Nevertheless, throughout the autumn—so curious for newspaper readers to observe,—the Darmstadt and all the other hotels seem to go on as if nothing untoward had occurred. The Darmstadt restaurant is as full as it ever was at this time of year. The electric light blazes from the crystal chandeliers; pretty ladies see themselves brightly reflected in looking-glass doors; and recherché repasts are elegantly served at the old fiendish tariff. Not, however, by Monsieur Nicolas—he is superseded. But another pursy Frenchman struts in his place, and is nearly, if not quite, as insolent.

Facetious diners perhaps crack feeble little jokes with head waiters. "I don't like this Liquidation gravy. Has the Official Receiver engaged a new, cheap cook? . . . Now don't stick it on to my bill because you are bankrupt." Otherwise all is as it was.

There is, of course, talk of the chairman—no longer discreet whispering, but noisy ill-considered chatter.

"Do you believe what they are saying about him?"

"Seymour Brentwood would be above that sort of thing. Yet—it is all so odd."

"Don't you know, what I can't get over is this:—Last November he had nearly three hundred thousand in the company—and eight months afterwards, just before the crash, he had only seven thousand."

"But are you sure that is accurate?"

"He confessed it himself. It came out at the Inquiry You know, a lawyer told me one of the shareholders is going for him for fraud and conspiracy."