

was scarcely given (louder, perhaps, than it used to be) before every maid in the house was out, and the lady looking through the blinds. I used to dance on the step, and beat my arms on my breast, with my basket down between my legs, and tremble almost for a second rap; and then it was, "Like your imperience!" "None of your stinking stuff!" and so on. But now they ran down beautifully,

and looked up under their eyelids at me, and left me to show them what I liked and never beat down a halfpenny, and even accepted my own weight. Such is the grand effect of glory: and I might have kissed every one of them, and many even of the good plain cooks, if I could have reconciled it with my sense of greatness.

CHAPTER XIX.—A CRAFT BEYOND THE LAW.

Colonel Lougher, of Candleston Court, was one of the finest and noblest of men it was ever my luck to come across. He never would hear a word against me, any more than I would against him; and no sooner did I see him upon the Bench than I ceased to care what the evidence was. If they failed to prove their falsehoods (as nearly always came to pass), he dismissed them with a stern reprimand for taking away my character; and if they seemed to establish anything by low devices against me, what did he say? Why, no more than this: "David, if what they say be true, you appear to have forgotten yourself in a very unusual manner. You have promised me always to improve; and I thought that you were doing it. This seems to be a trifling charge—however, I must convict you. The penalty is one shilling, and the costs fifteen."

"May it please your worship," I always used to answer, "Is an honest man to lose his good name, and pay those who have none for stealing it?"

Having seen a good deal of the world, he always felt the force of this, but found it difficult to say so with prejudiced men observing him. Only I knew that my fine and costs would be slipped into my hand by-and-by, with a glimpse of the Candleston livery.

This was no more than fair between us; for not more than seven generations had passed since Griffith Llewellyn, of my true stock, had been the proper and only bard to the great Lord Lougher, of Coity, whence descended our good Colonel. There had been some little mistake about the departure of the title,

no doubt through extremes of honesty, but no Lord in the county came of better blood than Colonel Lougher. To such a man it was a hopeless thing for the bitterest enemy—if he had one—to impute one white hair's breadth of departure from the truth. A thoroughly noble man to look at, and a noble man to hearken to, because he knew not his own kindness, but was kind to every one. Now this good man had no child at all, as generally happens to very good men, for fear of mankind improving much. And the great king of Israel, David, from whom our family has a tradition—yet without any Jewish blood in us—he says (if I am not mistaken) that it is a sure mark of the ungodly to have children at their desire, and to leave the rest of their substance to ungodly infants.

Not to be all alone, the Colonel, after the death of his excellent wife, persuaded his only sister, the Lady Bluett, widow of Lord Bluett, to set up with him at Candleston. And this she was not very loath to do, because her eldest son, the present Lord Bluett, was of a wild and sporting turn, and no sooner became of age but that he wanted no mother over him. Therefore she left him for a while to his own devices, hoping every month to hear of his suddenly repenting.

Now this was a lady fit to look at. You might travel all day among people that kept drawing-rooms, and greenhouses, and the new safe of music, well named from its colour "grand pæony," and you might go up and down Bridgend, even on a fair-day, yet nobody would you set eyes on fit to be looked at as a lady on the day that you saw Lady Bluett.