

Pessimism.

They were enjoying æsthetic tea, and the hostess said, "Now, you who read all that sort of thing, Mr. FITZBOODLE, do tell me exactly what Pessimism is. I have an idea of it, you know, of course, but I should like to have it clearly defined."

"Very glad to hear you say so. It's a habit of my own mind, and most important, I do assure you, most interesting. Yes, a definition is a valuable and important thing. Makes it all so much clearer, you know, opens up a regular vista of—that is, ah—opens up a regular vista, as one might say," Mr. FITZBOODLE replied. "And as to this new application of the word Pessimism, you know, they're using it in quite a different sense in these days. MALLOCK and SPENCER, and the other Agnostics have—ah—differentiated it, to adopt the modern term. Used to be something in the prayer-book, you know. Can't exactly turn up the passage, but such is my impression. In fact, I think I am quite right about it. But the prayer-book is, now-a-days, you know—well, our advanced thinkers, the Agnostics, you know, have rather set aside the prayer-book, and that sort of thing, and Pessimism has gone with the rest. That is, it is used, you know, but in a different sense. Do I make myself clear? Oh, I read all these books, you know, MALLOCK, SPENCER, and the rest, and I should say that Pessimism, as used at present, is a kind of feeling that everything is worse than anything else—though also better as it were. Yes, thank you, I will trouble you for another cup."

Are We the Shuttlecocks of Fate?

A CONUNDRUM ANSWERED IN FIVE CHAPTERS.

BY STUBBS.

I.

She was seventeen, fresh from college, and fair and gentle as a spring lamb. She read OUIDA's novels. She longed for her affinity. She didn't do plain sewing to any extent.

His was a mind and a moustache of no common order. He felt the fire of a poetic genius burning within him, and determined at no distant day to surprise the world with something grand. At present, however, he contented himself with writing poetry for the *Telegram*, and nursing his moustache.

He lived with his mother. They met by chance. It is needless to say that they loved. Any fool knows that. We shouldn't have been writing about them else.

II.

In the seclusion of her boudoir she murmured, "Did I not feel that subtle, sympathetic thrill, that magnetic oscillation of the inmost nerve-centre, which is vouchsafed alone to those who truly love? Alas, cruel Fate, that we are strangers, whom thou hast so plainly marked for each other!" She sighed therefore. Both of them languished in misery, and implored their stars to grant them acquaintance.

III.

The stars took the matter into consideration, after the manner of Mr. MOWAT, and concluded to grant the petition of the lovers. They met again—this time after the formal fashion of society. What bliss, what rapture was theirs? Two harmonized, intellectual organisms that contained but a single sentiment; two unified seats of vitality whose blended throbbings were as one.

IV.

Nothing now was wanting to consummate their happiness but the consent of the stern

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parent of the adored one. The s. p.'s opening interrogatory to him was "What are your means?" The young man hastened to explain that as he was at present living on love, he hadn't thought it necessary to provide himself with any, but that he hoped—the remainder of his hope was uttered to the moaning night wind alone, for the iron of the old man's sole had entered him. Yet, as he mournfully departed, he comforted himself with repeating the assurance of his darling that she would never cease to fondly, madly love him until the moment of her final molecular dissipation.

V.

A few years have passed away, and the personages of our story have not unnaturally become older. We wish we could record the triumph of love, but an inherent reverence for facts constrains us to be veracious. The divine one has become stout, and was peacefully married not long ago to a widower with four children. Strange to say, the memories of her bygone love don't seem to trouble her much. They don't ever come to her in the dread unhappy night, and when the rain is on the roof, and torture her soul with overpowering remorse. She gets stouter all the time, and the way that widower has to stand from under is systematic and thorough.

We regret to say, too, that the young man has, to appearances at least, pretty well laid the ghost of his former affection. He is now the enterprising proprietor of a steam laundry, and fully convinced that the prosperity of this country depends upon making the Chinese go.

We are.

Judgment Deferred.

GLADSTONE holds the opinion that young men born to a competence belong to the dangerous classes. So the *Saturday Review* says.

In what class would he include the young men born to an incompetence? Till Fiddlers of the Standard Bank, Flobbets of the civil service, and Doobil of nothing in particular, know his answer to that question they hardly know what to think of GLADSTONE.

We respectfully direct the attention of the U. E. Club to the *Ottawa Citizen*, which has recently indulged in open treason to the Conservative Party by referring in a sneering tone to Lord BEACONSFIELD's spirited foreign policy. The offence consisted in putting the word "spirited" in inverted commas. This sort of thing cannot be allowed to go unchecked if the Conservatives of Canada wish to retain their connection with the grand imperial Party of Jingoism.

A democratic paper like the *London Advertiser* should never attempt anything in the Court JENKINS way. In its columns the other day there appeared a long piece about the Vice-Regal household arrangements, in which reference was made to "Prince LOUISE" and "Princess ALBERT VICTOR." When an editor is so far gone on monarchy as this indicates, he ought to confine himself to discussions of the N. P.

Young men who may have occasion to decline proposals of marriage during 1880, should commit to memory SAMUEL J. TILDEN's response to a reporter, when that venerable bachelor was asked something he did not care to make direct reply to, "I would prefer that it be considered that you had not asked the question."—*Fond du Lac Reporter*.