



HOW TO ENCOURAGE AGRICULTURE.

M. MERCIER—"There! I propose to encourage Agriculture by giving you medals for successful farming—three grades, 'Merit,' 'Great Merit,' and 'Very Great Merit.' What do you say to that? Am I not a wise and paternal statesman?"

HABITANT—"Medals are well enough, but if you really want to encourage us, use your influence to get some of the taxation lifted off our shoulders!"

THE FAKIR IN ENGLAND.

LONDON, ENG.

MY DEAR BOY,—Well, I've struck it rich at last, and no mistake. Making money hand over fist. Grand, new, perfectly original scheme, and what's more, the British public have caught on. Let me see, when last I wrote I was running the English branch of the Liberal temperance Union. (Cap. "L" and lower-case "t"). It wasn't a permanency—not for me. Soon as I had it fairly started they went and appointed auditors and wanted to examine into my accounts. Of course I wasn't going to stand that kind of foolishness, so I resigned, and sent the auditors a few unpaid bills, as they seemed to want something to work on.

I came to London, and, after knocking around some time, found a partner with a few hundred pounds. We rented an office in a fashionable neighborhood, and started the "Society Bureau." It is without exception the biggest thing I ever struck. It's just exactly what the British public have been hankering after for years, only nobody had the enterprise to start it till I came along.

London, you see, has any number of poverty-stricken aristocrats. Their income from rents has fallen off, till they can't live on it. They won't work—that would be *infra dig*—and are at their wits' end for money. On the other hand, there are any number of common folks,

tradespeople, and so on, who are enormously wealthy, and ambitious of getting into society, and rubbing shoulders with the nobility. The "Society Bureau" brings these two classes together, introduces the poor aristocrat, whose title is his capital, to the wealthy nobody, who is willing to pay handsomely for the honor. See?

The bureau is conducted on strict business principles. We have a list of dukes, earls, viscounts, baronets, literary celebrities, etc., who are willing to hire out to dinner parties, receptions, and other entertainments, with a regular tariff of prices, according to rank. A duke, for instance, isn't to be had under 100 guineas, and if his duchess goes along he wants 200. An earl can be had for fifty guineas, and a countess—which is the female of the earl species—for forty. Barts and ordinary Sirs come cheap. They are rather a drug in the society market. They run usually from five to twenty guineas. You'll notice we do all our business in guineas, which are ever so much more aristocratic than pounds. Besides, a guinea is more than a pound.

We are doing a rushing business. We have only a couple of dukes on the list, and they are worked nearly off their feet. They sometimes take in half a dozen houses in a single evening. If they go in their ducal coronets and decorations it is twenty-five per cent. extra.

We lost one of our best earls shortly after we started. He couldn't stand the racket. Earl Devereux is of a somewhat haughty temperament, as an earl ought to be,