

apparently felt deeply interested in the success of the fair unwedded one; and just when the widow, who had been a length behind, had by her last bold stroke placed herself neck-and-neck (*Bell* again) with her opponent, and the proprietorship of the chair seemed again for a moment in abeyance, this enthusiastic bottle-holder, either ignorant of the rules of polite life, or carried away by intense interest in the *event*, broke the breathless silence of the assembly, and the spinster's studious calculation, by exclaiming, in a hollow, agitated voice, "Go it, go it, little un; go it!" the lady appealed to being of diminutive stature. When the laughter, hisses, cheers, confusion, cries of "Turn him out," &c., had subsided, the fair combatant did go it, and, apparently reluctantly, honored the expectant auctioneer with the acquiescent nod. The hammer hung in suspense. "Going—go-ing—Mrs. Scowler,—go-ing—go-ing"—the hammer descended—"gone—Miss Conder." Miss Conder received the congratulations of her supporters with an air of meekly triumphant humility, which distorted her at no time remarkably pleasing features into a most hideously spiteful visage. In so far as I was concerned, I had the satisfaction of knowing that I had fetched about four times my original price, and ten times my real value.

I speedily found myself, after having undergone a preliminary polishing, in the drawing-room of the worthy lady who had carried me off so victoriously from the hotly-contested field. I was soon made aware that I was promoted into a higher class of society than I had formerly been accustomed to. My old loose cushion was discarded, and after remaining uncovered for a few weeks, I learned that a piece of tapestry, upon which Miss Conder had for a long time been engaged, was designed, with a corresponding piece already completed, to compose the covering for my back and seat. In due time the last silken thread was wrought in, and I was sent to the upholsterer's to be invested with my new garments, and, thus adorned, I returned to take my position among the other elegant articles which found a place in Miss Conder's drawing-room. The pieces which that industrious lady had with her own delicate fingers wrought, in brilliant colors and glossy silken thread, were extremely appropriate to my shape, use, and material as an old oak arm-chair, being two orient scenes caricatured out of the book of *Genesis*; the figures, attitudes, perspective, colors, costume, and botanical and zoological accoutrements, having been suggested by Miss Conder's fancy, and decided upon by her own taste, which it would seem was ingenious rather than judicious. The work and myself, as serving to display it, however, gave abundant satisfaction, and I might have continued quietly to occupy a corner of Miss Conder's drawing-room, in company with sundry screens, ottomans, footstools, and other articles distinguished by that amiable lady having expended some portion of her taste and skill in their decoration, but that, having lived, say forty years, in a state of single blessedness, the aforesaid lady suddenly took a whim of giving both sides a fair trial, anticipating, of course, that a pair would enjoy double blessedness. So, forgetting the cruelty which no doubt she manifested in her early days, she yielded her

hand and purse, and what heart she had, to a young spark, who, being short of cash, had seen good to add a trifle to his pecuniary stature by a matrimonial speculation.

Mr. and Mrs. Montague Villiers, for reasons which the sagacious reader will readily discover and appreciate, determined on commencing their wedded life in a town in which they were unknown; and, accordingly, Mrs. Villiers made arrangements for disposing of a considerable portion of her goods and chattels, which she did not find it quite convenient to carry with her about the country in her wanderings in search of a home. I—having previously been stripped of the illustrations of Scripture history which had graced my back and seat—was presented to an old friend (a poor relation) of Mrs. Villiers, who, having been reduced in circumstances, was living in lodgings, consisting of a bedroom and parlor, whose walls were condemned to hear (if walls have ears, as the proverb asserts they have) her constant complaints of the present, and mournful reminiscences of brighter days of yore. In this pleasing retreat I became once more an article of use. Overwhelmed with cushions and pillows, I was privileged to be the seat in which, wrapped up in a multitude of shawls, this inveterate old grumbler settled herself when she rose in the morning, and in which she continued until she retired to bed again. The time soon came when death released her from her cares, and me from her service. Her friends, on learning that she had done grumbling, commenced raising funds for her burial, by the sale of her effects, and I, with a few rickety pieces of furniture, passed into the hands of a broker.

In common with other articles, I was occasionally brought forward and exposed to view, with a faint forlorn hope that somebody might buy us. At such seasons I amused myself by speculating into what sphere I should next pass, and many a person did I mark as likely to become a purchaser. For a long time I was doomed to disappointment, and, when my release did come, I was quite surprised at the character of the person who bought me. I had experienced, as the reader is aware, some strange vicissitudes, and was now quite prepared to pass into a cottage, and there be knocked about until I fell in pieces. Judge of my astonishment, when one day a very fashionably dressed young man stopped, asked my price (the old furniture-mania having disappeared, old rags or fantastic china being now the rage), I had sunk to my real intrinsic value), at once paid the moderate sum demanded, and ordered me to be sent to a house in the town, which proved to be inhabited by a carter. The next day I was hoisted on a cart, and taken several miles into the country, and finally deposited in the hall of a neat villa.

The gentleman who had purchased me at once appeared, and assigned me a position in the entrance hall. I was quite at a loss to conceive on what account I was thus introduced into a house which seemed to be complete without me. But I had seen a good deal of life by this time, and waited patiently in the expectation of some day solving this mystery. The explanation shortly came, for one day my owner, in conducting a party of friends through the hall, pointed to me, and said, "An heirloom; been in the family since the flood almost." Very probably I was quite as