

two chief assistants held a large mirror—borrowed from the Italian barber in the cellar—in various positions, that she might not lose any point of view.

Certainly she was very imposing, and she seemed very much out of place in the little room, with its shabby horse-hair sofa, its unblackened cylindrical stove, its cheap paste-board plaques, bearing Lacy's advertising imprint, on the walls, and its general air of tawdiness and neglect. Her gown of satin and spangled lace, with a long train, into the folds of which a garland of pink roses fell from her waist; her bouquet of blush roses—for which poor little Rose O'Connor had so valiantly struggled; her spangled fan, and her high-mounted hair, pinioned with a golden aigrette; her long white gloves, and the air of "deportment" that naturally went with such a dress, created a sensation. The inhabitants of the neighboring rooms passed by the Mulligans' door in a respectful procession and felt proud of being represented in society by such a beauty.

The breathless ascent of several children—who, to Nellie's disgust, would treat her appearance as something extraordinary—to say that there was a carriage at the door, caused her to put on the precious shoes. She was sure there would be no walking now. Her mother threw a shawl over her shoulders, and she glided slowly downstairs, the women with the pins bearing her train. Miles met her, and, still attended by her careful friends, she was led across the sidewalk between two dense lines of admirers, who had gathered at the news of her splendor. There was a chorus of "Oh's!" as she entered the carriage. No lady on her way to one of the Patriarch's balls could have felt more complacent—but there was one drop of gall in this honey of popular adulation. As Miles slammed the door of the carriage a voice was heard to say:

"She's got on our Eliza's satin shoes!"

Miles did not hear it, however; and Nellie reflected that at last she was safe—it was too late for the said Eliza to reconsider her loan now.

#### XVII.—Bastien's Point of View.

Bastien had been filled with vague doubts by the result of his first concert. It had disturbed all his preconceived theories; and he caught eagerly at Arthur Fitzgerald's suggestion that he should go to the Lady Rosebuds' "social" and examine the amusements of "the poor" for himself. His experience in the photographic workshop had as yet taught him very little of the real life of the people around him, and he had an almost passionate wish to get into the centre of it.

Arthur Fitzgerald found it easy enough to get tickets for this great assembly; they were supposed to be limited to those friends whom the Lady Rosebuds delighted to honor. But Arthur had discovered that the gorgeous badges—always an important feature in such gatherings—were not paid for yet, and that the manufacturer refused to send them until they were paid for. This fact, communicated to the chief Lady Rosebuds, had created a sensation. But there was no help for it; and had not Nellie Mulligan, in a burst of confidence, told it to Rose O'Connor, who told it to her Brother John, Fitzgerald's office-boy, the "social" would have been deprived of one of its glories.

The various committees were to be marked by what the milliners call *confections* of gold fringe and ribbon, and each member of the committees was to present a similar badge to her escort. When it was announced, almost at the last moment, that Bastien the photographer would give the badges, there was great relief among the Lady Rosebuds, and he received the warmest invitations to be present with his friends at the "social." Arthur Fitzgerald, who, while he admired Bastien, often found him incomprehensible, was astonished at the eagerness he showed about this festivity. But Bastien did not apologize for it.

"I have wasted most of my life," he said; "and now I propose to make up for the wrong—the crime, I may say,—by getting near to the heart of these people."

Fitzgerald and Bastien went early to the hall in which the "social" was to be held. Although nine o'clock had struck, nobody had arrived. The janitor and two policemen were guarding the entrance; there was a face visible in a pigeon-hole to the left, above which was written, in large letters, the

word "Tickets." Fitzgerald cast his credentials into the depths of the pigeon-hole, and, on paying fifty cents, he received two metal pieces with numbers marked on them. These entitled Bastien and him to have their hats and coats put away.

Suddenly a young man, on hearing the rattle of a carriage, burst out of the hall into the vestibule and called out, "Gents to the left! Ladies to the right!" He wore evening clothes, and from the left lapel of his coat hung a strip of white ribbon, heavy with gold fringe, bearing the words: "Reception Committee, Lady Rosebuds." Above this glittered a red star with silver rays, and above it was a button-hole bouquet of rich hues. The struggle he was keeping up at intervals with a pair of long white cuffs, which would fall over his hands, detracted somewhat from the easy grace of his appearance.

Several shawled and coated groups entered, and the young man continued to make his announcement, which was obeyed. Bastien and Fitzgerald remained in the vestibule, as the arrivals came thick and fast,—young men carrying parcels done up in paper; young women holding up their trains, and with many curl-papers visible under their veils. The contemplation of the arrivals seemed to give Bastien intense pleasure.

Arthur Fitzgerald had a face that concealed nothing. His eyes and his lips—he wore no mustache—were the plainest indices of what he thought and felt. Had he been sent abroad in the old days of diplomacy he would have been obliged to adopt Talleyrand's advice, and to sit with his back to a window, in order to watch his opponent's face without allowing his own to be seen.

Bastien was quick to see the expression of dissatisfaction in Fitzgerald's eyes.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

Fitzgerald reddened. "Well, the fact is," he answered, with a little hesitation, "I don't like your manner. You act as if you were examining a lot of animals with a microscope. If you are to understand the people around you, you must make yourself one of them; but if you are going to remain apart, an aristocrat at heart, you might as well let them alone."

Bastien seemed struck with this observation. He said, with his habitual short laugh:

"You mean that I must not be 'von Bastien,' but simply 'Bastien the photographer'? *Ach Himmel!*" Then he laughed again, but it seemed to be at himself. "Well, I'll take your advice, Fitz. I am afraid I have gotten into a habit of looking on the poor as a distinct class. But these people don't seem to be poor; I can't make out what they are—oh, you are right! There's a great difference between the spirit of the theorist and the practical philanthropist."

"Say rather," answered Fitzgerald, softly, "there is a difference between the spirit of Augustus the Emperor and of Christ the Saviour."

Bastien frowned. "I am not what you call a Christian," he said,— "but this is no place for the discussion of ethics."

They went through the swinging doors, upstairs and to the right, as they were commanded to do. Their overcoats and hats were taken in through another pigeon-hole, and they found themselves among a large number of "gents." Some of these young persons—all of whom wore collars of painful height and stiffness—were trying their powers in the dance, others pining on badges of varying degrees of splendor, others brushing their mustaches. Pleasant anticipation reigned, and the preparatory squeaks of fiddles came from the interior of the hall.

Bastien and Fitzgerald stood near the door, unnoticed. The latter knew some of the young men slightly, but they had no time for him just then. His spirits, usually good, were somewhat depressed; he liked Bastien, and his last words gave him something like a chill. Besides, though Fitzgerald had very little in common with the members of the assembly of which he and Bastien were now a part, he did not like Bastien's apparent attitude toward them. It seemed to Fitzgerald to be interested, but heartless. He knew that Bastien was anxious to help them, to lift them; but he began to doubt whether, if they were lifted up according to Bastien's ideas, they would be any better.