

poor Dobbs, as is too often the fate of simple but weak natures, had full credit for duplicity by every rascal in the land.

From which it may be inferred that nothing occurred to disturb the security of Gashwiler. When the door closed upon Mr. Wiles he indited a note, which, with a costly but exceedingly distasteful bouquet—re-arranged by his own fat fingers, and discord and incongruity visible in every combination of colour—he sent off by a special messenger. Then he proceeded to make his toilet—an operation rarely graceful or picturesque in our sex, and an insult to the spectator when obesity is superadded. When he had put on a clean shirt, of which there was grossly too much, and added a white waistcoat, that seemed to account for his rotundity, he completed his attire with a black frock coat of the latest style, and surveyed himself complacently before a mirror. It is to be recorded that, however satisfactory the result might have been to Mr. Gashwiler, it was not so to the disinterested spectator. There are some men on whom "that deformed thief, Fashion," avenges himself by making their clothes appear perennially new. The gloss of the tailor's iron never disappears; the creases of the shelf perpetually rise in judgment against the wearer. Novelty was the general suggestion of Mr. Gashwiler's full-dress—it was never his *habitude*—and "Our own Make," "Nobby," and the "Latest Style, only \$15," was as patent on the legislator's broad back as if it still retained the shopman's ticket.

Thus arrayed, within an hour he complacently followed the note and his floral offering. The house he sought had been once the residence of a foreign Ambassador, who had loyally represented his Government in a single unimportant treaty, now forgotten, and in various receptions and dinners, still actively remembered by occasional visitors to its *salon*, now the average dreary American parlour. "Dear me," the fascinating Mr. X. would say, "but do you know, love, in this very room I remember meeting the distinguished Marquis of *Monte Pio*," or perhaps the fashionable Jones of the State Department instantly crushed the decayed friend he was perfunctorily visiting, by saying, "Pon my soul, you here—why the last time I was in this room I gossiped for an hour with the Countess de *Castenet* in that very corner. For with the recall of the aforesaid Ambassador the mansion had become a boarding-house, kept by the wife of a departmental clerk.

Perhaps there was nothing in the history of the house more quaint and philosophic than the story of its present occupant. Roger Fauquier had been a departmental clerk for forty years. It was at once his practical good luck and his misfortune to have been early appointed to a position which required a thorough and complete knowledge of the formulas and routine of a department that expended millions of the public funds. Fauquier, on a poor salary, diminishing instead of increasing with his service, had seen successive Administrations bud and blossom and decay, but had kept his position through the fact that his knowledge was a necessity to the successive chiefs and employees. Once it was true that he had been summarily removed by a new Secretary, to make room for a camp follower, whose exhaustive and intellectual services in a political campaign had made him eminently fit for anything, but the alarming discovery that the new clerk's knowledge of grammar and etymology was even worse than that of the Secretary himself, and that, through ignorance of detail, the business of that department was retarded to a damage to the Government of over half a million of dollars, led to the reinstatement

of Mr. Fauquier—at a lower salary. For it was felt that something was wrong somewhere, and as it had always been the custom of Congress and the Administration to cut down salaries as the first step to reform, they made of Mr. Fauquier a moral example. A gentleman born, of somewhat expensive tastes, having lived up to his former salary, this charge brought another bread-winner into the field, Mrs. Fauquier, who tried, more or less unsuccessfully, to turn her old Southern habits of hospitality to remunerative account. But as poor Fauquier could never be prevailed upon to present a bill to a gentleman, sir, and as some of the scions of the best Southern families were still waiting for, or had been recently dismissed from a position, the experiment was a pecuniary failure. Yet the house was of excellent repute and well patronized; indeed it was worth something to see old Fauquier sitting at the head of his own table, in something of his ancestral style, relating anecdotes of great men now dead and gone, interrupted only by occasional visits from importunate tradesmen.

Prominent among what Mr. Fauquier called his "little family," was a black-eyed lady of great powers of fascination, and considerable local reputation as a flirt. Nevertheless, these social aberrations were amply condoned by a facile and complacent husband, who looked with a lenient and even admiring eye upon the little lady's amusement, and to a certain extent lent a tacit endorsement to her conduct. Nobody minded Hopkinson; in the blaze of Mrs. Hopkinson's fascinations he was completely lost sight of. A few married women with unduly sensitive husbands, and several single ladies of the best and longest standing, reflected severely on her conduct. The younger men of course admired her, but I think she got her chief support from old fogies like ourselves. For it is your quiet, self-conceited, complacent, philosophic, broad-shouldered *pater-familias* who, after all, is the one to whom the gay and giddy of the proverbially impulsive, unselfish sex owe their place in the social firmament. We are not inclined to be captious; we laugh at as a folly what our wives and daughters condemn as a fault; our "withers are unwrung," yet we still confess to the fascinations of a pretty face. We know, bless us, from dear experience, the exact value of one woman's opinion of another; we want our brilliant little friend to shine; it is only the moths who will burn their twopenny immature wings in the flame! And why should they not? Nature has been pleased to supply more moths than candles! Go to!—give the pretty creature, be she maid, wife or widow, a show! And so, my dear sir, while *mater-familias* bends her black brows in disgust, we smile our superior little smile, and extend to Mistress *Anonyma* our gracious endorsement. And if Giddiness is grateful, or if Folly is friendly—well, of course, we can't help that. Indeed it rather proves our theory.

I had intended to say something about Hopkinson, but really there is very little to say. He was invariably good-humoured. A few ladies once tried to show him that he ought to feel worse than he did about the conduct of his wife, and it is recorded that Hopkinson, in an excess of good humour and kindness, promised to do so. Indeed the good fellow was so accessible that it is said that young DeLancy of the Tape Department confided to Hopkinson his jealousy of a rival, and revealed the awful secret that he (DeLancy) had reason to expect more loyalty from his (Hopkinson's) wife. The good fellow is reported to have been very sympathetic, and to have promised DeLancy to lend whatever