

"THE MAN IN THE PARK."

ARGUMENT.—Lo! Summer is here, and the voice of the Park-preacher is heard in the Land.

WHEN the whispering tones of a Sabbath-kiss'd breeze
Sigh, with musical cadence, "midst summer crown'd trees,"
When the rays of blest Sunshine, and Nature's own voice,
Bid the trance-risen landscape, in beauty, rejoice,
When the azure resounds with the notes of the lark,
O! 'tis then that we gaze on "The man in the park."

Ah! "The man in the park," Sirs; blest creature is he,
From the frailties of mortals he's perfectly free,
He's an alien, true, in the realm of success,
And a failure in life, though he sneers none the less
At all wealth (yet a sail in prosperity's bark
Would uncommonly tickle "The man in the park").

He can smash up agnostics with thundering knocks,
Or, with mis-applied logic, be heterodox;
And can spout—though his nose be suspiciously red—
On the Temperance work, till his hearers have fled;
For to argue black's white, and to swear light is dark,
Is the undenied right of "The man in the park."

He blackguards the parsons, from first unto last,
With small hope for their future, less respect for their past:
They are wastrels who drink the sweet wines of the lees
And are less interested in souls than in fees,
Thus, in bile, be he navvy, mechanic, or clerk,
He's "agin" Mother church, is "The man in the park."

We thought him erratic, but esteem'd him sincere,
In his howlings on "Faith," and his strictures on beer;
But one day, as we travers'd a Don-watered vale
We beheld "Black Maria," on her way to the gaol,
And the rogue who peep'd out thro' the bars of "The Ark"
Was that stumbler from grace yecept "The man in the park."

Yet we like him, the scamp, and his overworked tongue,
Though the force of his logic ne'er equals his lung,
We admire so the man who can shame a bassoon,
Who can discount, in antics, a circus buffoon,
And we tender our thanks (Heav'n assoilzie the mark)
To the "idjut" who's known as "The man in the park."

HERWARD K. COCKIN.

THE ADVENTURES OF A WIDOW.

By EDGAR FAWCETT, author of "A Gentleman of Leisure," "A Hopeless Case,"
"An Ambitious Woman," "Finking Cymbals," etc.

XIV.—Continued.

But here Pauline paused, for a servant entered with a card. She glanced at the card, and made an actually doleful grimace.

"Mr. Leander Prawle is here," she said to her visitor.
Mr. Barrowe gave a start. "In that case I must go," he said. "I once spoke ill of that young gentleman's most revered poem, and since then he has never deigned to notice me."

"But you will not forget the dinner, and what is to follow," said Pauline, as she shook hands.

"No," Mr. Barrowe protested. "If you cleave my heart in twain I shall try to live the better with the other half of it."

"I should not like to cleave it in twain," said Pauline. "It is too capable and healthy a heart for that. I should only try to make it beat with more temperate strokes. . . *Au revoir*, then. If you should meet Mr. Prawle outside, tell him that you are sorry."

"Sorry? But his poem was abominable?"

"All the more reason for you to be magnanimously sorry. . . Ah, here he is!"

Here Mr. Leander Prawle indeed was, but as he entered the room Mr. Barrowe slipped past him, and with a suddenness that almost prevented his identification on the part of the new-comer. . .

"Mrs. Varick," exclaimed Leander Prawle, while he pressed the hand of his hostess. "I came here because duty prompted me to come."

"I hope pleasure had a little to do with the matter, Mr. Prawle," said Pauline, while indicating a lounge on which they were both presently seated.

Mr. Prawle looked just as pale as when Pauline had last seen him, just as dark-haired, and just as dark-eyed; but the ironical fatigue had somehow left his visage; there was a totally new expression there.

"I suppose," he began, with his black eyes very fixedly directed upon Pauline's face, "that you have heard of the . . . the *Morning Monitor's* outrageous . . ."

"Yes, Mr. Prawle," Pauline broke in. "I have heard all about it."

"And it has pained you beyond expression!" murmured the young poet. "It must have done so!"

"Naturally," replied Pauline.

"It . . . it has made me suffer!" asserted the new visitor, laying one slim white hand upon the region of his heart.

"Really?" was the answer. "That is very nice and sympathetic of you."

Mr. Prawle regarded her with an unrelaxed and very fervid scrutiny. He now spoke in lowered and emotional tones, leaning toward his hearer so that his slender body made quite an exaggerated curve.

"My whole soul," he said, "is brimming with sympathy!"

Pauline conquered her amazement at this entirely unforeseen outburst.

"Thanks very much," she returned. "Sympathy is always a pleasant thing to receive."

Mr. Prawle, still describing his physical curve, gave a great sigh. "Oh, Mrs. Varick," he murmured, "I should like to kill the man who wrote that horrible article!"

"Suppose it were a woman," said Pauline.

"Then I should like to kill the woman! . . . Mrs. Varick, will you pardon me if I read you . . . a few lines which indignation com . . . —yes, combined with reverence—actual reverence—inspired me to write after reading those disgraceful statements? The lines are—are addressed to yourself. With—your permission I—I will draw them forth."

Mr. Prawle, however, now drew forth the manuscript to which he had thus rather agitatedly referred, without any permission on Pauline's part. His long pale fingers underwent a distinct tremor as he unrolled a large crackling sheet of foolscap. And then, when all, so to speak, was ready, he swept his dark eyes over Pauline's attentive countenance. "Have I your permission?" he falteringly enquired.

"It is granted, certainly, Mr. Prawle."

After a slight pause, and in a tone of sepulchral monotonous quality, the young gentleman read these lines:

*"White soul, what impious voice hath dared to blame
With virulent slander thine unsullied life?
Methinks that now the very stars should blush
In their chaste silver stateliness aloft!
Methinks the immaculate lilies should droop low
For very shame at this coarse obloquy,
The unquarried marble of Pentelicus
Deny its hue of snow, and even the dawn
Forget her stainless birthright for thy sake!
Curséd the hand that wrote of thee such wrong;
Curséd the pen such hand hath basely clasped;
Curséd the actual ink whose . . ."*

"My dear Mr. Prawle!" exclaimed Pauline, at this point; "I must beg you not to make me the cause of so terrible a curse! Indeed, I cannot sanction it. I must ask you to read no more."

She was wholly serious. She forgot to look upon the humorous side of Mr. Prawle's action; his poem, so-called, addressed her jarred nerves and wounded spirit as a piece of aggravating impudence. The whole event of his visit seemed like a final jeer from the sarcastic episode recently ended.

He regarded her, now, with a sorrowful astonishment. "You—you wish me to read no more!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, if you please," said Pauline, controlling her impatience as best she could.

"But I—I wrote it especially for you!" he proceeded. "I have put my soul into it! I consider it in many ways the most perfect thing that I have ever done. I intended to include it in my forthcoming volume, *"Moonbeams and Mountain-Peaks,"* under the title of "Her Vindication." Even the grossly material poetic mind of Arthur Trevor, to whom I read it a few hours ago, admitted its sublimity, its spirituality!"

"I will admit both, also," said Pauline, whose mood grew less and less tolerant of this self-poised fatuity. "Only, I must add, Mr. Prawle, that it would have been better taste for you to have left this exasperating affair untouched by your somewhat saintly muse. And I shall furthermore request that you do not include the lines in your *"Moonbeams and Hill-Tops,"* or—"

"Mountain-Peaks!" corrected Mr. Prawle, rising with a visible shudder. "Oh, Mrs. Varick," he went on, "I see with great pain that you are a most haughty and ungenerous lady! You—you have smitten me with a fearful disappointment! I came here brimming with the loftiest human sympathy! I believed that to-day would be a turning-point in my existence. I confidently trusted that after hearing my poem there would be no further obstacle in my career of greatness!"

Pauline now slowly left her seat. Unhappy as she was, there could be no resisting such magnificent opportunities of amusement as were now presented to her.

"Your career of greatness?" she quietly repeated. "Did I hear you properly, Mr. Prawle?"

Her guest was re-folding his manuscript with an aggrieved and perturbed air. As he put the paper within a breast-pocket he rolled his dark eyes toward Pauline with infinite solemnity.

"You doubt, then," he exclaimed, "that I am born to be great—supremely great? Ah, there is no need for me to put that question, now! I had thought otherwise before . . . when you smiled upon me, when you seemed to have read my poems, to be familiar with my growing fame!"

"You mistake," said Pauline. "I never meant to show you that I had read your poems. If I smiled upon you, Mr. Prawle, it was from courtesy only."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the young poet. He clasped his hands together in a somewhat theatrically despairing way, and for an instant lowered his head. "I—I thought that you were prepared to endorse, to