

except Lord Alfred Courtland's deplorable ignorance of that said art of 'life about town,' in which he appears to have striven in vain to become a proficient, I am at a loss to conceive."

"Perhaps the simplest answer to Mr. D'Almayne's statement will be to place the note, on which the foundations of my 'mole-hill inflated into a mountain' rest, in Mr. Barrington's hands, asking him, for his own satisfaction, and for that of the other gentlemen present, to read it aloud."

As he spoke, Lord Alfred drew from his pocket the note given him by Tirrett, and handed it to Barrington, who, after a moment's hesitation, read aloud the following notable epistle, which the reader may remember was written by D'Almayne, with his usual cool audacity, in Lord Alfred Courtland's lodgings:—

"DEAR TIRRETT,—Your game is clear: let A. C—— and O'B——n each believe that you will ride for him, and at the last minute throw both over. In this case, Captain Annesley's Black Eagle is safe to win, as I daresay you know better than I do; thus you will perceive how to make a paying book. If I prove a true prophet, I shall expect a fifty pound note from you, as O'B——n will (before you quarrel with him) tell you I got up the whole affair myself, introducing him to A. C——, &c.

"I remain, yours faithfully,

"YOU'LL KNOW WHO WHEN I CLAIM THE TIN.

"P.S.—If you make a heavy purse out of the business, I shall expect ten per cent. on all beyond five hundred pounds."

As Barrington ceased reading, D'Almayne observed coolly,—

"Exactly as I expected—an anonymous letter, supposed to be mine on the word of a blackguard horsedealer (who probably wrote it himself to conceal his own rascality), and eagerly caught at by this fiery young gentleman, who, anxious to prove that he is out of leading-strings, gladly seeks any pretext for quarrelling with one to whom his Lordship has a painful consciousness that he appears no more a hero than to his valet de chambre. Tirrett declares that I wrote this letter, I say I did no such thing; there is no proof about the matter, it is simply a question of assertion—Tirrett's word against mine. I leave it to the gentlemen present to say which is most worthy of credit."

"Allow me to mention one small circumstance which may assist them to arrive at a just decision," interposed Lord Alfred quietly; "I have a perfect recollection of Mr. D'Almayne's writing a note, much resembling the one in question, at my lodgings, on the morning before he left England. If I am right in my conjecture, the date would be the 5th of last month, and the post-mark Pall Mall; may I trouble you to ascertain the point, Mr. Barrington?"

"Right in both respects," was the unhesitating reply. "Moreover,