found to contain a bequest of £500, free of legacy duty, for her "attached and valuable servant, Botterell." Bill was now twenty-eight, and he had a capital of about £1,200 in hand. He might have started a public-house had he pleased, or bought a house and let lodgings; but his ambition was of another and loftier kind. He wished to return as Butler to Blewberry Hall, and domineer over John and Thomas, who were still footmen, and over Mrs. Spryleigh, his good friend, who was getting to be a little aged and past work. Moreover, he was beginning to feel that he was in love.

During one of his holiday excursions home to see his parents he had been touched by the tender graces of Patty Britchin, the coachman's daughter, who was employed in the dairy, and churned butter in a way that was beautiful to see. The damsel had blue eyes,

rosy cheeks, and arms which, when bared up to the shoulders, resembled those of the statues which Bill Botterell had occasionally seen at the British Museum. His heart thumped when he saw Patty; and Patty became languorous when she perceived him. He looked so much the gentleman in his London clothes! His whiskers stood out on either side of his face like brushes, and he had a knowing way of winking, which is surely the perfection of gallantry. Unfortunately, Bill's mother was opposed to a match which would bring her into connection with those Britchins, whom she hated more and more as years rolled on; and she did her utmost to put Bill out of conceit with his bride-elect by describing her as bold, underbred, impertinent, and so forth. But Bill had an ally in his brother Dick, who had fallen in love with Betsy Mallowes, the daughter of the gardener, and Dick did what he pleased with his father and Bill's, Long Harry, so that one day the latter exclaimed, "My boy, do ye and Bill marry as yer like; I'll make things square with t' old 'ooman, who daren't say me nay when I sticks to my point."

So Bill Botterell resolved to marry Patty; and at the same time a vast dream of imperial policy filled his mind. He would get the butlership of Blewberry Hall, and put his wife as housekeeper into the room of Mrs. Spryleigh. Then, having allied himself to the Britchins, whilst his brother had wedded into the Mallowes' dynasty, he, Bill, would be able to govern

the Hall, the stable, the gardens, and the preserves all at once. A less able mind would have recoiled before such a vision of unlimited empire ; but Bill, having confidence in his own star, went to Mr. D'Avenant's butler and to Mrs. Spryleigh, the housekeeper, and offered them £250 a piece, privately, to resign. The bargain was not at once closed with, for the butler and housekeeper found it pleasant to live at Blewberry Hall ; but, on the other hand, Bill Botterell inspired them with a certain amount of awe, as a conquering genius who would stick at nothing to attain his ends. Besides which they felt pretty sure that Mr. D'Avenant would pension them for long and loyal service.

They were not mistaken, for Mr. D'Avenant was rather glad to get rid of them when he saw a chance of obtaining the services of William Botterell, who had proved such an excellent Butler to his wife's aunt. But, constant to his traditions as a fine old English Squire, he granted both his old servants £50 a year apiece for life when they announced their intention of going. Then Bill Botterell succeeded to the butlership, and he married Patty, who was appointed housekeeper ; and he healed the long-standing feud between his own house and those of the Britchins and Mallowses. He even prevailed upon his father-in-law, the coachman, to admit that Jehu was only one of the minor prophets, which was accepted as a sufficient compromise on an extremely vexed question by his father, Long Harry.

So now Bill Botterell rules at Blewberry Hall, but discreetly and wisely, like a man who has the instinct of statecraft in him. He has held his post twenty years, and will, perhaps, flourish in it ten years longer; for though he is passing rich, having saved steadily and spent next to nothing since he was a boy, he is not one of those men who care to retire on small fortunes. Add to this that he lives at Blewberry Hall as well as any English Duke, and considerably better than most Continental Princes. He has also a loving wife, who looks up to him with a doting admiration, and has brought up her ten children to do the same. The eldest of these children obtained a situation as a bank-clerk last year, and describes himself as Mr. Ronald D'Avenant-Botterell on his cards (the hyphen being conspicuous); the eldest daughter is a graduate of Girton; and the second son is about to be appointed to a colonial army commission through the influence of Mr. D'Avenant, who has friends all over the world, and who has discerned in young Rupert D'Avenant-Botterell (his godson) the qualities that go to make up a gallant officer and gentleman.

Therefore, as success is the touchstone of enterprise, one may say to the Butler of Blewberry Hall: "Well done, Botterell!"

THE YOUNGER SON.

THE Honourable Hugo-Yemuc-Kerr was a half-forgotten son of the nineteenth Baron Nortiman, of Hightantrums, in the county of Diddlesex, a peer who lived chiefly on the fascinations of his title and discourse. Somehow or other, in rain and fine weather, these valuable acquisitions had kept him in pleasant company all his days. He had not the smallest idea of the amount of his debts, and never bothered himself about them, for whenever he or his heir, the Honourable Felix, wanted money, they could always join in some operation which satisfied the lawyers and insurance offices. Only once the elder nobleman had been constrained on such an occasion to seek a brief interview with Mr. Attenborough on the subject of the great Mockworth diamond, which was an ancient and precious possession in this noble family ; but his more experienced offspring, having got wind of that transaction, resented it as derogatory to his rank and future title, because he had ascertained through a confidential aunt that it had been changed for paste by an impecunious ancestress nigh fifty years before.

“Hang it!” muttered the Honourable Felix. “The Relieving Officer has been making a gander of himself again. Drummond or Ransom would have let him draw on them, taking that old bit of glass as a pledge of honour, and would never have even looked at it. I deposited with Flush and Bobbingpenny three flannel waistcoats and an old saddle in a plate-chest for safe custody the day after the Derby last year; and when I told him I should want a “thou” the senior partner said, ‘Of course, of course.’ I saw too he was quite pleased at my asking for it, because I had walked down St. James’s Street with Bill Bobbingpenny, his godson, the day before, and promised to put the young cub up for White’s. But if the R. O. is caught marching against the Lombards, we shall get blown, the pair of us.”

Now the “Relieving Officer,” or, for brevity’s sake, the “R. O.,” was a term of endearment which the Honourable Felix, in common with other young noblemen and gentlemen at Eton, applied to his father. It was an interesting reminiscence of his sojourn at that admirable public school, and had reference to the tips or gifts of money, without which no parent was ever allowed to depart when he visited the College precincts. Times were altered since then. Felix the Oppidan had bloomed into Felix the Guardsman, and he felt the responsibility of protecting the head of his house from such imprudences as that above mentioned. The seniors of one generation are but as children to

the youth of the next, in the ways of the world—so grand and good a thing is “Progress.”

Lord Nortiman and his heir lived very respectably in this way. Hightantrums Court was really a very fine place, and the rent-roll attached to it was a thing to make one wink—on paper. Few knew or presumed to guess at the secrets of a nineteenth Baron; and there had never been any ugly scandal about him or his belongings. They got into scrapes, as other noblemen do, and those scrapes got into the papers or into after-dinner stories in select Society; but that was neither here nor there. Stories are told about everybody, and must not be credited by well-conditioned folk, or all reverence for the upper classes will be at an end.

It was enough that Lord Nortiman stood well at Court, and had held office in the Royal household, as he would do again when his party came in. Captain and Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable Felix Kerr also was an equerry of the Heir-apparent; so it will be seen that they were very high people indeed whom anybody would be glad to know, if only to be seen nodding to them in public. Indeed, this feeling was so general that people often nodded to them on speculation, and found it a very good business. “I did not know you chummed with Wilkins, the F. O. attorney, who does the dirty work,” observed the peer to his first-born on some such occasion. “Nor did I,” answered the Hon. Felix. “Who is he?” “He

has just bobbed his head to you," said my Lord. "Dessay," replied the other dryly, "I suppose that's his way of being funny. It isn't mine."

The Honourable Hugo-Yemuc-Kerr had all the tastes and associations of his patrician relatives. He kept the same society as his father and his elder brother. He was as well known in the betting-ring and behind the scenes of the Opera-house as either of them. If anything, his drag was rather better appointed than those of his elders, and he rode much straighter to hounds. If Felix was an equerry, he had been a page of honour; if Felix was a Life-guardsmen, he had also got his commission in the Household Brigade in the usual course, and was now high up among the lieutenants of the Coldstreams.

Both gallant officers had chambers in Piccadilly, also elegantly furnished and superbly-tenanted villas in Regent's Park. Both were equally averse from denying themselves any indulgence for which they had a fancy. The only difference between them was that the Honourable Felix was heir-in-tail to half a county, and the Honourable Hugo could not reasonably expect to possess anything but his own hat, if he should some day find enough to pay for it. Lord Nortiman gave him nothing but half of his forefinger when they came to close quarters while on duty at levées and drawing-rooms. In truth, his Lordship could never quite distinguish him from the Honourable Josselin, another of his sons, who sometimes came

over from Ireland, where he was aide-de-camp to the Viceroy; and the Honourable Hugo, on his part, was always mentally mixing up his noble father with the dignitary known as "Black Rod," because his Lordship was of a spare figure, and had placed his faith in a hair-dye of a most lustrous jet ever since he had passed his grand climacteric.

How the Honourable Hugo lived in the very front of polite Society under these conditions is not so clear. He never told anybody. People talked of Lady Jezebel Notmuch, a wealthy spinster with a taste for travelling and low dresses at fifty-six. There was still more talk about high play; and once—but that must have been a calumny—there was a rumour that the Dowager Countess of Hoardwell had been robbed of her jewels and painted in woad, for giving battle to her despoiler, while the Honourable Hugo was staying at her house during the Ascot week, the frolicsome robber being no other than the Honourable Hugo himself. Her Ladyship, however, who was a scion of the illustrious line of Yemuc-Kerr, and nearly related to the supposed delinquent, could never be brought to speak on this topic. All the world knew upon the subject was that the Honourable Hugo's bets on the events were punctually paid at Tattersall's on settling-day. The present Lord Hoardwell, indeed, had a correspondence with the committee of the Jockey Club, which raged fiercely till it blew over; and he went with Mr. Yemuc-Kerr to try a famous martingale at Monaco, where they

won seven thousand pounds in equal shares, and lost it on the following day. So that the quarrel could not have been serious.

Even the fine-spirited old lady felt constrained to enter into negotiations of the most delicate character with the ex-page of honour, for the woad with which she had been dyed would not come off. So, without making any unpleasant insinuations respecting the alleged dyer, she did venture to register a letter, marked "Private and Confidential," asking him to recommend her some safe detergent, which he very good-naturedly did, sending her a recipe which he assured her he had ascertained from historical records to have been in use among the Ancient Britons. It answered the purpose, too; and all is well that ends well. Such resources, delightful and even copious as they are to the youthful members of our great houses who have no fixed incomes, are, unhappily, of a somewhat fleeting and transitory character. The Countess's porter, who was of a gloomy character and six feet four in stature, always answered "Not at home," when the Honourable Hugo called in Grosvenor Square, after that calumny about the woad and jewels.

Lady Jezebel being left to her own devices one winter in Rome, telegraphed that she would marry her courier unless Mr. Kerr returned by express to his allegiance; and he could hardly do this, for he was then in attendance upon Mademoiselle Petitaux, the new Queen of the Ballet at Covent Garden. So her

Ladyship did as she had said she would do ; and the courier made her an excellent husband, coming out next season in London as Count Otellbillini, a title which she had purchased for him, together with the rank of Excellency, in the Italian dominions. He made a very good Count, too, after he was cured of the habit of applying for commission on his wife's purchases from her tradespeople.

These events, however, fell like utter bankruptcy on Hugo-Yemuc-Kerr. It was astonishing to think of how soon her Ladyship's marriage was known in the parish of St. James's, and what came of it. Lord Nortiman threw up his hands, in sign of grief and amazement, privately making up his mind to disown a young man who had played his cards so badly. The Honourable Felix, who had never liked his brother, and just then felt jealous about a chestnut horse he had, called to him from the opposite side of Bury Street, where they met by chance, to say, "So it's all U P now, old man !" and there was an ugly glitter in his eyeglass as he noted his brother's haggard looks. Then one of the red-waistcoated men who hang about White's ran after him breathless to warn him not to go back to his chambers in Piccadilly, because two bailiffs with writs were on the look-out for him. When he drove to Regent's Park, too, it was only to see that there was an execution in the villa under a bill of sale.

It was, however, to the superb tenant of that

expensive tenement that he was destined to owe his safety. She met him not only with composure but gaiety, and after a hearty laugh over a plate of early strawberries and fresh cream, which they shared together, she suggested that she possessed money in the funds, and that her hand was disengaged.

The superb tenant of the villa smiled charmingly as she made this practical suggestion, and the Honourable Hugo, not seeing very well what else he could do, and being constitutionally disinclined to meditation, at once adopted it. He had to scramble out of the Guards, of course, afterwards; but that didn't much matter, because, as he touchingly remarked, he could not have got any "plunder" for his commission, not having bought it. His wife, too, had a dashing income, and he would have been supremely blessed under his novel circumstances, for he had as many friends as ever—indeed, rather more—but, unluckily, the Hon. Mrs. Hugo-Yemuc-Kerr kept quite an unconscionably tight hold over her own income. She allowed her noble husband only half-a-sovereign a week for pocket-money, and required him to render a strict account of it on Saturday evenings. She had nerves, too, which required a great deal of shrill vocal exercise to calm them when excited, and on several occasions appeared to derive relief from meeting the Honourable Hugo in single combat, red-hot poker in hand, when he returned from his club in the small hours. This lasted nearly three months, and then one

night Mr. Kerr found a bill put up in front of his residence announcing that it was "To be let or sold," his wife having elected to make a prolonged visit to Paris, in company with a cornet in the Blues who had won too much money over the dice-box, and had to change the air of London.

The Honourable Hugo was in a piteous case after this. His splendid golden whiskers began to get a rusty grey. There was something white at the top of his head, which looked as though a goose had laid an egg in the moultings of some canary birds. He had to bolt, too, somewhere without the jurisdiction of the law courts, and lived for years under the name of Tompkins on one of the most desolate of the Shetland Islands, with nothing but the tardy reports of a scandalous lawsuit to interest him; for, of course, he tried to get a divorce, and failed.

Perhaps he was not altogether unhappy, though he sincerely pitied himself, when he came to think of it. At other times the old forester spirit of his race revived in him, and he fished off the coast, as one of his Danish ancestors might have done with content enough, or he shot rabbits and wild duck with a keener interest than he had ever really felt in baccarat or lansquenet; besides, this was a sort of pleasure to which there was no to-morrow morning. Once or twice, too, during his exile an old chum looked him up, a younger son, like himself, for he was popular in his regiment, being a commonplace fellow enough, who had many

sympathies and sentiments characteristic of his class. There was "Bill Rowley," Lord Cropperton's nephew, who proposed to go out with him to the bush and keep cattle. Jack Duffering, who had got a colonial appointment, offered to "put him up to a good thing in his diggings," which had something to do with cotton; but Mr. Kerr had hardly stamina sufficient for such bold ventures, and liked better to go pottering on his island in his own way. A maiden aunt in Worcestershire sent him a guinea a week in a post-office order. Such noble swells are never quite destitute.

Then all at once came an extraordinary return of prosperity. One night the Honourable Hugo-Yemuc-Kerr went to bed a beggar, and got up a peer. His elder brother had broken his neck at a steeplechase, and Lord Nortiman had caught a chill on a damp drawing-room day, where he had heroically stood in a thorough draught in silk stockings. The new Lord rushed to London by special train, and was inclined to take things haughtily; but, in truth, he had only exchanged the life of a primitive fisherman for a somewhat prosaic existence in solicitors' offices. Every person to whom either he or his wife (now a Peeress) had ever owed a sixpence started out of the earth, bill in hand, as if by magic; and their name was legion.

First and last, in his salad days, perhaps he had spent by hook or by crook some forty thousand pounds, a good deal of it in discount, wine, and

jewellery. He owed more than a quarter of a million. Of course, as far as the law was concerned, his father's and brother's debts died with them, and he took his besmirched title as other men do, without paying off any of the obligations on it, or acknowledging the security for which it had been virtually pawned. He racked and harried his tenants; he gave nothing and took much; but his own personal debts kept him a poor man; and he lived to its bitter close the shifty and dishonest life of a Younger Son, who has eaten his corn and drunk his wine before vintage or harvest. The custom of primogeniture and entail has some pleasing aspects.

A GRANDMOTHER.

IN the dining-room at Ruby Hall, where my friend Rubbalong lives, hangs the portrait, in oil, of a lady who must have been a paragon of beauty at the time when this work of art was executed, half a century ago. She had just then been married to Sir Harry Tattel; and Lady Tattel she has remained till this day, though it is many, many years since her husband went to his last sleep, having amply earned this repose by the excitement and worries of his married life.

My friend Rubbalong's mother was the daughter of Lady Tattel, and that is how her Ladyship comes to be his Grandmother. Lady Tattel had but one child, and, in bestowing her upon the late Mr. Richard Rubbalong, M.P., she was generally believed to have endowed that worthy man with the hand of an heiress. Unfortunately, Sir Harry Tattel had bequeathed the whole of his fortune unconditionally to his wife, so that their child could only inherit at the latter's death. One may be sure that neither Rubbalong nor his wife was anxious that the old lady should die; still both would have been glad if Lady Tattel had made some

substantial provision for them in her lifetime, instead of arranging by word of mouth, as she did, to pay them an allowance, and offering them hospitality during eight months of the year at Ruby Hall. The truth is, Lady Tattel loved companionship, and, most of all, the companionship of those who were dependent on her and dared not give her offence. Holding her daughter and son-in-law tied by the tooth, she could do with them pretty much what she pleased; and, as it seems, she made no very magnanimous use of this power.

She was very close about her own affairs, and would never reveal how much money she had; but when crossed in any way, she had a doleful trick of hinting that she had been unsuccessful in speculation, and anticipated ruin as a not remote contingency. She was frequently closeted with her lawyer, who came from London to see her; and when labouring under the cross fits just mentioned would remark, with a snivel, that she had been taking counsel as to how much Ruby Hall and the circumjacent estates would fetch if brought to the hammer. Then she would tell strange fibs about her diamonds, which were known to be most costly, and which she pretended, every now and then, to have sold dirt-cheap in order to procure the wherewithal to pay Rubbalong's allowance. Poor Rub used sometimes to wince when he received his pittance doled out to him in bank-notes, whereof the old lady had inscribed the numbers in

a businesslike-looking ledger with a parchment cover, which she held in her small white hands.

“Take down these numbers, Harry, and then write me out a receipt, if you please,” she would say, in an acidulated tone. “I do not know how long I may be alive; but I should be glad that at my death there should be testimony under your handwriting to prove that I never allowed *you* to want, however sorely I might be pinched myself;” with which words Lady Tattel would calmly rub her hands together with the expression of a martyr who is squaring her accounts with Heaven. Not, however, that she had the appearance of a martyr; for she was always very richly dressed in rustling silk, and wore lace caps of great beauty. Her complexion was fresh and pink, in spite of years; her eyes were keen as darts; her hair, which was abundant, wavy, and snowy white, and fitly crowned her head, derived a remarkable lustre from being powdered. Altogether, Lady Tattel had the aspect of a very pretty doll; but a wicked doll.

She was wicked looking at least when angry; but there were moments when she was frankly charming. If things went well with her, if everybody around her was pleasant, attentive to her behests and submissive to her caprices, she could talk in the most amiable vein and scatter promises about her like so much sunshine. At such moments her son-in-law and his wife were tempted to regard her as a Lady Bountiful. It mattered not that they had been duped over and

over again by her smooth words, which meant little, since her Ladyship kept a tight hold over her purse-strings even when her tongue wagged loosest—her conversation had such a joyous ring about it that it never failed to raise their flagging spirits. Poor Rub, indeed, liked so much to be spoken to kindly that he got into ways of the utmost baseness in order to cajole his mother-in-law. Besides, he was really frightened about that lawyer who used to come so often from London to hold long private interviews with Lady Tattel.

How was he to be sure that Lady Tattel would not alter her will at one of these interviews? That there was not much truth in the talk about her ruin, the sale of her diamonds, and the like, was made pretty plain by the fact that within a few hours only after she had declared herself to be beggared, Lady Tattel (whose spirits rose and fell like mercury) would often allude to her thousands in the funds, her intention of buying new land, and so forth. Still, there was, of course, a possibility of her getting ruined by foolish speculations, or of her disinheriting her daughter; and poor Rub therefore quaked at the idea of incurring her displeasure. By degrees the miserable man parted with all independence of character and human dignity in his attempts to be always civil to the whimsical dame for whose shoes he was waiting.

Eventually it came to pass that as Lady Tattel

would not die, poor Rubbalong, having been fairly bored out of existence, did so ; and soon afterwards his wife joined him. She, poor creature, could not have borne the misery of living alone with Lady Tattel now that her husband was no longer there to comfort her, and death was positively a release to her. But in dying she left a boy who was not to escape the fate which Providence had averted from her ; and this lad grew up to be my friend Rubbalong above mentioned. Dick Rubbalong his name was, and he had lived with his Grandmother from the day of his orphanhood up to the time of my making his acquaintance, when he had just turned twenty. Lady Tattel doted upon him, and had brought him up much as she educated her lap-dogs—by letting them have their own ways so long as they were agreeable, and cuffing them when they snarled. She had for years indulged Dick in everything but pocket-money, for she grew stingier in this respect as time went on ; and if her grandson had not had a pretty strong head upon his shoulders she would have converted him into the most ill-conditioned cub going. As it was, she simply made of him an Artful Dodger.

Dick was awfully deep. When he and I got to be friends he told me coolly one day, as we were sitting on a stile at the outskirts of Ruby Park, that he had taken his precaution for being happy during his Grandmother's life as well as after it.

"I borrow upon *post-obits*," said he, as he offered

me a fine cigar out of a nicely-mounted case; "and then I keep a ledger in which I note down all the old lady's eccentricities, so that I may be able to get her will set aside, on the ground that she was cracked, if she should bequeath any of her property away from me."

"That's a pretty cunning arrangement, Dick," I observed, gazing at my friend with involuntary admiration.

"She killed my father and mother by her tricks. I vow she shan't kill me," muttered Dick sulkily; "but, I say, here she comes."

Lady Tattel was in effect sailing towards us over the lawn in one of her brightest moods. She held over her shoulder a sunshade lined with dead-gold satin, which, forming a background to her silvery-haired head, brought it out in the most happy relief. Dick started up to kiss her, for he had become a fine actor; but as he did so, holding her in his arms and wishing her good-morning, he grinned at me over her shoulder in a way to remind one of Mephistopheles courting Martha in the garden scene of *Faust*. I can never forget the ludicrous scene, nor the painful effect it produced upon me at the time.

Yet I could not honestly wonder at Dick's having become such a hypocrite; for Lady Tattel, having no principles of her own, had inculcated nothing that was good. All that was not base in his character came to him from Nature.

His Grandmother's discourses to him had consisted chiefly of axioms implying that all men are rogues and all women jades. Her talk to the rest of mankind was garnished with anecdotes, largely spiced, about the Court of the Prince Regent, and the gay dogs who used to rule London Society in the days when she came out for her first ball at Almack's. Lady Tattel thought that Society had considerably deteriorated since those days. Morals were no better than they were, and manners seemed to be non-existent. "If you want politeness nowadays," Lady Tattel used to say, with a shrug—"if you want politeness, you must buy it of footmen and hotel-waiters. They are the only creatures who seem to take a proper pride in their appearance and who bow well."

One evening, when Lady Tattel had been prattling to me in this strain for above an hour, abusing all things modern and vaunting the glorious era of fifty years ago, I happened to look across the room, and saw Dick Rubbalong gazing at the old lady with a curious intentness. As he generally yawned during his Grandmother's stories (provided he could do so undetected), this change in his demeanour excited my surprise; and by-and-by, when Lady Tattel had gone to bed, I questioned him about it.

"Oh!" said he carelessly. "The old lady had grown so red in the face that I thought she was going to have a fit of apoplexy—Good-night."

I have often wondered since that evening whether Dick will not experience some calamitous disappointment on the day when Lady Tattel's will is read. For old ladies have sharp eyes, and are not always deceived by lip-service.

THE TUTOR.

EDUCATION in England is still almost wholly in the hands of the clergy, and my tutor was, therefore, a clergyman. He was a good specimen of what his class should be—hard-working, soberly, enthusiastic, sincerely, though not ostentatiously, religious, and the friend of his pupils if they would let him be so. The first piece of advice that he gave each one of them was this: “Don’t be in a hurry to make friends. They will come soon enough, and will be all the better for not having been sought. Meanwhile you will find that acquaintances hastily formed soon prove a tax upon one’s time.” No other counsel did he give when a new pupil came to him.

The students who have carried off the greatest number of honours are not always the best tutors, a fact which the Dons fully recognise in the number of Fellowships they award to men who have missed their First-class degree. William Johnson had taken but a First in Mods and a Second in Greats; and had never even attained to a *proxime accessit* in any competition for a University prize, though he was acknow-

ledged to be the best tutor at Wolsey's. But then Johnson had tried for all sorts of things; and to grind conscientiously for the Hertford or Gaisford is quite as useful in the end as to win them.

He was scarcely more than four-and-twenty when appointed my Mentor, yet was already bald. Otherwise a pleasant English young face, with moderate allowance of light brown whisker. The expression serious, as became a parson, but often relaxing into a smile. Dress—plain black with white tie, and careful avoidance of all phantasies in the matter of waistcoats or collars. Of medium height, in fact medium in everything except being a thoroughly good man. A Broad Churchman, of course, and a moderate Liberal. Occasionally smoked a cigarette, or even a cigar; but no Teutonic votary of the weed, as are most of the younger Dons.

He was singularly free from formalism; had no objection to be addressed as "Johnson" by the undergraduates; and would dispense with their coming in cap and gown to his lectures. He loved to take long walks with those who had anything in them, and would talk about Virgil, or cricket, or Gladstone, or anything you pleased. He was, also, superior to the common University affectation of shunning classic literature as "shop." As a host he was all that could be desired; nor did he confine his hospitalities to breakfast-parties, but gave capital little dinners, which he prefaced by the briefest of graces. "Benedictus

benedicat." Now and then he would be present at the men's entertainments; and even drop in casually of an evening on those who liked him. On one of these occasions he saw a lad of nineteen helping himself to a pretty stiff tumbler of toddy. "What right have you to drink whisky?" Johnson asked him. "You've never been in Scotland." "No," replied the other, "but I have been in Ireland." It was all banter, but one could just detect in the Tutor's tone the note of a kindly warning, which was also understood and taken in good part. He was, indeed, no hermit in love with total abstinence. The members of a reading-party he took for a ramble over the battle-fields of '70 were agreeably surprised at the frequency with which, while they were in Champagne, he treated them to the vintage of that sunny land, which costs quite as much on its native soil as elsewhere.

Perhaps the worst fault of a modern Oxford Don is an unconscious tendency to luxury. Johnson lived as plainly as any Tutor; yet he was better lodged than a bachelor Prussian Prince, and fared every day as no French professor could hope to fare more than once in three months. He had no idea of a dinner which should be lacking in soup, in fish, or in entrées, or fail to terminate with dessert and coffee. His eyes grew accustomed to the sight of massive silver plate and table linen of perennial whiteness. And what comfortable arm-chairs were those in his rooms!

What noble bookcases of oak, well loaded, too, with the best editions of the best authors! What a splendid view from the windows looking out on the Great Quadrangle! Sweetness and light and comfort all around one, imagination was necessary to conjure up the images of poverty and squalor. The wonder is not that Dons are occasionally priggish, or that they sometimes reason as if humanity began with persons of £300 a year; rather may we be thankful that so few are spoilt by life in those Academic Capuas. They are saved in various ways—some by religion, others by the severest studies, others by the English passion for outdoor exercises. Johnson was under the three good influences at once. He liked Church and Plato and long walks.

Occasionally he proved that he had not forgotten those muscular attainments which a public school generally manages to develop if a lad have pith and strength of frame. Johnson had often fought with varying fortunes, as a boy, in that usually quiet green hedged in by the Cloisters of Westminster—for that is the spot selected by Queen Elizabeth's *alumni* as the field where affairs of honour must be decided. The experience thus gained proved of use to him at Wolsey's. Among his pupils was one Evan Llewellyn, the son of parents only just well off, as Johnson knew. Evan idled persistently, and got into debt. For the first term his Tutor contented himself with remonstrances, which only succeeded in ruffling Evan's

dignity. Johnson was quite right to do nothing more during the first term, which is good-naturedly and wisely allowed by the Dons to be a somewhat lax one. They know that a boy transferred at once from the discipline of school or home to the almost perfect liberty of college will necessarily be disposed to enjoy his freedom, and they deem it best to let him have his fling, so long as he breaks no written rules. But Evan showed no signs of toning down the second term; on the contrary, he foreswore lectures altogether, and if seen in chapel, it was sure to be in the evening, when he had been sent there for missing the morning service. (I may observe, in passing, that the objectionable practice of punishing men by ordering them to join in public prayers has since been discontinued.) Johnson, who took a conscientious view of his duties, now resolved to write to the lad's father and warn him of the peculiar way in which young Hopeful was "prosecuting his studies." It was almost an unheard-of step for a Tutor to take. So a few days later Evan strode, boiling with rage, into his Tutor's rooms, and told him he was not a gentleman. Of course, Johnson had no choice but to complain of him to the Warden, and Mr. Llewellyn's University career came to an abrupt conclusion—at least for a time. I forget whether he was sent down for good or only for a term.

Llewellyn, however, had "friends"—if one must profane the word—who were resolved to avenge his

cause. It was agreed in a council of war that Johnson should be nailed up—i.e. that his door should be fastened in such a way as to render the window the only means of egress. Unfortunately for the would-be perpetrators of this pleasing jest, Johnson happened to be out when they fancied he was in; and were very busy with his oak when he suddenly appeared in their midst. They fled, some up stairs, some down: all except one, a brawny churl, over six feet high, whom Johnson managed to collar. The passage was dark, and my Tutor wanted to know who his man was: a purpose which his antagonist was equally anxious to frustrate. A desperate tussle ensued, ending in the victory of Johnson, who dragged young Ajax into his rooms, when the features of the latter stood revealed by the light of a moderator lamp. Then the victor released his foe, with the quiet remark, “Oh! it’s you, Mr.—.” The discomfited one slunk out; but never heard anything more of the affair. My Tutor was magnanimous, and, moreover, pleased with himself. No second attempt was made to molest so muscular a Christian.

One more anecdote—to show that the man had a kind heart, and, though living handsomely himself, could feel for others less fortunate. Candidates for honours in Greats generally read for three terms previously to the examination with a private Tutor—*vulgo*, a “coach.” Johnson was very anxious that one of his pupils should not lose this advantage, while the

shabbiness of the young man's clothes and the solitariness of the life he led argued that there might be a difficulty in the way. Johnson, in the most delicate manner, offered to pay for the extra tuition needed. The offer was accepted; but, in a couple of months, the cheque so generously given was returned. The transaction was a pleasant one to both parties.

Johnson, the type of a good Tutor, may seem to have been described too much by negatives—by what he was not. The positive side of his character might have been best divined by any one who had heard him quoting the “Golden Year,” and emphasising, with all the accent of conviction, the lines which sum up the moral of the piece:—

But well I know
That unto him who works, and feels he works,
This same great year is ever at the door.

He was a worker. And therefore happy? Not altogether. There lay the merit of the rule of life he imposed on himself. To a young barrister, weary of waiting for briefs and thinking of turning schoolmaster, he wrote: “Don't go in for tuition. It's heart-breaking work.”

To toil without pleasure, and to toil bravely and well—surely this has in it something of the heroic.

THE GOVERNESS.

MR. BEAUCHAMP was a man who had made a stumble on the threshold of life and fallen headlong into the Civil Service. He had thought himself very lucky when he was called away from college to what was thought a snug berth in the Audit Office on ninety pounds a year. His father, who was an Indian Colonel on half pay, congratulated him as though his fortune was made, and considered that he was well out of all the ills of life. This was partly true. A young fellow having nearly two pounds a week paid regularly can manage to rub on with hope and good spirit. Clothes are getting cheaper every year, chop-house dinners are not expensive to those who know where to go for them. No matter what is the price of bread, a bachelor has always his penny roll, and an ingenious youth has only to keep his own counsel to make as creditable a figure in the world as young Huncks, the pawnbroker's son, or Mr. Grubbe, whose uncle has been three times a bankrupt. In truth, he can hold his own against all comers if not over fast and inclined for too much joviality in the evening.

It is a very different sort of business when the

Government clerk on ninety pounds a year gets married. That is a dreary business. No more penny rolls; no more chop-house dinners or jolly companions for him. Henceforth he is wholly absorbed by house rent, taxes, baby-linen, and small accounts. Mr. Beauchamp did not make quite such a mess of his prospects as that; but he was a fine handsome fellow, with a very warm heart, who looked the future steadily in the face with a manly courage. He was conscious, too, of having no common share of energy and intelligence; so when he began to rise in the office and his salary reached two hundred a year, he married pretty Miss Trevor, who brought him nothing but beauty and goodness.

In any other career but the public service such a couple would have set ill-fortune at defiance. Beauchamp had all sorts of talents. He could have written a leading article better than nine professional journalists out of ten; he could draw well enough to make amusing caricatures which would have sold excellently; and he had such a notable head for figures that any public company with a shrewd eye to business would have jumped at him. Confound that Civil Service! It seemed to paralyze him. He never dared to give up what seemed a certainty for an uncertainty; and so he went peddling on from year to year with an increasing family and a face growing ever longer and longer towards Christmas time.

There was a secret but active prejudice against

Beauchamp at the office. A series of very clever articles published in a county newspaper, on some question of the day, were traced to him, and the Chief Commissioner of Audit sent for him to give him his choice between dismissal and pledging himself on his word of honour to cease all connection with the press. He had better a thousand times have sent his trumpery clerkship to Jericho, and thrown himself resolutely into the buoyant sea of life, determined to sink or swim. He would have floated like a cork, and have been in comfortable circumstances almost immediately; but the public service seems to exercise an unwholesome fascination over the luckless people who once come under its spell. In truth, it gives good employment to a certain dull sort of fellow who is fit for nothing else; there are branches and departments also that are made to pay by a very different class of people; and favourites, who get fat little things put in their way, have now and then cause to congratulate themselves; but for upright, clever men it is no place at all. Besides, the department never forgave Mr. Beauchamp for those unlucky newspaper articles. Over and over again he was passed by and younger men were put above him, till at sixty he was a nervous, dejected old person, with six grown-up daughters, all unmarried, and five hundred a year. He was in mortal fear, too, of being superannuated and sent about his business to make way for somebody with more influence.

His house cost him a hundred a year. He knew it ought only to have cost him fifty; but he had tried houses at fifty pounds a year, and had had to pay the difference in cures for colds and omnibuses and shoe leather. Moreover, provisions are dearer in the suburbs than in town. There remained four hundred a year, minus income tax and other taxes, to clothe, feed, warm, and cherish nine persons. The thing might have been done, save for the doctors; but Mrs. Beauchamp was always ailing. The youngest daughter had a delicate chest, another had met with an accident which made her lame from infancy. Three of the rest had to be sent to finishing schools. It would never do to leave the girls quite without accomplishments; and their mother was no longer able to teach them.

Rosamond, the eldest daughter, a resolute young lady of twenty-seven, with calm, steadfast eyes and a face habitually pale, remained at home, and was the angel of the house. She had made her sisters' pinafores when they were younger; now she cut out their bonnets and dresses, turning her nimble fingers to anything. Her needle was for ever in her hand when she was not busy with other duties. It was Miss Rosamond who kept the maid-of-all-work within reasonable bounds, and persuaded her to put on a white apron when she served dinner. It was Miss Rosamond, again, who made a toothsome dish out of nothing, when her weary, dispirited father came back from his

office overladen with thoughts and cares. She would sing the ballads that he loved when he was a youth full of energy and ambition; she would talk to him so brightly of hope and happiness that now and then the smiles would come back to his poor old faded face, and his worn-out heart would be warmed back to gladness. She was her mother's nurse, too, and her weak sister's nurse, and she had bought quite a pretty crutch for her lame sister out of the price given for some empty bottles which were the most precious things left to the Beauchamps by the half-pay Colonel when he went his way to another world, congratulating himself on having done so well for his son.

But it was all in vain; the family continued to grow poorer and poorer. There were nine mouths to feed—eight human beings who felt hungry two or three times every day; and it is the absolute necessities of life which cost money nowadays. A rich man can cut down his expenses; a poor man cannot. Luxuries may be suppressed, but not appetite. Rosamond, as might have been expected, was the first to take a common-sense view of the awkward position in which they were placed when the coal-dealer's bill had remained six weeks unpaid one severe winter. She did not say anything, save to her mother, with whom she took quiet counsel; but she answered an advertisement for a Governess, and engaged herself for sixty pounds a year to teach all she knew. Then she packed such few things as she wanted in an old

box, which she managed to make look presentable, and kissed her father, with her prim little black silk bonnet on, ready to start.

The proud head of the gentleman drooped as he took leave of her ; but she and her mother were of one mind, and gossiped and kissed away, as women will, the sharp pang that it gave him to see his darling go among strangers. Then the thing was done.

Happily, employment is easily had, nowadays. Rosamond's lines fell in pleasant places. She was her mother's pupil, when Mrs. Beauchamp had health and strength to teach, and so had been educated in the best manner. She could puzzle many a schoolboy in historical knowledge. She was great at facts and dates. She spoke and wrote exquisite English, much better than that in use at our Universities ; and she was a musician of no common excellence. She could draw and paint, too, in a ladylike way, and had a very fair conversational acquaintance with the more popular sciences. Above all, she had the art of teaching and of making herself respected and beloved.

Every Sunday she came home, and every quarter-day she left ten golden sovereigns in her mother's frail hand, taking her silent blessing in return. Mr. Beauchamp did not know of that little arrangement ; there are holy secrets among good women which must needs be kept ; but he felt that things went on easier to him as an overburdened horse may feel when an unseen shoulder is put to the wheel behind him. The

coal-dealer's bill seemed to dwindle miraculously, nothing was heard of the cost of cod-liver oil for Alice, or of the extras charged in the school bills for Mary and Jane. By-and-by, too, Rosamond's salary was increased, and her contributions grew larger as the rich people with whom she lived appreciated her more and more. She managed to give a hundred pounds, and a gold bracelet, which had been a present to her on her birthday, when her sister Jane married a young physician who fell in love with her while in professional attendance on the family. Fortunately, the Beauchamps could not afford a medical man of more experience.

Rosamond, for her own part, had renounced all thoughts of marriage when she had gone away from her father's house. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why she prospered. She aroused no jealousies; she excited no rivalries; she was never in the way of her pupils or their friends. She dressed with a certain determined plainness which was without pretension, and wore neither ornaments nor curls. She was very comely, but it was the comeliness of a Quakeress, prim, staid, and reserved, though she was never ascetic or obtrusive in her self-denial. Her words were always sweet, but they were few.

Possibly this peculiarity, which is precious in woman, may have struck Sir Job Sheepskin, the great equity lawyer, who had been at Winchester with her father, for he got into a way of sidling up to

PEOPLE I HAVE MET.

her when he dined, as he did oftener, and oftener, at the house where she lived. No doubt he would have married her if she would have had him; but she had a fine womanly instinct for the proprieties, and brought him to his senses one summer afternoon when he had called early to make his offer. It is seldom, however, even in this hard world, that self-sacrifice and steady good conduct go unrewarded; and a marvellous day came at last for the Beauchamps when Sir Job Sheepskin's will was opened, and it was found he had left the whole of a successful barrister's fortune to brave Rosamond.

There were other Governesses, perhaps equally meritorious, who had been friends of hers, and often when she went home of a Sunday afternoon there might have been seen a quiet, well-dressed lady, walking, with a soft, graceful step, from evening service at a church hard by. It was Miss Kindleigh, who was the providence of the Tumbledowns. Those illustrious personages would long ago have been lost, ruined, dragged through the mire and in again, but for Miss Kindleigh, who at least kept motherly hold over the Honourable Misses Tumbledown. Even the rackety old Viscount, who passed his time between Monaco and Newmarket, spoke of her with respect, for his wife had died in Miss Kindleigh's arms, thanking the Governess, and mutely beseeching her to befriend those she loved when she was gone.

Then there was Miss Segrave, daughter of the great

silversmith, who failed as she was about to marry the eldest son of an Earl. She had taken her disappointment without a murmur or a tear, save such as were poured out in prayer to God. Then she had gone into Mrs. Mereworth's family, and the two ladies had been as sisters to each other for more than twenty years. She now taught the children of those fine girls whom she had brought up to be good and charming women. Both generations call her "Aunt Alice," and would have sooner seen their very roof-tree go down than that ill or hurt should come to her. All the boys had wanted to marry her directly they came of age; all the girls had insisted that she should be among their bridesmaids. Every one of the married daughters had a child named after her, save one who had only boys; but even she managed to pay her beloved Governess homage by calling her firstborn always "Alick," though his name was Alexander. All her savings for thirty years are in the hands of Mereworth and Co.; and Sir John, who is head of the firm, often tells her she is quite a rich woman. Indeed, she has never been able to spend anything; for Mrs. Mereworth has always contrived that they should wear just the same things, and she has received birthday gifts, and Easter gifts, and New-Year's gifts, and Christmas boxes without number. The youngest of the Mereworth girls will have it all when she dies; and Sir John often calls her "the little heiress," in consequence.

A high-souled lady, too, is Miss Lisle, whose father was a Victoria Cross, and died of jungle fever in India. He had intrusted all his fortune to his elder brother to pay off mortgages on the family estate, trusting in his honour and affection to be just and brotherly when the land was clear. Nothing could be got, however, from the brother, whom nature had made a curmudgeon. Then Miss Lisle bravely went into service, not disguising to herself that it was service, and must be faithfully performed. She found a home among some just but unsympathetic people; and they soon learned to acknowledge her value. Her salary was doubled at the end of the third year she had lived with them; and when Mr. and Mrs. Manley, the hard-headed persons who employed her, found out that she spent every shilling she earned on bringing up her two brothers respectably, they abruptly asked her whether she would marry their only son, whom she knew very well was in love with her. After she had said "Yes," it seemed as though a stone had been rolled off her heart, for the young man himself had often pressed her sorely, and she had turned away from him with unutterable pain. Now she cried, for the first time since she had been left alone in this cruel world, which must be met with dry eyes; and Providence so watches over the good and true that she and hers were evermore the pride of the Manleys. She had a delightful wedding, and these unsympathetic people, who had been so cold to her at

first, turned out to be of those who wear better than they look, and, though outwardly undemonstrative, were really upright and genial at heart.

There are Governesses and Governesses, and it is to the latter class that Miss Tidy, the daughter of a small newsagent in the Borough Road, belongs. Her brothers, of whom she has several, varying in size and vocal powers, are habitually engaged in the exhilarating occupation of distributing the morning papers or drawing shrill attention to their titles and contents at railway stations. Her elder sisters have all comfortable situations in domestic service. One has even attained brevet rank as manageress of a luncheon-bar at a highly respectable old-established house in the City, chiefly frequented by the permanent officials of the Royal Exchange and the beadle of the Bank of England. Miss Tidy's sister has a becoming pride in this position of trust and emolument—a pride which was considered, indeed, a kind of family property, and even swelled the high heart of Miss Tidy herself in early years.

As a perverse fate would have it, however, just as she entered her teens, Mr. Tidy—or, as his daughter now calls him, her paternal relative—received a bundle of old novels from one of his customers, who regarded them as so much rubbish, which he was glad to have cleared out of his house; whereupon, Mr. Tidy having a business mind, set up a circulating library. All the servant-maids in the neighbourhood

forthwith flocked to his establishment in search of culture ; and the profits of this branch of trade soon formed so cheerful an item in Mr. Tidy's receipts that, whenever he or his sons lighted upon an odd volume in the course of their daily vocations, they carried it briskly home to increase their store. To be sure, there was some confusion in the ideas of several constant readers through Job Tidy, a patient boy, having numbered the books with reference only to their size, taking no heed whatever of their contents, so that heroes and heroines left in circumstances of great anguish at the end of volume the first often seemed to have been transformed, renamed, and made happy in volume the second, which would open with a joke and light puns in its very preface.

Miss Tidy had a great love for this kind of literature, and when she was fourteen could repeat whole pages of it by rote. Twice she nearly set fire to the house, and Mr. Tidy had to engage in a hand-to-hand struggle to prevent the firemen getting into his abode before the flames were extinguished, so as to escape the pecuniary advantages they had claimed. Once Miss Tidy burnt all the hair off her head during the perusal of a ghost story, and, as she was a prim little body, it was very irritating to her temper for her to be obliged to go about in a mob cap which had belonged to her grandmother. But no mishap or untoward circumstance could check Miss Tidy's devotion to romance ; and, as a natural result, she soon

began to import a considerable quantity of the finest sentiment into her own proceedings. She would have made a smart sort of parlourmaid, or a spruce nursery servant, and had her rational ambition been higher she might in time have won up to more important functions. But instead of following the healthy example of her sisters, and becoming a useful housewife, she preferred to be a martyr. Having privately put the Tidy till under contribution for the price of an advertisement, she obtained a situation as governess in a genteel family at Bloomsbury.

The name of this family was Hopkinson ; and they stood much in awe of Miss Tidy. She had read so many novels that she had acquired a perfect familiarity with polite society ; and polite society was the perpetual thought of the Hopkinsons, who would rather have suffered a misfortune than have confessed that the husband and father of the establishment was a fish salesman at Billingsgate, so grand were his Bloomsbury surroundings. It mattered nothing that everybody around and about was fully aware of the fact ; and that Miss Tidy's predecessor, who was married and portioned out of the house, had communicated to her this toothsome piece of intelligence while going through the inventory of Miss Corisande Hopkinson's frocks. It mattered nothing, too, that Mr. Hopkinson was familiarly known in the neighbourhood as "old Salmon," by reason of his professional calling and rubicund appearance ; the family held to the idea

originally started by them that Hopkinson *père* was to be regarded as "something in the Navy," and respected accordingly, declining more particularly to specifying his occupation, in order to baffle impertinent curiosity.

Over these good people Miss Tidy ruled with a high hand. The words "*movez tong*," uttered with a meaning smile, being sufficient to at once establish her pre-eminence whenever there seemed a disposition to rebel against her authority. She had, to be sure rather a hazy notion as to the precise meaning of "*mauvais ton*;" but she knew that the words were French, and had met with the expression in the book of a live Baronet. Moreover, Miss Tidy rather prided herself on her French, having committed to memory numerous words and phrases of that polite language from some handbook of conversations, and she kept these acquirements well up to the mark by diligently studying the article on fashions in a Society newspaper.

It was quite dreadful to see how round and large Miss Tidy's eyes became if either of the Miss Hopkinsons ate their pudding with a knife. Even the heads of the family, honestly bent on giving a good example to their offspring, kept a wary eye on Miss Tidy, and did not venture to deal with any new dish till she had shown them how to approach it in the tiptop manner. This rather embarrassed Miss Tidy at first, and might have caused a civil war had she not been a person of considerable resources; for a

new footman, who had served the Lord Mayor, having put some finger-glasses on the table, Miss Tidy gracefully held hers between a fore-finger and thumb, with a little finger delicately curved, and drank off its contents at a draught. "Hit's for the 'ands, Mum," growled the footman in a sepulchral voice; and Mr. Hopkinson, who had dined on several occasions with the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, had an impression that the footman's tardy warning was couched in the words of wisdom. Miss Tidy, however, was fully equal to the occasion, and was so voluble about the shortcomings of civic dignitaries, whom she wittily styled "John Gilpins," that the footman was discharged with an indifferent character. Probably he ruminated, while out of place, on the prudence of concealing his stores of information from persons of superior rank; and on the danger of offending those in authority—especially ladies.

Miss Tidy had a great many gushing friends, and they used to meet together on Sunday evenings at a mouldy-looking house in South Molton Street. It was kept by a retired Governess, noted in the profession for having made a *mésalliance* by marrying a meek creature who had been footman in the family where she lived, and who now kept rabbits in his wife's coal-cellar, never presuming to appear among her grand acquaintance. His name was Mivens, and both he and "Missis Hem," as he respectfully called his wife, made an extremely good thing of their

guests. In the first place, Mrs. Mivens kept a sort of governesses' agency, termed by her "The International Collegiate, Musical, and Terpsichorean Institution," where the nobility and gentry were informed on neat cards that "the highest talent, combined with the best references, could always be selected for educational emergencies." Then Mrs. Mivens let lodgings to Governesses in good circumstances under a cloud, and Mivens waited on them with celerity and discretion. It was secretly whispered that she had even a friend who lent money to the extent of at least five pounds upon tangible security; and, although some irreverent Governesses objected that this capitalist's accounts were scarcely satisfactory when it was necessary to repay his advances, yet they all agreed that "it was not the fault of dear old Mivens, who was the jolliest soul out." Miss Tidy's friends were free of speech, and it would have astonished the young ladies to whom they imparted a polite education if they had heard their goings on in the parlour at South Molton Street, known among them as their "gossip shop."

Mrs. Mivens seemed to have quite a fascination for these ladies. They called her "a naughty old darling" for getting married, and regarded Mivens as a mysterious being kept in a cupboard like a certain shocking bottle which shall be nameless, and which was only brought out with plum-cake on very cold nights, just as they were about to separate in un-

usually high spirits, after discussing all the latest scandal.

Miss Tidy's friends were not altogether nice ladies. They were all in the martyr business, more or less; but they were very aggressive martyrs, and far from resigned to their sufferings. In general they felt themselves immeasurably superior to their employers, and the difficulties which they experienced in making this truth sufficiently clear to the people with whom they lived was a theme of indignant complaint with them. They protested because they had not the best seats at dinner when parties were given. They felt insulted because less homage was paid to them than to the daughters of the house. They were aggrieved because the show guests of the evening were not presented to them as partners at a ball. They were affronted at being asked to accompany some young lady on view in the matrimonial market instead of being asked to display their own musical or vocal accomplishments for the rapturous admiration which they would certainly have commanded. Many of them seemed the bitter enemies of the households where they dwelt; and it was a gruesome thing for Mivens, ere he slunk out to his free-and-easy in Davies Street, to hear how they seemed to gloat over any humiliation or domestic annoyance which befell those who ate of the same bread and drank of the same cup with them.

LE NOUVEAU RICHE.

HE was a pleasant-faced man, whose name was plain John Capper, and one had to look at him twice before it was possible to realise the fact that his yearly income would have made a handsome fortune for an English duke or a Continental king. There was no mistake about this enormous property. The source of it was perfectly clear. It was partly the result of enterprise guided by great shrewdness, partly of sheer good luck. There was not a stain of fraud or foul play on a coin of it, and it was all in honest solid money. The owner of these immense riches had been a working bricklayer, and he was still on the sunny side of middle age—a tall, well-grown, upright man, with steady blue eyes, chestnut hair, and comely features. His manners, too, were good.

He did not pretend to be highly educated, and had he done so the pretence would have been a failure; but he listened with deference to those who spoke with him, which is a subtle charm in conversation, and the few words he said himself were weighty and

sensible. He did not like general society, probably because he felt out of place in it, but was fond of retiring to some out-of-the-way room in his big house, where he would make calculations, or play with his children by the hour. The only trace of money in his behaviour was a fixity of purpose and determined manner of doing things. He knew he could generally have what he liked if he paid highly enough for it, and he had it, buying down all opposition to his will or whims. Otherwise, he did not make an ostentatious or offensive use of his purse.

Contrary to the conventional idea of men who have risen from nothing, all Mr. Capper's belongings were in perfect good taste. The vulgar obstreperous nabob of farces and comedies which soothed the pride of weak-kneed and high-born poverty in the last generation, has entirely disappeared from modern Society. The surroundings of wealth are now very seldom garish or too highly coloured. When Mr. Capper bought his big house he had it examined by a perfectly competent architect, and improved in accordance with the last mandates of science and art. Mrs. Capper found one of the queens of fashion very ready to help her to furnish it with quiet and convenient splendour. The same lady, and some others, afterwards invited her guests. She had a Neapolitan Prince for her major-domo, a Parisian maid who had been a pupil both of Worth and of Leopold; and her establishment was admirably mounted, from the cook

—a man of genius—to the under-housemaids, who were all buxom and smart.

In like manner, Mr. Capper did not trust himself to fill his stables and his coach-house, or his wine-cellar. A member of the Jockey Club—a peer with a broken fortune, who had nevertheless kept his place as a leader of the turf—selected his hacks and his carriages. They were supplied by the best horse-dealers and the first firm in Long Acre. He employed a distinguished scholar to choose his library—not that he cared for books, but that he desired everything about him to be complete in its way; and as there was a library in his large house, it must be properly filled. His head-gardener came from Chatsworth; his head-groom from Newmarket; his coachmen had mostly graduated in the royal stables, and Lord Shortcash, his noble friend, saw that they did not go far wrong, for his lordship was, in fact, Mr. Capper's Master of the Horse, and made too good a thing of it to neglect his duties.

It is often—perhaps nearly always—*primâ facie* evidence against a man that he should be rich, for many pounds and much probity are seldom found together. But Mr. Capper had done nothing wrong, and it was quite refreshing to see for once that Fortune had made so fair a choice for the recipient of her favours. They did not add much to his individual happiness. He never spent three hundred a year on himself, for he was naturally abstemious, liked plain

food of a coarse sort, and shrank from all sorts of display. The agent of a South American Government, who wanted him to float a new loan, found him eating bread and bacon on his thumb, in company with one of his own workmen. He rose very civilly when accosted by the political financier, wiped his mouth without embarrassment, and led the way to a place more suitable for the reception of visitors of rank. Then he discussed the subject of the proposed advance in so shrewd a manner as to leave his guest with a very considerable respect for his abilities. Indeed, if he had not possessed more intelligence than the average run of diplomatists, he would hardly have been the man he was—one who had not only made money, but knew how to keep it.

To be sure, there were a great many scandals about him. He got drunk, some people said; and others that he had bought his wife at a fair. He let them talk: it did not signify to him that they said he had been a hodman too—a man who had gone up ladders with bricks and mortar on his shoulders, and had balanced himself on giddy scaffoldings, going home with tipsy labourers upon pay-days. It seemed strange to people who believed in the hereditary doctrines so much in fashion nowadays, for no attempt was made either by Mr. Capper or his friends to deny the fact, which, indeed, they were rather proud of. But then it was just as well to remember that this exceedingly rich man was an American, and America

had been colonised by some very remarkable people, though hardly any note was taken of them. Cromwell was nearly going out there bag and baggage. Misgovernment in Ireland, rebellion in Scotland, and in France Catholic disabilities and foolish legislation, have sent millions of great hearts and keen heads across the Atlantic.

Mr. Capper did know something of his father, he had seen him dimly when a child—a gaunt man with straggling red hair and a loud voice, who was stoker on a railway, and had been killed by an accident. His acquaintance with his genealogical tree did not go higher up. His mother even had died in giving him birth, and he had tumbled up anyhow in the neighbourhood of a brick-kiln. But the well-cut features of the man, his dauntless eyes, and clean-built active frame, showed to any judge of race that he came from no common or ignoble stock. *Nouveaux riches* indeed! Pick out half-a-dozen, or a score of them, in any country of the world, and see how advantageously they will bear comparison with the titular nobles both in mental and physical development. If a man is poor and down at heel at forty in these times, it means that he is a fool. If he is very rich, and keeps so, it means that he is very shrewd, and all the cant about self-made millionaires, who are ill-mannered dolts, is so much nonsense.

A man who is really rich has the ill manners coaxed out of him. The world is civil to him, and he learns

to like it; both men and women have so much to expect from him that they really respect him; and folk who agree so well together seldom quarrel about trifles. Mr. Brassey, who left the largest fortune in hard cash of any Englishman of his generation, looked, spoke, and acted like a Conservative duke. A. T. Stewart, the American, who had twenty millions sterling, was quite a stately person. The present Lord Overstone was the companion and friend of statesmen before he became a peer. People who want to dine admirably in the company of a pleasant, well-informed person should think twice before they refuse an invitation from Baron Tauchnitz or from Baron Reuter, or from Herr von Bleichröder, the capitalist of Berlin. M. Strousberg, the German railway king, also a self-made man, possesses amazing ability and acquirements. None of these *Nouveaux Riches* have any of the traditional ridicule about them. Perhaps a light-headed fellow, who has made a successful plunge on the Stock Exchange, may and does play absurd pranks; but great wealth is a sober and decorous thing.

It was curious to note the attraction which Mr. Capper and his money possessed for all sorts and conditions of people. It placed him upon a pedestal from which he might have looked down on Society and scorned it; but he had no such idea, and, fortunately for himself and others, he was wholly without the sense of humour. It is scarcely an exaggeration

to say that, enormous as was his fortune, he had constant opportunities of increasing it to any amount he might have fancied. Princes and potentates were ready to sell him titles and concessions, such as would cause an ordinary speculator to wink with excitement. Pretenders to thrones, who only wanted funds to become powerful sovereigns, were eager to give him their Royal signatures to blank papers or parchments. Inventors, on the eve of success, balked for a few hundreds, urged him to reap the harvest of their lives' patient labour. Energy and forethought, courage, prudence, wisdom, marvellous skill in the rich science of numbers, youth, hope, resolution, were all at his command. Authors, painters, musicians, were even ready to sell their fame to him; and had he been a vain man he might have rivalled Waldberg or Westmoreland, who have sunned themselves in other men's renown. Such borrowed plumes, however, had no temptation for him.

Like most active-minded men, Mr. Capper was fond of travel, and was for ever moving about, keeping his attention alive to his business, which amused him most. He was, perhaps, least at home in his big house. There he was often ill at ease, because too much fuss was made about him, and "he could not brush his own hat," he said, "without being interrupted by some meddlesome servant." His wife—who, of course, had become a very pearl of great ladies, so that polite Society called her Mrs. "Capandgown"

instead of Mrs. Capper—was constantly hunting him about with her carriage. It turned up, with its tall bay horses, silver-plated harness, and powdered footmen, at Lloyd's, or at Garraway's on sale-days, and chased him in and out of the Baltic Coffee-house, to the City Club, and back again. When he remonstrated in his dry, good-humoured way, his wife could only be appeased by his starting a brougham of his own; and then this is what happened. He went in it in the orthodox way to the Mint, where he had to negotiate the sale of some silver, and left it there in a pouring rain all day, forgetting that it was in waiting, and transacted the rest of his affairs driving about as usual in a hansom cab.

Ultimately he bought his wife's permission to go about his concerns in his own way, by bringing her home the funniest, whitest, most wonderful dog ever seen, which he had bought of a Maltese sailor at the London Docks. When he had made her this rare present, however, he vainly fancied that he might do as he liked in other respects, and absented himself from a five-o'clock tea attended by no less a personage than his Grace the Archbishop of Highdownderry; and Mrs. Capper, who was an excellent woman, being much scandalised by his apparent lack of reverence for so august a prelate, went personally in search of him. He was found, after diligently looking for, in a lumber-room, patiently trying a solution of caoutchouc for the perpetual repair of old shoes; his wistful, earnest face

was bent over his work, and he was wholly absorbed in it, being busy with the thought of his miners far away, and anxious to ascertain whether leather might not be mended without nails, which strike dangerous sparks underground. Suddenly the radiant figure of his wife, dressed by Worth in the latest Parisian fashion, stood before him, with a whimsical look, half of reproach and half of pride, in her kind eyes, and the pair made a curious picture.

He did not seem funny to her, even with his blackened hands and in his shirt-sleeves, sitting astride on a straw-bottomed chair, with all his millions. She had seen that concentrated look in his eyes before, and she knew how good and great he was in ways of which the world knew nothing. But he felt like a schoolboy caught out of bounds, and put his hands together with a laugh and a blush to ask forgiveness of her. She shook her finger at him as she used to do when they were courting, and then drew nearer and nearer in her dainty dress of silks and satins till her eyes grew dim with loving thoughts of what he did and what he was, and she bent over his shoulders and kissed his forehead. "Come, master," she said, after this little ceremony, for the best of women will have their way; and after a brief visit to her dressing-room, where she superintended his toilet, she led him off in triumph to the Archbishop.

THE DEVOTEE.

MISS THORNICRAFT was a sickly, motherless girl, with a tendency to hysteria, which was the true source of her celebrity. She had a poor mind, a nervous nature, and a lean soul, with little of human sympathy or generous feeling ; but with a quantity of vanity stored up about her altogether surprising in so frail and small a creature. She felt a desire to make herself remarkable before she was out of her teens ; and as the thing was difficult to manage by ordinary means, she threw herself into devotion, much as a person who wanted to attract attention rather than to be drowned might stand screaming on the parapet of a bridge in a public thoroughfare, and give ostentatious evidence of a purpose to commit suicide. She wanted excitement to relieve the monotony of existence in Cadogan Terrace, and she got it that way. She took up pious affectation as tipplers resort to stimulants, and her sanctified airs and graces were mental drams from which she derived excitement.

What balls, theatres, and concerts are to healthy-minded young women, vestments, ritualism, and

intoning were to Miss Thornicraft. She adopted a high falsetto tone of religion. She learned strange fashions of turning up and casting down her eyes, as though they moved on hinges; and her manners conveyed a tacit assertion that she considered herself a chosen vessel. She seemed to take it for granted that her fellow-creatures had no idea of the way to Heaven, and would be quite at a loss to understand the place if they got there, by means of her guidance. She implied that no other road could possibly be open to them. She talked a sort of ecclesiastical gibberish, from which it appeared that she was regenerated; but she was not pleasant to her friends, or kind to her servants, or attentive to her household duties. She gave way freely to her own caprices, just as she had done when unregenerate. She had a sharp eye for her own small interests, she had an unforgiving temper, and was secretly very fond of good living. But in the upholstery of her new profession she was perfect. She fitted up a room, which was never used, with all the appliances of picturesque asceticism. It looked like a cell belonging to a nun of a rigid order. There was a prim bed in it, and at the head of the bed there was a crucifix; at the side of it there was a dim oil-lamp always burning, and an odour of incense pervaded the apartment, which had originally been a kind of closet leading out of a bath-room. There were also some books about, with mortified bindings.

Perhaps the secret of her perverse ways might

have been found in the fact that she was not good-looking, and had no admirers. Her home, too, was not so pleasant as it should have been: she was the daughter of a somewhat blustering, over-busy man, who lived much in public, and had no time to notice her whims and her ways. He gave her so much a week to manage the domestic concerns of his establishment, and then thought no more of either of them. For this parent—loud, stout, and commonplace—she cherished a shrinking contempt and aversion, and she often bemoaned her fate in not having a father more in accordance with her tastes and aspirations. Indeed, she went generally into the martyr business, and the resigned manner in which she would help the pudding (viewed by strict sectarians as an unnecessary creature comfort) which figured at their Sunday dinner was truly edifying, for on Sundays only Mr. Thornicraft shared the family meal. Before it was over, his daughter had mutely left the room, and was on the way to hear some preacher who happened just then to be before the law courts, with the serious butler behind her carrying a conspicuous prayer-book, while a charwoman cleared the table.

The worst part of the affair was that Mr. Thornicraft, who was commonly called “Jolly Tom” among his familiars, was not even aware of what was going on under his own eyes. He thought his daughter rather a comical girl, and told her so; but it was his practice never to interfere in household affairs. She

did precisely as she pleased without comment from him ; and this angered her the more. Indeed, she was so incensed at one time that she became aggressive, and determined to convert Mr. Thornicraft. She put tracts on his dressing-room table, and eliminated meat from the Sunday dinner during Lent. But in the one case "Jolly Tom," fancying the tracts were merely specious advertisements of some new nostrum, unconcernedly wiped his razors upon them ; while in the other, thinking that an accident had happened in the kitchen, he went quietly off to dine at a club. His house was not cheerful, and he saw less and less of it ever afterwards.

Having thus estranged her father and practically got rid of all her duties, the outward signs of devotion occupied all Miss Thornicraft's time. She had nothing else to do except to invent sanctimonious phrases and attitudes. Her family were well off, but they were not rich enough to entertain sycophants or dependents ; and if she had wanted to go into Society she must have worked for it, and then have been content to play a subordinate part, as she had discovered greatly to her annoyance when she had turned that way for amusement. In truth, Society is only pleasant for very rich or very agreeable people, and Miss Thornicraft had no place there. She derived much more entertainment from conversations with ardent clergymen upon the abstruse points which separate the Church of England from the Church of

Rome, and she could any day take up the afternoon of a Catholic Archbishop if she expressed a desire to be converted as soon as her mind was fully satisfied touching the doctrines upheld by the Papacy.

Catholic Archbishops and their coadjutors are among the most polished and gentlemanly men in the world. They treated their new disciple with a delicacy and urbanity that made her abhor the very shadow of "Jolly Tom," wondering more and more how she, who was of so elegant and refined a nature, the very porcelain of human clay, could have come of such a progenitor. She met people very different from her father at the oratories and chapels of the Catholic Prelates and Monsignori. Some of them were pale men, with lofty foreheads and meditative mien, given wholly up to prayer and fasting; others were pleasant, mellow-voiced priests, who had a fund of nice small talk, in which more common-sense than she quite liked was wrapped up. One or two of them advised her to get married and busy herself with common things, as the life most agreeable to the Divine will in such a case as hers; and an illustrious scholar and divine whom she saw last recommended her, after three days' reflection over the communication she had made to him, "to consult a physician."

She went no more to consult him after that; but there were Protestant theologians enough to serve her turn, and they did it eagerly, enthusiastically, when she announced herself in their vestries and studies as

a brand to be saved from the burning. She ought to have been better acquainted with the pitch of religious controversy than any other person of her age and generation, so much and so often did she hear of the Thirty-nine Articles and the infallibility claimed by the sovereign Pontiff. Zealous clergy were never tired of defending their faith, and were ready to go over their arguments again and again to carry conviction to her understanding where it was still in doubt.

They received Miss Thornicraft as a highly superior person, far above the common run of young women. She became first an honoured guest and then a privileged person, even in episcopal palaces and cozy deaneries. It gratified the innocent vanity of the Right Reverend the Bishop of Honeymeads to address his favourite argument against the Jesuits to the sympathetic ear of Miss Thornicraft over a cup of bohea sound as his doctrine and sweet as his language, for his lordship was a mighty champion of the Established Church, and his printed works had not always met with so wide'a welcome as they deserved, so that he had much to explain when he found a willing and respectful listener. The Very Reverend the Dean of Chelsea was also not unwilling to convince the world that he too was a stalwart labourer in the Vineyard, and could show a convert on occasion as well as Henry Edward of Westminster, or Monsignor Capel on the other side. It was good

to hear the Dean addressing Miss Thornicraft in his richest and most mellifluous voice when select company were present at his well-spread board, and mildly rejoicing over her as a sheep that had been lost but was found through his humble endeavours and final victory over the great, he might say the immense, spiritual temptations and subtleties opposed to him.

Possibly Miss Thornicraft could hardly have done better for herself in a social point of view, for she succeeded in getting into much better company than would have been otherwise accessible to her. She saw some women of whom the world was not worthy, and some perhaps who were not worthy of the world; but they were all decorous and influential people, who overlooked her defects, or were blind to them, while repenting over their own, either in reality or in appearance. She formed almost an intimacy with Miss Merton, who had met with an overwhelming sorrow — her affianced husband having been condemned to ignominious punishment in error. The trial had been noised abroad as usual when a reputation is murdered. The tardy public amends afterwards made had no such echo; and when her betrothed had died of his disgrace, Miss Merton became a hospital nurse and a Sunday-school teacher, honoured and revered by half the Church dignitaries in London who were brought in contact with her. Miss Thornicraft also made acquaintance with Mrs. Winnington, whose

children had emigrated, and whose belongings were all dead, leaving her no consolation save in prayer and doing good.

The beautiful charity of these noble ladies in a manner consecrated Miss Thornicraft; and after she had lived long among them in communion of speech and action she, too, grew tender and better, living gradually upwards as they beckoned to her; till at last she rose, on whiter and whiter wings, to a level of worth and honour with them. As she advanced in years she left off much of her ecclesiastical millinery and adornment, growing always more modest and more helpful. Her health improved as her heart was quieted and her affections were satisfied; till, by-and-by, she took her father into favour, and made his extreme old age sweet with daughterly care and loving words. She had adopted piety as a garment till it had become the habit of her life, and gave a sober grace and fashion to her works and ways.

THE LOUNGER ABROAD.*

WE made Saunterer's acquaintance in Marseilles harbour, on the deck of the Messageries boat for Civita Vecchia. He had the air of a regular pratique of the company, and seemed as much at home on board as the clerk who has his summer holidays at Gravesend on the afternoon steamer from London Bridge. The usually reserved captain unbent to him; M. Jules, the head steward, grinned and saluted. He had found a half-dozen of male friends among the travelling company; exchanged greetings with Lady Kicklebury, and warmly pressed the hands of her daughters, as the ladies descended to betake themselves to their berths before tempting the restless green water. Great are the powers of motion, and they will prevail; and we did not see much more of Saunterer until, pale and placid, he stepped down into the small boat in Civita Vecchia harbour.

Nil admirari was profoundly impressed upon the almost studied abandonment of each feature and gesture. Was not the whole Continent as familiar to him as Pall Mall? had he not seen a full score of

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times all that was to be seen, and steeled himself by long habit against surprise? He did not stand head in air reading off the mural inscriptions—"S. P. Q. R. Munificentia . Pii VII . Pontificis . Maximi." He did not bother about Italian characteristics—blue sky and whitewashed walls, dust heaps and marble portals, beggars, priests, and rags. He had not written beforehand to secure quarters in Rome, as he had only made up his mind to his Italian voyage after being bored beyond endurance the other evening at the Opéra Comique. It chanced to be a Thursday night. It struck him that the Civita Vecchia steamer sailed on a Saturday. His decision was taken. Next morning he had interviewed the people at the packet office, secured his berth, and the evening saw him gliding out of the Gare de Lyon in the southern express. He and the host of the Angleterre at Rome are friends of old standing, and he knows that the house will willingly throw open its doors to so excellent a customer. But then the Angleterre is popular, and it is the height of the Roman season; and he certainly incurs the risk of being consigned to one of those gloomy chambers of which, it must be owned, the Angleterre has not a few.

However, it was all right, it would appear. We saw him next morning lounging out on the Bocca di Leone as if he had lived there all his life—and, indeed, he has spent a more than fair proportion of it in the vicinity of the Piazza di Spagna. He expressed himself delighted to see me, although our acquaintance

had been made so recently, and the opportunities of improving it had been so slight. But "Friend of my friend!" he says, with Mr. Alfred Jingle, we having been presented to each other by a common acquaintance. Moreover, Saunterer is good-natured, and he likes to play the cicerone and air the special sort of knowledge he has made the greatest progress in. When he does happen upon an ephemeral and episodic object in life, he likes to make the most of it. If he had only been lucky enough to stumble up against a profession, ambition and intelligence might have led him to great things. "Ah! a stranger to Rome, I think you said. Well, I ought to know something of it; and I think I may venture to recommend myself as a tolerable cicerone. If you want to set about doing like the Romans, and have nothing else on hand, I offer myself for the morning."

So he takes you charitably in tow, and you devote the morning jointly to busy idleness, eminently characteristic of the man and the place. What strikes you first coming there in your fresh innocence is that the "Romans" Saunterer alluded to are really the Anglo-Saxon colony; unless, indeed, he be one of the rare foreigners who have the "open sesame" to the exclusive local circles; in which case he is sure to let you know it. He ignores antiquity and archæology and art, except in so far as they subordinate themselves to the pleasures of the handful of islanders who, with insular complacency, vote themselves the monarchs of

all that surrounds them. The mouldering arches of the Flavian amphitheatre are a good object for a moonlight party, and the sculptured marvels of the Vatican for one by torchlight. The Transfiguration and the Communion of St. Jerome must be knocked off somehow ; but the Leonine City is remote, and the Vatican in its most distant quarter, while the access is bad, the odours are atrocious, and the steps on the staircases very many. In the honest opinion of Saunterer and his set, kings, republics, emperors, and pontiffs laboured at centralizing the temporal and spiritual government of the world among the Seven Hills so as to make winter tolerable to the blasés of Mayfair. War, pestilence, and superstition have desolated the Campagna to make a pleasant galloping ground for English riding parties, and picturesque spots for English picnics.

So Saunterer seizes you by the arm in his friendly grasp ; he has soon to release you, owing to the narrowness of the pavement. The first thing, of course, is to be put up at the Club. " Old General Cannon will do it at once ; we're sure to find him knocking the balls about after breakfast. Or, stay, we had better take Monaldini in our way, and see who are here." You go to Monaldini, where you enrol yourself as a subscriber, and look into the reading-room. It appears Prince Porlonia had one of his grand balls last night, and there is no one there as yet—at least, no one worth the knowing. You go on to the Club, where you duly find the General.

You drop in with Saunterer at the banker's, who is in a bustle, and the Consul's, who is engaged. It appears to you neither of these busy men fully reciprocate the flaneur's anxiety to renew acquaintance. You look up Chisella in his studio, who is delighted to welcome you, and offers cigars. Your presence hardly arrests, and does not embarrass him in his great work, "The Battle of the Centaurs and Lapithæ." He is quite accustomed to labour for a gallery, and the more he gets talked of the better for him. By this time lunch suggests itself in due sequence, and Saunterer carries off Chisella to Spillman's, where he insists upon entertaining him hospitably with galantine, mayonnaise, and Marsala.

Thus recruited in body and spirit, it strikes Saunterer, as he is having a busy day, he had better go through with it. So he dashes off to Prince Rudoschalei's to find out at headquarters about the arrangements of the hunt for the season, and follows that visit up by a round of the Roman livery stables, in futile search of something to carry him, and then makes a general card delivery in the quarters commanded by the Pincian. You had separated from your good-natured friend with a vague engagement to meet on the morrow at the Club. On your return to your hotel you found a card and invitation to a little dance, which the only people you knew in Rome chanced to be giving that very evening. You go to it, and later you see your friend Saunterer saunter in.

That is the salient feature of Saunterer's roving life. Go where he may he is not only in familiar quarters but among old friends. When you met him subsequently in the convent on Sinai—he had come from Palestine by Petra, while you rode across from Suez by the Well of Moses—you found him quite the spoiled child of the house, the petted darling of the refectory. If there is a state ceremony going forward anywhere in Europe he makes a point of witnessing it; breaks the line of the royal guard, and carries the very steps of the throne by sap or storm. He attaches himself as a matter of course to the suite of special envoys charged with congratulations at coronations or transmission of the insignia of the Garter. He seats himself in coupés secured by consular influence for Queen's messengers, and does no small share of his travelling in special steamers, the vessels of her Majesty's fleet, or the yachts of friends.

Paris naturally is his continental headquarters. He is a member of the Cercle Impérial. He used to have his permanent *pied à terre* by the Boulevards, until growing embarrassments cut it from under his feet. For now necessity inculcates the prudence he had once been too much inclined to ignore. Where at all practicable, he limits his aspirations to the comfortable, and only invests in show where it is absolutely necessary to assert the position he lives upon. He is always ready to join a friend at dinner at the Trois Frères or the Café Anglais, but when thrown back on

his own company he prefers the Voisin, whose equal or superior excellence is not taxed at fancy prices. Nay, he not unfrequently condescends to breakfast at *prix fixe* in the Passage Jouffroy, choosing his own *plats*, and being shrewdly guarded in the matter of the hors d'œuvres. He knows his way well to the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, and is hand-in-glove with the senior secretaries of the legation. He generally manages to find a friend to mount him in the Bois de Boulogne, or, if he prefer carriage exercise, he has a certain choice among the back seats of barouches. Mamma and the girls are glad to have him—he flirts of course, but he does not set up for a marrying man—he boasts openly of his lack of means, and, by implication, of the selfish luxury of his habits. If he lives on the fat of the land, and among the lofty of the earth, he does it to a certain extent on sufferance. He holds his living on much the same tenure as that of a travelling fellow; to trap and tame him would be to strip him of what makes him worth knowing; and, besides, you might as well hope to reclaim the Wandering Jew to the peaceful joys of a domestic life.

Making it his own business to know every one, Saunterer assumes, half in affectation, half in earnest, that you are equally well informed. As the soup disappears he slips into the vacant place opposite you at the table d'hôte of some Bellevue or L'Europe. He nods across cordially but carelessly, as if he had only parted from you yesterday. By way of conversation

you ask where he may have come from last. "Up the Lakes from Milan, and by rail to Geneva, with Sir George and Lady So-and-So." Who So-and-So may be perhaps you have not the faintest conception, or possibly you merely know them by name. No matter. If you do not, the fault is yours; if you discuss the world with a man of the world, you are bound to be better informed. And, not content with riding over you rough-shod with Sir George, Saunterer mercilessly catalogues for your benefit all the acquaintances they met *en route*. Accordingly you are pleased to know later that the pleasure of the journey was not altogether mutual, and that it would not have broken Sir George's heart to have dropped his accomplished companion on the way. Saunterer is no bore; if he were so, the shaking him off might be worth making a fight for. Still a little of him goes a considerable way, for his excellent qualities lie all on the surface, and his conversation tends decidedly to the monotonous.

So he rides round the world on the backs of good-natured people, a modern Old Man of the Sea, and when he dismounts anywhere for a more lengthened stay, more homœopathic applications of his agreeable society make him abundance of fresh friends. But, in good spirits as he always seems, even Saunterer, we fancy, must have his moments of dark reflection and his fits of the blue devils. It is even more unpleasant looking forward to a fading future than back

to a wasted past. He has tried such pleasures as came within the range of his means or tastes, and they have begun to stale. It dawns upon him that his appetite for everything is failing, and just as it wants tempting his means have narrowed, as we said. A new generation is growing up who barely know him; positively he has heard the whisper of "fogey" behind his back. His contemporaries are ruined or dying off, or have subsided into family men. One wears fast at work like his, and his locks are thinning and his whiskers streaking with silver. He was always trusted among beauties on their promotion; but now mothers begin to talk to him as to a father confessor, and consult him confidentially about the means and habits of eligibles whom he would fondly regard as rivals. Moreover, although change of scene has become necessary to him, it yields him slight pleasure nowadays, even in anticipation. The actual travel is unalloyed discomfort. He catches cold more lightly; he can't sleep through noise, on hard beds, notwithstanding the vicious remonstrances of their permanent tenants; and if he does succeed in spite of failing teeth in overcoming the resistance of tough viands, black dyspepsia is pretty sure to sit on his chest, and brooding nightmares to ride his slumbers. Altogether, Saunterer begins to surmise, too late, that, with all its beauties and its seductions, the world was made for something else than aimless sauntering.

THE COURIER.

THE triumphs of peace have their victims like those of war. There are always classes who see themselves threatened by the fateful wheels of the advancing car of science. Scribes and illuminators had to throw down pens and brushes when Guttemberg's discovery made manuscripts and missals a drug. The invention of gunpowder exploded the popular calling of the bowman; when the road came in collision with the rail, the dignified stage-coachman was rudely tipped off his hereditary seat; and, not to multiply instances, the growing facilities of modern travel have been the bane of the courier. The Cooks of our modern excursion parties are the Reformers of the new era, exerting a subtle indirect influence far beyond their visible sphere. The fastidiousness, the independence, the latent poetry and romance of your nature may long oppose themselves to your merging your individuality in a moving mass, and applying for shares in a provisional joint-stock company for mutual improvement and common admiration. Nature may revolt against your travelling ghost-like through the most hallowed scenes in the Cockney atmosphere of vulgarity you

carry about with you. Even the docile followers of a fashion may prefer to revolve in the deep-worn grooves in the aristocratic exclusiveness of their own family circles. But the influence of the excursionists casts a broad every-day light upon your path, whether you like it or not.

You can travel the backwoods and the prairies without a guide, where gang upon gang of pioneers have marked out the broad trail you have to follow. Nowadays the popularization of travel has left no room for discovery and little for doubt. Each church, castle, ruin, picture, view, and milestone is laid down carefully upon the tourist's map. We need hardly remark that we speak metaphorically, and do not refer to those shadowy sketches that are a standing reproach to the eminently conservative Murray. The chart notes not only the situation of hostelries but their charges; the railway books give you not merely the hour of departure of the trains, but their tariffs for passengers and luggage. A *crétin* might travel from Calais to Constantinople and back by his own unaided intellect; all the foreigners with whom the carriage traveller comes in contact have mastered sufficient of his language to welcome and to speed him; to take him in and to do for him. Thus the occupation of the Courier is well-nigh gone. There may be a certain comfort, to be sure, in transferring your baggage and its responsibilities to the shoulders of a mercenary. There is an undoubted luxury, when you are moving

with a rush that floods and swamps the hotel, in sending an intelligent quartermaster in advance of you. Unprotected females must have guardians, and male imbeciles must be dry-nursed; while families of questionable position and unquestionable means owe it to their dignity to attach a Courier to their suites, as an Austrian *nouveau riche* begins by setting up a chasseur. But the demand diminishes fast, and if the Courier is not yet a myth of the past, he is far indeed from being what he used to be. It was never the salary that made it worth the having; it was the perquisites—which our practical American cousins characterize as the stealings. No wonder the stamp of Courier has deteriorated when the profits are dwindled so shamefully.

Hear M. Dieudonné on the good old times. In the mellow maturity of his experience M. Dieudonné occasionally still condescends to travel, for, as he says, he likes the smack of the whip. But he travels rarely, for in a long life passed in the intelligent *exploiter*-ing of his fellow-creatures he has amassed an ample competency to soothe declining years. Moreover the bitters of change mingle so freely with the sweets of travel, that his pleasure is more than mixed. What a godsend M. Dieudonné used to be to those who were fortunate enough to secure him for their guide, friend, and philosopher. What a rare combination of gifts indicated him for eminence in the profession that nature inspired him to adopt. He was emphatically

a self-made man, and yet the workmanship was unexceptionable. You were never suffered to surmise this fact, for his origin was a close secret of his own. Swiss by extraction, like most of his tribe the youthful Louis early found his way from the mountains of the Valais to the streets of Geneva. From being a hanger-on in the courtyards of the different hotels, he converted himself gradually into an occasional *laquais de place*. As became a free mountaineer, from the first he utterly emancipated himself from prejudices ; always willing and always useful, his shrewd services were at the service of any one who chose to pay. He had excellent eyes for character, and as the patrons he was brought in contact with did not think it worth while playing the hypocrite with a lad of his years, his early studies in human nature were much easier to him by the distinctness of the print. Thus he developed the bump of acquisitiveness to the prejudice of his organs of veneration, while his common sense and courtesy constrained him to become an accomplished dissembler.

At last he caught the tide on the turn that carried him to fortune. A literary Englishman on his way from Italy to Paris retained him as his cicerone to Voltaire's Château of Ferny, and was thunderstruck at the acquaintance the out-at-elbows young Swiss displayed with the life and writings of the great philosopher. Louis, who was blessed with an admirable memory, was only airing his recollections of the conversation of a couple of Frenchmen he had conducted

a couple of days before. But he took good care not to let the cat out of the bag when his companion complimented him. Through life he knew when to speak and when to be silent. It ended by the Englishman carrying off his phoenix as travelling servant. When he started Louis was as innocent as a babe of the ways of the road, but he meditated profoundly on his future as the carriage dragged up the wooded zig-zags of the Jura. The result was his putting himself to school with the landlord, the postillions, his master, with any one who could teach, and with an air of such complacent self-sufficiency that they scarcely suspected he was learning. When the host of the Lion d'Or at Dijon showed himself backward with the black mail, M. Dieudonné was down upon him so sternly that the other fell upon his marrowbones and rendered up his own share of the pillage as a peace-offering.

When the pair arrived at Paris the master was so proud of his invaluable domestic that he could not help advertising his own perspicacity to all the world, declaring he considered it had suited him for life. The consequence was that M. Dieudonné forthwith bettered himself, finding an excellent place with a millionaire American family starting upon the tour of Europe. Once made free of the guild and roads, it was not likely he was to bury his talents in a humdrum country existence in England. The world was clearly his oyster, and Providence had given him a sharp wit to open it. His education progressed apace,

and pretence began steadily to convert itself into reality. The rough elements of his trade of course he mastered rapidly. Geography and topography came in the course of travel, and none of his later employers ever detected him in a first visit to any hamlet in Europe. The two leading languages came easily to a French Swiss born on the skirts of a German canton; and Italian, more or less of the *lingua Toscana*, followed in course. Any man with brains and brass can make himself a good travelling servant. M. Dieudonné was something more. If he had been cradled in the Uffizi and nursed in the Hôtel Cluny, he could not have developed a stronger natural bias towards art criticism. He was a walking Kugler; great in the Cinque Cento: and on the Renaissance it was equal to sitting at the feet of Vasari to listen to him on *morbidezza* and *chiaroscuro*. The flourish of the hand with which he dismissed the breadth of golden light in a Cuypp was only surpassed by the ecstasy when, with rapt soul gleaming in his eyes, he threw them up to contemplate the angel smile of a Murillo.

Surat, the mammoth cotton-spinner, who possesses the noblest gallery of the old masters in Manchester, is indebted chiefly to the counsels and assistance of Dieudonné for his unparalleled collection. Indeed, the celebrated battle-piece by Salvator—half the capital of a Corinthian column, a horse's hind-leg, a helmet plume, and a half-dozen of lance-points, all struggling dimly out of a grey cloud of dust—was a

discovery of Dieudonné himself, unearthed in a back lane by the Piazza Navona. He bought the gem, as he confesses with honest pride, for a couple of scudi. In the pride of his heart, and much to his subsequent regret, he displayed it to the sympathetic Surat, who prevailed on him to throw it away for only £700. It is of the less consequence, if Dieudonné would but believe it, that his art researches have been not unfrequently rewarded by similar treasure trove. One branch of art he is even stronger in than painting, and that is wines. It is the more natural that he has a fine palate untainted by excesses in early youth, and that in his time half the landlords in Europe have given him the liberal run of the choicer bins in their cellars. For, free to pick and choose among a numerous circle of travelling acquaintances, Dieudonné conferred his society by choice upon *bons viveurs*. The landlord might humbug his principal, but there was no imposing upon him. He supplemented his knowledge of wine by his acquaintance with human nature.

M. Renard, of the Toison d'Or, might come upstairs cradling gently as a sleeping babe in his arms a bottle of Romanée Conti swaddled in cobwebs. Dieudonné looks sharply from the bottle to its bearer, remarks the cobwebs to cluster suspiciously thick, and fancies he sees an overdone intensity of appreciation in the handling by the landlord. He says nothing, but waits to see the cork come out. M. Renard has

to exert his arm. Recorked, or an imposture, is the provisional verdict of Dieudonné; but he reserves his judgment. M. Renard decants out a glassful as if he were distilling the precious elixir of life. M. Dieudonné smells, sips, smells again, rolls the wine against the light, and his tongue and eyes in sympathy, holds it at arm's length, brings it in, gives a decisive smack, and drops the word, "Pommard." The landlord is disgusted, for the wine is really Nuits; but once entrenched among the growths of Romanée Conti, he feels an awkwardness in executing a strategical movement in retreat. But M. Dieudonné relieves his embarrassment. He is a man of the world, and knows that landlords must live, like couriers or other people. So he breaks into a genial laugh: "Pommard vieux, Richebourg, or whatever it is, you are right so far; it is worth money, and quite good enough for him," with a motion of the thumb towards the ceiling. So the Nuits goes upstairs at Romanée price, and the landlord mounts the nearest approach to Romanée for the discriminative critic. Next day the courier's complacent acquiescence is rewarded with half the difference between the prices. Men must live. And the life used to be a jovial one. M. Dieudonné confesses it in his moments of *épanchement*. Everywhere you lived on the fat of the land, and the dinner that began with oysters of Ostend or Marennes, followed its luxurious course to end with caviare. But now! now! and a sigh supplies the sequel.

Now !—M. Dieudonné's young élève, M. Jean Goujon, can tell you what the Courier's life is nowadays. Not that M. Goujon is of the same calibre as his trainer. He has nothing of his genius, and has enjoyed few of his opportunities. M. Goujon is a common servant, like any other, and in point of picking and stealing is condemned to revolve in a vicious circle, brought up by the shortest of tethers. Very gay and gallant he looks with his drooping moustache, his fur-cuffed coat, his bag slung to his shoulder. He has the military manner of a mousquetaire in plain clothes and on his very best behaviour. He makes wild work with the hearts of ladies' maids, as with jest, anecdote, and sparkling epigram he beguiles the tedious way. But half the swagger is assumed, and he is no longer an essential to the party he chaperones, or an incubus on the landlord he patronises. Most likely paterfamilias has the meanness to carry the purse or pay the bills himself. If he sees a strange bottle of wine in the note, his finger hits the fatal blot at once : if the charge for it is distributed over the bottles his party may have emptied, he forthwith has the wine-list up for reference. He will not tolerate a solitary *petit verre*, although a *chasse-café* twice a day is a necessary of life of every foreigner of distinction.

It is worse still when Goujon travels as squire of dames, unless, indeed, he takes the upper hand at once, and make his little luxuries the condition of his escort. What can you make of the bills of a couple of women,

who consider foreign tea a beverage for the gods, and simply follow the lowest figures when they do make a selection from the wine carte? If he take a single gentleman in charge, his chances are better, for of course the presumption is that the single gentleman who travels with a Courier is a fool. But the best pickings off a single man must be paltry, and the course of plucking must be brief. You generally find the men who go in a Courier's leading strings are never easy away from the apron-strings of Mother England.

Dieudonné is gifted and Goujon shrewd ; Karl Kalb is thoroughly honest and stolid and stupid. He has a big nose and a sleepy brown eye, a broad cheek and an immeasurable waist. He never exerts body or mind when he can help it ; he rises stoically superior to bustle, and is always nowhere in the rush for rooms. He negotiates a set of railway tickets as if he were carefully arranging a precedent, and tells down the coins one by one at the wicket until the impatient Frenchmen in his wake become raving maniacs. He crosses his hands before an emergency, and when time is everything deliberates until all is lost. But his respectability and his unimpeachable certificates pull him through, and, on the whole, were we condemned to a courier, it is to Kalb we would turn. True he would add something to our anxieties, for we should have to think and act for him, but at least he would leave us the master of our movements and our purse.

THE LAQUAIS DE PLACE.

THE traveller who has not in his time formed numerous acquaintances among the genus guide must be exceptionally lucky. There are endless species and varieties, from the affable individual who volunteers to pilot you to hot coffee when you disembark in the dark on the other shore of the Channel, to the free-born mountaineer who picks you out a path over air-hung ice slopes and treacherous crevasses, or the majestic dragoon who leads you to desert temples through the tribes and tents of Ishmael. But the "Laquais de Place" is the peculiar growth of cities—the spawn of an artificial civilization, shooting-up, fungus-like, under the tourist's foot, whether he sets it down on the graves of the mouldering past or in the busy thoroughfares of the bustling present.

It is hopeless to catalogue the types of a race whose name is legion, the subtle shades of whose distinct individualities defy analysis. They manage to make themselves more or less necessary to all of us, and the most accomplished of travellers cannot boast himself invariably independent of them. Like popular guide-books, the smattering of local knowledge at their disposal may often economise your time and spare you the

trouble of unremunerative original research. To do them justice, occasionally they may save your temper, although for the most part they link themselves with the most irritating souvenirs of your travels. In point of demeanour and manners, the very nature of their calling is against them. The superior knowledge for which they are retained places them on a vantage ground they infallibly abuse; and as your connection is essentially a passing one, they have slight inducement to study either your susceptibilities or your purse.

At the top of his profession stands the Laquais de Place retained as a supernumerary on the strength of your hotel establishment. You have reached Cologne over night, and are leisurely making your morning toilette, listening to the music of the bells and whistles on board the steamers, and watching the rush of life across the boat-bridge that falls and rises on the heaving chest of the Rhine. A tap at the door, and without waiting for permission, the tapper enters—a solemn gentleman, deliberately descending the shadier slope of life, whose person is better preserved than his apparel, although it takes a second glance to see his boots are burst, his coat braid frayed, and an occasional button missing. He closes the door gently behind him, and advances with an air where tranquil assurance and condescending respect are happily blended. You may be rising from your bath like Cytheræa from the waves; but it will be all the same to him. He ignores the exclamation or execration that welcomes him, and in-

introduces himself formally as custode extraordinary, key-bearer to the mediæval treasures of the ancient city.

With your vague constitutional notions of an Englishman's bedroom being his castle for the time being, you move in the direction of the electric bell with the idea of summoning the hotel authorities to vindicate your rights. But second thoughts bring sager counsel. After all, it is your first visit to Cologne, and you do not know a solitary phrase of German. You may have plenty of pluck and perseverance, but then you have little time; the old Rhenish architects had clearly designed their city with an eye to founding the guild of guides; left to your own resources, you would be like the hero embarrassed in the Cretan labyrinth without the saving clue. The man, although civil, seems resolved; so, to get rid of him and spare yourself future trouble, you engage him on the spot. His services secured, you fondly hope he will leave you in peace until you claim them. Not a bit of it. His habit is to dine early, and it suits his pleasure to have your morning expedition knocked off by noon. While you are still dallying with your second cup of coffee his shadow falls across your plate; he is respectfully reminding you that German beadles with the church keys withdraw into temporary retirement as the sun rises to the meridian. The Oberkellner, joining affably in the conversation, confirms him. It saves that functional trouble if you are back in time for the one o'clock table d'hôte.

"First, sare, I will make you see the Dom," remarks your companion. There is nothing to be urged against so reasonable a proposition, although the tone of command rather jars your independence. The road to the cathedral leads past a magazine of one of the clan Farina, as all roads in Cologne do. You cast a glance at the wooden cases behind the plate glass, and have almost passed it when a happy thought strikes your guide. "Ah, sare, by-the-bye, perhaps you like to buy some Cologne Wasser. Very good shop this one here. Suppose we go in: you not need to buy nothing—Mr. Jean Antoine know me very well." Knew him very well! We should fancy Mr. Jean Antoine did: if frequent commissions assiduously earned mean anything of the sort, the scoundrel is a sleeping partner in the concern. You remind him of his reminding you that the churches close at noon. "It not take long, sare; just one look and then we go, and the Swiss at the Dom he know me very well; suppose he gone, I know where to find him." Being your first visit to the Continent, of course you mean to take home certificates of travel in the shape of local souvenirs. You stand irresolute, and your guide hastens to commit you by taking silence for consent. Passively acquiescent, you become the proprietor of a bulky case of the fragrant fluid; your guide enriches himself by a thaler, and you have established an expensive precedent.

Before entering the cathedral, your companion, as a man of taste, insists on your making the tour of the

Platz, to appreciate external effects. You are surprised into audible admiration of the sculptures over the northern door. "Suppose you please, sare, I show you where you get very fine photograph of that—round that corner, sare, close by here," and while yet speaking he is striding away in the direction indicated. He presumes something on the success of his former "plant." For the moment you are firm, and insist upon entering the building. He shrugs his shoulders over your want of taste, more in sorrow than in anger. On dates in the cathedral you find him tolerably strong, and he reads off pretty glibly the monumental inscriptions you might have studied for yourself. But he is obviously ill at ease, and his furtive glances go wandering about among the long drawn columns. At last the rustle of approaching robes seems to relieve him, and the superb Swiss ranges up alongside, looking, with the magnificent insignia of his office, like a resuscitated Prince Bishop. He immediately undertakes the honours of his building, expatiating eloquently on the restorations, the stained glass, its munificent donors, and everything, in short, you hired a guide to tell you. He forces himself on you with an affability that will not be denied; but he talks to heedless ears. Your thoughts are too busy over the amount of the remuneration you may venture to offer his magnificence. Your guide shows himself a friend in need and indeed. "You give him one thaler, sare," he stealthily whispers.

"Now, now the time," he adds, something more energetically. So you humbly tender the coin, although thinking the payment in advance rather premature, while as yet you have not forced the iron screen that shuts you out from the choir. But you find it is all right. The iron gates mark the bounds of another territory, and mean a fresh levy of black-mail.

By the time you are suffered to quit the cathedral, you find yourself absolutely out of change. "Suppose you come to that photograph shop I speak of—there they give you the small money; you not want to buy, that make no matter, no matter at all." Fascinated by the photographs, you squander a good deal of time and a great deal of money, and consulting your watch when you leave the shop, you find you might just as well have gone round by the hotel to change your paper. Better, indeed. Your companion makes you remark that the Gereonkirche or anything else will be closed before you can possibly reach it: consequently, that you can do no better than go home and dine, and defer further sightseeing till afterwards. But, as you have despatched all the shopping he can reasonably hope to let you in for, he insidiously encourages your indolence, and winks at your shirking your self-appointed task. He passes Gereon and his Theban legion rapidly through their inspection, and pooh-poohs the cabinets of bones of Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins. He lures you out of the heat into one of the cool beer

gardens by the ramparts, where he waxes scandalously Rabelaisan over brimming glasses of Baierisch. He exerts his social qualities so successfully that the odds are he carries you off to the summer theatre up the river, although you know no word of the language. When he deposits you by your hotel door at night, floods of beer have forced the lock-gates of your generosity, and you offer a substantial testimonial to the social gifts of your agreeable Mentor. That long day's work hardly bears the following morning's reflection. It wants training to take your pleasure in a German Valhalla, and you wake next morning with clouded eyes and swimming brain after your beer and tobacco bath. If you are as conscientious as most young travellers, your impressions of Cologne are of the haziest, and your flying inspection of its archæology has laid up a store of remorseful reflections. You have misspent a day and a good many thalers to boot, you find your valued photographs will not fit into your portmanteau, and you are cumbered with an extra package in the shape of your uncompromising case of eau de cologne.

But although the Western Laquais de Place may make a good thing of it when gulls and owls are plenty, his opportunities are bagatelles compared to those of his lucky Oriental brother. A resolute or close-fisted man may possibly hold his own in the West, but he has no chance in the East. The donkey boys of Alexandria, or the Hamels of Constantinople,

read him a lesson of helplessness on his first landing. It is hopeless finding your way about those cut-throat alleys, even if your nerves are strong enough to attempt it, in face of the packs of masterless hounds, and under the stony glare of Moslem zealots scowling from their shop-boards. Like a child catching hold of its nurse's skirts, you cling abjectly to the protection of the melancholy, mean-looking, swaggering half-caste who takes you under his care. Generally a Maltese or a Levantine, he gives you the idea of a man constitutionally deprecating the blow he knows he deserves. Yet the *Io triumphe* fashion in which he traverses the *quartiers perdus* you shrank from inspires you with involuntary respect. With his massy silver earrings, his long greasy locks, his slippered feet and lanky calves dangling by his donkey's sides, he pushes past believers who from the serene heights of their faith in Paradise look down with contempt and loathing on the Giaours jogging towards perdition; haughtily motions aside the magnificent wild-eyed Bedouin fresh from his desert lordship, just as he waves off the Arab gamins who shriek for backshish. He stalks into mosques sealed but the other day to anything but special firmans as if they were cosmopolitan cafés, airily disregardful of the converging broadside of scowls from the tenants of the prayer carpets.

There is a freemasonry of rascality between him and the professionally pious, and he will get you up a function of howling or dancing dervishes just as he

will a ballet of Almehs by the Nile or Zingaris by the Bosphorus. But of course it is in the bazaars where he is in his glory. Of the market price of Syrian sabre-blades, attar of roses, amber from the Euxine, Brusa silks, or Arab bournouses, you have not yourself the vaguest conception. All you know is that when you come back from the East, you will be expected to fall into Eastern fashions, and return laden with presents. If the vendors knew you were as thoroughly *au fait* of values as a Jew broker, they would still demand three times the market-price. Being what you are, judge of the margin left to the unscrupulous intermediary between your innocence and their astuteness! It is a complicated arithmetical problem in any case to find out how many interviews, pipes, and cups of coffee go to making any considerable purchase, if you mean to arrange it on reasonable terms. When your impatience solves it by cutting the knot you are supposed patiently to unpick, the shopkeeper can spare the interpreter of your impetuosity a magnificent *douceur*. Were it not that retributive justice seems to condemn the dragoman to invest in reckless speculation the perquisites of his professional industry, no man would need to grow grey at the work. As it is, unlike his Western confrères, he is generally too clever by half, and his excessive acuteness is always overreaching itself.

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