



A VERY PITIFUL CASE.

(SCENE—Near St. Andrews' Church, probably.)

Clergyman—Well, my good woman?

Destitute Person—Please, sir, could you spare a trifle to help a poor woman with a family, which my husband, owing to the tyranny of temperance opinion, has been forced to deny himself of his natural liberty to drink whisky, and we are all in destitute circumstances accordingly!

MRS. PENCHERMAN'S POOR RELATIONS.

BLOOD kindred, marriage connections, and poor relations aren't always an unmixed joy, though fate fixes these as well as the other vicissitudes of life, people of this description are divided into those who are upheld by their relations, and those who no sooner get a chance to breathe the ether of the upper ten thousand than some awful cousin, with neither grammar or bangs gives you a social pull-back. A person can make a position in the world, and pick out his friends, but not even a Mrs. Pencherman can choose her relations. How things were in the olden times when the poor relation appeared, hat in hand before his rich kindred, humbly waiting his pleasure, I read off in the books of the past, also in the romance of the present time. Actual every-day life experiences make me believe that it is the rich man who trembles in the presence of his impecunious brother, to say nothing of his shabby sisters and his cousins and his aunts, especially his inextinguishable cousins, with their inquisitive, flirting or high-strung sensitive ways. Strong man as Lucius is, he's a regular coward in these matters. I've only to mention that Louisa Pring is coming to spend the day than he says he "won't be home to dinner." All the excuses I make for him Louisa regards coldly (you can't hoodwink Louisa Pring, more's the pity), says she "understands, and is sorry she can't help being poor," and hints that life is a see-saw, and that those who are up may come down, etc. Remarks of this sort make me feel mean, but if I venture to hint that we owe our prosperity to hard work as well as good fortune, she bursts out crying, and, pointing to Molly and Jane, wants to know "why I've brought them up as useless young ladies, if I'm so fond of work," and supposes "I'd be glad to see her take in sewing." Of course I'm sorry to hurt her feelings, but if I venture to say so, I'm told that only a proud spirit would wound a person in her circum-

stances by offering my pity, though she knows quite well that I generally give her a present before she goes home, I am always depressed after her visits, Louisa does hear such a lot of disagreeable things that are said about the Penchermans, I can't believe we're a popular family for days after. It seems almost impossible to please her, and some other poor relations. We don't dare to leave them out of any little parties we have. They are so particular as to the attention that's paid to them, I can't act naturally for fear of offending them, and I'm always blamed if their girls aren't asked to dance, they never once suppose if they happen to be wall-flowers, it is because they are ugly and stupid, or haven't any "go" in them. They are certain they are made little off, simply and solely because they are not rich. Oh, how I wish they were, so as I would have a chance to tell them how detestable they are. I've almost wished I could be a poor relation myself (for a day or two), so that I could speak my mind with a free tongue. I confess I do not always mention our relationship to the Prings when talking to some distinguished strangers, but catch the Prings forgetting the tie of blood that connects them with us, they bring our name in on all occasions, though they'd die rather than admit we are any superior to them. In their eyes it is only our money that makes people like us, and their want of it that makes others dislike them. I don't suppose if I talked for a year that I'd get them to see that if they'd only make themselves agreeable in Society, people'd not bother very much as to whether they're poor or not.

Thank heavens, we've one or two poor relations that are so pleasant and sympathetic, they are always welcomed with open arms and hearts by Eliza Pencherman and family, and we help them all they'll let us. Though they are proud enough to try and be independent, they think too much of themselves to act so as to make themselves hateful. Tell you what it is, they are the sort of poor relations that pluck and perseverance are going, one of these days, to turn into well-to-do ones. If they do long to be better off, they don't sit down for richer people and fortune to throw gifts into their laps. And they don't cultivate a hatred for luckier individuals of the present either; and whisper to their friends that the Miss Pencherman's would be frights if they weren't so dressed up, even if human nature makes them hope theugly ducklings of their own families may yet turn out swans. They have the sense to see that envy and grumbling never yet lifted any one from poverty, or made an M.P. out of a man who began life in a small way. A rural dell existence may not promise much, but lots of the great men of the country laid the foundation of their future distinction, like Lucius, in the camera obscura (so to speak) portion of their lives, historical family facts your acquaintances never lose sight off, if your own memory should be defective.

TORONTO SATURDAY NIGHT.

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