

THE PEPPERBURY FAMILY.

OF MRS. PETER PEPPERBURY AND HER FATHER, THE DRUMMER ;—
OF HER MARRIAGE SETTLEMENT ;—HER WAYS AND MEANS ;—
HER MANŒUVRES ;—OF MISS PAMELA PEPPERBURY ;
HER EDUCATION AND HER FLIRTATIONS !

CHAPTER III.

MRS. PETER PEPPERBURY was a stout old lady, who patronized a yellow wig and had a decided taste for the primitive colors ; therefore, it was by no means unusual to see that respected gentlewoman trotting to church on Sunday in a yellow bonnet, red shawl and blue gown, all of very expensive material. She displayed the same taste in the furniture of her house, her curtains and carpets being all of the most pronounced and contrasting colors. We think that this singular taste on the part of Mrs. Pepperbury, may perhaps be accounted for, from the influence on the mind of early ideas. That lady's papa was a drummer in a marching regiment, the Royal Blazers, who wore red coats, with blue facings and gold lace, and this may perhaps account for her continued predilection for those striking colors. The drummer after some years spent agreeably in the diversified amusements of beating the tattoo on his drum, and another species of tattoo on the backs of his delinquent comrades, had purchased his discharge, and set himself up in a small business, near the gates of his old barracks, where he retailed herrings, crackers, pipes, tobacco, pipe-clay, blacking and bath-brick, commodities much in request in the vicinity of a foot regiment. The *ci-devant* drummer was shrewdly suspected of cultivating a taste for strong liquors amongst his ancient comrades by supplying them *sub rosa* with whiskey, which had never contributed anything to Her Majesty's Customs or Excise. But the drummer and his spouse were a careful industrious couple, and by dint of great frugality and a little cheating, they saved money, and the little huckster's shop near the barrack gate, gave place to a "grocery store," in a larger street and better neighbourhood.

Mrs. PETER PEPPERBURY was the drummer's eldest hope, the first arrow in his quiver, and her acquaintance with her future husband commenced over the counter in the grocery store, whilst Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY, as the clerk of "Ticklefish and Co." was transacting business with her respected parents. In due process of time Peter and his intended became one flesh, in the language of the common prayerbook, and Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY, according to the custom of the natives in those parts, and the laws made and provided to meet such cases, effected on his lady previous to her marriage a settlement of a very handsome sum of money ;—

"A castle up in AIR-shire.
"And a tenement in SKY."

Thence it came to pass that when Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY, as we have seen, tumbled into difficulties, and got his legs into that terrible man-trap, the Bankrupt court, Mrs. PETER was enabled to maintain her carriage, and her horses, her footman and her page, and her establishment in general, in the most fashionable style. When darkness and despondency lowered over the "warehouse in the dirty lane," all went merry as a marriage bell in "the handsome stone mansion in the fashionable suburb."

The law of settlement or "dower" as it is called, under whose beneficent and most considerate provisions (for rogues), Mrs. PETER PEPPERBURY was enabled to live and flourish during the temporary obscurations of her lord and master, is one well worthy of adoption in other countries. By it a man may not only settle money on his wife before his marriage, though neither he nor she have one solitary farthing ; but even after marriage, by another convenient arrangement, she may take to herself one half of all he has, or makes ; that is, one half of all which is, in such cases as that before us, the property of other people. It has been observed that in this singular country, by means of these very singular provisions, men have been known to get richer and richer, more prosperous and influential, under circumstances that in other countries drive men into poverty and contempt, into jail madhouses, and suicide.

Now this law of dower, and the settlement of property *in nubibus*

made on the daughter of the drummer before her marriage was the *corps de reserve* on which Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY fell back when he went into difficulties. All the money which he made when things went well with him, the fruit of each successful speculation, he, like a good and dutiful husband as he was, duly handed over to Mrs. PETER, and that respected lady as duly invested it in the most secure and profitable manner. Thus it was that the handsome stone house in the fashionable suburb, was the property of Mrs. PETER, and many other houses ; the furniture was hers ; the carriage was hers ; the horses were hers ; Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY literally and truly, had not one thing in the world to call his own but the clothes on his back, and the desks and stools in the warehouse in the dirty lane ; these rather elegant articles of furniture the seedy clerk always "bought in" for Mr. PETER PEPPERBURY at the auction which followed as a matter of course, each "smash" that occurred.

PUNCH cannot help expressing his astonishment, that a law so well calculated as this for securing comfort and respectability in private life ; elegance and affluence amidst all the ups and downs to which gentlemen of a speculative disposition are subjected, is not at once embodied in the codes of all civilized nations. These poor benighted people are only in the habit of settling upon their wives property which really exists, defined and tangible ;—we settle property which does not exist and never may ; and more, we settle the property of other people, and this, it must be confessed, is a mode of defining the difference between *meum* and *teum* which is well worthy of imitation.

Mrs. PETER PEPPERBURY, the daughter of the drummer, was fat, sixty, and vulgar. Her education had been a little neglected, for regimental schools were not the order of the day, at the date when her father beat sheep-skin in the Royal Blazers. Her conversation was principally confined to grievous lamentations over the delinquencies of her female domestics, whom she regularly changed, all round, once a month, and enquiries into the misdeeds of those of her neighbors. The chief business of her life was a series of manœuvres directed to the "establishment" of her only daughter, Miss PAMELA PEPPERBURY. To this end she gave dinners and parties, dances and picnics ; there was no end to the consumption of boned turkeys and doubtful champagne. All the officers of the Garrison went tame about her house, and a man on the Staff, with an Honorable before his name, and £2000 a year, might have turned the whole establishment inside out, if it had pleased him. As for poor PETER, he was a cypher in his own house ; no body ever thought of him, his comfort, or his convenience. His business was to get money ; theirs was to spend it ; and not one of the family cared how disreputably that was obtained which enabled them to gratify their vicious tastes. On the contrary, mother, daughter and son almost appeared to make a point of "coming out strongest" in extravagance and dissipation, when things were at the worst in the "dirty lane." Mrs. PETER PEPPERBURY always gave a large ball on the night after her husband's name appeared in the "Gazette."

THEATRICALS EXTRAORDINARY.

Punch has been favored with a copy of a new Farce, entitled "The Returning Officer," lately performed in "The Bear Garden," once known as the House of Assembly. Although the subject was highly deserving, it was infamously treated. The following extract will give some idea of the author's style.

VANSITTART LOQUITUR.—It is NOT MAN, hath done this deed, but one of Middle-sex—the go-between of Oxford and of York. Man could not so be wrought upon to do the work of Friends.

"BREVITY IS THE SOUL OF WIT."

If this be truly said of wit,
Then surely of a pun,
It may be said no doubt of it,
It is the sole of fun.

MOMENTOUS QUESTION.

TO THE ELECTORS OF MIDDLESEX.

Why has your Representative no right to sit in Parliament ?
Because he is Not-mant