

## THE FORTUNE OF LAW.

I was chatting one day with an old school-fellow of mine, who, though young, was a barrister of some eminence, when the conversation turned upon his own career.

'People,' he said, 'give me credit for much more than I deserve. They compliment me on having attained my position by talent, and sagacity, and all that; but the fact is, I have been an extremely lucky man—I mean as regards opportunities. The only thing for which I really can consider myself entitled to any credit is, that I have always been prompt to take advantage of them.'

'But,' I observed, 'you have a high reputation for legal knowledge and acumen. I have heard several persons speak in terms of great praise of the manner in which you conducted some of your late cases.'

'Ah! yes,' he returned; 'when a man is fortunate, the world soon find fine things in him. There is nothing like gilding to hide imperfections and bring out excellences.—But I will just give you one instance of what I call my luck. It happened a year or two ago, and before I was quite as well known as I am now; it was a trivial thing in itself, but very important in its consequences to me, and has ever since been very fresh in my memory. I had been retained on behalf of a gentleman who was defendant in an action for debt, brought against him by a bricklayer, to recover the amount of a bill, stated to be due for building work done on the gentleman's premises. The owner refused payment on the ground that a verbal contract had been made for the execution of the work, at a price less by one-third than the amount claimed. Unfortunately he had no witnesses to the fact. The man denied the contract, alleged that no specification had been made, and pleaded, finally, that if such contract had been entered into, it was vitiated by alterations, to all of which he was prepared to swear, and had his assistant also ready to certify the amount of labor and material expended. I gave my opinion that it was a hopeless case, and that the defendant had better agree to a compromise than incur any further expense. However, he would not, and I was fain to trust to the chapter of accidents for any chance of success.

'Near the town where the trial was to take place, lived an old friend of mine, who, after the first day's assize, carried me off in his carriage to dine and sleep at his house, engaging to drive me over early next morning in time for this case, which stood next on the list. Mr. Tritten, the gentleman in question, was there also, and we had another discussion as to the prospects of his defence. 'I know the fellow,' said he, 'to be a thorough rascal, and it is because I feel so confident that something will come out to prove it, that I am determined to persist.'—I said I hoped it might be so, and we retired to rest.

'After breakfast the next morning, my host drove me over in his dog-cart to the assize town. We were just entering the outskirts, when, from a turning down by the old inn and posting-house, where the horse was usually put up, there came running towards us a lad pursued by a man, who was threatening him in a savage manner. Finding himself overtaken, the lad, after the custom of small boys in such circumstances, lay down, curling himself up, and holding his hands clasped over his head. The man approached, and after beating him roughly with his fist, and trying to pull him up without success, took hold of the collar of the boy's coat and knocked his head several times on the ground. We were just opposite at the moment, and my friend bade him let the lad alone, and not be such a brute.—The fellow scowled, and telling us, with an oath, to mind our own business, for the boy was his own, and he had a right to beat him if he pleased, walked off, and his victim scampered away in an opposite direction.

'The dog-cart was put up, and we presently went on to the court. The case was opened in an off-hand style by the opposite counsel, who characterized the plea of a contract as a shallow evasion, and called the plaintiff as his principal witness. What was my surprise to see get into the box the very man whom we had beheld hammering the boy's head on the kerb-stone an hour before. An idea occurred to me at the moment, and I half averted my face from him; though, indeed, it was hardly likely he would recognize me under my forensic wig. He gave his evidence in a positive, defiant sort of way, but very clearly and decisively. He had evidently got his story well by heart, and was determined to stick to it. I rose and made a show of cross-examining him till I saw that he was getting irritated and

denying things in a wholesale style. He had been drinking too, I thought, just enough to make him insolent and reckless. So, after a few more unimportant questions, I asked in a casual tone—

'You are married, Mr. Myers?'

'Yes, I am.'

'And you are a kind husband, I suppose?'

'I suppose so; what then?'

'Have any children blessed your union, Mr. Myers?'

'The plaintiff's counsel here called on the judge to interfere. The questions were irrelevant and impertinent to the matter in question.

I pledged my word to the Court that they were neither, but had a very important bearing on the case, and was allowed to proceed. I repeated my question.

'I've a boy and a girl.'

'Pray, how old are they?'

'The boy's twelve, and the girl is nine I believe.'

'Ah! Well, I suppose you are an affectionate father, as well as a kind husband.—You are not in the habit of beating your wife and children, are you?'

'I don't see what business it is of yours. No! I ain't.'

'You don't knock your son about, for example?'

'No! I don't. (He was growing downright savage, especially as the people in the court began to laugh.)

'You don't pummel him with your fist, eh?'

'No! I don't.'

'Or knock his head upon the ground, in this manner?' (and I rapped the table with my knuckles.)

'No! (indignantly.)

'You never did such a thing?'

'No!'

'You swear to that?'

'Yes!'

All this time I had never given him an opportunity of seeing my face; I now turned towards him and said—

'Look at me, sir. Did you ever see me before?'

He was about to say No again; but all at once he stopped, turned very white, and made no answer.

'That will do,' I said; 'stand down, sir. My lord, I shall prove to you that this witness is not to be believed on his oath.'

I then related what we had seen that morning, and putting my friend, who had been sitting behind me all the while, into the witness-box, he of course confirmed the statement.

The Court immediately decided that the man was unworthy of belief, and the result was a verdict for the defendant, with costs, and a severe reprimand from the judge to Myers, who was very near being committed for perjury. But for the occurrence of the morning, the decision would inevitably have been against us. As I said before, it was in a double sense fortunate for me, for it was the means of my introduction, through Mr. Tritten, to an influential and lucrative connexion.

## A REMARKABLE STORY OF GARRICK.

The celebrated English actor, Garrick, made a trip to Paris in 1757, when he was in the height of his talent and fame. He traveled for amusement, a mere tourist, anxious to visit a beautiful country which he might claim as his own. The family of the English actor was of French extraction; they fled from the country upon the revocation of the edict of Nantes. In the mail coach that bore them from London to Dover, Garrick found, for a fellow-traveler, Sir George Lewis, a gentleman he had met several times before in company, and had known for a constant frequenter of Drury Lane Theatre. They took advantage of this casual encounter to improve their acquaintance; each was delighted with the other.—After crossing the channel together they came to Paris in the same vehicle, but when they reached the capital they separated.—The actor went to the house of the friends who were expecting him; and Sir George took up his lodgings in one of those splendidly furnished houses of the Quartier de la Chaussee d'Antin, which then began to be a very fashionable quarter of the town.—The two traveling companions had promised to see a good deal of each other during their stay in Paris, but the very different life each of them led rendered it impossible for them to execute their resolutions. Sir George Lewis was a man between forty-five and fifty years old, with a very singular face, whose irregular and prominent features made his physiognomy most eccentric and expressive. During the whole journey Garrick had admired that countenance, thinking what an effect it would produce on the stage.

Despite his age, which should have cooled the ardor of his character, and should have engaged him to abandon the follies of youth, Sir George Lewis lived in the midst of dissipation and pleasure. He had come to Paris to amuse himself by gaily spending a large legacy unexpectedly bequeathed to him.—He was passionately fond of gaming, and the satisfaction of his passion led him into a very mixed company, as, indeed, are all companions where gaming is indulged, since these men are valued by the sum of money they are able or willing to stake on the cards, a test which allows many sharpers to slip in. The actor lived in a very different sort of society, and during the four months of their stay in Paris the two traveling companions scarcely met above two or three times. Just as he was about leaving Paris Garrick called upon Sir George Lewis to bid him good-bye, and inquire if he had any commands for London. To his horror he found that the unhappy gentleman had been assassinated the previous evening. His body had been found that very morning in the forest of Bondy, covered with wounds and bathed in blood. Deeply touched, Garrick exerted himself to ascertain as much as possible the details of the deplorable event. He found that Sir George Lewis had been one of a party of pleasure to visit a chateau in the environs of Bondy, where a large number of sportsmen and gamblers were assembled. He intended to remain there a few days.—The first evening of his visit he won a large sum of money at the gaming-table.

In the afternoon of the second day he received a note from Paris engaging him to a gallant rendezvous, and immediately on receipt of it he bade adieu to the company. They tried to detain him, less out of politeness, perhaps, than a desire of winning back the money he had taken from them, and this desire was so vehement as to carry them to the resolution of dismounting his carriage. But Sir George Lewis was a man of will, and he determined to return to Paris on horseback. He leaped on his horse and galloped away. Further than this Garrick could learn nothing. The police were inclined to believe the catastrophe one of the usual adventures then frequent in the forest of Bondy; but Garrick pointed out to them that Sir George Lewis' pistols were found loaded in their holsters, and that, while his purse had been taken from him, his gold watch, gold snuff-box and diamond ring were untouched, from whence he concluded, firstly, that Sir George Lewis had not been attacked by a banditti, but by some acquaintance, who perfidiously took him off his guard; and secondly, that the personal property lay untouched merely because the robber was afraid of compromising himself. Therefore the assassin was an acquaintance of Sir George Lewis, and moved in the social circle to which the late knight belonged.—The society assembled at the chateau was then secretly scanned by Garrick and the police, and suspicion alighted on an Italian called the Chevalier Gaetan. This Italian was proved to have quitted the chateau shortly after Sir George Lewis, and despite his explanations, he was arrested; but no direct evidence could be brought against him, and the noble proprietor of the chateau, who was naturally anxious that no such cloud as crime should rest on his 'friends,' used every exertion to procure the liberation of the Italian. At this moment Garrick intervened. He begged the police to allow him to make an experiment which he declared was decisive. Garrick, as everybody knows, was famous for his play of feature; he could assume whatever countenance he pleased. Sir George Lewis had had his portrait and 'make up' himself.—The police fetched the Italian from the jail, and took him, well escorted, to Sir George Lewis' rooms. Uneasy and perplexed at this move, (for he had been a visitor at Sir George Lewis' house,) he questioned the police agents what they were going to do with him. No reply was made to his inquiries until they reached the deceased's house, when the Chief of Police said:

'Sir George Lewis is not dead. He accuses you of attempting to assassinate him. I am going to confront you both.'

The Italian trembled, he could scarcely speak, his confidence all forsook him. He was carried into the room where Garrick stood. The great actor represented Sir George Lewis to the life; he had his face, features, expression, gesture, and it was in the very tone of the deceased knight that Garrick exclaimed:

'You wretch! You assassin! Do you deny your crime before me?'

The Italian was thunderstruck, and falling upon his knees confessed his crime and prayed for mercy. He was hung.

**KEEP THE CONSCIENCE CLEAR.**—Whoever believes that knavery, cruelty, hypocrisy, or any other vice, can, under any circumstances, promote even the temporal happiness of him who practices it, is but a superficial observer and a shallow reasoner. In the world's parlance, men who acquire wealth and influence by unwarrantable means are called prosperous. But what is prosperity in the true and legitimate sense of the word? Webster tells us: 'Advance or gain in anything good.' No man can be deemed truly prosperous whose conscience is ill at ease; and whoever enriches himself at the expense of justice, duty and honor, plunges his soul, even here, into a state of adversity which no indulgence of the senses, no adulation of time-servers and parasites, nothing that money can buy, or power command, will effectually or permanently relieve.

Another strong argument in favor of doing right is, that out of every hundred men who seek wealth by dishonorable roads, ninety-nine come to poverty and shame.—This is a statistical fact, and taken in combination with the other undeniable truth, that the small per centage of aspiring knaves who win their game feel in their souls that it has been dearly won at the sacrifice of inward peace and self-esteem, should long ago have made all the world honest, on selfish principles.

The retrospect review of a disappointed scamp must be melancholy in the extreme. He sees, of course, with terrible distinctness, how each departure from rectitude helped to cloud his life, sink him deeper in misery, and alienate from him the sympathies of the noble and the good. He is conscious of the besotted blindness which led him to put his trust in cunning and chicane, instead of choosing the path of duty and leaving the consequences to Providence, and is compelled to acknowledge to himself that roguery is the twin of folly, and a pure life the best evidence of a sound brain as well as of a Christian spirit.

Be assured, therefore, that it is good worldly policy to keep the conscience clear. It tends to comfort, content, real happiness; nor can this fair earth, and the excellent things with which it abounds, be thoroughly enjoyed by any Croesus to whose gold cling the curses of the wronged. The closing scenes of a life are, however, the grand test of the wisdom or folly which shaped its course. Sir Walter Scott's dying words tell the whole story: 'Be a good man, Lockhart, nothing else will comfort you when you come to lie here.'

**FALSE AND TRUE SMILES.**—Thank Heaven! there are a goodly number of people who smile because they can't help it—whose happiness, bubbling up from their heart, runs over in smiles at their lips, or bursts through them in jovial laughter. And there is a difference between the false and the true symbol of joy that enables the keen observer readily to distinguish the one from the other. The natural expression of delight varies with the emotion that gives way to it, but the counterfeit smile is a stereotype, and the tone of a hypocrite's laugh never varies.—The crocodile, if the scaly old hypocrite he is represented to be, should be accredited with smiles as well as tears. False smiles are, in fact, much more common than false tears. It is the easiest thing in the world to work the smile, while only a few gifted individuals have sufficient command of their eyes to weep at will. Few great tragedians, even, have the knack of laying on the waters of affliction *impromptu*; but who ever saw a supernumerary bandit that could not 'smile, and smile, and be a villain,' or a chorus-singer or a ballet girl, that did not look as if she had been newly tickled across the lips with a straw! Of artificial smiles, there are a greater number than we have space to classify. The Countess of Belgravia has her receiving smile, a superb automatic effect. Count Faro, the distinguished foreigner, who is trying London this year because Baden-Baden doesn't agree with him, shuffles the cards with a smile that distracts everybody's attention from his fingers. Miss Magnet, whose heart and lips dissolved partnership in very early life, makes such a Cupid's bow of the latter whenever an 'eligible match' approaches, that fortunes flutter round her like moths round a flame. The Hon. Mr. Verisoph, who wants to get into parliament, cultivates a popular smile. In short, smiling is a regular business accomplishment of thousands of people whose souls have no telegraphic communication with their lips.

**IMMORTALITY OF THOUGHT.**—One great and kindling thought, from a retired and obscure man, may live when thrones are fallen and the memory of those who filled them is obliterated, and like an undying fire may illuminate and quicken all future generations.