

THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE.

When it was announced that the Hon. Lillian Curzon—the energetic organizer of the Primrose League—was desirous of establishing a Dames' habitation at Snobton, the conservative ladies of that little town were thrown into a flutter of delicious excitement.

No doubt the enthusiasm of most of the ladies was due to real political feeling, but it would scarcely be uncharitable to say that with many it was largely the result of a desire to mingle with their betters, so that if the scheme had been proposed by the vicar's wife instead of by a peer's daughter they would have received it much more coolly.

Among ladies of the latter class the chief was Mrs. Tallow, the wife of a wealthy butter merchant of that name. Mrs. Tallow was probably a thorough Tory, but she was unquestionably a complete flunky.

Her ambition her husband appeared not to share. He discouraged all her efforts in that direction, and for a long time she was compelled to pine in the obscurity of her own class.

A very short time spent in reflection was enough to decide the course she should take. She would at once write in reply to the circular, and assure the Hon. Lillian of her enthusiastic support.

Mrs. Tallow at once accepted this duty, and without delay sent a circular to the other Snobton ladies, stating that by request of Miss Curzon she desired the honor of their attendance at a meeting at her house for the purpose of making arrangements for establishing a Dames' habitation of the Primrose League.

These remarks, it may be guessed, soon found their way to Mrs. Tallow's ears, but she only laughed at them. The vicar's wife might be as bitter as she pleased; Mrs. Tallow had the trump cards in her hand, and knew it.

Tallow was overjoyed by this communication from so distinguished a person, and summoned a meeting of the provisional committee to consider how they should recognize the honor the vicar's wife had done them by joining their habitation.

The warrant having been duly received, the inaugural meeting was held. It was a red-letter day in Mrs. Tallow's calendar. The vicar's wife and her eldest son, Hon. Cecil Torrington, and Hon. Lillian Curzon dined at her house before going to the meeting.

After dinner they all attended the inaugural meeting. The vicar's wife occupied the chair, and was appointed president of the habitation.

It has already been said that Mr. Tallow did not at first share his wife's ambition to become a member of fashionable society; this, however, was owing to his belief in the hopelessness of the thing.

It was a month or two after Mr. Tallow had become a private gentleman that he broached a project to his lady which surprised and delighted her.

"I don't mean that," answered Mr. Tallow. "I mean I was thinking you should go up for the season. All the nobles do that, you know."

"You don't mean it, William, do you?" she asked. "Yes, Maria, I do," replied Mr. Tallow, resolutely. "I've been thinking that as we're pretty rich, and have no children to provide for, we should enjoy ourselves."

"I don't see any reason, William," said Mrs. Tallow, trying to hide her ecstasy. "Then, you see," continued Mr. Tallow, "we ain't like most rich traders; we know a crowd of swells, and are sure to do well in society."

Mr. Tallow continued to stare at the butler, but his gaze was hardly as haughty as first. "I'm sure of it, William," said Mrs. Tallow.

"Yes, Maria," replied Mr. Tallow, looking very seriously into his wife's face. "Yes, we'll make the acquaintance of the leaders of our party. I ain't, exactly sure who they are just now, but I'm certain we'll meet them, and I'm very anxious to do so, because, Maria, let me tell you, I'm a bit ambitious!"

"And if I could only make these acquaintances and learn a few tips from them I don't see why I shouldn't stand for parliament," cried Mrs. Tallow, with a gasp. "Who would have thought it! And I imagined you cared about nothing but business and money."

Neither of them was, however, disappointed. Mr. Tallow especially kept up his spirits, and as the close of the season approached without their having seen any of their noble friends, he resolved to call at the Carlton upon the Viscount Swarth.

"Matters were really beginning to look hopeless, when one morning, as Mrs. Tallow was glancing over the Morning Post, she came upon a notice to the effect that Lady Gooseberry, wife of the conservative statesman, intended to hold at an early date a reception of members of the Primrose League.

As Mr. Tallow was returning home, disappointed and envious, he passed Lord Gooseberry's mansion, and as he passed he looked enviously at the doors which led to his mansion.

"Proud, isn't she? Was going to ask you for an introduction. Glad I didn't." The Tallows did not look that night for any more of their distinguished acquaintances.

"Not know her?" exclaimed Mrs. Tallow. "Why we have met her here a score of times, and once she dined with us." "Oh, yes, I know that," replied the Hon. Lillian, with one of her sweetest smiles.

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