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A Complaint.

I unfortunately have acquired the reputation of being a "society writer," that is, the author of some one or other of the various weekly conglomerations of gossip and small talk that appear in Saturday evenings' issues of our Halifax papers, and elsewhere. I say 'unfortunately' feelingly, for I have to suffer a good deal for the sins of others. [First, let me say in confidence that I am not, that I never have been, and that I daily pray that I never may become a "society writer." Having promised this I will endeavour to justify my use of "unfortunately.")

I am very ordinary mortal of living an every day life, doing my best to sweep my own doorstep, as the saying is. But whenever there comes out in the papers one of those mysterious paragraphs about a broken engagement, a new local aristocracy or an intimation of forthcoming amateur theatricals (which never materialize) I am at once questioned by numbers of my friends as to the names of the people implicated. I get it in the neck everywhere. My partner, at a dance, when we have sought the sweet seclusion of the conservatory and I fondly imagine she is beginning to appreciate my sympathetic and sentimental utterings, wants to know all about it. A lady to whom I am pointing out the various yachts from the piazza of the yacht squadron, as they round Point Pleasant buoy on a Saturday afternoon, interposes and puts me on the rack. Between the acts at the Academy the inquisitive fair one will turn round and cross examine me. Even in the club I am not exempt from this; men I scarcely know begin to pump me.

Its hard, werry hard.

If these good people would with one consent identify me with one or other of the correspondents from ponderous old *Doesticks* to love sick *Wrangler*, I wouldn't mind it so much, but their manner leads me to believe they suspect me of running the whole lot. Unfortunately I am not a man of leisure. I am a working man—in the sense that I have to earn my living. This decidedly objectionable but very necessary process takes up the greater portion of the day, but were I to attempt to produce the weekly columns that are ascribed to me, I should be hard at work from 9 a. m. Monday morning to 6 p. m. Saturday evening. My friends overlook this, and week after week give me the round of questioning. This kind of thing has lost its novelty, if it ever had any, and has become exceedingly wearisome. I cannot see any escape: it must go on to the end of the chapter.

But there is another phase of the question that is fraught with disagreeableness for me. My good friends the society writers aforesaid, occasionally "go for" some one in good style. Sometimes there is ground for this, frequently there is none. Under the latter circumstances I am inclined to think personal feeling must be the *raison d'être*. That, however, belongs to another story, as Rudyard Kipling says.

The person or persons implicated may be mentioned by name, or he she or they may not,—generally the latter course is adopted, its safer. It also whets the curiosity of the reading public who after puzzling its brains over the insinuatory paragraph finally comes to the conclusion that the weather's too hot for conundrums, and lays down its paper firmly convinced that the society writer in question must know an awful lot. When no names are given, the individual most interested generally has the paragraph pointed out to him by a half a dozen kind friends (who always take delight in anything of the kind) and he consequently gets a little mad about it. He then hunts up me, with fire in his eye, and thunder on his

brow, and proceeds to accuse me of having written what he "things" about him. It doesn't take a very long time, general rule, for me to convince this bloodseeker that I am innocent, but I know some of them go away believing me to be a great liar, and ever after bear me ill-will.

These little interviews are by no means pleasant while they last, but luckily they are not prolonged, for "sudden storms" are short. But nevertheless its very annoying to have to keep asserting that you're innocent when suspicion wrongly falls on you twice a week or so. Its hard on the nerves.

There is another issue! people frequently most indignantly ask me why no mention was made last Saturday of some unimportant little function they have had something to do with. They get huffy indeed about it for respectable people, and when I say the regulation of these matters does not lie with me, they say out they don't believe me. They retort that I wish to preserve my anonymity in order that I may continue to say spiteful things about my friends, and are confirmed in the idea that I omitted to make reference to their junketing malice prepense, and go straight to and scratch my name off their party list.

I have the reputation of being a literary man because I have written an article for *OUR SOCIETY*. I have had this reputation about eight months. I have fully described the many disadvantages that accrue from the possession of such a reputation. Owing to circumstances over which I have no control I must live with it. Does anyone want one? Mine is for sale, cheap for cash or in exchange for anything useful except baby-linen. MERLIN.

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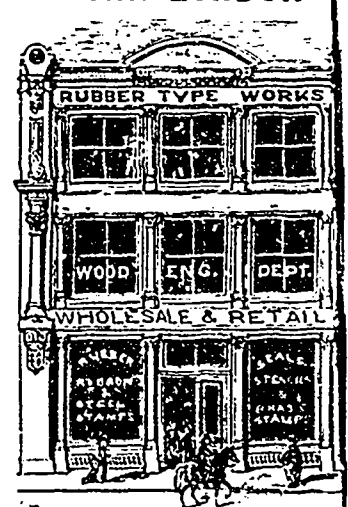
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