

so cautious in practice as he is theoretically. He has more than once nibbled at the bait of ten per cent offered on a plausible prospectus, and through the venal money article of newspapers, and been hooked by the nose for his pains. If the truth could be known, he has probably in the course of fifteen years, frittered away about £40,000 in unremunerative speculation; but he has been no more reckless in this respect than other landowners, and the breezy way in which he has borne his losses only proves how well he could afford to lose. Had he been a gambler, an owner of racing-stables, a collector of paintings, china, or bric-a-brac, he might have lost even more, and got a reputation for being a silly fellow into the bargain. As it is, he is looked upon as a highly sensible and steady-going person. He is forty-five years old, and inherited his estates about fifteen years ago, when he was thirty. In his youth, he was educated at Eton and Oxford, and did nothing at either of those seats of learning. The head master of Eton occasionally birched him, the boys kicked him; and he, when he got older, proceeded to kick younger boys. From twelve to fourteen he was the fag of a parson's son; from sixteen to eighteen he had a young Earl and a Baronet to fag for him, and thus he was enabled to acquire broad views on the subject of social distinctions. At Oxford, his tutor paid no more attention to his moral or intellectual welfare than it is the custom of tutors to do; but young D'Avenant had no evil instincts, and contented himself with idling and hunting to the top of his bent, until it became necessary to take his degree, when his obliging tutor crammed him for a brief season, and, after two "ploughs," got him through with a "pass." This was all that Squire D'Avenant's heir needed, for he never opened a Greek or Latin book after he left college, and might as well have been learning Hotentot during his stay at Oxford for all the use he ever made of his attainments. But of course he had derived the usual social advantages from his stay at Eton and Christ Church, and had picked up a great many more friends than he cared to acknowledge when he went forth into the world. During a couple of years after he left Oxford he was often bored by the painful necessity of having to cut old acquaintances, who, if encouraged, might have become too familiar with him, and have borrowed his money, for our friend John was known to be a very rich man.

Society makes no mistakes in the bestowal of its homage on the right men. Plain Mr. D'Avenant was welcomed in every drawing-room as more than the equal of any City magnate, and though many aspiring young ladies regretted that he had not a "handle" to his name, their shrewder mammas, looking only to the solid qualities of the young Squire, talked of his rent-roll and hinted at his influence, which would always enable him to get a title when he pleased. In the upshot, the heir of Blewberry Hall fell in love, as we all of us must do; and, queerly enough, he selected his wife from among the young ladies who had striven least to win his good graces. Miss Dora (or Dottie) Bell was a winsome little girl of quiet, homely tastes, who had never aspired to marry a rich man, and who, when Mr. D'Avenant asked her to dance for the first time, rather wondered whether such a "heavy swell," as her brothers called him, could dance. But D'Avenant acquitted himself fairly well of his waltzing; and, his eyes being very quick to discern where his own interests lay, he soon perceived that "Dottie" was just the girl who would make him a good, faithful wife. So he proposed, and was accepted—not without some trembling and diffidence; got married in great pomp, and has never regretted the transaction to the present day. Nor has Dottie.

Men may not always be said to marry wisely when they take wives who are cheerful, faithful, and devoted; for, according to some, it is desirable that a wife should be ambitious for her husband's sake, and spur him on to make proper use of his talents. This maxim only holds good, however, in the case of men who have talents. John D'Avenant's father was no eagle, and John himself was not a goose; but that is about all that can be said for the pair. And, as John's mother had never goaded the old Squire to fly higher than his pinions could carry him comfortably, so did John's wife abstain from filling her husband with a buoyant ambition. When the old Squire died, he had been sitting in Parliament for twenty years as member for his county; and so the new Squire was asked at once whether he desired to succeed to his father's seat; but hearing that there was another Squire who longed for this honour, John surrendered it to him at once without parley. How would it have benefited him to become a legislator? He was much prouder and happier in succeeding to the post of M.F.H., which he had filled as deputy during his father's last year on earth; and as for official rank, was he not a J.P., a Deputy Lieutenant, a churchwarden, and a chairman of half a dozen charities? The year after he came into his estates he was picked for the office of Sheriff, and during a twelve months he got enough in the way of pomp to last him for a lifetime; for he had to put on a Court suit and attend the Judges when they held their assizes—a formality the more tiresome as the Judges on the rota that year happened to be the dulllest old gentlemen going, who had never hunted in their lives, and could not tell a thoroughbred racer from a jackass. They did not even bestow a glance on the splendid teams of four horses which Mr. D'Avenant had provided for the pair of coaches in which they were driven about—though these eight horses

had cost the Squire not less than six thousand pounds and excited the admiration of every true lover of horseflesh.

Thank goodness, there are many such in the county which Blewberry graces, and Mr. D'Avenant is never at a loss when he wants to consult a neighbour about purchasing a new hunter or effecting some improvement in his stables. But the Squire does not give up all his thoughts to horses, for he is a gentleman of his time, who likes to travel for his amusement in the summer when his boys are home for their holidays. He has sojourned in all the best hotels on the Continent, and knows everything about foreign countries, except their monuments, which bore him. He travels, as he says, to see the people of other lands to enjoy a change of climate, and to give his girls a chance of picking up scraps of French and German. By way of encouraging native industry, however, wherever he goes he buys photographs, pipes, musical boxes, camoes, and even curiosities drawn from ruins which have been excavated. There is a museum of all those things at Blewberry Hall, and it entertains guests; but Mr. D'Avenant alludes to it laughingly as his "Chamber of Horrors," by which he means that it gives him the horrors to be questioned as to whence this or that article comes, and what it means.

For our Squire is not particularly intellectual—no more so than when he was at Oxford. He reads his *Times*, the *Field*, and he has his weekly grin over *Punch*; but, except when some new work on sporting matters is warmly recommended to him, he never opens a book. He pathetically says that he has no time to read; and he might add that most new books are beyond his comprehension. Accustomed to talk in terse pointed English, he can make nothing of that affectation of scientific and technical jargon in which many modern novels are written, besides which he has not the faintest sympathy with any of the *isms* of the day. His faith in religion and in politics is that of his father; and he cannot for the life of him see why any people should be dissatisfied with a Church and a Constitution which pleased the old gentleman so well.

Mr. D'Avenant, however, for all his respect towards the clergy, once nearly quarreled with the Vicar of Blewberry. It was when the reverend gentleman wanted to remove those high-backed curtained pews in which the Squire's father used to sleep so comfortably during sermons. John D'Avenant was not himself given to sleeping in church, but he wanted his curtains left for old custom's sake. Nevertheless, the Vicar had his way, for this is an age of unceasing changes.

MODERN MATRIMONY.

Matrimony is rapidly becoming an unpopular and therefore an unsuccessful institution—at least, so it would seem from a variety of circumstances. Take first of all the breach of promise cases. How often they reveal an engagement entered into for frivolous or mercenary reasons, and, like a house built upon sand, are unable to stand the slightest assault from without. The pretty face, once attractive, loses its charm beside a new one that appears still prettier; the lack of fortune which was to stimulate the lover to still greater exertions becomes a heavy weight, clogging all his energies, and impossible to be borne any longer; or, perhaps, it is simply fickleness, or inconstancy, or a sudden disgust for the holy state that induces the desire to back out before it is too late. Be that as it may, the injured party appeals to law, determined to find some compensation for loss of settlement in life, or a golden salve for the wounded feelings, the slight and mortifications caused by the other's want of faith, and manages to bear with equanimity the reading out in public of letters hitherto sacred to the eyes of one only, to reply to the cross-examination of sarcastic counsel, and hear unmoved the mocking laughter of the crowd. Note the terrible scandals of the Divorce Court, where not only the misdeeds of the parties actually concerned are revealed, but long accounts of their former lives and histories of other people are dragged in, often showing a determined placing in temptation and connivance and wilful collusion on the part of those who should have been the first to protect and guard.

Take modern novels, so enormous in number, and yet varying so little in theme as to resemble endless variations on one air, or a running commentary on the seventh commandment. The heroine marries a "hateful creature," whom she has taken for material gain. She is represented as surrounded by troops of admirers, chief among whom is a former lover, then poor and a nobody, now rich and a "swell." The end varies. Sometimes there is an elopement, followed by a divorce and re-marriage, though occasionally she is deserted, and he marries some lovely adoring innocent in her first season, who at once converts him into a model husband. Or there is an accident in the hunting field, or with "the birds," or on a yacht, which conveniently carries off the husband, so making way for a respectable termination to his wife's fast career. However, now and then he inconveniently comes to life, and sets everybody by the ears. For a change, we have the married hero, whose better half is known as a "dreadful person," while he is an ill-used darling, so mysterious, so sad, and with whom the simple country maiden falls madly in love, and so on, and so on. In society married people do their best to make the world believe they are nothing to each other. The wives de-

mand the entire attention of the young men, and expect to be considered the belles of the ball and queens of society, while the poor debutantes must do "wallflower," unless, indeed, the husbands come gallantly to the rescue and dance and flirt with them.

Listen to drawing-room or club conversations when matrimony is discussed, and note how irreverent and outspoken are the remarks. "It doesn't pay, and generally turns out so unsatisfactory; it is much better left alone altogether." The epithets of "delusion" and "snare" are freely bestowed, and the idea of being taken in by such a hollow mockery quite laughed to scorn. "Romance! No time for such nonsense in this enlightened age. Love! Dead and buried long ago, extinct as the mammoth; no doubt of some use in bygone days, but at present—" and a suggestive shrug completes the sentence. "An endless chase after money now makes the world go round, and all that is worth caring for is personal aggrandisement and well-being. Of course a few marriages must and do take place, but they are usually arranged on strictly *quid pro quo* principles, each party trying to get the best of the bargain." Then follows a suggestion, that, "as it has become such a commercial transaction, it might as well be placed on a footing with land and houses, and made leasehold. It would pay far better." Besides these general remarks there are those made by one sex of the other, and in which neither spares the adversary.

Men throw down the glove boldly, and say that matrimony has really no charm for them, now that women have become so fast and frivolous. They paint their faces, dye their hair, pad their figures, talk slang, drink on the sly, and look to marrying as if, like charity, it would cover a multitude of sins, besides enabling them to enjoy even more liberty for carrying on indiscriminate flirtations than before. Women want so much in addition to a husband; they must have carriages and horses, artistic houses, old China, Paris dresses, diamond suites, unlimited pocket money, and an endless round of gaiety and amusement, and for all these what return do they make? If they have fortunes they know how to spend them; if beauty, they only flirt outrageously with other men. Now and then there are a few girls to be met with possessing a little sense, but the only use they make of it is to rush into the other extreme, become totally unfeeling, push into men's work, ape their dress, and altogether make guys and horrors of themselves. "No, no matrimony, thank you, on any of these terms."

Of course the other sex cannot be expected to listen to these charges and aspersions with patience. They stand up in their own defence, and give back as good as they get. They say that these excuses much resemble those made by the wolf in conversation with the lamb. The fact is, men are so intensely selfish, so unwilling to give up any pleasure or luxury of bachelor days. They want to go on having stalls at every theatre, the best of wine and cigars, exotic button-holes for themselves and bouquets for opera singers, bracelets for ballet girls, and little suppers all round, to say nothing of unlimited loo and endless bets on every miserable little race that takes place, besides other still more expensive matters, not to be mentioned even in a whisper, save by their own guilty consciences. Do not men always seek and evidently prefer the society of "fast" girls? Why, then, express surprise if they are taken as models to be carefully and diligently copied? Nice dresses are called extravagant, quiet ones dowdy, while all efforts to be studious, or sensible, or industrious, are met by impatient remarks and disagreeable sneers.

So the ball is tossed backwards and forwards, each side being determined on not yielding an inch in their opinions, and Matrimony is in despair because her daughters are not settled, and Paterfamilias, who can barely make two ends meet, wonders what will become of them when he is dead and gone. I have read that there are 900,000 more women than men in the United Kingdom; and this number must perforce remain unmarried. As no one can safely say to whom the lot will fall to marry, it ought to be the aim of all to make themselves, to a certain extent, independent of the holy state. In any case, such as do marry will be sought from better motives than before; for man must respect those who respect themselves, and will quickly discover that an intelligent, thrifty woman of cultivated mind and good heart, capable of turning her hand to most things and add her quota to the general earnings, makes a more desirable wife than a silly, heartless doll who does not know a needle from a pin, nor a leg of mutton from a saddle, and whose knowledge of literature is a hazy remembrance of the trashiest novels. Women, too, would not be compelled to marry simply for a settlement, and might, in time, gradually lose that foolish habit of "marrying for marrying's sake"; while the men, finding so much more required on their part, might in turn, be induced to endeavor to work up to the desired standard of excellence.

JOURNALISTIC ENTERPRISE.

"The crack reporter of a Brooklyn evening paper," so the story is told by his admiring fellow-journalists, has displayed an enterprise and a resource rare even in American journalism. If the story itself is not a produce of American humour, this reporter, sent by an early train to Trainfield, New Jersey, to witness an execution

that morning, on arrival found that the criminal was not to be hanged till mid-day, an arrangement altogether incompatible with the despatch of his report in time for insertion in his paper, issued at 2 p.m. He therefore hurried off to the sheriff, and after pointing out that he should be a loser of ten dollars if the man under sentence was not hanged before 12 o'clock, implored that official to give orders that the "ceremony" should take place an hour earlier. At first the sheriff flatly, and with some indignation, refused, but the reporter at last coaxed him into promising that he would authorize the change of the hour if the person chiefly concerned would be induced to consent thereto. The reporter was then admitted without delay to the condemned cell, where he briefly explained his wishes to its occupant. Drinks were freely partaken of, and the reporter made himself so agreeable that presently the doomed prisoner volunteered the statement that "he did not mind being hanged an hour before his time to oblige so pleasant a fellow." This magnanimous offer was forthwith notified to the sheriff, who gave the necessary directions; and the man was hanged at eleven instead of twelve, thereby enabling the Brooklyn reporter to get off a full, true, and particular account of the execution to his paper in time for the 2 o'clock issue.

TIT-BITS FROM DOUGLAS JEFFORD.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BORROWING.—You ask me to supply you with a list of books, that you may purchase the same for your private delatation. My dear boy, receive this, and treasure it for a truth; no wise man ever purchases a book. Fools buy books, and wise men—borrow them. By respecting, and acting upon this axiom, you may obtain a very handsome library for nothing.

There are three things that no man but a fool lends—or having lent, is not in the most hopeless state of mental crassitude if he ever hope to get back again. These three things, my son, are—"books," "umbrellas," and "money." I believe, a certain fiction of the law assumes a remedy to the borrower; but I know no case in which any man, being sufficiently dastard to gibbet his reputation as plaintiff in such a suit, ever fairly succeeded against the wholesome prejudices of society.

LOOK upon all borrowed money, as money dearly, richly earned by your ingenuity in obtaining it. Put it to your account as the wages of your intellect, your address, your reasoning or seductive powers. Let this truth, my son, be engraven upon your brain-pan. To borrow money is the very highest employment of the human intellect; to pay it back again, is to show yourself a traitor to the genius that has successfully worked within you.

You may, however, wish to know how to put off your creditor—how to dumbfound him, should the idiot be clamorous. One answer will serve for books, umbrellas, and money. As for books, by-the-way, you may always have left them in a hackney coach. (This frequent accident of book-borrowers, doubtless, accounts for the literary turn of most hackney-coachmen. Still, I will supply you with one catholic answer.

Hopkins once lent Simpson, his next-door neighbor, an umbrella. You will judge of the intellect of Hopkins, not so much from the act of lending an umbrella, but from his unceasing endeavor to get it back again.

It poured in torrents. Hopkins had an urgent call. Hopkins knocked at Simpson's door. "I want my umbrella." Now Simpson also had a call in a directly opposite way to Hopkins; and with the borrowed umbrella in his hand, was advancing to the threshold. "I tell you," roared Hopkins, "I want my umbrella." "Can't have it," said Simpson. "Why, I want to go to the East-end, it rains in torrents; what?" screamed Hopkins—"what am I to do for an umbrella?"

"Do!" answered Simpson, darting from the door—"do as I did; borrow one."—*Jack's Letters to his Son.*

MUSICAL AND DRAMATIC.

JOE EMMET and Joe Murphy both go to Australia next year.

MR. JOHN HULLAH is likely to be the President of the London Academy of Music.

MR. W. E. SHELDON, the American actor, has made a great hit in Melbourne as "Don XL."

SARDON'S new comedy, "Feodora," is said to be in the style of "Daniel Rochat."

MADAME PATTI is to have a "reception" from the Commonwealth Club, on her visit to Philadelphia in the winter.

THE REV. Mr. Miln has left the pulpit for the stage, and appeared last week in Chicago as "Hamlet," scoring, according to the local press, a complete success.

THANKS to Mrs. Langtry, the stage will this season be surfeited with "The Unequal Match." No less than nine lady stars have added it to their repertoires.

MR. GOULD, it is reported, will turn the Grand Opera House into an hotel. The great manipulator does not approve of his son's private rooms as at present arranged.

MISS CARRIE MASON, who accompanied Mme. Rivé-King in her Canadian tour, has been engaged as the prima donna of the Remony Concert Company.