



THE CONSCIENTIOUS HYPOCRITE.

(A LENTEN PASTORAL.)

MRS. SASSIETY (*greatly shocked*)—"Horror! Is it possible, Miss De Style, that I find you positively committing idolatry?"

MISS DE STYLE—"Call it what you please. I am a frivolous creature of fashion, and I wouldn't dare to mock a true God with Lenten formalities. I *must* keep Lent to be in the swim, so I prefer to have a god that will not scorn the hollow hypocrisy of the thing!"

THE TERRACOTTAVILLE BROWNING CLUB.

OF all the gosh-blamed foolishness I've heerd of this long while Among stuck-up, conceity folks which sling on high-toned style,

About the wust I reckon, though there might be worser still, Is the Browning Club they've organized in Terracottaville.

'Twas a young school-teacher feller wich fust put 'em on the fake, A long-legged, red-headed galoot we once called "Sandy Jake," When he worked as Simpson's hired man afore he went away, But sence he got thro' college he's "J. Chauncey Banks, B.A."

Well, this here feller, Chauncey Banks, wich runs the village school,

Has all the indications of a nateral-born fool, An' the lot of extra foolishness wich college trainin' gives Made him jest about the fooliest fool of any man that lives.

He allowed he had a mission "to the public to impart Some knowledge of the rudiments of culture an' of art, Wich would raise 'em from the grovelments in which they blindly grope,

By givin' 'em true insight an' imaginative scope."

The reason why I'm able to give these remarks so plain Is by copyin' the notes was took by our Mirandy Jane, Wich attended at his lectur wen he opened up his plan, An' I kinder think Mirandy's gittin mashed on that young man.

He said the poet Browning was by cultured folks allowed To be jest about the king bee of the high-artistic crowd, That he knocked the spots off Tennyson an' Arnold an' the rest, An' Swinburne wasn't in it, though he done his level best.

This bein' so he reckoned it would be the proper caper If he on "Browning's Life and Works" should read to 'em a paper, An' after wich all them wich would chip in an' foot the bill, Might help to start the Browning Club of Terracottaville,

Mirandy Jane would have it that Her ma and me must go, Mirandy has big-feelin' ways and high-toned airs, you know; "I wish, papa," says she one day, "that you was cultured more, You spit so much tobacco-juice around the parlor floor."

Well, there we sot wile Chauncey Banks unloaded all his guff, In all your blessed life I swear you never heard sech stuff; About the "introspectiveness and clear resonant note, Pregnant with soul-suggestive ness" of what this feller wrote.

It seems that this Browning man—I understand he's dead—Sot out to write so common folks would not know what he said, An' it takes sech ducks as Chauncey Banks an' others in that line To pick the meanin' outen it an' git the thing down fine.

He slung some chunks of poetry: begosh, it knocked me cold, "Who will," one piece began, "may hear Sordeller's story told,"

I heern it told—an' all I know is that there was a feller Wich lived somewheres in furrin parts an' called himself Sordeller.

Well, at the close I riz right up to move a vote of thanks,

"This speech," I says, "does credit to our young friend, Mr. Banks;

I've knowed him sence he was knee-high—he means well, I've no doubt, But durn my skin ef I kin tell what it's been all about.

"Oh, no, Mirandy Jane! ye need not yank at my coat tail! I ain't a-goin' to keep my seat wile sech ideas prevail: I'm goin' to give my song an' dance an' free my mind awhile, An' them is welcome to retire wich doesn't like my style.

"I don't go back on poetry—it does me good, sometimes, To steal awhile away an' read the good old-fashioned rhymes; But this here Browning racket doesn't catch me worth a cent, What's more, I don't think two men here knowed what the speaker meant.

"Yer want to study poetry? Well, that's all right enough! But give me somethin' straight and plain an' not this mixed-up stuff; What's the matter with Will Carleton? he's a good one as they make, 'Tis all blamed rot to tell us that this Browning takes the cake.

"Or seein' we're Canadians an' patriots, yer know, I think that native talent oughter have some kind of show; 'Twould be fur more to the purpose nor this senseless Browning plan, To start a club fur studyin' the poems of The Khan."

There was loud expostulations in the most excited tones, There was cries of "Shame!" an' "Order!"—there was hisses, hoots an' groans; Mirandy Jane fell faintin' in hysterics to the floor, As I seized my hat an' overcoat an' moseyed fur the door.

"They air jined unto their idols," as the Scriptor book has said, An' the Browning Club is boomin', an' there's weekly essays read; But if Chauncey Banks comes sneakin' round to spark Mirandy Jane, I've got a different kind of club to make my meanin' plain.