

Dolphin was surprised at the cordiality with which the Earl received his proposal for his daughter's hand. For the old Earl, not having mixed much in the gay world of late years, was entirely ignorant of the fact that his lordly neighbor had made ducks and drakes with the patrimony his father had left him.

Thus stood the matter on this afternoon when our story opens, these two dignitaries working at cross-purposes. Lord Dolphin sprang from his horse, opposite the Earl and Countess, and paid them his respects. The latter extended her hand without rising, and, with many misgivings at her heart, as she observed his gross, dissipated appearance: but the Earl warmly grasped his hand: and, after exchanging some few conventional remarks on current topics, intimated by a nod in her direction, where Lady Eloise sat, and informed him that he had no doubt but that she would be delighted to see him.

He approached her with extended hand, and made an attempt at being gallant by awkwardly remarking that he thought the day was lovely until he saw her: but that she quite put it in the shade.

"Indeed," she coldly replied, "I am sorry that the day has become so disparaged in your lordship's estimation: for you will, no doubt, find it much more agreeable than my society."

"Egad," his lordship ejaculated to himself: "this is a filly that needs a tight bit;" and a wicked gleam appeared in his eyes as he seated himself beside her: and confused ideas arose in his mind about breaking in high-spirited horses, and about them afterwards becoming the best Derby winners, etc., etc.

Now, his lordship's conversational powers in the society of ladies never would, with the greatest amount of cultivation, have been of a high order; and this society having for many years been neglected for that

of turf men, card sharps, and other kindred spirits, he felt himself non-plussed as to what he should say to this divinity, who seemed indisposed to help him out of his dilemma. He picked up her book and examined it, thinking he might find something there to give him an idea: but as it had been some years since he had opened one, he was afraid that if he ventured on that line he would get beyond his depth. So, concluding to keep on safe ground, he remarked that he had had a jolly ride across country, getting everybody ready for the next hunt.

Receiving no response, except the faint click of the needle in Lady Eloise's hands, he continued:—"We're going to have a jolly time this year. Some entirely new blood, you know: Tony Blake, Cute Ableson, Ralph Cummings, and some others, perhaps. Not exactly in our set, may be," he continued, "but real good fellows. Lord Rosleigh and Squire Redpath were cut up about it when I told them I was going to have them. Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, as he thought of the discomfiture of his friends. His lordship then paused, out of sheer inability to say anything further: and in order to relieve the extreme awkwardness, she replied that she was sure that he would enjoy himself.

Encouraged somewhat by this remark, he continued: "Following the hounds is much better and more exciting sport than shooting. Don't you think so?" he queried.

"Really, my lord," was her reply, "my experience in those lines is of so limited a character that I am not able to express an intelligent opinion."

Then another silence ensued, which was anything but comfortable to his lordship: but in which, it must be confessed, his companion felt a malicious delight.

Anxious to put an end to a scene that he felt was fast degenerating into a farce, but determined not to be