



“Memor et Fidelis.”

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TOADYISM.

In the social, as in the individual, constitution, maladies have certain epochs, at which either themselves arrive at a crisis or throw off other shoots which eliminate subsequent species of evil. The increase of wealth, therefore, and the aids to luxury afforded by artistic improvement having given a fillip to national selfishness, this last has grown more exorbitant in its demand for power, rank, and pleasure, and now worships the idol in others which it desires itself to possess, condescending to perpetually augmented baseness and servility whereby to compass its ends. In all ages of the world the aphorism of Shakspeare has been proved true:—

“Plate sin with gold, and the strong staff of justice
Hurtless breaks; clothe it in rags, a pigmy's spear
Will pierce it!”

But this universal truth does not prevent our abasement before the image of “I or power becoming lower and lower; and when the last bone in the back of our dignity is broken, and we ignore folly, pay our addresses to incompetency, offer ourselves to be kicked by tyranny, swear fealty to falsehood, if only a coronet covers the assailant, or a title dignify the insult,—when we reach even the point of preferring stultified indifference and fatuity in peers to honourable efficiency and manly straightforwardness in commoners, we then become in every sense of the word “toadies.”

It is a word which owes its birth to the prevalence of the disorder it denotes; hence its usage is so common at present. It is associated with, and indeed springs from, unprincipled ignorance of the true nobility of virtue, or from mistaken notions as to the good being the expedient. A man either imagines there can be nothing higher than to know a prince, or that his acquaintance is sure to bring such inevitable benefits as will well compensate for the insult of being frequently snubbed by him. Now, as Masonry asserts the dignity of virtue, and wishes to encourage the moral elevation of man, a recognition of social evils, with their cure, appropriately belongs to her, more especially when such evils threaten imminently, as at present, her own expansion for the benefit of mankind. We shall, therefore, remark upon the too prevalent spirit abroad of toadyism, with a view of showing the mistake not to enlarge upon the disgrace, of those who practise it. Our observations, be it also understood, are in no case to be considered personal, but as deduced from the social

state at present painfully apparent, and directed to Masonic and national good.

Now there may be several much better things and more elevating to the human character than a close acquaintance with the princes and potentates of the earth, who generally give a promissory note, not unfrequently dishonoured, for an uncertain amount of temporal dignity, receiving in exchange a certain payment of our moral independence. Thus, in the anecdote recited of the parasite who asked George the Fourth to dine with him, and upon the Regent's acceptance of the courtesy, was induced to make himself scarce on the occasion and submitted to be banished from his own table, at which he was deemed unworthy to sit, whilst his tittering guests enjoyed the good things and sycofancy of the vulgar *parvenu*. It would surely have afforded the latter more subsequent satisfaction, mentally and morally, had he received the attentions of friends of his own grade, with whom he might have exchanged ideas without restriction, and tendered hospitality without the loss of self-respect. So that if we come to sum up the expense of the wine, viands, and attendance on this occasion, and throw in the utter prostitution of dignity of character, to make up “the total of the whole,” as poor Hume used to call it we must confess the toadyism proved here anything but a profitable transaction.

And though not so individually palpable, yet our social state at present evinces a general toadyism just as flagrant. What man does not put his virtue in his pocket, and run for miles to dine with a titled rascalion, who might figure as a right honourable adulterer, seducer, spendthrift, Knight Grand Cross of the Ancient Order of Gamblers, Custos Rotulorum et Vitiatorum? Nay more, we hear of clergymen complacently associating with lords in the very presence of the Sapphos, whose frailty is unpunished from the fear the spiritual Gallios entertain of losing a bishoprick. We, indeed, know of a few instances to the contrary, but they are very few; in fact, more than one example occurs, in not very remote history, of prelates owing their rise to an astute toadyism of the flagitious vices of a notorious Laiz; so true is it that the stairs by which men mount to eminence are very dirty, and that more than one personage may challenge Bacon's title of “the meanest” as well as “greatest” of mankind. Every one, of course, compliments virtue orally, in set phrases of commendation, but to show practically that he considers her to be the “true and only nobility” is quite another affair, and we verily believe that it, by some extraordinary revulsion of mundane politics, Satan should rise to direct as overtly as

he now does secretly the administration of honours and wealth, thousands of us would run the risk of being trampled to death in the race for being first to pay our homage to him, become his chaplain or prime minister, and be ready to swallow himself, hoofs, horns, and all. Yet we call ourselves a very noble, straight-forward, and independent people—what a farce!

Now Masonry ignores this pitiable spectacle as a falsehood and hypocritical delusion. She condemns the flimsy dress of pretended honour with which man conceals the skeleton of his infamy; she spurns the magniloquent rhapsodies which the pseudo-hero of a thousand virtues spouts upon the public stage, who, behind the scenes, in private life, indulges in saturnalia which Silenus would repudiate. Rank has its duties as well as its privileges. It has no right to receive the honours of the one the moment it discards the obligation of the other. If a being, therefore, called man, disowning the glorious prerogative of his creation in the image of his Maker, casts himself down in the dust before a fellow-mortal, in order to acquire title, wealth, or power, he deserves to receive the dirt the mean door-mat he has made himself is fitted for; his titles acquired by evil means, do but set forth and illustrate his turpitude, and present as ludicrous a contrast between the grandeur of his dignities and his own dishonour, as any long-eared Balaam who ever roared beneath a lion's skin. Those who have made him great, ridicule their own work; his superiors laugh at, while they consort with him; and the ranks he has just quitted, of his previous equals, now his inferiors, hate while they flatter, and long for the fall of the successful humbug whose meanness they abjure, and yet, for half his fortune, would—copy.

The clown's part in the play is the most amusing to others, the most tiresome to himself. To think what pains in the back so much bowing and bowing on the “toady's” part must cause! What revollings of the moral stomach must be produced by the perpetual demand on its powers to act in direct opposition to their purport, to gorge vice, tyranny, and oppression, and to be compelled to hiccup forth falsehood, servility, adulation! Rely upon it, the prevalence of sciatica and indigestion arises from this moral abasement, and not altogether from those infirmities which come strictly within the province of Parr's pills, or Holloway's ointment!

As far as rank conduces to the elevation of Masonry in a state, the question is capable of a modified estimation. We do not deny that the position of many Brethren as peers tends to impress the minds of the vulgar with a sort of respect for our