

unused to public reading, he does not know how to modulate it; it is shy from the same cause of unaccustomedness; it is dogged because he is very much displeased with his present occupation, and has not been successful in concealing this displeasure. When a man runs down to Oxford for a couple of nights, to see how the six years that have passed since he turned his undergraduate back upon the old place have treated her—runs down to a college chum unseen for the same six years—this is certainly not the way in which he expects to spend one of his two evenings.

"I hope you will not mind, Jim"—ominous phrase—the college friend has said; "but I am afraid we shall have to turn out for half an hour after dinner. It is rather a nuisance, particularly as it is such a wet night; but the fact is, I have promised to read to the 'Oxford Women's Provident Association.' Ah, by-the-bye, that is new since you were here—we had no Provident Women in your day!"

"On the other hand, we had a great many improvident men," returns Jim dryly.

"Well, the fact is, my wife is on the committee, and is a good deal interested in it, and we give them a sort of entertainment once a month through the winter terms—tea and buns, that kind of thing, sixpence a head; they enjoy it more than if we gave it them for nothing; and after tea we get people to recite and read and sing to them. I am sorry I wish them joy of my reading to-night, for I do not know how I am to make myself audible; I am as hoarse as a crow."

"I know those Oxford colds of old," returns Burgoyne with that temperate compassion in his voice which we accord to our neighbours' minor diseases. He is sorry that his friend has a cold; but he little knows how much sorrier he will be in the course of the next hour as he adds: "Do not distress yourself about me; I shall be quite happy