

might stand forever. It would be settled then, and both parties would be saved thinking of it.

Indolent and careless Martin Meeker readily assented to so convenient a method of disposing of the business. The idea of settlement—the first he had ever made in his life, quite charmed him. It looked like business, and then it was attended with so little trouble! So the parties settled; and in just a year from the date of the transaction, Pettigrew Pettifogg rode up to the gate as we have related. He could not forbear an affectionate look of concern over the premises, sorrowing at the neglected state of a property which he considered as already his own. Under his sorrow, there was a latent satisfaction at the thought how a little attention, without any great expense, could put matters on an entirely new footing, and make the neglected farm pleasant and productive.

Martin was not quite comfortable in the presence of his visitor, but assumed an alacrity of welcome which he was far enough from feeling. He hurried his guest into the house, unwilling that his too prying eyes should dwell upon the deficiencies in the farm management. The wife, a conscious slattern, under her husband's ill example and depressing influence, withdrew into some dark recess, vainly striving to draw her children after her. But children are not so readily to be taught to hide themselves, and Pettigrew had more than a glimpse of a ragged and forlorn groupe, who *would* want to see what the Squire could possibly want with their father.

Martin produced the ever ready bottle, and rather congratulated himself that, although he had paid more than one visit to it that morning already, the duties of hospitality demanded that he should compel himself to drink again. It required no effort to persuade the lawyer to take his dram: it was drink at another's expense; and until all drink should be furnished on such terms, there was no danger of Pettigrew Pettifogg becoming intemperate; nor, indeed, even then, if he could perceive that it interfered with his bargains or unfitted him for business.

P. Pettifogg, Esq., was a decided opponent of all restrictive laws; he valued the liberty of the citizen. He was averse to all sumptuary regulations, and was the Sir Oracle of the village bar-room on the constitutionality of a law which, once enacted and obeyed, would abridge his practice and defeat his grasping purposes. What chance, for instance, if the nominal proprietors were sober, could exist of Pettigrew getting a claim on Martin Meeker's farm? And there are many other pettifoggers who are lubricating their victims with honeyed words preparatory to swallowing them—estates and all.

No small lawyer—we mean no mean man—approves of the Maine Law. Freedom in the liquor traffic is his warrant of success, and enables him to join house to house and field to field, till there be none but himself left in possession. Whom the gods would destroy, the ancients used to say they first made mad.—Whom knaves would plunder, in these modern days, they first make drunk. It is not always the summary process of thieves and pick-pockets; slow poisoning answers the same purpose, and is not so palpable.

"A fine glass of brandy," said the lawyer, smacking his lips. Now Martin knew the lawyer lied, for he was a good judge of liquor; and as the farmer's city account

had long stood unadjusted, he was compelled to content himself with second ordinary from the country dealer. But Martin said nothing, though he might have blushed, if his face had not already too deep a color. The lawyer proceeded: "I suppose you have made provision against contingencies, for the fanatics are resolved that a man shall no longer keep the key of his own cellar."

It was a theme on which the two were congenial, or appeared to be so; and Martin Meeker's heart so softened towards the attorney, that he even invited him to dinner; though this act of temerity incurred a not very pleasant debate with his wife. He also recommended that the lawyer should consent to be put in nomination for the legislature on the "liberal ticket," but Pettigrew Pettifogg was too cunning for that. He left to others the open opposition and the obloquy; his cue was quietly to take the birds, while others should beat the bush.

Having dined with his client, and saved half a dollar, Pettifogg made motions to depart. Now if, that moment, Martin Meeker had been put upon his oath as to the character and standing of Pettigrew Pettifogg, Esq., councilor and attorney-at-law, the testimony he would have rendered would have endorsed him as the soul of honor and the heart of liberality—a Blackstone in law and a prince in generosity. They had hobnobbed glass to glass. Pettigrew had petted the children; he had complimented the wife; he had smoked, without a wry face, one of Martin's bad segars. He had expressed a great deal of generous sympathy with his client, and altogether ingratiated himself in the most apparently perfect and delightful manner. He had taken his leave all round and reached the door, attended by the family, children and all; he had drawn on one of his driving gloves and taken his whip from the corner, when suddenly a new thought struck him.

"By the way, Martin," he said, turning back into the house, "I had nearly forgotten my business."—What a positive lie that was!

Martin returned with him to the sitting room, and looked aghast and disappointed as the lawyer produced his drowsical pocket book, and said, "We might as well lock over our little affairs."

"I thought we had settled," Martin ventured to remark.

"O, that was a year ago. The world does not stand still—though for the sake of some good fellows, I often wish it did. Time rolls round Martin—and I feel it, both in years and in business matters. I'm not rich, you know—but I sometimes do wish for the honor of good fellowship, that there was no such thing as money. But as I said, I'm not rich, and I have to look out for my own. I'm not going to be hard on an old friend. I only want to arrange things so that when I am gone—and we don't know how soon we shall both go, Martin, things will be found straight between your people and my people. Here's a little instrument—a mere form, you know—which will save dispute, perhaps, and law and litigation. I do detest anything like that—Just read it, and then sign it. Never sign without reading, Martin. Never trust even a friend too far.—We're all poor weak creatures."

And so with a flourish of magnanimity, Pettifogg placed a paper in Martin's hand. The victim, whose senses were not a little steeped in alcohol, blundered