

"I quite understand that; but what I do not understand is, that you, a banker, should apply to me, a lawyer, for counsel on a point of this kind."

"Can you not understand that I may place more reliance on your opinion than on my own?" Mr. Trefalden smiled politely incredulity.

"My dear Mr. Greateorex," he replied, "it is as if I were to ask your opinion on a point of common law."

Laurence Greateorex laughed, and drew his chair a few inches nearer.

"Well, Mr. Trefalden," he said, "I will be quite plain and open with you. Supposing, now, that I had good reason for believing that you could help me to the very thing of which I am in search, would it then be strange if I came to you as I have come to-day?"

"Certainly not; but—"

"Excuse me—I have been told something that leads me to hope you can put a fine investment in my way, if you will take the trouble to do so."

"Then I regret to say that you have been told wrongly."

"But my informant—"

"—was in error, Mr. Greateorex. I have nothing of the kind in my power—absolutely nothing."

"Is it possible?"

"So possible, Mr. Greateorex, that, had I five thousand pounds of my own to invest at this moment, I should be compelled to seek precisely such counsel as you have just been seeking from me."

The banker leaned across the table in such a manner as to bring his face within a couple of feet of Mr. Trefalden's.

"But what about the new Company?" said he.

The lawyer's heart seemed suddenly to stand still, and for a moment—just one moment—his matchless self-possession was shaken. He felt himself change colour. He scarcely dared trust himself to speak, lest his voice should betray him.

Greateorex's eyes flashed with triumph; but the lawyer recovered his presence of mind as quickly as he had lost it.

"Pardon me," he said, coldly; "but to what company do you allude?"

"To what company should I allude, except the one in which you have invested your cousin Saxon's money?"

Mr. Trefalden looked his questioner haughtily in the face.

"You labour under some mistake, Mr. Greateorex," he said. "In the first place, you are referring to some association with which I am unacquainted—"

"But—"

"And in the second place, I am at a loss to understand how my cousin's affairs should possess any interest for you."

"A first-rate speculation possesses the very strongest interest for me," replied the banker.

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"The law, perhaps, has made me over-cautious," said he, "but I abhor the very name of speculation."

"And yet, if I understood your cousin rightly, his money has been invested in a speculation," persisted Greateorex.

The lawyer surveyed his visitor with a calm hauteur that made Greateorex fidget in his chair.

"I cannot tell," said he, "how far my cousin, in his ignorance of money matters, may have unintentionally misled you upon this point, but I must be permitted to put you right in one particular. Saxon Trefalden has certainly not speculated with his fortune, because I should no more counsel him to speculate than he would speculate without my counsel. I trust I am sufficiently explicit."

"Explicit enough, Mr. Trefalden, but—"

The lawyer looked up inquiringly.

"But disappointing, you see—confoundingly disappointing. I made sure, after what he had told me—"

"May I inquire what my cousin did tell you, Mr. Greateorex?"

"Certainly. He said you had invested a large part of his property, and the whole of your own, in the shares of some new company, the name and objects of which were for the present to be kept strictly private."

"No more than this?"

"No more—except that it was to be the most brilliant thing of the day."

Mr. Trefalden smiled.

"Poor boy!" he said. "What a droll mistake—and yet how like him!"

Seeing him so unflustered and amused, the City man's belief in the success of his own scheme was momentarily staggered. He began to think he had made no such capital discovery after all.

"I hope you mean to share the joke, Mr. Trefalden," he said, uneasily.

"Willingly. As is always the case in these misapprehensions, Saxon was a little right and a good deal wrong in his story. His money has been lent to a company on first-rate security—not invested in shares, or embarked in any kind of speculation. I am not at liberty to name the company—it is sufficient that he could nowhere have found more satisfactory debtors."

"I suppose, then, there is no chance in the same direction for outsiders?"

"My cousin has advanced, I believe, as much as the company desires to borrow."

"Humph!—just my luck. Well, I am much obliged to you, Mr. Trefalden."

"Not in the least. I only regret that I can be of no service to you, Mr. Greateorex."

They rose simultaneously, and, as they did so, each read mistrust in the other's eyes.

"Does he really want an investment?" thought the lawyer; "or is it a mere scheme of detection from first to last?"

"Has he caught scent of my little game?" the banker asked himself; "and is this plausible story nothing, after all, but a clever invention?"

These, however, were questions that could not be asked, much less answered; so, Laurence Greateorex and William Trefalden parted civilly enough, and hated each other more heartily than ever.

There was one, however, who witnessed their parting, and took note thereof—one who marked the expression of the banker's face as he left the office, the look of dismay on William Trefalden's as he returned to his private room. That keen observer was Mr. Keckwitch; and Mr. Keckwitch well knew how to turn his quick apprehension to account.

(To be continued.)

## "DINING WITH THE KING."

WE have so seldom an opportunity of obtaining a glimpse at the *vie privée* of Royalty, more especially as connected with personages and incidents of a contemporary date, that we offer, with an assured confidence in its more than ordinary interest, the following brief narrative, which commemorates the particulars associated with a private dinner at Buckingham Palace, as detailed from the communication of a late distinguished clergyman, who enjoyed an official connection with the court of William the Fourth.

The gentleman alluded to was the Rev. John Sleath, D.D., &c., Subdean of the Chapel Royal, Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, and High-Master of St. Paul's School. Previously to his appointment to these dignities he was for some years a Master of Rugby School, he was a native of the county of Warwick. He held other preferment in the Church, besides the offices enumerated, and was widely known as a most accomplished scholar, and was the possessor of peculiarly urbane and dignified manners that eminently qualified him for a higher position in the table of ecclesiastical precedence, and of courtly distinction, than he ultimately reached. His expectations of being elevated to the episcopal bench were, for several years preceding his death, very confidentially entertained; and we believe they were encouraged in quarters which fully justified his ambition of gaining a promotion, to which few of his contemporaries could more honourably have aspired on the score of personal merit.

The papers of the day having announced the intelligence of Dr. Sleath's introduction at the royal table, one of his more intimate friends took an early opportunity of obtaining from him the particulars of his visit, which are here given as recorded, for the information of a mutual acquaintance, in a letter of the same date.

On the Sunday preceding the reverend doctor's invitation to dine at the Palace, some one at the royal table had alluded in terms of very warm approval to a sermon preached that morning at St. James's by Dr. Sleath, upon which the King, turning to Mr. Wood, Prince George's tutor, said—"Wood, tell Dr. Sleath he must preach next Sunday at Chapel Royal; you must write to him." On the Wednesday following, he received the King's commands to attend a new bishop's doing homage at half past ten o'clock; previously to retiring, at the conclusion of the ceremony, he was honoured by His Majesty's further commands, that he should dine that evening at the Palace.

It is generally understood, in the circles more immediately cognizant in matters of courtly ceremonial, that a dinner at the private table of royalty, though esteemed an enviable privilege by the invited, is by no means usually a subject for very agreeable recollection, save as far as the indulgence of a sentiment of gratified self-esteem may lead persons so honoured to chronicle the event with feelings of qualified satisfaction. But a participation in the pleasures of the board, as dispensed under the genial influences called into exercise by the frank and easy joviality and unmeasured condescension of our late popular sovereign William the Fourth, was an occasion of real festive enjoyment—an event of unmistakable gaiety and good cheer. The open-hearted cordiality of the King, and the amiable and unassuming deportment of his most estimable consort, Queen Adelaide, put each guest fairly at his ease, and gave a welcome that enhanced the sense of the royal courtesy.

The party assembled on the occasion here particularly alluded to, appears to have consisted of individuals who formed an attractive *entourage* around the hospitable and princely board. On Dr. Sleath's arrival, he was shown into the reception room, where he found the King standing before the fire, talking to Lord James O'Brien, the Marquis of Winchester, Viscount Hill, Earl Amherst, the Earl and Countess of Mayo, two *aides-de-camp*, and a maid of honour. He was received in a very marked and gracious manner, and soon felt himself perfectly free from any idea of formal constraint. Presently arrived the Queen, who made her salutations in an easy quiet manner, in acknowledgment of the profound obeissances of those present. Her Majesty was soon followed by his Royal Highness Prince George of Cambridge, who, after making his bows to the company, accosted in a warm friendly manner, Dr. Sleath, with whom he continued to converse in a tone of lively and unaffected heartiness. We should have noticed more particularly the appearance of the Queen, who was attired in full mourning—a satin gown, boa, long necklace, and gauze cap, constituting the principal features of her Majesty's toilette. When dinner was announced, the King said—"Prince George, take the Queen." His Majesty took the Countess of Mayo, the Marquis of Winchester the maid of honour. The party consisted of about sixteen persons, there were no presiding seats at the table as on ordinary social occasions in general society, no "top" and "bottom," to use conventional terms implying the common arrangement in such matters.

The King and Queen sat opposite each other, on each side, at the middle part of the table, Prince George on the left hand of the Queen, the Marquis of Winchester on her right, then the maid of honour, and then the Doctor. The Queen, to use Dr. Sleath's expression, "was very quiet," and addressed her conversation chiefly to Prince George, but only talked a little during her stay at table. The King "was very pleasant." No dishes were set upon the table—nothing in the shape of catables appeared there. The entire space was covered with an immense variety of ornamental articles, curiously and elaborately constructed, to which a striking effect was com-