

AN ENGLISH SQUIRE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THAT ARTFUL VICAR."

From the Illustrated London News.

Mr. D'Avenant is the Squire of Blewberry Hall, and he boasts that his family have furnished lords to the Manor of Blewberry for five hundred years. When flippant persons ask him whether he is related to the great Earl D'Avenant, who is a K.G., he smiles, as a Guelph might do who was asked whether the King of the Belgians was not head of his house. Earl D'Avenant descends from an offshoot of the ancient family whereof John D'Avenant, Esquire, is the descendant in line direct: but, though we wish to say nothing disrespectful of a Squire so rich and of such good blood, we may point out that the worthy gentleman turns up his nose just a little too much at titles. Nobility is not lavished in England as it has been in some Continental countries; but peerages and baronetages have always been bestowed pretty generously on rich men who distinguished themselves in any way; and the fact that the D'Avenants of the elder branch have remained untitled for generations simply proves that they did nothing to deserve well of their country. They lived, ate, drank, married, amassed money, and died—that is about all that their record consists of. And though it is certain that they were comely gentlemen, who never got themselves into gaol for debt or petty thieving, it is not so sure but that they would have been more useful in their respective generations if they had sought to add to the quarterings on their escutcheons by a few brave deeds or some displays of intellect. To be sure, there is a story among some aged beldames of the county that these present D'Avenants only got their name by a marriage with the heiress of the great house about a hundred and fifty years ago; that prior to that their name was Brown; and that indeed, the Miss D'Avenant who married the Brown was herself the grandchild of a lady who had married a yeoman called Jones, and had given her name to him by license of Charles II. However this may be, none can forget that Avenant in French means "charming," so that the name has doubtless a chivalrous origin. It is not likely that it was first bestowed on a strolling tinker, a butcher, or a baker. Another positive fact is that John D'Avenant, Esq., living in this present year of grace, is powerfully rich, as his father and grandfather were before him. Part of his income comes to him from his estate; but the greater portion from scrip judiciously purchased at the right moment, through his London broker. He is reckoned to have about £50,000 a year.

This is a great fortune, for, when everything has been said about the expense of "keeping up" a large estate, it remains clear that a man who has no spendthrift tastes can scarcely disburse more than £25,000 per annum in supporting himself and his family in luxury. A large estate keeps itself up. Mr. D'Avenant sells yearly enough corn, timber, and cattle to till his land, improve it, and leave a good balance over. Such losses as he experiences occasionally do not come so much from bad harvests or diminishing rents as from Turks and Peruvians who will not pay the interest on the money lent them. Mr. D'Avenant, whilst imbued with the wisdom of most English squires as regards the folly of trying to get more than four per cent for one's money, is not always

