

Mr. Orthodoxy, Madame Fashion and Mrs. Grundy.—Continued.

BY PERCY POPE.

WE are all proud of the British Parliament, the august mother of representative assemblies. Other nations admire it, why do they not duplicate it? Simply because such organizations are not constructed but grow. If, at its next session, you exclude from the British Parliament every member who before sat in it, dismiss every trained official and deprive every elector throughout the country of his knowledge of parliamentary procedure as acquired by actual experience, though the written records of the past were available for the guidance of such new members as you might elect, even though these were superior in intelligence to those they replaced, you would find that the institution you took such a pride in had fallen from its high estate. Study the history of Oliver Cromwell's parliaments. Our parliament is what it is today because it is a living organism born more than a thousand years ago, which gained its character and strength by slow accretion of power, and secured by its moulding and educating its individual members to give expression not to their lives as individuals, but to its life as a corporation. In proportion as it was enabled to assimilate the new material offered to it and incorporate this in its life, it was enabled to perpetuate and develop its best traditions, but at any time an influx of untrained members inclined to assert their individuality at the expense of the community necessarily impaired its powers of action and jeopardized its future. Another instance:—

You are all of you members of a Christian community. Do you realize all this involves? To what extent did you originate your present standards of right and wrong, as these affect your action down to the most trivial detail of your daily life? To what extent were they imposed upon you by the Mr. Orthodoxy who dominates your circle and sect? You may flatter yourself on your independence, but it is doubtful whether the limits wherein you can exercise it are proportionately as great as that which the bit allows to the harnessed horse. By your actions you can uphold or you may impair the well-being of the community, just as the several cells in your body by properly or improperly performing their functions may maintain or destroy its efficiency, but in so doing you determine your own fate for your life is merged in its life. How all important then is this Mr. Orthodoxy—this Public Mind and Public Will which so moulds and directs your life and actions.

Fifty, perchance thirty, years ago we had in our midst individuals, brought up under the influence of the high standards of culture which then pertained to the privileged class in England, who enabled us to realize what was meant by the expression "gentle people of the old school." Their children, lacking the direction and control which developed such qualities in their parents, sank to a much lower level