

"advancing matters" as dear old Makepiece Thackeray would say with his hearty laugh, were he alive now.

I am a woman hater, not that I do not like, to say nothing of the more potent power, love, charming representatives of the fair sex: for I do most sincerely, and gratefully acknowledge and appreciate their many little kindnesses: but a kind of feeling akin to awe takes hold upon me when in their presence, and a sickening confusion is the consequence, and the invariable result of every interview I have had with them for the past twenty or thirty years of my life. I fondly hoped that this awkward bashfulness, that's the word, of mine would wear away as the years swept by, but, no, the lapse of time has had no effect, and daily I grow worse and worse until now I am a confirmed old bachelor, and my lonely hearth is not cheered by a loving wife and noisy young ones. No slippers and dressing-gowns await my nocturnal arrivals from my little old musty office or its older and mustier day-books and ledgers. Bright eyes and pouting lips don't flash and scold when I come home late to tea, neither am I ordered in a stage whisper to remove my heavy winter boots when scarcely past the threshold of the door, lest my footsteps would wake the infant joy of the house of Minktan Pellidee—but alas! all this is purely imaginary. There is no Mrs. Minktan Pellidee, though there might have been one, and I "rise to explain"—as "Truthful James" would say—why she was not a consummation, why my happiness was forever blighted, why I ceased to "put my trust" in the weaker vessels of humanity, and why I live on, a dreary blank, in single infelicity.

I once loved! There, that confession is out. I feel relieved. It was hard work for me to say the word at first; but I can hold my head up, high as Olympus, and say fearlessly *I once loved a woman!!* Need I hint here that she proved false, or am I anticipating the sequel to the story? I will proceed. Let me see, yes, I have it, its all of twenty years since I first met *her*, the poisonous destroyer of my future life, the faithless Mattie Manglethrope. Ah! Mattie Manglethrope you have much to answer for. You little know how much pain your cruel words have caused, you know not the fearful stab you inflicted upon this lacerated heart that falls bleeding at the shrine of love. Cupid, oh thou naughty Cupid, why *did* you shoot your shafts towards me. Better, ay, a thousand times better, had I never beheld the maiden Mattie.

Mattie Manglethrope was the only daughter of a wealthy green-grocer who sold vegetables and sausages in summer, and frozen fish of questionable odour, in winter. Mr. Jerome W. Manglethrope kept no store. His haughty soul towered above the shop. No, he believed strongly in locomotion, and disposed of his goods and chattels from a wheelbarrow, which he, respecting the dignity of labour, trundled in front of him, at early morn. The cocks on the wood-piles crowed their matutinal crow, the hens one by one, dropped from the legendary roost, and Mr. Manglethrope in silver tones broke the still air with the musical cry of "Ere's your fine perriwinkles and sprats, all ready