

"You know what I mean. You at any rate can understand me, though I fear you are too far gone to abandon the idea of making a fortune."

"I would abandon it to—how if I could come into a fortune ready made. A man must at any rate eat."

"Yes;—he must eat. But I am not quite sure," said Wharton thoughtfully, "that he need think about what he eats."

"Unless the beef is sent up without horse radish!" It had happened that when the two men sat down to their dinner the insufficient quantity of that vegetable supplied by the steward of the club had been all consumed, and Wharton had complained of the grievance.

"A man has a right to that for which he has paid," said Wharton, with mock solemnity, "and if he passes over laches of that nature without observation he does an injury to humanity at large. I'm not going to be caught in a trap, you know, because I like horse radish with my beef. Well, I can't go farther out of my way, as I have a deal of reading to do before I court my Morpheus. If you'll take my advice you'll go straight to the governor. Whatever Emily may feel I don't think she'll say much to encourage you unless you go about it after that fashion. She has prim notions of her own, which perhaps are not after all so much amiss when a man wants to marry a girl."

"God forbid that I should think that anything about your sister was amiss!"

"I don't think there is much myself. Women are generally superficial,—but some are honestly superficial and some dishonestly. Emily at any rate is honest."

"Stop half a moment." Then they sauntered arm in arm down the broad pavement leading from Pall Mall to the Duke of York's column. "I wish I could make out your father more clearly. He is always civil to me, but he has a cold way of looking at me which makes me think I am not in his good books."

"He is like that to everybody."

"I never seem to get beyond the skin with him. You must have heard him speak of me in my absence?"

"He never says very much about any body."

"But a word would let me know how the land lies. You know me well enough to be aware that I am the last man to be curious as to what others think of me. Indeed I do not care about it as much as a man should do. I am utterly indifferent to the opinion of the world at large, and would never object to the company of a pleasant person because the pleasant person abused me behind my back. What I value is the pleasantness of the man and not his liking or disliking for myself. But here the dearest aim of my life is concerned, and I might be guided either this way or that, to my great advantage, by knowing whether I stand well or ill with him."

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