

hurls his aristocratic fist through the air, and mutters, 'Bah Jove, I shall protect you.' His noble head is held high, his courtly, dignified figure is drawn to its full height, his—"

But, stay, why should I mention more? This is a sample of the entire book. And is this the thing, I ask myself, over which people are going half-mad? What is the cause of it? Ah, I have been informed. Mrs. Lightweight is a conjurer; she knows the trick, and I have learned the secret. I read it in a magazine. I copied it out, and have learned it by heart. It is this:



"Much Ado About Nothing."

"SHE CAUGHT THE EAR OF THE PUBLIC."

Now, isn't that a simple solution? I have reasoned the whole thing out to my entire satisfaction. The word Public means the people of a country, and if Mrs. Lightweight caught only one ear and performed so much, what might not one do if she could catch several ears? From henceforth this shall be my one object in life. I shall make it my business to catch ears. I care not who the people are, friends and foes, my dearest relatives and my

most deadly enemies, the coal-heaver and the politician, the fair, blushing maiden, and the raging suffragette, their ears must be caught if I am to make a best seller of my new book, "The Tangled Thread." I am not going to tell what steps I shall take to catch these aural appendages, but it will be well for all to be on their guard and watch their ears very carefully. Mrs. Lightweight's secret is mine. I know the trick, and shall begin at once.

WHEN Master Shakespeare composed his play, "Much Ado About Nothing," he knew whereof he wrote. He understood human nature if any man did. He was aware that people like to be tricked, and played upon, or in other words, to be duped. The conjurer knows this, and it gives him his living. He pretends to do something, to make things seem real, when it is only a sham after all. People crowd to see him, applaud his acts, and make much ado about nothing.

Business men understand this popular feeling, and so work the trick. Did you ever notice the crowd at a Great Bargain Sale? What a mad rush took place. Men, women and children surged madly forward in the wildest confusion. It seemed as if every one was fleeing for his life from wild beasts or a raging fire. And it was all about a few pieces of cloth, lace, and pins, for which the business man could find no sale. He had marked them down two cents each, and to save this amount a mass of living humanity tore at one another for hours. Women had their dresses torn and ruined; men

had their hats knocked off and trampled under foot, while several received severe bodily injuries, and others had nervous prostration. It was all to buy something they did not need, merely because the price was reduced two cents. The business man knew the trick, and Great Bargain Sale were the three words which produced such magical results.

Now, isn't this idea worth trying? I have some old shoes, a pair of worn-out rubbers, two broken-ribbed umbrellas, a number of frayed collars, and many other articles which can be produced. They are absolutely useless to me or to any one else. But why throw them into the furnace or into the ash-barrel? I should be losing a splendid opportunity. I used to do this, but now I know better. All that is necessary is to find out what I paid for the articles when they were new, reduce the price two cents, and then put up a notice, "Great Bargain Sale," outside the door of my house. If there isn't much ado about nothing, and if I don't get clear of all the useless rubbish about my place at a handsome profit, then I do not understand human nature.



"And Then Put Up Another."

What is a Gentleman?

No. Seven in the Series "Men We Meet"

By COULSON KERNAHAN

AN American mother had been telling her boy about George Washington. When she had finished, he inquired:

"Mamma, did you ever tell a lie?"

Being a very conscientious woman, she replied, after a moment's pause:

"Oh, perhaps, when I was young."

"Did Uncle Sam ever tell one?" was the next question.

Again she hesitated before replying. "Well, perhaps he may have been led away."

"Did Aunt Jane?"

"Possibly, once or twice."

The boy thought it over a moment. Then he said: "It will be very lonely up in heaven, mamma."

"Lonely, dear? Why?" was her query.

"Because there can't be anyone up there except God and George Washington," came the answer.

I quote this story, told originally, I believe, by Mr. G. W. E. Russell, because, if we apply a similarly severe test of word, thought, and conduct to our past and to our present selves, and probably to other persons, we shall have not only to admit with the Psalmist and Mr. Russell's small American, that "All men are liars," but shall also have to ask ourselves whether this earth of ours can boast a single gentleman; for there is not one of us whose gentleness has not at some time or turn of his life failed him.

The question, "What is a gentleman?" can therefore best be answered, not by asking ourselves what a man is, but what is it that the man strives to be.

That which, in his nobler, truer moments, a man longs unutterably to be; the ideal upon which his eyes are for ever fixed, and towards which, in spite of stumblings by the way, he struggles on and on, rising with new yearning and longing after each fall—that, in a very real sense the man is, notwithstanding the human error, weakness, and even wrongdoing, from which none born of woman is wholly free.

A gentleman, then, I take it, is one who strives to be truthful, courageous, and honourable in thought, word, and act; "clean" in mind and body; and unselfish, considerate, and courteous in his relation to others.

THIS, I admit, is a view which entirely rules out and ignores the arrogant assumption—still occasionally put forward—that the word "gentleman" necessarily implies gentle birth. I should be the last to deny that "blood tells" or to assert that it matters nothing from what forbears one springs. Whether we are dealing with race horses or roses, one has to consider the pedigree of the animal or the stock on which the flower was originally grafted. The man who from infancy upwards has had the incalculable benefits of the best of food, clothing, and sanitary conditions; who has had a superior education; lives among beautiful and refined surroundings, with books on his shelves, flowers and silver on his dining table; and who, because he comes of a long line of rich and powerful ancestors, has never had cause to soil his hands,

should, surely, with all these manifest and manifold advantages, find it easier to be and to behave as a gentleman, than does the son of a herdsman, born and brought up in a mud hut, and compelled possibly by the force of circumstances to crush down his manhood's independence, and to show respect to, and to take orders from those whom he has reason to despise. It is easy for a man who, because he was born into affluence, and all his life has been accustomed to give orders which his dependents dare not disobey, to acquire that air of command and authority which we all so much admire in what is called a "great gentleman." But if that same great gentleman had been born in a station of life which necessitated his earning his livelihood as a labourer, a clerk, or a shop assistant, and possibly had to bow to the will of a tyrannical employer, and to feign, at least an appearance of respect for a master whom he had reason to hold in contempt—something of that fine air of command and of authority would be likely to vanish. In practice, the theory that what is called "gentle birth" must go to the makings of a gentleman does not hold good. Possibly the manners of the man of birth and position may be easier and more polished than those of the man born in a humble sphere; but in himself (and it is what he is himself that matters) the poorly born man may be, often is, infinitely the finer and truer gentleman of the two. Blood and breeding, so called—for all the obvious advantages they bring—often mean no more in men and women than in dogs. The thoroughbred terrier who is awarded first prize at a show is sometimes an unintelligent, sulky, snappy, greedy and vicious brute, while a despised mongrel is not unfrequently a dog-gentleman from ear tip to tail, and a dog of brains to boot. Moreover, while considering the question of "gentle birth," we should remember that if, with all his obvious advantages, your well born man be not a gentleman in himself, he must not complain if the standard by which he is judged takes account of these advantages, and if he be pronounced all the greater boulder and cad for forgetting the motto, "Noblesse oblige," and for forgetting also that these same advantages imply added responsibilities of their own. Similarly if a man who with all the handicapping of poverty-stricken surroundings and sordid considerations of ways and means to hamper him, succeeds in attaining to true gentleness—then is he to be held in greater honour and admiration than the man who has merely held his own in the station in which he was born.

OF one of the characters of a novel, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: "He looked a little too like a wedding guest to be quite a gentleman"; and Dr. Wendell Holmes once remarked that he had seen men who might have passed for gentlemen but for the wearing of a showy and gorgeous scarf pin. I should not like to say that a gentleman is never overdressed for a too-sweeping assertion often nullifies itself by suggesting the very exception which is

its own contradiction. There has undoubtedly been a dash of the dandy and even of overdress about some of the world's great men and great gentlemen, just as there has been a suspicion of the sloucher and the sloven about others. But any tendency to loudness, either in dress or in voice, is as a rule as instinctively avoided by gentlemen as is the tendency to boastfulness in speech, of which it is the silent counterpart. To be too palpably and too expensively over dressed, is as much vulgarly to parade wealth as to gas about one's bank balance, or purposely to pull out a handful of sovereigns to pay for a half-penny paper. It is done to impress others with a sense of one's importance, and that is what a true gentleman never does. The moment I find a man anxious or eager to acquaint me with the fact that he is a very great person and one of the utmost social importance—whether he seek to convey the information by mentioning, the first time I meet him, the number of peers he has upon his visiting list, or whether he seek to overawe me by an expansive assumption of "side"—I know perfectly well that he is a nobody, who is not even sure in his own mind about his social standing.

I REPEAT, in conclusion, that a gentleman is one who strives to be truthful, courageous and honourable in word, thought and act; clean in mind and in body; and unselfish, considerate and courteous in his relation to others. By the word courteous I do not mean an over-parade of politeness. On the contrary, the man who is too ostentatiously polite is seldom sufficiently "sure" of himself to be quite a gentleman. Your truly courteous man quietly and unobtrusively stands back to let a woman or an old man precede him in entering an omnibus or tram car. Your merely polite one possibly waves an effusive hand and protests "Ladies first," or "After you, sir." One very pretty instance of tact and courtesy comes to my memory as I write. A train which happened to be very full was just starting, and a hunch-backed man with crutches was anxiously but unsuccessfully looking for a seat. "There is room for one in here," said a young fellow sitting near the door. As a matter of fact, there was no room, but as the hunchback entered, the young fellow quietly slipped out. He knew that the hunchback, handicapped by crutches, was in likelihood of being left behind. Ostentatiously to have given up his own seat would have drawn some attention to the other's deformity, so as I say, he slipped out without comment to find another seat or possibly to stand for the remainder of the journey.

His cap had possibly cost him sixpence-halfpenny and had seen its best days. He was dressed in a soiled and shoddy suit, and his unblackened boots were badly patched. But as I, standing just outside the carriage out of which he got, and so seeing and hearing everything, threw open the door of another compartment, so that he might jump in, I raised my hat as punctiliously to that gentleman, as if he had been the great Chesterfield himself, of whose last spoken words on earth, "Give Dr. Dayrolles a chair," the comment was made: "Superb! The man's breeding does not desert him even in death."