

brushed and oiled his hair till it shone with a high light like a patch of baldness, and every woman wore her finest cloak and bonnet, and the boy to be bandaged was conspicuous for the newness and pinkness of a shirt the Squire himself had presented to him. Each member of the audience was supplied with a shiny black note-book and pencil, and the Squire, sitting in the third row, set them the example of studiously committing to a similar note-book any point whereon the lecturer insisted.

"When you see me write anything down," he had warned them earlier in the evening, "you just pencil that black in your books. It will be something important to remember. And when you see me slip my book into my pocket and hold my umbrella so, you set to and clap for your lives. We must show the lady we appreciate the trouble she is taking."

There was a great deal of applause on the occasion of the second lecture.

The Squire wrote studiously and frequently in his book, keeping a corner of his eye upon the audience. And at least a dozen times during the course of the lecture he gave vent to a hushed and respectful "Hear, hear." The second lecture was even a greater success than the first. And the lecturer's face was a picture to see.

"It is the most intelligent and interested class I have ever lectured to," she said enthusiastically. Whereat the Major beamed like a lighthouse.

"I have had a precious busy week, I tell you, seeing to that rope and linseed meal and all the things," he told her.

brought them up fools, my dear, and though I'm their father I must say they are not what I'd have chosen if choice had been given me."

So her ladyship and daughters occupied the front row with distinctly depressing effect.

"What the deuce is the matter with the woman?" the Major muttered, glaring sidelong from his seat in the third row. She had invited him to sit with her. But he had the magic-lantern to look after. She had now put up her lorgnettes and was gazing into the lecturer's face with marked and patent disapproval. "And what the dickens does she mean by shaking hands with Miss Ramsay as though she had been a dress-maker?"

He had seen the girl flush and her face set proudly under Lady Basham's patronage. And in the glare of that disparaging frown she lost some of her high-spirited spontaneity and friendly brightness. But with steady eyes and a fine color she made her points and stood her ground admirably.

"Perhaps," she said presently, fixing Lady Basham with a glowing gaze, "perhaps one of the ladies in the front row will kindly come up on to the platform and show you again how this bandage should be put on. It helps the class to see one of their number doing things."

There was a pause.

Then "You go, Miss Maude, will you not?" the Major urged.

"Go," her mother whispered.

Maude went. Then Lady Basham gnashed her teeth. In the face and bearing of the untrained woman—the woman



"The Bashams"

"It has been quite a godsend to have something to do."

He stood again watching the lights of the receding brougham.

"She just twists and twines them round her little finger," he murmured. "And words—why, they float out of her mouth like—like butterflies. I never saw such a deuced queer thing as this is. You can't tell whether you're on your head or your heels."

On the occasion of the fourth lecture there were not so cheerful.

Lady Basham, with the two Misses Basham, from the next village occupied the front row. They did not require the whole front row, of course; but the Bashams were very great people, and not friendly and simple like the Major, and the villagers sitting beaming just below the platform curtsied humbly and retreated to the rear when the three ladies rustled in importantly.

"I shall see for myself," Lady Basham had said severely to his lordship, "and if there is anything that I consider indelicate, or if she attempts to take off the boy's stockings, I shall march out immediately with the girls and so express my disapproval. I consider that the County Council has disgraced itself by not inquiring into this person's age and—appearance."

"Pooh, pooh, my dear," his lordship had retorted; "you can't shut Roberts away from every pretty woman, you know, and if he don't want Maude—why, he won't take Maude, so there's an end of it. And Miss Ramsay's a lady—I knew her father—and a deuced sight prettier and cleverer than those prim misses of yours. You've

whose faculties lack that fine finish only reached by discipline and culture—there is always something missing. Though she be the daughter of a hundred earls the slip-stitch up-bringing of what may be termed a "carpet-training" will leave her unredeemed of a suspicion of milliner, the type of flimsy, narrow-chested femininity. Miss Ramsay's form and features were quick with fine intelligence; she moved with the restrained grace of discipline and self-command. She had faced the reality and responsibility of living. She was essentially a woman. And Miss Basham—well, Miss Basham was a "young lady." And in this year of grace and progress to be a "young lady" is to commit the most grievous of all sins against breeding.

Lady Basham, realizing it, gnashed her teeth. The Major, seeing it, grew white to the lips. For a man who has once known a woman can never after satisfy his soul with anything less. Miss Basham was a beauty, but she came out badly from the encounter. Miss Ramsay, with a pretty tact and skill, remedied the faults of the other's prentice hand.

"Thank you," she said smiling; "you did it beautifully." And Miss Basham descended from the platform rustling and with her elbows squared.

"By Jove!" the Major muttered under his breath, "If she'd had any cat in her—and a woman might under the circumstances of the Basham glare—it would have come out then. I'm glad she showed them what a bit of breeding is." And from that hour there was no room in his heart for images of Maude.

He was driving Miss Ramsay to the

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