

goods, they should store the same away, he receiving the landing-charges, and they the charges for rent. Nothing could seem more equitable than this proposal; it was quite in the usual course of business, and the lessees had accordingly no hesitation in giving their compliance. Maltby was delighted for the sake of his employers; but he had a parting request to make, a slight one, to which the lessees, after the spirit of accommodation they had shewn, would doubtless accede to. This was, that they would allow the goods thus stored to be seen and examined from time to time, as might be required, by the customers of Cole, Brothers. "Oh, surely, nothing could be more reasonable."

Conceive, then, these two sham-firms, in company with a third, which, unhappily, was real enough to be subsequently transported, become city capitalists, and undertaking 'transactions' at the rate of two million *per annum*; and only imagine how highly they must have been respected. That they should have imposed upon our poor literary selves and unbusiness-like readers, but on Merchant Princes, Commercial Intelligences, nay, upon one of the *Business Houses par excellence* of the city of London, as though it had had a mere *littérateur*, or even a poet, at the head of it, and controlling its gigantic finances—how unaccountable! Imposed upon too, to the extent of L.370,000! The subsequent proceedings were even more remarkable. One would have expected the house which was thus victimised to have been eager, on having its eyes opened, to expose the delusion. But no; the house had parted with a large proportion of these fictitious warrants to others, and remained silent. 'Why not expose them at once?' asked Mr. Commissioner of the Court of Bankruptcy; 'in order that you might get out of it—in order that you might reduce the damage? You did reduce the damage, indeed, but at what (moral) cost?' A question not to be answered; or to be answered, as it was in these remarkable words: 'The magnitude of the sum, and regard for our position, compelled us to thus act.' There has been no small amount of comment on this feature of the transaction; but to all non-commercial men comment must appear quite unnecessary.

But after all, we may not have been really taking a sufficiently 'practical' view of these things. A person unacquainted with extensive business transactions must needs be unaware, we are told, of the cruel necessities—quite apart from anything like temptations—which underlie them in all directions, and render individual honourable action almost impossible. 'Custom'—in the shape of rather sharp practice—does, in truth, 'lie on them with a weight, heavy as frost and deep almost as life.' Commenced by the Vicious, and assented to by the Weak, it has long become difficult indeed for the Honourable to stand against a system, whose principle is but selfish expediency.

One of the most honourable and generous persons in social life, whom we have ever known, a member of the House of Commons, too independent to be caught by any ministerial wile, was once guilty of the following (to us) most extraordinary conduct. He was a racing-man, and kept a 'Tout' to furnish him with early intelligence concerning 'great events' of the Turf. This emissary arrived one evening, while we were in our friend's company, and after a hint that we were 'safe parties' to be let in the secret—which, by the by, turns out we were not—proceeded to open