



A DANGEROUS PRINCIPLE.

ELDERLY HUSBAND—"You're so engaged on that lemon-squash that you don't seem to be listening to me!"

SAUCY YOUNG WIFE—"Pleasure first—duty afterwards, old dear."—*Pick-me-up.*

GUFFERY BUMSTEAD.

A STORY OF HIGH LIFE IN TORONTO.

BY T. HINSTON STARVIS.

CHAP. I.

I'd like to be a banker's clerk,
Whose life is one continuous lark;
To drive, and drink, and dance, and yacht,
A gay existence, is it not? —*Bummerson.*

THE scene of my story is laid in Toronto, as being the best way of securing a sale for the work. The only way to make Canadian literature go is to give it a local and personal interest. Everybody in "society" will want to buy Guffery Bumstead to see if they can recognize any of the characters. Great scheme!

Guffery Bumstead was a clerk in Boodlers' Bank, which, as everybody can see for themselves, is located on the south-west corner of Adelaide and John Street. He indulged in the customary pleasures of his class. Having a handsome salary of \$800 a year or thereabouts, he was able to spend most of his time in yachting, drinking champagne, attending fashionable evening parties, etc. In addition he was an athlete, a philosopher, a poet and a thief.

He couldn't help being a thief because his father, who was an Englishman of highly aristocratic lineage, had caught a Tartar of the female persuasion and married her. Consequently nothing could be more natural than that Guffery whenever he was a little short should help himself to the funds of the bank. It was all owing to his Tartar blood. No pure-blooded Englishman would ever do such a thing.

CHAP. II.

I sound my barbaric yawp over the
Roof trees of the world. —*Walt Whitman.*

Guffery had two friends. One, Jack Cresswell, was a bank clerk like himself and whirled in the giddy round of dissipation; the other was Maurice Rankin, a struggling lawyer without clients. The latter was so poor that he even had to steal coal to keep himself warm in winter. And yet he was not of Tartar origin, which renders such a proceeding the more inexplicable.

Jack was engaged to Nina Lindon. Her father was of no particular ancestry. But Guffery and other swells

of the bank clerk aristocracy generously forgave him and took in his balls and dinner parties because he was wealthy. It will hardly be credited but there are several people like Lindon whose grandfathers were quite low and common persons who move in the first circles and associate with Jarnisons and Denvises on equal terms. This practice ought to be frowned down.

Nina herself was pretty, but it was a kind of nurse girl prettiness. Nurse-girls never have the same kind of good looks as real ladies, you know.

Guffery met Nina at Mrs. Dusenalls—and there was the deuce-and-all to pay. After dancing with her five times in succession they strolled out into a vacant lot where his brow seemed to knot into cords as he concentrated his will power—and he succeeded in mesmerizing her. He had some trouble in bringing her back to her normal state.

Such is life in the first circles of Toronto.

CHAP. III.

Oh rare, pale Margaret—*Tennyson.*

Margaret Mackintosh was walking along King Street with an elastic step when she met Guffery Bumstead. She had a sweet, firm, generous mouth for caramels, and bowed like a princess.

"I was looking for a servant girl named Sarah," she said, "and as you remind me of Apollo, perhaps you would help me to find her. You are a nice person."

"I have nothing particular to do to-day—bank clerks seldom have, you know," replied Guffery, "Sarah shall be found."

"I have been reading Hæckel," remarked Margaret. "And I should like to live to be two hundred years old. I go to church, but I don't exactly believe anything in particular. My mother oscillates between pugnacity and resignation."

"Then you make evolution a part of your religion?" said Guffery.

"Yes," replied Margaret. "Look at the difference between Guiteau and Florence Nightingale."

"Just so," replied Bumstead. "That hadn't occurred to me before."

He was keenly susceptible to anything which called upon his ideality.

HOW TO FIND A NEEDLE IN A BUNDLE OF HAY.

