

CUTTING OLD FRIENDS.

One of the most difficult things a person has to do, who is getting ahead of the friends of his earlier and less prosperous years in the race of fortune, is to rid himself of these friends—to get quit of persons whose want of success in the world renders them no longer fit associates. The thing is not easily done, for you have to maintain appearances. You have to repel them gradually and gently, and in such a manner as to be able to defy them to lay any particular act of rudeness, any positive act of repulsion, to your charge. To manage the thing adroitly, therefore, requires some genius and a good deal of tact.

The difficulty of accomplishing this great manœuvre in a prosperous career, is much increased by the circumstances that as you advance your ancient cronies throng the thicker and closer around you. They in fact cling and cluster about you like so many bees, and with impertinent looks of glee seek to express their satisfaction with your prosperity.

Now, it is a most desirable thing to get quit of these gentry—to have them brushed off. But it would be rude to do this with the fly-flap and the strong hand. You must get rid of them by more tact and management. And after you have got rid of them, that is, driven them from personal contact as it were, you have to continue to keep them at a proper distance. No easy matter this, for somehow or other the obtuse creatures, your poor former acquaintance, will not see, what you see very distinctly, that you are now quite a superior sort of person to them, and that they are no longer fit to be ranked amongst your friends. This the perverse dull-witted fellows will not see. And, more provoking still, no degree of advancement in the world on your part, no acquisition of wealth, will induce one of them, whatever you yourself may think of to the contrary, to contemplate you with a whit more respect than they did when you were one of themselves. They insist on considering you merely as having been more fortunate than themselves—not a bit better or a bit cleverer.

Let us remark here, that the successful in the world are stout deniers of the doctrine of chances. They maintain that there is no such thing as luck; while the unsuccessful, again, are firm believers in the doctrine, and insist on it that not only is there such a thing as luck, but that luck is every thing. The successful man's vanity prompts him to attribute his prosperity solely to his talents and merit—the unsuccessful man's self-love to deny that the want of these qualities has been his hindrance. Hence the conflicting opinions of the two on this curious subject. Then, where lies the truth? We suspect between.

From a good deal of experience in the science of "cutting" under the circumstances alluded to in this paper—we shall not say whether as cutlers or cuttees—we have flattered ourselves that we could throw out a few hints that might be found useful to gentlemen who are getting on in the world, and who are desirous of ridding themselves of their earlier and poorer friends. Under this supposition we offer the few following remarks:—

For some time after you have started on the prosperous career on which you have luckily fallen, continue to smile and bow towards your old friends as formerly; and when you meet them accidentally (let this be, however, as seldom as you possibly can), shake hands with them as cordially as ever. You may even venture to remark, accompanying such remark with an expression of regret, that they are prodigious strangers now. But this is not quite safe ground, and we by no means advise its general adoption. Conducting yourself in this way, your old friends will never suspect that there is a change working at your heart—a secret operation as yet known only to yourself.

By and bye, throw the least, the very least thing of distance into your greeting: let your smile be *apparently* as cordial as formerly, but let there now be a slight expression of the slightest degree possible of coolness, of an indefinable something or other in your general manner of a repulsive character; take care, however, that it be indefinable—that it be of a description that cannot be named.