

excellent quality than in strengthening the sway of that excessive competition which has so often in the past presented the Anglo-Saxon race and civilization in unfortunate aspects.

Civis.

BORES.

There are many kinds of bores in the world. One of the worst kind is the would-be learned bore. He is so full of the idea that he knows a great deal more than other people, and is so thoroughly convinced of his superior *status* in consequence, and of the inestimable advantages the world would derive from a more general diffusion of his knowledge, that he rarely neglects an opportunity to impart some of it to those whom he considers less fortunate in this respect; in fact he is constantly cramming it down your throat. His conversation is didactic in the extreme; and the persistence with which he speaks of one subject, and returns to it again and again, to prove to you his thorough mastery of it, is very annoying. In vain you introduce a new subject, with which you hope he is unacquainted; he either adroitly evades the change, or, if there is no escape, he boldly ventures his own opinions as though they were based on well-known facts which could be proved, if necessary, at any moment. Though you may be satisfied that he is entirely wrong in his views, yet, if you are well-bred, you do not like to wound his vanity by an appeal to authorities which would expose his ignorance of the whole subject. You prefer to be considered an inferior being, rather than violate the instincts of your generous nature by placing him in such a disagreeable position. But your reward must be sought in the approval of your own conscience. *He* does not understand or appreciate your kindly forbearance; but accepts your silence as evidence of your deference to his superior intellectual power. In course of time you learn to submit to his lectures, and allow all his valuable information to flow in at one ear and quietly depart by the other. You are now his best friend, for he has arrived at the conclusion that he is properly appreciated; and he pours out the treasures of his mind without stint.

Now this kind of person is sometimes well-informed, and his knowledge would be really valuable to others if they did not equally enjoy its possession. His mistake is in supposing that he alone has had the opportunities or the ability to acquire it. He is usually self-educated, or he may have passed the greater part of his early life in some small town or village, where the standard of education is not generally high, and by constantly measuring his mind with narrower ones, he is naturally led to exaggerate the extent of his acquirements. A little more intercourse with the world would teach him that he does not by any means lead in the race after knowledge; and that there is a large number who keep pace with him, and not a few who are a long distance in advance. But he shuns his superiors, and even his equals, and fastens on those who are either too weak or too good-natured to resent his impertinent lectures.

It is a curious fact in regard to this kind of bore, that as sure as a time comes when you really desire information on some particular subject, you are surprised and disappointed to find that he positively knows no more about it than you; and stranger still, that he is willing to admit as much, though generally with some remark about its comparative unimportance,—as though what he did not know was not worth knowing. After dinning into your ear for months and years information on all possible subjects, with most of which you were perfectly acquainted, he fails you in your hour of need. You go to him, confident that he can supply the information you require,—quite willing to forgive (and forget, if possible) all his former assumptions of superiority, and ready to give him a new lease of your friendship for what you seek,—and you find him wanting when most you relied on him. If his former patronizing manner was annoying, his cool indifference now is simply exasperating. And there is no remedy, unless you cut his acquaintance altogether; but this is an act foreign to the instincts of a true gentleman. The only thing you can do is to avoid him as much as possible, without appearing to do so.

There is a species of the learned bore who seems to review his store of information (as a merchant takes stock of his goods) for his own satisfaction rather than for your edification. He is quite innocent of any intention to instruct you. He is perhaps only seeking your sympathy in the pleasures arising from the possession or the pursuit of knowledge. This is a comparatively harmless specimen of the genus, and may often be humoured into a less egotistical vein of thought and speech. He may even be an agreeable companion, if you are not too often thrown into his society.

Yet another variety is the individual who, in order to increase his store of information, is constantly asking questions which you are unable to answer. These questions often demand information far beyond his knowledge of the subject; and while they tend to expose your ignorance, they seem to indicate on his part a greater knowledge of the subject than he really possesses. Thus he contrives to make you appear small, when he only seems to be asking for information. This is adding insult to injury; and yet you can neither resent the former nor demand reparation for the latter.

Let us hope that society will yet devise some means to protect itself from this class of offenders. While criminals and lunatics are safely confined within stone walls, these semi-lunatics are allowed to roam at liberty, and prey upon their unfortunate fellow-beings.

A LIFE'S OPPORTUNITY.

BY FELTON LEA.

(Continued.)

It was an anxious group gathered around the couch of Miss Fairfax; never had one there seen her so distressed, so unlike her gentle, placid self. The semblance of opposition to anyone was a pain. Her life was passed in ministering to the joys and sorrows of others—never causing aught but a truer estimate of the better qualities of all who came within her sphere, and holding these up to the view of those who too readily seized upon what was unlovely.

"Aunt Mary, Uncle Ralph says he does not see why Violet should hesitate about becoming my wife. I was to say this for him; he will say it for himself later," and Brandon, spite of his pale face, spoke with a firmness that betokened he was not going to give up Violet without doing battle for her.

Violet sat very still, with a face rivalling that of his in whiteness; she felt like giving away there and then. To none had she disclosed the tempest of soul that had surged within ever since Brandon had asked her to travel life's journey with him. Her heart pleaded so loudly for him—every pleading of his had been weakening the fortress at first so strong, so resolute not to succumb. She sat on a low stool beside the truest friend girl ever had, and as Miss Fitzroy mechanically kept smoothing her hair from her brow, Violet pressed closer and closer to her.

"Brandon dear, you know we all love you; that your happiness and welfare is as our own. Are you settled as to your own future? If not, how can you help Violet in hers?"

"Auntie," pleaded Brandon, "I seem all of a sudden to have turned into a leper, and every one of you dreading contamination. No man living ever would, ever could do more than I will to make Violet happy. Whatever she wishes it shall be my one study to realise for her. What can I say to melt your heart?"

"Brandon, Brandon," was the tearful answer, "you never will know what it is costing me to follow what I believe to be my duty. There are more spiritual shipwrecks from marriage than one ever knows of. It is so common a thing for the professor to mate with the non-professor that a thought is scarcely ever raised upon the subject;—whilst position, suitability of disposition undergo a continual inspection, the *oneness* that ought to be the chief thing is not allowed to see the light, and so long as this is passed over, the churches may well complain of deadness and lack of life. *Where there is not co-operation, too often there is defeat.*"

"Aunt Mary, do you count me a heathen, and suppose I shall exercise some potent spell to win Violet from her allegiance—rather should you think of her as what she would be, my guardian angel, and her helpful presence will keep me right, though really I cannot for the life of me see where I am wrong. Do I not attend church as regularly as any? and am I not as anxious for myself as you are for me to live uprightly and do the right?"

"Oh, my boy," wailed Miss Fitzroy with such a pathetic love shining from her tear-dimmed eyes,—“You do not understand what the still small voice means; it is as if one were talking in foreign language—you may know enough to catch a meaning here and there, but the drift of the conversation is wholly unintelligible, and ‘this voice’ you do not understand. *Unless you look within, never will you hear it.*”

Noel looked nearly as distressed as Miss Fitzroy, and Beatrice scarcely less so, both wondering how this painful scene was to close.

"Brandon, are you a believer in the Bible or not?" queried Miss Barbara in her most decisive tone.

"Aunt Barbara," he answered with a nervous laugh, "you ought to have been a female detective. Now, if you are going to be my confessor, you know I am; but that does not prevent one getting into troubled waters studying it."

"How so?" she demanded.

"Well, one meets with such various expositions and contradictory suppositions from others doing the same thing, that it gets bewildering to know who, or what is right."

"Brandon," said Miss Fitzroy gently, "do not mistake and turn from the revealed truth to the unsatisfying ever changing counterfeits offered by poor sighted mortals, I have nothing to say about creeds. *It is the source of a river the explorer seeks;* the tributaries but lead to its direction, and so the many forms of belief are not the object upon which to fix our attention, but upon what foundation these are based. If upon that St. Paul told the Corinthians in his third chapter was the only sure one, then you must not look away from that, if you are to build up a structure that shall endure to the end."

"Auntie, what a pity all have not your trust," said Noel with a moistened eye. "What a laying down of burdens if the wise heads puzzling over that old Book trusted to being led, *instead of wanting to lead.*"

"Yes, indeed," said Miss Barbara promptly "and in their wisdom lose themselves, and drag others astray. For myself, if I am going into a strange place, and want to get information about the way, I prefer to get it from some one who has travelled in that direction; and if we believe the voice in the cloud said 'This is my beloved son, hear ye Him' is a command not to be disregarded, and Brandon, such as cannot do that and believe in Him must be of the same stock St. Paul tells the Philippians in his third chapter he wept over. You read that, my boy, and take heed to the last four words of the 19th verse, and I think you will find the key to many a disturbed peace."

"Instead of questioning the truth," said Miss Fitzroy looking with a yearning love upon the little group, "it were far wiser for each to commune with his own heart and be still. I well remember how the need of this impressed me when listening to a conversation among some farmers. They were discussing their crops of wheat; some were rejoicing in the unusual harvest in store; a few bemoaning that never had their fields looked so unpromising. Then began a general discussion upon the tilling of the soil; *not one questioned the seed,* and if the seed of God's truth were discussed less, and the attention turned to the cultivation of the heart more, there would be an end of possibilities and probabilities for the ground would be ready for the seed, and once let that take root, *there need be no fears as to its quality.*"

"Why cannot we believe without doubts?" said Brandon impetuously.