

at a disadvantage in the society of my new acquaintances, but now I was master of the situation. I had, as it were, taken the young couple into my service. They were now respectful indeed, but also distressingly ill at ease.

'My friends,' said I, 'it seems to me that you are not in good spirits. You must be aware that I engage you [how they shuddered!] with the tacit understanding that you will be elastic and agreeable in your behaviours. You have no conception how stupid you are become, Mr. Y.—That is better; I am glad to see that start; there is animation about you.—The cause of this alteration for the worse is obvious, even to a colonial mind. You are suffering under the sense of obligations to come.'

'Spare us,' cried X—'spare us; we will try and be jolly.'

'Yes, X will try,' exclaimed Y. The latter, poor fellow, had for his own part quite given up hope of recovering from his degradation. One end of his cigar was white and cold; he had lost his air of exclusive refinement and looked a good deal like a begging-letter imposter. 'It was I,' continued he, 'who persuaded X to advertise. We were resolved to do it, for we cannot live without our little elegances—I pay, for example, that is, I intended to pay, twenty-five pounds per annum to a florist for supplying this ornament for my coat every morning—and we had both of us spent all our money.'

'Yes, and a good deal more than all,' murmured X.

'We did it half in earnest, half in jest,' resumed Y. 'We did not think that anybody would be really fool enough to come.'

'Gentlemen,' said I, 'I am astonished at you. You offer certain terms to me, and when I agree to them, you begin to shrink from the bargain. It is true that you are poor, but what of that? Garibaldi is also poor. To have spent one's money is only to be regretted in case one has not received its equivalent. It costs a man five hundred pounds, I hear, to go to an English University, but does he not come away from thence with the capital letters B. A. appended to his name?'

'We are both B. As,' groaned X and Y despondingly.

'I can easily imagine it,' said I; 'I should think myself defrauded if you were not. That honorable distinction, then, enables you to profess to make B.

A's of other people; to get back in teaching the money you have expended in learning. Similarly, a doctor's diploma enables you to train up human leeches. Having eaten, or at least paid for, a number of indifferent dinners in a certain place, and purchased a wig and gown, you can exact premiums from gentlemen who have not yet passed through these ordeals. Even if you have spent money in buying a commission in the army, the investment is not entirely thrown away; there are many pursuits, such as out-and-out keeping and horse-jobbing for which, in Maitland at least, a man is all the better qualified for being a captain. Since all experience fetches its price, how idle then is it to imagine that a knowledge of London life and good society—to attain which has cost you, I suppose, ten times the expense of any of the others—is not to bear its marketable value. Is it reasonable that men about town alone are to have no return for their money, and health, and youth, consumed in dissipation that were often perhaps wearisome while they lasted, and the recollection of which is a positive reproach? Do you not perceive the injustice that you are thus inflicting upon yourselves? You can hardly imagine, I suppose, that the results of an experience of this sort are too sacred for barter, when even divines take very considerable payments from the young gentlemen who are so fortunate as to be their private pupils. Mere fashion can scarcely curl her lips, I say, at a practice indulged in by law, by physic, and by Divinity. Be men of common sense. I am come here, it is true, to procure certain advantages which you happen to have for sale; but the bargain being concluded—as it is, and on my word I think I have the better of it—what need of further talk or thought of the matter? We shall be of necessity companions; who knows but that some day we may become friends?'

'—Stokes, E.-q.,' exclaimed X, slapping me on the shoulder with much heartiness, 'I shall never regret that we advertised.'

'Morumbidgee,' observed Y, with tears in his eyes, 'you are a gentleman born.'

I had succeeded in re-establishing my young friends in their own good opinion. The one recovered his natural enthusiasm, the other relapsed into his equally characteristic state of polite apor.