



"TO WHAT BASE USES!"

[A doctor in the States has discovered a process of preserving dead bodies by compression.—*News Item.*]

"Imperial Caesar dead and turned to clay
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."
So Shakespeare wrote—but by this doctor's plan,
A widow who'd compressed her former man
Might use him now in solid chunks to drub
The flying figure of her second hub.

and it was with some misgivings that I made an engagement for him, at something over the usual figure, with a retired license victualler who was giving a Christmas party. He said he wanted to do the thing in bang-up style, and wouldn't be put off with anything less than an earl.

Next day Earl Devereux came to draw his money, looking all broke up. "Please take my name off youah books—aw," he said, as I handed him his cheque.

"Why, what's the matter? Anything wrong?"

He groaned despairingly. "Oh, it was tewwible. I cawn't submit to such—aw—degwadation. I weally cawn't, you know. I nevah saw such howwid bad taste—such bwutal vulgawity—aw. They had the mistletoe hanging in the hall, and the hostess, a fat, wed-faced female of fifty, thwew her beefy arms about my neck and—aw—actually embwaced me! I shuddaw when I think of it! And the unfeceling wetches lawfed in a coahse and bwutal way at my awful pwedicament. Then duwing the evening they insisted on my playing 'blind man's buff' and 'spin the twenchah,'—a beastly game with forfeits, you know, and subjected me to outwageous indignities of a similaw chawacter. The host got scandalously dwunk and slapped me on the back and indulged in low familiawities of that sort. I tried to leave at about ten, but the low bwute, you know, called out, 'Ere, Devereux, you ain't goin' to make a sneak now. You're hingaged for the 'ole hevenin', and paid

'andsome, too.' I wemained some time attah, and when I found an opportunity to retiah the hostess attempted to wepeat—aw—the osculatowy perfawmance. I taw myself fwom her and fled in tewwaw from the house. I cawn't bwing myself to wisk a repetition of my painful expewience. I shall go and live in seclusion, somewhere in Fwance."

Earl Devereux's experience will give you a notion of some of the difficulties which the "Society Bureau" has had to encounter. Fortunately, all aristocrats are not equally sensitive, and the people of the social grade of the retired publican who insist on engaging earls for their parties, are not many. However, as a safeguard I have since embodied a clause in the contract providing that our aristocrats shall not be subjected to personal indignities, or expected to join in games of forfeits.

So far we have not been able to secure any of the Royal Family on our list, but I'm in hopes. The subject will require to be broached very delicately. We could get £1,000 per evening for a prince, and I don't think from all I hear that the Duke of Edinburgh is the man to throw away a chance like that. A friend of my partner's has undertaken to sound him on the matter.

One of our dukes has just called to get his assignments for to-morrow evening, so I must conclude.

Yours truthfully,
THE FAKIR.