MRS. KEATS BRADFORD.

IX.

MISS PHILLIPPS THINKS OF CANONS.

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Mrs. Bradford was conscious of some sense of irritation when she heard this voice which she did not recognize.

Whom had her sister brought? The portiere was immediately drawn aside, and Mr. Soule entered, very pale, very weak and thin-looking and leaning on a cane. But his face was undeniably radiant as his hostess met and greeted him cordially.

He sat down quickly when Rowena had resumed her own seat.

"You see I have escaped," he said.

His eyes were so large and so black, they had in them such a wistful, child-like expression, that Rowena hardly liked to meet them. She did not fully realize that this look was there because he had been ill and was still weak, and that it by no means betokened anything child-like in his character. His pallor, too, in contrast with his inky hair and mustache, was something startling.

Rowena's voice unconsciously assumed a certain tender consideration.

Mr. Soule leaned back in his chair and clasped his hands on the top of his stick.

"Of course I came here first," he said, "I wanted to thank you."

"I have earned no thanks," was the response.

"Oh, I didn't expect you to be conscious that you ought to be thanked. It is not because of what you have done—it is because—"

Here he bent forward with an appearance of uncontrollable earnestness.

"It is because you are what you are, Mrs. Bradford. Do you think a man who is blessed with your friendship—may I not say friendship?—do you think such a man doesn't feel like thanking God?"

"You have been ill and you exaggerate, Mr. Soule," said Rowena, gently.

"I have been so near the other world that I dare to be sincere," he responded.

Mr. Soule was always very impressive. He was more so now than Rowena had ever seen him.

Moved by some inexplicable restlessness Rowena half rose from her seat and reached forward to the table where stood the vase holding the great bunch of odorous lilies. She detached one of the flowers from its companions and bent her face over it. Not only was she restless, but an indefinite indignation was growing within her. It was as if she were in some kind of a false position. And yet her reason told her that such was not the case.

Robert Soule was preternaturally keen concerning the moods of women. He had not, with his natural gifts to aid him, devoted a good many years to the study of them without arriving at great skill. Besides, he was sometimes a little feminine in the possession of something like intuition.

His appearance changed. He could not be otherwise than impressive, however, when with a woman.

He smiled, and said lightly:

"You like my lilies?"

Rowena flushed as she answered quickly with another question:

"Are they yours?"

"They were mine for the space of five minutes after I got them at the florist's. I was so foolish as to want you to guess that I sent them."

"You see I was not Yankee enough to guess correctly. I thought they came from Miss Phillipps."

Rowena held the bloom a moment longer, then with a hesitating, deprecating movement she laid it on the table. She knew there was a certain rudeness in her action, but she was impelled to it by a feeling she could not resist.

Having done so, she looked up and met Mr. Soule's gaze. There was a smile on his lips but there was no smile in his eyes.

"The perfume is very powerful," she said in a low voice.

She was glad that Sarah Kimball now returned from her own room where she had been to remove her jacket and hat, and to see if her hair was right. This was the successful second day of her crimps, and it appeared to her as if they were in perfect condition. She was assuredly very pretty now, as she advanced toward where her sister sat and placed herself near her.

It was evident that the gentleman present did not try to conceal his admiration for Mrs. Bradford's young sister. His face almost sparkled as he saw her. He was going to rise to place a chair for her, but he found himself too weak to move quickly. He made a gesture of self-mockery as he sank back.

Rowena was amazed to perceive that from the time of Sarah Kimball's entrance she herself became but a mere third person. Not that Mr. Soule was not attentive to her, but for the first time in her acquaintance with him she imagined that she detected a hint of something perfunctory in that attention. This was a new experience. She could hardly believe in the reality. She covertly watched her sister. Sarah Kimball seemed to twitter and preen herself like a bird who knows it is admired. She chattered like a bird, also. Rowena had never heard her talk so correctly. And there was a kind of charm in the fresh chatter. Sarah Kimball was shallow, but she was not "flat." She had a share of shrewdness that prevented flatness. Rowena could not help being amused by her comments upon what she had seen of Boston. The girl was never awed by anything. She had no reverence. The metallic, Yankee twang of her voice filled the room.

Suddenly Mr. Soule looked at his watch with the air of a man who had entirely forgotten the flight of time.

"I have been here an hour," he said. "Can you forgive me, Mrs. Bradford, and allow me to come again soon? I can't ask anybody else to tolerate me while I'm an invalid. I ask you because you are so kind you can't refuse."

Sarah Kimball was inwardly angry that he should ask her sister instead of her. Wasn't it plain enough that he had come to see her? A young man out at home would not ask somebody else if he could come again. She was almost sombre when she bade Mr. Soule good-by. But she was secretly very much pleased with the way in which he bent over her hand. She had never had any one bend over her hand in that manner before. She wished that some folks near Middle Village could have seen her and Mr. Soule then.

She walked restlessly about the room. Presently she became conscious that her sister's eyes were following her with a look in them that she did not like.

She went and stood before Rowena.

"I hope you ain't jealous," said Sarah Kimball.

A very decided fire came into the elder's eyes.

"Jealous?" said Rowena, with a cold scorn which made the girl writhe with indignation. Rowena did not control her eyes, but she allowed no fire in her voice.

"Yes," said Sarah Kimball in a raised tone. "Don't you think I remember how Mr. Soule seemed to be worshipping you that time he called to home, there? He didn't do anything or say anything, but he was worshipping, all the same. You know I didn't think you was to blame, but I did say I should think Mr. Bradford 'd be mad. Of course, you liked it. You couldn't help it. Now he's takin' notice of me I guess you don't exactly relish it. But you see I ain't married, 'n' if I'm a mind to go with Mr. Soule, I s'pose 'tain't nobody's business."

"Go with Mr. Soule!" ejaculated Rowena.

She was quite helpless for a moment.

"Yes," went on Sarah Kimball, still in that loud voice which the undisciplined use in excitement. "You needn't pretend you don't know what goin' with him means."

"Oh, I know very well what it means," returned Rowena, growing more calm in appearance, in contrast with the turbulent face and voice of her sister.

"What you mean, then?" almost shouted the girl. "Ain't you willin'?"

Rowena now found herself in the position of one who, if she said "no" to that question, said it because she was "jealous." The word stung her almost beyond endurance. And yet she must say no.

She could not account to herself for the great alarm she felt at this glimpse of the possibilities of the future.

"No," she said, "I'm not willing.

Sarah Kimball stood quivering.

"I didn't expect you'd be so mean's that," she said.

She put her hands over her face. Her shoulders moved up and down. She turned and ran out of the room.

Rowena rose. She stood looking about her with a startled question in her face.

"Mr. Soule going with her!" she exclaimed, with bitterness.

In a moment, and again aloud, "Oh, what shall I do?"

She moved toward the door through which her sister had passed. But, in the doorway, she hesitated. She felt like one groping in the dark. What should she say to Sarah Kimball?

A scorching suspicion now suddenly came to her that the girl might have seen Mr. Soule more frequently than she knew. They were certainly on very good terms with each other.

It was terrible to think that Sarah Kimball might fancy herself "in love" with that man.

Rowena knew very well that she could not judge her sister in the least by what she herself had been at that age. Her thoughts, her dreams, her aspirations had been as utterly unlike what those of Sarah Kimball seemed to be as if the two were not of the same species. She must not commit the error of seeming to oppose the child too strongly. She knew that opposition strengthened love as persecution made stronger the faith of the old martyrs. And she had never known Sarah Kimball to give up a point as a child.

Do you think it was singular that it did not occur to Rowena that Mr. Soule might be genuinely attracted to her sister?

The possibility did occur to her, but only to be banished as an impossibility. Not that she underestimated Sarah Kimball's charms. That he might be in love with the girl did not make the situation much better in Rowena's mind. How should she ever face her mother if any unhappiness came to her charge?

And she had been absorbed in her work. She must amuse the girl more.

She wondered what Keats would say to this situation. She put her hand in her pocket and drew out the letter that had come from her husband that morning. As she stood with it unfolded in her hand, recalling without looking at its pages, the friendly interest of his words, she experienced a sense of comfort mingled with a sense of something which she could not analyze.

It was a long letter. It gave in detail the daily experiences of the writer. He seemed to be enjoying himself. He said the rough, out-of-door life was just what he needed for a time. He sent a small photograph of himself "in leather." He had forgotten how to wear evening dress.

Rowena had this picture in her hand when some one came forward from the outer door.

"I've been knocking," said Miss Phillipps, "but when a person is daubing with paints what can one expect? Do you know, people are going to see that canvas of yours at Doll's. There are paragraphs about it in the papers. And paragraphs," sarcastically, "you know, are the beginning of fame. Presently millionaires who wish to have a reputation for love of art will be collecting 'Bradfords.'"

"Don't laugh at me," said Rowena. "But I shall paint even if no one ever collects Bradfords."

Miss Phillipps put out her hand and took the photograph from her companion.

"I heard from Keats this morning," she said. "This looks as if he were trying to be a cowboy. There must be a great charm in leather trousers with fringe down the outer seams. Such trousers, I imagine, have healed many a wounded masculine heart. Let us hope they will perform that office for Keats."

Rowena was silent.

Miss Phillipps still held the bit of card. She was not dressed in as severe black as she had worn of late. There was an indefinable suggestion of a change of mood in her appearance.

She suddenly turned about and walked to the table, where she deposited the card. She looked troubled. She said the lilies were very sweet. She asked where that little sister was, and she did not hear the reply. She remarked that Boston seemed to her insufferably dull. She used to think that if one could be interested anywhere in the world, it was in Boston. And Europe was getting just as bad.

She now approached Rowena again. She made this seemingly irrelevant remark:

"It is very silly to be proud." Rowena insensibly drew back a little. She was afraid of Vanessa, whose eyes seemed to see into her heart. And she had once been so happy because they could see thus. She involuntarily put out her hands as if to ward off something. Her hands were taken and held.

"Can you guess where I am going?"

"No."

"I am going where I can ride horseback, as Isabella Bird used to ride; where divided skirts shall be to me what fringe is to the owner of buckskin trousers."

As she spoke, Miss Phillipps was aware that the hands she held were growing cold in her grasp.

"You see," said Miss Phillipps laughing, "I have never yet ridden up and down canons. It is an experience I crave. I want to get away from culture and near to Nature."

"And the sisterhood?"

"That was too limited, I found; too cramping. Rowena, listen to me. Dear, you used to listen to me."

The old cadence in the tone made Rowena flush.

"I am listening," she answered, inwardly bracing herself.

"Will you go to California with me?"

Rowena withdrew her hands with some abruptness.

"No," she said again.

"You still wish to stay here and work?"

"Certainly. I am not fickle."

In spite of herself, Rowena put a slight emphasis on that personal pronoun.

"And is your work all the reason you have for not going?"

There was something in Rowena's mind which she could not have told. She drew herself up.

"Vanessa, don't catechise me," she said.

"Pardon me," responded the other, and to herself she said: "There is another reason."

"Do you go soon?" inquired Rowena.

"I start to-night."

A sudden fear, like that we sometimes experience in dreams, came upon Rowena. Her eyes dilated and then filled with tears. She made a quick step toward Miss Phillipps and put her arm over that lady's neck and her head down on her shoulder.

"Don't go!" she whispered.

Miss Phillipps's own eyes suffused. She always wondered why Rowena could move her so. She drew her closer. She said to herself that her cousin Keats must have a great deal of resolution to go away, and more still to stay away. What if his wife were absorbed in painting? There were worse evils than painting in the world. She wished she knew a good many things at that moment. Keats was so superlatively sensitive, and so ridiculously chivalrous. If he were a tyrant now——

The thoughts in the woman's mind ran on until they reached a state of inextricable confusion. Then she tried to stop thinking, and she asked again:

"Will you go with me?"

She kissed Rowena's lips. They were trembling. But straightway Rowena got herself in hand. She stood upright. She smiled.

"You see," she said, "that even a woman who dares to want a career sometimes gets nervous and tired."

"And I hoped," said Miss Phillips, "that you put your arm about my neck because you still loved me, and because you were sorry I was going. Now you wish me to believe it was only nerves. I would rather think it was affection."

"It must have been affection," returned Rowena. And she added: "It is very confusing to be a woman."

"So it is," said Miss Phillipps. "But I find it also immensely interesting. One is continually curious as to what one will feel next."

"There ain't anything the matter, is there?" asked a high voice.

Sarah Kimball always wished to see every one who came to her sister's rooms. She had heard the voices for some minutes, but at first her curiosity had been held in check by the excitement under which she had fled to her room. Now, however, she came forward alertly. She nodded affably at Miss Phillipps. She inquired if anybody was sick. She looked at her sister and said that she hoped there wasn't anything to cry about. She gave one the idea that she had subjects to cry about if she would only let herself do it.

Miss Phillips was very cool and nonchalant with this girl who looked like Rowena, only prettier, and who was not "interesting." She said good-by to her shortly. But she was tender in her parting with Rowena.

"I hope she makes fuss enough about you," remarked the girl when the lady had gone. "But folks always did kinder make a fuss about you."

She was very much out of sorts. She flung herself in and out of a chair. She was indignant that her sister did not look at her. She should think Roweny might be contented with all the notice she got.

She glanced at her sister, who was sitting perfectly quiet, with one hand shading her eyes. She looked exhausted.

"She was always awful odd," said the girl to herself.

Then her affection rose uppermost.

"I guess you're tired, ain't you?" she asked solicitously.

Rowena roused herself. Her eyes dwelt kindly on the figure before her.

"You must have had a dull time here," she said. "We will see more people; we will go out more."

"Can't we go to the theatre?" asked Sarah Kimball clasping her hands. "I should like to go there a lot. But I guess I don't care for what you call society, if it's like that Miss Phillipps and the Sears woman"—thus disrespectfully of Mrs. Appleton Sears.

"But if it is like Mr. Soule?" returned Rowena. Sarah Kimball blushed.

"That's dif'rent," she said.

Rowena thought she had never felt so nearly at the end of her resources. She thought of her mother and the boys in the old farm house. She almost wished she were there with them. Only the puzzles and complexities of life would follow. But for the moment, she did wish that Sarah Kimball were there, and that Sarah Kimball had never left the shelter of that roof. She felt to the full how powerless one is before a small mind when the small mind is persistent.

"I s'pose, then," said the girl, "that if we're going out more, you won't begin another picture right away."

And this girl also! The stars in their courses seemed really to be fighting against her.

A fierce rebellion rose in her heart, but she stifled it. She felt as if she were slaying some lovely live thing when she replied calmly,

"No, not just yet."

She rose and walked into her own room. She shut the door and locked it. An iron bolt was needed to keep her sister out, for she might have a fancy to walk in, without even a preliminary knock.

Rowena had a sense indeed as if she were hedged in by relentless circumstances.

Her thoughts immediately wandered to Miss Phillipps, and dwelt upon her with singular insistence. She looked at her watch. It was yet four hours before that evening western-bound train would start.

A moment later, Rowena was in her sister's room. Sarah Kimball had just arranged her hair in a new way, and she was standing with her back to the long mirror, while she held a handglass before her face and was twisting this way and that to get different views of her back hair and her profile.

"Rather becoming, ain't it, Roweny?" she asked, eagerly.

But her sister did not answer. She asked another question quickly.

"I've been thinking, Sarah Kimball, that perhaps you would enjoy a journey. You never have been anywhere, you know. Would you like to take a trip West? We might go with Miss Phillipps."

The girl put down her handglass and looked keenly at the face near her.

"No," she said, "I guess I don't want to go. I guess I'd a good deal ruther stay here 'n' go round. You know I ain't been round in Boston's you have, anyhow. But if 'tain't convenient for you to have me here, you c'n send me home, you know."

"It's perfectly convenient," returned Rowena. "And we will go to the theatre to-night. Let us look at the announcements."

Sarah Kimball, now radiantly amiable, selected, after much talk, the Hollis Street Theatre. Mrs. Sears had offered her box in that playhouse to Rowena. A messenger boy was sent round to ask if the two might occupy it that evening.

When the girl had given the last look at herself in her pale-pink opera cloak which Rowena had provided, she walked like a peacock to the door. Having settled her skirts in the carriage she remarked that she guessed Mr. Soule wouldn't be well enough yet to go to the play. She evidently wished that Mr. Soule might see her in that cloak.

If Mr. Soule were well enough he was not there. But there was some one in the orchestra who was greatly interested in Mrs. Sears's box. This person was a man who often put his operaglass to his eyes to look at the two in the box. Then he would turn and say something to his companion, who was a young woman. At last, at the end of the second act, the man rose. In a few minutes he appeared at the door behind Rowena and her sister. But he did not seem to see her sister at all. His face was very eager, and at the same time it was doubtful.

"I don't know as you can forgive me, Miss Rowena Tuttle," he said, "but it did seem as if I must speak to you."

PROPHET HARRIS'S FOLLOWERS.

A COUNTERBLAST TO THE OLIPHANT BIOGRAPHY.

From The London Anti-Jacobin.

Last week, Mr. Anti Jacobin, I was one of an odd-looking company that met to listen to an "inspired" lecture on the most modern and most mysterious of our Prophets, Mr. Harris. It would be hard to decide wherein lay the precise difference between these people and their fellows; though it was plain at a glance that they were not quite as other men. Perhaps it was that their eyes were somewhat brighter, their expression more earnest, their voices more shrill than those of ordinary mortals. On more than one face in the room religious fanaticism was written clearly. What gave a touch of pathos to the assembly was the palpable look of disappointment upon many who were there.

The lecture had evidently been organized as a sort of counterblast to Mrs. Oliphant's attack upon Prophet Harris. The Brethren of the New Life have at length waked up to the fact that until their leader has cleared himself of certain imputations there is little chance of his making converts in England of the class he desires. They are therefore struggling now to set him right with the world at large. Unfortunately for their cause, however, Mr. Cuming Walters, the pleader they have retained, is hardly equal to the duties of his position. Whatever interest the meeting of last week possessed was independent of anything he said. He began his lecture by demanding justice for Mr. Harris, who, he declared (with some show of justice), had been condemned unheard. But although the audience was most eager to listen to any defence that he might advance, he chose to ignore altogether the more serious charges that have been made against him. The subject of the lecture was announced as "Thomas Lake Harris, his Life and Works. A full, free judgment." The greater part of it, however, was devoted to a fierce attack upon Mrs. Oliphant, and upon what seemed to me a somewhat cowardly attempt to blacken the character of her hero and kinsman. The lecturer forgot that it was Mr. Harris who was on his trial, not either of the Oliphants.

After indulging in some wild incoherent praise of Mr. Harris, his holiness, purity, and moral grandeur, Mr. Walters proceeded to give extracts from the Prophet's writing to prove his marvellous intellectual gifts, the sweetness of his poetry, the stately magnificence of his prose. Now, the Brethren of the New Life hold a theory—Laurence Oliphant held it in his day—that the eyes of the profane are holden, their souls held back from appreciating Mr. Harris's literary genius. Be this true or not, one of the profane must confess that he never heard what seemed to him more utterly worthless stuff than was read that night. But I must in fairness add that there were others present who appeared literally thrilled with ecstasy as they listened. Mr. Walters mentioned incidentally that Mr. Harris's followers now number 500,000. We know of course that the Brotherhood has increased in number of late; but if it has already reached 500,000 it speaks badly for the sanity of the age. He also attempted to explain the "in-breathing" process by means of which the Prophet declares he has secured for himself corporeal immortality. It is the direct result, he said, speaking with the authority of the secretary of the Brotherhood, of Mr. Harris's having passed years of his life uncontaminated by evil. His explanation, however, added nothing to Mr. Harris's own statement on this subject. "With me the breathing is two fold, besides the usual breathing from and into nature is an organic action of breathing from and into the Adorable Fount and spirit of Existence."

HOARDS OF SILVER IN INDIA.

From The London News.

The ancient Oriental passion for hoarding appears from Mr. F. C. Harrison's elaborate article on the circulation of the rupee in "The Economic Journal" (Macmillan) to be gradually disappearing, and is now believed to be mainly confined to the old wealthy families and princes. The original cause, fear of civil tumult, has passed away, and the presence of an increasing market for investment, the sweet simplicity of the 4 per cents, or family misfortunes, sooner or later have the effect of emptying the family vault. Notable instances of the dissipation of large hoards have occurred in recent years. The Maharaja of Gwalior, a Mahratta chief, lent the Government upward of 30,000,000 rupees, of which all but 3,000,000 were in native coin. The Maharaja of Burdwan's accumulation (principally of sicca rupees) has disappeared in litigation and investment; and recently large hoards of Arcot rupees from Madras, and Chilal rupees from Kashmir, have passed into our mints. In Bengal several considerable hoards of sicca rupees have been found to exist in the houses of wealthy landholders on the occasion of their property passing into the control of the Court of Wards. Mr. Harrison estimates the annual quasi-permanent disappearance of Government rupees due to this cause as now less than 5,000,000, and would put it even lower if there were not reason to believe that in Southern India the priestly trustees of temples still accumulate the offerings of pilgrims.

The Gas that Leavens

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The Royal Baking Powder produces the leavening gas in the dough by purely mechanical means, and thus, while perfectly leavening, preserves unimpaired those elements intended by nature, when combined in our bread, to make it literally the "staff of life."

No leavening agent or baking powder, except the "Royal," possesses this great qualification.

SOME CHARMED CIRCLES

PHASES OF SOCIETY IN EUROPE.

In a letter published in The Tribune of Sunday last on the very thorny question of precedence, I referred to the fact that the latter affords far less cause for bad feeling and conflict in Germany, Austria, Russia, Denmark and Spain than in either England, France or Italy. The explanation which I gave at the time of this peculiarity was that whereas in the first five named countries stringent and elaborate laws provide for the exact definition of the social status of every citizen from prince to peasant, the regulations on the subject in London, Paris and Rome are inadequate, obsolete, and altogether anachronic.

There is, however, another reason that I omitted to mention on Sunday last, but which, nevertheless, goes far to account for the superior amount of friction on the score of precedence in the French, Italian and English capitals. It is the extraordinary expansion of society which has taken place in these three great cities during the last two or three decades. At Vienna, St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Madrid and in the capitals of the various sovereign States of the German Empire, society has retained all its old-time exclusiveness. It remains just as much a close corporation as in the days of yore, and not even the most despotic of sovereigns have been able to open its jealously guarded portals, to persons who, although adorned with the loftiest of titles, dignities and official honors, were, by reason of their inferiority of birth and ancestry, regarded as unworthy of admission to the charmed circle.

This exclusiveness on the part of those whom Mr. Ward McAllister would describe as the "Nobs" is not without its advantages. For, in the first place, it puts a complete extinguisher on most of those social ambitions which are productive of so much heart-burning, meanness, and downright evil. Social aspirations constitute the basis of snobbery, and they blind men, and especially women, not only to sentiments of dignity, loyalty and self-respect, but frequently also to those of honor, and even honesty. High principles and strong social ambitions are rarely to be found combined. For the latter in nearly every case involve the sacrifice of the former.

In Austria, Germany, Denmark, Spain and Russia, these social ambitions, and all the attendant evils in their train, are conspicuous by their absence. The people who do not belong by birth to the "caste" are aware that nothing that they can either do themselves, or that others can do for them, will ever succeed in securing for them admission to the charmed circle. They know that all their efforts, and all their intrigues, will prove unavailing to endow them with those qualifications of blood and ancestry that constitute the sine qua non of membership of society.

On the other hand, society, feeling itself safe from the intrusion of strangers, and, so to speak, "en famille," can afford to dispense with many of those straight-laced conventionalities and affectations which contribute so much to render the social intercourse of to-day artificial and lacking in spontaneity, nature, and heart. At Vienna, for instance, the members of society are all so intimately acquainted with one another that they call one another by their Christian names, and use the pronoun "thou" instead of the more formal "you." At Madrid titles are dropped, and a mere "Don" or "Dona" is prefixed to the Christian name, while at St. Petersburg, one hears young subalterns of the army apostrophizing old generals by their Christian name, coupled with that of their father. Princess Metternich is nothing but "Pauline" to Viennese society; at St. Petersburg no one would have dreamt of referring to that very great lady, Princess Helene Kotchubey, otherwise than "Helene," coupled with the Christian name of her mother, while at Madrid, when you remark that you are invited to the house of Dona Maria, everybody in society knows that you are about to become the guest of the Duchess of Medina-Coeli.

From this it will be seen that exclusiveness is not without its very great advantages. It does away with snobbery, affectation, conventionality and intrigue, and renders society at Vienna and St. Petersburg the most brilliant and delightful that it is possible to imagine. Every body knows everything about everybody else, and consequently there is no need or even possibility of pretense. There is but one well-known member of the Viennese society concerning whose ancestry, parentage, and even history, considerable ignorance prevails. I would not refer to him here were it not that he is the solitary exception to the general rule—the only man in whose case Austrian society has made an exception, and has accepted on his own personal merits. The name which he bears is that of Frederick Smart, but whether he is an Austrian or an Englishman it is impossible to say. For he talks both languages equally well. A tall, soldierly-looking man with snowy-white hair and moustache, and a very courtly highbred manner, he is to be met at the houses of all the grandest members of the Austrian nobility, and is treated by them as one of themselves. Who he really is no one seems to know, although everybody professes to have hard a different story on the subject. None of these stories are alike, although most of them are of a more or less romantic character. Nor do any one of them reflect the slightest discredit upon their subject. I may add that he is as much at home in Pall Mall and on the Paris boulevards as he is in the palaces of the Schwarzenbergs, of the Esterhazys and of the Dietrichsteins at Vienna. The first occasion on which I met him was at a dejeuner given by the Khedive Ismail at Cairo in honor of the Duke of Sutherland. It was the latter who made me acquainted with Smart, with the remark: "Of course you know Smart. Everybody knows Smart." The latter proved the life and soul of the party, and no one present felt any grudge against him for monopolizing the conversation, so interesting, brilliant and sparkling was his talk. When, after rising from the table, I turned to the Duke and asked him for information concerning his friend Smart "whom everybody knows," he hummed and ha'ad, and finally ended by professing entire ignorance upon the subject.

Official rank, or titles of new creation, no matter how lofty, count for nothing in Viennese society, unless accompanied by the possession of the proper number of nobiliary quarterings. This foreign diplomats accredited to the Austrian Court have found to their cost, and I remember one particular occasion, when the attitude of Viennese society toward a foreign Ambassador and Ambassadress of bourgeois birth, had been of a specially chilly and even freezing character, that the Emperor summoned the Counts Dominic Hardegg, Harrach and other prominent members of the charmed circle, and urged them as a personal favor to himself to induce society to display more friendliness and hospitality toward the foreigners in question.

There are Princes and Princesses, Counts and Countesses and Baronesses by the thousand who have never even dreamt of attempting to secure admission to the charmed circle, being well aware that any efforts in that direction would be of no avail. Among the instances of this kind which occur to me at the present moment are those of the late Princess Marie Windisch-Graetz, and of the Princess Aloys of Liechtenstein, the Countess Marie Kinsky and her married daughters, and many others. The case of Countess Marie Kinsky is particularly remarkable. She was, prior to her marriage in 1848, to Count Eugene Kinsky, a lovely Tyrolese peasant girl, of the most unblemished character. Of her four daughters, not one has ever succeeded in acquiring a foothold in society, and with the object of escaping from a social condition that was painful in the extreme, they have every one of them married either foreigners such as the English General Goodenough and the French Baron de Bourgoing, or else provincial magnates, such as Baron Pfaffenhofen, of Moravia, or Count de Miremont, of Galicia. Moreover, Countess Marie Kinsky's two sons, Rudolph and Eugene, as well as their descendents of the fourth and fifth generation, will be deprived of numerous rights and privileges belonging to the old aristocracy of the Empire, in consequence of her plebeian origin.

While it will be seen from this that numerous charming and in every way delightful men and women are debarred from society in Vienna in consequence of mere deficiencies of nobility quarterings, I scarcely know how to commend the practice of the Austrian Government to send just people of this kind—people subjected to a species of social ostracism at home—to represent it abroad. An instance in point is that of Baron and Baroness von Schwarz-Senborn, who together represented the Austrian empire at Washington during the seventies. The Baron was a Privy Councillor, and a man who, in addition to his office of Minister Plenipotentiary, held quite a number of other high dignities. His wife, the Baroness, was entitled even before she came to this country to be addressed as "Your Excellency." Yet owing to the fact that she was the daughter of one of the leading manufacturers of Bohemia and of bourgeois birth, she had been denied access either to society at Vienna or to the imperial court, and had never been admitted to the honor of presentation either to the Empress or to any member of the Imperial family. Abroad she enjoyed the social privileges adherent to her husband's official and diplomatic rank. But immediately on returning to Vienna both she and her husband, as far as society was concerned, were subjected to the severest kind of ostracism. A similar instance was that of the Count and Countess Hubner, at Paris, when the Count was accredited to the Count of the Tuileries as Ambassador, in 1858-1859.

I have stated above that Vienna society resembled nothing so much as a big family, where every one knows the other intimately, and where christian names and "petit noms" alone are used. This impression is strengthened by the quaint, old-fashioned methods retained by the Court and by many of the great leaders of society of inviting their guests. Instead of sending out cards or formal letters of invitation weeks beforehand, a chasseur goes around with a list of the guests, about twenty-four or forty-eight hours beforehand, and personally requests the person whose presence is desired to mark down against his or her name whether it will be possible to attend the entertainment. Of course the advantage of this is that it enables one to ascertain in advance the names of one's fellow-guests. But there is, in my opinion, a very great drawback to this manner of inviting people. It is that the lists are sent round early in the morning, generally between seven and eight o'clock, with the object of catching the persons desired as guests, before they go out. Indeed, whenever I have been honored with any Imperial commands to attend an entertainment at the Austrian Court, these commands have invariably found me still either in bed or just about to retire to a much-delayed and sorely needed rest.

EX-DIPLOMAT.

A MUSICAL CONGRESS IN VIENNA.

Mrs. Potter Palmer, in Kate Field's Washington.

"Did you hear anything about Princess Metternich's Musical Congress?"

"I could almost answer that I heard nothing else, and am surprised it excites so little comment in this country. This clever woman is carrying out a splendid idea to assured victory. The congress will engross Vienna next summer and make it the resort of musical students and dilettanti. The exhibit will trace the history of music from its dawn to the present day. Instruments and scores will be supplemented by practical illustrations of various schools. France has appropriated 300,000 francs for her exhibit, and will send artists to interpret modern French music.

"And all the work of one woman. How delightful! I wonder when our Government will set aside $60,000 to advance American music! Congress won't even pay decent salaries to our Marine Band!"

A NATURAL TELEPHONE IN THE ROCKIES.

From Electricity.

A marvellous tale comes from Dakota of a discovery which has been accidentally made in the mountains northwest of Rapid City. It is stated that there is a natural telephone line between two mountains in the Black Hills range. On each side of a valley twelve miles in width stand two high peaks, which tower above the other mountains, and have long been known as landmarks. These mountains are several thousand feet high, and only on rare occasions have they been scaled, so but little is known of their topography. Some weeks ago a party of tourists decided to make the ascent. They divided into two parties, one for each peak, taking with them heliographs for the purpose of signalling to each other across the valley. The ascent was made, and, so the story goes, while the members of one party were preparing to signal to those of the other, one of the party on the north mountain was surprised to hear voices which apparently came out of the air. He moved his position and the sound was no longer heard. By changing his position several times he discovered that at a certain spot of the mountain he could hear the voices, and it was not long before he discovered that they proceeded from the party on the other mountain. He called the attention of the others to the phenomenon, and when the attention of the opposite party had been attracted it was found that an ordinary conversation in an ordinary tone of voice was plainly heard from one mountain top to the other. There was only one place on the mountain where it could be heard, and this appeared to form a natural telephone. No shouting was necessary, and the words were perfectly distinct. This is rather a tall story to foist on readers of "Electricity," but, assuming it to be true, an explanation may be sought for in the form of the mountains, which might serve as elliptical reflectors of sound, the speakers placing themselves in the foci at each end of the ellipse, and in the low density of the atmosphere at the altitude at which the phenomenon was observed. The Mormon Temple at Salt Lake City, which is of enormous dimensions, is built in the form of a true ellipse, and a person standing in the focus at one end can carry on a conversation in a whisper with another who places himself in the focus at the other end.

A SPENDTHRIFT NOBLEMAN.

SENDING THE DUC D'UZES TO JAPAN TO SAVE HIS FORTUNE.

Paris, December 22.

The Duc d'Uzes is going to Japan, it being the way now in France to send young fellows who have dropped their fortunes to the furthest part of the earth. A young Heine a few years ago was in this case. His family got him declared a perpetual minor. He directs the nickel mines there and came back richer than he went out. But when he invested the money he had made he found that he had only power to draw the interest. It is said that if the Comte de Paris were living in France he would take steps to have his eldest son declared a perpetual minor. Prince Henri de Chartres was sent, under the care of M. Bonvalot, on his tour of exploration through Central Asia and Thibet to keep him from running through his heritage. He has a taste for plunging on racecourses and for baccarat. One one occasion he contracted at baccarat debts of honor to the amount of 700,000 francs. Baron Hirsch is supposed to have paid them. At any rate, the Prince was sent on his long and fatiguing tour. He is again on his way to the Far East, and proposes to explore the highlands of Tonquin, toward Yunnan, and Upper Burmah.

The Duc d'Uzes was sent on a tour to America not long ago to keep him out of mischief here. But as this did not succeed, the Duchess, his mother, has taken steps to have him declared a perpetual minor. The technical expression is to have him placed under a judicial council. He is thus disqualified from contracting debts, signing mortgages or selling estate. It was declared by his mother that he came of age past two years ago. On doing so he received his share of the estate left by his father, the late Duc d'Uzes, to four children. It came to 1,600,000 francs. The Duchesse d'Uzes feared that her son was incorrigible. He did not seem to understand the value of money. It is open to him, whenever he may think fit, to appeal from the decision. But as he is on the whole a dutiful son, he will not oppose just yet the course his mother has taken, though, it must be said, he might have used against her the tu quoque argument, she having been lavish in her expenditure on political organizations, having given 3,000,000 francs to General Boulanger.

The Duc d'Uzes might have been, so far as the lady's family was needed, the husband of the Princess Victoria Mary of Teck. She was brought over here when the Duke of Clarence was bemoaning his hard fate in not being able to marry Helena, the second daughter of the Comte de Paris, to have opportunities of meeting the Duc d'Uzes and of making a conquest of him. But he is senior duke of the old French peerage. The dignity is a justly traditional one and indeed shadowy. Still it is thought a grand one in the Faubourg St. Germain. Were monarchy restored, it would enable him to take the highest place at court after members of the Royal family. It was therefore thought by his family that the daughter of a German Prince of morganatic birth, namely the Duke of Teck, was not a match for him. On the Continent the Princess Victoria Mary does not rank nearly so high as a Demoiselle d'Uzes. Her descent on the maternal side from George III would not be taken into consideration in any court but that of Great Britain.

The Duke of Teck is the son of Prince Alexander of Wurtemburg by a Countess de Rheides, a person of obscure birth and of Hungarian blood. Prince Alexander might have put her away to marry a woman of his own rank, but only on that condition. But, as he did not do so, he sank to her level. The children were born on this plane, and have no kind of right to claim royal lineage. They could have inherited the personal property of Prince Alexander had he left any. But, as he died poor, they had nothing except their good looks for a heritage. A daughter, married to a captain in the Austrian army, lives at Vienna. Another one keeps a goats' milk dairy in the highlands of Upper Austria, and is an old maid. The Duke of Teck married some time after the Prince Consort's death, and with the Queen's consent, Princess Mary of Cambridge, who has a Parliamentary annuity of £5,000 a year. But it was not nearly enough for the expenses of their household, though they were lodged for nothing in rooms in Kensington Palace, and had the White Lodge in Richmond Park, a country house, also rent free with an income for the rangership of the Park, a sinecure given by the Queen to the Duchess of Teck. The furniture of the Duke and Duchess of Teck was seized by creditors and sold a few years ago. This was thought worse of by the d'Uzes family than even the morganatic ancestry of the Princess Victoria Mary. There are no people who hold debt in greater horror than the French, especially when there are no means of paying it—which was the Duke of Teck's case. Now that Mary Victoria is to stand on the highest step of the British throne, the Duc d'Uzes is said to be sorry that he did not get his mother to consent to his marrying her.

E. C.

THE HANDKERCHIEF WITH EVENING WEAR.

From The Clothier and Furnisher.

One of the most objectionable dispositions is the placing of the handkerchief within the folds of the dress-shirt, thereby throwing the shirt-front out of evenness, and rewarding your friends with an unintentional glimpse of your underwear; while the plan of affixing this indispensable adjunct of evening dress into the waistcoat at that junction where the buttons meet, a la corsage, is a preposterous innovation.

It was after all these various arguments had been advanced, and the merits of each canvassed, that it was declared by the discoverer that neither the coat nor the trousers afforded a requisite opportunity of concealment, but that the dress waistcoat was the apropos and feasible abiding-place of the handkerchief upon all formal occasions.

The plan was speedily evolved decreeing that there should be a horizontal slit pocket upon the inside or lining of the dress waistcoat, on both sides, a little forward of the armholes and extending down under them. The two pockets would be to the preference of the best men of swaggerdom, that always carry an extra handkerchief. In this manner the extra bulk would be so disposed as not to interfere with the fit of the coat, but rather fill out the chest in quite an enhancing way. Moreover, the shape and location of the pockets would enable the wearer readily and gracefully to reach them.

This idea has been frequently tried, being always found eminently practicable, and a delightful revelation to those that find so apt an innovation carried out in their "best suit of clothes."

Every now and then there will occur some flagrant divergence that will appall the men that watch closely the foibles of fashion, in the form of some handkerchief novelty in freak form of the most pronounced and inexcusable character.

An innovation that could take currency nowhere else than in Brooklyn, without raising an instantaneous storm of disapproval, was exemplified in the fallacious make-up of two prominent amateur actors during a performance given last winter. It consisted of the regulation swallow-tail and trousers—and a white duck waistcoat, cut somewhat higher than is the vogue. But the remarkable tangent out of the regulation formulae was the black silk mouchoir worn by both players, evidently preconcertedly, tucked into the waistcoat opening, a la decollete, and spread flat across, obscuring the lower half of the shirt front.

The idea was palpably at variance with good form. In the first place, a gentleman will never exhibit with aforethought his handkerchief, which is strictly an appurtenance of use, for an adventitious purpose of decoration, out of the pale of its meaning or purpose. It is now deemed one of the solecisms of dress to have the ends of the handkerchief discovered flowing out of the sack coat pocket; and how some of the swells reconcile the introduction of the breast-pocket for handkerchief in their dress suits is beyond fathoming. The effeminizing full-dress waistcoat porous-plaster arrangement adopted by these Brooklyn "would-bes" was, of course, to be deplored on general principles; but why was a black silk handkerchief chosen?

HOW MANY PEOPLE READ THOROUGHLY?

From The London Telegraph.

There is a great deal of truth in the remark made by the Dean of St. Paul's in the Morley Hall, Hackney, while distributing prizes to students of Lady Holles' Middle-Class School, that "education in these days is to a great extent superficial, a considerable portion of it being acquired merely for show and immediate appearances rather than for usefulness in life." But, after all, this wail is nothing new. Did not the Earl of Chesterfield advise his son to devote himself to the acquisition of literary scraps which he could quote in company, and thus acquire the reputation of a well-read man at a small expenditure of the midnight oil? And did not the late Lord Neaves express the spirit of the time in the query, "What's the use of knowing, unless others know you know it?" This is an age of "Elegant Extracts." Everybody must have a smattering of as nearly everything as he can, and, after the manner of Dick Swiveller, sprinkle his conversation with quotations, like a shopkeeper who exposes all his stock in his window. The reverend gentleman, however, added that the education given at the Lady Holles School was not of the showy kind now so much prevalent, but was of a sort that fitted the girls for the realities of life. Still the career of a young lady is made none the less attractive by a little superficial educational ornament.