POOR DOCUMENT

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The Indifference of the Miller of Hofbrau

By ANTHONY HOPE

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There is a swift little river running by the village of Hofbrau, and on the river is a mill, kept, in the days of King Rudolf the Third, by a sturdy fellow who lived there at all alone. The king knew him, having alighted at his house for a draught of beer as he rode hunting; and it was of him the king spoke when he said to the queen: "There is, I believe, but one man in the country whom Osra could not move, and that is the miller of Hofbrau." But, though he addressed the queen, it was his sister at whom he aimed the speech. The princess herself was sitting by, and when she heard the king, she said:

"In truth I do not desire to move any man. What but trouble comes of it? Yet who is this miller"

The king told her where the miller might be found, and he added: "If you convert him to love of woman, you shall have the finest bracket in Streslau."

"There is nothing, sire, so remote from my thoughts or desire as to convert your miller," said Osra scornfully.

And in this, at the moment, she spoke truthfully; but being left alone for some days at the Castle of Zends, which is but a few miles distant from Hofbrau, she found time hang very heavy on her hands; indeed , she did not know what to do with herself for weariness; and so, for this reason and none other at all, one day she ordered her horse and rode off with a single groom into the forest. Coming, as the morning went on, to a wide road, she asked the groom where it led to. "To Hofbrau, madam," he answered. "It is not more than a mile further on." Osra waited, for a few moments; then she said: "I will ride on and see the village, for I have been told that it is pretty. Wait here till I return." And she rode on, smiling a little, and with a delicate tint of color in her cheeks.

Before long she saw the river, and the mill on the river; and, coming to the mill, she saw the miller sitting before his door, smoking a long pipe, and she called out to him, asking him to sell her a glass of milk.

"You can have it for the asking," said the miller. He was a good looking, fair fellow, and wore a scarlet cap. "There is a pail of it just inside the door behind me." Yet he did not rise, but lay there, lolling luxuriously in the sun. For he did not know Osra, never having been to Streslau in his life, and to Zenda three or four times only, and that when the princess was not there. Moreover—though this, as must be allowed, is not to the purpose—he had swore never again to go far afield.

Being answered in this manner, and at the same time desiring the milk, the princess had no choice but to dismount. This she did, and passed by the miller, pausing a moment to look at him with bright, curious eyes that flashed from under the brim of her wide rimmed, feathered hat; but the miller blinked lazily up at the sun and took no heed of her.

Osra passed on, found the pail, poured out a cup of milk and drank it. Then, refilling the cup, she carried it to the miller.

"Will you not have some said she, with a smile.

"I was too lazy to get it," said the miller, and he held out his hand, but did not otherwise change his position.

Osra's brow was puckered and her cheek flushed as she knelt down, holding the cup of milk so that the miller could reach it. He took and drained it, gave it back to her, and put his pipe in his mouth again. Osra sat down by him and watched him. He puffed and blinked away, never so much as looking at her.

"What have you for dinner?" asked she presently.

"A piece of cold pie," said he "There's enough for two if you're hungry."

"Would you not like it better hot?"

"Oh, ay, but I cannot weary myself with heating it."

"I will heat it," said the princess, and, rising, she went into the house and made up the fire, which was almost burnt out; then she heated the pie and set the room in order and laid the table and drew a large jug of beer from the cask. Next she placed an armchair ready for the miller and put the jug by it; then she filled a pipe from the bowl of tobacco and set a cusion in the chair. And all this while she hummed a tune, and from time to time smiled gayly. Lastly she arranged a chair by the elbow of the miller's chair; then she went out and told him his dinner was ready, and he stumbled to his feet with a sigh of laziness and walked before her into the house.

"May I come?" cried she.

"Ay, there is enough for two," said the miller of Hofbrau without looking round.

So she followed him in. He sank into the armchair and sat there for a moment surveying the room, which was so neat, and the table so daintily laid, and the pie so steaming hot. And he sighed, saying:

"It was like this before poor mother died," and he fell to on a great portion of pie with which Osra had piled his plate.

When he had finished eating—which thing did not happen for some time—she held the jug while he took a long draught; then she brought a coal in the tongs and held it while he lit his pipe from it; then she sat down by him. For several moments he puffed and then at last he turned his head and looked at Princess Osra, and she dropped her long lashes and cast down her eyes; and next she lifted her eyes and glanced for an instant at the miller; and finally she dropped her eyes again and murmured shyly: "What is it, sir? Why do you look at me?"

"You seem to be a handy wench," observed the miller. "The pie was steaming hot, and yet was not burnt; the beer was well frothed, but not shaken nor thickened, and the pipe draws well. Where does your father dwell?"

"He is dead, sir," said the Princess Osra, very demurely.

"And your mother?" pursued the miller.

"She also is dead."

"There is small harm in that," said the miller, thoughtfully; and Osra turned away her head to hide her smile.

"And you are not very lonely, living here all by yourself?" she asked, a moment later.

"Indeed, I have to do everything for myself," said the miller, sadly.

"And there is nobody to—to care for you?"

"No, nor to look after my comfort," said the miller. "Have you any kindred?"

"I have two brothers, sir; but they are married now, and have no need of me."

The miller laid down his pipe and, setting his elbow on the table, faced Princess Osra.

"H'm," said he. "And is it likely you will ride this way again?"

"I may chance to do so," said Osra, and now there was a gleam of malicious triumph in her eyes and she was thinking already how the bracelet would look on her arm.

"Ah!" said the miller, and after a pause he added: "If you do, come half an hour before dinner, and you can lend a hand in making it ready. Where did you get those fine clothes?"

"My mistress gave them to me," answered Osra. "She has cast them off."

"And that horse you rode?"

"It is my master's. I have it to ride when I do my mistress' errands."

"And will your master and mistress do anything for you if you leave your service?"

"I have been promised a present if—" said Osra, and she paused in apparent confusion.

"Ay," said the miller, nodding sagaciously, and he rose slowly from the armchair. "Will you be in this way again in a week or so?" he asked.

"I think it very likely," answered Princess Osra.

"Then look in," said the miller, about half an hour before dinner." And he nodded his head again very significantly at Osra, and, turning away, went to his work, as a man goes who would far rather sit still in the sun. But just as he reached the door he turned his head and asked: "Are you sturdy?"

"I am strong enough, I think," said she.

"A sack of flour is a heavy thing for a man to life by himself," remarked the miller, and with that he passed through the door and left her alone.

Then she cleared the table, put the pie—or what little was left—in the larder, set the room in order, refilled the pipe, stood the jug handy by the cask, and, with a look of great satisfaction on her face, tripped out to where her horse was, mounted and rode away.

The next week—and the interval had seemed long to her, and no less long to the miller of Hofbrau—she came again, and so the week after; and in the week following that she came twice; and on the second of these two days after dinner, the miller did not go off to his sacks, but he followed her out of the house, pipe in hand, and when she went to mount her horse, and as she was about to mount he said:

"Indeed, you are a handy wench."

"You say much of my hands, but nothing of my face," remarked Princess Osra.

"Of your face?" repeated the miller in some surprise. "What should I say of your face?"

"Well, is it not a comly face?" asked Osra, turning toward him that he might be better able to answer her question.

The miller regarded her for some minutes, then a slow smile spread on his lips.

"Oh, ay, it is well enough," said he. Then he laid a floury finger on her arm and he continued: "If you come next week—why, it is but half a mile to church, I'll have the cart ready and bid the priest be there. What is your name?" For he had not hitherto asked Osra's name.

"Rosa Schwartz," said she, and her face was all alight with triumph and amusement.

"Yes, I shall be very comfortable with you," said the miller. "We will be at the church an hour before noon, so that there may be time afterward for the preparation of dinner."

"That will be on Thursday in next week?" asked Osra.

"Ay, on Thureday," said the miller, and he turned on his heel. But in a minute he turned again, saying: "Give me a kiss, then, since we are to be man and wife," and he came slowly toward her, holding his arms open.

"Nay, the kiss will wait till Thursday. Maybe there will be less flour on your face then." And with a laugh she dived under his outstretched hands and made her escape. And, the day being warm, the miller did not put himself out by pursuing her, but stood where he was, with a broad, comfortable smile on his lips and so he watched her ride away.

Now, as she rode, the princess was much occupied in thinking of the miller of Hofbrau. Elated and triumphant as she was at having won from him a promise of marriage, she was yet somewhat vexed that he had not shown a more passionate affection, and this clouded her brow for full half an hour. But then her face cleared. "Still waters run deep," said she to herself. "He is not like count gallants, who have learned to make love as soon as they learn to walk, and cannot talk to a woman without bowing and grimacing and sighing at every word. The miller has a deep nature, and surely I have won his heart, or he would not take me for his wife. Poor miller! I pray that he may not grieve very bitterly when I make the truth known to him." And then, at the thought of the grief of the miller, her face was again clouded, but it was cleared when she considered of the great triumph that she had won, and how she would enjoy a victory over the king and would have the finest bracelet in all Streslau as a gift from him. Thus she arrived at the castle in the height of merriment and exultation.

It chanced that the king also came to Zenda that night to spend a week hunting the boar in the forest, and when Osra, all blushing and laughing, told him of her success with the miller of Hofbrau, he was greatly amused, and swore that no such girl ever lived, and applauded her, renewing his promise of the bracelet; and he declared that he would himself ride with her to Hofbrau on the wedding day, and see how the poor miller bore his disappointment.

"Indeed, I do not see how you are going to excuse yourself to him," he laughed.

"A purse of 500 crowns must do that office for me," she said.

"What, will crowns patch a broken heart?"

"His broken heart must heal itself, as men's broken hearts do, brother."

"In truth, sister, I have known them cure themselves. Let us hope it may be so with the miller of Hofbrau."

"At the worst, I have revenged the wrongs of women on him. It is unendurable that any man should scorn us, be he king or miller."

"It is, indeed, very proper that he should suffer great pangs," agreed the king, "in spite of his plaster of crowns. I shall love to see the stolid fellow sighing and moaning like a love-sick courtier."

So they agreed to ride together to the miller's at Hofbrau on the day appointed for the wedding, and both of them waited with impatience for it. But, with the bad luck that pursues mortals (even though they be princes) in this poor world, it happened that early in the morning of the Thursday a great officer came riding post haste from Streslau to take the king's commands on high matters of state; and although Rudolf was sorely put out of temper by this untoward interruption, yet he had no alternative but to transact the business before he rode to the miller's at Hofbrau. So he sat fretting and fuming while long papers were read to him, and the princess walked up and down the length of the drawbridge fretting also, for before the king could escape from his affairs the hour of the wedding was already come, and doubtless the miller of Hofbrau was waiting with the priest in the church. And, indeed, it was 1 o'clock or more before Osra and the king set out from Zenda, and they had then a ride of an hour and a half—and all this when Osra should have been at the miller's at 11 o'clock.

"Poor man he will be half mad with waiting and with anxiety for me!" cried Osra. "I must give him another hundred crowns on account of it." And she added, after a pause. "I pray he may not take it too much to heart, Rudolf."

"We must try to prevent him doing any mischief in despair," smiled the king.

"Indeed, it is a serious matter," pouted the princess, who thought the king's smile out of place.

"It was not so when you began it," said her brother, and Osra was silent. Then about 2.30 they came in sight of the mill. Now the king dismounted while they were still several hundred yards away, and tied his horse to a tree in a clump by the wayside, and when they came near to the mill he made a circuit and approached from the side, and creeping along the house hid himself behind a large water-butt, which stood just under the window, and from that spot he could hear what passed inside the house, although he could not see. But Osra rode up to the front of the mill, as she had been accustomed to do, and, getting down from her horse, walked up to the door. The miller's cart stood in the yard of the mill, but the horse was not in the shafts, and neither the miller nor anybody else was to be seen about, and the door of the house was shut.

"He must be waiting at the church," said she. "But I will look in and make sure. Indeed, I feel half afraid to meet him." And her heart was beating rapidly and her face was rather pale, as she walked up to the door, for she feared what the miller might do in the passion of his disappointment on learning who she was and that she could not be his wife. "I hope the 600 crowns will comfort him," she said, as she laid her hand on the latch of the door; and she sighed—her heart being heavy for the miller, and maybe a little heavy also for the guilt that lay on her conscience for having deceived him.

Now, when she lifted the latch and opened the door, the sight that met her eyes was this: The table was strewn with the remains of a brave dinner; two burnt-out pipes lay beside the plates. A smaller table was in front of the fire; on it stood a very large jug, entirely empty, but bearing signs of having been full not so long ago; and on either side of it, each in an armchair, sat the priest of the village and the miller of Hofbrau, and both of them were sleeping very contentedly, and snoring somewhat as they slept. The princess, smitten by remorse at this spectacle, said softly:—

"Poor fellow, he grew weary of waiting, and hungry, and was compelled to take his dinner; and, like the kind man he is, he has entertained the priest and kept him here, so that no time should be lost when I arrived. Indeed, I am afraid the poor man loves me very much. Well, miller or lord or prince—they are all the same. Heigh-ho! Why did I deceive him?" And she walked up to the miller's chair and leant over the back of it, and lightly touched his red cap with her fingers; and he put up his hand and brushed with it, as though he brushed away a fly, but gvae no other sign of wakening.

Then the king called softly, from behind the water butt under the window:—

"Is he there, Osra? Is he there?"

"The poor man has fallen asleep in weariness," she answered. "But the priest is here, ready to marry us. Oh, Rudolf, I am so sorry for what I have done."

At this moment the miller of Hofbrau sat up in his chair and gave a great sneeze, and by this sound the priest also was awakened. Osra came forward and stood between them. The miller looked at her, and then he looked across to the priest, and said:—

"It is she, father. She has come."

The priest rubbed his hands together, and smiled uncomfortably.

"We waited two hours," said he, glancing at the clock. "See, it is 3 o'clock now."

"I am sorry you waited so long," said Osra, "but I could not come before. And—and now that I am come, I cannot—"

"You should have been here at eleven," said the miller. "I went to church at eleven, and the priest was there, and my cousin Hans to act as my groom, and my cousin Gertrude to be your maid. And there we waited hard on two hours, and you did not come."

"I am very sorry," pleaded Princess Osra.

"And now that you are come," pursued the miller, scratching his head again, "I do not know what we are to do."

At this the Princess Osra, thinking that an opportunity had come, took the purse of 600 crowns from under her cloak and laid it on the table.

"What is this?" said the miller, for the first time showing some eagerness.

"They are for you," said Osra, and she watched him while he unfastened the purse. Then he poured the crowns out on the table and counted them one by one, till he had told all the six hundred. Then he raised his hands above his head, let them fall again, sighed slightly and looked across at the priest.

"I warned you not to be in such a hurry, friend miller," remarked the priest.

"I waited two hours," said the miller, plaintively, "and you know that she is a handy wench and very fond of me." And he began to gather up the crowns and return them to the purse.

"I trust I am a handy wench," said Osra, smiling, yet still very nervous, "and, indeed, I have a great regard for the miller, but—"

"Nay, he does not mean you," interrupted the priest.

"Six hundred," sighed the miller, "and Gentrude had but two hundred. Still, she is a handy wench and very sturdy. I doubt if you could lift a sack by yourself, as she can," and he looked doubtfully at Osra's slender figure.

"I do not know why you talk of Gertrude," said the Princess petulently. "What is Gertrude to me?"

"I waited two hours," said the miller. "And Gertrude urged me, saying that you would not come, and that she would look after me better than you, being one of the family. And she said that it was hard that she should have no husband, while her own cousin married a stranger. And since it was all the same to me, provided I got a handy and sturdy wench——"

"What!" cried the Princess Osra.

"It being," pursued the miller of Hofbrau, "all the same to me, so that I got what I wanted why, when you did not come——"

"He married his cousin," said the priest.

A sudden loud burst of laughter came from the window. All three turned round, but the kind ducked his head and crucked again behind the water-butt before they saw him.

"Who was that?" cried the priest.

"A lad that came to hold my horse," answered Osra hastily, and then she turned fiercely on the miller.

"And that," she said, "was all you wanted. I thought you loved me."

"Ay, I liked you very well," said the miller. "You are a handy——" A stamp of her foot drowned the rest.

"And this Gertrude—is she pretty?" demanded Osra.

"Gertrude is well enough," said the miller. "But she has only 200 crowns." And he put the purse, now full again, on the table, with a resigned sigh.

"And you shall have no more!" cried Osra, snatching up her purse in great rage. "And you and Gertrude may——"

"What of Gertrude?" came at this moment from the door of the room where the sacks were. The Princess turned around and saw in the doorway a short and very broad girl, with a very wide face and straggling hair. The girl's nose was very flat and her eyes were small; but her great mouth smiled good-naturedly, and as the Princess looked she let slip to the ground a sack of flour that she had been carrying on her sturdy back.

"Ay, Gertrude is well enough," said the miller, looking at her contentedly. "She is very strong and willing."

There was a crash upon the floor and the 600 crowns rolled out of the purse and scattered hither and thither all over the floor.

"Ah, you are the other girl!" said Gertrude with much amusement. "And that was your dowry? It is large. I am glad you did not come in time. But see, I'll pick it up for you. Nay, don't take on. I dare say you'll find another husband."

"Nay, you'll find another husband," nodded the priest encouragingly.

"Ay, you'll find another husband," assented the miller placidly. "And just as one girl is pretty nearly as good as another, if she is handy and sturdy, so one husband is as good as another, if he can keep a house over you."

Princess Osra said nothing. But Gertrude, having picked up the crowns, came to her with a full apron and said:

"Hold up your lap and I'll pour them in. They'll get you a good husband."

The Princess Osra suddenly bent and kissed Gertrude's cheek, and she said gently:

"I hope you have got a good husband, my dear; but let him do some work for himself. And keep the 600 crowns as a present from me, for he will value you more with 800 than with 200."

Then she turned to the miller; and she bit her lip and dashed her hand once across her eyes and said:

"And you, miller, are the only sensible man I have found in all the kingdom. Therefore, good luck and a good wife to you." And she gave a little short laugh and turned and walked out of the cottage, leaving them all spellbound in wonder.

One day King Rudolf rode again to the miller of Hofbrau, and, having sent for the priest, told the three enough of the truth, saying that the affair was the outcome of a jest at court; and he made each of them a handsome present, and vowed them to secrecy by their fealty and attachment to his person and his honor.

"Then we are but quits, and all is well," said the miller. "Gertrude, the jug, my lass"

And so, indeed, it seemed to the king that they were but quits, and he said so to the Princess Osra. But he declared that she had so far prevailed with the miller as to make him desire marriage as a wholesome and useful thing in itself, although she had not persuaded him that it was of great moment whom a man married. Therefore, he was anxious to give her the bracelet which he had promised, and more than once prayed her to accept it. But Osra saw the laugh that lurked in the king's eye, and would not consent to have the bracelet; and for a long time she did not love to speak of the miller of Hofbrau. Yet once, when the king on some occasion cried out very impatiently that all men were fools, she said:

"Sire, you forget the miller of Hofbrau!" And she blushed and laughed and turned her eyes away.

The miller blinked lazily up at the sun and took no heed of her

GOING THE PACE KILLED WORLD'S MOST LUXURIOUS WOMAN'S CLUB

Sudden Collapse of the Empress Club Revealed an Astonishing State of Affairs in the London Smart Set—Special Brand of Absinthe Produced Such Results That the Servants Were Enabled to Levy Blackmail.

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London, June 21—After achieving a phenomenal success, the Empress Club, which was for years the swellest woman's club in London, went down with a crash. An official receiver has taken possession of the gorgeous rooms where titled dames and their attendant satellites were wont to hold high revels, and creditors are ruefully figuring on their probable losses.

The story of the rise and fall of the Empress Club sheds an illuminating light on certain phases of English society, which Lord Charles Beresford, in his blunt, uncompromising sailor fashion, declares to be "eaten out with the canker of money" and "rotten from top to bottom." The Empress Club bowed down at the shrine of the golden calf, and when disaster overtook it was repudiated by its idol. Though in its earlier years the management exercised sufficient discrimination concerning the moral qualifications for membership to satisfy the by no means stringent notions of what constitutes respectability in modern society as spelled with the big "S" in English journals, latterly it threw its doors open wide to those who could pay the price and go the pace. In consequence, for a time money poured into its coffers and the receipts of the departments which catered to luxurious tastes in the matter of solid and liquid refreshments—especially the latter—increased enormously.

But among those who obtained admission by means of the golden key were several women who had committed the unpardonable sin of being found out. Then discreet people began to whisper unpleasant things about the club which scandalmongers carried far and wide. The management, blind to everything but the financial condition of the club, allowed matters to drift from bad to worse. The club fell under suspicion. Titled folk began to drop out. Those who had joined the club for the sake of gaining social prestige followed the lead of their ladyships, with many protests of righteous indignation against the contamination to which they had unwittingly exposed themselves within its portals. As long as the duchesses and countesses tarried they cared not a jot to what extent their skirts were besmirched by brushing against the garments of women of dubious reputations. But when the peeresses vanished their morals were shocked and they betook themselves elsewhere in pursuit of virtue and social exclusiveness. The management found itself powerless to stop the stampede. The golden stream was dammed and the club was—well, something that sounds just like it. There was nothing left to do but wind it up and turn the assets over to creditors.

Philanthropy was just at that time beginning to be the fashion, and another happy idea of the executive was to donate one shilling (25 cents) out of every member's subscription to the Prince of Wales' (now the King's) hospital fund. Few people figured out what a very small percentage of the subscription fee twenty-five cents represented, and the action was loudly applauded as evidence of praiseworthy loyalty and self-denying devotion to a most deserving charity.

Still shrewder was the wisdom displayed in getting together a lot of titled women to fill the ornamental positions of the club. It opened its doors with a list of twenty vice-presidents, every one of whom was a peeress, headed by her accomplished Grace the Duchess of Leeds, the original of Sarah Grand's heroine, "Ideala." English society is nothing if not snobbish. Women tumbled over one another in their eagerness to be enrolled among these exalted representatives of blue-blooded feminine aristocracy. The presence of several American women of title furnished equally attractive bait owing to the supposed length of their purses. Among them were Lady Tankerville, who was one of the vice-presidents, and Lady Hesketh, Lady Arthur Butler, Lady Cooper, and several others, who joined as life members.

In a short while the club outgrew its original premises. The subscription fee was increased from three guineas ($15.75) to thirty guineas ($157.50); but even that latter price was considered cheap for the privilege of scraping up an acquaintance with a baroness, a countess or possibly a duchess. Just before the stampede began it was proposed to raise the annual subscription fee to fifty guineas, so numerous were the applicants seeking admission. The management built, at enormous expense, a magnificent palace in Dover street.

The site is historic. It was the scene of a pitched battle in 1554, when Sir William Wyatt marched upon London. But it was not its historic associations which commended the site to the management. It was its association with swaddom. Dover street being distinctly "toney." The first essential for the success of a woman's club in London is a good position somewhere between Piccadilly Circus and Hyde Park Corner. Women dearly love a swagger address. To hundreds of them, many of whom have long pedigrees but slender purses, a fashionably located club is an oasis of elegance in the desert of obscurity. Armed with its address on their visiting cards, they can afford to live in cheap lodgings in suburbia, and no one is aware where they roost save the hall porter at the club, who forwards their letters and guards inviolate the secret of their number and street. The executive of the Empress Club was the first to recognize what a convenience such an institution would be to women folk of this class, though, of course, it was the genuine society woman with a generous income to whom it specially appealed.

In the matter of furnishing and decorations—in all round up-to-dateness—the Empress Club house was probably the most luxurious and perfectly appointed establishment of its kind in the world. No expense was spared in its embellishment. Magnificence was aimed at and achieved. And it succeeded by leaps and bounds. It was the first woman's club that dared to provide a smoking room for women; the first, too, that ventured on a billiard room. At these innovations Mrs. Grundy raised her virtuous eyebrows and exclaimed, "What next?" The question was answered later.

It was not the smoking room, nor the billiard room, nor the refreshment bar which wrecked the Empress. In these days of feminine emancipation, club women will stand for all these things and more. Women's clubs in modern Babylon are in these Sunday schools that are men's clubs. But club women have not yet reached the point where they will tolerate association with women whose reputations won't stand investigation—not at least when such association ceases to be sanctified by the saving presence of duchesses and countesses and dames of high degree.

What played havoc with the Empress was the sparing use made of the blackball. Elated by the success the management grew indifferent to everything but money. Practically any woman who could furnish a banker's reference as a guarantee of ability to pay the subscription fees, was admitted to membership.

The atmosphere of the club became decidedly rowdyish. It was no uncommon sight to see waitens hurrying about as early as 10 a. m. with brandies and sodas, pick-me-ups, cocktails and liqueurs. Among the latter a particularly insidious kind of absinthe was the favorite, and was procurable nowhere else in London, being expressly imported for the club from Paris. Rightly or wrongly, there are not a few men in London who blame the Empress for having made their wives dipsomaniacs. The Excise people told appalling tales of the quantity of intoxicants sold there. But the management had an eye only for increased receipts and grew gleeful over the evidence of growing prosperity. The most objectionable people were the freest spenders.

The decline in the club's reputation, after the introduction of the rowdy element, was accelerated by the mysterious fashion in which the belongings of members and their friends disappeared. For the last year or so no one dreamed of leaving anything in the cloak room. Women walked about with their wraps and any other paraphernalia they might have brought with them When they sat down they deposited them in their laps, but even such precautions did not always avail. Things occasionally vanished right under their owners noses.

Here is an instance: A guest, having undone her lace scarf, pinned to the tablecloth, for the sake of security, the small jeweled brooch with which it was fastened. When she rose from the table, at the conclusion of her lunch, she discovered that it was missing.

"My brooch has gone," she said to her hostess, "yet you saw me pin it to the cloth."

The servant who had waited upon them was summoned and questioned, but he protested that he had never seen it.

"The trinket," said the owner, "is not worth half a sovereign. I simply value it because it belonged to a dear friend. But to whomsoever finds it I shall give two pounds."

Before she left the premises, however, the "lost" article was restored to her by the servant who had waited at the table. He had "found" it, he said, under the table.

"My brooch was stolen," said the lady. "My race to get it back has been successful, and although it is worth a hundred pounds, I have no intention of giving you the two pounds I promised for its return."

On ethical grounds, perhaps, her action was reprehensible but she knew the Empress. The infuriated domestic threatened to prosecute for aspersions on his character, but there was no more heard of the incident.

Among other things which helped bring the Empress low was woman's grand capacity for breaking rules. Now no one who knows anything of woman in the aggregate would accuse her of being generous in the matter of tips, which are, of course, rigidly forbidden in all clubs. At the same time, if it suits her purpose, she can be liberal to the point of lavishness. If a woman sits in her club all the afternoon and sips liqueurs or brandy and soda, what will the attendants who wait upon her think—and say—if she does not tip them freely? If she does fee them handsomely, of course they speak of her as a "perfect lady" and contrast her behavior favorably with that of the woman who gives only tea to her friends and rigorously observes the rules with respect to tips.

Under the free and easy state of affairs that obtained in the latter years of the club the servants soon came to realize their powers and levied what virtually amounted to blackmail. "I am very sorry, madam, but I shall have to report you to the secretary," was an observation that frequently proved worth $5 to the menial who uttered it. Toward the end the servants became completely demoralized, and the management, who were by this time deeply in debt to their staff as well as to trades-people, lost control of them completely and did not venture to question anything they did. Members who did not tip freely and frequently were snubbed and neglected.

The final blow was dealt a few months ago, when a member took it into her head to commit suicide on the premises, perhaps by way of emphasizing her protest against the mismanagement which had brought the club into disgrace. If so, it proved most effective. For weeks afterward the club rooms were empty save for the servants. After a vain attempt to raise money enough to keep the clamorous creditors at bay, the management threw up the sponge and decided to take the benefit of the bankruptcy act.

EVELYN MONTAGUE.

THE DUCHESS OF LEEDS. LADY TANKERVILLE.

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