

found it impossible wholly to restrain her vexation. "Perhaps you are satisfied now, Miss Smith," she said with some little bitter inflection in her voice; "and, if the dinner be still worth eating, we may, I hope, be permitted to sit down to it."

We do not say the speech was ladylike: it was not; but, certainly, the circumstances were very irritating. Miss Smith bridled herself up, and entered the room with the others; but, on reaching her allotted seat, bowed to her escort and to the hostess, and retired from the room.

An agreeable dinner party; of course an uncomfortable feeling—a damp over all—a relief when the spoilt evening was over, and the carriages rolled away. And all for what reason? For any adequate cause? Nay, for an idle superstition.

Let us examine a little into the thing.

It simply comes to this. Either that there is another god, called *Luck*, whom it is "unlucky" to vex, and to whom He who orders the fall of a sparrow—He who keeps account not only of the number of stars, but also of the very hairs of our head—has committed the ordering of matters which affect the closest welfare, even the life and the death, of his children; or that this God in whom we believe is absolutely influenced in his decrees for the ordering of the welfare of the life and death of the creature by such things as the number we invite to dinner, the crossing of a knife and fork at table, the spilling of salt, the passing under a ladder, the bringing a snowdrop into the house in January, the setting sail on a Friday, the being married in May, and a hundred other such trivialities, and, let us say, blasphemous insults to the Deity.

Imagine—it seems profane to do so, but why not bring the thing to the test?—imagine God, such as we imagine Him to be—changing his decrees upon such ground as our having one more than twelve, and one less than