

he lives, he becomes mysterious, and almost open to suspicion. It begins to be known that nobody knows anything of such a man, and even friends become afraid. It is certainly convenient to be able to allude, if it be but once in a year, to some blood relation.

Ferdinand Lopez, who in other respects had much in his circumstances on which to congratulate himself, suffered trouble in his mind respecting his ancestors such as I have endeavoured to describe. He did not know very much himself, but what little he did know he kept altogether to himself. He had no father or mother, no uncle, aunt, brother or sister, no cousin even whom he could mention in a cursory way to his dearest friend. He suffered, no doubt;—but with Spartan consistency he so hid his trouble from the world that no one knew that he suffered. Those with whom he lived, and who speculated often and wondered much as to who he was, never dreamed that the silent man's reticence was a burden to himself. At no special conjuncture of his life, at no period which could be marked with the finger of the observer, did he glaringly abstain from any statement which at the moment might be natural. He never hesitated, blushed, or palpably laboured at concealment; but the fact remained that though a great many men and not a few women knew Ferdinand Lopez very well, none of them knew whence he had come, or what was his family.

He was a man, however, naturally reticent, who never alluded to his own affairs unless in pursuit of some object the way to which was clear before his eyes. Silence therefore on a matter which is common in the mouths of most men was less difficult to him than to another, and the result less embarrassing. Dear old Jones, who tells his friends at the club of every pound that he loses or wins at the races, who boasts of Mary's favours and mourns over Lucy's coldness almost in public, who issues bulletins on the state of his purse, his stomach, his stable, and his debts, could not with any amount of care keep from us the fact that his father was an attorney's clerk, and made his first money by discounting small bills. Everybody knows it, and Jones, who likes popularity, grieves at the unfortunate publicity. But Jones is relieved from a burden which would have broken his poor shoulders, and which even Ferdinand Lopez, who is a strong man, often finds it hard to bear without wincing.

It was admitted on all sides that Ferdinand Lopez was a "gentleman." Johnson says that any other derivation of this difficult word than that which causes it to signify "a man of ancestry" is whimsical. There are many, who in defining the term for their own use, still adhere to Johnson's dictum;—but they adhere to it with certain unexpressed allowances for possible exceptions. The chances are very much in favour of the well-born man, but exceptions may exist. It was not generally believed that Ferdinand Lopez was well born;—but he was a gentleman. And this most precious rank was acceded to him although he was employed,—or at least had been employed,—on business which does not of itself

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