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JACOB SHUMATE

OR

THE PEOPLE'S MARCH



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A Voice from the Banks

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER VIII

	PAGE
SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL	I

CHAPTER IX

PENSIONS TO THE POOR	47
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC	92
---------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XI

CURRENCY	170
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

ANOTHER ELECTION	285
----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII

OUT OF PARLIAMENT	364
-----------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST	403
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL

THERE was a lull in Parliamentary affairs pending the bringing forward by the Government of the great measure of the session. But in the social, and what might be called the public-social, affairs of Excelsior there was a good deal of stir about the Golden Wedding Reception of Alderman and Mrs. Jortin. This, as the reader will remember, was to be given at their residence, The Anvil; and it was generally understood that it was to be upon a scale that would be quite remarkable. We know something already of Alderman Jortin, but it may be well to consider more attentively this typical industrial personality of the Province. You cannot understand the political side of advanced communities without a knowledge of the industrial side. The two are getting more and more mixed up together, and the principles of each reacts upon the other. Jortin, then, was a self-made man, and before all things was a man of business. He never swerved from his devotion to the Anvil Iron Works. Some twenty years before he had indeed stood for Parliament for that division of Miranda in which the works were situated, but he was badly beaten by David Stoker, then one of his blacksmiths, whom he had lately discharged for stirring up a boycott against Timothy Quirk, one of the few non-union men whom he insisted upon keeping in his employment. After that Mr. Stoker settled down to a Parliamentary career, and discharged the duties of his new position fairly, according to his lights. Jortin renounced

finally all disposition that he might ever have had for public life, and devoted his energy and ability, which were considerable, to developing the Miranda City Anvil Iron Works. He retained his connection with the Town Council, and afterwards became an Alderman; but the only other duty of a public nature that he undertook was being one of the Board of Overseers of the William Dorland University. This he accepted as a matter of business, to oblige his friend Dorland, who used to get most of the machinery required for his mines from the Anvil Works. At the University Board he steadily supported Dorland, the chairman, in all matters, and was ever ready to bring forward any proposals that his friend wished to have promoted. He regarded it as a matter of business. He was in the Commission of the Peace for Excelsior, but scarcely ever sat upon the bench.

He was a silent man, slow and deliberate when he did speak, and was not good at putting things in a persuasive or plausible light to others, though he saw through them very clearly himself. He made his statement and then left it to speak for itself. He nearly always took the right course in business—the course that proved to be successful. An apparently inevitable destiny seemed to guide him in speculation in the way that he should go. And when he made his venture he stuck to it, bearing reverse for a time quietly, when weaker men sold out, and he ultimately made, in most cases, a handsome profit. Other men started projects the certain prospects of which they would explain in the most lucid and happy manner. They would calculate the gains with great exactness, leaving a large margin for contingent losses, and still showing grand returns. If all failed they would demonstrate that at least a fair rate of interest on the money was an absolute certainty. But then too often some wholly unexpected factor in the problem would present itself—some expense, or competition, or defect, or loss of market, or failure of soil or climate, that never occurred to any one—and turn the thing into a heavy loss. Jortin could not put his projects attractively, but they nearly always came out in the end as he wanted them to.

Theoretically he was not a believer in the high duties upon the importation of ironwork that prevailed in Excel-

sior. But when they were imposed many years before, he saw at once that money was to be made out of them by the man who started local works first and got well established before the internal competition sprang up. So he began with all his capital, which then was not large, the Anvil Iron Works, and now he had the best business in the Province, and also considerable orders from time to time for the mines in the adjoining province of Amanta. He was a perfectly fair man in business, and absolutely just to all his numerous workmen. His enemies used to say that this was wholly owing to prudential motives. Nor, in truth, would he care to deny this. Outside his home, in the affairs of the world, he made no claim to altruistic motives. Nay, in his conversations with Dorland or any of his few intimate friends, he used distinctly to maintain that in this rough world things were best managed by each one taking care of himself, and that, as for those people who professed to be always thinking for strangers, they in fact did little good either for themselves or for the strangers. 'They are so engaged,' he would say, in his quiet way, 'in taking care of others, that they neglect to take care of themselves, and in the end they look to somebody else to take care of them too.'

Robert Jortin was not destitute of a conscience. In fact, he had two consciences. His week-day conscience was essentially a business one, upright enough, but strictly limited to business duties and obligations. His Sunday conscience was of the Puritan type. He was a strict Sabbatarian, and liberally supported the Rev. Silas Flinders, renting one of the best pews in his church, and subscribing handsomely to the stipend fund. He was not a regular attendant at the morning service on Sunday, but he always dispatched his wife and daughters morning and evening, and often accompanied them himself in the evening. The morning he loved to spend in repose in his little study at home, and he always took down the large Family Bible, and placed it on the table near his chair. The favourable presumption was that he used to read it while the family were away at church. Mingling common-sense with his religion, he discountenanced spending money upon ostentatious enlargements of the church, or upon costly buildings for

meetings and committee-rooms around it. But he supported a proposed increase to the pastor's salary on the arrival of a sixth child at the manse ; and later on he contributed handsomely to provide an assistant minister to help Mr. Flinders, when increasing years made that gentleman feel the need of the aid of a younger man.

Some of the congregation wanted to spend largely in putting another wing to the church. To them he made reply : ' My good sirs, we do not live by walls of brick and mortar, but by the living agencies that work inside them. My mother has told me that her father heard John Wesley preach in a barn.'

The Rev. Silas and his coadjutor, on their part, without compromising themselves by approving everything in the public and business conduct of their leading pew-holder, refrained from joining in any censures of him. Even in regard to the wretched business about the grandson, Mr. Flinders for the most part kept silence, or spoke in the ambiguous way that has been related in these pages.

Strange as it may appear, it is yet the fact that this Sunday conscience had its share in inciting him to that prosecution of his own grandson, the story of which Slater Scully had told to Frankfort. It intensified his dislike to the faultless Shirt Front and its belongings. Under the guise of a stern rectitude it stirred up the feeling that, as a man and a justice, he ought not to condone or compound crime, by whomsoever committed. This, joined to his week-day business indignation at the daring forgery of his signature, determined his unhappy action in that tragic episode.

Not only was Jortin just to all who worked for him, but he would at times liberally reward special merit or zeal. He had, as a natural consequence, a small but trusty band of followers who were employed by him in various capacities, and who in return for his fair, and at times generous, treatment defended him against the criticism of the public. For criticised by the public he certainly was, and very freely criticised. He was a wealthy man. The glamour cast around wealthy people in Europe, and even in the United States, did not extend to Excelsior. The prayer to ' bless

the squire and all his rich relations' was never offered in that province. It was quite the other way. Legislation was directed to limit vast accumulations. The public tone towards the few large owners was a critical one. They had to be on their best behaviour. The truth that they were trustees of their possessions for the public was one that they were often reminded of. Jortin and Mrs. Jortin avoided all display in their daily manner of life, and spent little more upon themselves when they were wealthy than they had in their early days of poverty. He gave every New Year's Day a contribution to each of the five leading charities of the Province, which was moderate in its amount and was generally considered too small by those who had nothing to give themselves. He never varied this amount, however urgent the appeal might be to free the institution from debt. He used to say that the fact that they were in debt showed that they did not manage properly the money they already had.

His wife and the two plain daughters were active in charitable work, and he let them draw upon him when there was real need. But as for himself, he absolutely refused personal appeal. He would not 'be hunted for mercy,' he said. The only one outside the family circle who had influence with him in this direction was the Rev. Silas Flinders, whom he regarded as a sensible man, and who only approached him on special occasions, and was very careful in the manner of his approach then. He would at times give handsomely, but always with the strict injunction that the name of the donor should be kept private. The reverend gentleman used at times to confidentially laud him to brother ministers who were apt to be censorious about him, as at least a man who did not let his left hand know what his right hand doeth. But Jortin's real object was to prevent people hunting him down. Thus he did not get credit for being as charitable as he even was, and was far from being 'a most popular man.' But as years rolled on many recognised his business integrity and the blamelessness of his personal life; while all admitted his value as a captain of industry. The unhappy incident of the prosecution of his grandson was well-nigh forgotten. The very intensity of the feeling

rendered it short-lived ; and as, after the first failure, he had never sought what are termed 'political honours,' severe scrutiny regarding him personally had died out.

His fairness as an employer, and his loyal observance of the numerous laws in the State relating to labour, was admitted upon all hands. The public never knew what he thought of those laws. Even in private he would only say that, in the industrial position which he had reached by hard work, it did not personally concern him what laws were made. He would smile in a reserved manner when some small beginner in the trade would seek to excite his indignation against the high rate of wages that must follow from the provisions of the latest Factories Act. For his own sake, he said, he would pay the best wages for the best work that the industry could afford. No law could go beyond that and last. If it ever did, he would quietly shift his chief works to another province or close altogether. For himself, he had nearly done his work, and his only son preferred managing the country property. He did, in fact, pay the best wages, and he also saw that he got the best work. The inefficient, the slow, the feeble he got rid off. He was obeying the Government policy, he said, and the State would no doubt provide for them in other directions.

On the whole, Jortin was well supported by his men at the Anvil Works. It was surprising to see how willingly those who were hot politicians outside conformed to the exact regime which he had established in every department, binding all to implicit obedience. They knew that the undertaking could not continue to prosper, or even to exist, without a strong head at the top and strict organisation in the ranks. There was a regular gradation of authority necessarily observed from Jortin down, through branch managers, foremen, and leading workmen, to the youngest apprentice. Orders given had to be obeyed without question. Those who worked before blazing furnaces, begrimed as they were with sweat and coal-dust, got less pay than the man who, in clean, cool morning suit, walked about with a pocket-book and made entries. He, again, got less than some gentlemen who sat in comfortable offices about the building and wrote letters and had conversations with people who came in ; while

Jortin, in his handsome suite of rooms, who could buy them all out, did nothing but sign his name to cheques and think. But without this thinking the Anvil Works would be a failure, and they would soon all want employment.

If they looked outside the workshop to the day-labourers about the yards, they saw men who worked harder and earned less than those inside, because their work demanded less intelligence. In the whole organisation of the Anvil Works there was no place for disputation and settling things by the count of heads, for making plausible but costly experiments, or giving attention to agreeable schemes, eloquently explained, that would entail a loss, nor yet for continuous changes in the management. They never thought of electing the new foreman by one man one vote, nor of passing a want of confidence motion in the head manager, because they had got tired of him, nor of deciding by a majority whether a proffered contract should be accepted or declined. They were intelligent men, and they knew, were any such course to be attempted, the Anvil Works would soon be a thing of the past. They were quite aware that the whole enterprise depended upon one strong head. They felt, then, that a different set of considerations applied to them as workmen to those that influenced them as electors, and that, as sensible men, they must draw a wide distinction between the political world and its ways and the industrial world and its ways.

Certainly, in that industrial world they submitted loyally to the demands of their Union, though at times these might cause friction with their employer. But they did this more as a matter of duty than with personal satisfaction, and often would have been glad to fall in with Jortin's views, could they have done so with honour, and without tarnishing that loyalty to one another upon which workmen justly pride themselves. Occasions did, in fact, arise when there threatened to be differences between some of the older hands and the Union leaders, owing to their objects not being identical: the leaders desiring to limit cheap production in some particular line, while the men thought chiefly of the good wages they were able to bring home to their families. These differences were generally composed

without any open rupture. The men, while they remained true to their colours as Unionists, also felt that as individualists their interests were bound up with the success of the Anvil Works.

Very stringent Factory laws had been made in Excelsior to protect the workers. Jortin directed his manager to see that these were all strictly observed. When other business men would express concern about their effect upon the export trade, Jortin would only reply that it was for the Government of the country to consider such a possibility.

'But, sir, we have to consider it too. I don't quite follow you—I don't know that it will pay me to keep going for the home market by itself,' the objector would urge.

'You are quite right,' the Alderman would reply, gently waving, as was his habit, his right hand before him, as if to clear away all ambiguity upon the subject—'you are quite right. We must consider what to do, and carefully consider too. It is rather a troublesome question for each of us. The law lays down certain conditions, but it compels no man to accept them. No man need continue an industry that does not pay him.'

And then he would raise the dark eyes to take a full look at his questioner, as if to see whether this simple solution of his business difficulties suited him. He felt quite at ease in putting this alternative, as his own view was that the State could not afford to impose conditions that would paralyse large and well-established businesses, like the Anvil Works, so long as they were managed with vigilance and ability; though it might prevent others like them from being started successfully.

'My idea is,' he once confidentially observed to his old friend Dorland—'I may be wrong, but my idea is that the weight of all these stringent industrial laws mainly falls upon small, struggling beginners—little capital—trying to start in business and to compete with the well-established old undertakings. They, you see, are the people who need the long hours, the struggle early and late to get on, that used to be the lot, before these progressive times, of those who wanted to succeed—what you and I had to go through, Dorland. The new principles, to be sure, forbid in the

future striking successes in industry by the few—all are to row in the one boat, the quiet stroke, no paddling your own canoe,' he continued, with a quiet laugh.

It was the same with whatever policy the State adopted. When the Government undertook the lending of money to farmers upon easy terms, to be repaid in thirty years, not a word of criticism was heard from Jortin, either in public or private. On the contrary, when Hopper, the managing director of the Excelsior Real Estate Fiduciary Company, complained of the effect of this policy upon the lending business, he only replied, 'Mr. Hopper, you must not forget that the State has to consider for the borrower as well as for the lender. We must not lose sight of the public.'

At the same time there was no doubt that the Imperial Bank, of which he was a leading director, was all the while getting rid of a good many 'shaky' country securities by getting their clients to avail themselves of the new law. Thus he was always loyal to the State. If, then, Alderman Jortin could not be said to be beloved by the public of Excelsior, he came to be regarded, as he advanced in years, as a solid, useful, and even deserving, citizen.

In his home at The Anvil he was a model of the domestic virtues, with the possible exception that whenever anything serious arose he imported too much of the stern man of business into his manner of dealing with it. This was shown by his harsh conduct to the pretty daughter when she made the bad match with the faultless Shirt Front, and still more in his consenting to prosecute the unhappy grandson. But he was moved in time, as we have seen, by the sad state of his child, brought her back again to the old home, and provided for the youth away in another province. Though he refused to receive, or even to see, the boy again himself, he always expressed pleasure to the mother at the excellent reports of his behaviour that he had from the business correspondent in whose service he was. Such, then, was Alderman Robert Jortin, the host upon this joyous occasion.

The reader knows also something of Mrs. Fanny Jortin already. She was a homely body, who belonged to the old school, and had the most antiquated notions about woman

and her social duties. So much so that she not only nursed her four children herself—the pretty one, the son, and the two plain Miss Jortins—but made no secret of the fact, was even proud of it. In those early days she seldom went out to any evening festivity, and when she did she would generally leave early, having first truthfully explained to the lady of the house that it was the call of maternal duty that required her return home. As times changed she did not change with them, but remained to the last under the impression that the chief duty of woman was centred in the home and the family. She, in fact, belonged to a bygone age. She would have sincerely accepted the sentiments of the amiable but antiquated Mary Evelyn, wife of John Evelyn, who wrote the *Diary*, who thus defines woman's sphere in a letter to her friend, Mr. Bohun:—

'We are willing to acknowledge all time borrowed from family duties misspent; the care of children's education, observing husband's commands, assisting the sick, relieving the poor, and being serviceable to our friends, are of sufficient weight to employ the most improved capacities amongst us.'

The Alderman highly valued her devotion to home duty, left her absolute mistress in that sphere, and used often to remark to his more intimate friends that he could never have stood the strain of building up the great iron business were it not for the way in which she had relieved him of all concern about family affairs.

Their residence, *The Anvil*, called, as has been said, after the city works, was in its construction illustrative of the career of its owners. It grew on steadily by degrees from small beginnings. At first it was only a six-roomed cottage. Then, as the family and the means alike increased, a plain, large, lofty room was built out upon one side, to serve as a healthy room for the children. Soon after a second big room was extended on the other side, to be used by the family generally, and also as a suitable home for a large piano that Mrs. Jortin ordered for the use of the eldest girl, the pretty Miss Jortin, who was then just beginning to show a decided taste for music. The ripening age of this young lady, accompanied as it was by a natural love of company and amusement, joined to the rapidly growing success of the

Anvil Works, soon led to further large extensions, which included a spacious room for dancing and also a combined billiard- and smoking-room.

Jortin for a time resisted the proposal to have the billiard- and smoking-room, as he contended that, as a general principle, a man must be supposed to build his house for himself. Houses were built to live in, not to look at, he said, and the social world was aware that he did not smoke, and that he would not know which end of a billiard cue to take hold of. For a time, we say, he was able to resist, owing to the fact that Mrs. Jortin sided with him, and the pretty daughter, though in these happier days she generally had it all her own way in domestic affairs, was not able in this matter of building to overcome father and mother when they stood united. But at length Fanny Jortin, impelled by the imperious instincts of good mothers to take all suitable means for providing partners for their daughters, deliberately laid down her arms and coolly went over to the enemy. Upon this there was nothing left for Jortin but to capitulate, and a handsome billiard- and smoking-room was built. But, alas!

Nescia mens hominum fati sortisque futurae.

It has of old been observed how we poor mortals long eagerly for that which it would be better for us not to get. This same handsome billiard-room, well furnished also as it was with all appliances for smoking, and with pleasant surroundings, was at first the attraction and afterwards the excuse for the frequent visits of the handsome, dashing young Frenchman, Gustave Hiliare d'Ade, whom Slater Scully described as the man with the faultless shirt-front and the black heart.

Years after, when the idol was broken, the illusion cruelly dissipated, and Fanny d'Ade had come back a widow to The Anvil, she used to avoid as much as possible going into that handsome billiard-room. The remembrances were too bitter. Its stately proportions and bright look-out from the spacious bow window upon the long green lawn, so much admired by strangers, only served to remind her of that first fugitive and deceptive happiness in her life's career.

It seemed to her only the other day when she was so joyous and light-hearted in that room. Dreadful is the irrevocableness of fate.

However, the house still went on growing, and finally a handsome conservatory was added at Mrs. Jortin's desire, to enable her to improve and enlarge her collection of flowers, in which she had taken a great interest from the first. She had commenced in a small way with the plants on the sheltered side of the verandah in old biscuit boxes and kerosene tins, and had continued her enlarged operations in small beds, sheltered from the wind by sugar mats. This humble work she had thoroughly enjoyed; in truth, she felt rather lost in the big new conservatory, with the head gardener turning on and off his hot-water pipes, and giving strange and barbarous names, neatly written upon clean little sticks, to her old familiar companions. But all the additions to the house, built in the latest style, the new conservatory included, did not make either her or her husband ashamed of the old six rooms in which they had started their home. They left those rooms untouched. And good Fanny Jortin would often assure her confidential friends that she and Robert had passed the happiest portion of their life in those small old-fashioned rooms, while the children were still young and the real troubles of life had not come upon them.

On this day, the celebration of their Golden Wedding, The Anvil and the surrounding grounds looked bright indeed. The weather was favourable. The flower-beds glowed with colour in the warm sun; the long green lawns, with here and there a shady tree; the stately proportions of the conservatory, with its clear glass walls; the drives, decorated with flags, made the old home and its surroundings quite a scene of beauty. Two large pavilion tents were conspicuous on the front lawn, in one of which a feast was laid out that was to be partaken of later on in the afternoon, while in the other refreshments were served at long counters that ran down each side. The space in the middle was left clear for an interesting gathering of the guests that was to take place at the presentation of a jubilee wedding gift to Alderman Jortin and his wife. The favourite city band, stationed near, played the latest airs; while in the drawing-room Madame

Palma and Herr Drumboski rendered classical music to those who understood it, and to some who did not; while, as a relief, Howard Macirone, the humorist and drawing-room entertainer, gave in another room comic songs and recitations. He brought with him an assistant, in the shape of a gramophone, that kept repeating, as it was wound up and fed with fresh material, popular songs and the sayings of remarkable people, including something that Mr. Gladstone had said about the colonies of England.

One of the most attractive features in the afternoon's entertainment was the Fortune Teller's Tent, or the Temple of the Prophetess of Mysteria, where, it was announced, there were to be seen visions in Spirit-land, and mystic moments in the future. Jortin himself did not half fancy this part of the arrangements, but his objections were silenced by the positive assurance of the pretty daughter that similar novelties were to be seen at entertainments given by the aristocracy in England. It was no use arguing after this decisive fact, so he acquiesced, and only asked who the sorceress was to be. It seemed that it had been determined to engage the great Palmist and Astrological Fortune Teller, Signora Guicciardini, whose saloon in Miranda was each night crowded, and also her coadjutor the well-known Indian Diviner and Seer of the Science of the Horoscope, Koot Honie. This prophetess was famous for her divinations and her power over the Occult, and by telling other people's fortunes undoubtedly made her own. Who she was and who the Indian Seer was, was a question that itself belonged to the occult. But this rather added to their power; for where would be the sense of having your fate foretold by Susan Briggs or by Bill Jones?

So the neatly-printed programmes, with golden border, of the afternoon's events announced that at the Temple of Mysteria, which was a pavilion buried in a deep shrubbery at the end of the grounds, Signora Guicciardini, aided by the world-renowned Indian Astrologer, Koot Honie, would reveal past, present, and future to all worshippers. In short, the Alderman had not heeded the cost in providing for this day's celebration, and, as he said to his wife, with that love of long life which successful men generally have, he looked

forward with pleasure to a similar outlay for their Diamond Wedding. Nor did this seem to be quite an impossible event, for though he was in his sixty-ninth year, and Mrs. Jortin in her sixty-seventh, they both looked strong and hearty. As for the Alderman, his keen eyes looked out upon you, full of energy, from beneath a head of hair that would have done no discredit to a man of fifty. The company at The Anvil that day was one of the largest that had ever assembled at an afternoon 'At Home' in Miranda, and was of an unusual character, inasmuch as in it, unlike the ordinary society entertainments, were to be seen commingling members of all classes of social life.

There were some who belonged to the generally exclusive upper circle, and many from the middle classes, inclusive of several outside characters—we mean, outside of high society—such as Secker Secretary and Mons. Froessolecque, not to mention a large political and Parliamentary party, only some of whom were inside the select circle of social life in Excelsior. All the men who were employed at the Anvil Iron Works, with their wives and families, Jortin insisted upon including in the entertainment, and they made a special feature in the outside amusements that afternoon.

Secker and Mons. Froessolecque came together, without their wives, in a hansom cab driven by Ben Mule. When Frankfort and Myles Dillon, who walked out from the city, came up they found Ben Mule engaged in a dispute with the city officer who was directing the vehicles at the gate, for allowing a landau and pair to precede him.

'I know yer,' he exclaimed, as he at length got his turn; 'it's all along of its being a big slap-up turn-out and a pair of 'osses, and two chaps on the box with black cockle-shells in their hats, that ye go and let them shove on ahead of an honest man's cab.'

And there was truth in what Ben Mule said. But he did not know the whole facts. If he had, perhaps he would have made more allowance for the perplexed city officer. For the landau was none other than the carriage of Sir Donald and Lady MacLever, and the man, though a sincere democrat, felt that it was only in the very course of nature to give some preference to the Prime Minister of the Pro-

vince, particularly as his carriage was unquestionably a fine one, and had two men on the box who did wear cockades, as Ben Mule had described. Lady MacLever had lately returned from England, and she lost no time in adopting for her carriage what she described as the 'European style.' She had noticed that titled personages in the old land had generally two men on the box, so that there was one ready to jump down and open the carriage door, touching his hat as he did so. As Sir Donald answered in position in Excelsior to the Peer who presided over the destinies of Britain, she decided that his wife's carriage should be maintained in the proper fashion.

What precise social standing in Excelsior the cockades indicated was an unsolved question in the Province; but there they were on Lady MacLever's men, let who will assail them. As they pulled up at the door of the old part of the house, Du Tell, who had been sitting on the front seat, jumped out first, and gave his hand to Lady MacLever. While doing this, happening to look round, he saw Secker and Mons. Froessolecque in their cab, and told Sir Donald in time for him to whisper their names to his wife as they got out. She shook hands with both gentlemen in an effusive manner, while she inquired quite graciously after Mrs. Secker and Madame Froessolecque, and was sorry to learn that they had both bad colds. Lady MacLever felt no difficulty in being gracious to those who were distinct outsiders as to high society. Where she was on the alert to stand stiffly on her dignity was with regard to any possible rivals in the social scale. These she generally met with a marked shade of reserve in her manner, speaking in a low tone of voice, as if she felt that it would not do for a person in her position to speak loudly, or to let herself go at all, and not even looking at them in too open or familiar a manner. In all this she understood she was copying people of distinction in Europe. But she was quite willing to regard Sir Donald's wish to be cordial with the common fellows. And by this simple attention the rising dissatisfaction of Mons. Froessolecque with the display of the Prime Minister's equipage was mitigated, and possibly an unpleasant paragraph in the *Sweet-Brier* was averted.

They all walked in to greet the host and hostess, who received the visitors in the big room that was built originally for the children. Frankfort and Myles Dillon, with Mr. Caffery and Mr. Stoker, who had just come in, followed them into the reception-room. The Alderman welcomed them all with equal geniality, and was as civil to his old workman and antagonist as if he had never been beaten by him at the poll. He asked him how Parliament was getting on with its work, and when they might expect the Old Age Pensions Bill to be brought in, and listened attentively to Mr. Stoker's answers. And, it may be truly said, that he was not insincere in adopting this attitude. He considered that Stoker had done the work he had taken in hand successfully. He had made a good speculation and was entitled to enjoy the profits. And as a fact, he was one of the country's law-makers and entitled to consideration as such.

Other guests came crowding in; but the most distinguished one of the day was Cardinal M'Gillicuddy. He made it a point to come to The Anvil that afternoon for half-an-hour, as he felt that it would be only fair to Jortin to do so, though he was a heretic. When Father Picard, the new French priest, many years ago married the pretty daughter, Fanny Jortin, to Gustave d'Ade, rather hurriedly, the Cardinal, then the Bishop, had blamed him for not inquiring more critically into the matter of the parents' consent, and only excused him at all because, being a new arrival, he was quite a stranger to social life in Excelsior. But he had ever since acted towards Jortin as if he thought that the Church had something to make up to him. He did not join in the outcry against him at the time of the trial; and after that the Alderman told his wife to visit the Orphanage of the St. Catherine of Seina for Girls, and to send them every year a twenty-pound note. Mrs. Jortin at first demurred to the proposal to help the Scarlet Lady in this direct manner, and told her husband frankly that she could never see the Cardinal, as he was now become, with all his suave manners, without thinking of the chains of the Inquisition and the flames of the martyrs' stake. But he reminded her that the poor motherless children must now be fed by some one, whatever happened three hundred years ago, and

ultimately her own motherly feelings overbore her religious scruples.

So the Cardinal came to give his moral sanction to the Golden Wedding celebration. Mr. Caffery, devoted son of the Church that he was, knew that he was coming, and was on the look-out for him as he drove in. He moved up to the carriage door, and as His Eminence stepped out Caffery bowed low and kissed his proffered hand in a hurried and furtive manner. He then resigned the illustrious visitor to Jortin and the pretty daughter, who had come out from the reception-room to meet him. A little knot of people had collected round the carriage, and among them Walter Crane, who was there to attend on his Minister, and stood bareheaded in a deeply reverential attitude. He was not only bareheaded, but his cap had disappeared altogether. He had put it right away into his pocket when he saw the Cardinal's carriage in the distance.

David Stoker, Secker, and Mons. Froessolecque were not far from Caffery when he met the Cardinal, and Stoker partly saw the hurried kiss of that dignitary's hand, though the door of the carriage and Caffery's big hat in his other hand were a good deal in the way of the line of vision. Stoker was, as has been already mentioned, a Dissenter, and was bigoted in his own way; so he was indignant with his Populist friend for such undemocratic servility, as he considered it. When he taxed Caffery with it, that gentleman declined any controversy about the matter, as it did not belong to the secular world at all. He then appealed to Secker, but that gentleman only observed:

'My dear Mr. Stoker, there is an old saying somewhere, "Render unto Caesar——"' when Mons. Froessolecque broke in with sincere wrath, 'Ah, bah, I am surprised. I would render tribute, right enough. Lead bullets, you know.'

'What is the good of you all talking of things as is different from one another. You don't understand. Come, let us get along to the tent,' said Caffery, preventing further discussion on a matter upon which he was rather touchy.

It was partly as a matter of policy, but a good deal as a matter of justice to Jortin, then, that the Cardinal attended the reception; and Mrs. Jortin, though she felt a slight

shudder as he entered her reception-room in his flowing robe and becoming biretta, could not but own that he was a kind-looking old gentleman ; and she was quite taken by the suave manner in which he shook hands with the Rev. Silas Flinders, whom she had asked to keep near her during this part of the day's functions. The Cardinal and his private secretary made quite a stir as they entered the crowded room, accompanied by Jortin and the pretty daughter, and shook hands with Mrs. Jortin. The son and the two plain Miss Jortins were busy in the other rooms with the guests, but the pretty daughter, sometimes popularly called the handsome widow, remained with her parents to assist them in receiving the visitors. This was so arranged by the father, as at all their entertainments he was careful to give her the place of honour in the household, first after his wife. It consorted with his sense of justice, while stern towards the grandson, to be considerate to the mother. Sir Donald and Lady MacLever felt bound, by virtue of their position, to wait some time with their host and hostess, Lady MacLever looking very straight before her so as not to see people that she did not want to see. But the rest of the party that had come in together were soon passing along to the drawing-room amid the stream of guests.

'Look here, Doctor,' said Mr. Stoker to Myles Dillon, as they got out into the hall—'look here, Doctor, how do you account for the boss having such a head of hair on him at near seventy? A man of science and knowledge of things like you should be able to pan it out some way.'

Myles Dillon had become one of the best known men in the city, and notwithstanding the eccentric political ideas which he expressed freely when and where he pleased, he was not unpopular. The poorer classes especially did justice to the unselfish services that he rendered to them at the Hospital and also often at their homes. People make allowances for the political views of those who are on friendly terms with them personally, and who act well towards them, and also they admire a man who is outspoken, and keeps his opinions on the surface.

'How do I account for his head of hair?' said Dillon.

'Yes, Doctor. What do you chalk it up to?'

‘If you ask me, Mr. Stoker, I chalk it up to you.’

‘To me, Doctor?’

‘Yes, of course, to you. Didn’t you keep him out of politics?’

‘Well,’ replied Stoker, with a laugh, ‘now that you name it, I did, and politics are a bit worrying.’

‘It is not so much the worry, Mr. Stoker; it’s the want of an easy conscience.’

‘Now, we know well enough that Surgeon Dillon don’t take on to us politicians,’ answered Stoker. ‘We will let that pass along. But I don’t see all the while how conscience or no conscience acts on the hair.’

‘Easy enough to see, Mr. Stoker. Uneasy conscience causes agitation and reflex action in the vital system. Reflex action impairs the *vis vitæ*. Decay of the *vis vitæ* first promotes the growth by millions of the microbe that eats away the colouring pigment from the hair and leaves it only white. You would like to know its name perhaps? It is the *Pigmentophagus* microbe’; and Myles Dillon looked at Stoker with great gravity.

‘*Pigmentophagus!*’ exclaimed the latter, turning inquiringly to Dillon to see if his explanation was a serious one; but Dillon, without seeming to notice him, only continued, as if finishing his analysis, ‘That is why lawyers have to wear wigs: they are bald so early.’

Mr. Stoker was about to assail Myles in defence of his craft, when the word went round that the first event of the day was about to take place in one of the large tents upon the lawn. This was the presentation of an address of congratulation and a jubilee gift to Alderman and Mrs. Jortin by the workmen of the Anvil Iron Works.

When the public of Excelsior first heard of this address they said that no working men would willingly get it up to a hard old man like Jortin, and that it must have been ‘engineered’ by the managers and foremen of the different yards. But this was not so. The majority of the men themselves took it up when it was mentioned. Probably only a few of them would have voted for him if he had been a candidate for Parliament; but they drew a distinction and felt a difference between the political world and the indus-

trial world, and they were glad of this festive occasion for drawing a little nearer to him, and showing that they at least esteemed him as the manager of their industry. They admitted that not only was he just, but that if a worker showed any special merit Jortin always made a point of recognising it. Many of the older workmen had grown up under him, and had always been advanced as opportunity justified, while a few that he had put into good positions became personally devoted to him—or at least as much devoted to him as men could be to one who never affected to be influenced by his heart rather than his head.

Thus when the idea of the men at the Anvil Works giving Jortin an address on his Golden Wedding was once started, it was taken up in a favourable manner in the different shops and yards. At first those who belonged to the advanced school of politicians did not like the notion, not from any animosity to Jortin, but from a doubt whether it was in accordance with true principles to render this homage to an employer outside the works. Indeed, Mr. Stoker, when the matter was first mentioned to him at the People's Club, was inclined to oppose it. He had quite grown past any animosity to his old employer and antagonist, but then he questioned this 'paying court to capital, whether in the iron or the silver business.' But Mr. Caffery maintained that it might injure their cause to oppose the feeling of so many men at the Anvil Works. Secker Secretary was privately consulted. He asked how far the thing had gone among the men; was it really popular with them? Stoker admitted that it was.

'Then, good sir,' said Secker, 'lead it; head it on the ground of his services to the cause of national industry. Besides,' he added, with, for him, an unusual outpouring of confidence about his political experience—'besides, you can always safely show courtesy to the man who is out of the running politically. In fact, it is the thing to do. You keep back the man you don't want. That is why we gave De Sale a front place at the meetings for Senate Reform. We knew they would not vote for him.'

It was the more easy for Secker to give this advice as, ever since his defeat by Stoker, Jortin had retired absolutely

from the political arena, and was careful, as we know, never to express opinions about State affairs in public, and only with reserve in private.

Even the Populist leaders could not deny that, so long as capitalists were allowed, in the present transition state, and till they all through the Government employed themselves, Jortin was not a bad representative of the old system. And Mr. Stoker used to maintain that the Anvil Works, which were carried on with such profitable results to the proprietor, served a useful public purpose in showing how easily the State could carry out its national workshops when it superseded the private employer. All you had to do was to substitute a competent manager for Jortin, the thing was done, and the large profits that now went to him would go to fill the Treasury. So all agreed that the Address should be presented, and Jortin himself was more moved by this instance of goodwill from his people than would have been expected by those who only judged him by his cold exterior in the counting-house.

It had been arranged that the Address was to be read at the presentation by old Ben Doig, the senior foreman, a Swede by birth. He had commenced his provincial career by running away, when a boy, from his ship, which had on its return voyage from the South Seas touched at Miranda. Soon afterwards he was engaged by Jortin, then himself a young man, at a cheap wage, to do handy man's work about The Anvil, which was as yet only the six-roomed cottage. He was found to be so handy that he was soon promoted to the Iron Works, and there he had gone on steadily rising, till he became one of the circle of trusty men with whom Jortin managed to surround himself in all branches of his work. He had been so long with the Alderman that many said he had grown to be like him, and, in fact, he did resemble him in being a man of few words. He had too much independence of character to fawn upon his employer, but he was penetrated by a sincere belief in him; and while his natural tendency was rather to disparage men whom he came in contact with, he always, even in the social gatherings of his fellow-workmen, stood up for Jortin as a business man and as an employer.

Politically, Ben Doig belonged to the advanced class of

Liberals—indeed, to the Populists—and he always read the *Sweet-Brier*. But a great change came over him as he passed in each morning under the large archway entrance to the Anvil Works. He fully believed that in the political sense one man was as good as another, but in his working life he assumed, as a matter of course, that there the natural order of things was for one to command and others to obey. It might be too much to say that in business he recognised a pleasure in subordination, but he, at least, realised its necessity; and as Jortin on his part rewarded the diligence of Ben Doig by continual advances in position and pay, the business ability and discernment of his employer came home to him as a fact. Some of his companions complained that his early political principles were gradually fading away from their original strength; but it was really only that he did not prove so accessible to every new idea as some of the younger men. And this is natural to all as age advances. It is only your plausible, facile, ready-tongued sort of man, with nimble perceptions and adaptable principles, who would die altogether unless he can keep in an atmosphere of popularity, who takes up as a matter of business each new idea as it becomes necessary to his success, and finds clever reasons for it.

It was, then, Ben Doig who stood forth, surrounded by the deputation from the Anvil Works, to read and present the Address. Jortin and his wife, with the pretty daughter behind them and with a semicircle of guests closing round them, were in the middle of the tent. Both Sir Donald and Mr. Brereton were there, and the Cardinal, with Mr. Caffery on one side and his secretary on the other. Slater Scully was quite in his element in this scene of happiness and kindly feeling, and Du Tell scrutinised the Alderman during the proceedings as if he intended to see right through him, while Secker gazed in a composed manner upon the scene, and Mons. Froessolecque made mental notes for the *Sweet-Brier*. William Dorland supported his old friend.

The Address spoke of Jortin's success in founding the Anvil Works, of the wide and profitable employment that they had given, and how as an employer he had acted fairly and never disappointed a hope that he had raised nor a

promise that he had given. It particularly recognised his strict observance of all the Labour Laws. It concluded with the usual wish for his long life and happiness, and that of Mrs. Jortin also. As a memento of the occasion, Ben Doig begged leave to present a small model anvil made in silver. Loud cheers were uttered by all present for Jortin himself and for Mrs. Jortin; and as they were dying away, Slater Scully's beaming glance fell upon the pretty daughter behind, who looked so handsome, flushed and smiling as she was, that he at once called out in rich, genial tones of voice, 'One cheer more for the pretty daughter!' whereupon the cheering was renewed with indescribable vigour, evidently to give expression to the warm feeling that was still felt for her, though her troubles had for some years past faded from public view. There is a great deal of good-nature in human nature.

Alderman Jortin, having handed the silver anvil to his wife, made a reply which was for him rather a long one. He said that he felt thankful to them for thinking of his wife and daughter and himself upon this occasion, and when he said that he knew that they would give him credit for truly expressing his feelings. They would not expect any poetic sparks from his anvil. (This was believed to be the only attempt at a pleasantry in speaking that he ever made.) The gift to his wife was a very fitting one for Excelsior. The silver represented the great mining wealth of their Province; the anvil the labour necessary to utilise it. Whatever might be said of him, he remarked, as if conscious that much had been said, he could claim to have done his work in life honestly. By this he did not only mean without any actual dishonesty upon his part, but with sincerity and truth in his dealings. And he had been assisted by their honest work in doing so. He certainly did not profess to carry on his business for the good of other people only; but perhaps he accomplished this end as effectually as some who did profess to have it as their main object. But, he added, and as he spoke he looked round at them all with a firm, confident air, he regarded every faithful worker among them, as a matter of business, to be a partner with Robert Jortin in the Anvil Works of Miranda.

A murmur of satisfaction broke out instinctively among

the semicircle of men who stood before him. He went on to say that at the same time they must remember that the problem of success in life, or at any industry, was one that could only be solved by each man for himself. As to public objects, he, as they knew, left those to the care and wisdom of the Government, and he was glad (here he turned in a deferential manner towards Sir Donald MacLever and Mr. Brereton and some other Members of Parliament) to see so many statesmen had done him the honour of accepting his invitation for this occasion. For himself, he held it to be the duty of all good citizens to render cheerful loyalty to their rulers. 'Honour the King' was one of the earliest precepts that he had learnt. His wife and daughter, and he himself, wished them and their families many happy years, and his wife and daughter wished him to say how glad they would be to attend, if allowed, and he said it also for himself, at the golden wedding of any of the Anvil people. In conclusion, he hoped that they would long be preserved for the Anvil Works and the Anvil Works for them.

Warm cheers, led by Ben Doig and the workers, greeted his speech, and then they all dispersed over the grounds to pass the time till the hour for the banquet came round. As Jortin moved out of the tent, many of his old friends came up to personally congratulate him, and they seemed really to enjoy his happiness themselves. He never before believed so much in mankind as he did that afternoon. Lady MacLever was gracious in a marked degree to Mrs. Jortin. Mrs. Dorland greeted her old friend in her own sincere, direct manner, the only thing that interfered with her full enjoyment of the afternoon being the absence of her knitting, which somewhat marred the force and incisiveness of her conversation. Mrs. Lamborn had been forbidden to travel by the doctor on account of a heart trouble that had once or twice before threatened, and which was largely responsible for the languid manner in which she often bore herself. This time it had come on in a more marked manner, and so she had sent Miss Lamborn 'to take care of father,' as she said, but really because she did not wish the girl to miss the trip to town and the festivities of the Golden Wedding. Eilly herself dearly loved a little excitement, though she did not

at all like leaving her mother, but Mrs. Lamborn insisted that poor father could not be sent away alone. So Mr. Lamborn and his daughter came up to the city, bringing Mrs. Fairlie with them, as Mr. Fairlie could not get away.

Frankfort and Myles Dillon were near Secker Secretary and several of the politicians, and as they sauntered off together, Dillon, who was resolved to enjoy the relaxation of argumentative discourse that holiday afternoon, accosted the Secretary of the Workers' Association.

'Glad to see you here, Mr. Secker. Glad that your noble Association recognises the worth of private enterprise in the person of host Jortin.'

Secker looked at him in his implicit manner as he made answer: 'Mr. Dillon'—he knew that that was the correct way to address a surgeon—'Mr. Dillon, I reciprocate your welcome personally; but you are under a misapprehension as to the Association. My visit here has no signification as to their views—nor to my own politically. I am here as a matter of good feeling. There are occasions that appeal to our common nature.'

'To be sure, there are weddings of all sorts—the first simple thing itself, the silver, the golden, and so on,' said Dillon. 'But,' he continued, 'I thought you would have had the sanction of your Committee to coming to this public affair.'

'This, Mr. Dillon, is a social, not a political display. In so far as it has public aspects, I will report upon it to my Executive when they meet next week.'

'And you can report something worth their thinking over, if you like,' said Dillon.

'Pray take me with you, Mr. Dillon,' answered Secker. 'I don't quite follow you.'

'Yes, what's on the board now, Doctor—what's the idea this time?' said Stoker. 'I heard nothing but the Alderman's straight-out remarks about loyalty to the Government and to us political men.'

'Yes, but the point is, Mr. Stoker, that neither Jortin nor his men apply your Government principles to their own affairs.'

'Why, how do you work it out, Doctor?' interposed Mr. Caffery.

'Only this way, gentlemen, if I may be excused. In the Anvil Works all are glad to get the most clever man they can lay hold of, and then to do just as he bids them. But in the highest business of all in Excelsior you shake up a box and pick out the names that come out on the top, and chance whether they know the business.'

'You are all astray this time, Doctor,' said Caffery; 'your diagnostication hasn't hit it off this go. Political Government is one thing and the Anvil Works another. They don't run upon the same set of rails at all.'

'Why not, Mr. Caffery?' answered Dillon. 'Does not the Government manage all our affairs, and as part of the job carry on some of the largest businesses in Excelsior?'

Here Secker looked round upon the two politicians, and observed, assuming a superior tone—'Really, gentlemen, there is much in what Mr. Dillon is saying—much, really. But even Progressives can only do one thing at a time. The State truly has taken in hand many industrial works. In due time it will learn how to carry them on. I candidly confess that neither the Anvil Works nor the Association of which I am a humble servant could be conducted for a month unless they had expert knowledge and a power of control vastly more than our common Government can boast of.'

'Well, I don't quite see where you are leading along to, Mr. Secker,' said Stoker.

'I leading? My dear sir, I lead nothing. I was only expressing my poor opinion upon the question that Mr. Dillon here has raised.'

'I will tell you, Mr. Stoker, where he is leading,' said Myles Dillon. 'You need not be like the man who broke his tooth on a sausage. He is leading to personal Government, the popular boss. Majorities are getting played out. You can't navigate a ship by a committee. Where is your Government? That's what I want to know.'

'It's plain enough. Your Government is there,' answered Stoker, pointing to Sir Donald MacLever, who was passing in company with Mr. Dorland. 'There is your Government in Sir Donald, directed by the wisdom of Parliament, and responsible to the people of Excelsior.'

'Very good Mr. Stoker,' replied Dillon. 'In our happy land, so long as the horses know the road and go it of themselves, you can have half-a-dozen fumbling away at the reins.'

'Why, you are getting worse than ever, Doctor. It was a ship. Now you are on to a coach. You had better next go and have your fortune told at the tent there beyond,' said Stoker, with a laugh.

'Just where I am going,' said Dillon. 'And if Mr. Secker here and you join me, perhaps the Prophetess will reveal to us where the coach is driving to. I'd rather like to know myself. She can do that as well as anything else, I expect.'

'A momentous inquiry, Mr. Dillon,' said Secker, as the three walked away together.

'The more need to ask about it,' replied Dillon.

'It's plain enough, if your heart is in the right place. We have only to trust the people,' said Stoker, as they disappeared down the path that led to the Temple of Mysteria.

Frankfort, a little before, seeing Mr. and Miss Lamborn near, had joined them, and was inquiring after Mrs. Lamborn and all his friends at Brassville. Eilly Lamborn was a little sad about her mother. 'Yes,' she said, 'the doctor rather frightened us. I don't like being away. But they do talk so, don't they, doctors?' and as she spoke she looked at him, as if seeking the comfort of confirmation of her doubt in doctors.

'Oh, certainly they do,' he replied; 'never mind them.'

'It is just this way, you see,' said Lamborn. 'They shake the head and look serious, and then it is all to their credit when they pull the patient through. So you need not make too much of it, Eilly. Just wait here a bit with Mr. Frankfort; I have promised to go round with Mrs. Jortin to speak to some of the families of the Anvil people.'

'Oh yes, heart weakness is nothing, Miss Lamborn,' continued her companion. 'Every one has it more or less.' Then, wishing to turn her attention from an unpleasant subject, he added: 'But you have never written to me

your opinion about the independence of politicians, as you promised—you remember that morning at breakfast at The Blocks.'

'Yes, I did not forget; but when I began to write, I found that I could not explain what I thought was quite clear when I was talking about it. I could not make it plain when I came to write it out, whether you were to please us or only yourself. And then mother said that it would be an odd thing to do, to write; so I gave it up.'

'Well, to be sure, probably your mother was right. I am disinterested when I say that, am I not?'

'Why disinterested?' asked Eilly Lamborn, looking at him in her frank manner.

'Because it would have been such a pleasure to me to have read your letter.'

'I don't see how you can say that till you know what would have been in it.'

'Oh, but I would have liked to know what you thought, whatever you said.'

'Do you know, Mr. Frankfort, I am afraid you are becoming just like the other politicians. Father, you know, says—though he is one himself—that they all say what suits at the time, never meaning it at all, at all. Just to please the people they are speaking to—you understand?' And Eilly Lamborn turned and looked straight at her companion, with an explanatory air, as if she wanted to make the imputation against the politicians quite clear.

'I am sorry, indeed, Miss Lamborn, that you should have such a low opinion of our public men.'

'Oh, you must not blame me, I was only repeating what Mr. Hedger and Dr. Keech, and father too, and all of them say. I don't know anything about it myself. You are the only one I have ever known.'

'And I hope that I don't confirm this ill report?'

'No, it only just struck me, when you said that you would be pleased with what you had not seen. But,' continued Eilly, looking away down the lawn, 'there is Mrs. Fairlie; I believe she is looking for me. She came down with us. And we will get her to go with us to have our fortunes told at the Temple of Mysteria. Mrs. Fairlie, do

come with us,' she called to that lady as she came up. 'We are going to have our fortunes told, and yours too, and you can ask about Teddy and everything.'

They were soon at the door of the tent, which was buried in a deep shrubbery. Myles Dillon and his two friends were coming out, and in answer to Frankfort's inquiry what fortune had been foretold for him, he could only reply that it was a famous one, and that he could say no more, as the Prophetess pledged all inquirers not to reveal their destiny to others till after the setting of the sun.

When they entered, they saw the Prophetess seated behind a table that stretched across the end of the tent. The place was dark, save for the light of an oil lamp that was hung over her head, and the dim shining of a small transparency near at hand. She was dressed in a black flowing robe, with a head-covering that, but for its dark colour, might have passed for a marriage veil. Koot Honie stood behind her, black as to his face, and casting around him keen glances (though not of the Oriental type), and clad all in dazzling white. On the table, which was covered with black, was a large ancient book, with big stiff pages, upon which, as you turned them over, were to be seen a series of almanacs and maps of the heavens, as they were known in early times, showing twelve signs of the zodiac, and indicating the movements of such of the planets as were then known. An enlarged copy of the maps of the heavens hung overhead, just behind the lamp, and getting the full benefit of its feeble ray. On one of the stiff pages, in lettering apparently faded by age, there was shown the Essential Dignities of the Planets, and also their Essential Debilities, set out under their respective headings of Dexter and Sinister. There was also a Table of Aspects, with long rows of abstruse-looking signs, which bore a remote resemblance to the figures of algebra.

Upon an opposite page was to be seen traced a large circle with a square inside it, and at right angles to this square a larger one clapped over it, as if to pin it down. Segments of circles were marked off to show the semi-diurnal arcs, and all around were traced various astrological figures. At times the Prophetess discoursed of the retro-

grade motions, sextiles, quadrates, times, and oppositions. This book was stated in the Seer's advertisements to have been compiled by Nicodemus Frischlinus some centuries ago from the records of the ancient Chaldeans. The figuring was reported to be done by Matthie Guarimbertus, and was based upon calculations that were derived from the same source. It was also stated that the great Napoleon had consulted this record before he crossed the Alps. The Prophetess, when she had got the necessary particulars from her worshippers, consulted this book, which then partly revealed their fate from their star. To complete the analysis, she had recourse to the lines of the hand.

A small transparency hanging behind her showed the outlines of four hands, on which the lines of life were marked in a bold dashing style. The public gazed upon these with wonder. The first was notable for a very short little finger; the second for a particularly thick and strong thumb; the third for a marked depression in the centre of the hand; while the fourth was considered to be quite unique for reasons that the Prophetess would explain at length when she had time. All these hands showed so many types of human character; the long lines on the palms were, of course, the lines of life; the shorter ones crossing them were the events that intervened to divert those lines from their proper course. By reading these aright, she assured crowds of the faithful, she could supplement what was left wanting by the astrological calculations as to the tallying of the stars.

Signora Guicciardini admitted that though the Book and the Palmistry lines were infallible if read aright, that yet a mistake might be made in reading them; as, for example, taking the wrong Horoscope; in which case it was impossible to set things right that afternoon, as it was unlawful to consult the Book twice on the same day for the same person. Owing to this several people had to go away that day suffering under a mistaken reading of their destiny. They understood, however, the cause of the failure, and could try another day. But another very obvious danger was that worshippers might give mistaken answers to the necessary questions, as these were often difficult to reply to, in which case, of course, the true results could not be obtained.

Then when two people came together, which was often the case, as with Frankfort and Eilly Lamborn that day, it was stated that sometimes the two Destinies, if they happened to lie in the same Horoscope, crossed, and then it was obvious to any one that there would be difficulty in disentangling the results.

As Frankfort advanced with Mrs. Fairlie and Eilly, he saw two grey eyes scrutinising him through the thin black veil. Koot Honie waved his hand towards the new worshippers, and exclaimed in solemn tones and very good English—

‘Approach, the Prophetess wills that you come near!’

Having looked for a few moments at them, she gave them the usual warning against revealing to any one their destiny which they were now going to learn till after the setting of the sun.

It was arranged that Eilly Lamborn and Frankfort should have their fortunes revealed first, and Mrs. Fairlie would afterwards see if she could learn anything about the destiny of her Teddy. As for herself, she did not care to have her fortune told, as she remarked, with a needless self-depreciation, that at her age there was so little left to tell. The Prophetess then demanded of Frankfort the month, the day, and the hour of his birth.

On the two first points he was able to give satisfactory information from hearsay; but upon the last he had no more information than he had recollection. Eilly Lamborn was, of course, in the same difficulty as to her natal hour; but luckily Mrs. Fairlie, with that retentive memory that women have for such details, recollected all about it, having gone to see her mother a few days after the event. She was able to state that it took place at half-past four o'clock on a Tuesday morning. ‘Ha, ’tis well,’ solemnly exclaimed the Prophetess. Still, she was in a difficulty about the imperfect information as to the hour that the man, whose fate she had first to tell, had come into this breathing world. It weakened the clue to the true Horoscope, she said. But she thought a while, and then inquired if either of them had been born in a comet year; and it turned out that Frankfort had, in fact, been born in the year of the great comet

thirty-two years before. This, it appeared, partly helped out the clue, so she signed to Koot Honie, and he proceeded to turn over the pages of the Book of Fate till he came to one, at which the Prophetess signed him again to stop, while she scrutinised one of the hieroglyphics upon it, and he looked out its counterpart upon the map that hung above. The two were carefully compared, and then Signora Guicciardini proceeded to take up the other or Palmistry branch of the inquiry.

She told Frankfort to lay his hand upon a small cushion that was on her table. She said that she would not touch his hand herself, lest the wave thoughts from her brain, through her fingers, might bring conflicting currents to interfere with the true reading of the hand. She then told him to earnestly think of what he most wished, while she watched the action of the brain power operating through the veins upon the lines of his hand. Her observation was somewhat impeded by the fact that his hand had in one part a peculiar break of gauge, so to speak, that intercepted the line of life in a striking way. Still, after some scrutiny the Prophetess declared that she could announce his destiny.

An event impended over him. It was distant a segment of his circle, that was, a fixed period of time. He had a straight course up to the Dexter point, when, owing to a great conflict between the Essential and the Debilitating elements in his destiny, the event would happen. But the signs gave the reading of an obstacle, as in the Horologue there was a star of great shock in the primary line, and this line was twice islanded.

When was the event to take place? Why, as to that, it might be delayed over one segment, but not over one and a half. The segments represented a varying number of years. Was it a good event or a bad one? Unfortunately, owing to his not knowing his natal hour, it was impossible to interpret his Horoscope fully without a long calculation from her Table of Aspects. The lines upon the hand only showed the happening of an event, but did not throw that light upon the nature of it that the natal star would have done, could they get the correct hour of birth. Koot Honie said that if he would arrange to call at the head Temple of

Mysteria in the city on the morrow, the calculation could be made out for him.

'Oh, do nothing of the sort,' whispered Eilly Lamborn to Frankfort. 'And do let us come away from this ; I am not going to have her talking all this sort of nonsense to me.'

Quiet as was her whisper, the keen ears of the Prophetess heard her, and her grey eyes turned upon Eilly with anger.

'Maiden,' she said, 'do not scorn to learn your destiny. It is there all the same. A Fate awaits you.'

Her solemn tone, the keenness with which she had heard the whisper, the gloom of the place, the silence save for the warning voice, the ghost-like figure of Koot Honie all in white, the solemnity that ever attaches to what may be fated in the future, roused in Eilly Lamborn, who was of a sensitive nature, a feeling of uneasiness she could not understand, and that in some absurd way got mixed up with her mother and the poor health that she was having lately. She began to feel frightened.

'Oh, do come away, Mrs. Fairlie ; I'll not stay any longer !' she exclaimed quite openly this time, as she hurried out of the Temple of Mysteria. Round the entrance was quite a little crowd of people waiting patiently for their turn to learn their fate.

'That thing in black, she quite alarmed me, looking at me and talking so,' she continued, as they got outside. 'Why should she talk in that way about Fate and things going to happen ? It's quite unpleasant. I am sorry I went in there at all.'

'But, Miss Lamborn, surely you don't heed such jargon as we have been listening to ?'

'Of course I don't in one way ; but then many people say that there is something in it ; and then no one knows what may be going to happen, do they ? But there is father ; he is looking for us.'

As Mr. Lamborn joined them, Eilly continued—

'Father, we have been making such fools of ourselves, listening to all sorts of silly things in the Fortune Teller's Tent. But Mrs. Fairlie would not have her fortune told, and I would not either ; and then the old thing in black got angry and threatened me with Fate, and made me quite

uncomfortable. I am so glad to get out into the bright sun again.'

'Well, well, Eilly,' said the father, 'I only wish I had known that you were going there. There is something in the future that I particularly wanted to know.'

'Why, now, father, what did you want to know? Mrs. Fairlie says that she is too old to have her fortune told.'

'I only wanted to know when the Reservoir at Brassville is to be commenced. Let her see that in the future, and I will give her a big fee. But,' he continued, 'I was just looking for you. If you and Mrs. Fairlie will go up to the house, you can get tea, while Mr. Frankfort and I go to the men's banquet. It is just going to begin.'

The proceedings of the day were to finish with this banquet in the large pavilion. All the men employed on the Anvil Works were to be feasted, and a few politicians and public men were thrown in. The host was in the chair, with Sir Donald MacLever on one side of him and Mr. Brereton on the other. Ben Doig took the vice-chair, supported by the two senior foremen of the workshops. The long tables were mainly filled by the workmen, and Jortin excused himself for asking only a few of his city friends to join in the feast by the fact that he must first provide for his fellow-labourers in the Works. When all had satisfied themselves with the good things of the feast, the time came round for the toasts to be proposed, the speeches to be made, the jokes circulated—poor jokes perhaps, but of amazing efficacy in agreeable surroundings.

'Our Gracious King' was given by the chairman, without one word in addition, but it was drunk with an enthusiasm even greater than would greet it in the old land. The Pope is more revered in the United States than he is by Italians. In the distant parts of the Empire there mingles with loyalty to the King the love of the old home and the pride in being part of so great a nation.

'Parliament' should have come next, but Josiah Ling, the senior foreman after Ben Doig, in his hurry to come to his toast, jumped up and gave 'The Host and Hostess.' He lauded them both with an after-dinner liberality, and expressed his firm conviction that they would live to cele-

brate their Diamond Wedding, coupled with a hope that he and all his fellow-workers would be there too. It was drunk with enthusiasm.

Jortin rose slowly and said that he thanked them deeply, both for his wife and himself. He hoped to see the day that 'his friend Mr. Ling' had referred to, and to see them all present with him again. Having said this much about himself, he trusted that they would excuse him from saying anything more upon that subject. But he would now give them a toast that should have come first were it not for the promptitude of his friend—'The Parliament of Excelsior.' Here Jortin spoke very slowly, and looked downwards to the table, as if seeking to pick out the right words to employ. The Parliament, under the Crown, was their ruler. It made laws that came home to them, as they affected the industries by which they lived, their liberties, and their property—whether the property of their daily labour or its accumulated result in wealth. They enjoyed much under Parliament, and depended upon it for many things; it became them all to pay respect to so great an authority, and to expect, with loyalty, that its wisdom would be equal to all the social emergencies that might arise. The part that each citizen had in controlling Parliament was not large; this relieved individuals of responsibility for what at any time might happen to be done. Their business was to obey. It would be their duty to render respect even to a bad Government until it was changed. How much more should they not honour their Parliament?

He then gave them 'The Parliament of Excelsior.'

The Honourable Mr. Lamborn said a few words in response for the Senate; and then Sir Donald and Mr. Brereton replied for the House of Representatives. They both said the same thing, and what indeed had been often said before—that the Parliament was what the people made it. Sir Donald put it, that the House of Representatives was a looking-glass in which the public saw themselves reflected; while Mr. Brereton said that it resembled the people as a child did its father. If the child squinted—wherefore, what then? Why, the father squinted himself, and, by the same token, squinted first.

Mr. Ben Doig then asked Mr. Secker if he would propose success to the Anvil Works. But that gentleman looked up at him with surprise, and said that, while personally nothing would be more pleasing to him, he could not think of doing so without the leave of his Executive. So it was proposed by Mr. Caffery, who spoke briefly, and said that, while he recognised the merits of their worthy host, and his value in the present industrial system, he could not forget the workers, who were the foundation, bed-rock part of any system. For himself, he was a man of the people. As he sat down, loud applause greeted him, and the chairman looked over the table approvingly at him, and joined, in his calm, measured manner, in the applause. Mr. Doig himself responded, and expressed the hope, when the present industrial system to which Mr. Caffery alluded was done away with, that, under any new plan, the works would be kept as cleverly going, and the weekly wage be paid as regularly as at present. Some slight murmurs of dissent were here heard from a few of the junior hands who politically were collectivists, and who had partaken in a generous manner of the wine and beer that were furnished for the feast; but Ben Doig averted controversy by concluding with the statement that at present they might enjoy themselves, and then the younger men could afterwards fix up things as they liked for themselves.

Nothing now remained but to propose the Press. The duty fell to Mr. Du Tell. He said that the public at all times wanted light. What gave it? The Press. He then cast a keen side-glance down the table to where the reporters sat, and his eye rested for a moment on Mons. Froessolecque and Arthur Hartpole, who were sitting near to one another. The sight of them seemed to inspire him, for he exclaimed with fresh vigour, 'Where would they be without the Press? Nay, what would they be? could they exist at all? *Vox populi, vox dei*; but what was *vox populi*? The Press. If it was wrong, the people were wrong. It might make mistakes; if so, it only reflected public mistakes. As his honourable friend the Premier had once happily remarked, "Show me your people and I will show you your Press."'

He gave them 'The Press of the Province.' The toast

was drunk with great fervour—greater indeed than you would have expected, if you only judged by the criticisms of men in private upon this same Press.

Mr. Urias Carson returned thanks for the *Rising Sun*, and Arthur Hartpole for the *News Letter*; but neither of them seemed to excite the same enthusiasm as did Mons. Froessolecque, who spoke last for the *Sweet-Brier*. Even people who did not like him, but who feared him, applauded. The warmth of his reception so excited him that at first he spoke with a slight French accent. 'What was the Press?' he asked in an emphatic tone. 'It was the brain of the people,—where they did their thinking. The Legislature was the tongue for the talking. The grand struggle of the people was to break the bonds that held them in slavery, whether social or political, or,' he added, turning with some fierceness to look round the table for Mr. Caffery—'nay, he would add, religious. The *Sweet-Brier* spoke strongly, but why? Because it felt strongly. It would never rest till the people were delivered from bondage—till there was not one slave of the social system left.' Here the natural politeness of his nation impelled Mons. Froessolecque to bethink himself of the festive nature of the gathering. His politeness was also perhaps stimulated by the steady, inquiring look that the keen eyes of the chairman directed towards him, as he was waxing warm in his periods. He then went on to say that the Press was blamed for the hard things it said of people. Indeed, at times, when he opened the paper of a morning, he was surprised to see what hard things he *had* written over night, but they must impute all to his zeal for the people; for them he was ready to do, to suffer, to die. He sat down amid loud applause.

And now, the banquet being over, the guests began to leave. All were happy and good-humoured, all had enjoyed the afternoon as a bright spot in life, in which black care had no part, all were full of genial feelings towards their neighbours: harshness, vengeance, stored-up hate were quite out of place that day. The gentle feelings of the natural man made an approach to the sublime standard which St. Paul sets before the Ephesian Christians, when he exhorts them to put away from them all bitterness and wrath and

anger, and to be kind to one another, tender-hearted and forgiving.

At the suggestion of the pretty daughter, it had been arranged that there was to be a parting cup of tea for the workmen and their wives and families, in the big dining-room of the house, after which the Alderman and his wife would personally bid them all good-bye. They crowded in cheerfully, the wives and children being put well to the fore by the men, at the long tressel tables, which were piled with cakes and sweets for the children, around alternate tea and coffee urns, which steamed away gaily from end to end. Jortin and his wife came in before the party broke up, with the pretty daughter following behind. He seemed to feel the kindly inspiration of the occasion; the frigid aspect of the man of business was softened. He inquired after the welfare of each family, cordially shook hands with the parents, and patted the children as they went by.

When the room was cleared of the party, he went back to his study, tired with the excitement of the day, but feeling his heart warmed and his sympathies aroused by the reception that he and his wife had met with from high and low. And the pretty daughter, how tenderly they had greeted her! As he lay back in his chair resting, he mused upon all that had taken place that afternoon. It was, in truth, a revelation to him of the kindlier side of human nature, even outside the limits of our own kith and kin. His ingrained business instincts, to be sure, now and then reasserted themselves, and would keep suggesting that on the morrow he and all the hundreds who had gathered round him that afternoon would be again engaged in the rivalry of competing interests, and the battle of conflicting claims in life. Yet, as a mere business man, he could not but feel what a vast reform it would make in industrial life, if some system of kindlier feeling and more sympathetic co-operation could be instituted between employer and employed—between the man who dispensed bread and the man who earned it. However, it was a satisfaction to him to feel that he had always been a fair employer—not, he must admit to himself, from sentimental considerations. But still he had always acted justly to his men, and, moreover, liberally rewarded

real merit. Then to his wife and family he had ever been fond and true. No doubt there was that sad affair years ago, about which he had suffered so much—even his loving wife blamed him—but even there he maintained that justice——

Here there was a knock at the door, rather a timid one, and in response to his clear-spoken 'Come in,' the pretty widowed daughter entered.

'My dear child,' he said, putting his hand fondly on her shoulder, 'you look quite flushed and exhausted. You are overdoing it. Where are we to have tea for ourselves? The whole place is upset. Let us go and have our quiet tea.'

'Yes, father,' she said; 'but there is one of your people whom you have not seen yet. He says that he wants to see you before he goes.'

'Really. Well, well, I thought Ben Doig told me that they had all gone. Where is he? I would not miss any one.'

'He is in the old nursery. He had to go there. The men were clearing out the dining-room.'

She led the way to the old nursery, the mother joining them as they went. She passed in first, and as the father followed her, she went straight over to a tall, comely-looking young fellow and took his hand into hers.

This at once told Jortin the whole story. Otherwise he would not have known him, as the very last time he had cast eyes upon him was when he saw him in the dock charged with the forgery. While old Flatley was confusing the jury with an involved explanation of what amount of authority would justify one man signing for another, he had cast a pained and furtive glance at his unhappy grandson. He had never looked upon him since, but there the boy now stood, hand in hand with his still young-looking mother, his child and grandchild together. Such a fine-looking young fellow too, with all the dashing air of the father, mingled with the soft, beautiful lines of the mother's face. For a moment the grandfather was angry. He had been taken unawares, and the likeness to the faultless Shirt Front began to excite the old ire. But when he looked on the

mother, his very own child, in all the flushed beauty of her agitation, could he blame her for a devotion for *her* child just such as he felt for her? What could words add to the scene, as they looked upon one another, father on daughter, daughter on father? Yet she spoke. She said :

‘Father, you must forgive me. He will go if you like, but you must forgive him too.’ And nature gave her relief in the tears that sprang to her eyes.

Jortin seemed to look older and gentler than was his wont, while he nervously moved out his hands as if deprecating something. He began :

‘Really, my dear, I can’t say that I blame——’

‘Oh, come now, Robert, we mustn’t finish a day like this with unpleasantness or worry—else we’ll never have the diamond wedding at all. Just shake hands with young Robert there, and let us come to tea. The girls are getting quite faint, standing about all the afternoon.’

Thus the mother broke in, and, like a skilful general, delivered her charge at the right moment. She had been in reserve during all the previous movements, lying by till the time came for her to operate.

The grandfather advanced and shook hands with his grandson, as if nothing had ever happened between them. He was too good a business man, to put it no higher, to do the thing in a niggardly way, when he had once made up his mind to do it. They all sat down to tea together. The two plain Miss Jortins, though they had no active part assigned to them in the plan of attack, knew all about it, and fully sympathised with it, as they both, good souls that they were, loved their sister Fanny, and felt for her in her trouble. Now that they saw what a fine young fellow their nephew was, they were more pleased than ever, as they could not help thinking, amid all their fond feelings for their sister, that he would be a most useful companion at dances, going wherever he was wanted, and at any hour however early, and then staying as late as was desirable. No more of that paralysing coming-away-at-twelve o’clock business.

Young d’Ade left shortly after tea, having made a decidedly good impression. The grandfather allowed that he had acted in a most becoming manner. Next morning,

as Jortin reviewed the events of the past day, many and various as they were, he felt that the chief of all was this unexpected appearance of the grandson, and his reconciliation with him. And he realised, now that he looked at it through his business spectacles, that the problem remained how best to proceed. Was he to send the boy back to his work in Amanta, where he was doing well enough; or should he take him up as one of the family again, and employ him in Excelsior. He did not like to do that; but he felt that the mother would never be content with any other course. So he was perplexed in his mind as he glanced over the report of Alderman Jortin's Golden Wedding Reception in the *Rising Sun*.

Meanwhile the mother had been debating things in her mind also, and taking counsel with her mother. Tired as she was last night, she could not sleep for hours with joy at the successful meeting; yet joy mingled with anxiety as to how things would work out. If Gustave Robert were to go away again to the other province, life to her would be as dim as before. It would be only a temporary patch-up of reconciliation. She bethought her how to put her case in the most skilful manner to her father, and came into his study early. He was sitting holding the *Rising Sun* before him, apparently reading it, but really puzzling about the same subject that was agitating her.

'Good morning, father. I am so happy.'

'Good morning, Fanny dear. So am I. Everything went off so well yesterday.'

'Yes, father, and I have got my dear boy back again.'

'Yes, my dear. I am very glad. Fine young fellow. He is getting on so well too in Amanta. I hope he will go on as he has begun; there seems to be every likelihood of it.'

'But, father, think of me too. If he goes back there by himself I'll never see him. You and mother wouldn't like never to see Frank.'

'Well, well, my dear, that is quite true. But really what can I do? What more can I do for him?'

'Take him into your office to write your own letters.'

You told mother you wanted some one like that, as Frank does not care for office work.'

She was desperate with the fear of losing her suit, so she put it boldly and directly. Her method had an advantage that she did not think of. As Jortin had spoken to his wife only about his wanting a private secretary, he knew that the mother and daughter must have conspired together to make the proposal. He felt that this was one of the rare occasions when quiet Mrs. Jortin would be roused. Perhaps it would be better for him to give in at once.

'But, my dear, you see it is a difficult matter. I am willing to forget—glad to see the boy do so well; but I must be careful not to do anything that would seem to allow that I had been wrong.'

'I would not like you to, father. I would not like it at all. I am your daughter as well as his mother. But it's this way, you see, though I don't know how I can explain it: it is the golden wedding time—jubilee time, when people who have done wrong are forgiven. You remember Mr. Flinders explained that at the chapel last Sunday. He made a sort of reference to your jubilee and to others. And he was so good here yesterday, handing round the cakes to the children. Then, you see, every one would say that it was done on account of the jubilee—that you took him back and forgave him in honour like of the jubilee. And every one would say what a kind and nice sort of thing it was for you to do, just at this time. It wouldn't be like doing it at another time, you know. That's why I want you, father dear, to do it now; every one would understand it.'

There was undeniably some truth in the way that Fanny d'Ade put her point; and the cause was assisted by the two plain daughters, who, when they came to give their father the morning kiss, both said that they had taken quite a liking to their nephew; he was such a fine young man. Mrs. Jortin's words were few, but they were determined, and the Alderman's usually resolute eyes assumed a subdued air as she looked straight at him and told him that an Amalekite, not to talk of a Christian, would not send away the boy from the mother. In the end he surrendered at discretion.

Young d'Ade was kept as his private letter clerk ; and as he lived in rooms not far from The Anvil, he was the source of perpetual joy to the pretty mother and the plain aunts, to whom he secured quite a new scope of ballroom life. His personal conduct was unexceptionable, and he in time became one of the most trusted business men in Excelsior. Society generally praised Jortin's conduct in the reconciliation ; all except a few, who were as incapable of seeing the good side of anything as the bat is of enjoying the sunshine. They said that what he had done was only an admission of his former cruelty to his grandson. But the Alderman went on his way, nothing heeding them. For the present we leave these three, father, daughter, and grandson. They have each done what they ought not to have done ; Fanny d'Ade not excepted, for she should not have married the faultless Shirt Front ; but we part from them with kindly feelings.

Frankfort and Myles Dillon went that evening to have tea with Mr. Lamborn and his daughter at their hotel. They found them both rather tired with the prolonged entertainment of the afternoon.

'I find standing about looking at things takes it out of me,' said Mr. Lamborn. 'It is worse than counting sheep.'

Eilly Lamborn was depressed about her mother. That solemn pronouncement of the prophetess about a 'Fate awaiting her,' whether she knew it or not, disturbed her. Though not of a superstitious disposition, her nature had that reverential bias which is impressionable to solemn views of the great realities that compass us round on every side. And, absurd as she owned it to be, yet this common Sooth-sayer had been able to touch this chord in her nature. It shows how ineradicable in us is the influence of that principle which is the basis of all religion.

The two friends left early, and going to Frankfort's rooms, were soon reclining in easy-chairs on the verandah, enjoying the cool evening air and talking over the experiences of the afternoon.

'MacLever came up in fine style, cockades and all,' remarked Frankfort. 'I rather wonder that some of his Democratic friends don't object.'

'They like it,' said Myles.

‘Like what?’

‘Like a lot of gilt and prunella upon their figurehead, so long as the figurehead knows how to keep properly boo-ing to them.’

‘Well, but,’ said Frankfort, ‘he is such a stuck-up sort of personage is Sir Donald.’

‘Not to them, Edward Fairlie. He keeps boo-ing to them, and then compensates himself by doing the other thing to the others.’

‘Well, to be sure, great is the power of humbug. I was surprised that a really intelligent girl like Eilly Lamborn should be influenced by what a humbug like that fortune-telling woman said.’

‘You forget it is mostly humbugs that do influence us,’ answered Myles, who was disputatious as usual.

‘Come now, Myles, don’t be a cynic.’

‘Well, a cynic is often an honest man a bit marred. He revolts at the humbug that your genial rogue only laughs at and enjoys.’

‘All the same, we are not mostly influenced by humbugs.’

‘How, then, my noble Frankfort, comes it that Signora Guicciardini makes her fortune? Didn’t you notice the crowd around the Temple of Mysteria? Some went there for fun, to be sure; but they go by the dozen seriously to her place down in the city. Wherefore, Teddy? Because they are silly. It’s the same all round. Quack medicines make men’s fortunes. Millions believe that printing State bank notes will make them rich. Insane burlesque crams the theatre to the roof. Shakespeare makes it bankrupt. And the more general education spreads, the wider is the scope of quackery.’

‘What nonsense, Myles. It is simply that with the extension of advertising more people are reached.’

‘Isn’t that what I am saying? Why, the Postmaster-General of the United States publishes a monthly list of frauds and quackeries, payments to which by a willing public are stopped by the Post Office. It fills from ten to twelve printed pages. Some plausible rogue starts the Bon Ton Cash-down Happy Marriage Association, or the Hearts-ease Co-operative Marriage and Birthday Endowment

Company, and straightway thousands of your intelligent citizens rush to post their cash to him, and have to be stopped by a vigilant Government. A man advertises that he will cure asthma if the patient will forward a lock of his hair, and the next day's post brings him hundreds of locks and of ten-and-sixpences. Another says that he will heal your rheumatism if you send him your photograph and a pound note, and forthwith the photos and the notes come tumbling in.'

'Well, what does all this prove but that there are some fools about?'

'It proves that a large proportion of the people have not sense enough to look after themselves. But together their united voice is the highest wisdom for the State.'

'Why, Myles, if there is any meaning in what you are saying, you are coming out against any popular Government at all.'

'Never mind where I am coming, Teddy; I am only talking of facts. The crowds, who are gulled by quacks, fortune-telling, medical, literary, religious humbugs, are the sole judges of quackery political. They are befooled by Signora Guicciardini, but they are Solons on the free Silver question that we will soon be amusing ourselves with in Excelsior.'

'This time don't be only destructive, Myles; tell us what we ought to do.'

'Fact is, if your Democracy is to succeed, you must find out great men and follow them. At present you are only rolling and tumbling along.' And Myles tossed himself back in his easy-chair as if to illustrate the present plight of Democracy.

'How, how, Myles? Just mention where to find the great men.'

'Your first need is to know that you want them. You will have to alter your ideas on the subject a trifle. Ye all keep staring at your own bit of candle-light so intently, and admiring it so much, that ye are grown to think that there is no need of the sun. It is there all the same, though.'

'Not blind at all, Myles. It is you who are only looking at the one thing. We know the difficulty as well as you do.'

Where is this sun of yours? Only prescribe for us how we are to get this light. How, for example, on this very Silver question——'

'Stop now Teddy, I'm not going into the currency question at this time of night. Besides, there is my messenger from the Hospital. I have an inward conviction that—— "halloo Dawkins, anything wrong up there?"' Myles Dillon exclaimed, as the man appeared in the clear electric light of the street lamp, crossing over the road to Frankfort's front door.

'If you please, sir, Quing Tick is very restless. He says that he would so like to see the medicine man.'

'Tell him that I'll be there directly. This Quing Tick is not so very bad,' continued Dillon, turning to Frankfort, 'but he has an unusual set of nerves for a Chinaman. There is one good point about him——'

'Believes in you, I hope?'

'You are right for once, Teddy. Directly I come he feels safe. He thinks that nothing can happen while I am there. I always feel his pulse and look at his tongue, and pull out my stethoscope, and then the simpleton feels quite happy. It is all a delusion, but it does him good to humour it.'

'Why, then, Quing Tick seems to be one of those fools that you have been talking about. But perhaps he might be able to give a sensible vote all the same.'

'Oh, bother your votes and your arguments, Edward! I will go and do something useful before I go to bed.'

And Miles hurried off to the Chinaman, and in a few minutes got him so composed that he was soon able to leave him fast asleep.

CHAPTER IX

PENSIONS TO THE POOR

WE must now turn for a time from the industrial and social side of life in Excelsior, in order to follow the fortunes of the Government proposal for providing pensions for the aged poor of the Province. In political circles attention was now centred upon this question, both because of its own importance and also owing to the political consequences that might follow from the introduction of a Government measure upon a new and difficult subject. The Premier had taken the formal steps to introduce his Bill, and it stood in the orders of the day of the House of Representatives for the second reading. When the appointed day came there was a full attendance of both Members and strangers. Secker and Mons. Froessolecque were in their usual places in the gallery, both on the first day (the Tuesday) and also on the Wednesday and Thursday, when the debate was continued after some intervening business had been disposed of, and when, as will afterwards appear, it was interrupted in an unexpected manner.

Sir Donald, in moving the second reading of his Bill, admitted that a sound system of Pensions should not be absolutely indiscriminate; yet he proposed an indiscriminate grant—but only in this Bill to provide for accrued needs. Another Bill was to follow, providing machinery for the old age insurance of young people upon easy terms; and those who in the future availed themselves of this privilege would have the advantage when they were sixty-five over those who did not. For the present he simply

provided ten shillings a week for all poor persons who had reached that age, and who with the ten shillings would not have, from every source of income, over one pound a week. They were all agreed, he observed, that some provision must be made for the aged. When a thing ought to be done it was always better to do it in a Liberal way. Liberalism was the guiding star of Excelsior. Some who had the special gift of financial criticism might ask where the money was to come from. But if a thing was right, should it not be done at any cost? He would propose in his financial statement a lowering of the limit of exemption under the income tax from £250 to £150, so that the class who might be supposed to specially benefit by the system would contribute directly to it. Thus no one in taking the pension would feel that he was receiving charity. When his proposals were completed by the Insurance system for the young, those who were more provident would have an ampler provision made for them. If it were right to encourage thrift—and he was far from denying it, he remarked in an apologetic tone—well, that would be done under the Government plan. But also all must in old age be guarded against want. He did not propose any special tax upon land, though perhaps it might be considered, and very reasonably too (here Sir Donald turned as amiable a look as possible upon Mr. Caffery and his friends in the corner), that land should bear more burdens than it did. Yet he did not wish the recipients of the pension to feel that they were indebted for them to any one class of the community. It was a debt from the country; not a dole from a class. If the revenue should fail, why then, of course, the land was there: it could not run away. That was the Government proposal, and having explained it, he need say nothing more, as perorations were not, he observed, in his line.

Mr. Brereton, as leader of the Opposition, then rose to expound his views upon the subject. As a general rule he who holds that position is expected to denounce whatever the Premier proposes. High authority in England has laid down the principle, intelligible and plain, that 'the duty of an Opposition is to oppose.' If the speaker cannot safely do this directly, at least he can condemn the *way* in which

the matter is proposed, or predict the failure of the machinery for working it, or object to the time at which it is brought forward, and complain that it was not introduced earlier, or postponed till later, or object that something omitted was not included, or *vice versa*. Of course, the motives that influence the Government in their action can be always impugned; or, at the very least, it can be shown that the wrong reasons have been given. Where support is accorded, it is to be granted in a criticising, dissatisfied manner. All this is part of the regular business of the stage political.

William Brereton, through long practice, had become fairly accustomed to this orthodox tone; but he never took to it very kindly. But there could be no question that Sir Donald had left himself open to legitimate criticism, in that in his Bill he left out what he admitted was a necessary part of his proposal for Pensions. The country was in favour of some plan for providing for the aged poor, and no one was more so than Mr. Brereton himself. His criticism, therefore, was on the way that Sir Donald proposed to do it.

He began by saying that he and the Opposition were as eager for old age pensions as if they were going to get them themselves. He was getting old himself,—perhaps, the Honourable the Premier was too, without knowing it. He felt how unpleasant it would be to be old, and at the same time to want the necessaries, not to say the comforts, of life. Though he might not be entitled to champagne and pheasant, yet pass along the beer and steak. Would he then support the Government plan? How now? Where were they? Take the bearings. What *was* the Government plan? Where was it? How was it? Wherefore, on the table? In the Bill? By no means. Not so. Bill says give all a pension. Government say let the young insure. Income-tax limit to come down—lower away there—discrimination, no mere promiscuity in their charity. But where were these things? *In nubibus*, to speak classically. When will they come down from the clouds? Query. Querissime indeed. In fact, answer *desideratum*. Still, was he to refuse one step now? No. He said, let them have

their second reading. Then a stay of proceedings, injunction to hold hard, till the other two Bills were passed. For himself, he was all for the poor. Every hand aboard could nor be bosun, or, for the matter of that, bosun's mate; but all may look for the daily ration. If they are no longer able to go aloft and take in a reef with the gale—blow winds and crack your cheeks sort of business—were they to get nothing, not even a glass of hot grog to warm their old hearts? He would, therefore, support the Bill so far for the present, *nunc pro tunc*, as the lawyers say, and make it a complete job in committee. He was for a long pull, and a strong pull, and a pull all together; but a pull with the three Bills straight into committee. They could then stand by and take their latitude and longitude, and shape their course right on ahead to the haven they ought to make for. He begged to observe that he had been thinking over a peroration for the past week, but found that poetry about the evening of our day and sunset, and so on, was too affecting for business, and as he meant business he would say no more.

The real issue before the House was thus made clear. All agreed that there should be pensions for the aged; but many held that they should be linked, as far as the young portion of the people were concerned, with some effort for self-help. The greater number, however, considered that they were the birthright of all citizens, irrespective of any action or conduct of their own. The Government naturally moved on the plane of least resistance. They sought to conciliate the one party by accepting the principle of self-help; but they satisfied the other by giving the pensions at once, leaving the other proposals to come afterwards—if they could. Properly the whole scheme should have been together; but it would not have been good business. The Pensions carried, they satisfied those whom they were most afraid of; and if the other Bills were not carried, were they to blame? Brereton and the Opposition wanted to checkmate this natural move of the Government, by forcing them to go on with the whole of their professed scheme together. But Sir Donald had them in this awkward position, that any one delaying his Bill could be plausibly represented to the public as trying to defeat the pensions of the aged poor.

Mr. Caffery rose at once after Mr. Brereton, with a promptness that showed that his heart was in the matter. He had the advantage over both the other speakers, that he felt for the poor with a personal feeling that they did not have, and could not have. Though now raised above want, his convictions and sympathies had been moulded and fixed by long years of poverty, at that period of life when a man's character is formed. He realised the sufferings of the poor—and there were suffering poor even in Excelsior—in a way that no observer from outside could understand. Feeling has much to do with thinking, particularly when it is the feeling of hard facts that you have experienced yourself. Argumentative and prudential difficulties in the way of any plan of relief do not come home to one in such case. The fear of cost, which was such a bugbear to some, was no difficulty to Mr. Caffery. It was rather a recommendation, so long as the money was raised in the right way. The heavier the taxation the better, provided it was directed towards accumulated wealth, and thus would tend to remedy the inequality in distribution. But even if the Government insisted upon some more general taxation as well, he would rather have the pensions anyway, as taxation was always useful in circulating money. The very reasons, then, that made some people critical about pensions, recommended them to him. But it would be doing Mr. Caffery an injustice not to admit that his deepest feeling was the wish to see all the old people comfortably provided for, as a right, by the State. He intended to level down the rich; but he longed to relieve the poor.

When Michael Caffery rose you could see that he was a full man. He jumped up in an alert manner, and bent his body forward, as he began to speak, over the heads of the Members who were sitting upon the bench beneath him. There was no coldness; no hesitation; no carefully thought out exordium to his speech. From the moment that he opened his mouth, there was started a sort of mutual sympathy between him and his audience, which did not necessarily mean agreement, in an intellectual sense, but made people feel, Here is a man with a belief within him, and a force behind him. You could not treat lightly what

he said, be it wise or unwise. He was so terribly in earnest.

Mr. Caffery began by stating that he would support the Bill on the table right through till it was law, before he would touch or look at any other Bill on the subject; more than that, he would say straight out that he would oppose both the other Bills tooth and nail that the Premier had referred to. Further, he wished it to be clear that he regarded this measure as only an instalment of what was due from the State to the poor. What! Did they hesitate to make provision for the aged poor? Observe, at present they were only talking of the aged poor, and all the while luxury running riot through fashionable places in the Province. Were whole classes of young men to waste wealth in pleasure, and women to scatter it in vanity, while aged men and women wanted a bed and a meal? Was this the morality, the religion of Excelsior? It was said, let the people save. What hypocrisy! Tell a struggling man with a wife and five or six children to save out of seven or eight shillings a day. How was it to be done? The iron law of competition prevented wages being earned that would allow of it. Would some of them like to try it out of their, not £2 : 8s. a week, but £5 a week? Was it not notorious that many of the old politicians were destitute? Was there not now a subscription going round the House for the Honourable Joseph Hatchett, and did not that honourable gentleman get his £5 a week for thirty years? Thrift was all very well, but it might run into a mean thing too. Why, the most thrifty people going were the noble Celestials, the Chinese, and he reckoned that they had no call for a civilisation like theirs—not by a long way. For his part, he would own up to it that he would sooner see this a spendthrift province than a Chinafied one. But would a man be less thrifty at twenty because he would get a pension at sixty-five? He must live on somehow up to the sixty-five. He could not get to that age by a job of any sort with a Ministry. Make the worker contribute, it was said. He would like to know how? Would they put them in gaol if they refused? Refuse to contribute they would, of course. The average young man would not bother about it. Youth was free

from care, and long may it remain so. If pensions were such a demoralising sort of thing for the poor man, how was it they were so good for the big wigs? They had at first rejected pensions for the Rangers, but it had come round again to the same thing in the Compensation Bill,—though that was a left-handed sort of affair that he did not fancy. Under that Bill the General would have £400 a year if he retired, not at sixty-five, but at sixty. He had made a little calculation of the number of poor people who could be provided for out of the pensions that now went to the judges and other highly-paid officials. He found that they would provide 1537 poor people with ten shillings a week. They were given to understand that in the insurance business which the Premier talked of the young people were expected to contribute sixpence a week. This was spoken of as a mere trifle. It might seem so to some lofty people, but in his early struggles, when he was in want of a meal, the sixpence seemed to him rather a big thing. He denied that the pension was a charity; it was a right. They gave pensions to the Rangers for fighting for their country. And did not the worker fight for his country too? You might fight with the spade as well as with the rifle; perhaps rather better. Then there was the stock argument that some of the old people would get drunk with the money. Perhaps they would. He was, as Honourable Members knew, a total abstainer himself. He was not aware that any one proposed to abolish razors because some people cut themselves shaving, and other people cut their throats altogether with them. He solemnly called on the House to rise to the occasion and to help the helpless. They already spent about a million a year in the education of the young. If necessary, let them spend another million on the preservation of the old—sort of second childhood of the people. Let the State take care of both ends. Where was the good of all their education if it did not lead them up to happy lives. He freely admitted that the State had done, or at least attempted to do, a lot in a beginning sort of way for the wage-earners—Protection, Factory laws, Government employment. This Bill was to provide one missing link. Let them rivet it in. If they left the poor to sink down,

they damaged the race. Life all along had its ups and downs—particularly the end part of it. There were a lot of tumbles, perhaps some baulks. The course was a stiff one—hard to negotiate was, he understood, the correct way to put it. Let not those who came in winners and got the big sweeps refuse to go shares even with the failures in the race. For himself, he continued, with a touch of real feeling in his voice, when he went upstairs to tea, and got his square meal there, he would be ashamed to eat it if he felt that he had been one to go against a crust for the aged poor. He felt too much to say any more.

And Mr. Caffery sat down suddenly. This abrupt close to his speech produced a deeper sensation than the most powerful peroration would have done. How different from the glittering coldness of Sir Donald, or the bungling rhetoric of Mr. Brereton! Here was the true man of the people speaking upon a subject that came home to him, and to them.

Loud applause followed his speech. Mr. Tom Creed, the Opposition Whip, got up to continue the debate from his side of the House. He was a good man to speak early in a debate, because he never compromised his party by pledging it positively to anything, but left everything open for whatever turn events might take.

While Tom Creed was speaking at large upon Pensions, our politician was thinking how he could most clearly define and justify his attitude to the subject as it had now been developed by Mr. Caffery's speech. He thought the Government proposals fair as a whole, taken together. If, to be sure, the provisions as to insurance by the young and the extension of the area of the income tax were only make-believes, to be dropped as soon as the fighting party were placated by the Pensions, it would be different. He was not naturally inclined to be suspicious, but Michael Caffery's decisive declarations brought that possibility right before him. Just before he got up to speak, the Minister of the Water Bureau sat down beside him in an expansive manner, throwing his long arm in an easy style along the back of the bench behind his head.

'You had better speak early,' he said.

‘Yes. I think of getting up directly Tom Creed stops.’

‘Glad of that, friend Frankfort, as you support our proposals.’

‘Yes, that’s it. I want to take your proposals as a whole.’

‘As a whole?’ asked Slater Scully in apparent surprise.

‘Yes, the whole scheme Sir Donald announced.’

‘Well, begin with this Bill. Easy ahead. One at a time. Wisely and slow. They stumble that go fast.’

‘But you heard Caffery declare that he would not touch your other Bills?’

‘True, my friend, neither you nor I can make Michael Cassio or Caffery and Company touch what they don’t want to touch. Any man may bring a horse or an ass to water, but no man can make him drink thereof unless he likes so to do.’

‘But what do the Government mean to do?’ asked Frankfort.

‘We will propose all our Bills firmly and energetically, and thus maintain our credit and save our souls—if we have any souls.’ And Slater Scully looked up in a mildly contemplative manner towards the Speaker’s chair, as if he was in doubt about that fact himself.

‘Well, but what steps will you take to insist upon your plan? That is the plain question.’

‘Insist, dear friend? It does not fall to the lot of any man here below to insist upon anything. We may not be able to command success. But we will do more, Sempronius—we will——’

Before he could get anything more definite from his genial companion, Mr. Tom Creed, whom he was to follow, suddenly sat down, and our politician was upon his feet. He spoke briefly, urging certain objections to indiscriminate Pensions, but supporting the Government proposals as a whole. He suggested that the best plan would be to take the three Bills into committee, and then to combine them into one general measure dealing with Pensions for the Poor. He asked, in concluding, if the Government would do this? Slater Scully smiled at him across the table—he thought in assent to his proposal.

Out of his simple conversation with Slater Scully a misunderstanding afterwards arose between the two politicians. When Frankfort, later on, objected to the Pensions Bill passing through committee alone, and appealed to the assurance of the Minister of the Water Bureau that the Government would take all their proposals together, Slater Scully protested that it was just the other way. He had clearly conveyed that they would take what they could get, and when Frankfort was speaking he had smiled indeed, but it was at his proposals, not with them!

However, the speech of our politician was fairly well received; but it did not make the obvious impression on the House which the aggressive and fervid address of Mr. Caffery did. And he was assailed directly by Mr. David Stoker, who had been eyeing him with a restless, indignant look for some time, being disturbed by having to listen to arguments which he considered all wrong. Mr. Frankfort had, he remarked, talked about remote consequences, and fears too, of this and of that. But had he a fear of the people starving—the old people too? How about their daily ration? Was it to be in a workhouse? He thought that he had bid good-bye to that when he shifted from Liverpool. Was it all to come up again in Excelsior? A financial question? Of course it was. But did not all the people pay taxes? Not one old soul of those who would have pensions but had the right to feel that he was taking it out of his own pocket—the people's pocket. He would not get it as a dole, but as a right, an inherent of his manhood and citizenship, and having reared a family and helped to build up the State. For he would tell the previous speaker straight that every man, unless the man in the penitentiary, helped to build up the State, and had the right to a share in the concern. Now and again they were told in that House about the good way that private enterprise managed some industries. And was it not so that in many of them pensions were given to old servants? Why, there was the proprietor of the Anvil Works. Alderman Jortin was not quite a softie; yet he gave some of his old hands pensions in the way of easy billets. The plain Liberal ticket was to give every man the pension on his sixty-fifth birthday. What was the use of all the reports and essays

upon Old Age Pensions? They were only nibbling the fringe of human misery. Talk of contributing sixpence a week! But what if the man has not got the sixpence to give? If they pinched up the people with their thrift too tight, the race would not grow well. It would fall away. Let them give every one a good sound wage first, and then he would talk with them about subscriptions to insurance funds. Pauperising the people was a good term—a very good term. He had yet to learn that the judges of the State court were pauperised by their pensions. As for this thrift business, those who made a provision for their old age seemed to look in the glass at themselves as if they were quite superior to all the rest. But he begged to differ. If they had been more generous and open-hearted, they might not have been so well off; they had thought all along only of themselves. Money wanted, indeed! That was the Treasurer's affair. But they had always the land and the estates of the rich who died. And now and then they did die, though generally they put it off as long as they could. It would be quite a pleasure to them in another sphere to know the good that their property was doing down here. Why, there were hundreds of millions of accumulated wealth in this Province. Had any one, professor or other, ever totted up what even sixpence in the pound upon it would come to? This would be better than doing with the poor as was often done now, kicking them aside like the old worn-out machinery at the Anvil Works. A lot was made about men spending their wages when they were young. Well, if they did, where did it go? To circulate among the people and help up the revenue. Thrift! He was sick of hearing it preached about. What about sordid thrift? Not that he defended idleness—no, not by long marks. He was no idle man himself. Yet your over-zealous worker was not of that value to the body politic that some might imagine. Why, what did he do? Granted he did the work of two men, or even three; he then only kept the others out of bread. Why should they delay this Bill on account of other Bills? Could they bring in a short suspensory sort of Bill to delay old age for the present? No; the people grew old, and the old got older still, while they were arguing about all

sorts of things, and making up their parcels of theories. In the early days in Excelsior things were different. The people were mostly young, and there was little real hard-up poverty. But now the iron law of commercialism was rampant, and the old accordingly going to the wall—squeezed right up against it. They were drifting straight to the condition of slave-peopled Europe. Was it not worth while to show a bit of fight against coming to this? Finally, Mr. Stoker looked round the House, and stopped for a moment or two, and then continued in a low deliberate tone: 'Perhaps I am a bit interested. I am getting old myself. Some of you are old as well. Old age wants a little brightening, as it's not very cheerful of itself. So we had better do the straight thing by the old ones.'

Mr. Stoker's speech impressed the House much in the same way that Mr. Caffery did, by its earnest, real tone. They spoke of poverty as only men could speak of it who had known in their youth what it was to walk the lonely, terrible streets of old land cities, looking for work wherewith to get bread, and not knowing where to turn now or what to try next. Arguments about remote effects upon national character, or the pressure of taxation upon a few, were trivial to men into whose nature impressions more powerful than any intellectual conclusions had been burned by such experiences. And now they spoke with the inspiring feeling that they and the poor had power to set right their wrongs, and that they need not cry aloud in vain any longer.

The feeling of the House being in favour of Pensions, there was a general inclination to meet the Government as far as possible. This was shown by the characteristic speech of Mr. Harding Buck, Member for Moodyville. He set out by stating that his own personal, private opinion was that the old age pensions would lower wages. Why did he say this? Because under them men would be free to work for a bare living, as the State would undertake to provide for their old age; and further, the old men, having a small allowance safe, would be glad to supplement it by any trifle of wages, and could afford to do so. They would make laws in vain to keep up the wages if they created a large class

who only wanted a little more to live on, but must get that little to live at all. Further, large employers like the proprietor of the Anvil Works, who had been referred to, would feel relieved from obligation to help their aged workmen when the State undertook that duty. More than that, sons and daughters who had been helping their parents would now turn them over to the Government.

Thus far it would seem that the Member for Moodyville was a downright opponent of the Bill, but now he propounded a view of his own on the subject. He said truly that he had now to consider what he individually should do upon the subject before the House. What was he? He was one of the servants of the people, who were the king in Excelsior. His sovereign had announced that he demanded this Pension, aid in supply, Benevolence, free gift—whatever you liked to term it. And his sovereign certainly needed the money. In fact, he was as hard up as any of the Tudors, not to say the Plantagenets, had ever been. Moreover, his sovereign was a rather testy sort of person, and did not like to have the Benevolence refused. In fact, he would not stand it. The Honourable Member for Brassville had said, Give it to him under certain conditions. Ah yes; just so. That was exactly what the patriots in those days used to say, but what the Plantagenets and Stuarts did not like. The kings of old objected to conditions. They demanded their aid in supply, and insisted upon it. All the court people said that it was most reasonable, most justly due to the king—noble king, how could any true subject refuse? The question was, what did the king demand? He demanded a free Benevolence, then, as now. What, he would ask again, then, was he, the Member for Moodyville? He was a loyal subject. Nothing of the traitor about him. Never thought of imagining the king's death, whatever he did. Was he, then, to refuse the Benevolence? Declare war against the sovereign! By no means; he would vote what was demanded of him. And if it was afterwards found that the Benevolence was too oppressive, he must trust to the king to ease it off a bit, and to the king's ministers and courtiers, whom he saw before him, to give the sovereign honest advice about it.

Loud Ministerial cheers greeted this conclusion, and Mr.

Harding Buck sat down, having disappointed the critics of the Bill, but having quite satisfied himself.

Slater Scully was eager to rise and destroy the unsatisfactory aspect in which the Member for Moodyville had left the question.

'I will smite him utterly to Dan and Beersheba, and far beyond too,' he whispered to Sir Donald. He felt that the peculiar logic of Harding Buck gave a fine opening for a rhetorical onslaught that would have been a pleasant excitement to him, Slater Scully. But Sir Donald turned a frigid look for a moment upon the jovial countenance of the Water Minister, as he leant over to catch his chief's reply, and observed in a deliberate undertone:

'I suppose you did not hear him say that he was going to vote for the Bill? Perhaps when he heard your speech he might vote against it.' He then whispered to Du Tell to get up, and to be sure to compliment Harding Buck, and to say nothing in particular.

Mr. Du Tell then rose, and began by declaring that the many striking views and powerful arguments of the Honourable Member who had just sat down rendered it impossible for him to remain silent. He said 'many,' because he could not truthfully say that all that honourable gentleman's arguments were equally convincing. His conclusion was noble—grand—to give a whole-hearted support to this great measure. But as to his contention, clever though it was, that pensions would lower wages, why, the plain fact was that, so far from lowering wages, pensions would raise them, as the aged, being made independent, need not work at all. Then there would be more work left for the others.

(Mr. Caffery here interjected, with a decisive nod of approval: 'You've got it this time. Right you are.')

As to the specious fallacy, if his friend would allow him to call it so, that pensions would relieve employers from providing for their aged workmen, that really did astonish him. Certainly, as an advanced Liberal, he was no worshipper of employers. But he would be unwilling to believe that they would be so unscrupulous as to make this law an excuse for evading their responsibilities. If they did, let them beware. There was such a thing as public vengeance. Men's heads

had been seen in the old world, and not so very long ago, to roll upon the scaffold for less—yes, for mere incivism.

Here Mr. Brown-Hawkins, who, as the reader has probably already gathered from this narrative, was rather an impatient listener, seemed to have a confused idea that this ghastly threat of Du Tell's might have some distant reference to his own head, and called out, 'Question—question.' Upon this Du Tell turned slowly round and faced with his sharp, small visage the Member for Castletop with great composure. He was really much obliged to him, for, as he had not very much that he could safely say, the more time taken in interruptions and irrelevant matters the better.

Having completed his searching survey of Mr. Brown-Hawkins, he said that he was amazed at the conduct of the Honourable Member. Did not that honourable gentleman see that this was the very question—the question of questions, in fact—the right of men to live and to prevent other men from starving them. He was really astonished. What could be greater incivism than to seek to pervert the true use of a noble law to the gross issues of private interest? And could it be wondered at—though far be it from him to encourage it—if an indignant and aroused people took vengeance upon such?

He would now proceed to another branch of the Honourable Member for Moodyville's interesting argument. He feared also lest children would be relieved by the pensions from supporting their parents. Well, but there were children and children. Suppose—it was not an improbable case—that the children themselves were poor; then he would ask again, why, what then? Honourable gentlemen who trod upon bank notes—he was far from accusing the Honourable Member for Moodyville—seemed to forget that there were some other people who had to walk on the bare ground, the stony ground too. But if his honourable friend meant to say that children who could afford to aid their parents would thrust them upon the State pensions, he would indignantly reply in the words of Iago, 'Fie, there is no such man; it is impossible.' Our common human nature forbade it.

Coming now to the main question, from the arguments

of his friend, they would not expect him to go over the details of the Government plan, which had been so admirably explained by the Premier. The genius of some of the greatest men of our time, down to their own Sir Donald, had been exercised, and he would say severely exercised, over this great question. And what did they all say? They simply said, 'Pay, pay, pay.' Objections, to be sure, were raised by those who were to pay. Where was the money to come from? it was asked. The Treasurer said that he knew. That was as good as if it was in the chest. Besides, if we had to pay money, where did it go? Why, among ourselves, as had been already acutely observed in this debate. There were the aged and there were the poor. The people said that they must be provided for. Who would dare say nay?

And with this inquiry Mr. Du Tell sat down, having looked round with some sternness for a reply.

Mr. Theodore Bunker, Member for Leadville, then spoke, and as was his custom, briefly. He rejoiced that he had lived to see justice done to the aged poor. The Honourable the Treasurer, the man who carried the bag, the national bag, told them that there was money to do it, so they need not trouble themselves on that score. What was more important, they all had, he trusted, human hearts—at least he had. He quite agreed that, as the Honourable Member for Moodyville had said, young people should not shunt their old relations on to the State. But they would not do it. They too had hearts. He had aged relatives himself. Would he pass them on to the pension fund? No. Small as his income was, he would share his last penny with them first. He congratulated Excelsior as being still in the van of civilisation. They were showing an example to the world. They held the banner aloft. In the march onward and upward they were still the whole team, a spare horse, and a big dog under the waggon.

So far the debate had gone on in the fair ordinary course, the different views of the question had been put, more or less effectively. But now an unfortunate incident happened, such as at times mars the course of Parliamentary action, and which in this case diverted the attention of the

House from the main matter, and ultimately influenced its action upon it, not perhaps unnaturally, but yet not very reasonably either. And it fell out in the simplest manner possible.

Old Mr. Brandreth was speaking, and he objected to that clause in the Bill which restricted its benefits to people of the British or European races, and therefore excluded, among others, the Chinese from claiming under it. If they were qualified in all other respects, he maintained that the matter of race should not be a bar. Generally he did not carry much weight in debate. All his ideas were so old-fashioned. But the simple, honest way in which he stated his argument was evidently making some impression on the House. After he had enumerated their claims for consideration—that they obeyed all our laws, paid all taxes, contributed to charities a little at least, a few had Chinese wives and families, that only a very few of them would claim in any case—he stopped, and looking round the House with more confidence than he usually showed, exclaimed—

‘I appeal to the spirit of fair-play in Honourable Members! Fair-play is an English word, which is untranslatable in any other language. No other language has a word to convey the same meaning. Why? Because only Englishmen know what the thing means.’

Sir Donald was always irritable under criticism that it was not easy to answer. And Brandreth’s objection, the fair way in which he urged it, and particularly the effect that it seemed to be having on the House, vexed him. Personally he quite agreed with him, but as a political leader he must, of course, follow the popular feeling. What else could he do? So, departing from the tone of rigid restraint which he generally affected, he leaned forward so as to get a full view of Brandreth, who sat on the cross-benches at the end of the House, and said in a deliberate tone, with something of a jeer in it—

‘Ah, just so; I have no doubt you would prefer to have your old Chinese shepherds pensioned off on the State.’

Now Brandreth generally resembled Moses in being the meekest of men. But, like many unassuming people, when he was roused by a plain wrong done to him he could hit

out with a straight stroke that was no joke for the man who met it. At home on his sheep station at Towrie, which was in the same district as the MacLever's estate at Land's End, he had often heard of how the MacLevers, father and son, had dealt with their Chinese gardeners and station hands. It so happened that Tom Hookey, the local Populist leader, had only a few months before written several strong letters to the *Land's End Reformer*, denouncing the long hours that the MacLever Chinese worked, and had given particulars thereof, which he had taken down in writing from Swing-Sue, one of the men themselves. He pledged his reputation as a public man (he was announced to stand at the next general election in the strong Populist interest, which was coming to regard Sir Donald as not thoroughly sound) to prove the facts 'before any tribunal in Christendom.'

Brandreth did not place implicit confidence in Mr. Hookey's accuracy, but from his own observation he was quite aware that the Chinese on the MacLever estate did work very long hours. Old MacLever, at any rate, was not very sensitive as to the number of hours worked by any one, himself included.

So Brandreth stopped, eyed Sir Donald steadily, and then, having first, as was his custom when moved or excited, drawn his hand across his mouth and coughed to clear his throat, he retorted in an unusually clear, strong tone—

'I do not want the State to provide for my old Chinese shepherds. I take care of them myself in their old age; and what is more, I do not, like the Honourable the Premier, work my Chinese at any age for twelve or fourteen hours a day.'

The House had been languid during the debate, and the benches were only half filled. But now it was aroused as if by the touch of a magician. Men who were resting in a recumbent position along the seats became erect at once, and pulled themselves together. The Speaker sat up straight, so as to be ready for action. Some Members buzzed about like flies disturbed from repose, while others hurried in from the committee-rooms in response to the swift rumour of the duel between Brandreth and MacLever. Excitement filled the air, and lightened the countenance of

each man, as he looked upon his companion and eagerly asked, How stands it? A general sense of pleasurable activity succeeded to the languor that had spread over all things before, like a pall. Mr. Tom Creed flitted about in the interests of the Opposition to see what could be made out of this daring accusation of Brandreth, who was known to be a solid man, not in the habit of speaking at random; though, to be sure, so antiquated in his notions.

Du Tell's anxious glance round the House rested for a moment upon Secker and Froessolecque in the gallery. The Frenchman was all excitement, chattering volubly into his companion's ear. But the Secretary uttered no word, and only gazed out straight before him, over the gallery rail, with his large grey eyes, into space, or perhaps at the chandelier in the centre of the ceiling, as if he were quite untroubled by the seething turmoil around him.

After a few moments' pause, Sir Donald rose and said, in his most composed manner, that he did not know whether it was necessary for him to contradict the statement of the Honourable Member for Towrie. If it was, he begged leave to do so in the most emphatic terms.

Mr. Brandreth rejoined promptly that neither did he know whether it was necessary for him to repeat his statement. If it was, he also begged leave to do so in a manner equally emphatic. So here was issue joined. Du Tell put up old Mr. Duddin, whom no one ever listened to, to speak about pensions generally till they could see what it would be best to do.

Mr. Brereton, the leader of the Opposition—fair and square B. B., as he was sometimes called—had an instinctive dislike to joining in personal attacks upon his political opponents. He was lolling back in his seat enjoying a good-humoured laugh at the pair of them; and was quite tickled by the fancy that took him to liken the contest to a fight between a tough grizzly bear (Brandreth) and a ferociously-enraged tiger (Sir Donald), when M'Grorty came to him from a little knot of excited Members and anxiously asked what he thought of it, and how he was going to deal with it.

'Think, Cornelius? I don't think at all about it. Deal

with it? Leave it alone. Crisis over a Chinkie. Mac out, Towrie sent for—won't wash any way. Wouldn't pan out the metal you want. No, no. Mutual apologies. Everything said in a Pickwickian sense. Shake hands. Love one another rather better than brothers, and Chinamen be—dropped, in Parliamentary language.'

But M'Grorty protested against giving away the chances of the party in such a manner, and Tom Creed, who had just come up, said that he had seen most of their men, and that they insisted upon something being done; not so much because Sir Donald was not very popular with them personally, as that it would never do for them to appear to their constituents as if they made light of such a thing as the Premier working men ten or twelve hours in the day. It was only a Chinaman now; it might be a white man to-morrow.

'All right, my lads, heave ahead, start the fiddle and round goes the capstan,' said Brereton, putting his hands in his pockets, and giving his head an additional lurch over the back of the bench.

'Heave ahead, only mark my words, with a *Nota Bene*, and, by the Lord Tomnoddie, with a big *Nota* too, if old Towrie fails in his attack, Donald will be stronger than ever, and he will tumble along his blessed Bill just as he pleases, in House or Committee.'

The others determined, however, that a demonstration must be made. Old Mr. Duddin had just come to the end of his usual peroration, in which he thanked the House sincerely for the attentive hearing that they had given him, and sat down quite pleased with his effort. So the Honourable Mr. M'Grorty rose, and having carefully adjusted his necktie, remarked in his most stately style that he sincerely regretted that anything should occur to delay the debate upon the vital question of pensions to the aged poor. But a portentous issue had now been raised in that House, which that House must deal with. It was none other than the issue whether or not the head of Her Majesty's Government in Excelsior had employed human labour—black, white, or yellow, he cared not—for ten and even twelve hours a day. In the face of such an issue, it would ill become him to use

any exaggerated language. Indeed, no language could exaggerate it. He would simply therefore pause, and with firmness, but he hoped without any undue excitement, ask the Honourable the Premier what course His Majesty's Government proposed to take in the grave circumstances in which the Government and the House alike found themselves.

When Sir Donald had contradicted Brandreth, Du Tell, who saw in a moment the seriousness of the affair, had slipped out of the House for the purpose, if possible, of having a word with Secker and Mons. Froessolecque. He beckoned to Walter Crane, who was in his corner of the gallery, looking down upon the scene with a quiet devotional air; and when he hurried out, cap in hand, told him to return to the gallery, and sitting near Secker and his companion, whisper unobserved, that he (Mr. Du Tell) would be glad to see them in the Ministers' room for a few moments. Soon they were there. What the Government were anxious to know was how the Populist party would take the matter—as they were the party that every one was afraid of. Could the whole thing be treated with contempt, or should there be a Committee to inquire and report? If a Committee was necessary, no time was to be lost, for the Government must be the first to offer it.

Secker spoke dubiously, but was rather in favour of the indignant, contemptuous method of treatment, if only it were safe. Would the people stand it? As to this he said that he would defer to the wide experience of Mons. Froessolecque. He did not wish to see Sir Donald disturbed, as he preferred to deal with him rather than with Brereton in the affairs of the State workers. And he had his private fears that there might be some truth in Brandreth's accusation. He had no doubt at all about old MacLever, and he did not know how far Sir Donald might not have been a party to the scandal, for he was owner of an outlying portion of the Land's End estate, which he had taken up under the Land Act years ago, and at times he had managed the whole property, when the old gentleman went to inspect his cattle run in Amanta. Secker therefore would have been glad if the whole thing could have been hushed up. But it so happened that Mons. Froessolecque had, in the discharge of

his editorial duties, become familiar, through the *Land's End Reformer*, with the agitation that Mr. Tom Hookey had aroused there about the long hours that the Chinese worked. The editor of the *Reformer* had sent him a special packet, post-free, under the new regulations, as being for a public purpose only, of all the numbers of his paper that dealt with the subject. And he had in the *Sweet-Brier* supported him with a crushing article directed against old MacLever. He felt sure that Hookey and his party would never agree to hush the thing up, and he could not afford to risk the position of the *Sweet-Brier* by consenting to such a course. He also had a good deal of the enthusiast in his nature ; so he at once declared, with some of his native force of gesticulation, that his heart's motto was that of the *Sweet-Brier*, *Fiat Justitia* ; and that nothing short of a full Parliamentary inquiry would satisfy the public conscience. Du Tell then saw that there was no time to be lost in argument, so he hurried back to Sir Donald and told him the result of the conversation, just as M'Grorty was addressing to the Government his solemn inquiry as to their intentions.

Sir Donald thought for a moment, and then rose and said that he quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that the statement of the Member for Towrie called for investigation. No one desired it more than he did. If the debate were now adjourned, the leader of the Opposition could confer with Mr. Du Tell, or any one on this side of the House, and an impartial Committee could be named to-morrow.

Mr. Brereton called out across the table to bowl ahead, as they were all on for the game. Some Members, however, did object to the postponement of the debate. Frankfort argued, with eagerness, that the real business before them would be only obscured by mixing up the question of the Bill with any personal question at all. But the feeling of the House was certainly against the objectors. In fact, interest in the main question appeared to be swallowed up in this new development. The claims of the aged poor were for the time forgotten in the clangour of the conflict about the Chinamen. For, men said, if this accusation be true, how can we any longer tolerate a Government whose chief so

flagrantly outrages the rights of labour. On the other hand, Sir Donald and his colleagues had a lively hope that in the result the Committee would have to exonerate at least Sir Donald himself, whoever else might be implicated in the charge, and then they felt confident that the Ministry would be stronger than ever, and that they could pass their Bill in any form that they liked. The natural feeling would be to regard the contest into which the debate had developed as having terminated in favour of the Government.

Mr. Brereton and Du Tell soon agreed upon a fair Committee. There was, as Brandreth had said, a love of fair-play among Members, whether for a Premier or for a Chinaman. It being now Thursday, the House adjourned over till the day for meeting on the following week, when it was expected that the Committee's report would be ready to be presented, and business could go on again. As all the witnesses, including a number of Chinese, were at Land's End, the Committee at once went down and commenced their inquiry. There had been hurried and active preparations to collect the evidence on both sides. Mr. Tom Hookey and the editor of the *Reformer* exerted themselves to vindicate their side of the case; and it was known that old Mr. MacLever's lawyer had been busy with the head man of the *Sin Yap Club*, Lee-Sam-Tack, who spoke very tolerable English. The old gentleman himself, Mr. MacLever, was absent at his station in Amanta.

The Chinese who were employed on the MacLever estate were all members of the *Sin Yap Club*, with one exception, and were in very close comradeship with one another. The exception was a mild-spoken youth, by name Swing-Sue, who had been employed by himself as a stable hand, and had left some time before with the declared intention of returning to China with his fortune; though what his fortune was, and where it was, and how he had made it was not clear. He was always about departing for his native land, but one thing or another delayed him, and at the time of the inquiry he was still at Land's End.

The *Sin Yap Club* was one that would seem to have been formed for just and useful purposes, as will appear

from the following rules, which were among those by which the club was governed :—

1. The origin of the establishment of this club is for the promotion of friendly intercourse and mutual assistance, and for the laudable purpose of affording aid to the sick. Should there, however, be any ignoramus who, when called upon to subscribe a small sum to the funds of the club, acts as though he did not hear, or who from a stingy disposition declines contributing to the funds ; such a person being like a wandering star—who has time to go in pursuit of him and get his subscription ? The non-subscriber is like an outside man. Should he get involved in any quarrel or sickness, or, in case of death or trouble in mercantile matters, he having no ticket from the society to produce, any member of the Society who shall interpret for him shall be fined in the sum of £10, which sum shall go to the Society's fund. There shall be no deviation from this rule.

2. The meetings of the Society must be conducted in a gentle manner, and the decisions they come to must be just. Speakers may sit whilst discussing ; but there must be no clenching of fists, or pointing with the finger, at any meeting of the Society, for this would be committing a breach of etiquette ; nor must the speaker raise his voice or bawl, and cause confusion during public deliberations ; firstly, because Europeans might suspect there was a row going on ; secondly, because it would be a breach of Chinese good manners. Guilty persons and witnesses whilst speaking shall not be allowed to sit.

3. The costume of the Chinese being very much disliked by Europeans, our friends and relatives who go about the streets, or who are engaged at work, are forbidden to wear Chinese trousers. It is allowed to any member who witnesses any infringement of this rule to report the names of the persons guilty of it to the Society, and the offenders shall be summarily visited with twelve stripes, and fined besides in the sum of £2, which shall go to the person who reported them. The repeated infringement of this rule is calculated to give much trouble.

4. The above rules being all for the public good, and not for any private interest, all the friends and relatives of our clan must see to their own good conduct, and endeavour to influence others thereby. All must equally obey and practise the rules. That all may get plenty of silver is our wish for our clan-fellows. It is well said, 'Let your strong purposes be developed by a vigorous execution of them.' You will obtain abundance of silver with which to return to your homes. The product of the earth (silver) is to be found in these southern regions ; the gathering of it together is for China. The gods alone are liberal, and confer happiness and pro-

tection to bless men. Is not this really excellent? Is not this noble? All happiness centres here.

The 4th year of the Emperor Ham-Fong, 11th month, 6th day. The Sin Yap people have unitedly adopted these rules.

The effect of injunctions such as these, and of the close companionship of the club upon fellow-countrymen dwelling in a strange land, was in many respects good. And it certainly promoted a marked unity among themselves in regard to their conduct towards strangers. In this respect they were as one man. What one said, all said. What one did, all did.

Both the parties to the inquiry were represented by their lawyers before the Committee, which sat in the Land's End court-house. The Brandreth-Hookey party naturally commenced with the proofs of their accusation. Mr. Hookey himself deposed that he had, at certain seasons, seen the Chinese working on the MacLever estate at six o'clock in the morning when he went to drive in his cows; and at six o'clock, and even seven o'clock, when he was driving them back in the evening, there were the Chinese still out about the land. He had written to old Mr. MacLever several times, but had got no answer. Once, some years ago, he had met Sir Donald himself riding round the property early one morning, and had spoken to him about it; but his only reply was that the place was his father's, and that the old gentleman managed it as he pleased.

When asked by Mr. MacLever's lawyer whether he continued looking at the Chinese all day, Mr. Hookey admitted that he only saw them morning and evening. He could not say whether they went to bed in the middle of the day or not; but it was not likely.

Several other witnesses gave similar testimony, and said that the long hours of labour on the MacLever estate were the talk of the whole of Land's End. But there was so far evidently a missing link in the case as it affected Sir Donald himself. The editor of the *Reformer* went into the box to supply this. He produced a receipt for wages signed by the "president of the *Sin Yap Club*, Lee-Sam-Tack, the whole of which, except the signature, was in Sir Donald's own handwriting. It was certainly an old receipt, and bore date

before that gentleman's accession to office. But it distinctly stated the remuneration of Lee-Sam-Tack, as head man and overseer, at so much an hour, and a slight calculation showed that he had been paid for superintending between sixty and seventy hours' labour during the week that the receipt specified. How this receipt got into the hands of the enemy was not clear; but it was admitted to have been in their possession shortly after Swing-Sue left the MacLever stable on his way to China, and dark insinuations of a nature highly injurious to Swing-Sue's moral character were indulged in by old Mr. MacLever's lawyer.

Still all this appeared to bear out the Brandreth-Hookey accusation; but a different complexion was put upon the facts when several members of the *Sin Yap Club* were examined for the defence. It seemed that none of them understood or could speak English, though a contrary impression prevailed among the Land's End people, as several of them were known at times to make a very fair attempt to express their wants in 'Pigeon English.' But they one and all declared, through the interpreter, that they knew nothing of the English language, and could only answer any question after it had been translated to them by him. The interpreter, Ah Now, sympathised with them in their ignorance, and assured the Committee that it would be 'no go' unless they spoke through him. Ah Now considered himself a proficient in the English tongue, and quite enjoyed giving his version of the question to a witness, posing his head on one side in a superior way the while, and putting the answer into proper shape, after several warnings and exclamations to his ignorant countryman, in the Chinese tongue.

Wong-Ah-Ly was first called. He was a pleasant, cheerful-looking sort of fellow, with bright twinkling eyes, and was sworn in such a way as to bind his conscience, by blowing out a match, and agreeing that his soul might be so blown out if he did not tell the truth. He said that they all worked only eight hours. He was one of the men that Mr. Hookey spoke to on some mornings when he was driving in the cows. His cousin, Lum-Hum-Fan, took up his work in the afternoon and he lay down and rested. His

cousin was very like him. He was away now droving cattle ; but he could not tell where he was on the road. No one could. His cousin would go on working till after dark. Wong-Ah-Tin and Wong-Ah-Gong, two brothers, who certainly bore a very close family resemblance to one another, gave similar evidence, and explained in great detail how they divided the day between them. Lew-Yee-See gave a like account of himself and his cousin. But it so happened that Mr. Hookey had on one occasion at least, when he had been engaged all day riding backwards and forwards past the estate, changing cattle, noticed that this same Lew-Yee-See had been there working all the time. When taxed with this, and asked if he would deny what Mr. Hookey said, the interpreter had great difficulty in getting him to understand the question. But he at last admitted that he had worked ten hours that time, but it was because he wanted to finish planting a lot of potatoes, as the rain was just coming on after the long drought.

MacLever's lawyer desired to turn the tables on Mr. Hookey and damage his reputation, by insisting that he was equally in fault in being so long on that day changing the cattle. But the Brandreth-Hookey lawyer maintained that the eight hours law did not apply to a man droving cattle. Still, much did not come of this incident, as Hookey admitted that rain was threatening, and that was indeed the excuse, in a moral point of view, for his making such a long day of it himself. Wong-Pay gave very explicit testimony that he only worked the proper eight hours. In fact, he never began work until eight o'clock. When asked with great vehemence by the lawyer, on cross-examination, whether on a particular day that was specified he was not seen at sunrise working in the crop, he quietly asked through the interpreter to have the question repeated, and upon this being done in a loud and threatening tone, he softly made some short reply. The interpreter being challenged as to what it was, informed the Committee that Wong-Pay said that, if that was so, the sun must have risen about eight o'clock that morning.

As all the members of the *Sin Yap Club* gave exactly the same evidence, there seemed to be little use in repeating it, so MacLever's lawyer said he would close his case, subject

to Sir Donald's own statement, which the Committee would hear from himself upon their return to the city. The Committee had sat upon such short notice that he was not able to get old Mr. MacLever back from Amanta in time. Thereupon the Brandreth-Hookey lawyer asked leave to call Swing-Sue, who had been employed in the stable, and who, as has been said, was not a member of the club. This was strenuously opposed by the MacLever side, as the other party had, it was contended, closed his case, and had no right to go into what was technically called a rebutting case. The Committee, however, determined to hear Swing-Sue, in the interests of truth. When he presented himself he seemed a simple sort of youth, quite kind and quiet in his manner. But Lee-Sam-Tack at once called attention to the fact that he had lost his tail, which showed, he said, that Swing-Sue must have been convicted of perjury in China, and which was the reason they would not have him in the *Sin Yap Club*. Lee-Sam-Tack mentioned to the Committee in an explanatory manner that the club could not stand perjury in any form or shape.

Swing-Sue, through Ah Now the interpreter, emphatically denied that he had lost his tail in China at all; and said that it was owing to his cousin, who was shaving his head, slipping it off accidentally. The Committee directed him to be sworn, and then it appeared that he was particular about the manner in which he took the judicial oath. He disdained the method of blowing out a match adopted by the *Sin Yap* people, and in quite an undertone mentioned something to Ah Now.

'What does he say, interpreter?' asked the chairman.

'He say, gentlemen, no match do for him.' And Ah Now added, turning round to the chairman, and extending his hands in an explanatory manner, 'No match stop him telling lie, you see.'

'Oh, I see. Won't bind his conscience to speak the truth.'

'Ah, just so. Won't bind his conscience,' the interpreter replied, as if he were quite pleased with the expression.

Asked what would bind him, he made some quiet answer.

'He say' Ah Now informed the Committee—'he say you

smash one big plate ; break it, you see, little bits. His soul smashed all the same if he tell lie.'

A messenger was accordingly sent to the inn for a plate, and the proceedings were stayed till his return. During the interval Swing-Sue stood in the witness-box, looking straight before him, with a meditative air, and not seeming in the least to feel all the trouble he was giving. He rather appeared to regard the delay as a tribute to his sensitive conscience, that was not to be controlled by common methods.

The plate having arrived, was duly smashed, and the appropriate invocation was made. Swing-Sue was then ready to speak the truth. He was asked, through Ah Now, whether the Sin Yap men worked in relays, as had been stated. Without the least change of expression, he made some remark to the interpreter in a quiet tone of unconcern.

'Well, what does he say?' inquired the lawyer.

'He says it all one big gammon, you know,' replied Ah Now.

After this there was nothing to do but to show on cross-examination what a bad character Swing-Sue was, and a number of questions were put to him about the loss of his tail, and other alleged unhappy incidents in his life. He made answer that all these injurious imputations were pure inventions. He had to admit, however, that he had once been in prison at Land's End ; and as so much turned on his evidence, the Committee investigated the facts regarding this incident with some care. They were not easy to unravel. At the time in question he was carrying on the business of a laundryman, and he was convicted of washing shirts after two o'clock on Saturday, contrary to the provisions of the Public Recreation Act. He could not deny that he was washing a shirt upon the day in question after two o'clock, but he swore positively that it was his own shirt which he was working at when the constable seized him, and that he wanted to get it washed and ironed by the Sunday, as he was engaged to take tea on the Sunday afternoon with his cousin Foo Slim. His lawyer, Thaddeus Knack, boldly argued that a man was entitled to wash his own shirt at any hour. This defence roused the ire of the pro-

secuting constable, who was of Milesian extraction, and who informed the Bench that he had repeatedly seen the accused washing after two o'clock on Saturday, and when he threatened him the man had always said it was his own shirt, and that if there was a word of truth in the story of this 'unapproachable Pagan,' as he called him, the shirt 'would have been scoured out of existence entirely' long ago. Foo Slim was called, and swore that his cousin had engaged to take tea with him that Sunday afternoon, and that he came in a soiled shirt, excusing himself by the fact that on the previous afternoon the constable had stopped him from completing the washing of it. But the Bench convicted the prisoner, and sentenced him to pay a fine of 40s. or to go to gaol for forty-eight hours. Swing-Sue said that the only way in which he could pay the fine would be by working overtime, as the statutory day's work barely gave him a living; and as then he would be summoned again, he might as well go to prison at once. And so he did.

The Brandreth-Hookey lawyer could not deny these facts, as they were proved in the clearest way; he could only maintain that imprisonment in the special circumstances of this case did not necessarily destroy the credibility of the witness. The Committee said that they would take his evidence, and consider what value they would attach to it afterwards.

When Swing-Sue's evidence was finished, the Committee rather irregularly allowed MacLever's lawyer to call Lee-Sam-Tack to say what he knew of Swing-Sue. Lee-Sam-Tack disdained the interpreter, and would tell his story himself. It was short. He stated 'he sorry he say Swing-Sue his cousin, for he was one bad man, and two big liar.'

The Committee having thus got information about the facts at Land's End, returned to town, and had only to hear Sir Donald's own statement before coming to a decision. Great man as he was, he could not afford to make light of this accusation. Proud as he was, and supercilious in his manner to many, he was deferential when summoned to answer the charge of having wronged the cause of labour. His political prestige, and the fate of his Ministry, depended upon his showing that he was innocent of this accusation,

which every worker in the Province felt himself interested in.

He made his statement to the Committee in a careful manner. The Land's End estate belonged to his father, all except some outlying country which he (Sir Donald) had taken up some years ago, and which was far from the home station where the Chinese worked. He had no direct share in the management of the property, and if in his father's absence he had paid a few wages bills, he never scrutinised the details, nor had he any power over them. With regard to men in his own employment, he fully observed the eight hours law.

When the Committee began to deliberate upon its report, there was found to be a general wish to do what was just ; but there appeared to be a difference in the manner of looking at the facts between the Members from the Government side of the House and those from the Opposition. In the end a compromise was arrived at. Compromise is said to be the essence of the British constitution. It was agreed to exonerate Sir Donald from responsibility for the working of the MacLever estate, but at the same time to report that Brandreth had reasonable cause for his assertion, owing to the long hours that Chinese were seen to be working on the land.

The Government party accepted this as a victory, and displayed much jubilation over the event. Their press congratulated the Premier on his vindication from the grave charge brought against him. Mons. Froessolecque, in a leader in the *Sweet-Brier*, declared a qualified approval of the report of the Committee, in so far as it cleared the character of the Liberal leader. But he indulged in some savage asides against old Mr. MacLever. The main purpose of the article was inspired by the prudential Secker, while the writer relieved his own feelings in the asides.

When the report of the Committee had been made to the House and unaminously adopted, the tone of feeling that Mr. Brereton had anticipated was found to be developed among Members. There appeared to be a general conclusion that all conflict about the Bill was over. There was no more fight in it. The attack on the Premier had failed, and it was only fair now to let him have his Bill. When

M'Grorty spoke to Brereton about how to proceed now, all he could get out of his leader was that he already had had his cake in the form of the Committee. There was nothing more for him to eat. Make his bow to MacLever and wish him joy of his Bill. Several Members, and in particular our politician, debated the different points of the measure, and they declared that the Government, in justice to its own plan, should combine the insurance scheme with the Bill for the Pensions. But there seemed to be no heart in further controversy; so, after two lifeless evenings in Committee, the Bill was reported to the House, and passed very nearly in the same shape as Sir Donald had introduced it. As the Senate could not venture to reject, even had they been so minded, such a popular measure as pensions in any form to the aged poor, the Senators accepted the Bill just as it was sent to them. Thus the principle of a general grant of pensions, without qualification, was established.

But what became of the Bills for promoting insurance for old age and for reducing the minimum of the income tax? They were proposed by the Government late in the session. But they were not popular. There was no vigorous party determined to push them through; while there was a very active party resolved to prevent their becoming law. Many quiet people approved of them. But the resolute fighting party, that feels it is backed up by the aggressive element out of doors, carried the day. After being debated upon one or two evenings, they were postponed, and never more heard of.

The House sat late for the final reading of the Pensions Bill, and our politician, instead of walking home, as was his wont, got into the first cab of the rank of vehicles that lined the street waiting for Members when the House broke up. It happened to be that of Ben Mule, the argumentative cabman, which stood first. He was an assiduous attendant up to all hours upon Parliamentary service, and that not alone for the sake of the fares, which were doubled after twelve o'clock, but because he enjoyed so much a good talk with the Member he would take home; and this irrespective of what party he might belong to. But Ben Mule himself was one of the Populist party, with, however, some

reservations of his own special views. He was acquainted with every Member personally, and managed to get a very fair knowledge of the merits and demerits of each by diligent reading of the *Sweet-Brier*, as he lay quietly in his vehicle sunning himself in the idle part of the day—that is, of their merits and demerits as they were represented in that journal. The Members also all knew him, and recognised the fact that he had no mean voice at the polls, owing to his vigorous exertions on election day, and also the influence which he at all times possessed with his brother cabmen. And the cabmen played an important part in the political world of Excelsior. They helped largely to form political public opinion, as they met and conversed with so many people, and on polling days it was they who did the practical work of bringing voters up to the polls.

So keen was Ben Mule's interest in affairs, that he used at times, when there was an important debate going on, to ask one of his brethren to look after his cab while he slipped into the strangers' gallery, heard the various speakers, and formed his own estimate of them. Once he was summoned by a young policeman, who was on duty at the House for the first time, for being absent from his cab. But the superior officer hushed the thing up, 'as it was only Ben Mule'; and a prescriptive right had come to be recognised in his case to be absent for a while when a really exciting affair was going on inside. Ben Mule understood that it was only on these special occasions that this concession was to be allowed, and he loyally respected the condition, and did not ask indulgence except when the attraction was such that political human nature could not be fairly expected to resist it. Altogether, he had come to be very well versed in the questions of the day, and he could advance the latest arguments upon them more readily than could many who were above him in the social scale. Still, these arguments were of use rather to justify the conclusions at which he wished to arrive than, in the first instance, to form his opinions about them.

He had been inside for an hour that evening, and was very full of the subject when our politician stepped into his cab. He drove away with quite a flourish, owing to his

excitement about the debate he had just heard, and looking in to Frankfort, through the window which he was careful to keep open for conversational purposes, he exclaimed—

‘There, now, to hear that there old Mr. Brandreth, the sheep man, talking along of the expense of these here pensions of the poor. Why, one of his own sheep could bleat it out better like.’

‘Still, Ben, the expense has to be thought of,’ replied our politician.

‘Ah, but what I’d be after knowing,’ Ben replied, turning round to the front again, and waving his hand about, as if to defy opposition from any quarter—‘what I’d be after knowing is why we never hear no objections about the expenses till we come on to the pensions of the poor man. Look at what pensions to the aristocracy in Great Britain tattle up to, and who takes on about the expense there.’

And Ben cited some of the well-known flagrant examples taken from the Black Book, which the *Sweet-Brier* had printed for several Saturdays running, in very large type.

‘All the same, the money must be got from the rest of us,’ rejoined our politician.

‘Well, and what cause, why not? Ain’t it well spent, providing the poor man with an independent bit of living, when the years are on him that heavy that he can’t work.’

‘Quite true, Ben Mule: I am for pensions too. But what we are doing now won’t provide for the poor man. You could not live on ten shillings a week, could you?’

‘In course not. How could I? But where’s the value of that ’ere point? Why not make it up so that a man can live.’

‘Well, it comes round again, Ben, to the old difficulty. Who is to pay the fare?’

‘Now, I don’t take on to that at all,’ exclaimed Ben, speaking loudly so that Frankfort could hear him inside, and interlarding his arguments on the Pensions question with remonstrances and ejaculations designed to stimulate his horse to renewed efforts. ‘I don’t take on to that at all. We don’t get stuck up like that by the expense when we give

pensions to the tip-tops,—the General there and his £400 a year till he gets to be ninety and more, who gets riled along of it? No, as I often makes remark to Mr. Crane, there down at Mick's place in the lane of a Sunday, it's all plain driving in these Government affairs till ye get on to the poor man, and then it is not there you are, but where are you?'

'Still, Ben, you don't say where the Government are to get the money.'

'The money?' exclaimed Ben, looking round with some surprise. 'The money? Why, look at me, a poor man myself,—if one of the cabbies is down on his luck, what do I do? Why, in course a few of us around give him a lift out of our three or four notes a week, if we know that he is the right sort. And why can't the big 'uns with their villas and pairs of 'orses, that would buy up fifty of my old mare Blu-ee there, as is pulling away in them shafts there—why can't they open their hearts a bit and ease off this yer hard lot of the poor man?'

'Ah well, Ben, here we are; it's past twelve o'clock—double fare, isn't it?'

'Oh, I ain't particular with Parliament men. We'll split the differ and make it 7s. 6d.'

'No, no, Ben, the law says double fare. There it is; good-night.'

And Ben, waving a courteous adieu with his whip, drove away the tired Blu-ee to the wished-for stable. And Blu-ee was very tired. No eight hours law for him. Advanced views had not reached his case yet; though perhaps in due time they will.

The gift of ten shillings a week was a grateful though but imperfect aid to many old people in Excelsior. Unexpected claimants appeared on all sides, and, except in the case of clear fraud, were generously dealt with. Our old acquaintance Jacob Shumate, after some internal struggles, determined to apply. He was undoubtedly qualified as to age and residence in the Province, and as far as poverty was concerned. Though his poverty was mainly owing to so much of his time being taken up with fighting municipal abuses in Glooscap, that a great deal of the best work of the village had gone away to other hands. Were he to give up

the abuses and devote all his time to the work, he would do well enough even now ; but then who would there be to keep things straight in the borough ?

His chief perturbation, however, arose from the recollection of the keen fight he had maintained against Sandy M'Givern's pension, and the reproaches that possibly the Mayor and David Blow might cast at him if he took a pension himself, and that without having done the State, as they would allege, any service such as Sandy M'Givern had rendered to the borough. Indeed, his own conscience was disposed to reproach him too ; and, as has been said before, Jacob Shumate had a conscience. But still there was the ten shillings a week waiting to be taken, if he would only put out his hand and take it. Modern life is running out of stock of the stuff of which martyrs are made. But we repeat that Jacob was not without a conscience, and he put the matter to his conscience in this way :—

Pensions for the poor are a different thing from pensions to the upper classes, and a man may consistently condemn the latter, while he accepts the first. And have I not done long and good service to the district, and that without pay of any kind ? There is a difference, too, between devoting municipal funds, which are meant for roads and bridges for the people generally, to the purpose of a pension, and taking the public money for a public purpose. My great objection was to Sandy M'Givern getting his pension out of the rates. I said that it was malversation, and so it was. Then as to working for myself, I am getting old and not so well able to work. My trade has been spoiled by my attention to public grievances. If I refuse the pension it will be a poor example to induce other younger men to give time to exposing abuses. But if I claim it on the ground of my public services, it makes a good precedent.

Ultimately Jacob Shumate satisfied himself that it was not only his right, but distinctly his duty, to claim the money, and thus leave himself some leisure to serve the public still. It was awarded to him without question. The Mayor of Glooscap and David Blow, and some others belonging to the local aristocracy, did attempt to rally him in their cumbersome, half-jocular, whole-earnest style ; but he

proved more than a match for them, for he had carefully conned over his retorts, as he knew what he had to be ready to meet. And they were afraid to go too far, as Jacob Shumate was an awkward man to provoke. Had he been a less dangerous man they would have been more merciless in their attacks. In the end the shoemaker triumphed, and lived to enjoy both his pension and also his reputation as a fearless enemy of all sorts of privilege or other public abuses in Glooscap.

The course of the procedure of the House of Representatives in dealing with the questions that had come before it in the session whose history we have been tracing may strike the observer as devious and unsatisfactory. And no doubt it was so, if compared with the ideal standard that a thinking man would set up in his mind as to what a legislative body ought to do. But looked at practically that House acted very much as any other 112 men assembled together would have done. The weaknesses displayed in its proceedings are inherent in all large bodies of men who have to carry on business by means of discussion and voting, unless they are led by a strong executive power that is not wholly dependent upon them. Often there is much discussion and little done upon it, while at times important results are almost silently arrived at. The defects are the defects of the system, as it has come to be developed in our time.

Then all assemblies must have means, under one form or another, of avoiding matters which they do not want to deal with. Further, when a decision is arrived at, it is rarely the result of the sum of the majority of the individual opinions of members. What inner views of their own men may have got smothered in most men by the prevailing tone of the chamber, the confidence of the stronger side, the acclaim of success. The comfortable feeling of going with all the rest carries many along by impulse, not by conviction. An eminent judge says that, even among a number of judges met to consider a question of law, some are apt to fall in with whatever proves to be the view of the strongest party. In popular assemblies this tendency is the more absolute, as the question is not what is the best abstract opinion, but

what is the best thing to do practically ; and what handier test of that can there be than what the majority decide for? The House of Representatives of Excelsior at times seemed to be uncertain and capricious in its action. Of itself it could do little. When urged by strong outside feeling, it responded readily. If it was not guided upon all questions by the force of mental conclusions, it at least reflected faithfully the merits and demerits of the people of the Province.

But imperfect as are the methods by which Democratic assemblies carry on Government, we must not overlook the distinguishing merit of their earnest purpose to help the mass of the people. Their motives in doing so may not be wholly disinterested. But their efforts towards that end are constant and sincere. Less able men who act thus may be more useful to the people than statesmen who would not have a fellow-feeling for their troubles. A combination of the two—real statesmanship and sincere sympathy with the people—would be the ideal form of Government, from which we are still evidently distant.

Though the purpose of this narrative is chiefly to present a sketch of the varying types of thought and movement that democracies now present, and to let the reader draw his own inferences, yet a few reflections may here be allowed upon that struggle to promote the wellbeing of the poor that is now the high purpose of democratic aspirations. It is true that what small, happy communities, still in their youth, surrounded by all the natural conditions of plenty, and free from the graver cares of national life, may do, does not prove that full-grown nations could do the same. They can try experiments, and if one experiment fails, can bear the loss and try another. Their large revenues, raised with ease by taxation, which, high as it is, is little felt in their prosperous conditions of life, is spent not upon wars or armaments, but upon the kindly purposes of their young national life. The youth of twenty-one can take liberties with his constitution that would be fatal to the man of sixty. Still, we learn from their experiments what peoples in our time desire to do—whither popular forces do tend to go, where there is free scope for them to work ; and we learn this

better from small and prosperous communities than we could from large and overburdened ones.

What, then, are those tendencies? As might be expected, they are naturally, and also rightly, all directed to improve the social lot of the mass of the people: to lighten the burthen of labour and to increase its share in the division of the national production. Political methods are valued mainly as they conduce to this end. The idea of the reformers of fifty years ago, that men would prize the franchise for its own sake, and for the national duties that it would train them to, has faded away. Democracy has passed the political stage, and developed into the Social stage. Men regard the franchise as important indeed, but important as a weapon for winning social advantages.

In the first place comes the demand for equality among citizens, and a feeling of irksomeness at any phase of inequality. Even intellectual distinction is recognised only because it is open to all, and often mainly achieved by the poor. Thus the William Dorland University was fairly popular in Excelsior, because it represented learning democratised, and the poor man could see his boy successful in its classes, and helped on his way to a profession.

This equality is easily secured on the political side of life. All that you have to do is to pass laws to produce that result. An Act of Parliament can enact that any man or woman of twenty-one years of age is the equal, at the ballot-box, of every other man or woman in the community. To the vote of the coachman of the merchant prince is given the same power as belongs to the vote of the man whose carriage he drives. To that of the cook the same as belongs to the mistress of the mansion. So far all is plain sailing. But then up comes the social sphere, based upon the old lines of uncompromising Nature. There it is found that men and women are unequal in their powers, and owing to that fact, if it is let alone, it results that one portion of the people are well off and other portions worse off—some indeed sadly so. Though the coachman drops his ballot into the box equally with his master, yet his social function is to groom the horses and to polish up the carriage in which the merchant prince reclines as he is borne to his

comfortable office in the city. Though the cook casts as good a vote as the mistress, yet she has to spend the afternoon cleaning the kitchen range, while the other rolls in her landau to a fashionable friend for afternoon tea.

Why is this thus, my friends? is the question that men newly awakened to their political rights ask, not unnaturally, of one another. Is there not something out of joint in this social world, so different in its operation from the political? Does not Nature's plan lead to injustice, and should we not try to set it right? We have won one half of man's rights by our laws, easily passed; but, alas! it is only a barren half—in fact, it makes the ills of social life worse than ever! Let us now win the fruitful side of our inheritance. Accordingly, the unsleeping efforts of the political power are directed to levelling down those social inequalities which become more and more incongruous as political development advances. It used to be considered that the true purpose of social reform was to give all a fair start in life, and then let the best man win. But we have grown beyond this. What is now desired is, that the race shall be so arranged that there shall be no failures, or, if that be impossible, at least that there shall be no extravagant wins, no more big stakes.

It is impossible not to sympathise with this generous purpose. When we call to mind what was the condition of the poor not more than a century ago, who will not look kindly upon efforts to secure for all a happier lot, and also a more just lot. Dr. Johnson, in one of his conversations, mentions the fact that about twenty people a week died in his time, in London, from the effects of hunger. As late as 1820, little children of eight and nine years of age used to be seized by the parish officers in that city and sent away from their parents by waggon-loads to Manchester and Leeds, where they were worked in the mills twelve, and even fifteen, hours a day, the little creatures being at times found by the gang master asleep upon their perches from sheer exhaustion. This was defended in the House of Commons upon the ground that, though family ties were most useful for the better class of people, yet the parents and home life of these children were so degraded that it was a positive good to take the young ones away. In 1816 a boy of ten years of

age, in London, was sentenced to be hanged for stealing. As late as 1842 women worked half-naked down in the coal-mines of England. In Lancashire weavers got as little as six shillings a week for fifteen hours' work a day. In Ireland in 1835 (before the famine period) there were between eleven and twelve hundred thousand agricultural labourers, whose average wage did not exceed two and six-pence a week, and then it was only casual employment. In parts the people used seaweed as an article of food. It would be easy to extend the list of these painful facts. And in England the condition of the poor was better than in many of the continental nations. All this was under the rule of an aristocratic House of Lords and an intellectual House of Commons.

It behoves us, then, to look favourably upon the new departure that is now made on behalf of the people. The swing is now the other way; but it must not go so far as to lose its balance. If in any respect we have to criticise, it should be not to impede, but to assist progress on sound lines,—to make the movement a success, not a failure. Criticism, if a thankless, is a useful service; and never more useful than in democracies, where so many are ever busy calling aloud to the people, 'O king, live for ever!' that they often forget to see that the true methods are taken for ensuring to the sovereign a long reign. Even imperfect criticism is more useful than promiscuous adulation.

If, then, we are to criticise, we should say that the weak point in much of the more advanced social legislation is twofold. It undertakes to perform more than the State can really do, and thus raises expectations and also creates needs that it cannot satisfy. And further, in its desire to help the individual it smothers him. He is made unfit for fighting by the weight of the armour in which they encase him for his defence. Persistent industry, self-denial, foresight in providing for a rainy day—these qualities come naturally to few of us. But they are essential if we are to be comfortably provided for by ourselves. They can only be developed by need and use, and under the paternal Government the need and use never presses home to us. A creeping paralysis sets in, operating in many ways, and spreading

enfeebling influences often where it is least expected. A general condition of lean-to pervades all classes. Nobody does anything unless he is helped by somebody else,—generally the Government. Everybody looks around him for support before he acts. Private enterprise withers. In this way Socialism is drifted into without ever being seriously considered, intelligently understood, or deliberately adopted. And the State? It can only be what its individual citizens make it. No Government can rise above its source.

There are some plain duties that every Government must discharge to its people. It goes without saying that no citizen should be left without bread, whatever sort of man he may be; and that society should freely help the needy in the case of sickness or accident, or other of the varied emergencies of life. Further, as a matter of justice as well as of policy, considering the often hard lot of the mass of the people, the State should liberally assist all efforts of the wage earners to make provision for old age. But when it is claimed, as a right, that the State should find work at full wages for those who demand it, and that it should give pensions to all without asking for any co-operation from the recipient, or expecting any foresight or self-denial from him, you find at once that you have got beyond philanthropic considerations into political and economical designs, which, while professing only to provide for the needy, are really altering the conditions upon which the Social State has hitherto rested. If you accept them, you ought also to accept the complete Socialist scheme.

For if the duty of the State to individuals be paternal, its authority over them ought to be equally so. If it is answerable for providing for its citizens (otherwise than against positive want), it should have some say in directing the conduct in life which leads up to the need for its intervention. For a man to insist upon the full freedom of individualism and also upon the Socialist right to be handsomely provided for by the State is to make a demand that the stern conditions of life will render it impossible for a full-grown nation to bear. In other words, the saving and hard-working people of the community could not pro-

duce enough to provide for themselves and also for others in this generous fashion. You can have the system of freedom, in which, to put it generally, a man is left to work out his own career; the State ensuring to all a fair start, and providing, of course, for the helpless. Or you can have, or rather you can attempt, the Socialist system, under which the State unreservedly undertakes to provide for every one; but only by taking every one into its service from his start in life, and then not alone giving him work, but compelling him to do it.

But no community could long continue to combine the freedom of the individualist system with the obligations of the socialistic. It would soon be faced by the old difficulty of the want of pence. A people can only live by what they produce, and Nature has decreed that production can only be achieved by labour; and labour, moreover, persistently pursued and intelligently directed. It is no use making the most advanced arrangements for distribution, unless there is efficient production to begin with. The half-socialist Governments are vigorous in distributing, but they do not take equal care to enforce production and to compel the idle, as full Socialism undertakes to do. Their present task is easy; they are in wealthy, young communities, and they tax heavily for their expenditure. They are mostly concerned with spending. The independent portion of society, producing under the stimulus of industrial freedom and individual exertion, provides for the losses incurred by the State. These Governments adopt what is agreeable in both the systems, discarding what is repellent in either.

Thorough-going Socialists admit this, and regard these half-socialist methods as only the transition stage to the full system. Mr. Caffery said no more than all intelligent Socialists admit, when he informed the crowd at the meeting in Miranda that, while he demanded employment from the Government, he would treat as a criminal the man who would not work when he got it.

What, then, is before us? Upon what lines is Government by the poor going? What does the example of these little democracies in pleasant places like Excelsior, able to do just as they please for the present, teach us? Is the

solution in the complete Socialist State, when the Government will employ all, provide for all, compel all as in one big industrial army? Some say, Yes. The farther you go in that direction, the farther you must go. If Democracy, like the grave, never gives back, no more does the Socialist principle. You go on weakening the conditions of self-help till there is no longer an individual self in the people to appeal to. Leaning is natural to men. A people after living a while on the stimulant of State aid have not stamina left to go on without it. They are fit only for alike the support and the control of Socialism. Such is the fear of some, and such the hope of others.

If, indeed, it be true that this is the trend of our democratic civilisation, then the conclusion would be forced upon us that this cycle of human history was drawing to its close. It would have done its work and exhausted its vital force. Not by the convulsions from within, nor by assaults from barbarians from without, would its fate be accomplished ; but by the quiet and sleepy process of a Chinese-like decay. You would have taken out of the social machinery Nature's power of man's individuality, which, ever pulsating like the heart in the body, keeps active the vitality of the whole system.

But there is another course which Democracies may take. Large experiments will certainly be made. But experiments teach people lessons in a way that no arguments can. More is always expected from State efforts than they can give. Often they work differently from what they were expected to do. Projects that were most promising in theory are found to have, when realised, their value sadly marred by some unexpected drawback in practice. The more pronounced Socialist experiments become, the more will be realised the price that must be paid for them in social paralysis and loss of personal independence. The love of freedom to do as we will with ourselves is a deep principle in Anglo-Saxon nature, and though it may be for a time held in abeyance on account of benefits received from the State, it will in the end reassert itself. Feelings of opposition would then be awakened that slumber quietly enough in the early, easy stages of the change, when pro-

gress chiefly consists in breaking down class aggrandisement and getting something from somebody else.

Here comes in the value of experience acting upon intelligent public opinion, and of the compulsory education that the conflict of everyday interests gives to a people. Truth also is buoyant. If a new principle is a mistake, if it is inconsistent with human progress, then in time this fact comes home to men, whether they will or no. They become sensible of it, perhaps slowly, almost imperceptibly, as they do of the advancing light of the irresistible dawn of day. Public opinion may fluctuate amid contending views, but, like the needle amid disturbing currents, it seems to possess an inherent tendency to turn in the end to the true direction. So long as the love of liberty remains the leading impulse of our race, and the Social State, with its present conditions of personal freedom and individual exertion, proves stronger than the paternalism of the political power, so that, instead of being transformed by it towards the collectivism of politicians, it is able to limit State action to the work that truly belongs to it—so long we may expect to see the social amelioration of the people advancing side by side with their political development, but without the two being mingled in State Socialism, as the final goal. The improvement of the industrial condition of the workers, and the raising of the wage-earner towards the position of a profit-sharer, while it could be assisted by wise legislation—probably in the direction of co-operative enterprise—would still be mainly dependent on and promoted by the increasing intelligence and, what ought to accompany intelligence, the self-reliance of the people themselves.

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL AND DOMESTIC

THE holiday time of Christmas was again coming round, and our politician arranged to spend it among his constituents at Brassville. He looked forward with pleasure to meeting his uncle, the banker, and the amiable, matter-of-fact Mrs. Fairlie, with the sprightly young cousins, Teddy and Minnie. He knew he would enjoy also his visits to The Blocks. The Senator and Mrs. Lamborn were so friendly; while the sunshiny presence and the frank, engaging conversation of Eilly Lamborn was quite a pleasant prospect to look forward to amid the dull, but at times perplexing, surroundings of public life. He would be glad to meet all his constituents—Woodall, the bookseller, and the worthy Mayor, Hedger the lawyer, and the local upper-class society, also Seth Pride, Miss Gazelle, and the temperance connection—even Barney Clegg, with all his grievances and humbug. There were some, to be sure, whose good-will, politically, he was doubtful about; notably the editor of the *Scorcher*, Mr. Hawk Purrington, and Jacob Shumate, the politician of Glooscap. For the editor, though he spoke in the fairest manner possible to Frankfort when he met him, some way managed to slip into his columns a number of damaging references to the Member's services, or lack of services, to the constituency; and more than once made left-handed references in the leading columns of a disparaging nature to the political action of their Representative.

Still, when Frankfort met him he found the lord of the pen as cordial as ever, and his conversation, in so far as it

had reference to our politician, decidedly partook more of a laudatory than a critical or adverse character. Once, after a very bitter article against him about the M'Glumpy business had appeared, happening to meet the editor in Miranda, he complained to him frankly about it as distinctly unfair. Purrington quite agreed with him. It turned out that the damaging article was inserted in his absence from the helm editorial. Still, severe articles did continue to appear in the *Scorcher* about our politician, so it was hard to say what the paper would do at the next general election.

As for Jacob Shumate, Frankfort had heard from Glooscap that Jacob had assumed quite a hostile attitude to him, and had upon more than one public occasion plainly avowed himself to be a straight-out opponent of the sitting Member.

'Are you on for Ebenezer Meeks then, Mr. Shumate?' the Mayor had asked him directly at one half-social, half-political gathering in the town of Glooscap; and Jacob had replied with his usual reserved bow and dark glance, 'That will more satisfactorily appear, Mr. Mayor, when the names of the candidates for the suffrages of the people of this district are announced at the next election.'

But these were not things sufficiently serious to interfere with the sense of holiday enjoyment after a hard year's work, and it was with a light heart that our politician travelled down by the evening North-Western express to Great Gorge, whence he was to take the branch line to Brassville. There he found the train waiting, with Hiram Brickwood in charge. Hiram was as hearty and vigilant as ever, and in his independent way he paid some attention to our politician, as being the Member *de facto* for the district. He even asked Frankfort if he would like to travel in the van, which he considered to be a very special privilege, limited to railway officials, political celebrities, and blood-relations of the guard. But our politician declined this honour, as, though he often enjoyed the outspoken remarks of Hiram Brickwood, he had an instinctive fear that a prolonged conversation would lead up to some of those local wants or personal grievances, of which he had quite a constant experience during the year, and which experience he did not

desire to extend more than necessary into the holiday period.

They were soon at Brassville, and Frankfort established himself at the Lake Reservoir Hotel, under the hospitable care of Tom Hilton, the landlord. His aunt, Mrs. Fairlie, was anxious that he should stay with them at the Bank, but Mr. Fairlie agreed with Frankfort that the Member for Brassville would be expected to give his patronage to one of the hotels. And not only was the Lake Reservoir a good hotel, but the landlord was a most public-spirited citizen, and therefore a highly influential elector. Our politician, therefore, took rooms at the hotel; but for the first few days of his stay, before his visits to The Blocks became more frequent, he often sought a refuge from disputatious constituents in the agreeable seclusion of his uncle's family. To a bachelor the mere fact of being, even for a time, one of a happy home is a new pleasure in life; and then Mrs. Fairlie was so kind, and the talk and pranks of Minnie and Teddy were so diverting. It was a pleasurable incident of this visit that he was now able to complete to his uncle the repayment of the money that had been advanced for him in his early days, and which he had been gradually paying back.

'I won't refuse it, Edward,' said the Banker; 'I have no mercy on a bachelor. I have the wife and youngsters to see to. You have only to put on your hat and your house is furnished, wherever you go, the world over. Happy man—happy man!'

'Nice way for you to talk, Edward,' interposed Mrs. Fairlie. She was so matter-of-fact that she could never understand even jocular sarcasms on the holy estate of matrimony. 'Happy man, indeed! I would like to know what sort of happy man you would be without me and Minnie and Teddy there.'

'My dear,' answered the Banker adroitly, 'I can afford to speak of others, just because I am so happy with you myself.'

His constituents were all glad to meet their Member, even those who differed from him upon some political questions. He was a fairly diligent Representative, never

acting upon Slater Scully's plan of letting letters answer themselves, and being always ready to give heed to all legitimate demands for local matters.

Still, even his friends could not maintain that he was as handy as Meeks, or as successful in getting things done, or 'put through,' as the popular phrase went. There was no doubt that the old Member was a very efficient man at this part of the work; and it was a part that came home to every man's bosom and business. Meeks used to keep very quiet in Parliament. There his voice was seldom heard, except when it was raised to ask a question about some local want of his district. But the daily work was got through in a surprising style. 'Billets' dropped in, in the most unusual manner. Money grants—some of them small, but still they were money—were made for local objects upon the most unprecedented grounds. When interest upon Government advances became due, it was arranged in quite an unexpected way to have it put to a 'suspense account'; and there it remained suspended so long that it generally passed out of existence altogether. He had the Crown Tenants' Deferred Rent Rebate Suspense Act at his fingers' ends. Indeed, he had it by heart; and it would have amazed the most legislating judge who ever stretched the purpose of an Act of Parliament to see the increasingly generous scope that Meeks gave to that generous measure. He had quite a talent for persuading the Minister, after frequent and patient explanations, that divers undertakings in the Brassville district were distinctly 'National works,' though in what their national character consisted, unless in being paid for by the nation, did not appear. Every now and then a point was scored in the perennial contest for Government favours that raged between Brassville and Leadville which disturbed the sleep of nights of the Member for the latter place, Theodore Bunker. A Minister of the Crown would be decoyed down to the Mayor's banquet at Brassville, and then prevented by sudden illness in his family, requiring his immediate return to town, from continuing the official progress to Leadville. He once prevailed on the Ministry to accept an invitation to a banquet from the Mayor of Glooscap; and the actual presence of the

Minister who was to go was only prevented subsequently by indisposition.

As for visiting his constituents, Meeks seemed always to be on a visit to them. A great part of his life was spent on the rail between Miranda and Brassville. He was a familiar figure at Madame Dole's up in the hills, and at all the wayside stations, and was a brother in travel to Hiram Brickwood. It so happened that at this very time Meeks was in town, having come down to present two prizes which it had been his custom to give, as Member for the district, at the close of each year—one for the boy and the other for the girl who stood highest in the State school for moral conduct during the year. These were not of great value, being only illustrated Sunday-school books, but were so much prized by the children that, as he expressed it, he had not the heart to discontinue them, even after the people had rejected him. Should the little ones suffer for the mistake of the parents? he asked.

Thus even his political opponents had to admit that Meeks was a handy business man. On the other hand, he was, as has been said, scarcely ever heard in the House itself; and though it was not regarded by the electors as essential to a man's usefulness that he should make a figure there, yet many liked to see their Representative take a prominent position 'on the floor,' both for the pride of the thing and also from a belief that it added to his weight in advancing claims for justice to their district in the matter of the distribution of the State bounty in all its many directions. In this respect there was no doubt of Frankfort's superiority, and not a few were disposed, on account of it, to extend a generous toleration to his deficiencies, particularly as a man of some Parliamentary weight was required to champion the proposed separate Bill for the Brassville Reservoir, on the ground of its being an urgent National work that could not be delayed till the passing of the next General Loan.

But what had our politician done so far about this separate Bill? His best friends had to admit that his action had been very supine. It was not very clear how this idea of such a Bill had got started in the con-

stituency. But once the proposition was started, all straightway accepted it as a thing that no one could think of questioning. Every fresh constituent as he met the Member expressed the same views upon the subject as had his neighbour before him, and had just the same answer to any objections that might be raised. Our politician, in reply, urged the difficulties in the way of carrying such a Bill, even if its principle was accepted. Hedger, the lawyer, admitted these, but remarked in a sententious manner that difficulties were things to be overcome.

On the whole, however, our politician was well received, and disagreeable views of affairs were kept in the background in this festive season.

‘Now, I look at it just this way. I take it fair and square. I don’t say that Meeks ain’t a good goer in the lobby. But ten to one against the field, and no bar one neither, for my man on the floor. He can carry the weight, and big jumps too.’

Such was Louis Quiggle’s summing-up of the situation to the Mayor. And His Worship did not deny it. A public man’s reputation can thus be made useful to other people as well as to himself.

There was, to be sure, an underlying strata of electors who were distinctly hostile to our politician ; but they kept quiet for the present. They were not as yet a numerous or a reliable class of voters. Barney Clegg of the Brown Jug was a representative man of one class of the malcontent citizens. He was very critical concerning our politician when he was not present ; yet he professed much personal regard for him, and when they met did not fail to assure him that he, Barney Clegg, ‘was right.’ Generally in public he maintained a judicious neutrality ; but in the secret places of the Brown Jug he felt bound to confess to the chosen few that the sitting Member was, in working for his constituency, ‘a teetotal failure.’ This expletive conveyed to Barney Clegg’s mind, and to the company generally, everything that was objectionable. The ostensible reason that he always assigned for this severe judgment was the failure to have passed a separate Bill for the Reservoir. But there were several other reasons. His own name had not yet appeared

in the roll of Justices of the Peace for Excelsior. The family wants, which the reader may remember he enumerated in his letter to Frankfort after the election, had been supplied in a very meagre way. His delicate son, Larry, had not been given an easy place in the Police, but was offered a vacancy out on the Border, where he was in danger of being killed and eaten by the savages. 'And where would be the good of his being in the Police then?' asked Mrs. Clegg. It was true that their daughter, Jenny, had got the rise in her salary as pupil-teacher that he wanted; but he considered that this was owing to the recommendation to that effect that the Reverend Father Malachy Duigan had given. For that reverend gentleman, while he condemned the secular system of education root and branch, had no objection to the members of his Church working under it; and when they did work under it, considered it only fair that they should be properly paid, and something allowed in addition for the dangerous nature of the occupation.

Further, the stoppage of the trains at Upper End seemed to be as far off as ever. They still flew by 'in the most outrageous manner,' as he would complain to his supporters, just as if there was a *malice prepense* upon the part of the locomotives in whistling cheerfully and defiantly as they ran by, taking away from the Brown Jug those who might have been its customers. So, all things considered, Barney Clegg was a deep, though not yet declared, opponent of the sitting Member. Secretly he was, and always had been, devoted to the cause of Meeks. The very charge that was urged against that gentleman, of having voted for the transfer of the licence to the Empire Palace Hotel for a consideration, Barney regarded with considerable complacency. He was not clear about the iniquity of a Member earning an honest penny when he could; and, besides, he held that the end of getting a licence for such a fine house as the Empire Palace was such a good one that the means employed should not be judged too severely. But he still preserved a wary silence about Meeks, unless when he was enjoying himself with a few jovial souls, who were also 'good men and true,' as he termed them, in the inner parlour of the Brown Jug.

Jacob Shumate was an avowed foe to our politician, and

a foe of a much higher type than Barney Clegg. He represented the strata of dissatisfied Populists, who objected generally to the present constitution of social life. Jacob had from the first regarded Frankfort with the dislike which an unsuccessful, and also a naturally unhappy, man is apt to feel for one who appears to be gaining position, succeeding in life, and enjoying it. What between his professorship and his landed friends, and his supposed learning, and his culture, which latter Shumate stigmatised in vulgar phrase, unfairly but sincerely, as 'his swelled head,' the shoemaker felt that our politician was not his style of man. He could not take to him, whatever he did. Like likes like. In truth, Jacob felt a secret uneasiness at anything that was supposed to be—for he did not admit that anything was—upon a higher level than himself. He particularly resented it in the matter of intellect, and he not unnaturally felt some bitterness when he saw stupid men, as he considered them, like the Mayor of Glooscap and David Blow, rising to social importance while he remained poor and neglected. Though he felt some contempt for Meeks also, at least there was no superiority, real or assumed, in that gentleman to chafe him or hurt his self-esteem. And if the Member for the district must be an inferior man, why, there was some consolation even in that. It was better to be able to look down than to have to look up. If the people were wise, he himself would be the man they would select to represent them; but if the general ignorance and prejudice were too strong for that, at least let them have some unassuming citizen, one of themselves.

The adverse feeling of Jacob Shumate to our politician became absolutely confirmed by his action with regard to the Pensions to the Rangers, and afterwards the Pensions to the Poor. There was no doubt that the surface impression, the view that might be popularly taken of Frankfort's votes upon these two measures, went some way to justify the shoemaker's adverse conclusion. As a fact it was not so, but it took a little thinking and discrimination to see this. And Shumate's feelings did not dispose him to thinking closely upon a matter about which he felt strongly; nor would any mere mental conclusion upon his part have been powerful enough to subjugate his feelings. We are all more

disposed to think what we like than to like what we think. When he contrasted the vote of our politician upon those two measures, he was convinced that Frankfort must be an enemy of the poor man. Else how could he vote *for* the Pensions in the one case and *against* them in the other? Thus, as he complacently observed to himself, his first impression of our politician was proved by subsequent events to be the true one. He believed that he condemned his Representative on public grounds; and so he did partly, but not wholly. For only half-acknowledged to himself was a sense of personal wrong which he believed he had suffered from the Member in what he suspected was his action in inducing the Minister to reject his, Shumate's, protest against the pension to Sandy M'Givern. Certainly he did not know that Frankfort had done this, but he had persuaded himself that it was so all the same.

All things considered, Jacob Shumate was a resolute and open foe to our politician, and, unlike Barney Clegg, he no more professed than he felt regard for him. He kept out of his way as much as possible. To be double-faced was not one of Jacob's faults. In truth he felt no temptation in that direction. It was rather a relief to him to let other people know how little he thought of them. He felt a pleasure in flouting men, particularly if he thought that they considered themselves superior in any way to him. It made him less unhappy with himself for the time, and that was something. But in these piping times of political peace and holiday-making he had no wish to encounter the Member for the district. He would be quite ready to do his duty when the proper hour came. Barney Clegg and Jacob Shumate thus represented, as we have said, two classes of opposition to our politician. Still, he was favourably received by the electors of Brassville as a whole.

Meeks was certainly very skilful in keeping himself before the public. To do this effectually requires a special aptitude in a man. It is as natural as breathing with some—indeed it is the breath of life to them; while in others the effort sits as awkwardly as a badly-made waistcoat, that won't button straight. Frankfort had received a pink card of invitation to a grand Musical and Elocutionary Entertain-

ment which was to be held in the Brassville Town Hall, to celebrate the breaking-up of the State Schools of the town for the Christmas holidays. The Mayor himself was to preside, and several Members of Parliament were expected to be present. It was mentioned that the prizes for good, moral conduct, the gift of the Honourable Ebenezer Meeks, late M.H.R., would be presented to the winners by that gentleman. When the appointed evening came round, one of the first persons that our politician met on the platform was Mr. Meeks himself. The ex-Member shook hands with the Member for the district in an impressively polite manner, his mild blue eyes having a downcast air almost of resignation. Mr. Theodore Bunker was also on the platform. Though representing the rival borough of Leadville, he wished to show that he sank all petty feelings in the grand cause of Education and enlightenment generally. The Member for Silveracre came from across the Great Divide, 'clasping hands with them over the mountains,' as he expressed it in a few remarks that he made towards the close of the meeting.

The most interesting figure, however, on the platform was Mr. Carmody Zinck, Member for the Metropolitan Division of Blue Street, in the city of Miranda, of whom we must say something, as he was destined to play a part in the future politics of Brassville. He was the most good-natured and also the most ubiquitous of men. He seemed able to find time to go everywhere, and to summon a fund of genial sympathy for every public occasion. He had proposed or seconded more votes of thanks to the chairman for 'his admirable conduct in the chair that evening' than any other man in Excelsior. He had seen all the foundation stones in the Province laid; and he also was ever ready to respond for Parliament at municipal festivities, agricultural shows, commercial banquets, club dinners, or even cold collations of any description. He had different formulas ready for these different functions, so that he was able to present each time something apparently fresh. In Miranda itself, and particularly in the Blue Street division of the electorate, he lived in a round of committees, being ever ready to make a few appropriate remarks upon the special

value of the institution that for the moment engaged his attention. His dress, though stylish, was a little odd; but this oddness was not disagreeable to the popular taste. It was, in its way, one element of the general interest with which he was regarded.

In politics Carmody Zinck was classed as a Conservative. Yet he certainly had a safe seat for the Blue Street division. That constituency was for the most part Liberal, in some quarters Populist, and it contained a large proportion of the Rails and Trams men, the Post Office carriers, and other State workers whose views were much influenced by Mr. Secker, the Secretary of the State Workers' Association. Their vote, if they were united, could decide the fate of a candidate. Yet Carmody Zinck always came in as one of the three that the constituency returned. To be sure he was generally last. His safe return was the more remarkable, as David Stoker worked against him, and had openly declared that 'he would no more trust him than he would a money-bag.' The causes that brought this result about were various, and in some instances apparently trivial. But important results are at times due to causes that are so small that even those who are influenced by them scarcely acknowledge them to themselves. People liked his jocular, sociable manner, his finished yet peculiar dress, and the dash of oddity about him. This trace of good-humoured charlatanism put him on a level with everybody. Then his benevolent turn of mind made him ready to support any plausible claim for sick pay, large compensation for accidents, or ample maintenance for the widows and orphans of deceased State workers. But these things would not have secured his return were it not that he and Secker saw a good deal of one another at the Wigwam of an evening, which was the favourite Bohemian resort of the city. The Secretary, in his moments of relaxation, enjoyed Zinck's jovial conversation; and while, in official discourse with the Workers, he condemned the stagnant ideas of the junior Member for the Blue Street division, he was disposed to favour, as a compromise, letting him in, so long as two good Populists, or at least Liberals, headed the poll. The Conservatives voted for him in a body, for, though he often expressed himself in a Liberal

manner, he always voted for them in the end. Then he was considered to be a solid man, as he was a director of the Imperial Bank ; and while he had not much money of his own in that bank, or indeed in any other, yet he discoursed at large of the flotation of Provincial loans, the rate of discount, about money hardening, gold appreciating, silver declining, gluts of coin, and the advance of millions for developing the resources of the country. As for himself, he had little need of money, since he was a single man, though not yet past the age of hope ; and this fact also made him to be more favourably received in some quarters than he would be if he were a heavy-laden married man with a retiring wife and a struggling family.

The special cause of Carmody Zinck's coming to Brassville this evening was that he had been unintentionally the cause of Meeks getting into such trouble about the transfer of the licence to the Empire Palace Hotel. Meeks, as the reader knows, was a strict total abstainer, and his vote against the transfer was counted upon as a matter of course. Zinck was certainly not an abstainer in any degree, and, moreover, was a director of the Empire Palace Hotel Company. He was good friends with Meeks, as he was with all other Members of the House ; and one evening, at a quiet interview over a bottle of claret (for himself) and a cup of coffee (for Meeks), shortly before the Transfer Bill came on, he put the thing so plausibly and so earnestly to Meeks that he won over the then Representative of Brassville. As yet no tumult had been raised about the matter ; but after the division the defeated party became, as Quiggle had explained to Frankfort on their journey down to the election, outrageously indignant, the more so as they themselves had been caught napping upon the question. They were particularly violent against Meeks as being a deserter, and nothing would do them but to insist that he had valuable consideration for his vote. Zinck knew the truth of the matter, and was concerned that, owing to his persuasion, Meeks had got into such trouble. He vindicated him everywhere. But Miss Gazelle and her friends only said, 'Of course he does. How could he do less?' It was this episode that made him ready to come all the way to Brassville to do honour to Meeks

in public, and in private to reiterate his testimony to that gentleman's entire innocence.

Let us look down from the platform upon this meeting. It is an inspiring sight, and one that is reassuring to the well-wisher of human progress. The people that crowded the hall were not the best off materially, nor the select people of the community. Most of them were those that lived by their daily toil, and who, a century ago, would in older lands be described as the mob, the masses, the great unwashed, the many-headed, the rabble. But here all were well dressed, comfortable, self-respecting, and respecting others; many of them in their way cultured, all of them orderly and intelligent listeners to a simple class of literary and musical entertainment. Father and mother and children came in holiday family union to enjoy the triumph of their own young people, and also to give generous applause to the successes of their neighbours; kindly feeling and plain good taste were shown upon every side. If they were not gentle by birth, they were at least gentle in manners. If a boy's recitation was too long, or a solo on the pianoforte heavy, or some girl's song rather trying, all was listened to and borne with polite patience. Where there was merit, it was kindly recognised and heartily applauded. Nothing could be more humanising, one might say more cultivated, than the aspect of this popular gathering. Compared with crowds in old nations a few generations before, the improvement amounted to a social revolution.

Theoretically, one would expect that this advance of peoples would be accompanied by an equal advance in the standard of public life. Such a superior class of people must have a still more superior class of representatives. But is this so? The theorist is surprised to find what imperfect sorts of governments this superior people are content with. As the dignity and power of the masses grow, that of the political class does not grow in proportion. The public is so much improved that it considers it can manage its own business, with such spokesmen as may be at hand. There is thus a mutual rising from below and a sinking from above in modern progress. The level is higher of the crowd, but it is the level of all. The people are so improved them-

selves that they are no longer content to elect men at all above them. They like having them in line with themselves. Thus the crowd in the Brassville Town Hall were worthy of Burke or Romilly as representatives. Nevertheless, in a contest such as we shall have to relate farther on, they would unquestionably have voted for Meeks against Burke.

As the Mayor took the chair, and was making the usual introductory speech, Louis Quiggle, the agent, who was sitting behind our politician, touched him, and, handing him one of the neatly-printed programmes, whispered, pointing with his finger along one line of the announcements—

‘Look there, Ebenezer is getting more foxery every year he lives. How did he fix it up?’

And Frankfort, looking at the paper, saw that just after the Dagger Scene from *Macbeth* (to be given by Miss Elsie Kirkup), and before the popular song, ‘She didn’t know she changed her mind,’ by Fred Mitchelmore, it announced a ‘Lecturette by the Honourable Ebenezer Meeks—Culture.’

The late Member was not strictly an Honourable at all, and should not have been selected to give a lecturette before the sitting Member for the district. But there he was, and how he got there even Quiggle could never clearly make out; except that the Town Clerk, who was in a quiet way one of the most trusted advisers of the Meeks party, said something about its being impossible to ignore the ex-Member’s position as the donor of the prizes for Moral conduct.

‘Why, if I had only thought of it, we would have given a prize for Virtue, right enough,’ answered the agent to the Town Clerk.

‘Where is it?’ replied the latter.

However, when Macbeth’s thrilling apostrophe to the dagger was finished, Mr. Meeks stood forward, and was received with warm applause by his friends. The lecturette, with perhaps the exception of one part of it, was a very becoming performance. It was strictly moral in its tone, and even religious in its flavour. He impressed on the young people the great need of improving the mind, and the disposition still more, early in life; and quoted some extracts from *Chips from the White House*—which, as the reader knows, is the record of the wise and moral sayings of the

Presidents of the United States—in support of his exhortations. He referred to some familiar passages in the Scriptures, and said that in his own experience he had known several boys who had been attentive at Sunday School, and had afterwards risen to be Members of the House of Representatives. He looked forward to many of the boys before him doing the same; and, he might add, some of the girls also, as he trusted that before long that grand man, the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty—the orator of this hemisphere—would be successful in freeing women from that badge of slavery, the disability to sit among freemen in Parliament. Saying this, he raised his voice to quite a loud, stern tone, and looked round the room as fiercely as he could, as if anxious to search out and expose the man who would dare to contradict him.

So far, no objection could be taken to the address of Ebenezer Meeks. But towards the close he drifted into a political reference that some of his audience regarded as out of place, while others considered it quite happy and clever. He was enforcing the value of Culture, which, indeed, was the proper subject of his lecture, when, as an illustration, he referred to the culture of the ground, and the need for intelligence and care with it. This somehow led on to 'Intense Culture,' and that to the need for Irrigation, without which Intense Culture was impossible. This naturally brought up the Reservoir, and Mr. Meeks stated that it would be unnecessary upon such an occasion to enlarge upon the subject, so he would only say that he hoped soon, with the valuable aid of their respected Representative (here he bowed deferentially towards Frankfort), they would have special legislation for their great National work.

Loud applause greeted the peroration of the speech, and the next day the *Scorcher*, in its leader, incidentally conceded, though apparently in an adverse tone, that the late Member, by 'his marked display of public spirit, was certainly working towards a clean bill of health from the public of Brassville, which would avail him, when the time came, in one or other of the constituencies of the Province.'

Carmody Zinck, in proposing a vote of thanks to the Mayor, assured the meeting that, though not a resident of

the district, he was, as a public man, satisfied that the Reservoir was a National work that ought to be provided for by a separate Bill. This announcement caused great enthusiasm, and the meeting broke up with a feeling of increased anxiety for the early introduction into Parliament of the separate Bill.

Quiggle was so put out by this clever piece of strategy on the part of Meeks, that he insisted as a counter move upon Frankfort paying special visits to the most influential electors. They were, as has been said, all glad to see him, and few were disposed to be critical in this genial Christmas time. But none forgot the Reservoir. Even Henry Woodall, the bookseller, thoughtful man as he was, called it a National work when he and Frankfort had a quiet talk together at the lower end of the shop. In fact, it seemed to our politician that there was a change in Woodall's tone upon the subject. 'A National work, Mr. Woodall?' he repeated inquiringly.

'Yes, that is what we say. You see, Mr. Frankfort, I am not a Minister of the Crown for this Province. I am only one of the people of Brassville. And why should we not ask for what we want, leaving those in authority to grant what they can? You heard what Carmody Zinck said about the separate Bill.'

'Still, you are also a part of the general public. You suffer if the State makes bad debts.'

'True. Quite true logically; but, practically, that liability is too remote to affect us when put beside an immediate gain. You see all the districts want all the money they can get. The Government stands for the whole, and I suppose the whole is made up of its parts. At any rate, we are only one of the parts.'

As he spoke, he leant over the counter to see if some stacks of books which one of his shop boys had just taken out of a case were put in the right order.

'Well, but are you ready to pay this rating of two and sixpence in the pound?' asked our politician, who was rather surprised at the cool way in which Woodall seemed to disclaim all responsibility in the matter.

'As to that, Mr. Frankfort, I think that I remarked when we spoke upon this subject a good time ago, that I

certainly don't see how we can. But if the Government are satisfied, what then? The Government is not a very hard creditor.'

'But, Mr. Woodall, as well as I can recall that conversation you refer to, you did not at that time believe in this Reservoir scheme at all.'

'Believe in it? As a paying thing, perhaps not. But it is for the Government to judge about that. And to say the truth,' added Woodall, speaking slowly, as he kept bending over and arranging the books, 'as a townsman who lives by his fellow-townsmen, how could I go against a quarter of a million for the district, if some one will give it to us? You can't expect me to enforce State economy against myself, can you?'

'It seems to me then, Woodall, that, according to you, popular government means every one for himself, and no one for us all. For, as you say, the Government only represents the parts.'

'Great truth in what you say, Professor. But I only keep a shop. Good afternoon, Mr. Clegg. I have got those forms for Miss Clegg; I will paper them up for you in a moment.'

This last remark was addressed to Mr. Barney Clegg, who had just come into the shop, having left his pony and phaeton (both rather old) outside in the charge of Larry, while he went in for the forms for Miss Clegg. He now shook hands with our politician warmly, and addressed him in friendly, and also in complimentary, terms. But he evidently did not then desire a prolonged interview. He said that he could not wait, as the pony, being a thoroughbred, was likely to catch cold. Still, he had time to express the pleasure that seeing the Member well gave him, and his hopes for his prolonged and general prosperity, also his confident expectation that the first day of the next session of Parliament would see the introduction of the special Bill for their great National work. Then, getting Miss Jenny's parcel from Woodall, he shambled out of the shop, assuring Frankfort as he went that he, Barney Clegg, was 'right,' and that he might also rely upon the missus and the girls, 'and the boys too, as far as me confidence in them extends.'

'Barney Clegg evidently agrees with you about the Reservoir, Woodall,' remarked our politician.

'Certainly, we are all at one upon that; in fact, that is one of the few things we do all think alike about,' answered the bookseller.

Frankfort paused a little as he looked down the shop after the ambling figure of Mr. Clegg. It was evident to Woodall that he had some rejoinder in his mind that he hesitated to express. So the latter continued—

'Surely, Professor, this is nothing new to you now? With your experience in politics, by this time you know the rules of the game.'

'To be sure I do. But to be candid with you, what I could not help thinking, as the form of Barney Clegg disappeared at the door there, was that after all—you don't mind my speaking freely, Woodall?—how little difference there is between Henry Woodall, the elector, and Barney Clegg, the elector, when the pocket of the constituency is touched: one is a more intelligent votary than the other, but they bend equally before the same shrine. What is the value of the extra intelligence?'

'To be sure we do—I don't deny it. I did not set up the shrine, as you call it. Being there we must conform to it. The minimum of political rectitude becomes the maximum.'

Woodall looked round as he spoke to greet Neal Nickerson, the schoolmaster, who was coming down the shop towards them.

'Ah, what about the minimum and the maximum—that is in my line, is it not? How do you do, Professor? What news about the Reservoir?'

Neal Nickerson, as he spoke, looked about the shop as if it partly belonged to him. He was certainly Woodall's best customer.

'The Reservoir and the little Bill?' remarked Frankfort inquiringly. He had got accustomed to the juxtaposition of the two ideas.

'Ah, just so. As the big Bill was not taken up, let us float the little one. Let us not suffer, whatever we do, from *aquosus languor*. Water, water, let us have the water! Small National loan for great National——'

'Are you so strong for the Reservoir too?' asked our politician, a little surprised at the enthusiasm of the schoolmaster.

'I? To be sure I am. And let me tell you, Professor, if you had thirty dirty boarder boys to wash every morning, you would be strong for it too.'

'And you are not afraid of the interest on the Loan?'

'Ah, there now, that is not my department. I don't teach that class. That is where the politician comes in, to look after such things for us. I keep to the ferule. You and I, Professor, remember Apelles and the shoemaker. *Ne sutor ultra*. We want the water—water, water we must have.'

'Never said a wiser word, Nickerson, of all your wise words to your scholars,' interposed Dr. Delane, in rather a patronising tone, for he looked upon Nickerson himself as a mere scholar. He had just looked in to get his copy of that evening's *Trumpeter*. 'Never said a wiser word, though it is all against my interest. *Aqua pura, aqua destillata*. With a brimming Reservoir on the rises yonder, this town would become too healthy for me to live comfortably in it. What is life to you would be death to me. Be sure you put a clause in the Bill, Frankfort, for a pension to the Doctor. You are in favour of pensions at times, are you not? You are taking the bread out of my mouth.'

And Delane laughed a quiet, self-satisfied laugh at his joke, and also at the comical idea that anything could really affect his position in Brassville.

Leaving Neal Nickerson and Woodall busy about a new series of arithmetic books that the schoolmaster was getting, Frankfort walked away down the street with the Doctor. He was concerned to learn from him that Mrs. Lamborn's health was in a very unsatisfactory condition. That there was something wrong with the heart was clear to Dr. Delane, and, truth to say, he was rather puzzled to know how far the mischief had gone, though he did not care to admit his perplexity to his companion. The action of that imperial little organ, sovereign over all the others, was, like that of some other despots, rather capricious in Mrs. Lamborn. Sometimes its throbs went too fast, then they were too slow; while at other times it took short pauses as

if it was doubtful whether it had not done enough work for one life, and might not now be allowed to rest. But there is so much involved in that rest! Delane, though his experience in heart troubles was not extensive, knew enough to be aware that the case might become a serious one, and had suggested to Mr. Lamborn that it would be well to have a consultation with some leading man from Miranda. He mentioned Myles Dillon. Honest Tom Lamborn would have given The Blocks, and even the Reservoir, to have his wife well again. But Mrs. Lamborn objected to having 'a fuss made about her,' and as they dared not tell her the full extent of the doctor's fears, the question of a consultation with Myles Dillon had been postponed from time to time.

Neither Delane nor the father were willing to tell all to the daughter either; so they had not the aid of Eilly's influence with her mother. But she could see for herself how weak Mrs. Lamborn was at times, and she was the more distressed at this occasional faintness as she could not understand it. She had, despite her mother's urgent remonstrances, declined all the local invitations for this holiday time, as she did not like leaving her for long alone. Mrs. Lamborn tried to get her to accept Lady MacLever's invitation to her grand yearly ball in the capital, by saying that father, being a politician, was expected to go, and of course he could not go alone. But Eilly, though she had listened to this argument on some previous occasions, showed such a disinclination to go this time that Mr. Lamborn, who was only too glad of an excuse, said that he would not think of leaving home just then when the rabbits were becoming more troublesome than ever with the springing grass, and so the family was not represented at the great ball. Were her mother well, Eilly would have liked to go, for this was the official ball of the year. All public men were invited—Members of the Legislature, officials of the State Workers, the Cardinal, and the heads of the Protestant churches, all the officers of the Border Rangers, the representative men of political, trade, and labour societies, a considerable class of nondescripts, and the Press. In fact, Lady MacLever herself described the gathering as quite a Ministerial,

miscellaneous affair to her bosom friend, the Honourable Mrs. De La Classe ; but her language, owing to imperfect recollection of the Scriptures, was jumbled.

'I do assure you, my dear,' she said to that lady, 'I call them in from all the hedges and highways,—Scythian and barbarian, bond and free, great beasts and elders, dragons, horns, and all included, I assure you.'

'How lovely!' said the Honourable Mrs. De La Classe.

Eilly had also a reason, or feeling, of her own for not going, which, however, she scarcely acknowledged to herself, but which nevertheless impressed her with a sombre view of her mother's illness, and made her resolve not to leave The Blocks till she should be strong again. Odd as it may seem in such a sensible girl, she was to some extent haunted by the dramatic warning of Signora Guicciardini—'A Fate awaits you too.' She was angry with herself for the feeling. Such nonsense to mind what a palmist, a futurist, a mountebank, like a clown in a circus, said! Yet every now and then the spectre of the keen eyes, the solemn voice, the uplifted hand, the absolute manner in which the thing declared 'A Fate awaits you,' would occur to her and depress her, all the more so as it was too absurd to mention to any one, and so talk and laugh it away. It may seem strange, we say, that a sensible girl should have such a fancy. It sprang from a certain depth and solemnity in her nature, the full and legitimate expression of which is to be found in the aspirations of religion, but which occasionally plays pranks and makes for itself outlets in devious ways.

'Yes, she is a grand girl that,' said the Doctor, as they walked together, and he told Frankfort of Eilly's devotion to her mother. 'I like them all at The Blocks, but I do admire that girl. Ah, if Alex. Delanc's heart were free again—which, you will understand, Mr. Frankfort, I have no wish it should be—but if it were——' and the Doctor said no more, but looked out towards the horizon in an emphatic manner ; for just then his best professional phaeton, drawn by a showy horse with new American harness, made after a pattern that young Mr. Fooks, the American visitor, had introduced, and having for

driver a gloomy-looking youth, with a great belt round his waist and a tall hat and silver band, came up for him.

'I am off to The Blocks,' he said. 'Can I take any message for you? Polite, kind, feeling—possibly tender, true, eh?'

'Do tell them,' said Frankfort, 'how I hope that Mrs. Lamborn will soon be herself again. Remember me to all. Say that I am looking forward to paying them a long visit in a day or two.'

Though he would not, of course, disclose them in response to the doctor's light remark, he could have truly sent some words of tender feelings to The Blocks. His opportunities of seeing Eilly Lamborn had been uncertain; but the admiration for her had grown more and more into a definite shape within him; and casual glimpses of an engaging object often keep up a high degree of interest in a receptive nature. What he had just heard from Delane about her roused this feeling anew. There was a true girl for you, none of your heartless, painted dolls, but good as she was beautiful! Just think of it: throw over Lady MacLever's ball of the year, as Delane had told him, and all the dances in the district too, rather than leave her mother alone. Well, he would not go down to the ball either. He would make some excuse; and be glad enough to do so too, for he never liked mere crushes. Yes, Eilly Lamborn was good, really good—and how diffusive goodness was. All felt its influence.

A few days afterwards he made his promised visit to The Blocks, and it was followed at pretty close intervals by several other visits. It was only common courtesy to inquire after the health of the wife of his brother Legislator, and he found a relief in that quiet home from the continued discussion with his constituents in the town of the engrossing question of the separate Bill for the Reservoir. But there was no denying that the great attraction, growing each day more and more, was Eilly Lamborn. Her inspiring presence, her engaging manner, those speaking eyes, her conversation, so natural and amiable, because the outcome of a good heart, were casting a spell round Frankfort, all unconscious to Eilly herself. He had seen her shining in the ballroom,

and right happy and joyous she was there ; for she entered into the spirit of it as well as any girl in the land. But when he met her in her home, he felt that all he had seen before was only the surface gleaming of the sterling metal beneath. Her devotion to her mother was so engrossing, yet so cheerful and natural, with no sort of ostentation. It came as if she could no more help it than she could breathing. In the more serious side of life too, with which the family at The Blocks were now threatened with some experience, a mutual sympathy which would never grow in the chill atmosphere of formal society is excited, and expands itself around to all. And what is love but sympathy in perfection ?

There was more simple kindness in Mrs. Lamborn's manner than before. Her weakness seemed to have a chastening effect in toning down what observers, who saw her only in society, judged, perhaps unjustly, to be affectation in her manner. As the young American, Mr. Fooks, had to return to his own country, owing to the failure in Excelsior of the operations of the Ethereal Starch Company, she was getting more inclined to favour Frankfort's visits ; the more so as the fond mother saw well enough that Eilly became even brighter than usual when he arrived ; and if the good child would not leave her to enjoy the fun of social life, it was well that at least she should have some pleasant visitors at home. She even said to Eilly that he was one whom you could not help liking when you knew him better. Only he did not appear to have the knack of managing things ; and as for the Reservoir, she had heard Mr. Hedger, the lawyer, say expressly that they seemed to be no nearer to it with Frankfort than they had been with Meeks. To herself, however, she reflected, that Eilly there, with her odd ideas, seemed positively to respect him for what others complained of.

Mr. Lamborn had all along maintained that Frankfort was a good sound lot, with, to be sure, 'some upside down brands' that he could not understand, but which he considered were only marks on the wool, that would come out with the growth. Next to his wife and daughter, worthy Thomas Lamborn's heart was most warmly devoted to the

Reservoir. It would be, as he said, the making, the coping-stone to The Blocks, the estate which it had been the work and the pleasure too of his life to acquire, and which he would leave as a princely home to Eilly and the man of her choice. With a constant stream of water from the Reservoir, he could use all the paddocks right through the summer, and his choice breed of merinoes would carry away the prize year after year. As a plain question of figures, it would add a couple of pounds an acre to the value of his land, the soil being good, sound soil, and only wanting the water to enable it to keep the grass going all the year. Then the lake that his wife and Eilly were so proud of, and which did truly look so bright and refreshing, sparkling away in the sunshine through the hottest day, in that little valley before the verandah, could be always kept brimming full, and the green elms preserved fresh and verdant, with the roots deep down in the moist soil. The Reservoir, the purling streamlets, the water trickling through the fields, well stocked with prize sheep, the water taps conveniently placed over the estate, the overflowing lake glimmering in the sunshine—all this, next to wife and daughter, as we have said, had come to be the fond object of Thomas Lamborn's life.

But his experience as a Legislator told him that there were difficulties in the way of securing the Reservoir for Brassville. The townspeople spoke as if they were the only people in the Province who wanted a Reservoir, and all agreed that the State could easily find the quarter of a million required. But a quarter of a million was a large sum for the Government to pay interest on for one district only; and he knew that William Dorland and the powerful mining party contended that the proper site was among the hills on the other side of the Divide. Yes, as a business man he could see that there were difficulties in the way. So he made allowances for the delay of our politician about the separate Bill, and never doubted that when the time came he would do his duty as the Member for Brassville. Also, he liked him personally, and, though his eye was not so keen as his wife's, he could not help noticing that Eilly seemed to be quite interested in his conversation; and to see her happy made him happy.

So both parents welcomed Frankfort's visits. And what did Eilly think about him? She did like him, and after each visit she also felt an undefinable spell closing her around. But this she did not stay to analyse; nor did she even own it to herself. As for actually falling in love with him, that had not occurred to her. Indeed, she did not know what the process was. So that for a time her feeling towards him resembled what a master in the art of describing the tender passions likens maiden love to—the moonbeams fitfully shining on the moving stream, pure, bright, beautiful, not fixed, but glancing, and, as he leaves us to infer, not yet glowing like the ardent sunbeams. As she saw more of Frankfort she began to feel and think more seriously about him, and even frankly avowed to her mother that she quite liked his conversation. Her heart must be left to its own workings.

And what was his position? Astronomers explain to us that 'the pull' of the attraction of gravity by one body upon another would, at a given distance, operate at first almost imperceptibly, but that it would gradually pull on and on, till at length the mysterious influence draws the two together with a rush—unless, to be sure, some awkward obstacle should intervene and divert them from the straight line. Frankfort was unquestionably under the influence of 'a pull' at this time, and his judgment told him that Eilly Lamborn was not only good in herself, but well adapted to bless him and make him a better and a happier man. Still he felt that, as a matter of prudence, it would be much better to wait till his position was more assured. His main provision was his Professorship in the William Dorland University, and for that he was dependent upon the Board of Overseers. Who could tell if this Currency question, with its Silver complication, which seemed to be looming up in the political horizon, might not get him involved in some way with the William Dorland interest in regard to his views and teaching upon the Currency problem? And he knew himself well enough to be aware that he would brook no interference with the expression of those views either in Lecture Hall or in Parliament. He would defy a dozen Boards of Overseers ere he would limit his right to proclaim sound principles of Currency.

Then he was young enough to wait awhile before fixing upon himself for life the ever growing responsibilities of matrimony. And Eilly, if she ever would think of him, could be in no hurry, as she was ten years younger than he was. Yes, clearly he ought also to be in no hurry. Thus he reasoned, and arrived at a firm conclusion, debating over the question with himself of an evening in his room at the Lake Reservoir Hotel. But the next day, when at The Blocks he sat listening to her blithesome conversation, and she, all unaware of the impression she was making, turned full upon him those dangerous eyes, why, then he did not feel so certain that the present might not be the proper time after all to make the plunge. And, to be sure, whenever it was made, and however long waited for, it was in the nature of a plunge when it was taken.

It was a diversion from the growing concentration of these pleasing, yet disturbing, reflections when Myles Dillon arrived at the Lake Reservoir, having been specially summoned from the city in order to see Mrs. Lamborn in consultation with Dr. Delane. As in most cases of heart ailments, hers was so much a question of degree, but a degree that meant the difference between living and dying, that at last the family doctor insisted upon getting another opinion. He said that for his own satisfaction alone he would like to discuss the symptoms with one who had made an independent diagnosis of Mrs. Lamborn's condition. Delane was free from that pitiful pride which makes some practitioners regard the taking of a second opinion as an indirect reflection upon the first. Mr. Lamborn welcomed the Doctor's proposal to bring up Myles Dillon, but whenever he suggested most skilfully, as he thought, and without mentioning any one in particular, the idea of getting further advice, just to please and amuse Delane, Mrs. Lamborn still objected, saying that she was very well as she was, and that she did not want to be turned into an invalid, nor to have a fuss made by sending down to town for people to come and pull her about. A pious fraud was thereupon concerted between honest Tom Lamborn and the doctor. After a while it was represented that Myles Dillon was coming up to Brassville to perform an important operation in the Hospital there, and

Mr. Lamborn mentioned to his wife that he must ask Frankfort's friend out to lunch as a matter of common civility. To this no objection could be fairly taken; nor yet to the proposal that Delane, who was acting with him in the Hospital case, should be asked to come out with him; and in the end Mrs. Lamborn (though not without some suspicion as to the special case at the hospital) agreed that when Surgeon Dillon *was* here, he could feel her pulse if he liked.

So the man of surgery and the man of medicine drove out together to The Blocks in the professional phaeton, with the small, gloomy-looking boy inside the big belt, behind. There was nearly being a mishap at the start of the interview, owing to Mrs. Lamborn thoughtfully, but also inquisitively, asking Dillon how his serious case at the Brassville Hospital was going on. As this was the first he had heard of it, he looked at her in doubt for a moment, but catching the significant glance of Delane, who was standing behind her chair, he at once availed himself of a plan of *alibi*, which he had heard of long ago in his native land; for he saw in a moment the state of the case, and that it would never do to frighten the patient with the admission that he had come all the way from Miranda in order to test her heart. So he acknowledged her interest in the poor fellow case, and without the least hesitation gave the particulars of a serious operation for hydatis in the liver, several peculiar conditions that marked the case being related with accuracy, the subsequent state of the sufferer also being enlarged upon, and the doctor's services (Mrs. Lamborn understood Dr. Delane's services) in administering the chloroform acknowledged. The description was realistic, and hung together consistently in all respects. And naturally so, for it was all strictly true. Only he did not mention that the operation he was speaking of was one that he had performed in the Hospital at Miranda the day before he came away, and that Delane was not the doctor who assisted with the chloroform.

So the good lady never realised the full meaning of this consultation upon her case, and was free from that agitation that a formal medical examination often excites in the patient who is aware of the gravity of the issue that the inquiry is to decide. For it is a grave business when you

stand before the expert who is to tell you whether you are to die or to live. He hears your story, he silently observes the symptoms, and, if the heart be the matter, listens to the beatings of that little 'muffled drum,' first at one spot, then another. The case proceeds, the evidence is being taken before the inexorable judge, who looks only to the facts, and all the while you stand like the prisoner waiting for the jury to come in with their verdict, which gives you a safe deliverance or sends you to your grave.

Some medical men maintain a very solemn air during such inquiries, but it was one element in the success that marked Myles Dillon's professional career that he always preserved a cheerful, easy-going manner in the most serious cases. While he sounded the chest of his patient at The Blocks, he told an amusing story as he tested one spot after another, and the point of it, which was quite funny, came just as he made a rather prolonged stop about the middle of the chest, but a little to the left. After a few minutes' consultation with Delane in the other room, he came back to the little family circle with a pleasant smile, and picking up his story where he had left off, was continuing it in a most amusing manner. Eilly, though she did not know of the graver aspects of the case, felt agitated by the visit of the two doctors, and in her direct, simple manner rather broke in upon his narrative by asking how soon her mother would be quite strong again, and able to take her summer trip to Miranda.

'Easy now, Miss Eilly, I am coming to that in a minute, trip and everything,' quietly answered Myles Dillon. And he did come to it when he had finished his story. But it certainly seemed to Eilly, as she sat earnestly watching him with those intelligent eyes of hers, that he was not very explicit in the information that he gave even when he came to the point. He told Mrs. Lamborn that, to be sure, she had a heart like all the rest of them, more or less; and, like every other thing of value, it needed attention; so did his own, for the matter of that. Often an instrument, or an organ, was so fine, so superfine, he might say, that it needed more attention than your strong coarse thing that would stand any usage. Every one had need to take care of their

health, Mrs. Lamborn included. The great thing was to avoid worry and excitement of all sorts. If he were a philosopher as well as a physician, he would write out a prescription for that; but perhaps it would not be of much more practical use than the common run of prescriptions were. And here Myles, wishing to fill up the time without saying too much about Mrs. Lamborn's heart, indulged in some general remarks about worry. Worry was trouble in trifles. It was the little things of life that bothered us—a bit of dust in the eye, a door that would keep creaking, or even a scratching pen or a squeaking needle. Why, a tight boot often bothered a man more than an uneasy conscience.

'And mother, then, can go for a change, can she? It would be so good for her to go away for awhile, and see new things, and——' interposed Eilly.

'I am just coming to those trips, Miss Eilly. Trips are all very well, only you may have too much of a good thing. Now, the next trip you and Mrs. Lamborn take to Europe, I would not recommend her, if you stay, as all the fashionable people do now, in Egypt on the way home—I would not expressly advise her to run up the Pyramids, or climb along the Sphinx, or go donkey-racing about Cairo.'

'Oh, come, Mr. Dillon, if that is all you have to stop her from, let us come into lunch. You give us quite an appetite, you do, upon my word,' said Mr. Lamborn, who felt relieved by Myles' easy manner and soothing report upon the case.

But later in the afternoon, when he walked down to the gate with the two doctors, Dillon told him more explicitly of unfavourable symptoms that his examination had disclosed, and repeated again the familiar advice to keep the patient from all excitement, and everything that might unduly tax the heart.

'But I need not tell you,' said Myles, as he and Delane got into the phaeton. 'You and my dear Miss Eilly there will do all you can to keep her cheerful and easy without prescriptions from me or my learned friend either.'

'It would be a bad case,' continued Dillon, looking down at Lamborn as the boy with the big belt gave the reins to his master and jumped up behind—'it would be a bad case

that Miss Eilly could not cure, if making happy is to do it. She is the right sort of medicine, she is, and no fear of an overdose either.'

Dillon was not altogether a stranger to Eilly. He had met her in social life more than once, and had been struck with her evidently fine character, while from Frankfort he had from time to time heard of her and her doings.

The two friends had a quiet dinner together that evening at the Lake Reservoir Hotel, as Myles had got back to Brassville too late to return to town by the evening train. He spoke to Frankfort more fully than he even had to Mr. Lamborn about the case. There was undoubted weakness of the heart. It was always hard to say how far the mischief had really gone, and so much depended upon extraneous circumstances, as to the actual coming on of a crisis. Myles added :

'But I can tell you, Edward Fairlie, there were some murmurs—bruits, we learned men call them—that I did not quite fancy as I listened through that bit of stick of mine.'

'And does that noble girl, the daughter, know that it is so serious?'

'Well, I tried to throw a little dust in her eyes, but I don't know how far I succeeded. She is, among other things, rather an intelligent young person, that.'

'And so devoted to her mother,' Frankfort remarked.

'I admit that,' said Myles, turning round the end of his cigar and looking steadily at it, as if it was misconducting itself in some way and wanted to be seen to. 'Yes,' he continued, 'I must admit that. And I further admit that it all comes naturally to her, no display or make-believe—the real thing.'

'Daughters, to be sure, are generally devoted to their mothers,' said Frankfort. He would really have liked to go on sounding the special praises of Eilly, but he preferred to hear Myles speaking about her, so he made the remark in the hope that it would draw him out more upon the subject.

'True, some are,' Myles replied, 'but some are not devoted to their mothers; nor to their husbands when they get them, nor to any one but themselves; all because they

don't know what it means to have a heart. It wants a few like Miss Eilly there to make up the credit balance for the sex.'

'Why, Myles, you are hard on the girls. They are not all like Eilly Lamborn, but they are affectionate; better than the men, anyway.'

'I am not denying it, Edward. Most of them are loving enough in a way; but some people, men and women, like the dancing Dervishes at Cairo, are so busy dancing for their own soul that they can't think of anybody else's.'

'But why so misanthropical, friend Dillon?' asked Frankfort, who enjoyed this severe criticism upon people generally, as it was used as a set-off to Eilly's supreme merit.

'I believe,' he continued, 'that some of the Miranda beauties have refused you, and you unpack your heart with railing words against them all.'

'Now, you need not be throwing that at me, Mr. Professor, and all the while I am glorifying your Eilly of The Blocks up to the skies.'

'Yes, she has a true heart, anyway,' said Frankfort, looking up with a sense of relief as he lay back in his chair, just as if the contemplation of Eilly's heart compensated for the heartlessness of the rest of the human race.

'True for you, Edward Fairlie; she is so made that it is not self-denial for her to think for others. The pain to her would be to think of herself only.'

'Yes, she is good.' Frankfort spoke, after a pause, in an impressive, deliberate manner, that made Dillon look round inquiringly at him. Myles had been struck by the earnestness that he had shown during the conversation. He thought that there must be something deeper in his thoughts than the common admiration so many had for Eilly Lamborn. But Frankfort had never told him anything definite about his feelings for her, or his prospects at The Blocks; because, indeed, it was only during this visit that the state of things had become serious. Even now, though he felt himself to be drawn closer and closer to her, he was yet so uncertain as to her feelings towards him, that he was unwilling to discuss the subject even with so near a friend as

Myles Dillon. Myles suspected something of the sort, and felt prompted, before the conversation closed, as he was going by the early train next morning, and might not see his friend again for some time, to give him some advice that was suggested by his medical knowledge of Mrs. Lamborn's case. So he remarked :

'Yes, she is a good daughter, and a good daughter makes a good wife ; but whether one wants a wife at all is a question, and rather a big one, for each one to settle for himself first.'

'Just so, Myles.'

'Only any one who wants Eilly Lamborn had better be quick about it.'

'Why? Where is the hurry? She is young enough.'

'Yes, she is young enough, I grant you ; but if anything were to happen to the mother before she got engaged, it would be all up with her—or at least with her lover.'

'How do you make that out? You don't mean that she would never marry then.'

'Why, then she would think of nothing but the father. It would be, "I could not think of leaving him alone." She would sacrifice herself to him then. She is that sort of girl, you see,' Myles continued—'one of the few who go on in that absurd sort of way about the father.'

'But she might do the same if she were engaged,' suggested his companion.

'Well, no, she is too sensible for that. If she were engaged there would be some chance of the thing going on again, after a bit ; though I suspect she would put her lover under terms as to enjoying a good deal of the view of that lovely lake before the verandah there.'

Frankfort was silent, and Myles, having given this parting suggestion, bade him good-night, and left him to his own thoughts, which indeed were full company for him just then. As for himself, hardened bachelor that he was, he had nothing upon his mind except his having to be up early the next morning, to catch the first train for the city. His friend was not so free from care, pleasing care though it might be. He was in no hurry to seek rest that night. He was too full of emotions at once pleasing and disturbing.

He was conscious that his feeling for Eilly Lamborn was daily growing stronger;—but hers for him? There was a serious point. The illness of the mother was doubly unfortunate, as it diverted Eilly's attention, apparently, from all other things, himself included. Yet she certainly seemed to like him. And what a happy fate to be liked by such a girl! What a contrast to the soulless beauties Myles had spoken of, all artifice outside, all selfishness within!

Then her ingenuous appreciation of the high ideal of a man's duty in public life. How naturally, how sincerely, how sympathetically, he mused to himself, she seemed to realise that truthfulness and a strict sense of duty were as much to be expected and honoured in public life as in private. She appeared to appreciate noble motives in a surprising way for so young a girl. It evidently came naturally, instinctively to her. To be sure, she had not experience enough to enable her to understand the allowable, and at times necessary, deflection of things in public life. But how grand her ideal! It was that of truth itself. He felt that there was force in what Myles Dillon had said about the consequences that might follow if anything were to happen to Mrs. Lamborn before Eilly's heart had been won. Nothing was more likely than that she would sacrifice herself to her father. It was just the sort of thing that she would do. But before he speculated further upon the future, would it not be well to try and get some more decisive indication of what were her feelings towards him at present? This he resolved to do on his visit to The Blocks the very next day. He would do no more than just sound her disposition towards him, and he could then, later on, decide finally upon what must be a determining step in the life of any man.

In the morning, as he walked down the town to the stables for his horse, he enjoyed the usual greetings with his constituents, and the flying words about public matters, chiefly the Reservoir; though it must be admitted that no public question of any kind, not even the Reservoir, was then uppermost in the mind of our politician. As he came by the office of the *Scorcher*, there in the doorway was Jacob Shumate in deep discussion with the editor, Mr.

Hawk Purrington. He had called to see if he could not persuade Mr. Purrington to have a rousing leader "giving the alarm and calling the people to arms" upon the Rabbit question, so as to ensure an effective demonstration in the shape of witnesses before the Commission that was promised to inquire into the conflicting claims about the rabbits. He also wished to convey to the editor dark suspicions that were gathering within him as to the meaning of the Member's frequent visits to The Blocks. For himself, he had no doubt that he was planning some treason to the people upon this very question with his brother Legislator of The Blocks, whose purpose, it was well known, was to have all the rabbits destroyed.

Frankfort had seen the shoemaker more than once in the town during his stay, but only at a distance. He would have liked to meet him and hear his pungent, though often unreasonable, criticisms upon the doings of Parliament; but he seemed never able to fall in with him, though on his earlier visits to the constituency Shumate at times would stop and discuss political and social subjects. He was glad therefore to meet him now. Frankfort shook hands with the two politicians, and was beginning to ask the editor if he had any later telegrams about the Currency question from Miranda, when Shumate interposed with a slight bow, and looking at our politician in a distant, alienated manner, observed:

'Beg pardon, I must take my leave. I have to be back in Glooscap for the Council meeting this afternoon. These intricate questions of State will be best settled by you two eminent gentlemen by yourselves.'

He moved off with decision in his manner, adding—

'I know I shall be excused; time presses, I have no horse, I have to walk the road.'

'He does not seem inclined to talk with me now, even as much as he used to,' said our politician. 'Now I can see nothing of him.'

'Don't you know?' asked Hawk Purrington.

'I have heard that he is opposed to me; but that is no reason why he should not talk to me.'

'Why, fact is, Jacob keeps a sort of conscience, you know; that's how it is.'

'Yes, I always thought him a very honest fellow ; but is he so hostile that he will not speak to me?'

'Why, to be sure, he denounces you from Glooscap to Brassville and back again, with all the intervening places thrown in, as an enemy to the people, friend of pensions to the rich, opponent of same to the poor, tool of the wealthy, supporter of the privileged classes, Conservative, exterminator of rabbits, and everything that is bad. He believes it too, does Jacob ; so he don't care to meet you, having, as I say, a bit of a conscience.'

'I respect him for his openness, anyway.'

'Oh yes, he is open, is Jacob. He enjoys, you see, having some one to pitch into.'

'All the same, I will try and have a talk with him, and make out how he can justify his charges against me.'

'The pensions are a great point—he can't get over them : pensions for the Rangers, not for the poor. He had a row in Glooscap about some pension there to begin with, and, you know,' continued Hawk Purrington, 'it ain't bad for a *prima facie* point against you, to be candid with you—mark, I only say *prima facie*. Then just now he was laying down to me that you and Lamborn are as thick as thieves, and up to some mischief about the rabbits. He says that you are there every other day instead of going among the people.'

'True enough, I am there pretty often. Mrs. Lamborn is not very well.'

'Ah, there it is. You see, Jacob's road from Glooscap goes by The Blocks ; so he keeps that lively black eye of his upon you. He makes a note of things, he does.'

'So he may. I am just going to ride out there now,' said Frankfort, rather resenting this interference with his private friendships, and resolved, if need be, to defy both the *Scorcher* and Jacob rather than not visit at The Blocks.

'Just so,' replied the editor, 'private life sacred by all means. Those were my very words to Jacob, when, to tell you the truth—it is best to be plain, you see—he wanted me to have a leader about it. "No, Jacob," says I, "the *Scorcher* don't invade the sanctities of life. We strike home on public issues, if you like." Still, you see,' the *Scorcher* added,

in a tone that implied a burst of confidence, and looking up in an open manner at Frankfort—‘still, you see, The Blocks ain’t the people of Brassville, are they?’

‘Why, in an industrial community like ours, where we are all equal, we should have none of this class feeling, either upper or lower. What is the good of our institutions else?’

‘To be sure; right you are. Still, when all is said and done, there is a difference between the trapper’s three-roomed cottage and The Blocks, ain’t there? There is this big difference for you and me to begin with, that for one man in The Blocks there are hundreds in the cottages—hundreds of Jacobs for one Lamborn. A hundred votes are better than one, ain’t they?’ asked the editor, turning to look up again. He added, partly to himself, and as if to reassure himself—

‘For one *Scorcher* that goes to The Blocks, hundreds go to the cottages; and when you have the circulation, the big ones must send the advertisements. All comes down to the numbers, you and I, the rest of us—Simon Keech and his church included.’

‘Very true, Mr. Purrington; but what is the use of political life or any other life if you can’t go to see your friends when you wish?’

‘Ah, just so, I only mention it as a friend. Remember me to Lamborn if you do see him’; and giving Frankfort a hearty grasp of the hand, Hawk Purrington hurried off, rather abruptly, to the editor’s room to see what he could do about the rabbits for the next morning’s leader.

Frankfort was soon cantering along the Glooscap road toward The Blocks. The morning was so cool and fresh that he regretted that he had not walked, and all the more so when he was a couple of miles on the road; for there he saw Jacob Shumate well on ahead of him, and if he could have fallen in with him walking, he would have been able to have had a quiet talk with him, and to put the true facts of the Pension question before him. Also, he would have been glad to learn, and try to realise, Jacob’s ideas about the better-off classes, and the duty of the Government to the worse-off, and what he really wanted Parliament to do, and what he believed Parliament could do to help the cause of

the poor. It was not alone for the purpose of conciliating the shoemaker's support as an elector that our politician wished to talk with him; but because he regarded the ideas of a sincere extremist on either side as well worth the study of any man. There is so much make-believe sentiment, and so many facile professions of the now established popular faith which can be of no value to the Truth-seeker, that the honest expression of any real belief upon social wants, and their remedies, must always claim attention. It was easy to say that Jacob Shumate was unreasonable. So perhaps he was. But the awkward thing was that there were so many of the trappers unreasonable with him. Yes, I will have a few words with him anyway when I come up to him, thought our politician. Jacob looked round, hearing the sound of the horseman coming up, and at once quickened his pace as he passed round the bend of the road out of sight. Soon Frankfort reached the turn, anxious to catch up with his malcontent constituent; but, though the broad road then lay straight before him for a good mile, not a trace was to be seen of the shoemaker. He had disappeared, was non-existent, as far as the king's highway was concerned; *non est inventus*, as the law says; was no more visible here below; not surely, though, translated above; but rather he must have struck off into the forest, for a short cut to Glooscap and the motherless little Shumates there, in his humble home. Never mind, thought our politician, I will manage to see him somewhere, in his cottage if not out of it, before I go back to Miranda. His pertinacity has something interesting about it, and respectable too. I would rather have it any day than the humbug of Barney Clegg.

Frankfort's disappointment at not meeting Shumate was soon forgotten in the more engrossing thoughts connected with Eilly Lamborn and his visit to The Blocks. He got there some time before lunch, and found that Mrs. Lamborn and her daughter were alone at home, as Mr. Lamborn had gone over to see Mr. Le Fanu to arrange with him the site of a temporary water dam that, pending the construction of the Reservoir, they were going to make upon the dividing line of their properties, to supply the paddocks on either side. So the three sat down to lunch together, and a pleasant

lunch it was. Mrs. Lamborn's health had been improving a little of late, and she was more cheerful than usual ; and as for Eilly, pleased as she was about her mother's better health, why, Frankfort felt that it made one happy to look at her.

When the meal was over, and old Peter Gouch, the Bush butler, had taken the things away, a somewhat difficult question presented itself as to what to do next. Mrs. Lamborn would not hear of her guest going till he had seen Mr. Lamborn, whom she expected back before dinner ; and Eilly made any such idea upon his part, if he ever had it, quite impossible by saying that father would be so disappointed if Mr. Frankfort went without seeing him. But the state of Mrs. Lamborn's health prevented her from joining in any excursion, and, besides, required her to get now her usual afternoon siesta. So there was nothing for it but that she should be left quiet in the drawing-room, while the two younger people must pass the time in admiring the scenery and enjoying the lovely breeze upon the broad verandah. Frankfort had felt impressed by Eilly's remark that her father would be disappointed if he did not see him. It was a very commonplace remark really, but to him it seemed to be of considerable value. And he was quite satisfied from her manner, and particularly from the fact that, when she spoke, she did not, in her usual way, look directly at him, but at her mother, that there was immense significance to be attached to it. 'So disappointed,' too, were the exact words she had used. At any rate, he felt that the time had arrived, whatever came of it, to explore more deeply and accurately Eilly's real feelings towards him. And a good deal did come of it. For when he left The Blocks that evening he and Eilly were engaged to marry one another.

'Now, Eilly, whatever you do, don't attack Mr. Frankfort with arguments and questions, and odd notions about things,' was the warning given by the mother to the daughter, as she and he passed out through the open window on to the verandah.

'I won't attack him at all, mother dear,' answered Eilly, laughing as she glanced back through the window. Nor did she. But before these two had been long upon that

verandah the mutual attraction that had been impelling them, unknown to one of them, at least, towards one another, reached its crisis. Frankfort afterwards could only in a confused manner call to mind the steps that led up to it. The house was very quiet that afternoon. There was only Mrs. Lamborn resting on the sofa within, and old Peter Gouch, who was occasionally heard in the distance. This Peter Gouch had been employed, in the early days, about the sheep on the estate, and owing to his tact and industry had been promoted to the position of chief butler at The Blocks. He was a discreet man, was Peter; and in his life had learned many things from experience, and among them not to be in the way when he ought to be out of the way. Still, it was his duty to see if his young lady and the visitor would like afternoon tea. Also, he was human, and not devoid of the curiosity which is natural to man. It was only human nature, then, that he should, after a decent interval of meditation in the pantry, present himself on the verandah to know if Miss Eilly would have tea now, or would wait till the master came back. But she was only looking dreamily at the lake, and did not heed him; and Frankfort so promptly answered for her with a general negative, that Peter Gouch quickly retreated, having his own ideas upon the situation, and satisfied, at any rate, that he had done all that could be expected of the chief butler on behalf of that day's afternoon tea.

Frankfort remembered that their conversation began in even a disappointing manner. As they sat looking out upon the banks that sloped down to the lake, called by Mr. Lamborn 'The Lovely Banks,' he, feeling the conversation to be impeded somewhat by a slight embarrassment, pleasing though it was, in order to say something, made a commonplace remark about the beauty of the lake and the surrounding trees. Eilly, who, as the reader knows, was always natural, at once replied with what was uppermost in her mind, that the lake was pretty, and that it would be so nice when they had the Reservoir, and could always keep it full, and would not have to water the outer row of trees at all.

This reference to the old skeleton gave, all unconsciously on Eilly's part, a check for the moment to our lover like

some striking move early in a game of chess, which seems to threaten the other player, and damage his position from the start. But there was to be no checkmate in this case. It was no struggle in cold ivory that was now going forward on the verandah of The Blocks. Her very outspokenness, and the genuine, unaffected way in which she evidently sympathised in her father's wishes about the Reservoir, only increased his admiration for her, as he looked at her frank, handsome countenance, glowing just a little from the breeze that was wafted up so freshly from the lake—or from some other cause. He felt that he could hesitate no longer. How could he dare to let the chance of winning such a heart for his very own pass him? So, after some further discussion of that kind which, at times, both parties to a conversation mutually feel to be mere filling-up—this time it was something about whether the inner row of trees would not be improved by thinning some of them out—he broke ground by asking Eilly if she had never felt the power of beautiful scenes in Nature to excite sympathetically in us the sense of the beautiful and the lovable in what touched the heart more nearly.

Eilly looked at the lake fixedly, and after a pause that both of them seemed to acquiesce in as only to be expected, answered in a lower tone than was usual with her, that she had not; but that she thought there was nothing more beautiful about The Blocks than the lake. This remark, made with the utmost simplicity by Eilly, obviously gave the lover his opportunity.

Soon his honest confession was poured forth before her. She was the thing of true beauty, even in that beautiful prospect. It was the charm of her presence that threw the real sunshine over the whole, and what were outward things, however pretty to look at, compared to the supreme joy of the mingling of kindred souls? And was she cold and indifferent to it all? Did she feel no responsive throb to the feelings that agitated him?

We know enough of Eilly Lamborn to know that she was, before all things, truthful. And she could not deny truly that she, too, had been becoming sensible to the glorious spell that love had been weaving round these two.

Glorious spell, indeed, and let the niggardly Fates have none but a happy destiny in store for it! But it would be a desecration to parade in the glaring light of day the confessions of that true woman's nature, so engaging in its maidenly simplicity, yet so warm in its honest love. It is enough to say that these two, who had been hitherto drawing nearer to one another, half-unconsciously, that afternoon attained the final moment of the disclosure of their heart's impulse, each to the other, love for love, a moment the remembrance of which survives passion and lasts a lifetime.

Before they left that verandah they would have pledged themselves absolutely, only that Eilly naturally forbore making this final resolve till she had her parents' counsel and consent; but of their consent she had little doubt from many indications that both father and mother had lately given of the estimation in which they held Frankfort. This obtained, there was nothing to hinder the free course of their mutual love, and they would be in that position which is so delightful to the lovers, and so interesting to other people—the position of an engaged couple.

They agreed not at once to tell the great news to Mrs. Lamborn for fear of any ill result from the excitement of a sudden announcement, but to let Eilly break it to her gently. Mr. Lamborn had evidently gone back to tea with Le Fanu after marking out the site for the dam, and Frankfort, who felt no aptitude then for the casual conversation of the dinner-table, made an excuse to Mrs. Lamborn for not waiting, and set out to walk back to Brassville. He felt that he would prefer the quiet walk in the cool of the bright starlight evening to riding, so he left his horse to be brought the next morning by one of the men who was coming. He left The Blocks a happy man. He realised what a change, what a gracious change, had come over him in those few hours. The effect of true love upon a good nature is akin to that of religion. Each inspires with lofty and affecting feelings, and the mind also is stimulated to noble thoughts. Each imparts to the receptive nature a higher tone, and makes it quick and apt, when under its influence, to vibrate responsively to grand and thrilling emotions. It was so that evening with Frankfort. Earthly

feelings mingled with higher aspirations, and he felt an elevation of spirit about him—a grandeur of hope—which he had never realised before when he knew not the power of woman's love. Twilight was fast fading into darkness as he passed round the lake. He paused for a while at that spot. It seemed beautiful to him even in the gloom; for her eyes had rested upon it, with some agitation, before they had turned lovingly and trustingly upon him. It was a sacred spot. Nor was the sound of the little waves gently rippling in the breeze dull or monotonous. All about it was pleasant, for had not the sunbeams danced with joy upon those waves that day at the outpouring of their mutual love?

He felt a better man; and with high aspirations rising within him, he walked away from the lake towards the main gate. Just before the gate the road was broken up and partly fenced across for the carrying out, at last, of the repairs to the bad bit, that Mr. Lamborn had so long complained to the Government about. Wayfarers in the dark had to feel their way along the fence to the crossing-place. As Frankfort paused a moment, leaning upon a post, and full of his inspiring reflections, the sight of the clear tropical sky, dazzling with the diamond flashes of the stars, caught his eye as he glanced upward, and seemed to stay him. He had often looked at those stars before, as have millions of us sons of earth, and had, like others, only felt staggered at the sight. What is one small world among so many? May we not be all forgotten in the throng? But now, somehow, he was less conscious of that sense of nothingness—almost of despair. No, now that so noble a nature as his loved one's was brought near to him, and that soon her pure soul would be joined in communion with his, was he to believe that all existence, spiritual world and material alike, was only one hideous phantasmagoria, a scoffing show, and that in a few short years she and he, and it for them, would all be blotted out for ever?

You wonderful stars—you wonderful stars, he mused to himself, looking down upon me as if you eyed me; as if I could even hear you speaking to me across the abyss and saying: 'Here we are, and there you are. You exist as

well as we exist. If we are a fact, so are you. We go on for ever, but what of you? Is it for you, poor men, just one baffling glimpse of this our glorious framework of eternity, and then an everlasting blank—spirits though you are, and we mere matter? Is this your lot, poor mortal souls?' No! My heart rejects it. Why, at this very moment aspirations such as mine are being breathed out from life in all its varied forms from ten thousand of those shining worlds. And are they all in vain—idle, futile, sent forth to perish in the blank immensity of dumb space? Never! As there is a just Ruler over all, this is not to be the fate of the nobler elements of His Creation. The sacred love between me and my dear one will endure longer than ye stars yourselves, and our souls mingle hereafter in some sphere as bright as yours, ye flaming Ministers of the Unseen.

He was still resting against the fence which marked on one side the narrow passage for foot traffic, when he heard an advancing footstep, and saw near him on the path the outline of, as well as he could judge in the darkness, the slightly bent figure of some wayfarer approaching. He had been so much impressed by the sight of the heavens, and the meditations which they suggested, that he had not noticed the stranger till he was almost right upon him. In the peaceful district about Brassville you need never fear to greet the traveller, whether you meet him by day or by night. So, as he leaned slightly back to give the advancing figure free way, he wished him good evening in a friendly tone. The figure returned the salutation rather shortly, and was passing on. But though the words were few, there could be no doubt about the voice: that slow, precise, aggrieved tone could belong to none other than Jacob Shumate. Frankfort felt benevolently disposed to men generally, so he said in a kindly tone—

'Why, Mr. Shumate, and how are you? I have been trying to meet you since I came down, but somehow me missed one another. But this bad bit of road brings us together. You are late going home. You have a good walk before you. But I think that you like walking?'

Jacob Shumate turned, and bending in an inquiring way towards our politician, replied :

‘ Ah, I think that I have the honour of addressing the Member for the district. Yes, sir, I am pretty well, and I *have* a long walk before me. I have no choice but to like walking : the State does not give me conveyance, though I have been out upon public business. I must make speed. Good——’

‘ Oh, but, Mr. Shumate, as we have met, let us have a little talk together. A few minutes’ rest will do you no harm ; the evening is young yet. Kept late by public business ? Well, I have been visiting constituents—at The Blocks.’

‘ So I should presume, sir ; there are no other electors along this part of the road, except poor cottagers—working men. I have been engaged at a meeting at the Trappers’ Arms down there ; a number of the trappers met ; getting evidence ready for the Rabbit Commission. The matter is of some little consequence to them. They and their families starve if the great landowners have their way. The poor must look after themselves, if they are to be looked after at all.’

Jacob Shumate added the last qualifying words in a tone that conveyed that it was hopeless to expect that they ever would be properly looked after.

‘ To be sure, there must be a fair settlement of that question,’ said Frankfort.

‘ But not to be sure, Mr. Frankfort, if the lords of the broad acres about here can prevent it.’

‘ Now, really, Mr. Shumate, I don’t think that you put it fairly. What power have the lords of the acres about here more than the trappers. They have all only the same vote. I think that you rather jump at conclusions. For example—you won’t mind my speaking of it now that we have met ?—I hear that you have become a declared opponent of mine. But why ? I don’t know any good reason.’

‘ Because you are an enemy to the people’s rights,’ promptly answered the shoemaker. And our politician could discern the generally bent head become erect, and

could almost see the gleam of the dark eyes, through all the gloom of the evening. He could catch, too, the sound of the short, excited breathing of Jacob Shumate.

'But what makes you say that? Give your proofs. You do not desire to be unjust to any man. You would not condemn one of the blackfellows without proof.'

'The Pensions question speaks for itself, from the case of Sandy M'Givern to the Rangers—then to the poor man, his claim denied.'

'Now, as to that, Mr. Shumate, you were never more——'

'Why, sir,' the shoemaker interposed with increased warmth (when he got a chance he enjoyed unburdening his soul)—'why, sir, your alliances with the wealthy alone would condemn you with the people.'

'My alliances with the wealthy!' exclaimed our politician, staggered for the moment by Jacob's expression, quite casual as it was.

'Yes, sir, your alliances,' repeated Shumate, who liked formal words.

'Why, sir,' he continued, pushing his attack while Frankfort was silent,—'why, sir, as you condescend to ask for my proofs, look at this very evening. I am spending it looking after the interests of the poor. I did not have the honour to observe you at our meeting. No, sir, you were paying your court at the mansions of the wealthy.'

Our politician felt half amused and half annoyed at the odd way in which the shoemaker's expressions shaped themselves. One would think to hear him that he knew all about that momentous conversation on the verandah that afternoon.

'I have been paying no court to Mr. Lamborn, Mr. Shumate. But you don't object to a man calling on his friends, do you?'

'By no means, Mr. Frankfort. I would only venture to remark, very respectfully, that the question arises, who *are* your friends? We poor people may be excused if we ask of our Representative where is his heart bestowed?'

And Jacob did not drop the 'h' in 'heart,' as it is said that sometimes even the great Sir Robert Peel did. He spoke with great correctness, for the plain man that he was.

Our politician did not answer this inquiry, and Shumate continued his discourse, leaning against the fence and pushing back his old shell-hat from his brow. As he did so, he too cast a longing look up towards the stars; but one that spoke of different feelings from those that in Frankfort had struggled to find voice. Shumate's soured glance seemed to say that even the heavens were no friend to the poor man.

He continued, leaving our politician little opening for entering on his defence :

'Yes, Mr. Frankfort, the question with us poor people is where a man's heart is bestowed? As that true statesman and patriot, the Honourable Joseph Hatchett, used to say: "Show me a man's friends and I will show you where his heart is—if he has a heart." He was a bit humorous, sir, was Joseph. "Trust to your own people," he would say, "and not to the wealthy folk. The wealthy coddle to the wealthy. Well, then, let us, the poor, do ditto, ditto, to the poor."'

'That is a narrow view, Mr. Shumate. A Representative may sympathise with all classes, though he cannot belong to all.'

'I have heard that sentiment before, sir, when a youth, in my native county of Bucks, in the old land—I think from the parson. With us the only difference in classes is between the poor who have remained poor and the poor who have been unscrupulous enough to become rich.'

'Still, in a young free community like ours—no privilege anywhere—there may be sympathy between them.'

'Excuse me, sir, there is not sympathy between them. Permit me to take this question of the rabbits. The poor men with whom I have passed the evening have one interest, and perhaps they may be forgiven if they think of that, for their bread depends upon it. Mr. Lamborn, by whom you were entertained, has also an interest, only it is directly opposite to that of my poor friends; and I trust that I am doing my old shipmate no grievous wrong when I say that he also thinks only of his interest.'

'Of course, Mr. Shumate, all classes look after themselves, though not, I hope, with the blind selfishness that

you attribute to them. But the true Representative is not to be the spokesman for any class alone. He speaks for all.'

'Excellent theory, Professor Frankfort; but the people find some difficulty in getting this true Representative, and so long as that is so, they may venture, I presume, to take care that at least he shall represent *them*.'

'And have I not represented the whole people of Brassville, Mr. Shumate?'

'As you do me the honour to ask me, sir, I would reply straight that you have not. On the Rabbit question, for example, Mr. David Stoker, though a representative from the city, has done more for the people here—been more serviceable, more zealous, more the people's man.'

And our politician was again sensible of the keen, suspicious glance upwards at him.

'We noticed, honourable sir, from the daily press, that you addressed yourself to the subject only briefly, when it came before the Parliament of the country. Mr. Stoker's speech filled nearly a column,' continued Shumate, speaking in the confident tone of a man who felt that he was now saying something decisive.

'I did not speak at length, because no speeches were of use as matters were then. We must wait for the Report of the Commission.'

'Well, sir, as I think I ventured to remark before, the trappers must live, and must support the man who will allow them to do so. For one landowner, like my old fellow-voyager in the *Argyle*, there are one hundred trappers. Why, sir, in the bankers' end of Front Street there in Brassville, there are some thirty elderly bankers, merchants, agents, and so on, most of them keeping their traps or gigs, the test of respectability referred to by the great Mr. Carlyle. And there, sir, in the Woollen Mill at the back of the town, there are thirty-five young women employed at a pittance of 20s. or 30s. a week.'

'Well, women are entitled to fair-play,' remarked our politician.

'Truly so they are so, as you say; and I was only going to observe, that on election day the thirty-five young women have a greater voting power than all the highly respectable

business gentlemen put together. The greatest good to the greatest number is supposed, by eminent authority, to be the true principle of Government, is it not, Mr. Frankfort ?'

'Well, then, it is true, as I have heard, that you are a supporter of Mr. Meeks, Mr. Shumate?' remarked our politician, feeling that Jacob was not a very hopeful person to argue with.

'As to that, sir, I am an independent voter. I do not fasten myself to any one with chain and padlock. But, to be frank with you, as you do me the honour of permitting me to converse with you upon these matters, as a people's man you are not in it with Mr. Meeks. You are not there, sir.'

'Not in it? Not there?'

'Certainly not, sir. Meeks is one of ourselves. He began as a boy at the carpenter's bench, and worked there till called by his country to Parliamentary honours. His sons and daughters are employed among the State workers. He and his respected lady join us in our homely meals. He will sympathise with us so long as he sympathises with himself. He is in no way different from ourselves; anyway, no assumption of superiority thereby.'

'But when have I claimed superiority over any of you?'

'Perhaps not, sir. But we don't fancy its being there, claimed or not claimed. We prefer being represented by ourselves, just as the wealthy do, when they can. Now, *we* can appoint the Representative, and they can't.'

'Now, really, Mr. Shumate, that seems——'

'Seems? Nay, it *is*, sir, as the famous Shakespeare observes,' interposed Shumate, facing round, and, as it were, squaring himself up to our politician, and continuing with increased fervour. 'It is, sir. You, sir, if, for example, you should ever marry, as most men do, wisely or foolishly, the same to be discovered later on—why, sir, permit me to ask, will your lady and children be among us as would Mrs. Meeks and family? No, sir; they would be at The Blocks, we will say. Your children would be at the William Dorland University and the professions—marriages taking place in high life, and so forth. Where will then be the fellow-feeling for the trappers—the poor men who support their small cottages by catching rabbits?'

Frankfort felt that Jacob Shumate was one of those people who argue more to gratify themselves than to convince other people. The more they dispute, the more confirmed they get in the view that is most agreeable to their feelings. He was also getting a little vexed at Jacob's tone, and especially with his frequent references to The Blocks. So he only said :

' Ah, well, Mr. Shumate, I am afraid I will never convince you. We have both a good bit of road before us ; but yours is the longer, so I must not keep you. We can wish one another good-night, anyway. Good-night—good-night.'

And so they parted. Jacob Shumate felt quite pleased, and glowed within himself as he trudged along his lonely road, and thought of the home truths that he had told the Member for the district, great University man as he was. He felt convinced that he had the best of the argument. Frankfort had evidently been unable to answer him. He kept thinking over and over the different turns which the conversation had taken, and every now and then burst out aloud, repeating some of what he considered his best hits. Poor man as he was, the Member and Professor evidently was afraid of him, and was anxious to conciliate him. It was all very well taking tea with the Lamborns ; and sure enough they would give him a fine meal in a grand room. But on polling-day he, Jacob Shumate, the poor shoemaker, could bring up fifty trappers and their wives for one Mr. Lamborn and his wife. No wonder that the Professor spoke so fair and smooth to him. And was not he, Shumate, honest and straight with him ? He had told him to his face that he was not a people's man. And was he not right ? Were not the homes of the honest men who met at the Trappers' Arms that night of more consequence than all the grandeur of The Blocks ?

Jacob felt tired when he got to his cottage, just outside Glooscap. He slipped in to the small front plot of garden under the fence at a convenient spot, which was familiar to him from frequent use, as the handle of the little front gate had been broken some time ago owing to the youngsters stretching themselves by hanging on to it in their

games. Having struck a light, he first looked at the little truckle-bed in which his two small children, Flopsey and Popsey, were sleeping. They were the offspring of his hapless marriage with Daisy Dill. The girl, Flopsey, was the older of the two by a year. The kindly Widow Dobbs, since Shumate was left alone, parted from his wife, used when he was away upon business to come in to give the little ones their tea and put them to bed. She called the girl Flopsey, because when an infant she had the habit of tumbling down a good deal in her attempts at walking ; having, in fact, been put down to stand, the widow maintained, much too early by Daisy Dill. The boy she named Popsey, because, as soon as he could run at all, he was always, when his father was away, popping into her cottage to get something, or to say something, or to play with her cat. It soothed the father to see how peacefully the two children were resting, undisturbed as yet by those social injustices from which he was seeking to protect them. There was an old slipper, round which a dirty wrapper was coiled, still held in sleep by the small girl, and, as it had worked up towards her mouth, it was interfering with the child's free breathing. She had taken it to bed with her under the impression that it was a doll, though, to be sure, a poor thing compared with the complete figures and large eyes of the ones that she at times, when her father took her down the village, wistfully gazed on in the general window of Mrs. Garvin's Post Office. Shumate gently took this childish delusion away, and placed it on a stool near, so that his daughter could get it when she awoke next morning. He kissed the little ones, and then reached down from the shelf his loaf of bread, and from out of a broken safe the remains of a pair of rabbits, upon which he and the young ones had made their dinner, before he started on his walk to the Trappers' Arms. With these, and some cold tea that the neighbour had left for him from the children's supper, he made his frugal evening meal. Jacob Shumate was a total abstainer, except at public feasts where important toasts had to be honoured duly, when he found, as he explained, that a moderate draught of wine gave him increased power in expressing his views. Soon after he went to his bed, which was in a lean-to at the back of the cottage, and being

wearied, was not long in going to sleep. As he sank to rest, he felt the approval of his conscience for having passed a useful day. But he never experienced religious aspirations such as moved Frankfort when he looked up to the heavens that evening ; and as for saying prayers, he regarded that as a superstition. He was not a profane man ; but he had early in life taken a dislike to the churches, which he regarded as only another phase of the unjust constitution of society.

Our politician also had his cogitations as he walked on to Brassville. There was no denying that there was a substratum of fact for what Jacob Shumate had said. You might not like it, and statesmen might not own it, yet there might be truth in it. The poor were pressed by their daily wants, and would they not think of them before general, distant interests, and get representatives who would do the same? And how great a political force they were, even beyond their numbers ! Compare with the dilettante politics of the wealthy this eager meeting at the Trappers' Arms, and men walking home late at night to their cottages, and having to rise early to their work the next day. Politics, from being concerned with the cares of nations, appeared to be coming down to the wants of individuals. The thing was getting broken up ; and the government of the future, it would seem, was not to be the guiding of the whole from the top, but a movement resulting from the struggles of all the units from below, developed by some popular force, probably autocratic. No doubt personal wants had always been the main object with men. The new thing in our time was that Government now rested with the poor, whose personal wants were so pressing and engrossing.

But Frankfort cast off political musings quicker than Jacob Shumate did. His thoughts soon recurred to Eilly, and to the gracious change in his prospects and his whole being which her loving words, few though they were, had brought about that afternoon. Yes, 'These two shall be one' was an inspiring thought for him. This delightful reflection was a little dashed by the recollection of Jacob Shumate's remarks about paying court at The Blocks, alliances with the great, and the question that the people

would ask—where the *heart* of the politician was. What would Jacob and all his party say when they learned that he was going to marry the daughter of The Blocks? What about his being the friend of the people and the poor man then? Thus did our politician commune with his own thoughts by the way. But that evening, as he hastened on his road, the man was stronger than the politician. Come what may, the world—the political world—would be well lost for Eilly.

When he reached the Lake Reservoir Hotel he felt in no humour for more interviews with constituents that night. So he passed on down the hall towards the stairs that led to his room; but not before he had been seen by Barney Clegg, who was on the verandah with a number of other citizens enjoying the, to him, delightful relaxation of expressing his views in public upon the questions of the hour. Mr. Clegg hurried after him, not to 'impedite' him, as he remarked, but merely for the pleasure of grasping the hand of the Member for the district. Generous wine had made him more effusive than he would be in the daytime, and he also had some curiosity to know what particular committee or other 'political function' had detained his Representative till this late hour.

'No committee to-night, Mr. Clegg. Oh no, though I have had rather a long talk upon politics with Jacob Shumate. I met him on my way back from The Blocks. Mrs. Lamborn has not been very well. I went out to inquire for her.'

'And a fine lady she is, Mr. Frankfort, and Mr. Lamborn a fine gentleman too. But these big 'uns'—and Barney put his head upon one side as he impressively looked at Frankfort—'these big 'uns with the big acres—well, the likes of them, why, what were they in the old land but the ruin of Ireland.'

'But we are not in Ireland now, Mr. Clegg, and we have lots of land free for all here,' said our politician, disengaging, as slowly and as decently as he could, his hand from the gentle but continuous grasp of his constituent. Barney Clegg saw that he was not disposed to continue the discussion, so he gave an additional pressure of the hand, by

way of a parting token, and remarked, speaking in a lower tone :

‘Ah well, Professor, good luck to you, anyway. I am afraid old Jacob is a bit crooked, but Barney Clegg votes straight, anyway. You can always count upon four straight ‘uns at the Brown Jug.’

‘Four, Mr. Clegg?’ said our politician inquiringly.

‘To be sure—meself and wife and two girls, aren’t they there safe enough?’

‘And they agree with your views, then, I suppose?’

‘In course,’ briefly replied the owner of the Brown Jug, and apparently of the three electors referred to as well; and having given Frankfort one more grasp, he released him. Barney then returned to the verandah to resume his speech, which this time was of an argumentative type, devoted to proving the absolute need, in the interests of the town, of at once getting up a petition for the Member for the district to present to the Minister of Trams and Rails, to secure the stopping of all trains at the Upper End Station.

‘And let the Member not be content with presenting it, neither. Let him put it through and not be choked down with “no” for an answer. If I were to name a fault as belongs to our respected Member, I would insinuate that in borough affairs he ain’t sufficiently covetous for the people’s rights.’

Barney Clegg did not allude to the fact of the proximity of the Brown Jug to the station, but only to the general public interests involved. Indeed, with the natural tendency to exaggeration of his native land, he even described the proposed movement as being of a national character. It was to promote this object that he had come down to the town that evening from his own suburb of Upper End.

Frankfort, from his bedroom above, heard the tones, at once mellow and eager, of his constituent’s voice below for some considerable time, and they rather jarred upon him as he sank to sleep, thinking of Eilly. But soon he was at rest. For that had been, if a happy, also an exciting day for him.

Early the next morning the man came in from The

Blocks with his horse, and brought the following note from Eilly herself:—

THE BLOCKS,
Wednesday Morning.

My dear Mr. Frankfort—Father and mother were so good when I told them. Of course I could not leave mother till she is quite strong again. I am so happy. Mother wants you to come to lunch to-day. Come early.—Ever yours,
E. L.

It need scarcely be said that he was soon riding along the Glooscap road again on his way towards The Blocks. Mrs. Lamborn had been somewhat fluttered when Eilly had, in her simple, candid manner, told her all. No woman, and certainly no loving mother, could have been blind to the growing sympathy which had been daily becoming more manifest between her daughter and Frankfort. She had, as is usual in such matters, speculated upon it long before either of the persons most nearly concerned had ever thought of it; and later on she had confided her ideas upon the subject to her husband, before, as she saw, Eilly was conscious of any serious feeling towards Frankfort, or of anything more than that charm which wise Nature attaches to the companionship of a young man and a young woman who are disposed to be agreeable to one another.

Mrs. Lamborn at first, of the two men, preferred, as we know, the young American, Mr. Fooks, who was a most amusing as well as gentlemanlike young fellow, and was as successful in society as he was understood to be in the management of the Excelsior branch of the Ethereal Starch Company, which he came from the United States to take charge of. Mr. Lamborn, too, did not regard him unfavourably. But as time went on and he saw more of Mr. Fooks, both during his visit to the Blocks, upon that occasion when Mrs. Lamborn had let Frankfort go so readily in order to make room for him, and in business circles in Miranda, he did not think that there was much in him; nor, for the matter of that, in the Ethereal Starch Company either. Eilly was in the habit of seeing more of the young American in society than she did of Frankfort, as the clever business man was asked everywhere, and made it a matter of business to go everywhere. She was amused by him, and liked him well

enough at the time, when they met ; but she never thought of him after they parted, as she sometimes, even then, did of Frankfort.

But after a while an event happened that was quite unexpected in society, but not so unexpected in the inner business circles of the city, namely, the crash and smash of the Ethereal Starch Company. It stopped, and its agent had to hurriedly return to his native land. What brought this about was obscure, but it was understood to be owing to a difficulty about the patent under which the Company was manufacturing in the United States. At least this was the explanation given, and it was considered quite a respectable one. At any rate, the company was no more. Mr. Fooks was gone. When he was out of the way (and well out of the way, thought Thomas Lamborn), Mrs. Lamborn took more kindly to Frankfort, and used to speculate to herself upon the chances of his putting out whatever Government was in, and becoming at least Sir Edward ; and then how delightful it would be to see her own Eilly Lady Frankfort.

The sum of the whole matter was, that when Eilly ingenuously told the story of the love between her and him, now openly confessed to each other, both father and mother gave a willing sanction. It may well be believed it was not without some emotion and fond excitement that they talked the matter over that evening ; and when the father kissed his daughter for good-night, his thoughts recurred, so he afterwards told his wife, to the time when he had first kissed her as his own, more than twenty years before. In his fond excitement he had rather startled poor Eilly by exclaiming—

‘Yes, dear child, you will be happy with him. He is a good fellow, and your children will always have this grand estate, with the water in every paddock.’

When he and his wife were alone, the memory of their two first children came back to him. They had lost them when quite young, in the early rough days when medical aid was hard to get : one just after its birth, the other by that dreadful diphtheria. As Eilly only was left, it was a good thing to have her settled, so that she should not be left solitary, ‘as time goes on,’ he remarked to himself vaguely. All languages bear testimony to this disinclination to mention Death, by

the many phrases and circumlocutions which they have to express it. He was just upon the point of referring to this rather sombre aspect of the happy event, in talking with his wife, but as she seemed to have been made more feeble by the excitement of the evening, he forbore, and only spoke cheerfully of how pleasant it would be for them always to have Eilly near them, and often, no doubt, staying with them at The Blocks.

The next morning they told Eilly to write asking Frankfort to come to lunch; and later on Mr. Lamborn walked down the grounds towards the front gate to inspect the men who were laying the Brand's Patent Poisoned Wheat for the rabbits, and also to be ready to meet and welcome his future son-in-law when he should arrive. The road to The Blocks had never seemed so short to Frankfort as it did that morning, and soon he appeared, picking his way through the excavations at the bad bit of road before the gates. Mr. Lamborn advanced with more feeling in his manner than was his wont, and welcomed him as the accepted claimant for his only child.

'The mother and I could not object. We only want to see her happy. And it is happiness to know that she will not be leaving us altogether. She will still be often with us. We will want the two of ye here now. And,' he added, the thought that he had repressed the night before when talking with his wife coming uppermost again, 'we old people can't last always, you know, and some time you and Eilly—it's all for you two—all for you.'

Then, not wishing to dwell on grave topics at this joyous time, he continued in his usual solid tone of voice, turning round to have a good look at the grassy slopes stretching out on every side, studded with sheep:

'And it is a fine bit of country, I tell you. I never knew what was in it when I put up my bark hut here in the wilderness, in the early days. And when we get the water, why——' and he waved his hand to tell the rest.

They were soon at the broad verandah on which Eilly and her lover had the day before spent so delightful and so momentous an afternoon. It seemed to him to be an enchanted spot, for there she was, having run out to meet

them, as frank and natural as ever, with a slight flush of embarrassment flitting over her countenance. It was like the sunshine, he thought, as they had watched it yesterday when sitting together, sparkling over the lake, through the leaves of the branching trees, when they stirred in the breeze.

We need not linger to describe the happy hours that both the old people and the young experienced on that long summer's day at The Blocks. For long it was, according to the astronomical calculations of the time that the sun was to set, though short in the matter of duration as it was experienced by Eilly and her lover. It is enough to say that Eilly, who was blessed with a disposition that always inclined her to feel happy and loving, now realised that a new phase of human affection had opened for her; while he felt that, notwithstanding Jacob Shumate's ill-omened croakings about friendships with big families, his union with Eilly meant not only a supreme, soul-satisfying contentment for himself, but also the ennobling of the whole purpose of his life, in whatever lines it might be cast in the future. And why should not those continue to be the political lines, especially as she had such an enlightened insight into and sympathy with the political purpose of his life? What surer support could a man have in the effort to play a noble part in public life, and to rise above the baser arts by which, at times, a vulgar success was achieved, than to have at his side a companion who would understand his purpose, honour his constancy in pursuing it, and be prepared to share with him defeat and adversity, if only it was worthily brought upon him?

Quiggle had told Frankfort that he must not delay a visit to Glooscap, where he had got very good support at the election, but where there could be no doubt Jacob Shumate had been doing much to injure him for some time past. It was arranged round the happy tea-table at The Blocks that afternoon that the engagement should be at once announced in both the *Scorcher* and the *Trumpeter*, and that Eilly and Frankfort together should in a day or so pay the expected visit to Glooscap. Mrs. Lamborn was not strong enough to go, but it would be easy to get Mrs. Fairlie to take her place.

When the engagement of the Member for the district to

the daughter of The Blocks became known, it excited the liveliest interest among all classes in the community of Brassville. It might seem that the proposal of two people to marry one another was an affair that only concerned themselves and their immediate relatives. But the world, or at least so much of the world as knows about the intended alliance, always has many remarks to make concerning it; and, we may add, many observations of the critical type to expend upon it. There is, at the same time, a mutual understanding in society, and particularly in the married portion of it, to regard with complacency all proposed additions to the marital ranks, and to smile in an approving, nay, patronising, manner upon all auxiliaries to the noble army—not, of course, of martyrs, but of married people. This complacency, however, does not necessarily imply a continuation of the same amiable aspect to the new-comers when they have actually taken the shilling; and the after consequences of this momentous step, and the difficulties it may involve, are sometimes made still more serious by the fact that men—and even women—regard the two new recruits combined less favourably than they did each of them when they stood alone.

In this primitive district of Brassville, where they all knew one another so intimately, and where the Representative was in such close connection with his people, the affair was regarded by no means as a private one, but rather as a public event to be discussed in all its aspects, the political included. A considerable number of the better-off people agreed in the opinion of Hedger, the lawyer, that it was a capital thing, and that now the Reservoir might be considered safe. The remark of Woodall, the bookseller, was that Frankfort was lucky in getting such an admirable girl, politics or no politics. ‘Politics don’t stand to you for a lifetime like a good wife, do they?’ he observed to Neal Nickerson. Nickerson took a contrary view, and he was at once critical and classical in the answer which he made to Woodall and one or two others who were standing by, discussing the event of the day:

‘Ah well, never mind. It is which a man prefers, politics or the other thing. Ulysses again. *Vetulam prætulit.*’

No one understood what this meant, as the simple folk of Brassville were not aware that the learned describe that ancient hero as preferring his wife to posthumous fame, and being ready to give it up for her. But it was understood to convey something injurious to the Member's political prospects under the new conditions of his life. And there was no doubt that the Meeks party were quite jubilant over the event, though in a reserved and quiet way. And others, who were not among the personal following of that politician, but who were supposed to be in touch with the real common people, shook their heads, some in sorrow more than anger—but they shook their heads. Hiram Brickwood was very reticent, as the papers say of the police. The answer that he gave to inquiries after his opinion was a nod, accompanied by the exclamation 'By and by!' When pressed to be more explicit, he only evasively remarked that it was no use blowing the whistle till they came near the crossing. Karl Brumm observed in his benevolent, superior way that they were a most worthy pair, but that it only showed his wisdom in voting for Meeks, as it did not behove Patriots to revive in their fair land the caste of Junkers in politics. To the general public Barney Clegg was perplexing in his treatment of the subject. Drawing as well as he could upon his recollections of the poetry of his native land, he effusively admitted that Miss Lamborn was the first Gem of the Isle, and that there was no withstanding it that Mr. Frankfort was fit to be *particeps criminis*. His youngest boy was learning Latin, as an extra, at the State school, and from hearing him bungling over his exercises to his sister Jenny, he had someway got it into his head that this phrase meant participator of the crown, or something of a similar purport. At times, when he was among the friends of our politician, he would add the wish that they might have a long reign, Crown and Gem together. But generally he was more reserved, and expressed no views beyond a general encomium upon them personally. When, however, he found himself with his confidential circle at the Brown Jug, he expressed his more sincere sentiments, and, reiterating his old opinion that landlords were the curse of Ireland, declared 'straight,' to use his common expression, that in their great country, at

least, it was the right of the nation to have a people's man for the people.

Taken as a whole, however, the general verdict did not appear to be an unfriendly one; and there was only one feeling, as universal as it was sincere, of regard for Eilly Lamborn. Most of them had known her from her childhood, and many of them had in sickness or trouble experienced the genuine goodness of her nature. The children of the Brassville Orphan Home, when they heard that she was going to be married, for the important news spread down even to the children of the town, made some anxious inquiries as to whether the event would interfere with her weekly visit to the Home, and the supply of cakes covered with white sugar and picture-books in flaming red and blue colours. While Eilly was kindness itself to all, and especially to the poorer class of people, there was, someway, not the least trace of the patronising air about her, or of what the proud poor—and all the poor were proud in Brassville—are apt to resent as patronising. She was too natural and sincere for that. She was not making herself kind and gracious to them. She was so instinctively. So all loved her. Miss Gazelle was a keen critic of her own sex; but she frankly admitted that Miss Lamborn was a good creature, and no *tulle illusion* about her either. Seth Pride, of course, agreed with Miss Gazelle.

But it was little that Eilly or Frankfort thought then of the criticism of the world. They were the world to themselves. Never was there a happier party than those three, he and she and Mrs. Fairlie, as they drove away that pleasant summer morning on their promised visit to Glooscap. Yes, it was a pleasant morning, driving through the light, exhilarating air, fragrant with eucalyptus, the rather sombre green of the forest relieved by occasional gullies of fern trees, and the darting coloured birds adding the beauty of colour, if not of song, to the scene. The loud note of the red parrot from overhead interested our travellers, and added the charm of novelty and wildness to the scene. It seemed to them that they had been driving only a short time, when they saw the first few straggling cottages that mark the entrance into Glooscap. Our politician, leaving Mrs. Fairlie

and Eilly to rest a while at the Red Parrot Inn, walked down the main street to meet his constituents, some of whom were transacting their business or discussing their affairs in the open, standing about the street ; while others were available for conversation in their shops, during intervals in their work at the counter. All were glad to see him, and they were almost as full of his proposed alliance with Eilly as he was himself. For it was an important local fact ; since The Blocks had considerable business relations with Glooscap, both in obtaining there certain classes of stores and in selling odd lots of sheep from Mr. Lamborn's flocks. They were a kind-hearted people too, those Glooscap folk, and all had a warm corner in their hearts for the daughter of The Blocks, and felt a personal interest in her fortunes.

Mr. M'Glumpy was enthusiastic over the event, and maintained that he had a distinct hand in bringing it about, as had he not emphatically called Frankfort's attention, when he was last in the town, to the importance of getting married, and at the Mayor's banquet proposed the toast of the future wife, and even the children ? He had also privately confided to Mrs. M'Glumpy, and to his sister, Mrs. Garvin, that he all along knew who the bride was to be. Mary Garvin, as she welcomed the Member for the district at the shop door, over which was her name as Postmistress, could not have been more gracious had it been her own daughter that he was going to marry. There were quite a number of feelings and considerations that went to produce this marked warmth of feeling in Mrs. Garvin. In the first place, as a Government official, she desired to keep upon the fairest terms with the Member for the district, for whose services she often had occasion in little matters connected with the Department, and of whom she intended to make frequent use in the time to come. Then she was not destitute of gratitude, in all the phases of that feeling, past and future. Frankfort had done her a good turn in getting her nephew, Terry, the appointment as letter-carrier, the particulars of which the reader is already acquainted with, and she considered that a good turn deserved recognition, especially as she had some sons of her own coming on, not to mention several more nephews and nieces who must be provided for some way. She also, with

a women's foresight and instinctive grasp of all the possibilities of the case, indulged in hopes which might be classed as 'most secret and confidential,' that in due time events might even give her the chance of a temporary engagement at The Blocks—in fact, a succession of such engagements—in that other capacity in which she acted, as Quiggle had vulgarly expressed it, for the King's females as well as for his mails. And though both she and her brother Rimigius were strong democrats, and though they would even have supported Meeks, under the belief that he was the people's man, were it not for his default in securing the Reservoir, still she had enough of human nature about her to prefer an aristocratic engagement for her monthly services to a plebeian one. Things were so much pleasanter, and the pay better. But it must be said for Mary Garvin that a further and very real cause of her amiable reception of our politician was a genuine regard for Eilly Lamborn and respect for her lovable character.

Terence M'Glumpy, letter-carrier, was well to the fore at the Office, and he greeted our politician in a frank and cordial manner. He was getting on famously, was learning to read, and was a general favourite. When he made a bungle of the delivery of any letters that his aunt had given him to take round, owing to his mixing up her directions as to their destination, he had such a merry joke for each baffled housewife, when he came again with 'the correct card,' as he phrased it, that all took it in good part, and whenever there was any important letter expected, went for it themselves. None would be so ill-natured as to make complaints against a neighbour, and so perhaps put the boy out of his fifteen shillings a week. And nothing could be cleaner than Mary Garvin's shop now, both upon the Government side and the commercial side. As for the window of the post office proper, Terry polished it up every morning so vigorously and so cheerily that it was quite exhilarating to witness him discharging this part of his public duty.

When Frankfort had seen his leading constituents, not forgetting his interesting friend Ernest Hooper, the school-master, he hurried back to the Red Parrot, where he found

Eilly and Mrs. Fairlie, who had returned from visiting several of the villagers in whom Eilly took an interest. She had been greeted upon all sides with the kindest welcomes and with point-blank compliments, which, if not always highly polished in tone, were more sincere than polished compliments sometimes are. She received them all in her own natural way; and Mrs. Garvin only spoke what she felt, that day at least, when she declared to the widow Grimes (who had called for her letters) that, however much the sun might be shining, Miss Lamborn made the street a bit brighter as she walked down it. The Blocks party had a pleasant lunch together in the small best parlour of the Red Parrot; and Eilly spoke of the families she had visited, and of the additional sense of responsibility which she felt now that they were 'her own constituents,' as she called them.

'Why, Eilly dear, you may represent them yourself some day, when they get tired of Edward. I must really say, Edward, that she seems to be a greater favourite with them than even you are. You would have no chance if you were to quarrel, and she were to stand against you.'

Matter-of-fact Mrs. Fairlie said this intending it for a pleasantry.

'Now, my dear aunt, please don't even imagine such a fate as that for me. What? Lose both wife and constituency at one blow! You do think of such dreadful things, Mrs. Fairlie.'

'Now, I don't say that it will happen, Edward. I only say that it might. Your uncle says that women will be sitting in Parliament directly, and you know married people at times do quarrel—though, to be sure, they ought not to.'

The idea rather jarred upon Frankfort. It might naturally happen under the advanced views of the day. Brought home to him personally, this new status of a wife seemed objectionable, notwithstanding all his devotion to Woman's Rights. Mrs. Fairlie certainly had, he thought, quite a knack at times for saying odd things. In fact, however, it was his devotion to Eilly that made him sensitive to his aunt's somewhat ponderous pleasantry. Eilly, who knew her better than he did, had just commenced a laughing remark about stranger things having happened, when Birnie Farrar, the

Town Clerk, tapped at the door and introduced himself, with many apologies for the intrusion. He said that his only excuse could be the express commands of His Worship the Mayor, who sent his compliments to the Member and Mrs. Fairlie and Miss Lamborn, and begged their presence in the Commercial Room downstairs for a 'slight social function,' before they left that afternoon.

When they went down to the Commercial Room, they found that the flower of Glooscap social life had assembled to do them honour. It was a spontaneous expression of kind feeling, mainly to do honour to Eilly, but also extending to Frankfort, now that his fortunes were identified with hers. The Mayoress and the wives of the leading councillors were there, and conspicuous among them were Mrs. Garvin and Mrs. M'Glumpy. Terry had been left in charge of the Post Office. The Town Clerk had asked Jacob Shumate to come, but he refused upon the ostensible ground that, though the Mayor might personally entertain any one whom he pleased, it was unconstitutional for him, as Mayor, to entertain any politician, unless in pursuance of a resolution of the Council sanctioning his doing so.

They were, however, a jovial party, despite his absence. The Mayor, being slow of speech, told the fluent Town Clerk to propose the toast of the day, which, of course, was health and happiness to the Member for the district and his future partner. He intended to himself follow with a short speech, which he had carefully thought over, and which he expected would make rather a hit. Fluently did Birnie Farrar perform his part of the work, being particularly happy in his allusion to the blending of political influences with more powerful social graces, and to the silver telephone wire, electric with all the best currents that played in human nature, which would henceforth indissolubly unite, with murmuring messages of sympathy, The Blocks to Glooscap, the most rising municipality in the district. The Mayor, stirred by this reference to his borough, was just about to begin, when Mr. M'Glumpy, who could no longer restrain himself, suddenly interposed to second 'the pleasing interlude of the distinguished Town Clerk,' as he termed it. He stated that he did this the more readily as he claimed that

to him belonged the distinguished honour and unspeakable happiness of having mainly contributed to bring about the grand result of the auspicious union which they were met to do honour to that day. It would not become him as a gentleman to speak more directly upon the subject. Did he mention names when he first spoke on this genial subject? No. Would he now? Never. There was a civil code of honour and gentlemanly etiquette in these matters which he was not the man to violate.

While he was enlarging on this favourite topic of his, Eilly whispered to Frankfort to know what he was talking about. She knew something of his fervid manner of speech from seeing him when she visited Glooscap, but she did not give him credit for the full power of invention that he possessed. Only a fellow-countryman of his could realise his true position. For Rimigius M'Glumpy was not conscious of any untruthfulness that afternoon. He had repeated the same statement so frequently since he had heard of the engagement, that he had come to believe that he really had taken the part which he stated in bringing about the happy result. And then the very idea of this supposed influence of his was so personally congenial to him that it was a pleasure to him merely to contemplate it.

Right heartily did these rustic folk of Glooscap honour the toast, jovial their hip, hip, hurrahs, while the highest point of excitement was reached when the generally grumbling David Blow stood forth and called for one cheer more for 'the first prize from The Blocks,' adding in an aside, 'and no short commons there neither.'

Frankfort spoke a few warm words of thanks, which were vociferously applauded by M'Glumpy, and also by Terry, the letter-carrier, who had given himself a short respite from Post Office duties to enable him to attend the proceedings. He kept the applause going strongly at his end of the room in honour of his patron. And Terry did not think that he was neglecting his duties in leaving the Post Office for a while, as he felt that entertaining the Member for the district was almost as much public business as giving people their letters. This was with him an innate idea—a political innate idea.

'Eilly and Edward for ever!' exclaimed M'Glumpy senior, waving aloft his empty glass. He was getting exhilarated under the double influence of the joyous nature of the occasion and the generous wine.

But his unwarranted interposition had deprived the Mayor of his opportunity for making that speech upon which his heart was set, and which he considered moreover was expected from him, as Mayor. He was not a rhetorical man, and he was further under the difficulty, now that Frankfort and Eilly had already been proposed, of selecting some toast that would at least justify a reference to them. At last an idea struck him, and he got up and gave them 'The Reservoir and its true and lasting union to the district.' He drew an elaborate parallel between the benefits that the two unions would confer on Glooscap. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm. 'The Ladies' and 'The Press' brought the homely gathering to a close, and soon Frankfort, with Eilly and Mrs. Fairlie, was rolling along the broad highway that leads from Glooscap to Brassville, taking in The Blocks in its circuit.

Just as they got to the end of the main street, where some half-dozen straggling cottages upon either side of the road leave it questionable where the village ends and the country road begins, they saw two ragged-looking children hanging over the fence of one of the least cosy of the cottages, staring down the road with eagerness in their dark eyes after a man, who turned as he was walking to wave his hand towards them, and call aloud a fatherly response to their imperfectly-bawled-out 'Good-bye, dada, good-bye.' Frankfort thought that he recognised the figure in the distance; but he stopped a moment, as they came up to the cottage, to ask a matronly-looking woman, who sat knitting at the door of the next dwelling, whose the children were. Sure enough they were Jacob Shumate's—the two little ones that he had bent over to see that they were sleeping soundly on the night when he came home late, after his enforced meeting with our politician at the bad bit of road. He had, it seemed, to go again that evening into Brassville to attend a meeting of the Trappers' Executive Committee, who were trying to arrange for Mr.

David Stoker coming down to address a public meeting upon the Rabbit question, and the unjust action of the large landowners in relation to it. Now that he had an old age pension from the State, Shumate felt it to be more his duty than ever to assist in all useful public movements in his district, and the trappers needed some one who was acquainted with political business to assist them.

The children looked as if they were well fed, and they had sufficient clothes for that mild climate ; otherwise they bore a rather neglected appearance. The hair of the eldest—she whom the widow called ‘Flopsey,’ a girl of about seven—clustered round her head in shaggy profusion, and, like its owner, seemed to need some regulating and binding up. The younger, a little fellow of six, in twisting on the fence to look after his father, had dropped one of his shoes, and was pointing his bare little leg in the air, as he hung over to peer down the road.

The matronly-looking woman, who was none other than the Widow Dobbs, said that the children were all right, and that she was going in to give them a bit of tea, and to put them to bed before it got late. As Frankfort looked round at them, he saw the two pairs of small but strong dark eyes turned upon him fearlessly as he passed. There was none of that cowering, nor even deferential, air with which children in the past times in the old land used to recognise the gentry of their neighbourhood. Shumate, when, in his looking backward, he had recognised the Member for the district, had hurried on almost out of view ; and as the buggy came up with him, he walked on faster than ever, and looked fixedly before him, declining all recognition of those whom he considered were not friends of the people, and who moreover had that day been unconstitutionally entertained by the Mayor.

The afternoon proved chilly, dark clouds came up, and there was promise of a dreary evening when they reached The Blocks. Frankfort and Mrs. Fairlie left Eilly at the side garden gate, near the house, and then hurried on to town. It had been arranged that he should take tea with the Fairlies. His devotion to The Blocks had made his visits to the Bank uncertain of late, and he was glad to have this evening to see

a little of his uncle, and to have some fun with Minnie and Teddy, who were at that interesting period of youth that lies between the dawn of intelligence and the advent of self-consciousness. And pleasant talk he had with the uncle, and fun with the cousins. Only that the youngsters would every now and then come back again to the respective merits of their boats, and the grand sailing that they would have on the Reservoir. Minnie, who was only nine, was especially persistent in describing the feats that her boat would perform; while Teddy kept looking over her head at his mother, making significant grimaces, because they both knew that Minnie's was only a show toy boat that could not float at all. Frankfort enjoyed being with them, and there was both talk and fun sufficient to make him stay late; but as it had been a long day for his aunt, and she was somewhat tired, he left soon after the children had gone to bed, and a few minutes' brisk walking brought him to the door of the Lake Reservoir Hotel.

As he came near, he noticed several people standing about the verandah, talking eagerly to one another, and saw that there was pervading them all an air that is undefinable, but not imperceptible, of something unusual having happened. The landlord, Tom Hilton, had, as the reader knows, made one momentous and unexpected announcement to our politician when, on that eventful evening just before his meeting in Brassville at the election, he had told him of the withdrawal of the Reservoir project. He was destined now to make to him another.

'Well, here's a go!' he said, addressing him, using his accustomed phrase, and speaking in his usual demonstrative manner, his cap thrown back on his head, and waving his arm around, as if to challenge general attention to his excited feelings—'here's a go! Why, I am knocked all of a heap. Blest if I don't feel my own heart galloping away round the course, regular bolt like.'

'Gracious heavens, what do you mean? What is wrong?' asked Frankfort, whom the mention of the heart had startled.

'Wrong? Why, here's Mrs. Lamborn of The Blocks out there found dead in her chair, just as she might be found

taking a cup of tea and a bit of toast, or sitting on this here verandah'—and he waved his arm around again—'taking a quiet glass of wine.'

'Mrs. Lamborn found dead in her chair!' exclaimed Frankfort. 'Why, who says such a thing? It is only a couple of hours since I passed there on my way from Glooscap. Surely there must be——'

'Not a bit of it. Here's Delane just told me, as he came in on his way from The Blocks. "It is well," says he, "that I know all about it, as I am Coroner. Dreadful sudden, but no inquest wanted—not unexpected by science—premonitory symptoms—heart, Mr. Thomas, heart," says he. "Sad, awful for poor husband and that dear Miss Eilly." Says I to him——'

Frankfort turned and hurried down the street to the stables. He was soon cantering back along the Glooscap road. He was doubtful about obtruding upon such a sorrow. Yet he felt that he could not rest till he had seen Peter Gouch and heard something from him about the dreadful affair. When he got to the main gate, he threw his horse's rein over a post and left him, so as to walk up quietly without disturbing the stricken household. As he passed the lake, his mind was diverted for a moment to the recollection of his joy as Eilly, looking out upon its tranquil water, bright then in the sunshine, had confessed to him her love. He hurried on, not without a feeling of self-reproach. When he came near the verandah, he saw in the flickering light of the hall lamp Mr. Lamborn sitting down and looking at the boards in a vacant sort of way. He hesitated, thinking it might be better to go round by the side door; but his step and its sudden stoppage had roused the drooping figure, and Mr. Lamborn looked up and greeted him in a quiet manner. He was dazed by the suddenness of the blow, and the incongruity of the surroundings to all his ideas of what Death must be. He had a feeling that he could not make it out, and that, notwithstanding what Dr. Delane had said to him, there must be some mistake about it. It seemed too monstrous that he should be told that his Annie sitting there in the chair, with that handsome silk gown upon her and the becoming lace cap on her head, was

only a corpse, and that that dear figure, which he had so often pressed to *his* heart, would directly begin to decay—less lasting than the frail lace upon the cap. And all because *her* heart, for some unknown reason, had suddenly stopped that gentle throbbing. Life, it struck him, was as dreadful and as mysterious as death. And then Delane telling him in that subdued, feeling way not to trouble—that he would make all arrangements and would give the certificate, so that there need be no inquest or worry of any kind. It was so like a nightmare; he seemed even to have the half-consciousness of the dream behind, that it was all unreal.

No wonder he had a difficulty in realising what had taken place. With surprising calmness, as if he were relating something that he was only concerned in, as an onlooker, he told Frankfort as much as came first to his mind about it; and afterwards Peter Gouch, who appeared to be more visibly upset, and who indeed was deeply affected, gave him the details. Eilly, when she was able to speak of it, told him more.

Mrs. Lamborn seemed to be quite as well as usual all that day. As is often the case with these treacherous ailments of the heart, she seemed to be even brighter than she generally was, and more than once spoke cheerily to her husband about the lovely day that Eilly was having for her first visit to Glooscap as a betrothed girl. Lamborn had stayed at home, so that she should not be quite alone, and had busied himself with planning the best course for the intended channel from the Reservoir aqueduct to supply the house and stables, through an obstructing ridge of stony ground that lay in the way. As the evening came on she got restless, because the party were later in returning from Glooscap than they were expected to be; but when Eilly came home she was quite happy again, and as she listened to her daughter's cheerful voice telling the merry story of their day's adventure, of M'Glumpy's odd compliments, Mrs. Garvin's marked attentions, the Mayor's feast, the speeches, David Blow's 'No short commons,'—'You know, mother, Edward told us that he says that to everything—it was so funny,'—while she listened to Eilly's laughing story, she

quite brightened again. Her daughter's cheerfulness seemed to make her easy and composed again.

Eilly left her mother sitting in the arm-chair in the little boudoir that opened on to the verandah, and from which she could get an end peep of the beautiful view of the lake. She went to see if the tea-table was ready, and to light the burner of a new but complicated coffee-pot that Mrs. Lamborn had taken a fancy to when she was last in Miranda. She would then come and bring her mother to tea. It pleased Eilly to think how she would be interested in seeing her new invention steaming and gurgling away in the approved fashion. She said that she would be back directly, for she had not half told the adventures of the day. It was such fun, she repeated, as she was leaving the room—the Mayor's banquet, and the speeches; and Mrs. Fairlie was so pleasant, and, as usual, saying odd things in her matter-of-fact way, about her, Eilly, representing the constituency, and Frankfort losing everything; it was so absurd, she would tell her all about it when she had started the coffee-pot; it was so comical to hear Mrs. Fairlie talking that way.

The new coffee-pot took longer to get into proper working than the three minutes which the advertisements specified as the exact time that was required for the purpose. Still, it did not keep Eilly very long, and soon she was back again in the little boudoir. But in the meantime her mother's heart had ceased to beat. It had stopped its march—would do no more, for ever, would that dominant and imperious but all-mortal little organ. No doubt there were certain adequate causes producing their necessary results—dangerous tendencies that were aggravated by some influences and retarded by others, until the fatal, inevitable moment arrived—all inexorably working out their unseen effects, so as to strike the blow at exactly the appointed moment. If we only knew the value of all the quantities concerned, we could calculate the time with the accuracy of an astronomer foretelling the eclipse of the sun's light. But we know more of the motions of the heavens than we do of the courses of our own bodies. So the stroke comes upon us suddenly, with no previous calculation or prediction possible. To us it seems to strike blindly when it does strike.

Eilly had come running into the room, still half laughing to herself at Mrs. Fairlie's absurd fancy about the constituency and Edward's losing her and everything; and was beginning, exclaiming—

'Mother dear, you will laugh when I tell you how she said it——'

But she was checked by the stillness of the repose of the figure before her. Her mother must have fallen off into a doze in the few minutes that she was away getting that coffee-pot boiling. And how peaceful she looked, as well as Eilly could see her in the deepening twilight. It would be a pity to disturb her. There was nothing to do but to run back, stop the patent coffee-boiler, and tell Gouch to delay the tea for a while. Yet she could not but stay a moment, struck by the deep stillness of the sleeping form, as it lay back, evidently quite at rest, in the easy arm-chair. The neatly-made dark silk dress that was so becoming to her mother, the lace cap that lay so tastefully on the head, the white cuffs bordering the hands, as they rested, one on the lap, the other thrown back on the arm of the chair, the small diamond locket that hung round her neck, and which enclosed soft little circlets of the hair of her children, with one rougher tuft of her husband's hair, taken long ago, when it was a bright brown—all this caught Eilly's eye, though dimly, in the deepening gloom. The diamonds did not sparkle in the glancing light from the other room—all was so still. She was going nearer to see if she could not raise her mother's head, which hung down in an uncomfortable manner. As she stepped gently round by the open window, she looked out for a moment on the verandah, where, only a few days before, she had passed those supreme moments of a lifetime, in which her heart was pledged for the first time, and also for ever. She saw just the gleaming of the beautiful lake in the hastening darkness.

Eilly felt a little awed by the gloomy aspect of the evening; and also the continued deep silence of the room seemed more and more to grow upon her and affect her. She advanced towards the chair; but that stillness, that appalling stillness, struck home to her in a way that no outcry could have done. She became suddenly agitated by the

vague dread of some fearful fate, that she could not express even to herself, but which seemed to be closing inexorably around her. Her mind recalled on the instant, quite involuntarily upon her part, the threatening warning of the fortune-teller at Jortin's party. She turned and ran to her father and begged him to go and see when mother would wake and come into tea. He, alarmed by her manner, hurried to his wife—what was his wife—and soon the worst was known. In ancient phrase, Annie Lamborn being called, would no more answer.

The good-natured people of Brassville and Glooscap felt a genuine sympathy for both husband and daughter when the news was spread abroad. It aroused a deeper feeling in that country district than it would have in a city, where the funerals go daily about the streets. People, too, are especially sensitive about a sudden death, though truly nothing can be more merciful than such an end. Glooscap was deeply sympathetic, and the ripple of human feeling extended as far as Leadville, to Tinville also. The public sentiment was the more impressed by the fact that the bereavement came so soon after the engagement of the daughter. Those who knew Eilly had admired her before; they now loved her in her sorrow. The funeral was one of the largest and most impressive that Brassville had yet seen; and that entirely owing to the spontaneous feeling of sympathy among the people. Neither Lamborn nor Frankfort took any steps to promote a large gathering.

When the burial day came, it was found that all classes, all shades of party, and all the country-side, as well as the townspeople, assembled around the grave, which was in the Church of England portion of the Brassville General Cemetery. It seems strange that we are more exclusive in death than we are in life, and that people of different denominations, who have been the fastest friends here below, must have a boundary fence between them in the final repose of the grave. Mother earth must not catch them to her bosom again together, till they are separated well apart from one another, according to the correct lines of the surveyor's chain. Yet how tenderly have different nations named the resting-place for the dead. The Greeks called it

'the sleeping place'; the Jews 'the house of the living'; the Germans 'God's acre.'

All joined to mourn over Mrs. Lamborn; and there was naturally a large representation of the political class, as the deceased was the wife of one Legislator and, had she lived, would, it was understood, have been the mother-in-law of another.

The crowd was closing in around the coffin when Frankfort, as he stood near Mr. Lamborn, heard a voice which he thought that he recognised, saying in a pretty audible whisper to a neighbour :

'He would have come himself if he could have got away. He quite feels for Lamborn. And he does feel at times, does Sir Donald.'

As he glanced round, Du Tell nodded to him. Sir Donald MacLever and Lamborn were old friends, and there was just now some friction with the landed interest about the rabbits and Brand's Patent, so the Premier, both upon private and public grounds, desired to show his goodwill by being represented at the funeral. He could not get away himself owing to his many engagements, so he sent Du Tell. That gentleman was also anxious to come in the interests of the party, to learn how Frankfort's recent engagement to Eilly affected his position in the constituency. Du Tell was ever on the alert, popping up here and there, inquiring into everything, and finding out most things. He even peered inquiringly at the coffin, as if he might see through its mystery if he tried. But there he was at fault, since, as sages have long ago remarked, no one knows what death is, nor indeed what life is either. Strange that we are gifted by Providence with the faculties to realise that there are mysteries—to grasp that fact, to puzzle at them, but not in the least to comprehend them !

Meeks, who was never long absent from the district, was also there; and though he was a dissenter himself, and was understood to have no great admiration for the Church of England, he displayed exemplary attention to the service, and a sympathetic feeling for the mourners. Father Malachy Duigan was present, but he stood away at the back, as if not wishing to plunge too deeply into any compromising

situation. But Barney Clegg, it was believed with the Father's express sanction, elbowed his way well to the front of the crowd, and stood looking round every now and then, as if to challenge attention to what a liberal Catholic he was. Honest Seth Pride listened to the solemn prayers of the Church of England Burial Service with reverence, and laid a large wreath of flowers upon the coffin, which had been woven together by the nimble fingers of Hannah Gazelle. Neal Nickerson came with Woodall, the book-seller. He sympathised, too, in his own way. But even in his sympathy he was disputatious.

'Do you know,' whispered Woodall to him, as the coffin passed on, 'with all the funerals I have been at, I can't help feeling afresh every time as if it was the only one I had ever gone to.'

'I quite agree with you,' answered Nickerson, 'if you mean feeling for those who are still above ground. You have no need to feel for those who are taken.'

He spoke, not in the awed whisper of Woodall, but in a confident tone, and with a superior air, as if he knew all about it. Quiggle came, it must be confessed, partly to observe the extent of the popularity of the Lamborn family, with whom his man was soon to be connected. But he was so impressed by the service and all the trappings of sorrow that the only thing of political interest which the kindly little man remembered was the prominent part that Meeks took, and the visit of Du Tell. Karl Brumm was also there, full as to his heart of the kindness of human nature, and as to his head of the theology of Karl Marx. Rimigius M'Glumpy was well to the fore; and such was his impressionable nature that he shed real tears without intending it, or being able to prevent it, when he saw the coffin lowered down into the ever-feeding yet hungry earth. Nay, even Jacob Shumate was there, having to come in in any case, as he stated, to attend a meeting of the Trappers' Committee. He also gave, as an explanation, his having sailed out in the same ship with Mr. Lamborn in the early days of the Province. Auld Lang Syne was, he said, the sentiment of that true democrat, Robert Burns. His usually dark, angry glance was mitigated or clouded over, like the eye of a sick

eagle, and the general unhappiness of his countenance was toned down into a look of blank solemnity.

Yes, all were affected when they came together in the presence of Death. Why not? How is it that we spend part of our short lives in hating and trying to injure one another, with death staring us in the face all the while? Truth to say, we forget all about it during the most of life; but this matter of disposing of dead, burying them away out of our sight, compels us every now and then to look straight at the blank reality, and then, for a moment at least, we realise how small are the things of earth, unless we can link them someway to hopes beyond the grave. If, indeed, like Elisha, all men were translated at the end of life to the higher sphere, and there was no more Death, the horror we now feel at the termination of this state of existence would vanish, and the end would be a deliverance, not a terror. But when we see one after another of those who were our living, breathing brothers laid down in the earth, to be closed over there for ever—another lump of clay for mother earth—then it is that staggered human nature turns with a longing that surely is implanted in us by God Himself, to that noblest form of hope which gives some meaning to this life by the prospect of another beyond it.

After a short interval, Frankfort resumed his visits to The Blocks. The Christmas holidays were drawing towards a close, and before long he must resume his work at the University, and also be preparing for the business of the next session of Parliament, which it was supposed would be devoted to dealing with the complex and critical subject of the currency. He found the home a changed one. Lamborn was realising more and more what Ernest Hooper, the Glooscap schoolmaster, had described as having half of you torn away, and that, too, when you are getting older, and more feeble in resisting evil things. He had always been devoted to Eilly with that peculiar tenderness that we often see to glow in the special fondness of the mother for the son and the father for the daughter. But now he clung to her entirely, his own early love being gone; and all the deep sympathy of her nature seemed to go out to him with renewed intensity. For the time they were all in all to one

another, and even Eilly's love for her lover seemed to be, for the moment, eclipsed in the shadow of this great sorrow, and in absorbing devotion to the father. In answer to some gentle suggestion by Frankfort, that she must now look forward to the time when she would find with him the dearest union of all, she said that she knew it, but that at present she could think of nothing but the mother who was gone and the father who was desolate.

Frankfort afterwards mentioned his hopes regarding Eilly to the father. He found him much more accessible than the daughter. Mr. Lamborn was, in fact, anxious that the marriage should not be delayed beyond whatever time would be proper to show respect to the departed, and which Eilly herself might desire. In truth, his love for his daughter was stronger than any selfish feeling for himself; and now that he had seen Death face to face—that the reality had been brought home to him—the question that had anxiously suggested itself to him, even during his wife's life, came back with redoubled force—What would Eilly do when he was gone if she was to be left alone in the world? So he agreed with Frankfort that an understanding should be come to, and he spoke to Eilly about it one evening as they sat alone together. It was a moving discussion between father and daughter; for he wanted to remind her, without putting it too broadly, that in the course of nature he could not always be there to take care of her, and to impress upon her what a consolation it would be to him to know that she would, if he was not there, have a nearer still, as he rather pained her by saying, to be with her for life. Though Eilly had lately made acquaintance, for the first time in her life, with sorrow and death, she yet shunned to contemplate the gloomy prospect to which her father had alluded. She seemed to be unwilling to fix the time when she should leave him, even for a little while.

But, after a while, her love for Frankfort began to reassert itself, and enabled her to give more heed to her father's suggestions. She at last agreed that after the year's delay which would be proper respect to the memory of her mother, and if some plan should be arranged for her being a good deal at The Blocks, she would be ready to unite her life with his.

‘Tell him that he must be often here. I could not leave you for long, father,’ she said.

‘Why need you, Eilly dear? The Blocks will belong to you and him together, and when we get the water in, it will be the grandest estate in this country-side. It is his district for Parliament. He must be often here.’

So Lamborn spoke to Frankfort and explained all. Life seemed again to have some value for Eilly as her heart turned with renewed fervour to him, and she was possessed with the enthralling emotion of a first love. It was arranged that the marriage should take place at the end of the twelve months. But a great deal may take place in twelve months. And, in fact, a great deal was to take place in the coming twelve months.

CHAPTER XI

CURRENCY

CURRENCY was in the air. The talk of the people was of bullion—especially silver. Money cheap and money dear—especially paper money—occupied their thoughts. State banks and State cash, and a national volume of cheap and handy tokens of exchange, ever flowing round the land—these things were talked about by the people, and critically discussed by the experts of Excelsior. And there were quite a number of Currency experts in that progressive Province. The man in the street heard the many-voiced explanations of the meaning of Money, thought he understood them, and then explained them to the other man in the street. And wherefore? Why this excitement about Currency? Because there was depression abroad, and the question naturally was, What were the Government going to do about it? The Government had in the past done many things in order to make men prosperous, and with all its depression Excelsior was still a happier place for men to toil in than most of the countries of the Old World. But then they had still to toil, and often under difficulties.

And what was it that now stood in the way of the general prosperity? The public lands had been distributed, local industry protected, wages fixed by statute, advanced labour laws passed, free education secured, employment provided by the State for the unemployed, pensions secured for the aged, ample public moneys devoted to public works. A substantial loan from Europe for continuing the National reproductive works was looming in the near future. Yet

there still remained, staring every one in the face, the fundamental difficulty about Money, which, indeed, generally resolves itself into the want of it. The Government had provided easy loans for the farmers, but that measure of relief did not help the restricted nature of the currency generally. It was only a surface treatment of the difficulty. Money was demanded by the whole community—cheap money. And it was felt by a large number of the people, headed by the Populist party, that the trouble lay in the present basis of gold as the foundation of the currency. Gold and the mere notes of private banks were, in their opinion, unable to furnish sufficiently ample means of exchange for the industrial needs of the people.

Nor was this popular feeling an unnatural one. The agitation was attended, as will appear in our narrative, by the accretion of exaggerations and delusions that often gathers round popular movements. But a number of people believed that the existing currency was one that favoured the wealthy and pressed upon the poor; while many, without wholly accepting this view, thought that some reform was necessary—at least to the extent of the Government undertaking the issue of State bank notes, instead of leaving the paper issue to private banks, which now and then failed and spread ruin among the people. What the State notes were to be based upon, and how the issue was to be directed and controlled, they did not consider very closely. There was a sentiment abroad that, notwithstanding all their laws, the workers still did not get their fair share of the good things of life. This feeling was in Excelsior much the same as it used to be in older and unreformed lands. For they still had there the unequal capacities of men themselves (as Samuel Johnson says, a man must generally have vigorous parts to be able to make money), owing to which, so long as we retain personal freedom to work and succeed, or to idle and blunder, the social lots of men will be unequal. When this sentiment becomes active among a people who have, and who feel that they have, the power of government in their own hands, they then readily fasten first upon one feature in the existing social system, and then upon another, as the cause of the ills under which they suffer, and are apt to applaud

changes in those features of social life as a very present help in their trouble. Is it to be wondered at, then, that any people, in their efforts to fathom the cause of the disabilities that oppress the poor, should before long come straight upon the very question of Money itself?

Money is indeed, as has been said, a mystery. But this much at least is plain, it presents in a concrete form—reduces to the simple fact of getting coins or being unable to get them—that difference between the rich and the poor which is, and ever has been, the fundamental, and also the disturbing, factor in politics, or the business of governing men. One man has an unlimited supply of these wonderful tokens, and this enables him to claim the produce of the labour of other men, and, even more, to exercise authority over his fellows. Another man is hard set to scrape together a few coins sufficient to buy bread to keep life in him, so that he may still be able to work. Sickness and sad old age come to all. But one in sickness has all that skill, attention, and comfort can do to ease his pains and to prolong his life. Another has to take his chance among the crowd in the public hospital. One man grows old surrounded by all the comforts of the world and the attention of friends and relatives. Another crawls towards death, with the additional burden of penury, dependent for his mere bread upon the pittance of the State pension for the aged. Nay, the power of money seeks to stretch beyond that leveller, the grave. One man rests in the family vault, and the costly monument above records his virtues, or at least the virtues that his friends ascribe to him. Another rests under a nameless heap of clay, with only tangled weeds flourishing over him. And this because one man managed to get a larger share of the counters than the other.

Though complex in its remote application, how direct and forcible, then, is money in its influence and working upon our daily affairs. If you would know men, ask how they get money, how they prize it, and how they spend it. Note its dissolving touch when applied to make-believe and sentiment. Walter Scott says that the grace of God is better than gold pieces. True; but still what a living power here below are the gold pieces. A man will make a glowing

speech on behalf of a charity, and affect not a few, including himself; but will he give so many of his gold pieces that he will feel the loss of them? Two old friends meet after long absence; kindly feeling overflows.

We twa ha'e paid'd in the burn
 Frae morning sun till dine;
 But seas between us braid ha'e roar'd
 Sin' auld lang syne.

But what if one wants from the other a loan of ten pounds? The love of a father for his daughter is a fond thing, but you are held to give evidence of its strength by the sum of money that you pay for her marriage portion. Nay, the wife of your bosom, the husband who clasps you in his arms, are there not instances where the emergencies of life force even these to realise how the fondest feelings of the heart may be brought to a chill test by the cold, glittering gold pieces? Contrariwise, how are enmities subdued, and sworn foes made to embrace one another, by the mere sheer power of money.

O thou ever young, fresh, loved and delicate wooer,
 Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow
 That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god
 That solder'st close impossibilities,
 And makest them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue,
 To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!

We come, then, upon the bed-rock of the social edifice when we get to money. And when the claim for more of it—an ampler currency—is publicly announced, it is not strange that it should soon spread itself abroad among men. In Excelsior it went from home to home, from workshop to workshop, from village to village, by a human system of wireless telegraphy. The impulse was there, though perhaps a surface one; it dissipated itself all abroad, and was sympathetically caught up and responded to as it spread. It was more a matter of feeling than of thinking. For, while the subject of the Currency is a perplexing one to trace out in argument to its real operation and distant effects, there are surface aspects of it that commend themselves to men in general, when plausibly propounded; and upon an intricate

question, what view cannot be plausibly put? These surface aspects of the question were now being advanced in *Excelsior*. They were very generally accepted by many, to whom it seemed plain enough that an ample currency would help them. At the same time we would misunderstand the position of affairs did we not remember that there was in reserve, among the public, a good deal of sound opinion upon the question, and that some even of those who were generally favourable to the proposed reform did not accept all the new ideas, nor expect so much from the change as the Currency reformers promised on its behalf.

The Press represented the different sides of the controversy fairly enough. The *Rising Sun* wrote in a highly progressive tone upon the subject of money, ridiculed all obstructionists and monopolists, and was severe in its aspect towards bankers generally. But the point to which it gave chief prominence, and to which its arguments seemed always to lead it back, was the absolute need of doing something for Silver, one of the great natural products of the Province. The old Tories, it contemptuously wrote, seemed afraid to say a good word for Silver. This, and the duty of the State to take upon itself, or at least to stringently regulate, the Note issue, were the two points to which it actually committed itself.

The *News Letter*, while admitting the full right of the State to regulate the money of the people, and in case of national need to have a temporary issue of legal-tender paper, argued that not only should they keep upon the well-ascertained lines of financial experience, but that they must do so, as if they went counter to them sharp experience of the evils of a disordered currency would soon make itself felt among all classes of the people, and especially among the poor. Its articles were ably written, and they commanded respect, but they had not the immediate popular influence that those of the *Rising Sun* and the *Sweet-Brier* commanded. The *News Letter* represented the retiring, and, as they might be called, the non-combatant portion of the people, who follow on behind the active warriors and provide the commissariat and supplies.

The *Sweet-Brier* was thorough and emphatic in the

support of the reform that was demanded. Reform of the Currency had always been a favourite topic with Mons. Froessolecque. For a long time he had been alone in maintaining that it was the reform of all reforms, and that all other remedies for the unsatisfactory condition of the masses would prove ineffective until the State provided cheap money. 'I am a voice crying in a wilderness of wooden heads,' he used to say; 'but I will cry on till I make even the wooden heads hear.'

When, therefore, the Reform of the Currency came to the front as the question of the day, his enthusiasm was fanned not only by the spirit of patriotism, but was also stimulated by the fervour of egotism. He could claim, with some exultation, that the *Sweet-Brier* had led the way. In its leading columns he confessed to doubts whether Mac-Lever was the man for the hour. The hour had struck, but as to the man—that was a question for Sir Donald to answer. It could not take the responsibility of answering for him. But the *Sweet-Brier* thundered daily, having now in front of it the monopoly of all monopolies. Defending the old standard of Gold was with it the crime of all crimes.

A simmering excitement about money soon spread over the people of Excelsior. When such an excitement once pervades a democratic community, it at first carries, or seems to carry, all before it. No one cares to be out of unison with what all the others are saying, and so it is only those who are in favour of the popular idea who speak out boldly. The minority, for the present, keep quiet; and thus more people seem to be of the common opinion than really are. In the prevailing current all seem to float on together. The one or two who raise a jarring note of opposition, 'straining harsh discords,' are not much attended to. There is a feeling that it is almost unseemly to run counter to the common idea, the general wish.

In Excelsior, as has been said, there were quite a number of Currency experts. They had studied the problem, and considered themselves—and, what is more, were considered by others—to be authorities upon it. Emerson says that society is a troop of thinkers, and that the best heads among them take the lead. This is too general. He must have been

thinking of his own society. In the long run intellect tells, but in the day that is passing over us a man may, with a slender amount of mental power, gain considerable estimation as an authority in the minds of eager and simple-hearted people; especially if his theories are at least designed to help the cause of the poor, and if he himself believes in them.

Both these conditions were fulfilled in the case of our old friend, Karl Brumm, and in Mr. Penny Killenger, who kept the newspaper shop in M'Grorty Crescent (so called after the popular politician), where he also sold cheap stationery. Karl Brumm had, as the reader may remember, strong views of the importance of having a State Note issue, a legal tender within the Province. From his quiet home near Brassville, and amid his screeching parrots, he was always sending letters, extracts, paragraphs, tables of figures, questions about the Currency which he considered could only be answered in the one way, to the *Sweet-Brier*. He read a paper on 'Slave Money and Free Money' before the branch of the People's Club in Brassville. He considered that his strong point was in putting painfully plain and distressingly explicit illustrations of the most intricate phases of the Currency problem. His answer, when Seth Pride asked him, 'What *is* money?' was so simple and explanatory that Seth felt half ashamed of having propounded the question at all. More than once Mons. Froessolecque considered his matter so useful that he touched it up a little, omitted some peculiarities, and used it for his leading columns. He thus came to be regarded at the office of the *Sweet-Brier*, and by the Populists who mustered there, as an authority upon the Currency who was sound in principle, if somewhat eccentric in his methods.

But Mr. Penny Killenger was considered an even greater authority than Karl Brumm. For he had learned experience as a financier himself, and might be regarded as a converted banker. When a boy he had been employed as a clerk in the Imperial Bank, and had shown aptitude for figures. He had been promoted in due course to the position of manager of a country branch. But there, though his conduct was unexceptionable as far as diligence and integrity

were concerned, his judgment was so much at fault, being at once erratic in his advances to customers and oversanguine in his calculations, and he so tried the Head Office by his many schemes for speculations in silver of a novel and daring character, that in the end his resignation was insisted upon. He then set up business in M'Grorty Crescent, and in the pretty frequent intervals of employment in the shop with the customers, devoted himself to the study of the Currency question, and especially to the claims of Silver to more recognition than the English financiers, who were devoted to a Gold basis, were willing to give it. As the papers and reviews from many lands came to his shop, he had a perpetual supply of stimulating literature upon the subject. But while this reading widened the range of his thoughts, it also confused them, and in the end, beyond a fixed conviction with which he had started, and about which he was clear—that private banks, with their notes, and the worship of gold, were at the root of the trouble—he never seemed able to establish any sequence between the different propositions regarding the Currency which he was in the habit of enunciating to his customers, and also detailing in letters to the *Sweet-Brier*. But his knowledge upon the subject appeared to be most extensive. He was an expert at calculations; and sometimes he surprised people by the wide range of his figures, and at other times he would impress them by the exactness with which he worked out his problems to several decimal points. He would estimate the amount of gold and silver coin (allowing so much for the undue exportation of gold) that would have been required during the Civil War in the United States to do the work that a few tons of paper, in the shape of greenbacks, did just as well. He would jot down figures showing the Funded Debts of France and Russia, and the proper amount of paper for those nations to issue, as readily as he would give the price of his newspapers by the month, quarter, or year. He was able, at any moment, to illustrate by rows of figures the different effects, in a population of so many millions, of making the ratio of silver to gold 16 to 1 upon the one hand, or $16\frac{1}{3}$ upon the other. He took the trouble to prepare a table—which the *Sweet-Brier* printed,

and of which it sent him a stock of slips—based upon careful calculations, of the total sum that Great Britain issued as legal-tender paper during the various suspensions of the Charter of the Bank of England. His mastery over the different phases—or, at least, phrases—of the Monetary problem struck awe into the heart of the listener. Money cheap and money dear, glut of gold, famine of specie, automatic paper issue, the power of absorption thereof by trade, stamped value and intrinsic value, legal value, nominal value, real value—all were simple to him. Bimetallism he marked for his own. He amused himself by comparing its merits with Symmetallism. When David Stoker humbly confessed, in private conference, his ignorance of the distinction between the two, or indeed what either of them meant, he smiled with a wearied air, and proceeded to explain the difference in such detail that David felt bound to answer in a dazed manner—‘Just so, I understand.’ Still, he did not understand it—either the problem or the explanation. But he learned certain phrases about it. Penny Killenger even professed to have mastered the purpose, scope, and after consequences of the Bland Silver Legislation in the United States. But in this respect his friends considered that he was romancing. On the whole, the result was rather that he furnished the man in the street with certain propositions and phrases upon the subject that were agreeable to his feelings, than that he gave much insight into the problems, or conundrums, as they seemed to the plain man, which had been propounded for the public determination. But he was regarded as quite an expert upon financial topics. The fact that he had been himself a banker was alone considered sufficient to give authority to his opinions. Then, as he was dealing with a subject that most people understood at least less than he did, he was always in the position of being able to ask questions that no one could answer, and propound propositions that no one could dispute without his being able to flatly contradict his opponent.

The Populist party, then, urged on by the *Sweet-Brier*, and incited by the fundamental financial reforms that had been proposed in other lands, had arrived at the conclusion

that the Gold basis of the Currency was the foundation course, so to speak, of the present depression. To reform it was obviously the way to regain prosperity. They had not worked out the details of the proposed change, beyond that it was clear that the Government should take into its own hands the Note issue of the country, leaving it no longer under the control of irresponsible banks, and should arrange for the 'emission'—that was the word of Mr. Penny Killenger—of a sufficient, but not, he said, a wasteful, supply of legal-tender paper for the people's needs. As far as he was concerned, he held that the credit of the State, the whole wealth of the Province, was an ample security for redeeming these notes, if ever any one should want to redeem them.

But if they were to be redeemed at all, then by what? Here a powerful but quiet party, whose influence was more felt than seen, and who seemed to mingle with the Populist party upon this particular question, rather than as being generally identified with them, advanced the claims of Silver, and spread abroad the view that the Government should purchase and keep in the Treasury vaults a store of silver, the native product of the Province, to the value of at least one-third of the note issue. Silver also was to be made a legal tender either the same as gold, or to a considerable amount not yet decided on, and at a ratio to gold that was to be fixed hereafter. A skilfully drawn bill that embodied the whole scheme of Currency Reform, leaving some convenient blanks, which, as the marginal notes explained, were to be filled up in committee, was printed in neat pamphlet form, and circulated broadcast among the people by some one who was unknown, but who was evidently public-spirited enough to incur the expense in the people's cause. At trades' meetings, people's clubs, and other places where the electors congregated, impromptu speakers explained the principles of the proposed reform. And while these gentlemen gave the first place in their remarks to the need of a Government paper issue, they all agreed in holding that the recognition of Silver was an essential part of the scheme for relieving the prevailing depression. In fact, concurrently with the main idea of the issue of Government notes, this

adjunct of a silver basis, and a silver reserve, was always edging itself in. In the common but graphic American phrase, it seemed to 'freeze on' to the principal proposal. Populist leaders, though their voice was primarily for the paper issue, resting upon the wealth of the country, could not deny that there was much to be said for 'encouraging silver,' since it was one of the natural products of the Province, and gave so much employment to the people. Mr. Penny Killenger admitted this during a discussion at the People's Club, in response to an appeal for his opinion upon the subject that was made by Mr. Michael Caffery.

Such were the ideas that were seething and bubbling up among the people of Excelsior. Meanwhile the Government were known to be considering the question, and especially considering what their policy was to be upon it. Sir Donald MacLever was clear upon one thing, namely, that it was the duty of the Liberal party to lead the people, with Sir Donald at their head. But all the same he was the servant of the people, not their master. The question therefore was, where the people wanted to be led. Where would be the sense of giving them a thing that they did not want?

Still, he had to be careful not to make a mistake and take up the wrong thing. Du Tell was untiring in his efforts to get accurate information upon this determining factor in the Currency question—what the people did want. He was ubiquitous among the Members of the House of Representatives, and also the 'members of the first estate,' as he used, only half in joke, to term the men of the Press. He was ever asking questions, suggesting qualifications, quoting figures, framing hypotheses, starting objections, but not persevering in them if he saw that they were not palatable. In that case he would often answer them himself. His most frequent conferences were with Mons. Froesselcque and Mr. Secker, the Secretary of the Workers' Association.

The views of the proprietor and editor of the *Sweet-Brier* were, as we know, enthusiastic in favour of a National Bank and a State issue of paper. He was not so eager in regard to the other part of the scheme, though he

was willing 'to give silver a show,' as he expressed it. There was no doubt that the Honourable William Dorland was very attentive to Mons. Froessolecque just now. The great mine-owner had been in the habit of distributing his numerous advertisements impartially among the newspapers, irrespective of their politics. But latterly the *Sweet-Brier* came in for rather more than its share of this valuable business. He had always made it a point to maintain civil personal relations with the old Frenchman, and to give him any reasonable information that he desired about the silver mines. Mons. Froessolecque felt, all things considered, that the least he could do was to accept an invitation which Dorland sent him to a quiet lunch at the Dorland mansion one Saturday afternoon. It so turned out that the only guests there besides himself were Alderman Jortin and our politician.

'You know Professor Frankfort,' observed Dorland in his grave manner, as he introduced him to the editor. He understood that the *Sweet-Brier* was in general antagonism to Frankfort, and he was anxious, if possible, to promote some unity of action between them in the coming conflict about the Currency, and especially in regard to the claims of Silver. The pressman had forgotten the details of his charges against Frankfort, and only knew that it was part of the policy of the *Sweet-Brier* to keep up a running fire against him. This he regarded as all in the day's work, to be got through and put out of mind as soon as possible. Our politician certainly had not forgotten about the M'Glumpy episode and its shameful misrepresentation, as he considered it, by the paper. But he knew enough of politics to be aware that the first thing that a public man required, if he would have peace of mind, was a short memory for wrongs done to him. So he frankly shook hands with the old Frenchman, who greeted him warmly, as if he were one who had ever been dear to his heart.

Soon the three were seated around the hospitable table of the President of the University. Dorland had no wish to bring forward the Currency question for discussion then. In fact, he would have preferred to avoid any immediate declaration of Frankfort's views upon it. He only wished him to realise the vast importance to the University of a

favourable treatment of the claims of Silver, and, generally, the delicate position he would be in if, as Professor of Sociology, he exposed those claims as being economically unsound. He therefore led the conversation towards other topics; but towards the end of the lunch the impetuous Frenchman could restrain himself no longer from his favourite subject. In reply to a commonplace remark by Alderman Jortin that the price of the existing stocks of wheat would be kept up by the lateness of the autumnal rains, he exclaimed—‘Ah, my dear sir, the real rains we want are the showers of a bountiful currency. This is what the country is truly languishing for—the State bank notes flitting and falling refreshingly over the parched country.’

‘You must base your notes upon something,’ observed Alderman Jortin.

‘He would base them upon a Silver reserve in the Treasury,’ interposed Dorland, saying more on behalf of Mons. Froessolecque than he had said for himself.

‘Well, I do not so much object to that, if I only get for the poor country a generous note issue, and if the Professor here’—the editor added, turning to Frankfort in a manner that was half ironical, while partly polite—‘the Professor here will give us his approval.’

Frankfort never felt any disinclination to state what his opinions were, and he was rather pleased with this opportunity, for he thought it just as well that the *Sweet-Brier*, and Dorland too, should know what he intended to stand by. He said a few words about the true basis of a note issue, and, was going on to the question of a Silver reserve, when Dorland observed, ‘Well, well, before we get too deep in this problem, suppose we turn from currency to coffee, and see what Mrs. Dorland can do for us in the drawing-room.’

When they went into the other room they found there Mrs. Jortin and the pretty daughter Fanny d’Ade, who had come to have a quiet afternoon with Mrs. Dorland. The Frenchman, who took an enthusiastic interest in the sad early fortunes of the pretty daughter, but had rarely the opportunity of meeting her, was so engrossed by her conversation that for the time he forgot all about the Currency

question, and nothing more was heard of it in Dorland's drawing-room that afternoon.

After they had their coffee the party separated. Mons. Froessolecque and our politician walked to town together. Fanny d'Ade being now out the way, they soon resumed the Currency contest with the fervour that springs from each one having a personal conviction of the truth of his own creed, and they were still no nearer to an agreement when they parted at the door of the office of the *Sweet-Brier*. Unfortunately, the conversation confirmed the editor's prejudice against our politician. He was a very thorough democrat, was Mons. Froessolecque, but he did not appreciate the frank expression of unpopular opinions. His notions of free discussion were one-sided. For a man to say openly and distinctly that the popular idea was a mistake, he regarded as unseemly, nay, as a sort of overt act of treason against the people.

The attitude of the Secretary of the State Workers' Association, Norrie Secker, Esq., to the Currency Reform was not so clearly defined as its friends could have wished. He was believed to hold the most advanced views upon the subject. Yet when Du Tell, after listening peeringly and patiently to him while he gave expression to broad public views in favour of a Government supply of cheap money, would endeavour to ascertain the particulars of the reform that he would advocate, and especially whether the State Workers would be willing to have their wages paid in the State paper money, Secker would turn towards him a slightly surprised look and reply :

'My dear sir, the State workers? You know that I can only speak as plain Norrie Secker—Citizen Secker,' he added, with a gentle smile. 'My Executive,' he would go on, 'have not considered the question. Indeed, I do not know how far our chairman—the Major, Major Trounce—would approve of their dealing with the question. He sometimes takes peculiar views upon these matters, does the Major.'

'You see, after all, the point there is, Secker,' said Du Tell, catching hold of one of the buttons on the breast of the Secretary's coat and looking attentively at it—'the point

there is, and a very critical point too in the whole business, how far the workers would be content to take their wages in State——'

'My dear Mr. Du Tell,' interposed the Secretary, 'you may rely upon it that the workers will ever be found in the van of progress. That is, to be sure,' he added, at the same time impressively touching Du Tell's arm, as if he wanted him to look at something—'that is, so long as any proposal really is progressive so far as the people are concerned.'

This did not throw much light upon what Du Tell wanted to know. Secker's attitude made that gentleman rather distrustful of the whole movement. As he hurried back to Sir Donald at the State Offices to communicate what he had been able to discover of the public opinion of the city, he realised more fully than before that the attitude of Secker and the State Workers might develop into a considerable difficulty in the way of the Currency Reform which was proposed. People are ready to approve of a paper issue for the purpose of paying other people, but they do not like to lose their own right to be paid in gold. When they are faced directly by this practical and personal issue it seems to put the question in a new light. Sir Donald at once saw the importance of the possible attitude of the State Workers.

'It may upset the apple-cart—bad luck to it!' said Slater Scully. 'And my constituents are for the apple-cart. Yes, the men and women of Biggleswade all want the free apples. And so do I.'

'I may be permitted to observe,' remarked his chief, 'that if the vehicle is to be upset, I hope it will be so before very long, else we will have to declare our policy about it.'

Sir Donald expressed what was the prevailing feeling of the Cabinet. They would have been well pleased to see the whole thing upset and out of their way. Meanwhile they agreed that all they could do for the present was to diligently find out what it was that public opinion really demanded.

Mr. Michael Caffery and Mr. David Stoker, the Populist leaders, upon their part, were fully alive to the attitude of the Government, and in order to support them in

their liberal financial policy, as it was publicly announced, but, as they privately observed, 'to keep Sir Donald up to the mark,' they determined to hold a great National Currency Convention in Miranda. Strictly speaking, it was not a convention at all, as the delegates to it were not elected to it by the people. But the two Populist leaders, who, together with Mons. Froessolecque, organised it, spared no trouble to make it as representative and as imposing as possible. For some weeks they were busy securing speakers, arranging for representative men and women of all shades of popular thought and feeling to come from different districts of the Province, and preparing the resolutions that were to be moved. The Convention was to be held in the large People's Hall in Blue Street, adjoining to which were the rooms of the People's Club. It was announced that, as usual, the galleries would be reserved for 'lady electors and their escorts,' and it was stated in the advertisements that any lady desiring to speak was to send in her name beforehand to the committee. There was no doubt that there would be a vast assemblage of electors, and no lack of speakers; but Caffery and Stoker were anxious to have as many representative men and women to advocate the cause as possible. There was, however, some difficulty in getting prominent speakers, as, though most politicians were in favour of a liberal policy upon the Currency question, yet the subject was a new one in practical politics, and men were unwilling, at this early stage, to commit themselves to the specific propositions that would be embodied in the resolutions that were to be moved.

The man whom they were most hopeful of, and also most anxious to secure, was the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty. We will here delay for a few moments to further consider this most popular politician. The best way to understand history is to look inside the characters of the men who make it. In a previous chapter we have given some account of him, and from it the reader may conclude that he was chiefly a gay man of the world. He certainly was the gay man of the political world, with his perfectly-fitting attire, his handsome button-hole, and that ready, plausible manner of his. And he was also much in request in general middle-

class society, and was successful at those celebrations which ladies grace with their presence.

But all this was only the light side of M'Grorty's nature. He had also in him many of those qualities that go to win success in political life, and he had so diligently improved his natural gifts that he was at this time a generally liked politician, as well as one of the most advanced principles.

He made it his study to be well in front of each popular movement, once he was satisfied that it was a real march, and that the band was not playing up the wrong street. And he prided himself upon his skill in being able to distinguish the successful advance from the false start. To all novel ideas he was open ; to the winning ones he was completely receptive, when they became winning ; though when they were first started he would often joke about them in the seclusion of the Commercial Club, of which he was one of the vice-presidents. Nay, he would in these early days give light answers about them even to his earnest political friends. When some years ago Caffery urged him to bring in a Bill for a universal compulsory eight hours law, he replied in even a rollicking tone—'I'm your man, Michael Caffery. Eight hours' work, eight hours' play, eight hours' sleep, eight shillings a day. But what about the unspeakable farmer ? Farmer can sleep the sleep of the just while his crop is growing ; but when it has to be reaped, how then ? Then he sleeps no longer. No, he reaps away from morn to noon, from noon to dewy eve. No, Michael, I dare do all a man can do ; who dares do more is—not a politician.'

But as each new proposal grew in general favour, he became more guarded in his remarks about it. When it was accepted as a part of the popular programme he embraced it *simpliciter*, without any mental reservation ; for which, in truth, there was no need, as it was not a mental process with him of personal conviction, but a submission at once dutiful and discreet to the will of the people. Thus he afterwards cordially supported an eight hours law as applied, with some modification, to the country districts. The last words in Cardinal Newman's book entitled *The Grammar of*

Assent are—'And I have been speaking all along under correction, as submitting absolutely all I have said to the judgment of the Church and its head.'

Such was M'Grorty's attitude to his ruling authority, the people. Newman was guided by an infallible Pope ; M'Grorty by an infallible People. He was not a man who in England would have refused a bishopric, or at Rome a cardinal's hat, owing to scruples about the teaching of either England or Rome. He would have held any benefice he could get, and accepted the Thirty-nine Articles in a liberal spirit, and also done his duty fairly well in the premises. And in rough, worldly politics he was certainly not going to miss success owing to any separatist crotchets. Who was he that he should set himself against the people's voice? So he readily became one of the leading magnates of the established political hierarchy. His objects were not sordid ; but he loved that popularity which delights more than it elevates, and those political honours which the people award to the man who faithfully interprets and champions each new phase of their wishes. He would not have denied the force of the Divine warning not to lose your own soul even for the whole world. Still, he regarded failure in political life for the sake of principle as a poor thing, and considered the consolations of an approving conscience in such a case to be meagre and attenuated fare for any public man to thrive upon. Were a politician to obstinately hold to his own convictions upon the unpopular side of any question, and to fail of success for so doing, M'Grorty would have openly spoken respectfully of the obstinate one, but would also have regretted that he did not understand politics better. To himself he would have mused, varying the sarcastic remark of Bacon, that the unsuccessful man was something of the fool and *too much* of the honest.

But M'Grorty was not consciously dishonest. His attitude to political questions arose from the light or aspect in which he viewed all things political. He used to say in the quiet moments of confidential conversation that politics were not a sphere for the expression of individual opinions, but the practical machine for making things go—carrying on somehow daily government. In truth, he looked upon

the whole thing as a piece to be performed upon the public stage—in some aspects a comedy; certainly not to be a tragedy as far as he was concerned. So he naturally, and without any shock to his moral system, took up each new idea as it came to the front, and in due time assimilated it. But he did it all skilfully, for he was not a mere hack. He was a superior hunter, who would strike out his own course, at times a little apart from the common pack, but always joining in with them at the final rush. Thus he clothed the crudest ideas in as becoming a garb as possible, often suggesting some plausible limitation or qualification, and always finding respectable arguments for the required conclusions, and mitigating extreme views, as far as it was safe to do so; for though enthusiastic in manner, he was wary by nature. Thus his principles for a politician were not very high nor very low, but were very serviceable.

This Currency question gave him trouble. Whatever the people did really want he would support; but he was in doubt how far they would go, and he was too well-informed a man not to know the serious and far-reaching consequences of an unsound method of dealing with such a central factor in affairs as money. Still, he would never think of separating himself from any onward movement, and he was quite prepared to occupy—in fact, he would like to occupy—a prominent position at the Currency Convention, so long as he did not commit himself too deeply to all the Populist demands.

Some days before the meeting Caffery and Stoker went to the Commercial Club to ask M'Grorty to speak at the meeting. He was not an easy man to find, so they were glad to catch him on the steps at the entrance as he was coming down with a young reporter who had been seeking news for the afternoon edition of the *Rising Sun*.

'We are in luck to-day, we are. Drawn a prize right away. The very man we wanted to see.' So spoke Michael Caffery as he clasped M'Grorty by the hand.

'Aha, glad to see you both, though I know you are conspiring together about something. Two make a conspiracy in law, that they do. What is the plot now? Idle hands, Satan finds the mischief. You know it all. Both

good boys at Sunday school ; long time ago, though. What is up now ?'

M'Grorty addressed them in a cheery, off-hand manner, having little doubt about what they wanted him for ; and turning rapidly in his mind, as he was shaking hands, what answer he should give them.

'No mischief at all would we be for setting the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty to. The other thing it is, right-about. We only want him to move the first resolution at the grand National Currency Convention, for cheap money for the million,' said David Stoker earnestly.

'Cheap money ? To be sure, the question of the day—of all days. Every enlightened man is against the monopoly of the money-changers. Let me see—what is the date of your big event—when does the People's Convention come along ?'

'Tuesday next,' answered Caffery. 'Plenty time to fake up a grand oration—though it is not much time that the Honourable Cornelius wants to prepare for any speech.'

'Why, there it is, you see, Caffery,' answered M'Grorty in a tone of expostulation. 'Why did you not let me know in time ? I have not yet spoken to my constituents upon the question ; no time now before Tuesday. I must first make a clean breast of my views and principles to them. You know, both of you, the rules of the service. We are all in the same chain-gang.'

'But now, really, don't you think,' chimed in David Stoker—'couldn't we fix it up somehow ? They would not mind a leading statesman like you now, M'Grorty, first having a blow-off in the city—would they now ?'

'What ? Offend the electors of Tibboburra, and a general election not six months ahead ! Not to be done, sir. The very first principles of popular government forbid it ; and what is more to the point, the noble electoral souls, male and female, of Tibboburra forbid it.'

He paused, glancing at the despondent Caffery for a moment, and then went on, giving him a cheerful tap on the shoulder :

'I have it. Just the thing. The days of inspiration are not closed. I will take the chair for you ; introduce the

speakers, push the show along. A short speech will do, explaining that I must reserve myself for the heights of Tibboburra. There you are ; all fixed up fair and square. Chair filled, Tibboburra placated, Caffery and Stoker eloquent—pin heard falling, not a dry eye in the vast crowd. You know I would do anything for the cause. Why, cheap money——'

'That will be just what we want,' interposed Caffery eagerly ; 'won't it, David? The Honourable M'Grorty in the chair will be a bit of a draw, first and foremost. And you know how to push the show along, you do.'

'Well, bye-bye ; good luck to the meeting, and to us all. I'll practise deportment between this and Tuesday'; and M'Grorty, with a loud hail and his uplifted umbrella, stopped the approaching tramcar, and was soon carried off down the city.

Thus it was arranged to the satisfaction of both parties. Caffery and Stoker had secured a most popular chairman, and the chairman was in the happy position of not only being able to think, but of being believed to think, a great deal without being called upon to declare what his thoughts were. He was identified with the onward movement, without being pledged at this early stage to any of the details.

M'Grorty having been thus secured, the next point was to get Mr. Secker as one of the speakers ; he was so influential, from his position of Secretary to the State Workers' Executive, and was also such a clever man. Secker, like M'Grorty, felt, as we know, considerable difficulty about the Currency question. - Naturally his sympathy was with cheap money, and upon no account would he break with Caffery, Stoker, and the *Sweet-Brier*. But he saw the serious consequences that would follow upon any false step in such a matter more clearly than they did. What gave him pause, more than even this consideration, was that part of the proposed scheme which provided for the issue of Government paper for all the monetary wants of the Province. The great creditors of the State were the State Workers. It took one-third of the revenue to pay them. They would be the first to get this paper. It certainly would not be of any

use to them outside the Province, and would thus become less valuable within. The question was thus brought straight home to them, and became a personal question for each of them. And, despite all the arguments, demonstrations, and illustrations of Karl Brumm and Penny Killenger, there could be no doubt that they would prefer to be able to get a golden sovereign rather than a State note, backed though it might be by all the silver mines and other wealth of Excelsior.

Thus, Secker had to be careful not to give way to specious theories, with such hard facts near at hand to deal with. He was just a little disturbed, therefore, when Caffery and Stoker broke hurriedly into even his inner private room at the State Workers' Executive Office, and enthusiastically claimed him as a speaker at the Currency Convention. It was to meet early the next week. He was sitting in his revolving chair at his table, with the portrait of Major Trounce, his President, on the wall on one side, and before him, on the table, a large photograph of Mr. Bryan, the silver candidate for the office of President of the United States. He said that it was an unexpected pleasure meeting them, and asked what day they had fixed for the meeting. Upon learning that it was the following Tuesday, he remarked :

'That is lucky, Mr. Caffery. Just in time—in the nick of time. My Executive meets on Tuesday. It will give me pleasure to bring the matter before them.'

'But can't you put it through, Secker? To be sure you can. Give us a good kick-off this time, and then the game will bowl along,' pleaded David Stoker.

'Well, you see, Mr. Stoker—you see my position. I am only a servant—in fact, a servant of servants. The Executive serve the Workers. We none of us can do just as we please—you observe ; you see the situation?'

Secker spoke slowly. He felt perplexed how best to satisfy his eager interviewers. In his mental conflict he moved round in his revolving chair, clasping one knee, and looking inquiringly up at the ceiling. It was a habit that he had acquired during his often troublesome interviews with the State Workers at that very table. As he did so now, his eye caught the round, good-natured, easy-going face on the

canvas of his President. It suggested a new idea to him, and facing back again, he exclaimed—

‘I think I can see my way to the correct course—becoming on all sides. You both know my feelings for this great cause. I can do better for you than you say. I will see if the President himself would take charge of a resolution for you. The mere moral weight—the momentum, so to speak——’

‘Capital. Just the thing. The correct card this time, and no mistake neither,’ warmly exclaimed both Caffery and Stoker. ‘And you could speak a bit as well. And you *can* speak, we know.’

‘Why,’ continued Caffery, who was more sanguine than wary in his disposition, ‘with the State workers themselves all for the State notes, the thing will hum along first-rate.’

‘But let us see then, now,’ inquired David Stoker, who was the more practical of the two politicians—‘let us see. When can we meet the President and know for certain. There is not much time to spare now. We want to know the men who are to speak a while before.’

Secker thought for a moment, and then replied, looking straight at Stoker, as if he was quite struck by the intelligence displayed in his question :

‘Just so. You are quite right, Mr. Stoker. You see, we ourselves don’t meet till Tuesday—that is your day, is it not? It makes a slight difficulty. The President, to be sure, must consult the Executive. The point is, the best and shortest way to communicate. Why, there it is. You are on the telephone, I know. I remember, indeed, telephoning to you from your own house up to Parliament. There, we have it. I can speak to you straight after the Executive meeting. We can’t go quicker than on the wire, can we.’

And Secker smiled gently, as if at the very absurdity of such an idea.

Thanking the Secretary, and urging him to leave no stone unturned ‘to bag the Major,’ as they put it, the two Populist leaders departed, well satisfied. Secker was satisfied too. He had now full time to think over matters, and he had arranged an easy way of sending an adverse reply, which it was his present inclination to do. It was a habit of his,

when in any difficulty, to keep open a way of escape by promising a final reply later on through the telephone. He considered that that instrument had many advantages as a medium for sending awkward answers. The other person cannot see your face while you are giving the plausible excuse or direct refusal. There is not the least need to keep your countenance with the transmitter only before you and a mile or two of wire between you and the angry man who seeks to remonstrate with you through space. You can pause for a moment to think without the hesitation being observed. You can also fail to catch a remark until it has been repeated, and, *e contra*, as the logicians say, your own remarks may be indistinct, owing to electrical or other causes. The telephone gives no encouragement at all to the process of cornering a man by means of too pertinent and pressing questions, nor is it the least use for making severe remarks, which when made face to face may be very telling indeed. There is no sense in getting angry at one end of a wire. The cold metal is a damper. The situation won't stand it. Finally, it happens now and then that the current suddenly stops, from one cause or another. Then there is an end to the conversation. You and he talk no more. Blank silence reigns, and all around you is only the irresponsible ether. The same result can be obtained by your *assuming* that the current is cut off, and quietly hanging up your transmitter. Secker preferred to send unpleasant answers through this wonderful instrument.

Caffery and Stoker were anxious that the women electors of the Province should be well represented among the speakers at the Currency Convention. No wonder, for they were as numerous as the men, and whatever party secured their votes would win, against, if need be, a majority of the men. To a large extent women were in the habit of voting as their husbands wished. But upon any subject upon which they felt so strongly as to act independently they could always, working with a minority of the men, turn them into a decisive majority of the whole. One of the first things, then, that a skilful organiser of a political campaign in Excelsior would look to was the feeling of the women. Mons. Froessolecque told Caffery and Stoker that they need have

no fear but that the female vote 'would go solid for cheap money.' And there was no doubt that he was right. Indeed, at the first blush of the proposal the bulk of both the male and the female vote was in favour of it. The housewives especially realised that they wanted a more ample currency—more money. The want of it—of coin—came home to them even more pointedly than it did to the men, as they were pushed each Saturday evening to make ends meet out of the small sum of money at their disposal. Even well-to-do farmers' wives, who had no lack of substance, suffered from the want of money. It was not plentiful in the city, but it was desperately scarce in the country. The women of Excelsior were too intelligent to believe that any Government could give them whatever money they wanted; but the general faith in the saving powers of Government was very strong, and when they were told that the State would find a generous supply of silver and notes, so as to promote the free interchange of what their shops and farms supplied, they naturally thought that this would be better than the stinted and parsimonious management of the Imperial and other Banks. As to the real problems involved in the Currency question, they certainly had not fathomed them. But then no more had the men.

An important point, therefore, was to have the women electors of Excelsior well represented at the Currency Convention. There were quite a number of able women who were well known in political circles, and several of them were good platform speakers. Mrs. Pawsey Peters, the President of the Woman's Rights League of the Province, was remarkable rather for her administrative ability and her advanced views upon Woman's Rights than for her power as a speaker. So strong were her feelings regarding those rights that when she married Mr. Peters she declined wholly to forsake her maiden name of Pawsey, and from the first years in their married life she had managed to give a good deal of attention to the cause of Woman, while she was also entirely devoted to the man whom she had chosen. Her sons—she had no daughters—were now grown up, and Peters, who had been all his life one of the keenest members of the Miranda Stock Exchange, was now one of its Vice-Presidents, and

was immersed all day and also part of the night in calculations about the stocks, and especially about Silver. Mrs. Pawsey Peters was thus left free to attend to public questions. She and her husband were the best of friends; and Mr. Peters was strongly in favour of some change in the Currency 'that would give Silver a shove along,' as he expressed it. There could be little doubt that it was partly owing to his urgent representations that her views were so pronounced in favour of free Silver. She therefore agreed to Mr. Caffery's proposal that she should appear upon the platform, so as to give her moral support to the movement; though she was not quite satisfied with his selecting the speakers from the younger women. Still, she knew that public speaking was not her strong point, while there were several able women who were well known upon the platform in the city, among whom was Miss Emma Nevitte, a very happy speaker, though her voice was not adapted to crowds. Miss Hannah Gazelle, whom we have met already, had quite a reputation in the country. These ladies were all, like Mrs. Pawsey Peters herself, women of sterling worth. They spoke effectively, and were becoming in their manner as well as forcible in their elocution. The friends of Woman's Rights were bent on returning them to Parliament as soon as the enabling Bill was carried, and it was considered that their tone of debating was in better taste than that which often prevailed in the Legislature. They certainly had this in their favour—that the deference to women, which has become part of decent men's nature (owing to her supposed dependence upon man), had so far survived her emancipation from that position in Excelsior, that when they spoke at meetings they were respectfully listened to, and were free from those interruptions, gibes, and unpleasant questions that at times discompose male speakers. Thus their advocacy was useful to any cause, and their influence, directed by Mrs. Pawsey Peters, was valuable in securing the decisive woman's vote.

Seth Pride, Miss Gazelle's constant companion in all efforts for social improvement at Brassville, accompanied her when she came up to attend the Currency Convention at Miranda. Their engagement had just been announced in

the local Press, and the marriage was to take place soon. As we now meet these old acquaintances for the first time in their new relation as a betrothed couple, it may be a slight relief, before engaging in the perplexities of the Money question, if we here seek to gain a little more information as to the personality of these two representative people. For representative they were, even in their generally quiet walk of life, of a social development that is making its impression upon advanced peoples in our age.

We think that in a previous page of our story we characterised Hannah Gazelle as a good soul. And so she was. She was also handsome. Her bright hazel eyes flashed keenly, but not unkindly, and her tall, well-proportioned figure charmed common men, quite apart from politics. Her mouth was well formed, and her lips, which were thin and firm, parted readily and often to display a fine set of sound teeth. In the social circle in which she moved she was a good deal admired in the ordinary, simple way in which men admire the other sex, but she was more especially looked up to as an advanced woman, and for the ability and vigour which she early displayed in advocating Woman's cause. Yet she was not happy, or rather she had not been so—at least, until her engagement to Seth Pride. Like many others, she found life a rather disappointing affair. Not that her circumstances were hard, for she live comfortably with her father, an old soldier, who as a boy had served in the ranks in the Crimean war. Her mother had died when she was a baby. She was a loving and attentive daughter, but she was dissatisfied with her lot in life. When this is the case with young women who have a soul above chickens, which was the way in which she described herself, Nature seeks relief in different ways with different individuals. Some plunge into the intoxication of amusement, others into the nobler if more sombre satisfactions of piety or the active work of charity, and the care of the helpless, and particularly of that most touching class of those who cannot help themselves—children who have been left deprived by death, or by a worse fate, of their natural protectors. But the early unsatisfied yearnings of Hannah Gazelle's soul found expression in a fervid conviction of the generally feeble and depressed

condition of woman, and particularly in dissatisfaction with her subjection to man. She did not stay to inquire how far Nature might be to blame for this state of things, but threw herself early into the movement for the emancipation of her sex. Her claim was for woman's absolute equality with men in all social matters, and in all public rights and duties, as political adults. She often said that she had no antagonism to men, but that she wished to work amicably with them for the public good. Let men and women join, and put their shoulders together to the wheel of progress, and make it go round. What provoked her to some bitterness was the sight of individuals who were stupid compared with herself figuring in public positions, and attracting general attention, merely because they were men; while she was left out merely because she was a woman. She maintained that when your political system provided that one man was as good as another, the least you could concede was that a woman was as good as a man. It was only the natural corollary to the general principle of equality that permeated the political state.

But Hannah Gazelle was not destitute of those feelings which, from a time to which the memory of man runneth not counter, have been regarded as being specially appropriate to her sex. Such things as have of old touched woman's heart touched hers—the sleeping babe, the music of the child's laugh, the half-conscious smile of the happy infant—that dawn of joy in a human life! Also the tender feelings that are roused by the sufferings of the sick and the sorrows of the wretched. Nay, though she had a soul above chickens, yet she felt a furtive interest in the sight of the little chicken, peeping out with its self-satisfied air from under the sheltering wing of the anxious mother. Only she cultivated a certain reserve in the indulgence, certainly in the acknowledgment, of these feelings, such as it has been the custom of society to expect from men.

She and Seth Pride were thrown very much together in the work of social reform, especially in regard to that part of it which is concerned with the emancipation of women. And in time it was so, that among other womanly feelings to which she proved not insensible, was that fundamental

and all-pervading one—to fall in love with man. Seth Pride's feelings were reciprocal, though not so decisive as hers; but her will was the stronger of the two, and before long he was her acknowledged conquest. He was not an unwilling captive. But, to say the truth, his mind had been all along so occupied with the public aspect of their cooperation that the newer and closer development of it came upon him rather unawares, and in what followed there could be no doubt that the old prerogative of man to lead the way in these affairs of the heart gave place to the more advanced views, according to which not the mere accident of sex, but the possession of greater strength of character, determines the leadership. Hannah Gazelle truly loved Seth Pride—but according to knowledge. When she determined to marry him she gave up a good deal to him, but not her personal individuality or her political independence. If any one had told her of Bacon's statement that the husband governs the wife by prerogative of sex, it would have seemed to her to be a joke. Her intention was that they two should continue to work together for the amelioration of the Social State, and especially for the improvement of the condition of women. She wanted aid, and Seth would be a helpmeet to her.

On the other hand, Seth Pride was, as we have said, a willing captive. It may be a question how long he would have taken to make up his mind himself to demand the hand of Hannah Gazelle; but when the thing had been brought about he accepted the result gratefully. He looked upon the situation through the haze of social reform. A progressive man ought to be married to a progressive woman, who would keep the marriage state in an up-to-date condition, and be, in fact, and not merely in common phrase, his better half. Seth was pleased to think of himself as such an advanced man that he was advanced even in his marriage relations. The old ideas of deference to the husband, protection for the wife, woman's kingdom being her home, domestic seclusion for wife and children (if there were any)—these were clean gone. Seth Pride was a fair platform speaker, and he enjoyed public speaking, but he admitted that Miss Gazelle's style was more incisive than his

own. She went to the point at once and hit straight home, he remarked, with the pride that is natural to a lover when he dwells upon the accomplishments of his charmer. No idea of rivalry, nor any sense of unfitness, mingled with the feeling of admiration that Seth Pride had for Hannah Gazelle. Adoration of the fair one was there as it used to be in the time of our fathers, but the scope of its incidence was altered. Tender emotions fluttered amid the plaudits of the platform, instead of mingling with murmurs beneath the hawthorn shade.

In truth a new literature would be required to illustrate this new phase of the relationship of woman to man. For the conceptions which have inspired the masterpieces of poets, moralists, and novelists, and to which so many charming and so many moving situations in prose and verse are owing, are undoubtedly based not upon the equality of the two, but on their inequality, and upon the profound difference in their functions. The Hector and Andromache of Homer, the Dido and Æneas of Virgil, the Brutus and Portia of Shakespeare, the Adam and Eve of Milton, the Laura of Petrarch, the superb character of Romola—all these ideals are unsuited to the independent though affectionate relations between Hannah Gazelle and Seth Pride. And when they came up to Miranda to attend the Currency Convention, the woman was to do the speaking, and the man was to attend her, to help as best he could in his more retired position, to join in the plaudits that she would win, and to indulge a lover's pride in her success.

On the day of the meeting it was apparent from an early hour that it would be an imposing demonstration. Delegates arrived by the first trains, and hurried to the Tramway Arms to get breakfast over betimes, so as to be ready to meet and confer with their brother delegates. Miss Gazelle, attended by Seth Pride, was met at the station by Miss Nevitte and taken to the National Coffee Palace. Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk of Glooscap, who came up to town to attend a Rabbit deputation, arrived early with some of the Brassville people. Representatives of the country Press were seen flitting between the offices of the newspapers in whose confidence they were and the common

room of the People's Club. Jacob Shumate also came up to the city, but he was not much seen. He travelled by himself, and did not go to the People's Club, but sought refuge somewhere in the recesses of the Coffee Palace. Politicians were so well to the front throughout the day that you could not miss seeing them at the different centres of political attraction. Though the Populists took the lead, the Liberals were also represented. The mere fact that the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty was to take the chair showed that it was a demonstration that both parties might join in, for was he not known to be a Liberal, with Populist tendencies well developed? Still, with the exception of Caffery and Stoker, there were no Members of the House of Representatives who were to speak in support of the resolutions that were to be moved. The two Populist leaders kept the movement very much in their own hands. Other legislators for the present took no active part; but they openly declared that Money was moving and that the question was becoming a live one.

Caffery and Stoker had a disappointment, late in the afternoon, in regard to the support of the State Workers' Association and the expected appearance of Major Trounce, the President, upon the platform. Not having heard from Secker as early as they expected, they 'rang him up,' as the phrase goes, and in answer to the usual question, 'Are you there?' they soon heard the calm, measured tones of his voice admitting that he was there. This was the most explicit statement which they got during the interchange of voices. Caffery begged to be informed what resolution the President would like to speak to that evening. But the reply was, as well as they could make it out, that, owing to the indisposition of some members of the Executive, he, the Secretary, had unfortunately not yet been able to get together the quorum that was necessary for the transaction of business of that description. They were only going on with routine matters meanwhile. After tea he hoped to have a full meeting, and he was telephoning in all directions to get the members to come. What was to happen after this, or how the thing was to work out so as to have the President ready to speak at the appointed hour, was left so

vague that David Stoker seized the transmitter from Caffery, and in a very clear, strong voice—which, however, did not assist the current at Secker's end—demanded to know the hour when they would learn what resolution the Major would take, and how and where they would get the desired information.

'It is no use, you see, Mr. Secker, our hearing at 9 o'clock about a motion that is to be moved at 8 o'clock,' Stoker added, in his most distinct tones. But it was no use. The sounds seemed to get confused. All they could gather was Secker's complaint that the line was working so badly, owing to the Electric Lighting Company beginning to send round their evening currents, that he could not make out what more they wanted to know. Stoker shouted back that he wished only to learn where and when he would meet the Major before 8 o'clock. But it is a fact that speaking too loudly does confuse the sound, and the only reply he could get was an inquiry 'To meet what?' and a request to spell it. So the interview, if we may so speak of invisibles, broke off unsatisfactorily. Stoker went down at once to the office to see Secker, but he was out hunting up his Executive; so in the end the State Workers were not represented upon the platform that evening.

But nevertheless it was a great assemblage. The vast floor of the hall was crowded, and the galleries were full to overflowing with the women electors and their male following. All were orderly and attentive, full of a natural enthusiasm for a reform that promised to help the struggle of industry, and add to the ease and comfort of their daily life. Du Tell came early, but refused to go upon the platform, as he did not wish to commit the Government to details. There was the less need for his doing so, as he said that every one knew that *he* was sound to the core upon Currency. All knew that this was the way in which he referred to Sir Donald. Several who were outsiders as regards politics were there, among them Professor Ridler, of the University. He and the President were close friends, and had a mutual high opinion of one another. He was known to hold profound and Liberal views upon the Silver question. Robert d'Ade moved about in his easy,

gentlemanly manner, making keen mental notes the while of the salient points of the meeting. These he reported in a graphic style to his grandfather, the Alderman, the next morning. Mrs. M'Ivor, wife of the Honourable William Dorland's confidential clerk, took so great an interest in the Currency problem, and especially in cheap silver, that she appeared among the other ladies in the gallery, attended by her escort, who was Mr. M'Ivor himself. He kept a small note-book in his hand under the balustrade, and furtively made notes in it from time to time, so as to be able to give Mr. Dorland a correct idea of what had taken place when he called in to see him upon his way home.

In the gallery, next to Mr. and Mrs. M'Ivor, were Ben Doig, Jortin's foreman, and his wife, little Mrs. Ben Doig, who was one of the unprogressive women of the Province. She voted regularly at every election, but always as her husband told her, without even requiring him to give his reasons. She boasted that she could not tell one candidate from another, and that she did not trouble herself about what any of them said. She only came this evening in order to keep Mr. Doig company, and also to see that he came home early, so as to be ready for his work the next day. Robert d'Ade, as soon as he saw the foreman and Mrs. Doig, came and sat down beside them, greeting them in his affable way as old friends. Ben was a keen-minded man, and he had been thinking over Currency till he had got quite perplexed about it, as he found that most of the explanations, even those of Mr. Penny Killenger in the *Sweet-Brier*, though professing to be so very simple, in fact started one difficulty while they were hunting down another.

'I don't see myself,' he remarked to M'Ivor, looking up to the roof and giving his shoulders, at the same time, a self-satisfied shrug—'I don't see myself how this yer paper and silver will add to a man's wage. What is the use to the working man of lots of this here currency, as they talk all about, if he don't get more of it, nor yet, leastways, more tucker and things for it.'

'Ah, but you can see straight enough, Mr. Doig, that as silver rises the workers rise with it. It is the staple product of our Province. We are surely wise to make use of it,'

Mr. M'Ivor answered, speaking in his quiet, almost plaintive tone, and really repeating the views that he had heard expressed by his respected master, the Honourable William Dorland. Then, having no further ideas of his own to bring forward in answer to Ben's objection, he sought to edge away from the subject by turning to Mrs. Doig, with mild inquiring look, and asking her if she did not agree with him.

'Nay, nay, Mr. M'Ivor, ask your own wife. If she agrees with you I make no objection, so long as you make no objection to my agreeing with my old man here'; and Mrs. Doig gave her husband a poke with her elbow, as if to clearly mark him for identification.

'Well, still I don't seem to have got to the rights of this cheap money business,' remarked Ben Doig, who had been thinking to himself, and had taken no notice of M'Ivor's appeal to his wife. As he spoke he faced round in his seat, with a confused and slighty perplexed look, to Robert d'Ade, as if appealing to him, and throwing over M'Ivor for the present.

'Well, I don't either, Ben, seem to have got to the rights of it, quite straight, you see,' said Robert d'Ade; 'but at any rate it will be pleasant to hear them talk about plenty of money. It will be like having a good look at the bullion in old Peters's window in the Stock Exchange. Won't it, Ben?'

'Ah, right enough, Mr. d'Ade; but what good does looking at it do you? Staring at the cakes don't feed a boy if he is empty?'

'But we all want more money, don't we now? Well, Mr. Caffery and Mr. Stoker say that they will give it to us. So they are the men for my money, Ben.'

The worthy foreman enjoyed an argument on his own side with any one who would listen to him. So he continued:

'My point, Mr. d'Ade, and which I repeat, is how we will get better truck for our work, more wages like, or that leastways will buy us more stuff for the house, whether you have more or less of this yer paper, and whether for the matter of that it is Government paper or Bank paper. This

paper can't make the job, nor the wage neither, worth more than it was before.'

'Ah, Ben, you are getting too deep for me. Indeed you are. We must hear Penny Killenger explain all about it. I was getting the *Sweet-Brier* from him before tea, and he said that he would make it—he is to speak to-night, you know—as clear as an equation. When I asked him what that was, why, Penny rebuked me for my levity. But here they come, Ben. I will get out my note-book.'

Saying this, Robert d'Ade pushed back his coat sleeve and left the large glazed shirt cuff clear. Taking out his little gold pencil-case, he rapidly jotted down a few catch-words, as he observed the speakers filing in upon the platform. And now all attention was directed to the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty, who appeared accompanied by several Populist Members of the House of Representatives, headed by Messrs. Caffery and Stoker. Precedence was given to the ladies who were accredited as deputies from the Woman's Rights League—Mrs. Pawsey Peters, the President, and the two speakers, the Misses Hannah Gazelle and Emma Nevitte. The Honourable Mr. M'Grorty had taken the chair, and was beginning his speech, which was to be introductory to the proceedings of the evening.

He said that his words must be few, not because he was not full of the vital subject that had brought them together that evening, but because the constitutional obligations of a Representative compelled him to reserve the expression of his views for his constituents in the first instance. As a Liberal—he might almost say a Populist—he congratulated them on the onward march of, as he would term it, Popular Liberalism. They had by the grand power of the people's will done much to help the worker in Excelsior. Still, on the onward march an obstacle was met. There was still a lion in the path. It was the Currency question—the supply of the circulating medium—Money, in fact. When they had struggled free from so many tyrannies, were they to be enslaved by this one? Never, by all that was grand in the people's destiny! Yet, while all felt the evil, he need not tell the intelligent men and women now crowding that hall that care was demanded, knowledge was demanded—the

best mind of the people must be called in for devising the Popular Liberal Policy on the Currency. For himself, much as he had reflected upon the problem—and he would take leave to say that it was a problem—he had still an open mind for some points in it. He might say, with the great German, Goethe, with whose works many of them were familiar, that his cry was still ‘Light, more light.’ What was clear was that they must have an ample volume of Currency for all the industrial needs of their great Province. He would listen with attention to the speeches which they would soon hear, not only on account of the paramount importance of the subject, but because he saw in the list of speakers which had been placed in his hand the names of talented women, and of men some of whom were financial experts, and others political experts, who together would shed much of that light prayed for by the great German. The subject was partly financial and partly political, but before all things a subject for the people, to be solved by the people. He would call upon that old war-horse of the onward march, Mr. Michael Caffery, to move the first resolution.

When Michael Caffery stood forward you could see at once that he had no doubts about his subject. He was less polished in his style than the Chairman, but he had a directness of speech that gave it a force that was lacking to the other. He said that the resolution which he had got in his hand was—‘That the present Gold basis for the Currency is the corner-stone of Monopoly, and that it is the first and paramount duty of the Government to provide a People’s Currency for the People.’ He began by saying that he recognised much that was sound and bright in the remarks of their respected Chairman. But he had not the same perplexity about the question that the honourable gentleman was possessed by. He had thought a lot about it, as well as the Chairman, and had read a lot too, though he had not been able to look up Adam Smith upon it. One must read a bit upon these subjects, if only to see how little plain sense often went to make up a big book. Leland L. Stanford was one of the world’s economists, and he had put the thing on the right track when he said that

wealth was money, and that a plentiful currency meant a wealthy people. In Excelsior they had rich mines, first-class land, more than they wanted, local industries, an intelligent people; and Providence had lately sent along a good season. Yet they were all hard up for money. That was one of his straight-out facts. Why this thushness? he might say. Simply because the Currency—the State's Currency, mind you—was managed by private banks, and based upon gold and a small note issue, just to ease things off a bit. They had lots of wealth, but a starved currency—water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. The farmers, miners, and shopkeepers had the stuff to give right enough, but they were stuck up by the want of currency. Even the good housewife in the country had a job to get coin from the provision store for her hams and eggs. The people felt a natural craving for more currency. They were a bit hungry for it. When, like *Oliver Twist*, they asked for more, Beadledom and Noodledom were struck all of a heap. But the boy really needed it. That was why he asked for it. What was Money? Money was what the State made Money, whether gold, silver, shells, bits of leather, or ditto of paper. Paper was the handiest, and was all right if the State issued it and controlled it. What the sovereign State declared by its fiat to be money was money. Parliament gives its magic touch, and straightway money it becomes, whether it was a piece of paper or a piece of metal. What did they want behind the State note but all the wealth of Excelsior? Or, if they must have some reserve, as they call it, let them store their own silver. Why this worship of the gold of Europe? If they must have a calf of some kind to kotow to, let it be a silver one, of their own breeding. They had mountains of silver and bales of paper, and of printer's ink about enough. What more did they want? A scarcity of coin was just as bad as a scarcity of corn. Then another point, cheap money would haul after it cheap interest. The people to pay the piper would be only the money-lenders. Some wiseacres asked, 'How much of this Paper Currency are you going to issue?' Let them issue away, and the country would soon tell them when it had enough. It was now all as dry as a stick for

want of a full currency, but, like the soil itself when the rain comes on, it will soon show when it is full up. You would see it on the surface. People asked him how he would redeem the State notes. He was not a conjurer, and begged to be excused from going into the conundrum line. It was enough for him to know that the State notes would buy him his bread and meat and boots at their face value—that was the correct term, he understood. Irredeemable paper, indeed! Why not irredeemable quart-pot? In conclusion, he called upon them all to go straight for a people's purse, full and honest like the people themselves.

The Chairman then called upon Mr. Karl Brumm, the Brassville delegate, 'and he might add philosopher,' to second the adoption of the resolution moved so ably by Mr. Caffery.

Karl Brumm rose slowly, and looked out calmly upon the crowd, and in almost a compassionate manner, as if he felt for their weakness in getting perplexed over what was after all quite a simple matter. His capacious though receding forehead seemed to blush with the force of the thoughts that were glowing within. He began by saying that it was sad to observe the duncery of mankind, particularly upon Currency questions. It was said that money was the root of all evil, or at least the love of it was. It was just the other way. It was the want of it that did the mischief. Talk of a gold basis. What was gold? In itself the most useless of metals, only fit for gewgaws. Zinc was much more valuable. Wise Lycurgus had made iron the money of his state, Sparta by name. In primitive and happy lands they had no need of gold at all, nor indeed of any money. Only a hundred years ago the people of Loo-Choo had no currency at all, but amicably exchanged their produce with one another. True, in Excelsior they had got beyond this simple stage. They wanted some *media* of exchange. Well, let them have bits of paper. To be sure, Marco Polo had said something about the Chinese having adopted paper money a thousand years ago and afterwards gone back to coin. Perhaps so. And had they not stagnated ever since? But then, to proceed a step further, if their Social State required *media* of exchange, it was surely

mere common-sense to give them a sufficient supply of the *media*. The cries of the bankers for a narrow gold basis were, like the shrieks of the red parrots in the woods, persistent, but getting monotonous. What better basis could they have than the State? But perhaps in saying this he was getting off orthodox lines.

Mr. David Stoker: 'But you are on the lines of square truth.'

He was obliged to his friend, Mr. Stoker, who was a practical man, and was able to read books without believing them. Some simple people said that if you had paper *media* or currency you might have too much of it. This amused him. Even a greedy boy knew when he was full. And they were not greedy boys. They only wanted a square meal. Besides, the thing really explained itself. He was ashamed to dwell upon such simple matters. Could not any one see that the rate of interest would soon tell the tale if the State emitted too much paper. If they must have bullion at all, let them have stored silver. And they need not puzzle about the standard value of this silver, or its ratio to gold, whether it was to be 15 or $15\frac{1}{2}$ or $15\frac{3}{4}$. What was the silver dollar in the United States? Merely a lump of silver containing $412\frac{1}{2}$ grains. What were the Thalers, the Silver Groschens, Marks and Schillings, Florins and Rix-dollars of his native land, before Bismarck, enemy though he was to the people, united Germany? Merely bits of metal, made *media* of exchange by the government stamp of all the petty little states. Could not this great Province stamp its pieces of paper or silver as well? Some noisy fellows made an outcry about public faith. Perhaps they were not aware that England had issued bonds at six per cent during the war with Napoleon, and afterwards reduced the interest to three per cent. Let them all take a wise and calm view of this fundamental question of money, and free their struggling land from being any longer depressed by the weight of money-bags or the mistakes of simple people.

The Chairman then rose, and looking round with a respectful bow to where Miss Gazelle was sitting between Mrs. Pawsey Peters and Seth Pride, announced that he felt peculiar pleasure in now calling upon one of the brightest

representatives of the Woman's Rights League to give her support to the resolution, and to name Miss Hannah Gazelle as the next speaker. She rose at once, and taking off the handsome cape which had been presented to her by Seth Pride upon her engagement, she hastily handed it to him, and advanced to the front of the platform. She was dressed in a becoming manner, and looked handsome, nay even grand, as her eyes glanced brightly and keenly around. The thin lips were more firmly compressed than was usual with her in the easy intercourse of private life. A close observer would see that she was conscious of that, to some trying, to others inspiring, feeling of having some thousands of eyes fixed upon you, and some thousands of ears on the alert to hearken to what you have to say. It seemed not to be an unpleasing experience to her, certainly not an upsetting one. The vast crowd was sympathetic and respectful—for what man is not conscious of the influence of a handsome woman—and no human being, certainly no woman, in her place could be without the secret consciousness of what undoubtedly was the fact, that at that moment hundreds of men were admiring her, quite irrespective of her views on the Currency problem. True, Currency is a hard thing, even a sordid thing at times, but it does not crush out all the tender emotions from man. Women can be accustomed to publicity as well as men, and when the spell of private life is dissipated, they may, like their vain brother man, enjoy being looked at, listened to, talked about. The careers of actresses on the stage shows that all this can come about without moral offence.

Hannah Gazelle, then, felt inspired by the gaze of the crowd, and experienced an inward glow of satisfaction. But her manner was by no means brazen. She looked handsome, intelligent, pleased, self-possessed, lady-like, and talkative. She gave a short, incisive wave of her right arm as she began. She had come, she said, deputed by the Woman's Rights League at Brassville, to address them upon a question that came straight home to them. Perhaps women felt the need of a proper Currency most, but she ignored all differences between men and women while she spoke to them of their common rights as citizens. The

first right of a free citizen was to get a proper reward for his or her labour. Could they do that under an antiquated system of Currency? Rather not. She paused for a reply. (Here she turned round, with a vigorous but graceful gesture, and saw the smiling countenance of the Chairman leaning towards her with attention and sympathy. Her eye also caught the figure of Seth Pride turned towards her with admiration in his countenance, her cape thrown across his shoulder, to leave his hands free to join in the applause. It would be hard to say which homage was for the instant the more gratifying to her—that of the distinguished Chairman or that of the devoted lover.) She continued, growing more easy and confident as she went on. All they wanted was that the right thing should be done. Was there a bad man in that crowd? She doubted it. They were a good all-round sort of people. Why, then, this fear of dangerous finance legislation for the people by the people? As for the coin merchants, bank haberdashers, why should the people fall at their feet? Moses forbade them. Christ expelled them. Let them argue the point a bit. They were told that there must be no inflation of the Currency. Respectfully she could not see how they could be inflated till they had at least got enough first. To be inflated, as she had learnt out of her dictionary at the State School, was to be blown out. They could not be that just yet, though perhaps some of those who reasoned thus were. (Cheers and laughter.) She saw that they took the point. The people who were inflated were those who thus antagonised public opinion. At times she felt inclined to think that there might be depreciated intellects as well as depreciated currency. How were they to grapple with this gold monopoly? Why, as Martin Luther did with the Devil—throw some printer's ink at it, upon clean crisp State notes, with all the wealth of Excelsior behind them. Gold was not wanted for the masses. At least it didn't seem so, as they didn't get much of it. It was the tool of the wealthy. Silver was more suited to the poor. Though at present she would not deal with Bimetallism, nor any other ism. The first duty of the Government was to make money cheap for the people. Let the State determine both the quantity and

the quality of the Currency. When the State said of a thing, 'Let it be money,' it was money. It could say that of one of the buttons on her shoe. As to redeeming the State notes, she was rather tired of that sort of talk. The use of money was to give it away. It was no use in the stocking. The State notes would be redeemed every day in getting things that the owner of the notes wanted to get. How else were sovereigns redeemed? Gold was wanted chiefly for ornamental purposes, and for some useful work too, such as filling teeth. But they need not worship it all the same. Banks were meant to be their servant, but the servant had mounted the patient animal—the people—and was riding it as he pleased. To put it to them in another way, the created was become greater than the creator. Miss Gazelle wound up with a spirited peroration in which she confidently declared that the hour for victory over monopoly had struck, and they only now wanted the leader. Saying this, she turned towards the chair with a slight bow.

The applause was enthusiastic as she walked, with some dignity in her pose, back to her seat between Mrs. Pawsey Peters and Seth Pride. The former was a severe critic of public speaking. Mere rhetoric she despised. She was probably unconsciously influenced by the fact that her own talents lay in a different direction; though she felt that she could have made upon this occasion a business-like statement of the views of woman upon the Currency that would have been more useful than eloquent speeches. Her own feeling was that the ecclesiastical etiquette was better which upon state occasions assigns the pulpit to the chief dignitary, though he may not be a popular preacher, when compared with some of the florid young priests about him. She did not feel disposed to offer her laudations personally to the successful speaker. Still, she felt that Hannah Gazelle had done well, and she was not without a motherly regard for the interesting situation of the two engaged young people. So, without relaxing the somewhat imperious attitude with which it was her custom to sit back in her chair, she tapped Seth Pride smartly on the shoulder with her long fan, and observed with a slight nod—

'You ought to be proud of her, Mr. Pride.'

'So I am, Mrs. Pawsey Peters,' Seth replied. 'She has excelled herself this evening. I never heard the Currency question put so straight.'

Mrs. Pawsey Peters was about to say something further, when the clear voice of the Chairman was heard putting the first resolution, 'which was so ably supported by Miss Gazelle,' to the meeting, and she stopped to look around at the unanimous crowd of uplifted right arms in its favour, while she raised aloft her fan. It was carried, amidst the waving of other fans, handkerchiefs, and umbrellas, with general enthusiasm.

The Chairman then called upon Mr. David Stoker, the Member for Dead Hatch, to move the second resolution.

Mr. Stoker commenced by reading the resolution, which was—'That in the opinion of this Convention a National Currency should be cheap, ample, and accessible to the people, and that this end will be best attained by the issue of an adequate quantity of Government Legal Tender Notes, resting upon a National and fiduciary basis, secured upon the wealth of the Province, with, if necessary, the usual Banking reserve of one-third coin (Silver) in the State Treasury.' In his speech he enforced the views that Miss Gazelle had propounded, and also brought forward a scheme of his own regarding the State notes, remarking that perhaps he had as good a right to have a scheme as any other man. He would issue legal tender notes based upon reproductive works, and the notes could be redeemed out of the produce of the works. The people would work out the debt, and the country would get the works for nothing. Land could be cleared right away, and made safe and snug for the plough in this way. You could do a lot with notes, backed up by the wealth of the whole Province, and thus put that wealth to some useful purpose. When they issued notes they created capital. Why, the United States for years had bought tons and tons of silver every month with greenbacks, for which all they had to cash up was the printer's bill. Excelsior was, under Democracy, only one large co-operative association. Its money should be a certificate of services rendered to the commonweal, and

in the form of notes it would simply push around and pay for their services to each other. Gold coin was a remnant of old-world slavery. How could it be said that they governed themselves, unless they had the power to regulate the volume, value, and virtue of the people's money? If it was his last word as a public man, he would exhort them all, men and women electors of this great Province, as they wished to live and die free men and free women, to demand that the State should issue the people's money and make it cheap, uniform, plentiful, and comeatable.

While the cheers that greeted Mr. Stoker's speech were still resounding, the Chairman called upon Mr. Penny Killenger, the retired banker, to second the motion. When Mr. Killenger stood forward he was seen to be a spare man, lean in feature and small in stature, with a countenance that gave evidence of thought, yet was suffused withal by a troubled, confused air, as of a man who had been wrestling all his life with some mental problem and never been able to properly throw it in the struggle. His eyes had a dulled, resigned appearance, as if he could not see his way clearly out of it, and he slightly arched his eyebrows every now and then, as if, while full of pity for every one, possibly himself included, he felt inclined, in vulgar phrase, 'to give it best,' and to wash his hands of the whole thing. As the reader may surmise, all this was owing to the perennial struggle of Mr. Penny Killenger with the Currency problem.

He said that he had read a great many books about Money, and he rather feared that if he went on reading them he might become as stupid upon the subject as some of the people who wrote the books. The books were often as much the capitalists' books as their bank ledgers were. Yet if they looked at it as men of sense the thing was clear enough. What was money? Only pieces of metal pledge as a security for merchandise, whether the merchandise be an ocean liner or a housewife's chicken. The ladies present had brooches, rings, necklaces, and so on. These could all be used for money, and often had been. What was the use of money? Only to give it away, as Miss Gazelle had truly said. If so, anything that the other party would take as money served the turn, whether a piece of paper or a pebble.

And if the State said that you must take the pebble, why, there you are, you had your money—at least, the man who had the pebble had. In different nations different things were money, and at different times in the same nation different things were money, and further, at the same time different things were made money in the same nation. For example, in the United States they had as money gold coin, standard silver dollars, subsidiary silver, gold certificates, silver ditto, Treasury notes, United States notes, currency certificates, National Bank notes. The United States had dropped the coin portion of their circulation during the time of the Civil War. Their feudal barons, the bankers of Excelsior, were very emphatic about the ratio of value between silver and gold. They forgot that this was a matter of arrangement that changed with the times. In the first century, in Europe, it was one ratio, later on another. And it used to be different in different localities—one thing in Lombard Street and another in the Judengasse at Frankfurt. Historical events altered it. During the seventeenth century the flow of silver from Mexico and Peru raised the ratio, while the Latin Convention sought to fix it at $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1. In 1837 the United States adopted the ratio of 16 to 1. The result was obvious. Silver was exported to Europe, where it was $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, and the United States was left for a while to gold and paper. What did all this prove, as clear as the sun that shines? Why, that it was the business of each State to determine what it would have for its currency, and to fix its value. They had another example of this in the Bill that was introduced into the United States Senate in 1876, which provided that the United States Mints should coin dollars of the weight of $412\frac{1}{2}$ grains of standard silver, said dollars to be a legal tender for all debts, except where payment of gold is required by law. The economic conditions in Excelsior were different from those in Europe, with low wages, long hours of work, and aristocratic framework of society. Should the labourer stagger under his load in order that the Banks might strut along with big dividends? Their public debt could be converted by the issue of State notes into money for the use of the people, and in about $33\frac{1}{2}$ years be extinguished. How was the amount of the State

paper issue to be regulated? He had compiled tables that by a simple arithmetical calculation would provide for the emission of paper upon a graduated scale, according to the growth of population. A currency that could be exported was only of use to the bankers and capitalists, while State paper was all in favour of the worker. For, according to Gresham's law—but why go into details? Years ago M. Cernuschi, the Bimetallic Pope, proposed an International Congress to settle once for all the position of silver as a legal tender metal. But it came to nothing, and left untouched the question between Bimetallism and Symmetallism. Silver, they must remember, did the work of money in the world long before gold was thought of for that purpose. If they would have a free currency they must deal with it themselves as free men and women. The Currency as it was now was only the advance trench of the fortress of privilege. Who would be free himself must strike the blow. He craved leave to second the resolution that his friend Mr. Stoker had moved.

When this resolution had been carried by acclamation, Mr. Marcus Swing, Delegate from Silveracre, was called upon to move the third resolution, which read thus—'That this Convention pledges itself, and moreover calls upon all the electors of Excelsior to vote against any candidate who, at the coming general election, declines to support a reform of the Currency, and so to help to remove the prevailing stagnation of industry in this Province.' Mr. Swing said that he came from across the Divide to let them know that all the people his way were for a State Bank, and for the grand principle of using the State's credit for the State notes and the people's silver for the people. He was on all-fours with Mr. Stoker's plan for advancing the State notes upon the reproductive work of farmers; but why, he would beg leave to ask, not to miners too? Wherever there was value, there let the State advance right away. He would have a State Bank, and advance to public works and to industrious men with families to support. Parliament could look after the Government, and see that the Bank was kept all straight. He imagined that the people could be trusted to look after their own money. If there were a few

losses, why, they all had to pay them out of their respective pockets, left hand or right hand. It would not be sudden death, as anyway the money would go to the people. Over-caution was a lean sort of beast to travel with; at least, if they wanted to cover the ground. Across the Divide they had a way of going at things straight. They must excuse him if he did not spin out his yarn any more, but just call upon them to go bald-headed for a State Currency full, free, and fair all round. No more rough-riding by the Banks. He begged to move the resolution that he had read. He knew that they would go straight for the fence.

The Chairman then requested Miss Emma Nevitte to second the motion. Miss Nevitte was an elderly lady, with a somewhat stern manner, who was a well-known speaker at the committee meetings of the Woman's Rights Association. Her voice, as has been already said, was not strong, so she had a difficulty at first in making herself well heard, except by those who were seated near the platform. This made the crowd lower down impatient as she went on, and, without any intention to interrupt her, that swell of unrest arose which always sets in when the speaker is not well heard. The Chairman did his best to assist her by paying exemplary attention to what she said, his head inclined upon one side, so as to hear her better, and raising his hand gently every now and then to bespeak complete silence. Still the uneasy ground swell continued at the end of the hall, and at length a voice—rather a querulous one—called out, 'Pitch it up a bit. Can't hear down this way.'

Upon this the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty rose, and with more gravity than was usual, in his suave manner observed—'He was surprised that any gentleman—and he presumed that they were all gentlemen—should address a lady in that manner. Such conduct if it were persisted in would lead to lady electors shunning the platform. If the gentleman could not hear, at least he could keep quiet, and then perhaps other people could hear better. Possibly if he did hear he might not be much improved.'

Loud applause and laughter followed upon this rebuke of the restless man, particularly from the lady electors who filled the galleries. There was a general consensus of feel-

ing directed against the rude interjector, and a clear public opinion in the hall that the least he could do would be to apologise. There was no opportunity afforded of this being done, however, as the man kept quite quiet, being evidently ashamed of himself, and his identity was never truly disclosed, —though, as we shall see, it was guessed at.

Miss Nevitte then continued her speech ; but though perfect silence was maintained, there was necessarily some flatness in the crowd, and so she missed the stimulating feeling of support that Miss Gazelle had, who could be well heard and sympathetically followed. Her remarks were therefore not prolonged. They wanted an ample Note issue. They all felt the want of it, whether in their shops or farms or private homes. When they issued a couple of million worth of notes they gave currency to a couple of million worth of wealth. How so? Why, if they had not the notes they must have had sovereigns to use instead. Some very wise people asked what was behind the notes. She answered—the honest votes of the people. Votes for notes. An ample note issue meant three good P's—plenty, prosperity, and progress. Indeed, she might add a fourth—peace. Mere book-learning upon the subject was as useful as a sewing-machine without any thread. You might work away at it as much as you pleased, but it was no good without the little thread of common-sense to make it go. (Here there was much applause by those who caught the illustration. Mr. M'Grorty audibly observed to Mr. Caffery that it was one of the happiest that he had ever heard.) People might be learned and foolish. The men who persecuted Galileo were learned in their way. Let them learn from the living voices of their own country, their M'Grortys and Penny Killengers. She had a word to say to wind up with. It was to the married women. She was not married herself. She had only her own vote at the poll. But she knew enough about it to know that when things were right it was not one man one vote, but one married woman two votes. The married women were answerable for their husbands voting right, and she would call upon them to look after the men upon this question, which after all came home to the women most. If the wives heard any of the husbands

muttering something about hard money, they might be quite sure it was a question of soft brain.

This sarcasm excited laughter and applause from all who heard it, and those who did not laughed and applauded because the others did, and amid the general cheering Miss Nevitte retired to her chair with considerable credit achieved.

The list of selected speakers was now exhausted, and the Chairman had risen to put the resolution to the meeting, when a shabbily-dressed man emerged from the crowd half-way down the hall and challenged his attention. That half-bent figure, partly owing to advancing years, but more from an affectation of deference in launching forth sarcasms; that keen black eye; that face, sad with grievances, excited a flutter of curiosity in the meeting. It was Jacob Shumate, who claimed his right as an elector to speak to a resolution that, as he remarked, was specially addressed to the electors. Who this gaunt intruder was no one knew, except the few who came from Brassville, so people were taken by surprise at his unexpected appearance. When he first rose the practised eye of Cornelius M'Grorty discerned possible trouble in the interposition of the new-comer. The speeches of the selected speakers had been gone through, and the experienced Chairman knew that it was always wisest, when so much had been accomplished, to close the proceedings without breaking new ground. He therefore blandly inquired the name of the stranger, and upon the shoemaker emphatically pronouncing the name 'Jacob Shumate,' M'Grorty, with superfluous care, scanned over the list which he held in his hand, and turning upon Shumate a bright, inquisitive look, observed that he feared there must be some misapprehension, as he could not find the gentleman's name in his list. But Jacob had anticipated this difficulty. In fact, he rather enjoyed it. Slowly taking from his pocket a worn, soiled copy of the *Sweet-Brier*, he respectfully craved leave to read the advertisement which called the meeting. From this it appeared that the people were invited to attend the meeting, which was called 'for the purpose of enabling the electors to discuss the vital subject of the Currency.' He observed, with a deferential bow towards M'Grorty, that he now claimed, as one of the electors, the right to take part in the discussion to which he

had been by public advertisement invited. Several of the people near him enjoyed the prospect of the mild excitement which an unexpected speaker promised. There is inherent in a crowd the love of frolic and joke. So several called out 'Platform, platform'; and Jacob Shumate, well pleased, accepted the invitation. As he walked up and stepped upon the boards he felt quite elated by the reception, partly jocular, and partly merely tumultuous, that was accorded to him.

'You desire to support the resolution just moved, I presume, Mr. Shumate?' inquired M'Grorty, obligingly handing Jacob a copy of it.

'No, I do not, Mr. Chairman,' decisively replied Shumate.

'Oh, indeed; then Mr. Shumate proposes to address the meeting against the motion that Mr. Marcus Swing has made and Miss Nevitte seconded.'

'If you will excuse me, Mr. Chairman, I would esteem it as a personal favour if you would permit me to state myself what I do propose.'

'Certainly, certainly, Mr. Shumate; only if you do not propose to support the motion, nor yet to speak against it, I really don't——'

'Ah, there's where it is, Mr. Chairman. There's where I personally come in, I imagine. What I do propose is to move an amendment.'

'Oh, just so, Mr. Shumate, an amendment. Perhaps then you will kindly hand it to me,' said M'Grorty, who was nettled at the defiant, and so far successful, attitude of Shumate. As he eyed the shabby, eccentric figure of the poor shoemaker, he considered it probable that the intruder had never thought of having his amendment written out, and that the demand might put him off, or at least delay matters and give time to learn something about this unexpected apparition. But the shoemaker, as we know, was not without experience in affairs such as these. He had carefully prepared his amendment, and he produced, and with a slight but deferential bow presented to M'Grorty, an old envelope, on the inner side of which the Chairman read as follows:—

'That this meeting, while recognising the absolute need of a cheap and accessible Currency, declares that such a

fundamental reform can only be safely entrusted to the true friends of the People, and that therefore the first step towards its accomplishment is to remove from power the nominee of Banks and Capitalists who now fills the office of Premier and Treasurer, and who is responsible for the reintroduction of the curse of the Pension system as applied to the Border Rangers of Excelsior.'

M'Grorty read this slowly, turning over in his mind the while how it would be best to deal with it. He would have been willing to put the amendment, indeed happy to do so, if he thought that it would be carried, and so a blow struck at the Government. But he knew that the meeting in its present temper was bent upon supporting the Currency resolutions, that the amendment would be decisively rejected, and thus an apparent victory would be won for Sir Donald. There was also a feeling all over the crowded platform which was adverse to this queer-looking stranger. Some sense of exclusiveness will make itself felt in the most democratic circles. There is still some one in the front row even there. If Jacob Shumate were some well-known elector—say, from Tibboburra—the case would have been different. But who was this new-comer? Caffery and Stoker, too, resented the intrusion, and thought it most objectionable to have any man claiming here, before all the people, to be more extreme in his Liberalism than they were. David Stoker bent forward and whispered to Caffery, who was sitting before him on the right hand of the Chairman :

'This won't do, Michael. Going one peg higher in this style won't suit no way.'

Caffery, who often adopted Stoker's vigorous attitude, passed on the objection to M'Grorty, still in a whisper :

'Mr. Chairman, this won't do no ways at all, this one peg higher style of business. And we couldn't carry it, neither.'

The representatives of the Woman's Rights Association did not like the look of Jacob Shumate. Mrs. Pawsey Peters, who, to say the truth, had no very high opinion of men generally, eyed him askance, through her glasses, and, with a backward toss of her head, exclaimed, 'Queer fellow, queer fellow !'

‘ You may say so, ma’am,’ observed Miss Gazelle. ‘ We know him. He comes our way. He is the Glooscap politician. And he need not be so angry with the pensions. He has a pension himself.’

This fact, though it was irrelevant to the merits of the amendment, and in truth was no just cause of complaint against Jacob himself, was soon spread around, and at once confirmed the prejudice of the platform against the shoemaker. Even this, however, he possibly might have stood against, were it not for a still more damaging imputation that Birnie Farrar started against him from the other side of the platform, where Miss Nevitte was sitting. The Town Clerk of Glooscap, though it was his general policy to conciliate Jacob Shumate, as a person apt to be dangerous to the peace of the borough, yet had no wish to see him gain importance now by a successful appearance on the platform. So he exclaimed, addressing Miss Nevitte, but loud enough to be heard by those near :

‘ Come, come now, madam, this is too much for Mr. Shumate. First he interrupts you in your admirable speech, and now he comes up with his out-of-the-way amendments.’

This was a mere reckless piece of misrepresentation on the part of Birnie Farrar. He suspected that Jacob was the man who had interrupted Miss Nevitte ; but he had not seen him at the time, nor was it clearly known who did interject. Once started, however, the word soon ran round the platform that this was the man. A feeling of general indignation sprang up, and a muffled hum of anger rose around Jacob himself. Dauntless though he was in all political gatherings, and in conflicts too, in his own district, he got slightly confused as he realised the muttering storm that was rising about him. M’Grorty caught at once the prevailing sentiment, and adroitly bethought him of a likely way to checkmate the obtruder. So he politely inquired who was going to second the amendment.

‘ We follow Parliamentary law here, Mr. Shumate, that an Honourable Member moving anything must let the Speaker, that is the Chairman here’—he spoke in an easy, explanatory tone—‘ know who is going to second it.’

Jacob, who was the most solitary of men, and who was

too proud and shy to secure friends to co-operate with him, was unable to name any seconder. If he had been quite self-possessed he might have thought of Karl Brumm, who would probably have supported the amendment for the mere pleasure of further explaining his views about the Currency. As it was, since he could name no one, the Chairman promptly announced that the amendment could not be proceeded with without a seconder, and that he would therefore at once put the original motion. It was carried unanimously, and amid general applause, not even Jacob Shumate holding up his hand against it. A deputation was then appointed to go to the Premier and present to him the resolutions passed at the Currency Convention, and the meeting broke up.

Caffery and Stoker had shared in the indignation of the platform against Jacob Shumate, not that they were anxious to shield Sir Donald MacLever and the Ministry from censure, but because they could not brook that any one should appear more ardent for advanced views than they—the leaders of the Populist party—were. When they understood, however, that Shumate came from the Brassville district, they asked Seth Pride about him. Seth took a more tolerant view of the shoemaker than Miss Gazelle did, and told the two politicians that he was an honest fellow enough, and that in the country he was regarded as the most pronounced friend of the masses as against the classes in Glooscap. Hearing this, they welcomed him in a friendly way, as they were all moving together off the platform, and invited him to join them over a cup of coffee at the People's Club, so that they might discuss further the question which his amendment had raised. Shumate was made placable by the attention which they paid to him, and as they walked away together, while taking part in the general conversation in an absent manner, was eagerly thinking over to himself all the strong points which he could recall against Sir Donald, in order to support the position which he had taken up. They sat down to their coffee, and Jacob at once launched out into his indictment against the Minister; but before he had got well into his subject, David Stoker suddenly looked at his watch and exclaimed that he was almost late, and must go at once, as 'he had a lot of his folk to see before he

went to bed.' He shook hands warmly with Jacob as he left, but the shoemaker coldly returned the pressure, as he regarded Stoker's statement of the folk who wanted to see him as only an excuse, and this strengthened the suspicion with which he regarded all politicians. However, he concentrated his arguments upon Caffery, and declared that the people could not trust the Government, whether of the ins or the outs. He told the story of the 'municipal embezzlement,' by which the pension to Sandy M'Givern, the aged Town Surveyor of Glooscap, was to be provided for, and how the last Ministry had refused to stop it. As for the present men, they were no better. Had they not reinstated the system of Pensions for the Rangers? Sir Donald, he boldly averred, was nothing but an aristocrat, with a thin veneer of Liberalism, which was always cracking and showing the true skin beneath. Was he to be trusted with Currency Reform, 'which is a straight-out issue, Mr. Caffery, between the Banks and the people? But who is there to look after the people, I would like to know—unless, indeed, they may be able to wake up and look after themselves.'

And Jacob Shumate raised himself from his usually bent position, and for a moment fixed his searching, dissatisfied look upon Caffery, as much as to say—in fact, he seemed to almost continue saying it :

'The people cannot, and do not, trust any of you Members of Parliament, not even Michael Caffery, Populist though you are.'

Caffery had all the receptivity and also the self-consciousness that usually mark a sympathetic nature. He knew, and what is more, he felt, what it was that Jacob meant to say—namely, that the *real* friends of the people did not regard him, Michael Caffery, as sufficiently thorough in the people's cause. The sudden challenge disconcerted him a little. What? Was there here, then, a more advanced democrat than he was, a more thorough friend of the people, and that after all that he had done and professed, and also truly felt, in the people's cause? Yes; here was a man who went further than he did, and who claimed to be as advanced compared with Caffery as Caffery did compared

with Sir Donald—a man who had charged him with tolerating those who were not the people's friends; who, plainly enough, regarded him as little better than a Liberal in buckram, only good for show and not able to fight the people's battle. Gracious Heavens! And all this to Michael Caffery. He felt inclined to resent this outrageous distrust of himself; yet he knew after what he had heard from Seth Pride it would never do to make an enemy of Shumate. So he sat facing him at the small round table where they were taking their simple meal, stirring his coffee frequently, and sipping it slowly, resting his arms upon the table as he listened to the shoemaker, and looking earnestly at him, as if he desired to become thoroughly possessed of his view of public affairs. Shumate quite enjoyed himself as he grew more and more voluble, and wound up his remarks by exclaiming, as he gave a sharp turn round in his chair and threw his dingy metal spoon into the saucer—'Yes, Mr. Caffery, who will look after the people? Are we rabbits for the big land-owners to trap?'

When the shoemaker came to a momentary pause, Caffery sat up straight from the table, and looking at him in an interested manner, exclaimed—

'True for you, Mr. Shumate. Yoke us up together to the same pole, and we will pull shoulder to shoulder. But what about the rest of them, Mr. Shumate? We can't pull the waggon along our way, if the others of the team don't fall into line a bit. Now, you see,' he continued, settling himself back in his chair as if he felt made comfortable by what he was going to say—'you see here—why, your own people down there Brassville way, why, they don't send to Parliament even a straight Liberal, a real-out friend of the people. At least Professor Frankfort——'

Caffery had not been in political life for twenty years without knowing that an elector's political sentiments, however strong, generally assume a glowing heat when applied to the concrete case of his own Representative and constituency. He felt sure that Shumate's indignation towards the politicians as a class would be concentrated upon Frankfort in particular. And so it was.

'Professor Frankfort? Friend of the people? Never

was one, sir. Why, now he has gone over straight to the enemy. Sold himself.'

'Sold himself?' asked Caffery, looking up in surprise, and wondering whether after all there might not be some scandal connected with even the highly respectable Member for Brassville.

'Yes, sir. Sold himself in marriage to The Blocks.' For the moment Shumate thought that every one knew about Lamborn's grand estate.

'The Blocks?' again inquired Caffery.

'To be sure, sir, The Blocks. In time—an only daughter, no son in the case, sir—he will be the owner of a principality acquired by land-grabbing.'

'Ye don't say so, now? Well, I never! To think on it—and Professor Frankfort too, of all men.'

Caffery kept looking at Jacob in an interested attitude while he continued musing to himself, 'To think of it—really now, the Professor, of all men.'

Caffery had no especial dislike to our politician. But there could be no doubt that what he heard from Jacob Shumate pleased him, as he believed that it placed Frankfort in a disadvantageous position politically. While he was musing, Jacob too paused a while. Jacob's conscience here made a slight remonstrance. So he continued looking down upon the oilcloth top of the little table, and describing upon it the most involved circles and figures with his finger, which he damped from time to time in the dregs of his coffee-cup. The involved circles and figures were emblematic of a confused feeling that was excited in him by the twinge of conscience. At last he spoke and satisfied his sense of fair-play :

'You will understand, Mr. Caffery, that the young lady herself is admirable, and no mistake at all about it. She is a real good 'un to the poor. The people speak well of her, and with good cause, sir. In fact, she has been very good to my own little ones—orphans, Mr. Caffery, orphans.'

'Well now, you don't say so,' said Caffery, not noticing Jacob's compensatory eulogism upon Eilly Lamborn, but with a prompt eye to business—'you don't say so? And will Meeks run him out? Is it good enough to start Meeks next time?'

'As to Mr. Meeks,' Jacob answered slowly, 'I am not a tailboard follower of that gentleman, by no means. But Meeks does try to serve the people all he knows. At least, he does not assume to be better than other people.'

The shoemaker's private conviction was that he, Jacob Shumate, would make a better people's man than either Frankfort or Meeks, or, for the matter of that, than Caffery, or even than M'Grorty, the celebrated Chairman. He was enlarging upon Frankfort's chances at the coming election, when there was a stir at the end of the long coffee-room, and who should appear coming up, amid a circle of admirers, and nodding and smiling kindly all around, but Cornelius M'Grorty himself. About him were Secker and Mons. Froessolecque, several Members of the House of Representatives, the special reporter for the *Scorcher*, and some gentlemen of the Press who were believed to write for the *Rising Sun* and the *News Letter*. Robert d'Ade walked next Mons. Froessolecque, with whom he always kept upon the best of terms. They were all moving towards the stairs that led up to the private supper-rooms at the back of the building. M'Grorty looked, in his cheerful way, at the solemn pair who were seated at the little tea-table, and, shaking hands with Shumate, whom he had learned all about from the reporter for the *Scorcher*, asked him if he had a spare copy of his amendment.

'A deal in it, Mr. Shumate. Quite a new view of the situation. True enough, too, if we only had the numbers.'

Jacob, well pleased, produced the soiled paper containing the amendment, which it seemed was attracting so much notice.

'Ah, just so. There it is. But why had you not your seconder ready? I would have seconded it myself, only I was chairman—and carried it too,' he added, looking round at Du Tell with playful nod. 'But come along, Mr. Shumate—Caffery, I know, will join us too—let us get some supper. Friend and foe, we meet together and quench our enmities in the cup that both cheers and inebriates. That is classical, if not orthodox, is it not, Mons. Froessolecque?'

Having thus impressed Jacob and Caffery—not unwilling victims—the party passed along to where Karl Brumm was seated at one of the small tables with the faithful Helsa Brumm next him, the two old people quietly taking their evening meal of boiled milk and muffins. Karl was in an even more than usually placid and agreeable state of self-consciousness. He felt that he had made a striking speech, and had told some home truths upon a question that nearly concerned the happiness of his fellow-men. His only doubt was whether the people who heard him were intelligent enough and sufficiently well-informed to appreciate his views. To be sure, it was a question that every one did not understand. Members of Parliament themselves did not seem to know much more than others. Certainly none of them had thought out the problem as he had done. It was a sad want, he quietly said to himself, to have a class of ignorant politicians. But his meditations were broken in upon by the cheerful voice of the Chairman, addressing him, however, in a respectful tone:

‘You must really permit me to thank you for your very instructive, I may say thought-provoking, speech. May I express my obligations also to you, Mrs. Brumm, for, no doubt, some of the brightest passages were yours?’

And M‘Grorty raised his hat to Helsa, surmising correctly that she was the old German’s wife.

‘Ah, sir,’ replied Karl, looking up at the little party of which M‘Grorty was the centre with an air of calm superiority, ‘I am your debtor for your kind remarks. You will excuse me, however, for observing that the time has come when we want more than speeches. We want acts—that is, if we had the men to achieve them.’ And Karl Brumm turned round in his chair and looked quietly about him, as if he were seeking then and there to lay eyes upon the right man.

‘Very true indeed, Mr. Brumm. It is men we want. But how shall we get them while thinkers like yourself remain buried amid the shades of Brassville?’

‘Ah well, if we could get one real statesman—dear me, just one man like Gaurishanker Udayshanker Oza,’ continued Karl, leaning back resignedly in his chair. He had read the

story of this remarkable Indian, written by one of the German students of Sanscrit.

‘Who was the gentleman you have named, Mr. Brumm?’ inquired Du Tell, peering at old Karl more intently than even was his wont.

‘What! a leading legislator not know one of the grandest of living statesmen!’ exclaimed Karl, with a look of pained surprise.

‘Well, I may as well admit at once, Mr. Brumm, that I never happened to hear of this eminent individual before,’ said Du Tell in his most candid manner.

‘Why, dear friend, he is the Dewân, or Prime Minister—in fact, the Sir Donald MacLever—of Bhavnagar, in Kathiawar. Only he happens to be also a statesman, and has reformed the Currency and most other things.’

And old Karl looked with downcast eyes upon the table, as if to convey that, whoever was to blame for the want of statesmen, he was not.

‘Really, most interesting, and very much to the point too. Yes, I think that Max Müller has something about this dusky Gladstone. Must look it up,’ interposed M’Grorty, who was a general reader. ‘Meanwhile I wish you could join us in our quiet meal yonder, Mr. Brumm. But I dare not ask it, as your respected lady accompanies you.’

And with affable salutes to the worthy pair, M’Grorty led his party upstairs to one of the private supper-rooms. A winding passage led to these in a building which formed the back portion of the adjoining Three Stars Hotel, and here more generous liquor could be obtained than was allowed within the limits of the People’s Club itself. They had a jovial supper together. Shumate, to whom this dissipation, mild though it was, was unusual, became rather excited, enlarged much upon the fact that Sir Donald could not be trusted by the people, and assured the company generally that the trappers of Glooscap were firm in their determination to return a true people’s man next time. The shoemaker occupied a large share of the attention of the little circle. They listened to his denunciation of many things with interest, and even when he spoke disparagingly

of the politicians they did not mind it. They were used to it. As for M'Grorty, he quite enjoyed Shumate's rustic indignation, and all because he could not see his principles adopted and carried into effect! When the party was breaking up, Caffery was careful to ask him for his correct address, so that he could write to him in good time before the general election. He also asked if Jacob would undertake the formation of a People's Committee in Glooscap. As they were moving away from the table, Jacob, who was flushed with the unusual excitement of the evening, turned to M'Grorty with an anxious look, and, speaking with emphasis, begged him to remember the important principle that was contained in the amendment.

'Remember thee, thou lapsed amendment; ay, while memory holds a seat in this distracted globe!' M'Grorty grasped Jacob's hand impressively, and hurried away arm-in-arm with Mons. Froessolecque.

Jacob Shumate regarded it as one of the pleasantest evenings that he had ever spent; for, although he had not been able to carry his amendment at the meeting, it was evident that the Chairman approved of it, and the attention paid to him by so many members of the House of Representatives showed that he was regarded as a power in political circles. This, indeed, he was, as it was believed that he and his following, if they could not return any one they pleased for Brassville, at least could keep out any man whom they disliked. He went back the next morning by the early train to Brassville; and Hiram Brickwood, the guard, invited him into the van on the branch line, in order that he might hear from him the particulars of the Convention meeting. This, again, was a marked compliment, and Jacob realised more than ever his weight in the political scale. This was a perpetual solace to him in the poor surroundings and the struggling conditions of his daily life. He trudged by the stately Blocks upon his way to his little cottage, that was not as big as the cow-house of the mansion, but he felt a glow of satisfaction as he said to himself:

'Ah, Tom Lamborn, great man as you are, you would not have had the attention last night that I had from the Members. M'Grorty would not have told you that he would

never forget your amendment. No wonder neither. I would like to know how many votes you could poll on election day compared with me.'

And on Jacob trudged, with mingled thoughts running through his head of the last evening's events, of his superiority in politics to Tom Lamborn, and of the two little Shumates whom he looked forward to finding safe and sound, and eagerly expecting his return, when he got home.

And here, before we continue our narrative, it should be stated that Jacob's suspicion that David Stoker had invented an excuse in order to get away from the People's Club that evening was unfounded. Stoker really had, as he said, a lot of his people to see before he went to bed that night. He lived in his constituency of Dead Hatch, and a large proportion of his electors were employed by the Government in one or other of the numerous Departments of the State, and especially upon the Trams and Rails and the works in connection with them. Necessarily there are many grievances, some real, some fanciful, among all large bodies of workpeople. In industrial life in older lands these are met as best they may be by the action of Unions among the men, and such concessions as they may be able to secure, aided by public opinion, from the liberality, or the fears, of their employers. Some have simply to be put up with, as is the case with a good many other evils in all the various walks of life. But when the State in a democracy is the master, the least that any representative can do is to see that no wrong is done to any of his people, and certainly that it is not done by the Government. The Representative, with one hand on his constituents and the other on the Government, is the natural link between them. He depends for life upon the voter's vote, and the Government depends for life upon his vote ; and the system goes on so long as the country is willing to pay for it.

Those of David Stoker's constituents who were already in the Government service could only consult him in the evening, after tea. Most of them had attended the meeting, and after it was over those who had business with him went straight to his modest home, which was in the main street of the railway suburb of Dead Hatch. Some who came

before he arrived were welcomed by Mrs. Stoker, who said that he was sure to come soon, as he knew that they would be waiting for him. Before long David Stoker arrived, and at once took in hand, in orderly succession, the complaint or difficulty of each attendant at this humble levee. He was the representative in our time of the proud nobleman in whose ante-rooms, a couple of centuries ago, the suitors of that age used to congregate. Only he was not so proud nor so independent as the nobleman; and the claimants belonged to a different class from, and were not so submissive as, the old ones, nor so easily refused or put off. One was a Tram gripman, whose difficulty was that he had six months before been reduced to the position of conductor for some slight indiscretion. The period for which he had been disgraced was now at an end, and he had got a note from the inspector to resume his old position. But, under a rule of the Department, all new appointments as gripmen were to be at one shilling a day less than the old men were receiving, and he was asked to go on at nine shillings a day, instead of ten, which he was getting when he was temporarily reduced. He contended that his case was clearly one of reinstatement, not a new appointment; and he wanted it to be attended to at once, lest he should be held to have accepted the position at the reduced rate. A casual hand, brought on as a line repairer for a special job, complained that he was put off before the job was completed, while others who came on at the same time were still retained. An applicant for work on the same job, who was thrown out on the ballot which was held to prevent any favouritism in the selection out of the numerous candidates, was prepared to show how unfairly the ballot was managed. In fact, he maintained that the revolving urn, into which the names of the candidates were cast, was so manipulated that practically the inspector could select the men as he chose. He demanded that this public abuse should be at once challenged. For himself he did not care. On the public works the men employed were, as a general rule, given three months' work in rotation, and were then displaced in order to give the others a turn. A man who had just been put off had come prepared to show that, owing to the intervention of holidays, he had not got his full

month by several days. Others came about some question concerning the yearly increments that belonged to their pay; but Stoker's experience was so extensive with regard to those claims, which were naturally ever arising from the numerous ranks of the public employees, that he knew the points of each case almost instinctively before the applicant had spoken half-a-dozen words. Then there was a memorandum, hastily written in pencil upon a leaf torn out of his pocket-book, by a newly-appointed clerk in the Trams Branch, who had called that evening, having forgotten that Stoker would be absent at the great meeting, and was unable to wait, or perhaps did not care to take his turn with the rest, for exclusive feelings will still survive in some people. He was going into the accountant's office, and begged Mr. Stoker to oblige him by arranging for a reduction in the sum for which he was to ensure his fidelity. There was no time to lose, for the fortnight allowed to insure in would expire on the following Thursday. A good mother came to ask that her son's term of probation as a telegraph boy should be reduced from six to three months, or at least that he should get half-pay after the three months, so that the lad should get something for his long hours. A Mutual Defence Association had been formed in the Railways by the men and officers who were employed about the stations. It seemed that some official was making a difficulty about the mixing up of the two, upon the ground that the officers should keep themselves distinct, so as to be free to control the men in their work. The Secretary of the new Association 'rang up' Stoker, and requested him 'to put the matter in the right light to the Minister.' Timothy Dudden called about a small place for his boy, who was just from school, and must get something to do. One word from the Minister and the lad was made for life.

Stoker entered into the facts of each application with the care with which a lawyer would listen to the case of his client, or an agent to the instructions of his principal. He was fair, too, in stating difficulties and objections where they presented themselves, and did not encourage more than he could help demands that he considered extravagant. It was believed he could do more than he was really able to

do. Where classes of employees were affected and the general rights of labour concerned, there he was a real power. But while he heard all complaints from individuals, and advised upon all, it was not every case that he took up. Still, he gave every one a hearing, and the more pertinacious ones were generally able to get a promise that he would mention the matter to the Minister himself.

When the last one of David Stoker's levee was gone, and he had a little time to himself to spend with his wife, he could honestly say that he had done a fair day's work. And this business of his constituents was his hardest work. Sitting in the House of Representatives was rest in comparison. He did not regard the opening of a new session with any anxiety, but rather with feelings of relief, as he would be no longer at home every evening for the callers, and they would have to trust to chance interviews about the lobbies of the House.

The newspapers of Miranda gave ample reports of the proceedings at the great Currency Convention, and discussed the many difficult questions that had been raised. The *Rising Sun* prided itself upon its reports, and it gave a very full record of the resolutions that were moved and the speeches that were made in support of them. Its columns contained a detailed account of Jacob Shumate's attempt to move his amendment, and a copy of the amendment itself. He was proud of the part he had taken, though he had not succeeded, and kept a couple of copies of the paper in his home at Glooscap. Karl Brumm was quite pleased with the report of his speech. He got it turned into German, and inserted in the little German paper of Miranda. He sent copies of this to the few old acquaintances in his native land with whom he still communicated; and they were under the impression that a financial revolution of a new and striking description was in progress in Excelsior. There was a general agreement between the man in the street and his friend that something should be done by the Government to reform the Currency. More exact views upon the subject even the Press itself had not got. But the talking portion of the public in Excelsior talked more than ever of the Currency problem; so much so that two strangers

could not stand up in an archway from a shower without feeling the impulse to exchange their views about a Government note issue, with a reserve in silver, much in the same way as, when a weather crisis is upon us, people crossing one another in the street exchange words about the blizzard or the heat wave. It is not to be wondered at, then, that when Frankfort and Myles Dillon met on the evening after the meeting they should talk about it too. Frankfort had gone over to Dillon's bachelor quarters to have a quiet chat with him, and to enjoy that recreation which is afforded by intellectual converse with a friend between whom and yourself there are no differences, except such as arise from matters of opinion.

Myles was unusually disputatious and disposed to scorn the voice of the crowd that evening. For during the day he had been engaged in a dispute with a sub-committee of the Hospital, who had presumed to question some arrangement of the honorary staff. He declared that they were incapable of understanding the point—at least without an operation in the head first. He was indignant at the notion of simpletons, who did not know the difference between an artery and a vein, interfering with science. He was still incensed at the attempted dictation of knowledge by ignorance when Frankfort walked in, telling him that, as he had the evening free, he thought he could not do better than come over and have a chat with him.

'I don't know that you could, Edward Fairlie; and if you will only talk a little sense to-night, so much the better. Here, don't take that cigar; take the big one. It will lower your system as well as any other.'

Myles Dillon was lying on the sofa reading the report of the Currency meeting in the *Rising Sun*.

'All right, Myles. I will do whatever my medical man tells me, even to lowering my system. But why challenge me to talk sense? Don't I always talk sense? What is wrong this evening, Myles?'

Frankfort thought he noticed some irritation in his friend's tone.

'What's wrong? Why, I have been reading the report in this paper rag here of your grand Currency meeting, and if ye are not all cracked, why then, by the powers above, I

must be. To think of grown people first talking such stuff and then amusing themselves by governing their fellow-creatures afterwards !'

'Stay a minute, Myles. It is not my meeting, you understand. But what annoys you so much about it? At popular meetings there must be some nonsense spoken, particularly when the subject is new and intricate.'

'What annoys me? Why, the whole thing. Having the meeting at all. Such nonsense asking a lot of men and women off the streets to settle the principles of the Currency.'

'A case of the head of the snake being pushed on by the tail ; is that it, Myles?'

'No, it is not, Mr. Frankfort. It is the case of no head anywhere. It is a sort of caterpillar business ; the whole animal pushes itself along, or rather about, on its belly anyhow, and moves along tumultuously all in a heap together.'

'Why so fervid, Myles? After all, it is only talk, the talk of a popular meeting. They don't decide the matter. I suppose you don't object in a free country to the people saying what they think about the Currency.'

'You might as well ask them what they think about the respective merits of the systems of Kant and of Spinoza, and to vote accordingly.'

'You keep missing the meaning of the thing, Myles Dillon. This is not a question of abstract philosophy, but of the everyday matter of money. Among the dearest rights of men is the right to think wrongly. In order to know what they want, you must hear what they have to say. It does not follow that you believe all they say, or do it either, for the matter of that.'

'Well, I am glad to hear your last wise remark, Mr. Frankfort ; for, in my humble judgment, you might just as well have held a meeting to argue out the question whether the pineal gland in the human head is a remote survival of the serpent's third eye, and then put the question to the vote, amid general enthusiasm. Pretty science you would have at that rate.'

'True, Myles, if daily government were a problem for schoolmen, not the work of common men and women. We

have to trundle it on somehow by the aid of these men and women, you see. No other way for it nowadays. If they have votes to decide the Currency question, you may allow them to have opinions too; and also to express their opinions for what they are worth.'

'Well, and is not that what I am saying? You are as illogical as the man who was caught the other day stealing Taylor's *Holy Living* from the library. Your system starts with one man's opinion being as good as another's. But somebody must be on top everywhere. Your equality means an inversion from below: you have an aristocracy—that of Penny Killenger and Company. Conclusion, Messrs. Penny Killenger and Company are to lead us to the true principles of the State Currency.'

'Not at all; they are only entitled to, and all they profess to do, is to voice one part of public opinion, or rather, feeling; and it only in the making. You can't expect to combine the freedom of democracy with the expert culture of the old aristocracy,' answered Frankfort.

'No, I only want a little common-sense in Government, whatever 'ocracy we are under. To think of Caffery, Gazelle, and Co. settling the Currency! Gracious powers!'

'Oh, come now, Myles, be fair. They only start discussion on the subject. The difficulty in perplexing questions is not about the arguments, but the facts. Find out the real facts and the rest is easy. In due time all has to face the searchlight of the matured public opinion of the whole community.'

'I am glad to hear about your searchlight, Edward Fairlie, and would be also glad to know when it is going to be turned on.'

'Well, you see the Press is now writing daily about the different proposals. The subject gets sifted with what wisdom may be at hand in the club, the tramcar, and the market-place. By the way, I shall be doing my part, indirectly at least, at the University. Next week Money—the great topic of Money—comes round again in my course of lectures.'

'What? are you going to be a gladiator from the cloisters for the Currency combats?' asked Myles Dillon, raising himself to look round at Frankfort as he spoke.

‘Oh no ; of course I shall not directly allude from my chair to any political agitation ; but, incidentally, I cannot help exposing some of the fallacies that are current about money—silver in particular—some of those points of Gazelle and Company that put you out so much. The mere statement of a truth challenges a mistake.’

Dillon paused for a few moments before he continued the conversation. He had been reading a little before in some American reviews of the summary manner in which the wealthy patrons of certain universities in the United States had dealt there with professors whose teaching supported economical principles that were hostile to great financial interests in which they were concerned. Myles was a keen observer of men, and, from what he knew of the Honourable William Dorland, he concluded that he would not allow the University to be used to injure his interests. It was of vital consequence to him, and also to the revenues of the University, that the decline in the value of silver should be checked. Dillon did not consider Dorland a narrow-minded man, nor an illiberal one either. But his ideals were not lofty. They were all practical, and capable of being made to square with strict business considerations. Money in the present day patronised some universities as princes used to do formerly. The princes allowed no disloyalty to their interests. Would money now to its? Dillon forgot his irritable feelings in this new line of thought. He of old knew Frankfort’s way of saying whatever he thought true whether in science or politics ; and the facts about the American universities imparted a serious aspect to his position, which he himself did not seem to realise. After a while Dillon remarked, rising from the sofa and sitting down facing his companion :

‘Well, Edward Fairlie, may your searchlight business do good, and especially to yourself ! But, when you touch silver, you have not alone your intelligent meetings to deal with. You have the University itself, and its patron, the Honourable William. Both rest on silver. I see in the American reviews of the strangest goings on in the universities there, down Kansas way, and other respectable places.’

‘Why, what happened there ?’

‘Only this : some professors there taught in their lectures what did not suit the patrons of the College, and thereupon the professors had to walk the plank.’

‘To be sure, that is a danger ; and perhaps the most serious development of the power of money—its power over the sources of public thought. But we have not got that far in Excelsior. They won’t enslave me, at any rate, Myles.’

‘But they might get rid of you,’ said Dillon, with a slight nod at Frankfort.

‘Why, Dorland is not so desperate about silver as all that, is he?’

‘Ah well, I should like a bill of particulars as to who runs this agitation for State paper, with silver in the background. Penny Killenger is to supply the eloquence ; but who finds the cash?’

‘To be sure, there may be more in this Currency business than meets the eye. But it’s one comfort, anyway, that my course is clear. No bothering question of expediency here. A teacher in his chair is like the judge upon the bench. And, indeed, I don’t believe that Dorland, or the Overseers either, would dare——’

‘Long live they so, and long live you to think so, is the sentiment of Myles Dillon ! But when you do hold forth, Teddy, I can tell you what would be the true solution of the Currency difficulty to put forward.’

‘What is that, Myles?’

‘Why, simple enough. Divide your discourse into two heads, and teach the people under the first head how to make money and under the second how to keep it. Nine out of ten men don’t know how to do either. Hence the problem.’

‘Ah, therein the patient must minister to himself. But come, Myles, stroll part of the way home with me, and I will give you some of the points of my first lecture. It is an interesting subject, too, though it is intricate.’

‘I will stroll with you, Edward, eat with you, drink with you, and smoke with you, but I will not have your points. Currency and a quiet life don’t go well together.’

When they reached High Street, one of the busy streets of Miranda, they found the newspaper boys shouting that

the latest editions of their papers contained additional and startling information about the Currency agitation, and further particulars about the grand National Convention. The *Sweet-Brier* issued an extraordinary which announced the probable early calling together of the Legislature, and the supposed favourable disposition of the Government to free money. Aged men stood at the street corners seeking to supplement their small State pension by selling a variety of pamphlets upon the vexed question: 'Soft Money or Hard: Which?' 'The Last of the Barons—the Banker'; 'Shylock and Co. exposed by Penny Killenger, the Reformed Banker'; 'Silver Safe: Why not?' 'The Gold Bug's Penny Reckoner'; 'Currency made Clear.' Citizen spoke eagerly to citizen. They threw money, metaphorically, at one another. Placards announced meetings at which the true principles of the Currency would be explained by well-known lecturers. General discussion was invited after the lecture. Women's clubs were to meet to hear learned ladies and to settle the question for themselves.

'Yes, Currency is in the air just now!' exclaimed Frankfort.

'I think you may say in the clouds, Teddy!' exclaimed Myles Dillon.

When they came to the People's Club, they turned into it, and found that an impromptu gathering was about to disperse, after hearing Mr. David Stoker explain the principal heads of the proposed reform. Mr. Stoker had, as we know, the power of ready expression, and he was now so familiar, from frequent discussion, with all the common-places of the Currency question, that it was no trouble to him to start off and explain them to other people. And he put what he had to say clearly; in fact, perhaps more clearly than he would have done had he thought profoundly upon the subject, and worked out the consequences that were involved in the changes in the State money that were spoken of.

'Why, you here, Mr. M'Ivor?' said Frankfort, as William Dorland's confidential clerk came down the hall; the resigned, patient look upon his face seeming to say—

'Here I am, hard at work as usual; but after all it is only my duty to my respected employer.'

‘Yes, Professor; I am very much interested in this great question of the day. It comes home to us all. I can assure you it does, Mr. Frankfort. Mrs. M’Ivor asked me to go down to the hall here and learn if there was anything new. She feels strongly. She said to me only the other evening—she said, “Mind, George, we both go straight at the poll for State notes and free silver. If any candidate, man or woman, George, don’t go straight for free currency, that does for him; we strike him out. Out he goes!” Yes, she understands things, does Mrs. M’Ivor. It comes home to her, you see, in the house accounts.’

‘I congratulate you on your public spirit, and that of your respected lady, in looking after the Currency. Whatever you do, get us plenty of it. If you would join us in a cup of tea,’ said Myles Dillon, sitting down at one of the tables, ‘you might explain your money principles; or perhaps Mr. Stoker will be speaking again.’

His belief that Dorland was an active mover behind the scenes in the project for Currency reform was confirmed by M’Ivor’s presence in the hall, and particularly by his prompt reference to his wife, as the cause of his being there. Both Dillon and Frankfort were curious to hear a fuller expression of M’Ivor’s views; not so much for their intrinsic value as for the light they would throw upon the attitude of Dorland himself, and upon the possible action of the Board of Overseers at the University which he presided over and controlled. When the three were seated by themselves at the table, it occurred to the confidential clerk that the opportunity would be a good one to give Professor Frankfort some idea of how Dorland did regard the subject. So he enlarged upon the crisis that was at hand, if silver could not get some help, and particularly upon the fact that his respected master had lately ascertained, from returns furnished by the University Bursar, that, unless the fall in silver was checked in some way, the income from the endowment of the University would be so reduced that it would be impossible to maintain the existing staff of professors. Some of them must go.

‘It distresses him very much, I can assure you. He is a very feeling man is Mr. Dorland, though his manner is so

quiet. It distresses him very much indeed. If things go on in the present dreadful way, why, in time he would be almost a poor man himself. Something must be done, I do assure you, Mr. Frankfort.' And the confidential clerk looked up from his cup of tea at him with a meek and appealing look, but an inquiring one too.

'But you have not told us yet, Mr. M'Ivor, what you would do to prevent this dreadful state of things coming on us,' remarked Myles Dillon.

'I tell you, Mr. Dillon? Why, I am not in the public line at all. It is to the respected Professor here that we should naturally look. He could explain the proper conditions for a note issue, and a reserve of silver in the Treasury. But even I can see that we should use our own natural wealth.'

Frankfort saw clearly enough that M'Ivor was not speaking merely his own ideas, nor yet speaking without a purpose. He was about to make some indifferent reply, when his attention was diverted by a familiar voice at the table behind them.

'Never mind, Ben. You may argue and spread out your objections as you like. I expect you would arguefy with your horses if the beasts would only speak to you. I say it was a very powerful speech of the Honourable Mr. Stoker, and all along for the poor man too. He showed straight enough, if ye'll only heed to him, how the poor people want more of this circulating modicum, if they are to get their rights and their share of things. Why, in Ireland there——'

He recognised the voice of Walter Crane, free from the official restraint of the Water Bureau, and speaking to the Grubb Lane party as if they were already in the nephew's cottage there.

'I ain't a-talking of Ireland just now,' replied Ben Mule, the argumentative cabman. 'And I ain't denying as how we want more of this circulating business. But what I want to know is how you, or I, or Mick there, will get more of it all the time? The big ones will take the big lots as before, and as usual. It's better distribution we want.'

And Ben looked round in a decisive manner.

'Ye see it's this way,' interposed Crane's nephew Mick, thinking, with the confidence of youth, that he could answer

even Ben Mule—'it's this way the old 'un puts it. When ye have a lot, a good lot, ye see, of this currency modicum, you have more for all of us, more to go round like. You can't distribute more till ye have got enough to chuck round first.'

'But you don't seem to take note, young 'un, that you may have enough to chuck round, but you need not chuck it all the same. The tiptops may keep it to themselves. If I fill two bins with oats, instead of one, you make on that every 'orse in the stable must have double feed. It rather depends on me, I am thinking.'

And Ben gave a short, self-satisfied laugh, as he eyed the youthful Mick with a superior air, and added—

'You'd better leave the arguefying to the old 'un, young man.'

'Why, Crane, is that you here? All for Currency reform too? I have not seen you for a long time,' said Frankfort, as he nodded to Ben Mule and the nephew.

Crane was taken by surprise to be found there by official people. As a rule, we know, he avoided all appearances in public, except at the Bureau, and limited his arguments upon questions of State to the Sunday gatherings at his nephew's in Grubb Lane. He had, in fact, come this evening in obedience to a confidential suggestion by his official head, Mr. Lavender, who was impelled thereto by Slater Scully, the Minister of the Bureau. Like all his brother Ministers, from Sir Donald downward, his anxiety was to know what the people wished about the reform of the Currency, and to what extent the general opinion went, and would support a Government in going. For it is often a difficult thing to say what a community does want. You live and move among the people; you hear their voices; you read their newspapers; you talk to them, and they answer you. But it is a special gift to be able, all the while, to hit off the true flow of the public feeling, as distinct from some eddying current. Some men have the gift of always gauging the direction of the drift; others, the aptitude for always missing it. Crane was far too wary to say anything about the real cause of his visit to the People's Hall; so, rising up and then bending low, as was his habit he made answer to Frankfort—

‘It is proud I am to see your Honer, and I hope your Honer is in good health as before. Just coming along from Mick’s here, being a bit tired like—coming along—we slipped in and were having a drop of something soft.’

‘And who spoke, Crane? Fine speeches, I expect. We only came in at the end, just now.’

‘Who spoke, your Honer? The speeches? Yes, your Honer, they were splendid indeed; the Honourable Mr. Stoker and other distinguished gentlemen of the House. We were admiring them down here, your Honer; that we were, indeed.’

‘Why then, Crane, you are for free Currency and all the rest of it, are you?’ remarked Frankfort, in a casual way.

‘Currency, yer Honer?’

‘Yes, this Currency reform—free silver, Government notes, and so on.’

‘Silver and notes, your Honer?’ Crane repeated in an inquiring tone. He was thinking how he could best avoid any specific declaration of his views upon the subject.

‘Yes, Mr. Crane. The Professor here means, I suppose,’ interposed Myles Dillon, ‘that, as you admired those splendid speeches so much——’

‘Yes, your Honer, that is just what I was saying—splendid speeches indeed; never saw finer speeches, and the cheering and clapping and applause and benefactions of all the people up there round about the platform, who could hear what was going on. Down here we could not hear the disquisitions upon all the abstruse points, being so low down in the hall here, having only come in to get a drop of something soft, as I was saying to your Honer.’

Crane stopped for a moment, and then it struck him that perhaps he might get some useful information for Mr. Lavender, so he went on—

‘Perhaps your Honer heard some of the important things that Mr. Stoker and the other honourable gentlemen were saying now. They would be quite simple to your Honer. Yes, your Honer could explain them easy now.’

‘Oh no, Crane; as I say, we came in late. The speeches were just over. How are they all up at the Bureau?’

'Thanking your Honer, they are as well as could be, considering ; only His Excellency the Minister is so dreadful busy with all the work — writing out the laws, and settling those abstruse water questions and deputations. And it's a big deputation he may be expecting, as the session comes round, with your Honer about the Reservoir ?'

'That is all right, Crane. Good-bye. I will be up at the Bureau some day soon, with a couple of deputations behind me.'

'And it's welcome your Honer will be, deputation or no deputation,' said Crane, bending down as he spoke, and gradually sliding into his chair to resume, with the free-and-easy air of his private life, the argument with Ben Mule.

Myles Dillon and Frankfort spoke little to one another as they walked away up the street. They both had a growing consciousness that this Currency question was assuming graver proportions for Frankfort personally than he, with his direct way of looking at public questions merely upon their own merits, had hitherto realised. When difficulties are impending over us they often seem to scatter premonitory warnings casually about us, and, unnoticed by ourselves, we suddenly find our horizon flecked by the flying scud of the coming storm. Myles forgot the ruffled condition of his own feelings when he first met Frankfort that evening in thinking of the positive and direct manner in which this Currency question, joined now with William Dorland's interest in silver, was menacing his friend. He did not reopen the subject, however. He only gave him a warmer grasp of the hand than usual as they parted, in silent response to his remark—

'Yes, Myles, this Currency business does look threatening. It is plain that it is not the poor people who are getting up all this agitation. And it seems as if Dorland and the University too are involved in it.'

Professor Frankfort's Lectures on Sociology had always attracted a good deal of attention from the public, both on account of their own merits and also because they dealt with subjects that interested a community that was progressive, and also Socialistic, in its tendencies. There was always a number of people who were discussing social prob-

lems, and proposing their own solutions of them. It was the practice of the William Dorland University to admit strangers to the back rows of the lecture-rooms, under regulations sanctioned by the President. The Press were careful to be represented upon any important occasion. There was no doubt that at the opening lecture of the series there would be a full attendance, and that general attention would be directed to the views of the Professor of Sociology upon the now living topic of Money. He had no wish to give the subject in his hands any political aspect; yet it was impossible to deal with it at all without incidentally showing the unsoundness of much that was laid down in public as economic truth. This must always be so where free discussion prevails, if a University is to undertake the teaching of sociological subjects at all. But the popular ideas were his least difficulty. A new element of danger threatened the search after truth, owing to the fact that the heads of the University happened to be in this case, for good reasons of their own, as eager for the success of part at least of the popular programme as were the poorest of the people. Thus there was a combination of the higher influences of society with the lower, owing to this new manifestation of the power of wealth—its power, or assumed power, over intellect and those fountains of knowledge where the authority of intellect was supposed to be supreme.

As Frankfort thought over this novel peril of peoples, which was now being brought home so directly to himself, he for the time forgot his own danger. What an insidious evil would threaten human progress if, under Democracy, money were to claim that dominance over learning which kings and aristocracies had asserted formerly! For it wielded a greater power than they did,—more penetrating, all-pervading, secretly working, silently spreading. The teacher in his college chair and the author who keeps himself free and fearless were really the only untrammelled inquirers after social truth left in modern society. They had no need for the wisdom that is so necessary for the skilful man of affairs—the wisdom of compromise, of give and take, of learning from the times what is fittest, of shunning singularity, of being content with what approaches your ideal, or, better still, having no ideal

to trouble about. A noble ground of vantage truly! The judge dispenses justice for the people before him and for his own time; the teacher of knowledge for all people and all time. He belongs to the Republic of Intellect, which is one and indivisible for all ages and throughout the whole family of man. Frankfort felt how great was the responsibility that such a position carried with it.

On the first day of his lectures there was, as had been expected, a considerable attendance of the public, who sat all around behind the large class of young women and men who were students at the University. He was glad to see that several ladies who held positions in the Woman's Rights Association were present. They were headed by Mrs. Pawsey Peters, who, as we know, held strong views in favour of silver. But even more observed than Mrs. Pawsey Peters was Mrs. Dorland, the wife of the President of the University, who came with her knitting, as of old, and made from time to time vigorous digs with her needles to relieve her feelings when the lecturer laid down propositions that were contrary to those that Mr. Dorland held. Mr. M'Ivor was there, having come to escort Mrs. M'Ivor, who continued to take a deep interest in free silver, to which she had already pledged her vote and that of her household. They happened to come in near to where Secker and Mons. Froessolecque were sitting together. The old Frenchman greeted M'Ivor in his most effusive manner, and gave up his own chair to Mrs. M'Ivor, while he sat behind. The position of Secker upon the Currency question was still peculiar, not to say critical. He did not want to commit the State Workers to the new proposals, and he continued to avoid doing this without breaking with the *Sweet-Brier*. Every one could not have managed this, but he did. The difficulty of getting the Central Executive of the State Workers' Association first to meet and then to come to a decision stood him in good stead. Secker drew certain conclusions from the cordiality that was displayed between Mons. Froessolecque and the M'Ivors, which he knew was of recent origin. He connected Dorland with it directly, arguing from what he would do if he were in Dorland's place. But, in fact, the proprietor of the *Sweet-Brier* was convinced from the figures and returns

that M'Ivor gave him that a rise in the value of silver would largely increase the employment that the mines would give, and also cause a rise in wages. He believed that all that was wanted to bring this about was appropriate legislation. There were several other men of the Press and politicians at the end of the room. Du Tell, who had come early to see Frankfort about a point in the Riparian Rights Bill, which was still unfinished, naturally looked into the lecture room for a while. But he seemed to be chiefly occupied with observing how the politicians and the men of the press took the enunciation of the principles of a State Currency as they were laid down by Professor Frankfort.

He dealt generally with the subject in his opening address. What was the true function of money? Aristotle had more than two thousand years ago defined 'money to be a kind of merchandise designed to facilitate the exchange between other kinds of merchandise.' True money must have value in itself. Coins were not merely signs of value; they had value themselves. A money of pure convention was now an impossible thing in civilised countries, and certainly in such a State as theirs. As a fact, gold and silver, and, for minor uses, copper and other metals, were accepted the world over as 'money.' Mankind agreed to accept them as the standard of value and the medium of exchange. Inside all communities there were issues of paper as part of the currency. The essence of these was that they should at any time, and at once, be taken back by whoever issued them, and coin given for them. In a great national crisis there might be for a while inconvertible paper—paper the holders of which were not entitled to have it turned into coin—but the ruling principle was that issues of paper based upon anything but coin must fail, because the notes could not be instantly turned into cash. The security of the State and all its wealth was good, but not sufficiently 'liquid.' It was for the Government of each country to determine the conditions of the issue of notes, whether by itself or by private agencies. The function of money in any community was to circulate and exchange the products of its lands and industries. A certain sum, and no more, was required for this purpose—proportioned to the

wealth of the community and the amount of products that it had to circulate or to exchange. A poor country wanted little money, for it had little to circulate or to exchange with other countries. A rich country, otherwise. Increasing the currency did not of itself increase the riches. The increase in the production of wealth was the first and great thing; and the currency could be easily adapted afterwards to the needs of the increased production. If a country required, say, fifty millions of a currency composed of gold, silver, and convertible paper to do its business, and you were to issue fifty millions more of inconvertible paper, then you would have one hundred millions to do the work of fifty millions, and thus fifty millions would not be wanted, and would go elsewhere. But, as the paper was of no use outside the country, the gold which was accepted everywhere would go. Hence the tendency of a paper currency was to send gold away. Its effects would be first discerned in the rise in the value of the specie, and next in the increased price of things generally. Where there are two kinds of currency in a country, the wage-earning part of the people were apt to be paid in the inferior kind. Frankfort explained at some length these different heads of his subject, and, in concluding, stated that in subsequent lectures he would deal more in detail with the distinctive characteristics of gold, silver, and paper as money: the standard of the measure of value, the credit system, the question of bimetallism; and also the question whether any one State can give a special value to one of the precious metals without the co-operation of other States.

Full reports of the lecture appeared in the papers the next morning, and fierce were the criticisms that it excited, first in the press and afterwards among those who get their opinions from the press. Though no reference had been made in it to the proposed reform of the Currency in Excelsior, the principles which were advanced were clearly opposed to the proposals for a Government note issue, based upon the wealth of the Province, as had been proposed. And then it had been coolly announced that these principles, which thus, it was declared, defied public opinion, were to be more fully developed in future lectures. The *Sweet-Brier* denounced not only the principles and their author, but also

the University for maintaining a teacher of unjust views upon the vital question of money. The *Rising Sun* wrote one of its seemingly strongly popular articles ; which, however, was found in the end to be of a character that was quite non-committal.

The *News Letter* vigorously defended the lecturer, and maintained that it was not only his right, but his duty, to teach the economic principles which he believed to be true. And at the same time it contended that his views were in the main sound. A number of quiet-going people who, though they were in a minority, were not without weight in Excelsior, agreed with the *News Letter*, and gave Frankfort credit for his fearless and explicit statement of his opinions. He did not hear much of these quiet people's applause, as they did not take the trouble to make themselves heard in the way that detractors do. They enjoy their just feelings in private. In democratic States once popular feeling is roused upon any subject, the public man who rejects the accepted creed is apt to be put out of court altogether. Frankfort was just now in that position.

Among his letters the next morning he found one from his agent at Brassville, Louis Quiggle. It ran thus :—

DOVECOT COTTAGE, BRASSVILLE,
3rd May 18—

Dear and Respected Sir—Electors here discussing your important delivery *re* Currency, and principles thereof. Personally do not profess to understand details said question. But in view general election end of current year, positively essential to keep her free a bit, pending popular decision *re* Silver, etc. etc. Have to report this district generally favours proposed reform Currency. Already speculations as to Free Currency candidate next time. Meeks strong for State notes and silver. Mr. and Mrs. Gazelle Pride give to-night joint lecture "Bonded to Shylock." But Jacob Shumate objects till honest men in Government to work out the new currency. No making out Jacob. Would respectfully suggest early visit and address upon general question, keeping her off the wind a bit.

Mrs. Quiggle says that she votes free silver straight, but sends kind inquiries, and accept ditto from yours respectfully,

LOUIS QUIGGLE.

E. F. Frankfort, Esq., M.H.R.

Smiling to himself at the friendly hints of his faithful

agent, his eye was caught, as he put down Quiggle's letter, by the direction upon one of the envelopes in a handwriting that was always cheering to him to see. It was the handwriting of Eilly Lamborn. It gave him a sense of pleasure as he thought of his loved one, and knew that she thought of him. Many as were the letters that he had written to her, and she to him, since their engagement, his joy at getting each new one was not lessened. And then her letters always seemed to him so natural, and, without any special pretension to wisdom, so sensible. Soon he read as follows :—

THE BLOCKS, 4th May 18—

My dear Edward—I must write to tell you all the people here are talking about your lecture about Money. I am quite pleased ; but some object to what you said, as, I suppose, people always will. I wish you had been here yesterday when we had Mr. Hedger, the lawyer, and Mr. Nickerson, the schoolmaster, and some other people to lunch. Well, well, they began talking about it, of course. And says Mr. Nickerson, 'He is right enough upon some points, but he is wrong in saying that gold, silver, and copper were the only metal money. They used iron for money in Sparta.' And Mr. Hedger, you know, always tries to make fun of the old schoolmaster, so he asked, looking so grave all the while—'Had they bullock-drays in Sparta, Nickerson?' 'Bullock-drays!' said the other; 'well, why, what has that got to do with it?' 'Oh, only to carry their purse when they went shopping,' answered Mr. Hedger. It was quite too funny to see the way they looked at each other, and they all laughed at Mr. Nickerson. But, really, it seems Mr. Hedger's fun was wrong, as Mr. Nickerson explained to one or two of us who would listen; for the object of the heavy iron, he said, was that none of them should have very much money at all. But it was so comical. Now, I must tell you that the poor people say they want the new currency as money is so scarce. I was at Jacob Shumate's cottage the other day to see his little boy Popsey, who has got a cold and was ill with the croup; and he and Martha Dobbs, who came in to tidy up the place, kept arguing and talking about it at such a rate as you never heard. I did not follow them very well, as I was busy fitting on the warm vest that I had brought for Popsey; but they seemed to be both saying that there must be more money, but Jacob objected that he wanted something else first, and Mrs. Dobbs said she should vote for it at once, so as to get it soon. Will your lecture make enemies for you at the election? I hope not, as I must have you near the dear Blocks. Father says that it may, but that it does not matter, as the Reservoir will be the great thing next

time if the Government can get a loan of money in Europe. What a long letter this is, and all about politics! but then the politics are all about you. You know how much I always did admire you speaking your mind truly whatever happened. I do so like a true man, and so I am, with father's kind regards, your ever attached,

EILLY LAMBORN.

On the back of the last page was this short note :—

Dear Frankfort—Eilly lets me add a line here. Take care of Dorland. He and I are old friends, but he wants his own way, and will have it if he can. He was nearly getting the Reservoir over the Divide. I expect it will be same about silver. Awkward customer to tackle. People here all for free money too.—Yours truly,

THOMAS LAMBORN.

What a happy, hopeful feeling Eilly's letter gave him! It was like a piece of sunshine breaking out from the clouds in the middle of a gray day. But these comforting gleams of joy often flit over us all too briefly, and sometimes just before the dark cloud is coming up. There was that ominous difficulty about the University that seemed to be closing round him. He put Eilly's letter into his pocket for safe keeping, and taking up the next one, sure enough, there was the broad crest of the University upon it. He seemed to instinctively feel that this must be the very thing that Lamborn was referring to. So oddly at times do things seem to be brought together by some power in the background.

And this was the note from the University :—

THE WILLIAM DORLAND UNIVERSITY,
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, 4th May 18—

Dear Professor Frankfort—Could you call in to see me here for a few minutes' conversation upon a matter that concerns us both, and the University too.

I will be in at nine o'clock to-morrow morning, and hope that time may suit your convenience.—I remain, dear sir, yours respectfully,

WILLIAM DORLAND.

He had little doubt that the interview asked for had reference to the Currency question, and the method of his treatment of it, as it was shown in his opening lecture.

And so, in fact, it had. If he was clear as to his duty, Dorland was equally clear as to his rights. He was not a sordid man. His munificent endowment of the University showed that. What would be popularly called his 'money-grabbing'—his vast operations that so often resulted in large accessions of wealth—were to him only another form of acquiring power and exercising it. His ideas of business, though clear and fair, as he understood them, were not lofty. He had at first some expectation that when Frankfort, one of the professors of the University, went into the Legislature, he, the President, might expect to find in him an exponent, to some extent at least, of the policy of the College authorities, of whom he, William Dorland, was the chief and the spokesman. It so happened that the first important public matter that Frankfort had to consider—the Reservoir—was one upon which the President's opinion fully agreed with his own, and Dorland had warmly praised his independence in refusing to advocate its being constructed at Brassville. There was no doubt that putting it there would have been a flagrant political job; but it was also the case that Dorland's mining interests upon this occasion coincided with those of the public. He would be materially assisted if the Reservoir were put in the true site across the Dividing Range which Blanksby, the Water Bureau engineer, had pointed out in his own peculiar manner when Frankfort first inquired into the subject at the Department. While, if he could have got it placed at Silveracre itself, it would have been another fortune to him. Dorland's view of the action of our politician upon that occasion was a mixed one. He knew that it was honest politically; yet this sheer, mere political honesty was an unfamiliar idea to the President's mind. He had not had an extensive experience of it. Generally there was, he held, some little alloy to temper the extreme purity of the metal. Was that alloy in this case the wish of Frankfort to stand well with the President of the University?

If, however, he cherished expectations based upon this idea, they were never fulfilled. But, as he said to himself, no decisive occasion had yet occurred for testing them. And as to political co-operation, Dorland was too clear-headed, and too fair a man of business, not to admit to

himself that there was no term of the contract between Frankfort and the University that provided for any such co-operation. But with regard to the teaching in the University itself the case seemed to his clear but commonplace mind to stand upon a different footing. There they might expect from their officers at least so much respect for the views of the ruling body as would be involved in avoiding any teaching that would be hostile to those views; certainly to the extent of not dealing at all with that branch of any social subject with regard to which difference of opinion existed. Such, he thought, might fairly be expected from a teacher in his University. And no doubt the governing body of the institution was entitled to protect itself. Were they to give their money to have principles taught which were injurious to the community? It was plain that they must have some rights in the matter of overseeing what was taught in their halls, else doctrines that were subversive of social life might be promulgated, and, as it would seem, under their own authority and sanction. What were the Board of Overseers for but to overlook all that went on in the University; but especially its teaching? And of the scope of its rights and the manner of exercising them, who could be the judges but themselves?

When Frankfort went up the next morning to the President's rooms, the glittering books, the burnished furniture, the spick-and-span busts, the clear vase of water, the flowers from the University garden, the too striking photograph of the President that made the outline of his features look so strong, and even hard, all caught his eye in a moment, and seemed to recall his recollection to the previous conversations which he had had with Dorland about the rights and duties of the professors of the University. The remembrance also just crossed his mind, came flitting back to him, of that interview at which he had been inaugurated into the perplexities of public life by the President's abrupt and forcible condemnation of the Reservoir. Was he now going to have another stirring experience?

He found the President going through his heap of University letters, which he promptly put upon one side as he moved out his chair from the table, turned round to face his

visitor, and shook hands in his old, staid, and, though not effusive, yet not unfriendly manner. He spoke at once, and went directly to the point.

‘I am thankful to you for calling, Professor. I wanted to have a quiet talk with you—quite confidential between us. I am afraid there will be trouble about your Currency views.’

‘Trouble about my views?’

‘Yes. The Board of Overseers think that it would be sound policy for the State to have a certain issue of State notes, based upon a silver reserve. It would be good for the country, and it would be good for the University—indeed necessary.’ Here Dorland looked away from Frankfort at the busts on the overmantel. ‘Yes, necessary for the University; that is, if we are to maintain our present teaching staff and usefulness.’

‘Well, Mr. President, so far I do not see the trouble that you allude to.’

‘Why, it is this, you see. Your teaching in their Sociological Chair condemns any such course as unsound and wrong. So, then, what is to be done?’

‘That is a question more for yourself and the Board than for me.’

‘Not wholly so, Professor.’

‘Certainly. So far as I am concerned, the question is not a doubtful one. So long as I am in the Chair of Sociology my duty is plain, to teach the true view of the different social questions that are dealt with.’

‘Oh, certainly; but what true view?’

‘The truth as I hold it.’

‘Well, there now, Professor, we come right upon the point,’ said Dorland, settling himself in his chair with the air of a man who was willing to consider the question reasonably. ‘What about the truth as the Board holds it? You can teach things one way, and you can teach them another way. A lecturer upon these social topics is to some extent an advocate. Surely there must be some one to judge—somewhere some independent judge of the proper line to take upon, look ye, a public, not a mere scholastic, question. Else we might be maintaining in our University a Chair that was doing harm.’

‘As I say, Mr. President, all that is for you and the Board to consider. I know that my course is to teach true principles.’

Dorland undoubtedly wished to come to some amicable arrangement with his professor, so long as he could carry his point substantially and stop the dangerous course of lectures. So he was not put off with Frankfort’s decided answer. He never minded his personal feelings so long as he could have his way. He assumed his most conciliatory look, which was, however, somewhat rigid in its outline, but yet showed a desire to please, and said :

‘But have you thought over this, Professor? Perhaps I take you sudden-like. You don’t say—to be sure you don’t—that if a professor were to teach, well, that property was robbery, as some people say, you know, and that, according to true sociological principles, we should have all things in common—you would not say that the Board should have no voice to forbid what was injurious to the community?’

‘I am afraid that it is scarcely profitable to continue the discussion upon such lines as you suggest. You are the judge of your rights and I of mine. No one will deny your right to prohibit within your walls what is injurious to the Social State.’

‘Well, you see, that is our case now.’

‘By no means. It is the teaching of false principles that is injurious. The truth is always beneficial, popular or unpopular.’

Dorland gave a slight, dissatisfied laugh as he raised his arm in a deprecating manner.

‘We are sailing in a circle, Professor. We come round to who is to be the judge.’

‘Well, you cannot expect me to give up the right to judge for myself.’

‘Perhaps the Board may say that they cannot give up their right to judge either.’

‘In that case we should have come to an issue, Mr. President.’

‘Yes, yes ; but I have no liking to see things go awry this way in the University. It is disappointing, that it is.’

Then, looking up at the oak panelling of the bookcases, as if puzzling something out in his mind, he continued :

‘Let us consider a bit. There is that suggestion of old lawyer Alleyn—one of our Overseers—that the Board should have the opportunity of perusing, as he calls it, the draft of lectures before they are delivered.’ Dorland smiled at the technical term as he spoke.

Frankfort smiled too, and shook his head.

‘No?’ said Dorland, facing round at him with a look of composed inquiry. ‘But there is this to be thought of. You are only just beginning this course of lectures. Could not this part of the subject be postponed a while till this excitement and the Currency crisis pass over? They come in, you notice, just now as if they were meant for the crisis. That is like making them political, you see. You don’t want that?’

‘Certainly not. It is quite accidental that this crisis and the subject of Money in the sociological course come together. The difficulty is that, if I were to stop now, it would not be accidental. It would be a desertion of duty upon my part, and be known to the public as such. That is the difficulty, Mr. President, and it is a decisive one.’

‘Well, ye see, we have a difficulty too—the Board of Overseers have. The period of your first engagement ends next month. The new Chair of Sociology was rather an experiment. Are we justified in renewing it—as we had certainly hoped under certain circumstances to do—if we find our revenues failing—the failure, too, assisted by action of our own—like the views on Currency that we are teaching through our Chair. That is the question, ye see. You can see it yourself.’

‘I can only repeat, Mr. President, that is a question for you and the Board of Overseers.’

Dorland was too good a judge of men not to know from Frankfort’s manner that the prospect of arriving at some quiet compromise was small. He was disappointed, but he never lost his temper in business. So he only replied, with some extra gravity in his voice :

‘We seem to have come to a full stop. And I don’t

know what the Overseers will say to carrying on the Chair in the face of the decline in their investments.'

As they parted he shook hands with Frankfort with no diminution of his usual friendliness, and as the door closed after him set himself to think resolutely for a few minutes what should now be done. Something must be done. It would never do to have these lectures continued in *his* University. And was it not his? Had he not founded it? Did not his money support it, and money drawn from this very silver, the helping of which was to be proclaimed from its walls to be a pernicious delusion? Yet the thing required careful treatment. William Dorland, though not a working politician, had enough of the political instinct to be aware that too arbitrary methods might excite a feeling of reaction, and so weaken the popular support upon which he relied to carry the cause of free silver.

After a few minutes' consideration, he determined that before going further he would consult his old friend Alderman Jortin; all the more so as he had resolved that, in whatever action was taken at the Board of Overseers, Jortin should be the man who would ostensibly take the lead. The Alderman always had worked with him at the Board, and now his co-operation would be more necessary than on perhaps any previous occasion. So he telephoned to the Anvil Works to know if Alderman Jortin was in his office, and whether he would be able to see him if he called in during the morning. Soon the well-marked, gentleman-like tones of Robert d'Ade's voice flitted along the line, and informed him that the Alderman was then in, and would be happy to see Mr. Dorland at any time. Half an hour later he was at the works, and was met in the outer office by the Alderman's grandson, who bowed the important visitor into his grandfather's presence in the inner room in a manner that was at once dignified, as far as he himself was concerned, and also deferential, as was becoming to such an old and important friend of Jortin's.

As Robert d'Ade closed the door behind him, going back to his desk in the other room, he shut in two of the strongest and most clear-headed men of business in Excelsior; men who were cool, calculating, reasonable

according to their lights (which it is essential to be if you would ensure broad success in business), clear in seeing their advantage, and resolute in pursuing it. But, as it is not given to men to be always wise, so it falls to the lot of few men to be wise all round. The cleverest may be very keen in regard to things that are within their own ken, but that ken may be a limited one. And men of the world though these two were, there were broader phases even of worldly things that they failed to grasp or appreciate. With regard to one at least of them we will remember how strikingly this defect was exhibited, if we recall the tragic episode that marked the early relations between young d'Ade and his grandfather.

There was no prolonged greeting between the two commercial magnates, as Dorland placed his chair at one side of the table where Jortin was sitting, the very picture of composure; but with also, as the keen observer would judge, a certain alertness of observation lurking in the calm countenance.

'I have just given you a look in, Jortin, about a difficulty that has cropped up at the University; thought I would have a talk before anything comes before the Board.'

'Surely.'

'It's this way. You see, the Professor of Sociology, Frankfort, is lecturing on Money, and he makes out that the State notes and free silver are all wrong, according to the books, and so on. Well, we know that the State notes won't come to much, but the silver is serious. Something may be done for it; the experiment alone would send up values. But if his lectures go on, we don't know what a lot of the better-off class may begin to think. And we don't want to have them against us.'

Jortin, looking straight before him, only said:

'Speak to him.'

'I have spoken to him, but he stands upon his rights and dignity as a professor, and that sort of thing—judge upon the bench sort of business. Now Ridler, the English Literature Professor, talks differently. He says that the Overseers have the right to control the policy of lectures. He is a sensible man is Ridler, and sound on silver.'

Jortin waved his hand slowly, as was his custom when something serious was under his consideration, and then, turning upon Dorland the clear eyes which even at his age were superior to the aid of glasses, said in his quiet, resolute tone—

‘Dismiss him.’

He had just before touched the button of his electric bell, as his eye caught a letter upon the table that he had forgotten to send to post. Robert d’Ade was in the room in a moment, and took away the letter. As he was coming in Dorland made answer, with a touch of banter in his tone—

‘That is all very well for you to say, Jortin. But you are rather a stern customer. We are not all as strong as you are. We can’t afford to be.’

Dorland had no thought of referring to the old grim affair of the prosecution of the grandson, but the coming in of Robert d’Ade brought it at once to Dorland’s mind and to Jortin’s too. They glanced at one another with that consciousness which comes to two people instantaneously and involuntarily when they each know that the same idea has struck them both, but is not acknowledged or avowed between them. Jortin was not in the least discomposed, nor did he stay to consider whether Dorland had intended the reference or not. He only took up his precept again—

‘Dismiss him. Why not?’

‘Well, ye see, Jortin, we must consult public opinion, to some extent, anyway.’

‘Public opinion does not trouble about college professors.’

‘But the school people and literary folk and some of the Press would make a fuss.’

‘Did they build the University?’

‘No, to be sure not. But really, Jortin, we must look at *facts*. A lot of people would say that you should not interfere with the teaching of the professors.’

‘No supervision? He may teach that property is robbery.’

‘Why, that is just what I said to him. But we need not rush at the fence if there is a gate open at the side. Why not discontinue the Sociological Chair?—only an experiment

—no funds available to continue. And the term of Frankfort's fixed engagement will be out next month.'

'Quite so. Very well,' said Jortin, who was always ready to give up his first idea, if another one that was better for gaining his object was proposed.

'Will you move at the Board then?' said Dorland, coming to the next head of the business.

'Certainly,' replied Jortin.

And with a mutual nod the two men of affairs parted. William Dorland, as he walked away, felt satisfied that they had adopted the right course. He was averse to an avowed dismissal of a professor on account of his opinions, not that he objected to the thing himself, but because he felt that it would be unwise to take a greater responsibility than was necessary for carrying his point. So long as he got Frankfort out his object was gained. Nay, if he could have induced him to lecture upon something else he would have been better pleased still. You need not pay a shilling for a thing if you can get it for sixpence, he used to say.

He talked over the whole question at a private meeting of the Board of Overseers. Though it was nominally elected by graduates who had taken the more advanced degrees, Dorland managed to have Overseers returned in whom he had confidence. And he was not too exclusive in the matter of his patronage to candidates, so long as they were fairly safe men. He did not seek to have them all his own creatures, though there were some who came under that description. He never missed a meeting of the Board himself, nor did his creatures either, and as he was perfect master of all the affairs of the University, he was enabled to direct things in his own way, without any undue appearance of dictation. What he proposed to do was, as a general rule, in fact the proper thing to do.

In this matter, however, he did not take a prominent part, even at the private meeting. He sat quietly in the chair while his friend the Alderman brought the question forward. The College Bursar had prepared a clear statement showing the falling-off in the revenues of the University, which Jortin read. Also he mentioned the fact that the original term of Professor Frankfort's engagement would be completed

early next month. They must economise. They would most fairly begin with the latest addition to the University curriculum, the Sociological Lectures. He proposed to move when the Board met in public—

‘That the Board of Overseers regret that, owing to the decline in the revenues of the University, they are unable to continue the Chair of Sociology.’

He need say no more, as the figures spoke for themselves. He sat back in his chair, and looked quietly round the table, as if on the chance of any one wishing to say something.

It was understood by several members that such a proposal was contemplated. Some to whom Dorland had spoken were in favour of it. Some had no clear ideas of their own about it. The direct action of Jortin brought the issue straight up to them. Overseer John Baskin, who was a large holder of mining interests at Silveracre, looked round at Jortin’s composed countenance (he was sitting at the same side of the table), and exclaimed, in a tone that was at once inquiring and confidential—

‘Right you are, Alderman, and your figures too! But that is not the whole of it, is it? There is this Currency and silver business to the fore as well?’

‘Incidentally,’ replied Jortin, slightly turning round to look at him.

‘Ah, just so; and I am with you, right through. If new sorts of doctrines are taught here—new theories, social, financial, or other—who, I would like to know, are answerable in the premises therefor? It don’t lie on us to say, “Oh, we are extremely sorry, but it is all Professor So-and-so’s way of teaching.” No, that’s too thin for us to offer to the public. If we oversee the University, we must oversee what is taught in it.’

Jortin had not, in fact, expressed any views upon the further development of the subject that Overseer Baskin had brought forward; but, from his intimacy with Dorland and the manner in which he had assented to the inquiry addressed to him, it was clear enough that the real motive of his motion was not that which appeared on the face of it. Upon this tacit assumption the discussion was continued, and soon it appeared that a large majority of the Board agreed with the

Alderman. They resented the claim of any professor in their University to teach what he chose upon questions that concerned public interests and political issues. It did not appear to most of them, staid business men as they were, that the matter admitted of much question. And even those who might have entertained some doubt about the Board's interfering in such a case felt themselves overborne by the general tone of unanimity that prevailed among the leading men who sat around the horseshoe table.

The only discordant note which was struck, and that was a feeble one, was by old Mr. Corbitt, the retired judge, who felt that he wanted to make some objection, but did not see quite how to do it. He began to discuss the conditions that justified 'amotion from office,' as he termed it, and was going on to consider how far they existed in the present case. But the solid business men became restive, and even Jortin moved round uneasily in his chair. The President had sat intent and observant during the short discussion, and now he observed, looking at Corbitt in a deferential manner—

'I see the soundness of what our respected colleague says, but not exactly its relevancy. The motion that Alderman Jortin proposes does not suggest the amotion of any one. It only says that we should not continue what we cannot pay for.'

This lawyer-like objection appealed to the legal instincts of the judge, and he could only reply—

'Very true—very true indeed. But you see I was only alluding to what we mean, you know.'

'What we mean is what we say, according to law principles, I think,' replied the President conclusively, folding up some papers before him.

The general feeling of the Board was plainly in favour of Alderman Jortin's proposal, and, according to true Trade Union principles, once the majority agreed the minority acquiesced, and the Board faced the public with a united front. When they held their open meeting, Jortin simply moved his motion, and cited the figures that were necessary to prove the need of retrenchment. There was no discussion, and the President declared it carried.

The Secretary to the Board wrote in official terms a

letter to Frankfort, enclosing him a copy of the resolution that had been adopted, thanking him in the name of the Board for the services he had rendered to the University, and expressing its regret that it was unable to renew the engagement. The real motive for the Board's action had not been openly avowed. Frankfort felt bound to respect the President's stipulation for regarding their conversation as confidential. So he simply acknowledged the letter, and the thing was done. In the midst of this very democratic community there was an authority over intellect as pretentious and engrossing as that of kings in the old time.

When, the next day, the newspapers reported the action of the Board in discontinuing the Sociological Chair, it excited attention and interest, but no general indignation; though the real purpose was guessed at. Some thinking men condemned it as an interference with the freedom of intellect, and Frankfort's class of students stood by him with all the enthusiasm of youth. Young people soon get devoted to a teacher who is able to enlist their sympathies in what he teaches, and the feeling of sympathy radiates on to himself. His class vowed that they would hire one of the lecture rooms of the Free Library, and keep on their studies there under his direction. But this enthusiasm was owing to his personal influence, and was necessarily limited in its scope. In so far as the action of the Board concerned the public question, men approved it or condemned it as it affected the side which they had espoused. But the general public did not appear to take much interest in the matter. Jortin's idea that they would not care much about college professors was correct. They were not sensitive to lofty claims for the independence of intellect. They rather admired that sort of intellect which comes to the same practical conclusions that plain people generally arrive at. Thus the popular feeling for the new Currency for the present diverted attention from this example of the despotism of wealth over intellect.

The *News Letter* alone of the newspapers vigorously denounced the conduct of the University Overseers as being at once shabby and despotic, and as an attempt to poison in the furrow the seeds of free thought among the people. Its emphatic declaration that the episode was the most dangerous

exhibition of the power of money that had yet been seen in Excelsior after a time began to make an impression upon many who did not feel keenly the claim for the sovereign freedom of intellect, but were sensitive to the all-pervading influence of the Silver power.

This dominance of wealth over intellect is one of those problems that Democracy has yet to grapple with. There is nothing new in the evil itself; what is new are the conditions under which it now presents itself. Intellect has never been wholly free from the control of power. Religion itself has taken service under it. Have not churches had permanent forms of prayer for the 'most religious king,' though none can tell what sort the king will be? Did not colleges on bounteous kings depend, and teach what kings approved of? And when Democracy and money come to the throne, shall they have no allegiance from learning?

Let us read this:—

'In bearing your Majesty in mind, as is frequently my custom and duty, I have been often struck with admiration, apart from your other gifts of virtue and fortune, at the surprising development of that part of your nature which philosophers call intellectual. The deep and broad capacity of your mind, the grasp of your memory, the quickness of your apprehension, the penetration of your judgment, your lucid method of arrangement, and easy facility of speech—at such extraordinary endowments I am forcibly reminded of the saying of Plato, that all science is but remembrance. In no person so much as your Majesty does this opinion appear more fully confirmed, your soul being apt to kindle at the intrusion of the slightest object; and even at the spark of a thought foreign to the purpose to burst into flame. God has endowed your Majesty with a mind capable of grasping the largest subjects and comprehending the least, though such an instrument seems an impossibility in nature. As regards your readiness of speech, I am reminded of that saying of Tacitus concerning Augustus Caesar—"Augusto profluens ut quae principem virum deceret, eloquentia fuit." Your Majesty's eloquence is indeed royal, streaming and branching out in nature's fashion as from a fountain copious and elegant, original and inimitable. And as, in these things

which concern your Crown and family, virtue seems to contend with fortune—your Majesty being possessed of a virtuous disposition and a prosperous Government, a virtuous observance of the duties of the conjugal state with most blessed and happy fruit of marriage, a virtuous and most Christian desire of peace at a time when contemporary princes seem no less inclined to harmony—so likewise in intellectual gifts there appears as great a contention between your Majesty's natural talents and the universality and perfection of your learning. Nor, indeed, would it be easy to find any monarch since the Christian era who could bear any comparison with your Majesty in the variety and depth of your erudition. Let any one run over the whole line of kings, and he will agree with me. And the more since in your Majesty's heart are united all the treasures of Sacred or profane knowledge, so that, like Hermes, your Majesty is invested with a triple glory, being distinguished no less by the power of a king than by the illumination of a priest and the learning of a philosopher.'

Who writes this, and to whom? Some mercenary courtier, some shameless, begging penny-a-liner of past times, some venal politician, fit ancestor to the vendible demagogue of later days? By no means. It is thus, with some further laudations omitted, that imperial Bacon addresses the despicable King James I. in the luminous pages of *The Advancement of Learning*. And can we wonder that Power, in whatever form it survives, will still claim its tribute of intellect?

But in time the suspicion that the great capitalists had too much to do with the Currency movement began to spread quietly, though as yet the feeling in favour of paper and free silver rendered it a risky matter for any public man or newspaper to speak plainly about it. Still the *Sweet-Brier* itself began to write in a quieter tone. At first Mons. Froessolecque had written leading articles in his most slashing style, applauding the action of the Board of Overseers in getting rid of Frankfort and his lectures at one stroke, and had loudly called upon Sir Donald to read the signs of the times, free the people from the incubus of gold, and let them enjoy the bounty of a free Currency. After this

early day's outburst, there were for a while some rather tamer deliverances, followed by a short interval of silence, and then a leading article appeared, written evidently by the pen of a ready writer, and in a different tone from the previous ones; though it still loudly asserted the right of the people to cheap money. Men noticed the difference, but they did not understand how it came about.

It came about this way. Mr. Norrie Secker, the Secretary of the Executive of the National State Workers' Association, had from the first been doubtful, as the reader knows, about the desirability of the changes in the Currency that were advocated, and particularly about the issue of Government paper, of which he saw at once the State Workers would be the first and largest recipients. He had not the slightest objection to the ousting of Frankfort, but his native political instinct told him that if this act could be connected in the popular mind with the idea that the millionaire mine-owners were really at the bottom of the movement, a reaction might set in that would not only discredit the proposed reform of the Currency, which he had never regarded with much favour, but would damage the Populist party and the *Sweet-Brier*, with whom he was acting. Upon no account would he break with them. He instinctively belonged to them, and would rather be wrong with them than right with others. But he would do his best to keep them on the winning side. When he observed the early vehemence of the *Sweet-Brier*, he began to think that it was time for him to interpose with a little good advice before he and the State workers were perhaps entangled in this new scheme for money. It so happened that the ardent Frenchman was also getting restive under the continued inaction of Secker and the State workers upon this vital subject. When, therefore, he called in at the Secretary's office one morning about this time, to urge action upon his part, the two men were really at cross purposes, though only one of them realised this when they met. The Frenchman began impetuously :

'My friend, my dear friend, I have just looked in to ask when we may have the high pleasure of one explicit declaration from the great Secretary himself, guide and philosopher for the State workers, and from his illustrious Executive,

upon the question of the day, the hour, nay, the minute—free money, emancipation from the banks and the gold barons.'

Secker thought to himself what a good opportunity this was for modifying the impetuosity of the *Sweet-Brier*. He made a composed reply :

'Really, my dear sir, I am not in the least degree surprised at your wanting to know. It is a most natural inquiry. Our Executive is a difficult body to bring to a decision. It truly is so. They meet again next week.'

'Ah, bah! we know who carries the brains. You know too. The question is, what do you say that they will say when they do meet?'

'My dear sir, I don't deny that I have some influence with the Major, our worthy President; but we both depend upon the Executive; the Executive again depends upon the Workers; the Workers again depend for support upon the people; yes, we all come down to the people.'

'Most true—a most true remark, Mr. Secker; and you know what the people say. Say? why, they are thundering at the door.'

Secker received with calmness the rising excitement of Mons. Froessolecque. He said :

'To be quite candid with you, as you know is my way, if you ask my humble opinion—my impression is that public opinion is rather at a standstill, for the moment, upon the subject. There is a slight lull in public feeling. The gale does not blow so freshly.'

He stooped down before him as he said this, to puff away some dust from the corner of his desk, taking the opportunity to throw at the Frenchman a keener glance than usually marked his composed countenance.

'Take me with you, my friend. Take me with you. I do not follow nor apprehend. Do you say that the people do not desire State notes, free silver, cheap money, industry free from the incubus of——'

'Never fear, my dear sir, for the cause of free money—cheap money. It is safe, safe in the people's own keeping. I speak only of time—it is a question of time—time how, time when. If you shoot before the time you do not bag your bird.'

'But how are we to wait? What are we to wait for? Do explain, Mr. Secker. What is wanted?' said the Frenchman, extending his hands in an explanatory manner.

'Time is wanted, Mons. Froessolecque. For one thing, time is wanted to assure the people that—why, in fact, to allay any feeling that this movement is at bottom the work of the Silver Kings. What if the idea got started—got abroad that William Dorland and Jortin are pulling the wires, and will reap the profit? It shocks one to think of such a thing.'

'But why thus? Where does this suspicion arise? Are the people not to have cheap money for fear of Dorland and Jortin. Whence, I say, this suspicion?'

'The people, you see, dear sir, are apt to be suspicious. For example, now, the action of the Board of Overseers of the University—the William Dorland University, mind you—though so just, has rather given colour to the idea, you observe. Some of my Executive, too, are not free from this feeling. They don't fancy monied men being to the fore in the affair. They don't, indeed, I do assure you, nor do the Workers, whom they represent. In fact, to speak, as I say, quite plainly, this thing is in danger of getting twisted in an ugly way right about.'

And Secker gave a sharp swing round in his revolving chair, as if to whirl himself out of the perplexity of the subject.

The puzzled and disappointed air of the sincere and more simple-minded Frenchman would have amused Secker had he felt free just then to enjoy any lighter moments. Mons. Froessolecque kept silence for a while. At last he broke out—

'Well, I never! Who would run a newspaper—serving the public! I would take chain gang first, picking oakum, rather.'

Then, pulling himself together, he returned to the charge.

'But I do aver, Mr. Secker, say what you will, that the people do want free money, and cheap money. Look at the great meeting—resolutions unanimous, men and women speaking, general enthusiasm. I say that the people are

pledged to reform, and the *Sweet-Brier* is pledged to the people. Betray them? Never, while Baptiste Froessolecque is trusted by them.'

'I quite agree with you. You put the case correctly,' quietly remarked Secker.

'Well, then, why delay? Where is it? I will sound the tocsin daily, if the people do want rousing.'

'It is this way, my dear sir; you don't quite note what I say. At present we are in a patch of slack water. You have only to adapt your paddles to it—keep marking time. When the current flows free again, on you go.' And Secker gently waved his hand to show how.

'But, Mr. Secker, I do believe in State notes and free silver, and I will advocate it as long as I do live—as long as I have a drop of—well, I will say ink, to shed.'

'To be sure—to be sure; we are at one. So would I. It is only a question of time.'

'And what is the *Sweet-Brier* to do in the meantime? What is it to do *now*? That is the question.'

'The position is plain,' answered Secker, and he went at once to the point that he knew was pressing upon his visitor. 'The position is plain. You should come out with an article, marking time, as I say, for the present. Declare State notes and free silver to be inevitable; threaten the Silver Kings; leave the rest open. There you are.'

'Ah, very good, very good indeed, my friend, if you will get me the man to write this simple article that does not go back and does not go on either—very simple indeed; so it is, to be sure.'

'You already know my disinclination,' said Secker slowly, 'to take any active part in politics; indeed, I am not authorised to; but yet, in confidence, in strict confidence, I will send you a leader upon the subject. I will typewrite it myself. You can copy it. It will, I hope, express our united views.'

There had not been much union apparent so far in the views of the two speakers; but Secker was the stronger man of the two, and he knew that he could carry Mons. Froessolecque with him. The old Frenchman felt this, as a weaker man instinctively recognises and owns to himself a stronger one,

and knew that his paper would be safe in playing a waiting game for a while under the guidance of the astute and powerful Secretary. He had truly his own convictions ; but yet, as a newspaper proprietor, he must take care that whatever course he pursued should be a successful one for the paper. So a few days later the *Sweet-Brier* had a long, and evidently carefully composed, leading article upon the Currency question, under the heading 'Whence and Whither?'

It began with a scathing attack upon the Wealth Barons of modern society, and declared that a people's Currency must be substituted for a Barons' Currency—a Currency, like the people themselves, free, ample, and spread in fertilising energy over the whole Province of Excelsior. But plain as was this purpose, it was a difficult matter to work it out ; obvious as was the goal to be reached, there was a right way and also a wrong way of approaching it. The Barons' influence was still all-pervading. Scotch the animal in one part, and, lo ! it kept wriggling in another. Hence the alarming rumour, that had caused such anxiety to all the friends of a true Currency, that upon certain lines this grand reform would mainly mean the piling up afresh the glittering hoards of Baron Money Bags. No free citizen could contemplate such a catastrophe without dismay. The dismissal of Professor Frankfort from the William Dorland University was an act well within the powers of the rulers of any institution. But there were not wanting those who said that the personal feelings and interests of the Silver Barons were not without weight in bringing it about. The article went on to ask where were they then? *Nusquam tuta fides?* The experience of the *Sweet-Brier* was that the truest wisdom was chiefly found in the humblest spheres, and they must confess that a valuable note of warning had been struck at the grand Currency Convention by a comparatively unknown man, one of the great people themselves—a Mr. Shumate—who, they understood, was a leading populist of Glooscap, in the Brassville district. In brief, this speaker's position was that the vital Currency problem could not be safely grasped until they had a Government of thorough-paced Populists to grapple with it. Far be it from them to judge Sir Donald and his colleagues prematurely ;

though in saying this, possibly hope triumphed over experience. Mr. Shumate's idea undoubtedly contained the germ of an important truth. Before they went further, they must make sure that their leaders in this great advance were all staunch to the people, true to the core, safe to lead to the straight goal. Secure in the sense of their power, they need not absolutely now pronounce judgment against present Ministers; neither need they hastily pledge themselves to the details of the grand and inevitable reform which awaited them. In due time the Government must declare its position. Till then they could possess their souls in patience.

This article produced the effect that Secker intended. No one could make more out of it than that it sounded a note of delay, and gave a qualified approval to Jacob Shumate's view that little could be expected till they had a thoroughly Populist Government. Whether men agreed with this warning note of the *Sweet-Brier's* or not, all had to own that it was marked by an out-and-out devotion to the people's cause.

Nowhere did this article cause so much sensation as in Glooscap. That quiet and rather conservative country town was stirred to its depths by the fact that the great metropolitan organ of the Populists had actually named one of its townsmen as the man who struck the true note on the Currency question. For the moment differences in politics were forgotten in the feeling of pride at the prominence thus conferred upon Glooscap. Mrs. Garvin was among the first to notice the important leader when she got her copy of the *Sweet-Brier* out of the early mail bag, and she called her brother's attention to it when he looked into her shop on his way down the main street. Rimigius M'Glumpy being, as we know, a born politician, was electrified by it, and instinctively experienced an inward regret that he had not been at the meeting and started the idea, instead of Jacob. He beckoned in his nephew Terry from the outside, where he was cleaning the window of the Post Office side of the shop, that he might have the pleasure of telling him the news. They were all three much impressed by the importance that had been conferred upon their fellow-townsmen and upon their town. It also simultaneously occurred to each

of them that it might end in Jacob getting into the House of Representatives at the coming general election, so that they had better be attentive to him, in view of the many matters relating to the Post Office that needed the help of a friend at court. They felt the natural desire to be on the side of the coming man.

Great was the surprise of Birnie Farrar as he read at his comfortable breakfast-table the *Sweet-Brier's* honourable mention of the poor Glooscap shoemaker. When he walked down the street later on to his office at the Town Hall, he met the Mayor and Mr. David Blow, both in earnest discussion of the surprise of the day. The Mayor, who was a mere Conservative, in fact, an old Tory, said contemptuously that it was just what he had all along been looking for from the *Sweet-Brier*; he only wondered that it had not come before. Of course they took up Jacob Shumate. 'Birds of a feather, you know,' he added, as he gave a hasty turn round upon his heel to relieve his disturbed feelings.

'But what I can't come round about,' exclaimed the rugged Mr. Blow, 'is as how they drop upon this here town this time, and upon old Jacob here. It's short commons mostly that we get from these here papers as to noticing Glooscap, and now they are right on to us.'

'Depend upon it, Mr. Mayor, and depend upon it, Mr. President,' said Birnie Farrar, raising his walking-cane straight before him twice, and bringing it down slowly again—'depend upon it, there is some trick in it. The Press is not above tricks, you and I know, Mr. Mayor.'

Birnie Farrar always assumed the air of a knowing man of the world—in fact, a city man—among the simple folk of Glooscap. As he passed on to his office, whom should he see coming down the street but Jacob himself, walking along quite like an ordinary man, and all unconscious that he had awakened that morning to find that fame had been thrust upon him. He had just finished breakfast with the children, and was going down to the Free Library and Reading Room to consult the *Sweet-Brier* as to the true view of current affairs, while his kindly neighbour, Mrs. Dobbs, looked into his cottage to clear up a bit and to give the children a wash. Jacob thought, as

he came down the street, that his fellow-townsmen had given him more marked salutations than usual that morning—for the news was not long in flitting over Glooscap—but he understood nothing till he met the Town Clerk. Birnie Farrar, antagonist though he was of Jacob Shumate's, could not but express pleasure at the prominence given to their town; and he also deemed it only prudent, considering the turn things had taken, to cultivate, as far as he could, better relations with the shoemaker.

'Ah, Mr. Shumate, congratulate you vastly—the town too. Really very gratifying.'

'Congratulate me? Upon what, Mr. Town Clerk—to what am I indebted for such an honour?'

Jacob Shumate only coldly reciprocated the salutation of the man from whom, upon public grounds, he was estranged.

'What, Mr. Shumate, not seen the *Sweet-Brier*? Why, your policy is endorsed by name—Jacob Shumate, Esq., the man of the hour, sir; the conquering hero.'

Without waiting for further parley, Jacob hurried into the bare and dusty Free Library. Its blank walls, adorned only by advertisement sheet almanacs, pictured manifestoes of patent medicines, and some play-bill notices of a travelling circus that was coming to Glooscap, often seemed cheerless to him, but did not do so to-day. Seating himself at the rough pine-log table where the free papers lay, he seized the *Sweet-Brier*, which was already opened and folded back at the sheet containing the leading matter that was big with his fate. True enough, there he saw, in the first article of the day in the leading Populist journal, his name, his very own name—Jacob Shumate—in clear print, honourably mentioned as that of the man who alone had proclaimed the true national policy upon the great question of the hour. It is seldom given to the sons of men to experience in this hard world such ecstasy as Jacob Shumate felt at that moment. To see his own name in print, to realise how the world must be thinking of him and of his view of the Currency question, to gloat to himself over the prominence that he, the poor neglected shoemaker, despised by some of the little people in Glooscap—he, unappreciated Jacob

Shumate—had now secured in the great capital of the Province—all this made him think that, after all, life was worth living.

There was no doubt that, by one of the curious freaks that Fortune plays at times, Jacob's idea did have a marked effect, and also a beneficial effect, upon the course of the Currency agitation, in causing delay and giving time for latent public opinion to assert itself. The surprise of David Blow and the Mayor, and the Glooscap people generally, was not unnatural. They could not think how it came about; and no wonder, for only Secker knew its secret history. Most incidents in life have an inner history which would often surprise us if we did know it.

At first Jacob had prepared his amendment rather owing to his desire to do something contradictory to the rest, and to assume the character of an extreme Populist, than from any deep conviction upon the question which it raised. As we know, it failed to get even launched at the meeting, and no more would probably ever have been heard of it were it not that Secker was at his wits' end, in writing the article for the *Sweet-Brier*, to find some plausible Populist ground for delaying the advance of the Currency movement. But, once the people's paper gave voice to that idea, a greater number appeared to acquiesce in it than one would have expected from observing the early display of enthusiasm upon the subject. Some supported it because they thought themselves, and wished others to think them, very advanced Populists; others because, like Secker, they wished the whole thing delayed, and yet did not care to openly say so; while M'Grotty and the direct Opposition favoured it, as the mere suggestion of the doubt disparaged the position of the Ministry.

Hence it was that Jacob Shumate awoke that morning to find himself famous. When he went back to his dingy cottage to have his dinner with the children, he was all the time glowing internally with the sense of his newly-gained importance. Nothing he regretted more than that the little Shumates were too young to understand it, else with what delight he would have told them of their father's fame, and taught them to aspire to serve the public as he

did. Nor was that fame wholly ephemeral. It at least had one practical consequence: it determined Jacob to stand for Brassville at the general election, which was to take place at the end of the year. With the support of the *Sweet-Brier*, the trappers, the Populists, and all the Glooscap people, who would, of course, support their own townsman irrespective of politics, he would, he said to the Widow Dobbs, be more than a match for any professor, or ex-professor either.

Altogether; and particularly since the article in the *Sweet-Brier*, there was to be noticed a hesitation in the public mind setting in about the proposed reform in money. An important factor in the working out of the question was the general good sense of the people, though at first it seemed to be overborne by the excitable cries of the active party for cheap money. The great Silver interest was very far-reaching, but the business men and institutions that were outside its grasp were against the scheme; while even the power of the Silver Kings was impaired by the suspicion which had been excited that the movement might after all mean the aggrandisement of the large mine-owners. Frankfort's students warmly proclaimed that this was the true explanation of the agitation, as was proved, they said, by the unworthy treatment of their teacher.

Sir Donald MacLever and the Ministry had watched the agitation for some time with anxiety. Fortunately the Parliament was not then sitting; but soon it was to meet for its final session before the general election which was to follow. Something must be done, and done decisively. Neither Sir Donald nor any of his colleagues, except Slater Scully and a young Minister who sat at the end of the Council table and voted without speaking, had much faith in the proposed reform of the Currency. But the question was, What did public opinion say?

At the first Cabinet meeting held to consider the subject, before they settled down to work, Slater Scully amused himself by explaining the Currency question generally, glaring round through his spectacles upon such of his colleagues as would listen to him. Sir Donald, when he had finished opening his letters, interposed:

‘Now do let us do a little business to-day, and stop talking for a while ; or, if you must talk, Mr. Slater Scully, would you tell us what the public do want ?’

‘Want, Sir Donald ? They want money, more money. That is what the people cry for, just as my friend M’Grorty says he does for light, more light.’

‘And perhaps you would explain where we are to get it. Make it ?’

‘Yes, make it. As I have said, my honoured chief, they want money, cheap money. Call on the State printer ; print State notes ; let them circulate free as the antelope over the prairies.’

‘And upon what are the notes to be based ?’

‘Upon the whole health, wealth, intelligence, not to mention lands, mines, shipping, and cities, of this noble Province.’

‘And when you want to cash your note, do you propose to liquidate the whole health and wealth and all the rest of this noble Province ?’

‘My respected chief,’ Slater Scully replied in his most gentle tones, lying back in his chair—‘my respected chief, I do not follow you. At least Slater Scully does most faithfully follow his chief, even unto death—political death, but his mind fails to follow the difficulty you would present it with. When I get these notes, it will be liquidation enough for me to present them to the baker, the butcher, the grocer in return for the bread, beef, and tea that they respectively leave at my humble home with the wife of my bosom. I do not need any other liquidation. The difficulty will be to get enough of them to liquidate in that way.’

‘It is tolerably plain that you have not liquidated the problem, at any rate,’ said Sir Donald, turning to a package of letters and papers that had just arrived from the Commissioner for the Province in London, and evidently feeling that further discussion on the principles of Currency with his Water Minister would not be profitable. As he opened the letters, giving a glance at each to see what it related to, he stopped at one with more deliberation. After looking at it for a few moments, he said :

‘That’s all right. The Commissioner says that the

prospects of our new Loan are excellent, if nothing happens in the next few months. We must have the Loan. The country won't stand more delay about its National works.'

'What does Hanbury say it can be done for?' asked Du Tell, coming up to the table and scanning over the letter which Sir Donald had just laid down.

'Ah yes; at about three per cent, if all goes right,' said Du Tell, answering himself. 'The very thing for the country now, a good loan—and for us too. It makes us safe. Nobody wants to quarrel with a Ministry that have five millions to give away. I should imagine not, at least.' And Du Tell looked round with a smile at his brother Ministers. Slater Scully smiled too, and inquired—

'And when may we expect this shower of gold to come to the languishing Danae, as personified by Du Tell here and the rest of us? At least let the Olympian one come well before the elections.'

While they were talking, Sir Donald appeared to be wholly occupied with his own thoughts. And so he was. At last he spoke, stopping Du Tell, who was about to make some reply to Slater Scully—

'What I would like to know is what effect this Currency agitation will have upon the prospects of the Loan?'

Du Tell turned round promptly from the Water Minister, and exclaimed—'Why, the very point. How could we ever have overlooked it? Why, it might upset the Loan *in toto*, and upset us too.'

Several Ministers broke out into a buzzing controversy upon this new and serious aspect of the Currency agitation. The consternation caused by the failure of the last Loan recurred to them. It would not do to run any risk this time.

'At any rate,' said Sir Donald, speaking aloud to himself, 'we had better cable at once to Hanbury to send us a full report of what the Home Government think of it; and particularly, very particularly indeed, what the money market would say to it.'

So it was agreed by the Cabinet that this was the first thing to be done. A message was cabled home to the Commissioner of the Province, and soon a reply came, which

was afterwards supplemented by explanatory despatches. The reply of the Imperial Government was considerate, as it now always is to its dependencies; but it made the difficulties in the way of any alteration of the Currency of a Province very apparent. If allowed by the Crown, its operation must be limited to the Province; 'and neither you nor I could give it value outside,' remarked the Under Secretary at the Colonial Office to the Commissioner. A more decisive objection was raised by the magnates of the money market. They stated emphatically that, if the Province tampered with the Currency, it would never get another loan from them. The sway of money is wide. It issues its mandates not merely throughout a nation, but over the world. It operates everywhere, scorning frontiers and boundaries.

Its power was felt decisively in Excelsior. What, no more loans? And the whole country looking forward to the floating of the too-long-deferred loan for Reproductive National Works. This was a consideration that came home to every one. No Government could last that was not prepared to give effect to this progressive policy. Each district felt its own needs that were to be provided for out of the Loan more imperatively than it did the want of a general reform in the Currency. Men's personal interests were stronger than their political desires. And the 'country' was made up of the districts. When, therefore, the difficulty raised by the danger to the new Loan came to be generally understood, it had a decidedly paralysing effect upon the Currency agitation; and it at once consolidated and gave courage to the scattered elements of opposition that had existed all along to the cheap money agitation. The depression that had started the agitation still continued; but what was better for depression than a good loan? M'Grorty said it was like a glass of beer taken at the right time. The *Rising Sun* now held an ambiguous position no longer. It admitted that the Currency question must be solved—in time; but maintained that it would be disastrous to deal with it in such a way as to jeopardise the position of the Province on the European money market; and that it would be unwise to deal with it at all at present. The country was pledged to a progressive policy of Repro-

ductive Works. The whole subject of Currency must be postponed pending the floating of the new Loan.

Du Tell had a conference with Secker. Each had reasons of his own for wishing to see the new Currency proposals put aside—Du Tell for the sake of the Government, and Secker on account of the State workers. They agreed that the best course would be for Sir Donald to announce the postponement of the question till next year, in order to facilitate the immediate floating of the Loan.

‘But how,’ asked Du Tell, who did not know what had already passed between Secker and Mons. Froessolecque, but suspected something about it—‘how about the old Frenchman?’ As he spoke he looked keenly at the imperturbable Secretary.

‘Yes, Mr. Du Tell, there may be some trouble there. Still, you see,’ and here Secker drew a long breath, as if of relief—‘you see the Populists want National works too. Yes, my dear sir, human feelings will tell. Each district, Populist or not Populist, must have their wants, their pressing wants, attended to. They must be provided for some way. We must all live, my dear sir, as well as we can. But you had better let me see the old gentleman myself alone.’

That afternoon Secker went to the office of the *Sweet-Brier*, and when he had ascended the rickety stairs that led up to the editor’s room, he found Mons. Froessolecque at his desk in a dejected condition. He also had been wrestling with this latest phase of the Currency question. He also had been perplexed about the Loan, or rather the danger to the Loan. To do him justice, his natural impulse was to give the people of Excelsior free money, and let the foreign money markets do their worst. He was for principle. He had unwillingly agreed to Secker’s late move in modifying the tone of the *Sweet-Brier*, and going further in that direction was still less congenial to him. When Secker entered he looked up at him in a perplexed, surprised way, that was akin to the agitation which Faust displayed at the later visits of Mephistopheles. He at once broke out with what was upon his mind.

‘What is this we hear talked about now? Postpone everything on account of the big Loan? People sell their

birthright for a mess of gold. *Sweet-Brier* dumb? And what, I would say, has become of the grand Currency Convention speeches, votings, enthusiasm—the true voice of the people?’

As he spoke, he rose and walked over to where Secker was sitting, gesticulating with natural fervour the while.

The Secretary sat still as usual, looking composedly before him. When the Frenchman paused, he observed—

‘They did not then think of the loss of the Loan.’

‘What, and do you, my own friend and companion, tell me that the people are to be put clean away from a grand measure of justice for them and their children for this one dirty loan? Is that what you would have me advocate in the free and fearless columns of the *Sweet-Brier*? I would just ask you, is that what you advise?’

‘By no means. Not at all.’

‘Then what do you advise?’

‘You feel deeply what you say, my dear Mons. Froessolecque?’

‘Certainly I do. I would go for the grand principle of reform and the people’s rights.’

‘Then I would recommend you to write an article in tomorrow’s *Sweet-Brier* telling the people to give up their dirty loan, and to go for principle and their rights.’

Secker looked up at him with a sweet confidence in his manner.

‘Ah well, that is all well; but there must be some diplomacy in things, you see——’

Here an active step was heard upon the stairs, and Cornelius M’Grorty stepped lightly into the room. He too had been concerned about the turn things had taken, as he was going to address his constituents in a few days, and it was one of his principles to ascertain public opinion before he declared it. He nodded cheerfully to the perturbed Frenchman, and tapped Secker lightly on the shoulder as he remarked:

‘Well, that is all right. It’s fixed up all right now.’ Then, as he saw the surprised look of Mons. Froessolecque at him, he continued, changing his countenance at the same time, so as to show an appearance of concern:

'At least, when I say all right, I mean as right as such a lame and impotent conclusion can be.'

'Pray explain yourself, my dear sir,' said Secker, with more cheerfulness in his countenance than usual. M'Grorty's manner had inspired him with the feeling that some good news was coming.

'Why? Don't know? I thought you two of all men—— Well! there has been a small caucus—Caffery, Stoker, and other yeomen of the Blues, Populists—general agreement, Currency postponed—one year only—Loan to be floated, National works carried on, districts supplied, and then again the current will rise with the currency.'

'And do you go for this, too, might I inquire?' asked Mons. Froessolecque, with solemnity in his tone.

'I go—it goes for me. It is no use running one's head against a stone—nor a loan either.'

'Ah well, the *Sweet-Brier* has to have its say.'

'My dear Mons. Froessolecque, you have only to slightly enlarge that admirable leader of yours the other day—danger of Silver Kings, delay till true men at the helm, better no reform than half reform, only delay the radical thing—urgent need for Loan meanwhile. There you are.'

And M'Grorty sat down at the little table, and resting his elbows upon it, looked round alternately and cheerfully to the Frenchman and the Secretary. Secker assumed his more serious air, as he said:

'Truly I do look, I must confess, with apprehension to the supreme question of free money being dealt with by any unless by the real friends of the people.'

'Ah, very good, indeed; and where will you find those real friends of the people? Not in the Government, you do say; and not out of the Government either, I do say. Thank Heaven, I am not a politician, anyway.' The Frenchman looked up to the ceiling in dramatic style as he spoke.

'No, only an innocent pressman; tender conscience, sensitive plant, shrink at touch of bad world, honest, one man picked out of ten thousand. Is not that it, Secker?' said M'Grorty.

'I should say,' replied Secker, pursing his lips in a dignified manner—'I should say of both pressmen and

politicians—and I can speak the more freely as I belong to neither honourable category—that each renders honest service to the State—the one to constituents, the other to its readers. The people include both, and I must admit that the people are for the Loan.'

'That's it. There we are. We must leave the monarch of the pen to prepare the thunder and to polish up the lightning for the morrow's outburst.'

And M'Grorty put his arm in Secker's, who had stood up to go, and gently pushed him towards the rickety staircase, down which they disappeared, leaving the old Frenchman the conscientious, but unhappy man of the party. But afterwards, later in the evening, Secker went back and gave the editor some useful hints for the next morning's article.

Thus it was that Currency Reform, which had at first excited such warm feelings in Excelsior, was quietly put aside. Many different influences combined to bring about this result. At first the strength and staying power of the popular fervour for it was exaggerated. It was not, in fact, so strong as it seemed to be. Most people wanted some change, but they were not clear as to what change they did want. There were causes of complaint against the existing banking system, and plausible grounds for calling on the State to have its own note issue. Still, there was always a minority, which was more weighty than numerous, who distrusted the proposed methods of reform. The influence of the Silver interest was considerable; but after a while, and when its despotic inclination was evinced by the action of the Board of Overseers at the University, a feeling of suspicion was gradually aroused in the public mind. Secker and M'Grorty, as practical politicians, regarded the danger to the new Loan for Reproductive Works as the determining factor in the reaction that set in. And there could be no doubt that it had an important influence upon the result. Still, those two men, clever as they were, went too far in crediting the whole result to it. They gave too little weight, as eager politicians often will do, to that which is behind and below all surface movements in such communities as theirs—the common-sense of the whole people; which, in a sort of silent, unnoticed, at first unconscious, way begins

after a time to make its weight felt in regard to movements that at one period seemed to carry everything before them. It takes time to tell, and it cannot be said to be always successful. But very often it in the end forms, as if by some process of nature, a *vis inertia* of resistance, if the thing proposed is wrong, and ought not in truth and in fact to succeed. It depends upon the political institutions of each community whether time is allowed for this common-sense of the public to assert itself, or whether it is thrust aside by the hasty despotism of the political party that for the time commands the polls.

But now the short session that was to be held before the dissolution was opened, and short though it was, its legislation had an important influence upon the fortunes of our politician. The Bill of the session was that which provided for the National Loan for Reproductive Works, and in the schedule which enumerated, for the information of the public and the lenders on the home market, the general purposes to which the money was to be devoted, appeared this item :— 'For National Reservoir in the North-Western District, £250,000.' The locality was afterwards to be fixed, whether it was to be on the Brassville side or on the inland side of the Dividing Range. The battle between the different districts would, no doubt, be a keen one, and, as in all battles, much would depend upon the skill and resolution of the different Members who were leaders of the contending forces.

When Frankfort opened the Bill and glanced at the schedule, he saw plainly enough that the old skeleton, skeleton no longer, but now living reality, had risen up facing him, straight in his path. The home at The Blocks, too, instinctively recurred to him as a new embarrassment. He recalled at once the eagerness with which Mr. Lamborn, and Eilly too, looked forward to having the Reservoir next them, with running rivulets fertilising and adorning the estate ; and also Mr. Fairlie the Banker's emphatic declaration that he would support Meeks with the Reservoir before any one else without the Reservoir. Besides and beyond political results, what further consequences, that would touch him more nearly, might not follow when he declared against the

Reservoir at Brassville? Might not the exasperation of old Lamborn endanger his prospects with Eilly? Fearful thought! Many of his brother legislators scanned that schedule of Works with anxiety for their districts, and some with disappointment; but there was no trouble like that of our politician. But he was spared one perplexity—the perplexity of doubt. His course was clear. Yet the outlook was depressing. He found himself at once plunged in the meaner issues of what are called politics. The Currency was at least a great public question, which men might feel a satisfaction in fighting over—if need be in falling for. But the Reservoir—a national undertaking to be perverted into a local job, with its specious estimates of profits that would never be realised, and rates that would never be paid, the make-believe, and the pretences, conscious or unconscious, by which it was to be promoted; the cynical avowal, as even Woodall had owned to it, that the politics of Brassville meant the plunder of the State—why, this, all this, and mixed up now with his fondest personal hopes—all this faced our politician like an evil apparition.

Take any shape but that.

Hence, horrible shadow!

CHAPTER XII

ANOTHER ELECTION

THE five million Loan was successfully floated ; and the people of Excelsior got the money to spend, only binding themselves and their children to pay to the English capitalist some £175,000 a year for the use of his millions, and to pay the millions themselves back at the end of twenty-five years. It was obviously, then, of the highest importance to the State that this money should be so profitably employed that there would be no difficulty in afterwards fulfilling the obligations thus undertaken. But the mere fact that there was this large sum to distribute somewhere naturally excited the keenest interest in all the districts of the Province as to where it was to go. All certainly could not get, for their local wants, as much as they required, yet, as the manner of its distribution was to be decided afterwards by Parliament, each one could indulge in the pleasing hope that it would be fortunate in the share of the State bounty that would be allotted to it. It behoved them all then to bestir themselves in time, so that they should not be left behind in the race, or possibly thrown out of the running altogether.

A favourite means of calling the attention of the Government to the needs of a district was to invite the proper Minister, or all the Ministers, to a banquet, as they could have the need for the National work explained to them on the spot, and at the convivial board have the local claims presented under the most favourable auspices. The Minister who was in most request was Slater Scully, as it had been announced that the greater portion of the five millions which

it was intended to borrow would be devoted to Water-supply works, which would be undertaken under the direction of the Water Bureau, over which he presided in such a genial manner. The keenest interest pervaded the North-Western side of the Province about the great Reservoir that was to be constructed to supply its wants. Slater Scully had already received and accepted invitations to banquets from Tinville and Leadville, two of the towns, as the reader knows, on the coast side of the Dividing Range, and also from Silver-acre, which was on the other side, among the mines. He enjoyed himself much at each place, listened sympathetically to their respective claims, as they were urged by ready speakers, and gave general satisfaction by his replies. But, as he observed, the secrecy to which his solemn oath as a Cabinet Minister bound him, prevented him from making any precise statement as to where the Government proposed that the Reservoir should be. And as it was plain that it could not be at all the towns he visited, but only at one of them, and possibly not even there, it was the fact that nothing more definite was known after the Minister's visit than was before.

The local magnates of Brassville, the Mayor, the Honourable Mr. Lamborn, Hedger the lawyer, Seth Pride, Neal Nickerson the schoolmaster, our old acquaintance Barney Clegg, Tom Hilton, the landlord of the Lake Reservoir Hotel, and others met in secret conclave, and determined to postpone their banquet till after the election, when they could present to the Minister their newly-returned Member as a staunch supporter at once of the Ministry and of the Reservoir at Brassville.

There did not appear to be much doubt who the winning man was to be; nevertheless, the prospects of the contest aroused much interest at Brassville and Glooscap, and throughout the surrounding country. For there was to be a contest. When the returning officer published the nominations in their alphabetical order, the candidates were seen to be:—

EDWARD FAIRLIE FRANKFORT, M.A.

EBENEZER MEEKS, Gentleman.

JACOB SHUMATE, Shoemaker.

Frankfort only described himself by his academic title, as he was no longer Professor of the University. Though, in truth, he might still have truly claimed the description of Professor, as he had already made arrangements for continuing his Lectures on Sociology at the Free Library, to a class that was chiefly composed of his old students at the University.

The general opinion of the district was distinctly in favour of our politician. The question of the hour was the Reservoir, and though many felt that Meeks was the more handy man of the two for the everyday business of the place, yet he had failed in getting the Reservoir into the last Loan, and they all felt that, for an important business of that kind to be advanced against such keen opposition from other places, the weight and standing of our politician in the House would be specially useful. The very character for independence in politics which he had acquired would make his advocacy of their claims all the more weighty. It came in quite handy. Meeks would, to be sure, do all he knew, as the common phrase went, but he was not so good at a set speech as our politician, and he had not the same influence on the floor of the House in debate. Then, since the Empire Palace Hotel scandal had been launched against him (unfounded though the charge was), his moral weight, first in the House and afterwards in the community, had visibly declined. So, between the two, public opinion favoured our politician as being the better man for winning the Reservoir. Still, Meeks had a considerable following. Barney Clegg maintained nightly at the Brown Jug that, Empire Hotel or no Empire, he was the more useful man of the two. Mr. Frankfort might be the better man, he remarked, 'on the floor ; but it's under the floor, I can tell ye, the work is done ; an' what account is he in the premises ? As much, let me inform ye, as my Newfoundland puppy there would be at a rat hole.' Of the many people, too, whom Meeks had been useful to while he was the Member, several stood by him now, and Mrs. Meeks had a fair personal following among the all-important body of women electors. The majority of these, however, were devoted to the Temperance cause, under the leadership of Mrs. Hannah

Gazelle Pride, and what they could not get over was the Empire Palace Hotel affair. The good wife assured them, with tears in her eyes, that she knew there was nothing in it, and remarked that if any one ought to know, she ought. Some were satisfied with this moving testimony to the husband's innocence. But many agreed with Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride, who held firmly to her original opinion. As to the denial of Mrs. Meeks, she observed contemptuously that a poor creature like her would, of course, say whatever her husband told her.

Jacob Shumate's friends had an exaggerated idea of his prospects in the contest. He had himself brooded so long over the article in the *Sweet-Brier* that he thought every one must be thinking of it as much as he was, and that it would lead all the Liberal electors to support him. Many of the trappers were working for him among the people, and the thorough-going Populists preferred him to either of the other candidates. But they were not so numerous in Brassville as in some other electorates, and Jacob further suffered from the fact that no man is considered a prophet in his own country, particularly if he is not personally popular. This feeling was especially strong in Glooscap itself, which he expected would have supported him in a united manner, for the sake of the township's honour. But the fact was that many of the small cottagers there resented the notion of their queer neighbour being elevated to the position, and grasping the salary, of a Member of the House of Representatives. Jacob was not a sociable man. He did not, in fact, take much interest in other people individually, nor had he the knack of seeming to do so ; though he was concerned for the cause of the people generally. And then the Mayor, Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk, David Blow, and all the respectable people, though they did not say much, as they were afraid of Jacob, especially after the article in the *Sweet-Brier*, arranged quietly among themselves to poll every vote they could against him.

Mrs. Garvin and Rimigius M'Glumpy, her brother, while they had a sneaking liking for Meeks, yet felt bound, as a matter of principle, to vote for our politician, as he had provided for Terry, and also because they considered that he

would be the most useful man for the Reservoir ; but they kept their intentions quietly to themselves, and in public spoke respectfully of Jacob Shumate. Terry only, with the ingenuousness and enthusiasm of youth, declared that he would vote early, and, if need be, would vote often, for his patron.

Such, in few words told, was the way in which the electors of the Brassville district regarded the candidates for their favour in the coming struggle. Let us now peep behind the curtain and observe how the candidates themselves looked at it.

Our politician felt that he was going upon a forlorn hope. As far as he was concerned, there was no getting over the Reservoir. He knew that he could not succeed without pledging himself heartily to it, and the more he learnt about it the less he was prepared to make that sacrifice. The thing was plainly dishonest, according to the old standards of honesty. Though the transaction was a public one, and involved a large amount of money, it was, after all, getting the State's money upon false pretences. If the Government could be coerced or wheedled into granting it, it would be a breach of the public trust given into their hands to do so. The promised returns from the rates for the water were unreliable. The rates could never be realised ; the profits from the sale of the water were fanciful ; the interest upon the cost of the work would never be paid by the district. The distinction which some seemed to make between dealing with public funds and private moneys was obviously a false one. No common practice, no generalisation about doing the best for your constituency, no sophistry drawn from the analogy of the duty of private agents to their principals, could get over the plain fact that he was required to represent what was untrue, in order that Brassville might get public money that it had no right to. The fact that by doing this he would secure his own personal objects, and make his seat in Parliament safe, only made him the less willing to temporise with the issue that was now presented to him.

It is but right to give our politician credit for honesty of purpose. Yet honesty, though the foundation of his feeling,

was not the whole of it. He was possessed by an ambition to do public good in his career, to render service to the State, if possible to do great things for his country; so that afterwards he could look back upon his political life as having been, in the main, lived for statesmanlike objects, and occupied with work that it was worth while giving a man's life to. To one with such ideas, the part he was now asked to take seemed not worth the playing. He was cast for a character that would not do him justice; and to which, indeed, he could not do justice. If this really was politics, he had better try something else. It was not even that it was so wicked a thing, as that it was so poor a thing. To succeed in such a career would not satisfy his nature. As a mere private citizen, the press, the platform was open to him, and he would at least be free to speak the thing that he knew to be true, and do what he thought to be honest. To gain the position of a Member of Parliament upon the terms now asked would be to defeat the very purpose for which he wished to be in public life. But he felt not only the loss to himself, but the disappointment he must cause to many friends. Above all, he was concerned for the shock that his views about the Reservoir would cause at The Blocks, to Lamborn, and even to Eilly. Who could say what consequences might not follow from it? He cursed the Reservoir in his heart. Why should fate jumble up his dearest prospects with such incongruous difficulties? Even his hopes of Eilly might be jeopardised by this Reservoir!

He resolved that the best plan would be to arrive in Brassville only just before his first meeting, and there to explicitly state what he thought and what he intended to do about the National work. Thus he would avoid the perplexity of having first to make personal explanations and defences to individual constituents. It would certainly be throwing a bombshell among them; but it was better to have the explosion over at once, and to see what the effect of it would be.

If now we inquire into the state of mind of Ebenezer Meeks, we shall find it to be widely different from that of our politician. Meeks did not either see or feel the slightest difficulty about the Reservoir. He regarded it as the saddest

event in his political life that he had not been able to get it provided for in the last Loan for Reproductive Works. He would have been ready to support the demand for two Reservoirs, one for the east of Brassville and the other for the west, if his constituents required it. Why not? He was to represent Brassville, and should he not represent what it wanted? Certainly he wished to be returned to Parliament, and to have a safe seat; but also his ambition was to be a successful local Representative, to do a lot of work for the place, and to make the people feel that they had a good bargain in him. As to his duty to the country at large, it never occurred to him that he could have any that was superior to his obligations to his constituents. And he felt that he must look sharp and be pushing, or Theodore Bunker, who was certain to be returned for Leadville, would cut him out and carry off the spoils to that town; or Dubbs might make a dash for Tinville, or Carter Bogey for Silver-ace. He was not conscious of any want of principle in all this. Quite the contrary. He was acting upon the national principle, as he understood it, of every district looking after itself, leaving other districts to look after themselves. There was none of that secrecy which is held to be a badge of fraud about Ebenezer Meeks. He avowed, nay, he boasted, of his efforts to get all he could out of the Government for the place. He prided himself upon being a hard-working and skilful Member of Parliament. And he was frank with his legislative compeers and competitors. In the coffee-room at the House he would talk with Mr. Bunker about their respective chances with the Minister of success in some point of vantage that Brassville and Leadville were keenly struggling for, much as one counsel might talk to another about the verdict for which they had been all day mutually trying to outwit one another in court.

Public questions gave Ebenezer Meeks as little perplexity as did local demands. He naturally and unaffectedly accepted whatever was the popular creed of the hour. He was open and receptive in his nature. Not only did he not cultivate any personal convictions that might stand in his way, but he would have felt it unbecoming in him to do so. Why should one man set up his judgment against all the rest?

Why should he not be in accord with his neighbours, feel with their feelings, and say with their sayings? The majority knew what was right; why then should he be in the wrong? To be sure, as regards new proposals, he need not be in a hurry in declaring himself. He would first observe how the popular leaders who were safest to follow interpreted public opinion. As a general rule, he found it best to follow the Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty.

Meeks felt that he had an uphill struggle before him. He knew that the Brassville people considered that our politician would be the better man to fight the Reservoir in the House; and he did not deny, even to himself, that they were right. For Meeks was not a self-assertive man. He felt a sinking within him, too, when he reflected that Frankfort had been for the past three years the sitting Member, and, recalling his own experience, he thought sadly of the number of electors that our politician must have attached to his cause by those little services which he had been able to render to them in the State offices and otherwise. And then there was that unhappy, though innocent, vote of his in favour of the spirit license to the Empire Palace Hotel. Next to Frankfort's superior value for the Reservoir, this was the greatest difficulty that threatened Meeks. Yet he felt no boiling indignation towards the men—or, rather, the women—who brought this serious charge against him. He deprecated their wrath, but what he chiefly lamented was its effect upon his chances at the election. His feeling was one rather of sorrow and concern at the possible consequences than of anger. Though, to be sure, he felt specially hurt at the imputation against the integrity of his total abstinence principles. That he should be accused of getting value for his vote might be bad; but that it should be charged against him that he did this thing on behalf of the Liquor Traffic was cruel indeed—he, Ebenezer Meeks, who did not even know what the taste of wine was!

Jacob Shumate was a different sort of candidate from either of his competitors. His objects were diverse, and so were his difficulties. If he could not lay claim to a lofty ideal of politics, he was yet entitled to be classed as a man who had ideas of his own, and who tried honestly

to hold to them. He was not a man to paddle with the stream because it was easy and profitable to do so. He sincerely believed that the existing constitution of society was unjust, and that the poor were wronged by the rich, simply because they were rich. He was specially indignant against the large landowners. He was filled with anger when he called to mind their action about the rabbits, which he could look upon in no other light than as an attempt to deprive the trappers of Glooscap of their means of living, and to evade a reasonable levy upon the unearned increment of their land. He was poor himself. He felt for the poor, and the poor felt that he felt for them. And the poor feel for the poor more than the rich do for the rich. They have more experience in feeling. He had, therefore, a living earnestness to support him when he advocated any measures which were in favour of the poor and against wealth and privilege. No proposal to help them could go too far for him. Few went far enough.

But when he thought over his prospects at the coming election, two difficulties troubled him. One he could see his way to deal with, but the other for many days seemed to him to be insuperable. The first was his weak hold upon the all-important Woman's vote. After much doubt, and a good deal against his own personal inclination, he had persuaded himself to support the enfranchisement of women. But he did not care much about it, and he felt quite dissatisfied with the idea of their sitting in Parliament and sharing the Executive Government with men. The fact was that his views upon this question were biassed by his own experience of the other sex, which, as the reader knows, was an unhappy one. His hapless union with Daisy Dill influenced his opinions, or rather his feelings, about women for the rest of his life, and these, again, affected his political views, and led to a coolness between him and the Brassville Branch of the Woman's Rights League, which afterwards had an important bearing upon the election.

What he called his opinions were, we say, really his feelings. Daisy Dill was the only woman whom he had ever known intimately, since he had grown to manhood. He had left his home to emigrate to Excelsior as a mere youth.

He was distinctly of opinion that women were inferior to men, physically, mentally, and even morally; though this latter fact was, he considered, kept dark by conventional habits and the general make-believe of society. If you wanted lofty purpose, generous emotions, fixed devotion to the right for its own sake, the power to renounce the petty and the conventional for the true, you must not, thought Jacob Shumate, seek for those qualities among women. His inmost conviction was that the best thing for both the women and the men would be that the women should be subordinate to the men, and be ruled by them, fairly, of course, and he would have also wished generously, but still ruled. When Woman's Suffrage came forward as a practical question, some years before, at the time of Meeks's first election for Brassville, Jacob Shumate, who was standing against him with fair prospects of success, as being a local man, agreed, as has been said, to support it. But he did so in an ungracious way, and, in fact, let it escape him, in the excitement of speaking, that he accepted it not on account of its own merits, but simply because it would strengthen the masses against the classes. Meeks, who was an enthusiast for woman and all her rights, made the most of this weak point in Jacob's profession of faith, and, as he got the support of Seth Pride and the other men who believed in the perfectibility of woman, he beat his antagonist by a fair, though not a large, majority.

Since that election Jacob Shumate, taught by experience, had been very guarded in the expression of his real ideas about women. He had need to be. For now that they had gained the suffrage and were electors, any quiet hopes that he entertained of ever having a political career depended upon his conciliating at least a fair proportion of them. Accordingly, he had latterly, and especially since the favourable article in the *Sweet-Brier*, done his best to conciliate the heads of the Brassville Branch of the Woman's Rights League of Excelsior, and had even, at some strain to his conscience, in response to the usual written inquiry that the Branch sent round to each of the three candidates, when they were announced for the approaching election, agreed to vote for women being eligible to sit in Parliament. But women

can see through men very well indeed, and Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride and the other leading ladies of the Branch did not care for him. His manner, too, was forbidding. And then several of his female neighbours from Glooscap took the trouble to represent his relations with Daisy Dill in a not over favourable light for himself. Not that they justified the erratic wife and mother—certainly not ; but they maintained that it was partly Jacob's fault that she was so erratic. He ought to have put up with things and worked harder to keep her. A man could not do too much to retain such a prize as a woman's love. When a woman goes wrong, they held that there was generally something not right with the man. On the whole, then, the attitude towards him of the powerful Woman's vote was one of Jacob's difficulties at the election that was impending.

The other difficulty was the Reservoir. To understand this we must bear in mind that Jacob Shumate was not only an honest man, but a man who had convictions of his own, and who was too proud, or, if you like, too egotistical, to be ready to sacrifice them at the bidding of some one else. He thought too much of himself, and too little of other people, to like doing this. He had not the adaptability of Meeks, nor his ready habit of falling in with whatever his neighbours wanted. He was rather inclined to go the other way. He could not but see that, from a public point of view, to place the Reservoir at Brassville would be an injustice to the people of the Province generally, as it must, in fact, be paid for by them, and not by the citizens of Brassville, who would simply pocket the gain. If this gain was to be distributed chiefly among the wage-earners, he might have waived his objection from the public aspect of the question. But what he could never get over was that the chief and permanent profit would go into the already swollen chests of the large landowners. The money distributed in wages for the construction of the Reservoir would be soon dissipated, while the permanent gain would remain to the Lamborns, the Hilljohns, the Le Fanus, and the other holders of the fine estates. The value of their land would be increased by from two to three pounds an acre. Here was the unearned increment with a vengeance. The other aspect of the scheme

his judgment disapproved of; this one he personally disliked. His natural honesty of character was troubled at the thought of even the people of Brassville getting State money that they were not entitled to. But his feelings as well as his principles were roused when he thought of this money going into the hands of the large landowners.

Yet what was he to do? He knew the district well enough to be aware that it was not worth his while to stand at all unless, like the others, he declared for the Reservoir. He was sadly perplexed, and the Tempter, who is never far from any of us when our principles tug one way and our interest another, was suggesting to him that it would be better to strain a point than to miss the great career of usefulness that was opening before him, ever since the article in the *Sweet-Brier*. That was the way the evil influence put it. Here, however, his pride came up to reinforce his conscience, and asked him if he, the fearless Jacob Shumate, champion of the trappers against these very landowners, was going, like the aristocrat Frankfort or the supple Meeks, to do their bidding under the thin disguise of working for the district.

Jacob was not a man who usually confided his mental conflicts to the consideration of other people; but now in his perplexity he resolved that he would disclose his difficulty frankly to Shad Hubbard, the leading trapper, Chairman of his Glooscap Committee, and one of the few intimate friends that Jacob had gained in his lifetime. In fact, Shad Hubbard among men and the Widow Dobbs among women were the only people to whom he would ever think of unbosoming himself. Hubbard had only a few days before collected, by an active canvass among the trappers, the £25 which the electoral law required each candidate for the House of Representatives to lodge with the returning officer before the election. If a man did not poll one-fourth of the votes cast for the successful candidate, his £25 was forfeited to the State. Jacob went over to Hubbard's cottage in the evening, and found him at his tea. He had just come in from the Gullies, where he had been spreading the nets and fixing the traps for the night. The candidate soon explained to his Chairman the difficulty that oppressed him about the

Reservoir, and in the first place sought his old friend's counsel as to whether he could not venture to boldly declare against it, as a mere job of the territorial aristocracy. (He had seen this designation of the landed interest in an old volume of Cobden's speeches which was in the Glooscap Free Library.) Shad Hubbard in his own secret mind quite agreed with Jacob; but he was a practical politician, and a fair manager of an election, though a man of few words. He listened quietly while Shumate explained his difficulty, steadily consuming his evening meal all the time. Shumate had spoken resting his arms on his knees, and in his dejection bending downwards towards the floor. When he had spoken he looked up for his answer. Shad Hubbard had finished his meal. He pushed his plate decisively from him, stirred the tea in his cup round and round deliberately, gently moved his head from side to side, as if to clear himself from all mental entanglements, and slightly elevating his eyebrows, while he looked down into his cup, only said: 'If you talk in that style outside, Jacob, you will drop the twenty-five notes.' He then looked straight up at the shoemaker, as he added, 'Better give the boys their notes again while we can.' Shad Hubbard then leant back in his chair and continued swaying his head from side to side. He was a man who could look all round a question—right behind it even.

Poor Jacob turned away from his friend's cottage in despair. The case was now made the more difficult by his having told Hubbard his real judgment about the Reservoir; for though Shad was not a talkative man, yet Jacob was now in the position of one who has been to his confessor. If he were, after this, to go forward, boldly advocating the Reservoir, he would always be conscious that there was one person, at least, who knew that he was belying his real convictions, and helping to aggrandise the landowners against his better knowledge. This was painful to Jacob Shumate's conscience, and intolerable to his pride. He had to pass The Blocks on his way home, and bitterly did he look upon the stately park and mansion as he trudged by.

'Ah,' he mused to himself, 'ye rich ones have a fine time of it in this world, anyway. If I had only had a few hundreds of old Lamborn's thousands of acres, I could throw

over these local nobodies and go straight to Miranda and stand on the Populist ticket for Blue Street, and have a career in Parliament; and I know I could tell them something there, and tell it rightly, too. But no; law, or custom, or society, or some other cursed thing, gives it all to old Lamborn, and after him to Gentleman Frankfort.'

In his excitement he walked quickly, and it seemed to him only a short time till he reached his home. When he went in, he found the Widow Dobbs finishing the washing of Popsey's feet, hands, and face, 'just to give the pillow and bedclothes a show, Mr. Shumate,' as the widow explained. Jacob thanked her kindly, as kindly as he could in his then disturbed state of mind, and having kissed Flopsey, the little girl, who had been put to bed first, and seen Popsey laid to rest, he closed the door of the cottage after good Martha Dobbs. She had to hurry away to Mrs. Garvin's Post Office for a letter which she was expecting, but which had not been delivered to her, owing to Terry M'Glumpy, the letter-carrier, making a mistake about the direction. The children were soon asleep, and Jacob sat down at the table where the widow had left his tea ready; but not to eat—only to think, and think out, if he could, this distracting position in which he found himself. He was perplexed over the different phases of it, and the various excuses he could frame to himself for declaring in favour of the Reservoir, turning over in a mechanical way, all the time, the pages of the *Sweet-Brier*. At what was a considerable charge to his small means, he had ordered that paper to be regularly posted to him, after the important article that had appeared in it upon his amendment at the Currency Convention. Looking over its columns in this heedless manner, his eye was caught by a well-known name, as a familiar name will attract notice amidst the print. It was that of our old friend, Karl Brumm, at the foot of a letter which filled three-quarters of a column of close print. Over it was the heading: 'Don't buy them out. Don't kick them out. Only tax them out.' He knew that this referred to the landowners, and as he read on, he found that Karl Brumm was again calling the attention of the people, before the General Election, to the true principle of taxation,

enunciated first by Moses and afterwards repeated by Henry George, of making the land pay for everything.

Jacob Shumate was not a religious man. If he had been, he would have believed that he was vouchsafed an inspiration as he glanced over that letter. Why not declare for the Reservoir, with the condition to be inserted in the Bill that the large landowners of the district should pay the interest upon the cost, by means of a progressive tax, which should exempt all holdings of under 250 acres? There was no public objection to Brassville getting the Reservoir, if it honestly paid for it. Silveracre and Leadville too could each have their Reservoir upon the same terms. The wage-earners would get the benefit of it, but would not have to pay for it; while the great landowners, instead of being unjustly aggrandised, would contribute at least a fair proportion of the unearned increment. Even so, it would not be what it ought to be, the whole of that increment; but it would be making an advance in the true direction.

'I have found it—I have found it; the true thing, and the right thing!' exclaimed Jacob, half-aloud in his excitement.

'I have found the way straight before me out of the difficulty. The *Sweet-Brier* will be sure to support it and me. I know that old Froessolecque is in favour of the single tax. Right you are, Jacob Shumate, at last, and soon you will be Member for Brassville.'

He had now appetite to take his cold tea. Soon he was in bed, a happier man than he had been for some days before. Next morning he saw Shad Hubbard, and eagerly explained the new idea to him. Shad mused a while, and then, looking out at Jacob with his heavy eyes, slowly observed—

'Why, yes, perhaps that'll wash.'

He then looked all around him, and further said: 'Yes, that may net them.' Jacob himself was now eager for the Reservoir, since it gave such a good chance of getting in the thin edge of the single tax. He had satisfied himself of the public justice of giving Brassville the Reservoir, since it was linked to the single tax. He went forward boldly advocating it, with this new condition, and was sanguine that he

would win. It was certainly a plausible solution of his difficulty. How far it was brought about, unconsciously to himself, by Jacob's despairing conviction that some way or other he must go for the Reservoir—to say how far this was so would demand a more profound analysis of his mental conditions than we, at least, can supply. Thus, then, in the manner that we have related, did the three candidates for Brassville contemplate the contest, each from his own point of view. And thus did the electors of that constituency regard the men who were seeking their suffrages.

Our politician arranged that his opening meeting should be announced to be held first, before those of either of the other candidates. A more wary calculation of the chances might have induced him to delay as long as possible the determining declaration of his attitude to the Reservoir; but it was more in accordance with his feeling of what was due alike to himself and to the constituency to make a plain statement at once of what he meant to stand by. So he instructed his agent, Louis Quiggle, to hurry on the arrangements for his meeting at the Town Hall, and he decided to arrive by the evening train only just in time to go over to the hall. His friends in Brassville were well pleased to hear of his intention to take the field at once, and made ready to give him a hearty welcome. It need not be said that none looked forward to meeting him with the delight that Eilly Lamborn did. She postponed a visit to her Aunt Blaney, in Miranda, which the old lady had urgently invited, as she wanted her bright niece's company, being for some time past kept indoors by rheumatism. Eilly would have liked the trip to the city; but she could not miss the chance of seeing something of Frankfort on the spare evenings that he would be able to snatch from the election contest. Quiggle was indefatigable in his efforts to make 'the opening ball,' as he termed it, a success. He secured the Mayor, Alderman Popay, for the chair. He sent special cards of invitation to all the leading personages in the borough, not forgetting Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride and the Committee of the Brassville Branch of the influential Woman's Rights League. He gave the *Scorcher* and the *Trumpeter* substantial advertisements. Suitable paragraphs relating to the meeting were

also supplied. He asked Hedger, the lawyer, to move the usual vote of confidence in the candidate, and left it to himself to select his seconder. He was anxious to engage the Temperance Band to play 'See the conquering hero comes' at the railway station when the train arrived; but he found that, owing to its being election time, the musicians charged double, so he determined not to enlist their aid till later on in the struggle, when it might be necessary to have some rallying airs at the final meetings. He got out his placards early. The most striking-looking of these called upon the electors to rally round 'Edward Fairlie Frankfort, their old and tried Representative,' the name standing out by itself in very bold letters in the middle of the poster. But the Meeks party played him what he denounced as an unprofessional trick in electioneering. They printed off hundreds of slips, bearing the name of Ebenezer Meeks, and during the night pasted these over the name of his man, so that all his placards the next morning presented Meeks to the electors as the real 'old and tried Representative.' This unfair way of playing the game so annoyed Quiggle that he forgot his usual good feelings, and straightway struck off and had posted up in conspicuous places all over the town large placards specially addressed to 'The lady electors of Brassville.' The women were always addressed as 'lady electors.' The expression of the democratic sentiment, as it concerned them, would have been that 'one lady was as good as another and better.' The placards invited them to come to the poll early and 'vote for Meeks and the Empire Palace Hotel.' The local branch of the Woman's Temperance League had determined, in any case, to revive this old scandal; and Quiggle's placards gave the cry a good start. Unjust though it was, it afterwards played an important part in this contest.

The Town Hall was already crowded when our politician arrived. The Mayor was there, accompanied by the City Aldermen and Councillors, and attended by the Town Clerk. The platform was filled with representative men. Lamborn, Hedger, Neal Nickerson, Woodall, the bookseller, Tom Hilton, the landlord of the Lake Reservoir Hotel, and other prominent citizens occupied chairs upon either side of the

Mayor. From Glooscap came its Mayor, followed by Birnie Farrar, the Town Clerk, and with him David Blow and several Councillors. M'Glumpy arrived early in the day, with his sister, Mrs. Garvin, the Postmistress, who was deputed to watch the proceedings, upon behalf of the Glooscap Branch of the Woman's Rights League. His nephew, Terry M'Glumpy, the letter-carrier, followed a little later, after the morning delivery of letters, the neighbours not being particular about the afternoon one. The whole family made a day of it. M'Glumpy himself was busy up to the hour of the meeting, discussing with his acquaintances at the street corners, and other casual places of social intercourse, the chances of the three candidates, and particularly how the success of each of them would promote the prospects of the Reservoir. Terry passed a pleasant afternoon in the company of a young letter-carrier in the Brassville Post Office, and, with his aid, arranged for a party of youthful friends to come early to the meeting and get good places, so that they could effectively cheer everything that his patron said. For Terry, though he had some budding political views, yet subordinated, as has been already said, all political questions to a grateful loyalty to our politician. His uncle and aunt admitted that this was only natural in the boy.

The gravest face upon the platform was that of Mr. Fairlie, the Banker. He remembered the momentous interview with Frankfort in the Bank parlour just before his first meeting at the last election; and now when they shook hands, as Frankfort moved through the chairs to his place near the Mayor, the look of each man, short glance though it was, at the other told significantly of a mutual consciousness that a serious business was then in hand. Jacob Shumate kept proudly aloof from the meeting, but Shad Hubbard and several of the Trappers' Committee were there. Shad and his friends got a quiet corner to themselves, and, as he sat down in the midst of them, he threw his head well back, and gently swayed his visage round from side to side, so as to take in comprehensively all that passed. Meeks, however, who had been in the town for some days, got the Town Clerk, who was a friend of his, and 'a supporter on the still,' as that official put it, to let him in by a back door

to a small room that opened off the platform. The inside door next the platform was locked by the Town Clerk ; but there was a large flap over it for ventilation purposes, and as this was left down, Meeks could hear everything very well.

The galleries were filled with the lady electors, Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride sitting conspicuous in the front row with the ladies of the Woman's Rights Committee. Seth Pride did not sit near her, as he usually did, and as he was entitled to do, since near male relations were admitted to the ladies' gallery. He sat by himself upon the platform. There was, in fact, a slight difference between them about the right way to fight the election. They were both so far in favour of our politician, but Mrs. Pride insisted upon giving prominence to the accusation against Meeks concerning his vote in favour of the Empire Palace Hotel, as she was firmly persuaded of his guilt in that matter. Seth Pride considered it to be unfair to do this, now so late in the day, and when, after all was said, there was no proof that Meeks had got the money. He refused, therefore, to be a party to bringing it forward ; and in deference to his entreaties his wife gave up her original intention to raise the question by herself speaking in support of the vote of confidence in Frankfort, and recalling the charge against Meeks. But she and the Woman's Committee had arranged that Thaddeus Knack, the rising young lawyer of Brassville, who had lately been taking a good deal of Hedger's police-court business, should speak at Frankfort's meeting, when the usual vote for the candidate was proposed, and drag the whole nefarious business into the light of day. For greater effect he was to speak from the gallery, and they were all to support him by concerted and united demonstrations of approval. Seth did not care to be mixed up in this proceeding, so he sat by himself on the platform.

The Mayor had taken the chair, and was making his little speech in introducing the candidate, when Hedger turned to Neal Nickerson, who was sitting next him, and asked him to be ready to second the vote of confidence in Frankfort, which he was going to move. Nickerson replied, in his usual disputatious manner, that he would be happy to give him an answer when he heard what the candidate

had to say for himself. 'Impracticable lot you bookish chaps are,' Hedger said, turning to Woodall, the bookseller, who was behind him. 'Here is Nickerson says that he can't promise to support the vote of confidence till he hears the speech.'

Woodall's answer was stopped by the Mayor sitting down, having concluded his opening speech by introducing the candidate. Our politician stood forward to address the electors. He was favourably received, and began by dealing with the public questions of the day. It was his practice to come to local matters last. Meeks, on the contrary, began with the wants of the district, and always found them to be so numerous and pressing that he never got beyond them. The people listened quietly to the reasons that Frankfort gave in favour of women now sitting in Parliament, since they had already been called upon to take their share in politics by being given the franchise, and also to his views in favour of a considerable reform in their system of State primary education, and of completing the legislation in regard to Old Age Pensions. Having dealt with these topics, he shortly reviewed the problems that had been raised by the Currency agitation, and having stated that he invited questions upon all matters at the close of his speech, said that he would now deal with local topics, and especially with the Reservoir.

Disraeli, in one of his novels, while describing a gorgeous aristocratic ball, at which the hero of his tale figured, sketches impressively the hush of expectancy, almost awe, which thrilled through the high-born assemblage when, at a signal from a lord-in-waiting, the distinguished duke, who was the host, led the way, with impressive obeisance, to the inner, and even there select, alcove where the Prince of the Blood, who was present, was to sup with a few of the very rare and special members of the nobility.

A similar thrill of subdued excitement was felt by this humbler gathering at Brassville, as the people settled themselves down to hear all about the Reservoir. The general hope was that our politician would begin by saying that he had that day seen the Minister, and had come supplied with some favourable news from him. He began, however, in

quite a different way. If the people were still when he came to his subject, they were stiller than ever when they heard his first words about it.

Frankfort said that he was conscious that the view he took of the Reservoir question was different from that which many of his constituents held. He was fully of the opinion that, if it was to be placed upon this side of the Dividing Range, it ought to be somewhere near Brassville, rather than at Leadville or Tinville, and he would do his best to enforce their claims, in such a case, upon both Government and Parliament. Further, if elected, he would be prepared, as their Representative, to assist their deputations in presenting to the Minister such arguments and representations as they might urge in favour of having this National work upon the coast side of the mountains. But as to his own judgment upon the subject, and his vote in Parliament upon the question, they must allow him some freedom. As a Member of the House of Representatives he was bound to consider what was best for the country generally, as well as for his own district, and he was not prepared to say that the best site for the proposed Reservoir would be on the coast side of the mountains. Then, they must consider that the interest upon a quarter of a million would be a crushing charge upon them, if they were really to be responsible for it, as was proposed.

Our politician had got thus far, and was going on to support his views upon the subject, when he found himself interrupted by the loud buzz of excitement and astonishment that broke out simultaneously and unintentionally all over the meeting. The people could not realise it. They looked into one another's faces, as if to make sure where they were, and that it was not all a dream. The sound of many voices, each man asking his neighbour what it meant, was like that of the responses in church being repeated by a devout congregation. There was a general uprising, partly to ask questions and to utter exclamations, and partly merely to relieve excited feelings by moving about. The Mayor called out in vain to preserve order. No one was ready to speak, or quite knew what to say in such novel circumstances. Only Shad Hubbard, who had sat silent, not then swaying

from side to side as usual, but looking straight at Frankfort through all the hubbub, suddenly called out in his hoarse, strong voice—

‘D’ye mean to chuck it, then?’

Our politician, rightly interpreting Shad’s inquiry, replied that he had no intention of retiring from the contest, and that he would go to the poll; but that he would not ask for any vote of confidence till at subsequent meetings, and in private discussion with them, they had opportunity to fully consider his views about the Reservoir.

It would demand the pen of a dramatist of the realistic school to sketch the astonishment and consternation, and indeed indignation, that broke out from all quarters among the crowd as they rose to go. For they did rise to go. What had they to wait for? Neal Nickerson, with the self-congratulation of the simple-minded man who has made a hit, nudged Hedger as they stood up, and whispered amid all the tumult into his ear, ‘Have you got that vote of confidence ready, Hedger?’

For the moment he forgot even the Reservoir in his satisfaction at having scored a good point. The lawyer only remarked, in his most business-like manner, swinging himself round, without looking at Nickerson or appearing to answer him, ‘What I want to know is, what the man did come here for.’ Meeks was beside himself with joy. Brassville was now his. The position—and salary—of a Member of the House of Representatives he regarded as in his grasp; and he would take good care not to lose it again, if anything he could do would enable him to keep it. He crept out at the back door, and as he walked down the main street had some difficulty to compose his countenance so as not to show exultation or too great a sense of security, which might set some of the electors against him. In the babel of tongues as the people moved away one could only catch stray words of bewilderment, such as Rimigius M’Glumpy’s sententious exclamation that chaos had come again, and that there was an avalanche upon top of them; or David Blow’s ejaculations about ‘short commons’; or Hedger’s reiterated inquiry, what he *did* come here for. Secretly, M’Glumpy was not displeased, as he could now, without question, openly support

Meeks. The Mayor declared that he had never experienced such a shock in the whole course of his public career. The Town Clerk said that he would only venture to say that the town had been upon the edge of a precipice without knowing it; and several Councillors afterwards repeated the remark to other citizens. Tom Hilton was heard exclaiming that they were all dropped down in the wet; while Neal Nickerson kept objecting to this imagery, and maintaining in his strident voice that it was just the other way. Terence M'Glumpy was dumfounded. He had resolved to go on cheering to the end, whatever happened; but, with all his youthful enthusiasm, he felt that he must stop after he heard the first few sentences about the Reservoir. What in law is termed a *casus omissus* had arisen in his experience—a state of things not provided for, as no one could have anticipated it.

Shad Hubbard walked away slowly down the street, surrounded by the Trappers' Committee that was supporting Jacob Shumate. The trappers clustered round their leader, uttering joyous congratulations upon the unexpected improvement in the prospects of their man. Shad kept silent for a time, as he pondered upon what it all meant and calculated what Jacob's chances really were. At last he spoke aloud, tersely summing up the situation as it now was, 'Darn Meeks, anyhow!' More fully set out, what he wished to express was that if they only could beat Meeks, they must now win, as obviously the contest lay between him and Jacob Shumate. The citizens generally did not know how to express their feelings in the unprecedented circumstances in which they found themselves. Several of the quiet ones owned to themselves that there was something in the position that our politician had taken up; and they felt that the interest upon the cost of the Reservoir would be a heavy charge upon the district, if it was, indeed, to be paid by it. But they were silent amidst the present outburst of feeling. Woodall, when his turn came to say something in the group with which he walked away, only observed, 'Well, I am surprised.' And so, in fact, he was; but only at our politician saying what he did, not at his thinking it; for, in truth, he thought the same himself, only, as one of

the business men of the town, he could not afford to say so.

Poor Louis Quiggle was quite crestfallen. His was such a kindly disposition that he could not be much in any one's company without contracting a liking for him, unless he were a very unpleasant person indeed; and he did like Frankfort. He used to say that he was a gentleman, and he always added to this statement his own opinion—that a gentleman was a gentleman to the end of the chapter. From their conversations upon political business he knew that his man had some very queer notions in his head; but he never thought he would go off his head altogether, as he had that night. As a generally successful electioneering agent, he felt keenly the prospect of being badly beaten, and in his own district too. He did not know what to do now, or what line to take. If, by rousing the Woman's vote against Meeks, he could divert a good part of it to Frankfort, something might even yet be done. He resolved to fight on bravely. At least he would try and escape the melancholy catastrophe of his candidate losing his deposit money.

But of all the sad men and perplexed men on that platform, the saddest and the most perplexed was Thomas Lamborn. When he heard Frankfort's extraordinary statement, the first thought that flashed across his mind was for Eilly Lamborn. It, for the instant, even displaced the Reservoir. Could he trust his darling child—the only thing now left to him—to one so odd, so alarmingly odd, in his ideas? Who knew what mad notion he might not take up next? He was out of the University, he would be out of the constituency, and what would he be out of next—perhaps his mind? Thomas Lamborn was a practical man. His resolve was soon taken. He would break off the match between him and Eilly. Dreadful though that would be for her, it was better than to have her sacrificed. Yes, he thought to himself, absolutely sacrificed to one who had shown himself to be both eccentric and impracticable. But he must not break this too abruptly to his daughter. He would be wary in his methods.

So he stole hurriedly home to The Blocks, and, if the truth must be said, he told Eilly a white lie. He said "he

had got a letter in town that evening, saying that her Aunt Blaney was worse than ever with the rheumatism, and wanted her to come to Miranda at once, as she felt so lonely, being kept in the house with no one to talk to. Eilly had better start by the early train next morning, and in a few days he would follow her himself, and bring her home when the aunt got better.

Mrs. Margaret Blaney was Lamborn's only sister. She had come out to him when a girl, in the early days of the Province, and had for some years lived with him and his wife in the small bush home that afterwards grew into the stately Blocks. Mrs. Lamborn was in poor health before the birth of Eilly, and her husband, being anxious about her, brought up Dr. Frederick Blaney, the fashionable Miranda doctor, to attend at that event, in consultation with Dr. Delane, the local man. The doctor combined a short holiday at The Blocks with his professional engagement, and while there was much struck by the sisterly devotion of Maggie Lamborn—and also by her figure. It ended in their marrying. Dr. Blaney died a few years before the time we are writing of, leaving his widow handsomely provided for. She had lived on by herself in the fashionable doctor's house, and was, by virtue of the large connection in high life of her husband, one of the recognised leaders of society, though now, in her advanced years, she was not so much in active service as on the retired list of the fashionable corps. Eilly's heart was touched at once when she heard of her aunt's bad health and solitary condition; and, though it was a sore disappointment to her not to meet Frankfort, she was up betimes the next morning and off to the capital by the first train. The guard, Hiram Brickwood, was surprised to see her make such an early start, and cheerfully congratulated her upon it as he handed her portmanteau and travelling bag into the carriage. Her father had driven down to the station with her, and when he had seen her safely bestowed, he passed on to the post-office compartment of the train, and dropped into the box a letter to the aunt, which would catch the express at Great Gorge, and reach the capital a few hours before Eilly. This was the letter:—

THE BLOCKS, 2nd October 18—

My dear Maggie—Eilly is coming to you by the morning train. I have told her that you want her at once. I want to get her away from here just now. Things have all gone wrong, and I am quite upset. Frankfort, at his opening meeting, said that he was not prepared to go for the Reservoir! Of course he has no chance now; and how can I let the affair between him and Eilly go on when he throws away his chances this way? Yet you know what a child she is, and how she will feel it. I am quite upset, I say. Perhaps, without saying too much, you could prepare her a bit for the break-off. I will go myself to town in a few days, as, while I must go for old Meeks, I am sick of it all.—Your affectionate brother,

THOMAS LAMBORN.

P.S.—Just fancy, the Reservoir on the other side of the Divide, and The Blocks——!

Wishing Eilly a safe journey to Miranda, and as happy a stay with her aunt as may be possible, consistently with that black thread which is ever slipping into the coil of our lives, unknown how or why to us, and which was now winding into hers, we must at present return to the election contest at Brassville.

Several of the leading men of the district announced without delay that their support would be given to Meeks, as, though Jacob Shumate was also for the Reservoir, they distrusted him even before he had proclaimed his progressive land tax, by which the interest upon the cost of construction was to be paid. When he did announce his plan, all the people who were to be taxed, and those who were in their interest, went silently and solidly against him. As for Thomas Lamborn, though he could support our politician no longer, he was so much depressed about what had happened that he had no heart to take any further part in the contest. Meeks would, of course, be returned, and would work his best for the Reservoir; and as for himself, Thomas Lamborn, he had his private griefs to think about. He had no ill-feeling to Frankfort; but he felt that it would be distressing to have him at The Blocks, or to meet him more than he could help. So the day Eilly left he wrote him this short note:—

THE BLOCKS, 3rd October 18—

Dear Frankfort—You have quite knocked me over. Of course, I must go for Meeks and the Reservoir. I can't make it out. So sudden, too. There is no one at The Blocks, as my daughter is in Miranda with her aunt. I go down to her as soon as I can.—
Yours faithfully, THOMAS LAMBORN.

Frankfort read a good deal between the lines in this letter; the more so as he knew from Eilly herself that she had intended to be at home during the election. What did this mean, and what might it not mean? However, he had no time to indulge his feelings then. He must fight, and would fight, the thing through. He might be beaten, but at least he would not be discredited.

Nor, indeed, with all his eccentric views about the Reservoir, was he discredited personally among his late constituents. Most of them gave him credit for meaning well, with all his odd notions. But some did not do even this. Typical of those who took a darker view of his motives was Barney Clegg, to whom the social set who forgathered at the Brown Jug looked up as a leader of thought and an exponent of their principles in relation to public affairs. Those principles were not of a high order, and were much mixed up and confused with their personal wants. In a public aspect, they were centred upon the requirements of the borough, and emphatically upon the Reservoir. Outside these ruling purposes of their political life, their zeal was not keen, and, for the most part, simply disposed them to give a vote for the poor man generally. Many of the electors took larger views, and looked down upon the Brown Jug set; though upon a great question, such as the Reservoir, all were pretty much united. But there was perpetual antagonism between the Temperance party and the Woman's Rights Association, headed by Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride, and the Brown Jug people. Barney Clegg and his followers were stigmatised by them as the Brassville Thirsty Souls' Brigade.

This Brigade had all along favoured Meeks rather than our politician, though it was the fact that Meeks had made frequent and true asseverations upon the platform that he did

not know what the taste of wine was. But since their man was defeated at the last election, they had kept their political predilections very much to themselves; and Barney Clegg used, as we know, to volunteer evasive statements to the public as to the way in which he had voted, and in which he intended to vote.

The night of Frankfort's first meeting was a great night for the Thirsty Souls. They had been all along not without some hopes of being able this time to get in their man, but they were faint hopes. They felt the force of the general opinion that Frankfort would be the stronger man of the two for advocating the Reservoir in the House. It was arranged, after some convivial, but still prudent, consultation at the Brown Jug, that they should all go down to the meeting in a body, headed by their leader, and listen attentively to the candidate's speech, as independent electors, without disclosing there their bias for Meeks. They were to watch all our politician said about the Reservoir very closely, and when questions were invited at the close of the address, Barney Clegg was to ask a question. He was to inquire what steps the candidate would take to enforce the just rights of his constituents to the Reservoir, in case the Government should make any difficulty about it. In the premises aforesaid, would the honourable gentleman be prepared, in his place in Parliament, and upon the floor of the House, to move a want of confidence motion in the Ministry that denied justice to his constituents? Barney Clegg had carefully composed this question during the day, and had got his son Larry to write it out in fair round-hand, so that, in the confusion of the meeting, he should be able to read it easily. They were not quite certain what the answer to this inquiry would be; but, from what they knew of our politician, they hoped that something would come of it that would help Meeks, whom they arranged to challenge in the same terms, and who, they knew, would reply that he was prepared to put out fifty Governments till he got the one that would do justice to his constituents; and further, that he would, if necessary, be ready to fall upon the floor of the House himself in fighting their battle.

Mr. Clegg and his party took up a good position in the

centre of the hall, some time before the meeting began, and discreetly awaited the course of events. They were not interested in our politician's explanation of his opinions on the questions of the day. But they were all alert when he mentioned the Reservoir. They could scarcely trust their ears when they heard the first few sentences. When the statement of his attitude to the National work was finished, they felt, intellectually, quite upset—stunned, in fact. For the moment they forgot about the success of Meeks, now, they considered, assured, and even about the Reservoir itself, in the inexplicable spectacle that was before them of a candidate for Brassville refusing to pledge himself in its favour. Barney Clegg felt himself to be in a dazed condition, and when the meeting broke up hurriedly, he slowly rose from his seat, buttoned his coat right up to his chin (which he only did in times of great perplexity), looked slowly round at the crowd, and without saying a word, walked out, followed by the Thirsty Souls, and directed his steps towards the Brown Jug. His party shared in his sense of collapse, though some of them kept making exclamations of surprise, and even beginning attempts at explanations, which were continuously being broken off and renewed by others of the party in different forms. Once or twice they appealed to Barney Clegg, but he kept silence.

When they reached the Brown Jug, they retired to the private parlour behind the bar, leaving Larry at the counter to attend to stray customers, and to pass in to them the necessary refreshments through the slide, which he left a little up, so as to be able readily to hear their orders, and also to enjoy the jokes and conversation generally of the Thirsty Souls. Barney Clegg took the chair, pipes were produced, liquor was supplied, and the party addressed themselves to a full consideration, and, if possible, explanation, of the unprecedented scene which they had just witnessed. Pleased as they were about Meeks, and concerned about the Reservoir, the dominant feeling was still one of amazement at what the candidate could have meant by his statement, and curiosity to find out what was behind, when he made such a public declaration. It was this psychological problem which they set themselves to solve.

They went on discussing it, but still the chairman kept silent, smoking his long pipe, and throwing, from time to time, furtive and perplexed glances at each speaker, as he contributed his little to the general effort to find the true solution. The common, first-to-hand explanation was that given by Coape Jones, the saddler, to this effect, 'That he is off his head is as plain as the nose on your face.' Several of the Thirsty Souls fell in directly with this explanation. It was simple, obvious, easy to be apprehended. But Jos. Cobb, who kept the livery-stable which was behind the Brown Jug, the two institutions being worked in close commercial concert, took a somewhat, though not an entirely, different view. Jos. Cobb possessed the usual outward and visible characteristics of a man who had passed his life in a stable. He was understood to have been born there. But he belonged to the talkative, not to the silent branch of the horsey family of men. He had the close-cropped hair and impaired constitution of legs common to the whole tribe; but he had also a large round head which, for all that you could tell, might have inside it a brain big with intelligence, an expansive, talkative mouth, and full eyes, which had a glazed appearance, and moved restlessly from side to side while he spoke, as if to beat time to what he was saying. He soon broke into the discussion.

'Now, ye ain't right on the track about this yer 'stror-nary affair yet. The nearest thing to it, and which hugs it closest in the running, is old Karl Brumm's bolting away by himself on the jury there at Glooscap in Tom Maggs's case, last sessions.'

'Why, what has this show got to do with Tom Maggs and old Karl? Where does it come in, young feller?' remarked Lewis Fitch, the American tobacconist, as he called himself, though he was a native of Miranda.

'Just you listen, Yankee Doodle, and you'll pick up soon enough where it comes in,' said Jos. Cobb, settling himself, with his arms upon the table, quite pleased with the prospect of being able to tell his story right through.

'It's this way, please to take notice. This here Professor is one of those contrary sort of chaps that he'll never pull straight with his team—wants the high horse sort of prancing

about, upside-down, don't-go-straight-along-the-pike-road, kick-over-the-traces busines. Just as I was remarking about old Karl on that yer jury job, making out like that he was wiser than the other eleven of us, bless yer.'

'You haven't tipped us what Karl did yet, you know. No hurry, I expect,' said the tobacconist, who felt an interest in the promised story, as he had been serving on the jury himself at Brassville the week before.

'I am telling ye, if ye would only take a pinch of snuff and listen. It was when Maggs—Bill, ye mind—was up at the sessions before judge and jury for that little affair of Dredge's bullock; and a close-fisted chap is that same Grip Dredge, as ever got ten and a half per cent on a bill of sale. Bill shook the beast straight enough,' continued Jos., nodding round to the company confidentially, as he struck a match. 'The evidence was straight enough too, as the judge expounded to us gentlemen of the jury in his closing-up speech to us, bowling along about larceny, and taking things not quite on the square, and recent possession, and how long you can have a beast in your stockyard that belongs to some one else, and brands new, and brands old, and all the constitootional law on the affair. When he had run himself down like, says he, "The evidence is clear and direct, gentlemen; but perhaps you would like to consider your verdict." "Yes, we would, yer Honour," says Jim Pulley—he was foreman of us gentlemen, you see. So in we comes to our room, and Jim takes the chair at the head of the table, and only a glass of water beside him, and we all settles down around the table afore-said, with old Karl, who came in last—his paces are a bit slow, are old Karl's. "Take the wice-chair, Mr. Brumm—take the wice," says Jim, quite pleasant like. Karl, he is rather hard of hearing at times, he is, and did not hear him very right; so Jim waves his long arm to the chair, and in goes Karl straight enough, and sits down there as solemn-looking as the judge himself. And then says Jim, "Now to business, gents, if you please. There ain't no manner of doubt at all, at all, that Slim Bill"—Maggs is better known as Slim Bill, you see—"there ain't no manner of doubt that Slim Bill he's been goin' it too strong altogether in this yer line of business, and these here doin's of his, shakin' a beast

here and shakin' a beast there. It ain't the correct thing. It ain't respectable, nor the straight tip at all. He's too covetous by long chawks. But he has had a good warnin' this time, so I says as how we shall acquit him this go, and tell him straight when we see him outside, that if he don't leave off his tricks, we will run him in next time clear and safe by a length or two. Yes, we will give him a good square talking too, and no mistake."

'When Jim says this, he looks round rather stiff-like, as how he would give it to Slim Bill, and we in course nods our approbation generally with his remarks all round, all but old Karl, who, as I just now made observation, is not very spry in his hearing. He didn't pick up very clear the last of Jim's remarks; he only caught on to Slim Bill's shaking the cattle, so says he, quite solemn, "Mr. Foreman, I did not quite hear the last words of your opinion. Did you say that we should therefore convict the accused?"

"No, by no means, Mr. Brumm. The other way right about. Acquit him this trip, Mr. Brumm," says Jim, smiling away at a hand-gallop at the old man's mistake.

"Might I ask why, Mr. Foreman, since, if I heard correctly, I understood you to premise in your observations that he had abstracted this animal?"

'He does use such long words, does old Karl, and as he spoke, he looks right round the table in that reg'lar bell-topper style of his. But Jim Pulley answers him straight up at the fence:

"Why, this way, Mr. Brumm. You see, Bill has got it pretty strong this time. He has had to negotiate a stiff bit, this go. Why, he has paid down twenty notes to Thad Knack to defend him, and I'll take my Bible oath there's not one of Gripp Dredge's bullocks worth a fiver."

'We all says ditto to Jim, he put it so straight and plain; but, would you believe it,' continued Jos. Cobb, rolling his eyes round upon his interested audience, 'Old Karl wouldn't have it nohow. He must do something odd, like this here Professor, as I was making observation. The evidence was this, and the evidence was that, and the evidence was t'other, and so he couldn't go with Mr. Foreman and the rest of us noways. I 'spects, as I have seen on the

newspapers, that he thought he never met eleven more obstinate chaps than the lot of us.'

'And how did you run it off, Jos.?' asked Lewis Fitch, the tobacconist.

'Run it off? Why, we didn't run it off at all. After a couple of hours with the obstinate old gent, the judge calls us out again into the court, and says he, "Very sorry we found such difficulty in agreeing to our verdict,—such a clear case, gentlemen," says he.

"Just so, your Honour," says Jim, "quite so, and we are all right enough, but for one of the party here——" "Stay, gentlemen," says the judge, pretty sharp like, "I cannot hear anything about your differences with individual jurors. You must speak together through your foreman. Only, to be sure, I may remark that it is a pity if, for any small point, any one gentleman should cause a disagreement, and justice be defeated. It is the duty of every gentleman to do his best to come to some agreement, conscientiously," and then he looks straight at Karl, as if for all the world he had clapped his ear to the keyhole of the door, and knew all about the trouble he had been giving us, and old Karl all the while standing, quite obstinate like, with his ears thrown back, like a jibbing horse. And, do you know,' Jos. went on, raising his voice so as to finish his story with effect—'do you know, and I give you my solemn word of honour, that that there old Karl Brumm aforesaid, notwithstanding all the judge's talking to him, and all Jim Pulley's arguments, stood out that he knew better than any of us, and than the lot put together.'

'And all the while he makes as how he is a reg'lar democratic chap, and all for the majority being in the right of things,' was the commentary of the American tobacconist.

'Right you are! Chalk it up, Stars and Stripes!' continued Jos. Cobb. 'But I was a-telling this here yarn to show up about this here Professor. His goin's-on are just in the same style of galloping. Must do a superior line to any one else. Pitch it a peg higher. His head ain't so much cracked as it is swelled a bit.'

While Jos. Cobb was enjoying himself in telling this long story, Barney Clegg, who, in the course of his experience

in that room, had heard the story before, was sitting not heeding it now, but puzzling away at the problem which had been exercising the Thirsty Souls ever since they had heard Frankfort's remarkable declaration. He had continued silent so far, for the simple reason that he did not know what to say. At last, towards the end of Jos. Cobb's story, an idea struck him. His face promptly exchanged its puzzled aspect for an air of satisfaction that spread itself over his features. All in a moment the true key to the conundrum seemed to be presented to his mind. When Jos. Cobb stopped, the chairman cleared his throat, placed his pipe upon the table in a deliberate manner, as a token that he was going to speak at last—in fact, to give judgment. Something new and striking was expected from him. He spoke :

'I wonder, gents, that ye are so much put about by what's easy to be seen, if ye'll only open your eyes and have a look around. Most of ye have been to the State school, and yet ye can't put two and two together.'

'Well, now, to be sure. You've got it, have you? And where is the double event, Mr. Chairman?' asked Jos. Cobb, turning his glazed eyes in a staring manner at Barney Clegg.

'It's there, plain enough, if ye will only take a square squint at it. Why? What's happened? Only t'other day, on this here Currency business, William Dorland sacks the Professor, and he duly and accordingly loses his billet. Ain't he on for getting it again, I would premise?'

'Well, and what if he is? I don't see the two and two this trip,' says Jos. Cobb.

'Can't ye see?' answered Barney Clegg, elevating his little eyebrows with a sense of superiority—'can't ye see, all on ye, that if he gets the Reservoir at Silveracre, William Dorland's fortune is made? "Now and accordingly," says Dorland to the Professor, "you get me the Reservoir"—that's two, d'ye take notice—"and I'll get you back your billet"—that's t'other two, always and notwithstanding, providing that ye've no objections, Jos. Cobb; and if ye have no further objections, I again remarks that two and two makes four.'

And Barney Clegg sat back with a calm look of triumph,

and took a long, solemn whiff at his pipe. Then, holding it aloft for a moment, as if to wave in some further remark that was struggling for utterance, he continued :

‘ And mind ye, gentlemen, I’ve no call to score the Professor for a-lookin’ after his bread and butter. Only we must keep a weather blinker on our bread and butter too.’

As he spoke, a general and inward feeling of conviction of the truth of his remarks spread itself around the table, and there arose a gentle murmur of admiration at his penetration. Jos. Cobb was beginning a few remarks, with the view of developing several reasons of his own for now concurring in the chairman’s explanation, when a slight tap was heard at the back door of the room, that which opened into the yard of the Brown Jug. From the yard you passed into the livery stables, which extended to the small street behind. Meeks had gone to the stables to arrange for a buggy to take Mrs. Meeks and himself the next day on election business in the suburbs. Also, while at the stables, he could slip quietly in to say a word to the Thirsty Souls, who, he knew, were assembled in the back room that evening, after Frankfort’s meeting. His relations with Barney Clegg and his following were, as we know, peculiar. He belonged to the teetotal party. Yet they put up with him. Why? We would want Barney Clegg himself to explain this. Perhaps it was because he was such a very handy Member for everyday business ; perhaps because he was so careful to be fair-spoken to them all. Possibly it was because the entry set down to his credit for that one conspicuous good work, the vote for the Empire Palace Hotel, was still unexhausted. However it was, he had been their man for the constituency at the last election, and experience of Frankfort’s independent ways had made them long the more for the pliable Meeks again. Now, to their triumphant satisfaction, he was the winning man.

The moment he put his head in at the door, in response to the chairman’s challenge to come in, Barney Clegg rose with some solemnity, congratulated him in the name of the Thirsty Souls as the conquering hero, and with a delicate consideration for his well-known weakness, called aloud through the half-open slide :

‘Larry, something soft here, quick, for the Honourable Mr. Meeks.’

While Meeks was raising the innocent glass to the good health of the company, Jos. Cobb twisted his eyes round at the chairman, and remarked in a confidential tone :

‘Spit it out again for him, ole man. Perhaps he don’t twig it. Chuck it out again.’

And in response to this invitation, Barney Clegg cleared his throat, and, looking round the table with all the conscientious importance of an original discoverer in research, repeated to Meeks his solution of the phenomenon which had perplexed so many that evening, and concluded with an exhortation to the Member-elect to make a clean breast of it at his opening meeting the next evening, to show up the foe, and to shame a certain person who should be nameless. Meeks listened attentively, expressed his surprise—almost his concern—that such an explanation should be possible of the action of a candidate for Parliament ; yet that action was such a departure from his duty to the constituency, it must have some special explanation ; further, he protested that the solution had never occurred to him, paid a warm tribute to the penetration of the chairman, and said that he would consider how far it would be possible for him personally, ‘and prudent for me, mark, Mr. Chairman, indeed, becoming, as I may say, in a rival candidate for high legislative honours from this great constituency, to avail myself of the important discovery that I have heard this evening.’

The Thirsty Souls were struck with the delicacy of feeling that their man displayed, and much enjoyed the fervent and sincere declaration that he went on to make of his own undying devotion to the Reservoir, and to the interests of the town generally. After making a little set speech, such as is always appreciated at such gatherings, he informed the company that he had only looked in just to enlist their support and kind offices for his meeting, and begged that they would excuse him for not prolonging his stay, as it was getting late and Mrs. Meeks always waited up for him no matter to what hour he might be detained by public business. He then disappeared by the same way

that he had come. As he hurried down the back street to the Brassville Coffee Palace, where he was staying, he undoubtedly felt a certain secret satisfaction at this latest imputation against his opponent. But he checked himself from indulging in it too much, and he never had the slightest intention of himself proclaiming it. He did not believe it for a moment, and he understood the broad popular feeling well enough to know that the great majority of the electors would equally discredit it. For, angry though they were about the Reservoir, there was a sense of fairness about them, and even of generosity. Nay, the Thirsty Souls themselves only took up the chairman's view in their sheer despair of explaining the thing in any other way. Meeks felt that it might do him more harm than good to advance that explanation of Frankfort's action. Of course, if Barney Clegg and his following chose to whisper it about, that was not his fault. For Ebenezer Meeks was not a rancorous man; and so long as he could get into Parliament and keep there, he had no wish to injure any human being—man, woman, or child. He was even urbane to the animals.

His meeting was a great success. The enthusiasm of his supporters would have been even greater than it was, were it not that his election was considered a foregone conclusion, since, our politician being regarded as out of the running, they had little doubt that he would beat Jacob Shumate. His speech was devoted to the Reservoir. He showed a minute knowledge of all the details of the subject: the first cost; the need of auxiliary water storage; the charges for maintenance; the expense of reticulation; the outlet of so many millions of gallons, and the value thereof at so much per each million gallons; the small charge to the people at per thousand gallons, which would nevertheless produce a vast revenue; the rating of one penny halfpenny in the pound upon the municipal valuation, which would be the utmost that would ever be required, if indeed the water did not of itself pay for the whole thing. His figures were very ample, and at the same time very exact, most of his returns being worked out to decimal points. He only briefly alluded to the declaration of our politician. He said that, in the course of his long career as a public man, no

incident had ever given him such a shock. He would not have alluded to it at all, were it not that it was impossible for him, or any intelligent citizen of Brassville, to meet any other intelligent citizen without expressing his amazement and consternation.

A vote of confidence in Meeks was passed unanimously, and so, successfully started in his candidature, we will for the present leave him, while we give some attention to the prospects of Jacob Shumate.

These proved to be poor. Both he and Shad Hubbard had miscalculated the effect of the proposed progressive land tax upon the electors. If indeed all the electors had been sincere enthusiasts, like himself, he would have been on safe ground. But what they wanted first, and before all things, was the Reservoir. So long as that was safe they had no objection to the progressive tax, particularly as all who held under 250 acres were exempt. But if this tax endangered the chances of getting the Reservoir, then not only did they not want it, but they positively objected to it. And there was no denying that a small but active and powerful party, namely, those upon whom the tax would fall, would be apt to throw over even the Reservoir rather than to have to pay for it. Whereas, by the simple process of taking the money out of the Loan for National Reproductive Works, the district got all the gain, while the burden of repayment was handed over to the diffused and distant responsibilities of the Loan. They were, in fact, placed to the suspense account of the future. All parties were thus satisfied. It was in vain that Jacob, supported by some of the trappers and by a few devout believers in Henry George's single tax, proclaimed the justice of a fair system of taxation, by which those who got the profit should bear the burden. It was in vain that he quoted rows of figures, which he and Karl Brumm had painfully worked out, showing the unearned increment which the Lamborns and the Le Fanus and the Hilljohns would put into their pockets if they got the Reservoir without the progressive tax to pay for it. He had several quotations from Henry George copied out to read to the people, and some extracts from Karl Marx that Karl Brumm had selected for him. Karl also gave him several references

from the Bible bearing upon the Mosaic land laws ; but these Jacob, as a consistent Freethinker, refused to have anything to do with.

He thought that his election was secured when one morning, on opening his *Sweet-Brier*, he found a small sub-leader distinctly approving of his land tax, and declaring that its adoption by the people of Brassville would be a torpedo exploded under the old hulk of Toryism. He came to his next meeting with some confidence, armed with the *Sweet-Brier*, and triumphantly read the words of the oracle. All in vain. The people wanted the Reservoir more than even the torpedo. Jacob Shumate could not but feel dispirited, though, like many candidates at election contests, he gave most heed to the hopeful prognostications of his supporters, and set down all the doubtful chances as sure in the end to turn out in his favour. Several of the trappers and those who were land-taxers on principle cheered him forward, and declared that many of the poor men did not like to speak out against their employers, but that at the ballot-box it would be all right. So he struggled away fiercely, and hoped for success. He said within himself : For one large estate-owner there are hundreds of poor men who have everything to gain and nothing to lose by the tax, so in the end and with the secret voting they will support me.

As for our politician, he fought his fight vigorously, as if he confidently expected every man and every woman to give a disinterested vote upon the Reservoir proposal. He held meetings throughout the district, and was not ill received, for he was personally liked, and the public give a certain amount of encouragement to all candidates at an election, however hopeless they may know their prospects to be. At Glooscap there was still a kind feeling for him on account of Eilly Lamborn ; and the Mayor, Birnie Farrar, David Blow, and the Councillors generally, had at first looked forward to his arrival in their town as a happy occasion for congratulating him both upon his sure prospect of re-election and also upon his early union with the daughter of The Blocks. After his Brassville speech they felt that the wickets were down at the first innings, and knocked

down by himself, too. So Birnie Farrar reported to the Glooscap citizens when he and the Mayor returned the next day from the meeting. They were all quite sorry about it. When our politician came to their town he found himself kindly met by his old friends, but with that air of reserve about them which men are apt to assume towards those who have fallen into some moral lapse, but whom they do not want to disown harshly. In the mind of the common man the distinction between guilt and failure is like the difference between light and darkness at twilight, not easy to fix. They fade into one another. Their attitude to him was that of men who thought that he had done something wrong. And so they did think. But he had a good meeting. They all came to hear him, and a motion was passed thanking him for his address.

After he had met all who wished to see him at the close of the meeting, he went up to the cottage of Ernest Hooper, the schoolmaster, in whose company he could rest a while from the treadmill round of discussion with individual electors, trying to excuse himself about the Reservoir.

Ernest Hooper was glad to see him, the more so as he knew that his was no mere electioneering visit, but the disinterested meeting of friend with friend.

‘Sit down, Mr. Frankfort—sit down. I am sorry I cannot still greet you as professor. That affair was really one of the worst symptoms that I have seen in our social condition. Getting you out of the University, I mean. Let us keep the mind free at any rate. Let us have no slavery of the soul.’ Ernest Hooper spoke with more animation than was usual with him. It came home to him as a scholar.

‘Yes, truly, I am getting some experience of the political difficulties of our time. Dorland and the University gave one example, and now it looks as if this Reservoir job would give another. I, at least, consider it a job.’ Frankfort spoke plainly to his friend.

‘Well, for certain, it is a job, only we hope it will be a good job for us—that is the general feeling. It is, however, a political abuse. The other is an attempt to buy and sell truth and intellect.’

‘But is the feeling for the Reservoir so strong in this

part, Mr. Hooper? I thought it was chiefly at Brassville, where they are to have it.'

'Why, you see they all expect to gain something by it. And if they can't get it here, at least the Brassville district gets it. You cannot wonder at the people not supporting you now. How could they take you, and give the Reservoir to Leadville or Silveracre?'

Here a step was heard upon the little verandah of the cottage, and a moment afterwards Mr. Hilljohn, the land-owner, whom Frankfort had visited when he first went round the district with Louis Quiggle, entered the room.

'Ah, good evening to you, gentlemen. Let me shake hands with you, Mr. Frankfort, and congratulate you upon the noble stand that you have made about the Reservoir. I have never touched an election before; but now I am going to ride round these parts with you and canvass for you, while Quiggle is at work at Brassville.'

Hilljohn spoke with as much warmth as was consistent with his usual quiet dignity of manner.

'I am sure it is very good of you, Mr. Hilljohn,' said Frankfort, 'and I certainly stand in need of all the votes that I can get. Indeed, I confess I don't see how I am to succeed against the general demand for the Reservoir.'

'Well, well, we must try. To begin with, my house-keeper, Mrs. Coggan, is a warm supporter of yours, and hopes to get you several of the women's votes here. She can't stand Jacob Shumate at all. We must see what we can do in our ride about to-morrow.'

As they talked over the prospects of the election, both Ernest Hooper and our politician expressed themselves as having little hope of the result. But Hilljohn took a more cheerful view, and maintained a good many of the respectable people would see through both Meeks and Shumate, and, combining their votes upon Frankfort, would make him stronger than either of the others. 'You see,' said the sanguine Hilljohn, 'when three are standing, one good man has a chance.'

'You hope, then, Mr. Hilljohn, that the respectable people you mention will vote for our friend? How is Mr. Lamborn going? I have not heard.'

Ernest Hooper spoke in ignorance of the real relations between Frankfort and Lamborn. He lived so much in his school and his books that he knew of little outside. The question rather disconcerted Hilljohn, for he called to mind that he had heard something of Lamborn having given his name to the Meeks Committee, and it just flashed upon him that there now might be some difficulty about Frankfort's engagement to Eilly Lamborn. A rumour to that effect had already begun to spread itself abroad, in the unaccountable way that rumours will. People thought it possible, nay, likely, and spoke about it. Some stated that they knew it was so. Frankfort said nothing, and Hilljohn, observing his silence, turned the conversation, and the little party soon after separated, Hilljohn and Frankfort having arranged to make an early start the next morning from the Red Parrot, for their ride round among the farmers.

As these two set out upon their political tour the following day, they might be truly described in ancient phrase as 'blameless men,' at least in electioneering tactics. Our politician agreed with the view of the leading reformers of a past generation, who objected to a man personally soliciting the elector to vote for him, and when Quiggle went with him, all the business management was left to him. Now he had only Hilljohn with him, and though Hilljohn would take any trouble to serve his friend, he had the dignified notion that personal requests for votes, at least when in the company of the candidate, would never do. So they went through the Glooscap side of the constituency without ever getting the promise of a vote. They met and talked with the voters, male and female, and Frankfort sought to justify his position regarding the Reservoir; Hilljohn warmly supporting him in this, but making no allusion to his own position as one who would be a chief gainer by it. They were everywhere received in a friendly way, and as Hilljohn had known most of the people from their childhood, at the close of the day, as the two rode up to his home at Charlotte Mount (which he so called after his mother), he had formed a sanguine forecast of the support that Frankfort would get in the Glooscap division on the election day.

Our politician was not so hopeful ; but he had enjoyed the ride through field and forest with a congenial companion, and the conversation with the many sorts of men that a country tour brings one in contact with. It was less exacting than the street canvass of the town.

As they came round the foot of the hill upon which the house stood, their road brought them by the comfortable log cabin of King Billy and Queen Mary. The keen eye of the aboriginal recognised our politician directly, though he had not seen him since they met when Frankfort went to Hilljohn's on his way to Glooscap at the first election, and when, as the reader will remember, the king briefly expressed his disappointment about the Reservoir. He was seated at his open door, smoking the stump of a cigar that one of the men in the shearing shed had presented him with, while Mary was squatted down next a log, cutting up an eel which her lord had caught in the creek, preparatory to boiling it for tea. As they came up Hilljohn said :

'Billy, here is Mr. Frankfort, the Member, you know.'

Billy glanced at our politician, and only replied 'A' right,' and then looked away from them around at Mary and the fish, as if something had suddenly called off his attention. He kept turned from them long enough to let his master and Frankfort pass ; but they both stopped, amused at his evident reserve. At last our politician, departing from his principle not to solicit votes, exclaimed—

'Why, Billy, you don't forget me, do you? I want you and Mary there to vote for me at this election.'

King Billy turned quickly round, his eyes twinkling with excitement, and, with something of the savage roused within him, exclaimed, while he kept waving his hand, with the cigar-end between his fingers—

'Look here, Massa Frank. Me slap-up free elector. Go straight for Massa Meeks. Massa Frank, look out, straight tip, no go. To be so, wherefore? Now, then, he sell my birthday. Lake make tracks straight away to dam' Leadville.'

'No use trying there, Frankfort,' said Hilljohn, as they passed on, laughing. 'He has heard the men talking of the Reservoir. Some of them have told him that it is his

birthright, and that you are going to send it away to Leadville.'

'At any rate, he has given me a straight answer—the most direct that I have had during the day. But he has no vote, I suppose?'

'Oh yes, he has always been registered. But his feelings experienced quite a shock when the Woman's Franchise was passed into law, and I told him that Mary must be registered as a voter now. He could not understand this at all, and objected to it in that strong, short style of speaking that he indulges in. But I would have it no other way; so now they are both registered.'

'Perhaps, then, I may get Mary's vote. Perhaps Mrs. Coggan can influence her,' said our politician, continuing the joke.

'Oh no, he won't let her vote. His ideas of Woman's Rights are in a very rudimentary state. He brings her in on polling day; but only to carry his boots, which he puts on when they get near the village. It is an instance of the truth of the old remark that it is no use having a law unless the condition of the people suits it.'

As they came near to the verandah of the house, Mrs. Coggan appeared at the door to greet them, and Hilljohn said, as he waved to her a token of recognition:

'But there, now, is a true supporter of yours. She won't have Meeks at all; and as for Jacob Shumate, she says that the only woman in Glooscap who will vote for him is the Widow Dobbs. Ah, Mrs. Coggan, here is the candidate come to get your vote. But they say down the village that you are working for Jacob.'

'Well, sir,' replied Catherine Coggan, with a slight curtsy, for she retained the manners of early days in her native land, 'it is not for me to discuss questions the like of these with you two gentlemen; but if you ask the opinion of Catherine Coggan about Jacob Shumate, I would only respectfully declare upon oath, if I am so required, that I would rather vote for a pair of old shoes of his own making.'

'Why, then, Mrs. Coggan, are you for Meeks?' said our politician.

'Is it to vote for Meeks you are speculating on, sir? I

can assure you, Mr. Frankfort, that rather than go and vote for Mr. Ebenezer Meeks and Mrs. Meeks, Catherine Coggan would for choice stay at home and do a wet Monday's washing.'

'Well, that is good for me, Mrs. Coggan ; better comfort than King Billy gave me just now,' said our politician.

'Ah, well, sir,' remarked Mrs. Coggan, as the gentlemen moved into the house—'ah, well, sir, as I was saying just now, it is not for the likes of me to deprecate these things, but I should like to know where's the good of giving black thrash like that a vote ? They have not got as good notions in their heads as the collie Nero there.'

'You see,' said Hilljohn to our politician, with one of his grave smiles, as his trusty housekeeper left them alone together—'you see Mrs. Coggan is not educated up to the one adult one vote yet.'

They passed the evening talking over their day's political work, and speculating upon their prospects of support in the Glooscap district. The estimate that our politician formed of them was more correct than Hilljohn's. Mrs. Coggan was indeed going to vote for him ; but that was partly upon account of her reverence for her master, and partly because of the Woman's Temperance Association cry against Meeks, and the general objection of the women to Jacob Shumate. But on the whole the day's operations had been a failure. There was no one more respected in the countryside than Hilljohn ; but it is one thing to respect a man, and another thing to follow him at election time. It is even possible at that time for the elector to support a man whom he does not respect, but whom he thinks will be more useful to him than the other man. Hilljohn, with his gentlemanlike, lofty ideals, though affable to every one, was felt to be out of place at the work. Then, as to the canvassing, was it real downright canvassing at all ? thought many of the electors. Why, they never asked a man for his vote ; while Meeks, who had crept round the neighbourhood a little before, had begged them individually to give him a chance, and Mrs. Meeks had personally entreated the women. If a thing was worth having, it was worth asking for. John Bright, it is true, laid it down many years ago that personal canvassing was humiliating to a man, and declared in his

cocksure way that the best constituencies had abolished it. Soon it was to go altogether. It was only the stupid party that clung to these abuses. But the time has not yet come for the reform. The self-denying ordinance which he proclaimed for the rising democracy has not been observed when it is risen. The visit of Hilljohn and our politician did no good in an electioneering point of view ; though there was a general feeling among the electors that they were both gentlemen.

He got on more successfully in other districts, where he had Quiggle with him to make the business arrangements. He held meetings everywhere, and was listened to with attention. But his agent had a fainting feeling at heart after every one of them, that the attention of the people was owing to mere good-nature, and that there was no possibility of ultimately weathering the Reservoir. Indeed, for several days it seemed doubtful whether he would not be below the Shoemaker on the polling-day, as also whether he might not be in the unfortunate position of forfeiting his election deposit money, owing to his not getting one-fourth of the number of votes that would be cast for Meeks. But towards the close of the first week a sudden and new development of the contest shone a gleam of hope into the soul of the despondent Quiggle, made Meeks afraid, and perplexed Barney Clegg and the fraternity who followed him.

It was the Woman's vote that did it. Meeks had been afraid of it all along. Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride and the Temperance party had never forgotten nor forgiven Meeks for his action on the Empire Palace Hotel question. They still continued to insist that Carmody Zinck had bribed him to betray the Temperance principles which he had been sent to Parliament to maintain. There was certainly no proof of this ; but as Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride often said, what proof could there be, if one man hands the other the pound-notes, as the two are sitting by themselves in a smoking-room ? At first she and the ladies of the Brassville branch of the Woman's Temperance League had no cause for uneasiness, or for any special exertion ; for with the three candidates running, all, as supposed, equally zealous for the Reservoir, there was no doubt that Frankfort would win

easily, and this would be the more gratifying to them, as he was such a pronounced advocate of woman having her full political rights.

But when he made his inexplicable declaration about the Reservoir, all their prospects for the election were upset. There were only left Meeks and Shumate in favour of the National work, and as between the two, the return of Meeks seemed to be certain, since he advocated it without any local tax; and besides, he was generally considered to be better fitted to manage for it in a business-like way than Shumate.

The near prospect of the return of Meeks to Parliament for Brassville roused anew their indignation. They had defeated him before, and so long as there was no prospect of his succeeding there was no need of special exertion, or of doing more than just keeping the old cry alive against him. But now that he had been unexpectedly thrust to the front, every nerve must be strained to save the constituency from the disgrace of returning the man who had sold himself to the liquor party.

The Temperance League had undoubted weight with the public. And it deserved to have it. For, though some of its views were extreme and some of its methods erratic, it had this distinguishing merit, that, amid the many selfish, and even sordid, purposes of men, its aim was to grapple with a social curse, and a curse that was especially powerful in its sway and cruel in its effects over the more miserable and the weaker portion of the community—the very poor and the women and children of the drunkard's home. The League, then, had just weight with the people generally, and had a special control over the Woman's vote, though by no means as exclusive a control as it once hoped to have. The great object was to secure this Woman's vote. If it could be got to follow the Executive of the Temperance League, there was no doubt that they could put in either Frankfort or Shumate, since there were as many female as male voters on the rolls. The trouble was with those of the married women who wanted to vote with their husbands. But even without counting these, whoever the single and independent women supported would at once become at least a dangerous

competitor to Meeks. Here poor Jacob Shumate's harsh views about women and his grudging support to their advanced proposals told against him. They put him aside at once, the more readily as he had never been personally agreeable to them ; and so what was there to do but to join all their energies in favour of our politician. It was hard to do this in the face of the Reservoir fiasco ; but how else were they to keep out Meeks? Hannah Gazelle Pride herself circulated the rumour that it was only his independent way that led him to speak so oddly about the Reservoir ; for that it was certain it would be on this side of the Divide, and that then he would, as he had promised, do all he could to have it at Brassville instead of at Leadville. Thus there was presented in Brassville the unprecedented spectacle of a party of electors who thought more of their principles than even of the Reservoir. At any rate, Mrs. Pride and several of the women, anxious as they were for the Reservoir, were still more anxious to keep Meeks out. It must be set down to their credit that there was one public object at least for which they felt more warmly than even for the Reservoir itself. So they resolved to go solid for Frankfort. They signalled this new development in the campaign by raising in fiercer tones than ever the old charge against Meeks, and openly denouncing him as the man who sold for money the Temperance cause.

The Meeks party were alarmed at the turn things had taken. If the Woman's vote did go solidly for Frankfort, they must be beaten. The startling anomaly of a man being returned for Brassville who did not support the Reservoir was within the range of possible events. Meeks himself was, like Othello, perplexed in the extreme, and as for Barney Clegg and the party that followed him, their feeling was that they were nearer than ever the precipice to which the Town Clerk had alluded, unless the Woman's vote could be in some way conciliated. Meeks's Committee held an anxious consultation at their room in the Coffee Palace, with the result that they determined to get Carmody Zinck himself to come up to Brassville, and there upon the public platform vindicate Meeks. Carmody Zinck had just been returned, in the first batch of the elections, for the Blue Street

Division of the Metropolis, and was thus left free to go about and help his friends. He came in third on the list, being far behind the two Populists that headed the poll. But there he was. There had been, in truth, a quiet understanding upon the matter between the political managers, mainly brought about by the influence of Mr. Secker, the Secretary of the State workers, who liked Zinck personally, and who, moreover, was always ready to promote any arrangement that put a candidate, of whatever party, in the position of being indebted to him for his seat. Carmody Zinck readily accepted the invitation to come to Brassville. He was not unwilling to help Meeks; and he further felt that his own position as a Member of the House of Representatives, and also as Managing Director of the Empire Palace Hotel, Limited, was assailed by this unfounded imputation against Meeks. For it was plain enough for any one to see that, if Ebenezer Meeks took the money, Carmody Zinck gave it. His letter accepting the invitation came down by the evening train, and the Meeks Committee had large posters placarded all over Brassville before the morning announcing that Carmody Zinck, the eminent Member of Parliament, would appear at Meeks's meeting on the following day and give a full and explanatory denial of the infamous Empire Palace calumny.

The excitement through the electorate grew apace. Attention was even momentarily diverted from the Reservoir by this new aspect of the old scandal. Hannah Gazelle Pride and the Woman's Committee held a special secret sitting in order to decide how best to meet the reinforcements that the enemy were hurrying up. As they believed Meeks to be guilty, it naturally followed that they also believed Carmody Zinck, eminent Member of Parliament though he might be, to be guilty too. Hannah Gazelle Pride was not wanting in spirit, and she proposed herself at the meeting to 'go straight for him,' as she expressed it, and put such questions to him about the transaction as would show the mutual guilt of the two of them. But then, though she was a good speaker, she had no experience in cross-examination, and the rest of the Committee prudently felt that, if she grappled with Carmody Zinck, who was a 'hardened man of the world,' as Mrs.

Toms remarked, and failed, Meeks would be more triumphant than ever. He would then not only win the election, but would actually get a public certificate of good character. The idea of this exasperated them, as did also the prospect of the success of Carmody Zinck. For he was in several ways obnoxious to them, as being a Director of the Empire Palace, a hardened man of the world, as Mrs. Toms had said, and a bachelor who always seemed to be particularly gay and happy.

After a hurried consideration of the matter, they resolved to enlist in their service for the evening the rising young lawyer, Thaddeus Knack, who was particularly clever in cross-examination. Though not himself a total abstainer, he always worked with the Woman's Temperance League, and he got a good deal of business through their influence. He spoke well at their meetings, and was unflinching in his efforts to sheet home charges of irregularities in the liquor traffic at the Police Court. In consideration of these services, the fact that he was not a strict total abstainer was overlooked. Him, therefore, they invited to undertake the duty of questioning Carmody Zinck at the meeting, and he readily accepted the commission, as he thus strengthened his relations with the influential Woman's League, and hoped also to extend his fame as a cross-examiner.

The Temperance Hall, which Meeks had taken instead of the Town Hall for his meeting, in the hope of conciliating the Woman's League, was crammed upon the eventful evening by an audience that had been drawn together by their interest in the personal issue, as well as by their zeal in the public cause. As there were no galleries in the hall, the women had to sit downstairs, where the front half was allotted to them and their male relations, the rest of the men being left to congregate lower down and to stand about the doors. Hannah Gazelle Pride and her party got seats well in front, accompanied by Thaddeus Knack, who was her escort that evening, as Seth Pride did not go. Several of the Glooscap people were there. M'Glumpy and his nephew, Terry, had come to Brassville early in the day, Mrs. Garvin undertaking herself to deliver any special letters, so that the boy might have the afternoon free to himself upon such an

important public occasion as this was. Barney Clegg and his following got seats as close up behind the women as they could, so as to be able to give the full weight of their moral support to Meeks and Carmody Zinck.

Hannah Gazelle Pride and her party gave no sign of their intended hostile demonstration. They came to the front 'with their escorts' simply because they were women. They and Thaddeus Knack determined to mask their battery as long as possible, and thus to come upon the enemy as a surprise. So they kept all secret, and Meeks and Carmody Zinck stepped upon the platform expecting to have a triumphal march that evening. The speech of Meeks was short. What he said about himself was in a grieved, deferential tone, and he looked round upon the meeting in a deprecating way more in sorrow than in anger. But he waxed indignant when he alluded to the aspersion that was also indirectly cast upon his honest friend, the distinguished statesman, Carmody Zinck. When he sat down the distinguished statesman rose, and was received with applause, which was pretty general, but was quite enthusiastic from the quarter where Barney Clegg and the Brown Jug party sat. Carmody Zinck was fresh, buoyant, strikingly dressed, sweet-tempered, pleased with himself, and plausible in his manner.

He said that it was not merely as a friend of his respected brother legislator, as he trusted he was not premature in styling Mr. Meeks, but as a lover of justice, and one zealous for the high standard of the honour of the Parliament of their noble Province, that he came away from many pressing public engagements to stand upon that platform, and to declare there openly in the face of all the electors, men and women, that their late respected member was, in regard to the Empire Palace Hotel affair, pure as the sparkling spring, clear as the sunbeam at noon, and white as the driven snow. He went on to pay a high tribute to the virtues generally of Ebenezer Meeks, commercial, political, and, above all, domestic, and concluded by stating that he would be most happy to answer any questions which any lady or gentleman present might wish to ask him.

As he said this he looked down towards where Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride and her party sat, with a respectful and rather prolonged bow; for Meeks had told him that it was in that quarter that his powers of conciliation were required. During his obeisance he had not observed Thaddeus Knack, who had promptly stood up and moved forward right before the platform. Carmody Zinck was recalled to the harsher aspect of political life by a short outburst of contending cries, those who were in the secret cheering the lawyer loudly, while Barney Clegg and the Thirsty Souls began to suspect mischief, and, in order to be on the safe side, commenced cries of dissent and interruption in anticipation. Mr. Knack was accustomed to experience obstruction in the discharge of his Police Court and forensic duties; so he stood in a composed manner, calmly turning round to take a sweeping view of the crowd, and thinking to himself all the time what a capital advertisement it was for him.

As soon as the first tumult had subsided, Mr. Knack, addressing Carmody Zinck, said that he wished, as an elector, to avail himself of the offer kindly made by the speaker to answer any questions. He desired to ask one or two, if Mr. Zinck had no objection. Carmody Zinck at once replied that he would be most happy to hear them, and he looked round the hall with quite a patronising air as he begged for silence in order that all might hear both question and answer, 'down even to those gentlemen at the door and looking in at the windows.' Thaddeus Knack began by thanking the Member for Blue Street for his courtesy, and put a few questions to him in a complimentary tone. In reply to them, Carmody Zinck said that he was the Managing Director of the Empire Palace Hotel Company, and a very successful manager too. Before he took that position the house had no license to sell wines and spirits, and it was then a loss to the Company; but since the enabling little Bill had been passed it had become a valuable property—yes, no doubt owing to the license. Certainly he, Carmody Zinck, was a Liberal Conservative, while his respected friend was a Liberal Populist, and they sat on opposite sides of the House; but he was proud to

say that no political difference would ever prevent him, Carmody Zinck, from doing justice to the public virtues of an opponent.

'Quite so, Mr. Zinck,' continued Thaddeus Knack; 'and I believe that I may add that Mr. Meeks has always been one of the ornaments of the Temperance party, while you, Mr. Zinck, are one of the chiefs of the liquor interest—I mean, of course, the respectable liquor interest, Mr. Zinck.'

The junior Member for Blue Street did not deny the fact, and the lawyer then suddenly faced round upon him and in an inquiring, satirical tone, said :

'Might I now, Mr. Carmody Zinck, venture to ask where you were at half-past twelve o'clock on the night of 2nd April 18—?'

This question, simple as it was, rather upset Carmody Zinck, as the date did not at the moment strike him, and he could not think what new kind of aspersion the lawyer might not be upon the point of casting at him. Meeks hurriedly whispered to him that he was referring to the night in question—the night of the division on the Empire Palace Hotel Bill.

'Oh yes, quite so,' Carmody Zinck answered, somewhat discomposed by the misapprehension on his part—'quite so; to be sure, I and Mr. Meeks were in one of the rooms upstairs of the House having a cup of coffee.'

'By yourselves, I believe, Mr. Zinck?'

'Certainly. We walked up together for a few minutes while the debate was going on.'

'And were busy, no doubt—drinking coffee?'

'To be sure; as I have repeatedly stated to all and sundry, I was explaining to my friend the gross wrong that would be done to innocent people if the Bill then before the House was rejected.'

'Quite so; and so convincing were your reasons, Mr. Zinck, that I believe I am correct in saying that your friend went down with you directly afterwards to the House, and you both voted together for the Bill?'

'Of course he did,' said Carmody Zinck, now looking down upon the lawyer with some awakening indignation—'of course he did, sir, and so did the other honest Members of

the House, and so would you, sir, have done, if you were one of the honest Members yourself.'

'Never mind about my honesty just now, Mr. Zinck. We must not have too much of a good thing at once; but permit me to ask you if you can name a single other Bill for which Mr. Meeks has voted at your instance before or since?'

'Well, to be sure, as to that,' Carmody Zinck replied, being somewhat discomposed by the hostile tone that Mr. Knack's questions had suddenly assumed—'as to that—why, on the moment—one can't recollect everything in an instant. I don't know that I can recall. But, sir, you observe,' he said, eyeing the lawyer with some dignity in his manner, 'it is not upon every Bill that I could give Mr. Meeks or any one else such forcible reasons as I could upon this one.'

'Certainly, Mr. Zinck; I never doubted that your reasons were very forcible and solid, too. We won't pursue them further. But I put it to you boldly, Mr. Zinck,' continued Mr. Knack, 'is it not a fact that you yourself have said that you had squared Meeks?'

'No, sir, it is not,' exclaimed Mr. Zinck, now with indignation—'it is not, sir! What I said was that I had put the facts so squarely to him that, as an honest man, he could not resist them.'

'Oh, indeed, Mr. Zinck, very good. It was the facts that were squared—not the man. Very good. There is only one other question that I will trouble you with.'

And here Thaddeus Knack looked round the hall, as if in contemplation of the excitement that his final question would raise.

'There is only one other question. Supposing—you observe I only say supposing——'

Carmody Zinck nodded attention.

'Supposing that in that coffee-room you gave Mr. Meeks a fifty-pound note, do you think that either of you would be likely to mention it again?'

The pent-up feelings of the crowd exploded at this inquiry. Many did not catch the purport of the earlier questions, especially as Thaddeus Knack had put them in

the most inoffensive tone possible. But there was no mistaking the last two. Hannah Gazelle Pride described them afterwards to some of her friends as being as clean and straight as new knitting needles. The Meekites were uproarious, and the anti-Meekites enthusiastic.

Carmody Zinck, who now fully realised the injurious and insidious nature of Mr. Knack's line of questioning, waved his arm aloft over the excited crowd, and pointing at the lawyer, who was looking round in quite a happy mood, called out :

'Mr. Mayor, I am truly astonished and thoroughly disgusted with that person. I will only remark that there are some individuals from whom no gentleman can take an insult.'

The worthy Mayor looked in a puzzled way in the direction of the lawyer, as if for some reply. At the moment Thaddeus Knack had his back turned, as he was picking up some papers that were on his chair ; but he quietly looked up, and without the least appearance of discomposure, in fact cheerfully, but with a slight languor as he spoke, said :

'Ah, Mr. Mayor, you see the question just at present is not whether a gentleman can take an insult, but whether he gave a bribe.'

Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride and her party loudly applauded, and crowding round their champion as the meeting broke up, congratulated him upon having demonstrated the guilt of both Carmody Zinck and Meeks. Hannah Gazelle Pride, indeed, got rather excited, and glancing a look of indignation after the retreating form of the Member for Blue Street, as he moved off the platform carrying his hand-bag, exclaimed that he was a complete Judas, bag and all.

Barney Clegg admired Thaddeus Knack's way of putting his questions, and made a mental note that he would engage the young lawyer the next time that he got into any trouble about the Licensing Law at the Brown Jug. He was, as we know, not much oppressed by the gravity of the issue either way, except for the harm it might do Meeks in the contest. But on that account he loudly denounced the whole imputation as 'teetotal spite and venom,' and kept

sententiously repeating to all around him, rather confusing Carmody Zinck's figure of speech, that it was now 'demonstrated that Ebenezer Meeks was white and upright as the driven snow.'

As a fact, Thaddeus Knack's questions had thrown no new light upon the matter; though the mere starting afresh of the imputation set people thinking of it; and as everybody does not obey the apostle's injunction, to think no evil, not a few of the electors shook their heads in concert, and said that Ebenezer Meeks and Carmody Zinck were not in that small coffee-room for nothing, and arrived at injurious conclusions against poor Meeks.

For a few days Hannah Gazelle Pride and the Woman's Executive had hopes that they could get the main body of the women electors to vote for Frankfort, and so keep out Meeks. And many women, and not a few men, would have been glad to see him kept out. Many also liked our politician personally, and, with all his drawbacks, he was more effective on the platform than either Meeks or Jacob Shumate. And a number of the women, especially those who were single, held that his consistent advocacy of their rights bound them to vote for him in any event. But as the polling-day came near and the contest settled down to its true bearings, it became more and more clear that there was no getting over the Reservoir. Most of the men kept steadfast to the National work for the district, and for Meeks as a safer man to get it than Jacob Shumate would be. Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride could not even get her husband to follow her on the issue now before them. Seth Pride this time asserted his own independence, and said that he would not injure Brassville to punish Meeks, even if he was guilty; and of this, with the obstinacy that mild men sometimes display, he declared he was still doubtful. Mr. Fairlie, the banker, Hedge, the lawyer, and the whole commercial interest went for Meeks. Many of the married women followed their husbands in the end, though Hannah Gazelle Pride had made them waver at first. But the independent women followed her to the poll, and several of the quieter sort of electors, who are never heard of, voted for our politician, as they secretly doubted whether Meeks could get the Reser-

voir after all, and thought it wiser to secure the best man. Woodall, the bookseller, voted for him, but said nothing about it, as he did not want to offend his customers. Neal Nickerson voted for Jacob Shumate, as he wanted the Reservoir very much, and at the same time held that making the big estates pay for it was only giving effect to the ancient policy of the Gracchi. But in the end poor Jacob got scant support from the electors. When towards the close it was felt that Meeks must get in, many of the trappers went over to him; while Glooscap, so far from supporting Jacob as their fellow-townsmen, deserted him for one or other of the candidates in a body. All the women, except a few that the Widow Dobbs could influence, went against him. But while most of the Glooscap electors voted for Meeks, a fair minority polled for our politician. Rimigius M'Glumpy and Mrs. Garvin 'made the running for Ebenezer,' as they openly proclaimed, but Terry was equally candid in avowing that, Reservoir or no Reservoir, 'he would go straight for the man who got him his billet.' He metaphorically exclaimed that he would be drowned in the Reservoir before he would vote against his benefactor. His uncle contemptuously asked him how he could be drowned in it, if it was not there. But he privately remarked to the aunt that he rather admired the spirit of the lad. King Billy was early at the poll, having left Mary outside the village to wait for his boots, and voted for Meeks. But Ernest Hooper, unfortunately, had forgotten to renew his Elector's Right, and was not able to vote at all. Birnie Farrar attended the Mayor to the polling booth, and both voted for Meeks, the Town Clerk remarking to several bystanders that personally he was a friend to our politician, but that his motto in public affairs was '*Fiat justitia, ruat—et cetera.*' David Blow voted the same way, and afterwards explained at the dinner in the Commercial Room of the Red Parrot that it was better to have a full meal with Meeks than to be on short commons with our politician. At Brassville, Lamborn, who had taken no active part in the election beyond giving his name to the Meeks Committee, voted immediately after the poll was opened, and then left by the train for Miranda, to join his daughter at Mrs. Blaney's.

On the evening of the eventful day, when the returning officer announced the result, the numbers stood thus :

Ebenezer Meeks	.	.	.	3013
Edward Fairlie Frankfort	.	.	.	1427
Jacob Shumate	.	.	.	722

Thus Ebenezer Meeks was again the Representative of Brassville, and Jacob Shumate lost his deposit money, not having polled one-fourth of the votes given for Meeks.

The successful candidate returned thanks for his election to the crowd of citizens who assembled in the evening around the Town Hall, in a speech that displayed more exultation than was usual with him ; but it was excusable in the hour of victory. What he specially congratulated them on was that the constituency had proved itself true to the core, and that the cause of progress and irrigation was triumphant. Mrs. Meeks was in tears. Our politician also briefly addressed them, and thanked those electors who had supported him, while he also expressed his regret for the disappointment that his attitude regarding the Reservoir had necessarily caused to many of his friends.

As we shall have little further opportunity of meeting the Glooscap shoemaker in this history, we will now follow him from the election and briefly tell the story of the concluding fortunes of his career.

Jacob Shumate did not appear at the Town Hall. He had gone to the Coffee Palace late in the day, and there he waited to hear the result from Shad Hubbard, who was to run down from the Town Hall and tell him how the numbers stood. He had gloomy forebodings towards the close of the battle, and he did not care to face the crowd when the final declaration would be made. But he never thought of such a disaster as this. Last upon the poll ; lost his deposit money ! He silently turned his back upon Brassville and trudged away home to Glooscap, wellnigh broken-hearted. As he toiled along the road past The Blocks, the bitterness of his heart rose within him. The old mansion looked so solid and comfortable and safe. But it was sombre-looking, too, for there were no lights to be seen, as Lamborn and Eilly were away in Miranda. Ah, he thought to himself,

you smug, lucky lords of the soil, who know how to be worldly-wise and to take care of yourselves, perhaps, after all, you are wiser than independent men like me, who fight for principle and to right wrongs, and for the cause of the faithless, ungrateful people. And he thought, too, of his meeting with Frankfort at the broken bit of road near the gate of The Blocks, about a year before. He had, he remembered, then reproached our politician with not being a friend of the people, and in order to give point to his charge, had spoken favourably of that humbug Meeks. What good was it to be a friend of the people when they go and put a sham man like Meeks above him, their true friend? Jacob asked himself: What have I gained by being a people's friend?

When he got to his cottage it was late. The Widow Dobbs, after she had put Flopsey and Popsey to bed, had left an oil dip on the table, in order to prevent them from feeling lonely while they went to sleep. By its feeble light he looked round upon his dingy, cheerless home. He sat down at the table where the widow had left some cold supper for him. But he did not touch the supper. He only buried his face in his hands on the table and thought; or rather was seized hold of by certain ideas, fears, reproaches, emotions, that seemed to rush into his mind from all sides, and shake and worry him, as a trapper's dogs might one of the rabbits. Cruel dogs—hapless rabbits! What was the good of all his work for the people? Where was the use of his life at all? His neighbours here at Glooscap—even the trappers themselves, after all the years of toil and fight for them—turning against him, and giving triumph to such a thing as Meeks. He, the honest, fearless champion of the poor man—why, poor and rich joined to crush him. His Land Tax rejected by the very people who would gain by it. He was not sure that even Shad Hubbard was staunch to it. His deposit money lost; the few pounds for posters and advertisements, where was he to find the money? And debt he hated as slavery. How could he pay the bills out of his old age pension? Oh, the ingratitude of men, the spite of women, the uselessness of it all! Why should he keep clinging on to life like a crouching

slave before a master whom there was no pleasing? He started from his seat, and looked upwards towards the cob-webbed rafters and the decaying, shingled roof above them, discoloured by smoke and dirt, and seeming in the faint light like a gloomy little firmament over his home. He looked up, not in prayer, for he considered it illogical, but in despair.

As his eyes fell, they rested upon a small deal desk which he always kept locked. It contained the few family or personal keepsakes that he possessed. Among them was a worn book of Wesley's Hymns that was his mother's in the old home; also some letters of hers, which were folded inside his own first copy-book at the village school, on the opening page of which was to be seen his sprawling attempt to trace in presentable outline the heading, 'Virtue is its own Reward,' with underneath it the severe comment of the Dame of the school, 'Very careless.—Betsy Fag.' Wrapped up in a piece of flannel, to keep out the damp, was an ancient daguerreotype likeness of an elder sister, who used to play with him when he was a child, and which, despite the wrapping, was now rapidly failing. Among the papers which he preserved was the first Elector's Right, which he had received when manhood suffrage was secured in the Province, nearly thirty years before. With it was the certificate of his marriage with Daisy Dill, which he had kept for the sake of the children; copies of his more important letters on public matters, and a bundle of cuttings from newspapers in which he was referred to and his name mentioned in print. In an envelope by itself there was the notable article from the *Sweet-Brier* which made such favourable mention of his amendment at the Currency Convention, and which he had fondly but vainly hoped would have carried him successfully through this election. There were a few cheap trinkets, too, put by there, which he had lately got with the intention of presenting them to the Widow Dobbs as an acknowledgment of her kindness to the children. Deep down in a corner of the desk, in an old envelope, was the wedding ring that he had given to Daisy Dill, which he had claimed back from her, and which she had readily returned to him.

There was also something else in this desk, below all the papers. It was a small bottle of prussic acid. And it came there quite innocently, nay, laudably. Jacob, with all his sour manner, was a kind-hearted man, especially to those who were dependent upon him. A couple of years before he had bought the poison intending to mercifully kill with it his dog Yank, who had got his leg broken in a rabbit trap, and was whining with pain. But when he came from the chemist, the Widow Dobbs, who had come bustling in, objected, in her cheerful way, to this manslaughter of the dog, as she styled it, deftly bound up the leg, got the animal to rest in a comfortable corner, and in a week or so had him all right again. So the prussic acid was not used, and Jacob locked it away safely in the bottom of the desk.

So queer was the man, and so odd in his ideas, that it is a fact that, as he put it away, he half-prophetically mused to himself, 'Well, I don't want this for Yank after all, but now that I have got it from the chemist, and explained why I wanted it, and signed the book, I may just as well keep it. Heaven knows but I may some day have other and more serious use for it.'

The moment his eye rested upon the desk he thought of that little bottle. In feverish excitement he unlocked it, and lifted the protecting lid; an instant more and there was clutched in his hand that small, neatly-labelled piece of thin and brittle glass, which contained within its narrow compass, in that pale, harmless-looking fluid, such tremendous possibilities for life, and for eternity too. He looked at it with a sort of fascination; it was so fearful in its potency, yet so dumb and impassive—in his power till it passed his lips, then he in its for ever and for ever! What consequences might not, then, one decisive act of volition have brought on Jacob Shumate and his little ones!

His hand was on the stopper, when, in trying to twist it open, a jerk of his elbow upset a plate that was loosely resting on the dresser above. It fell with a crash upon the floor, and partly woke Popsey, who had fallen off to sleep rather uneasily, the last thought on his mind being of his father, whom he had been looking forward all day to see before he went to bed. The child stirred and uttered a

half-waking, half-slumbering cry. Not even the agitation of the moment could stop the impulsive movement of Jacob Shumate to the truckle-bed. He bent over it, and Popsey woke enough, and only just enough, to be conscious that it was his own father who was looking down upon him. He could not wake altogether; he merely stretched out instinctively his arms in a feeble, helpless sort of way. Jacob bent down, tenderly kissed him, and hushed again to blessed sleep his little son, all innocent and unconscious as he was of the fearful crisis that Fate seemed to be about to precipitate upon that humble home.

Those two little arms clasped Jacob Shumate again down to life and duty with a grip that was stronger than that of iron. He raised himself up and looked with nervous horror at the deadly bottle that was still in his hand. He had a fearful feeling lest that still, unconscious, but deadly thing might not after all prove too strong for him, seize him against his will, throw him, kill him. He sprang to the door of the cottage, holding the foe as far as possible from him, and in another moment he had dashed it to pieces against some rubble stones that were heaped together to fill a gap in the dilapidated fence. He glanced up at the vast, clear, open heavens, looking down calmly upon his distraction, as they do perpetually and silently upon all the struggles of men. At least they seemed to him brighter and freer than the gloomy roof of his cottage that he had only a few minutes before glanced upwards to in despair. A gleam of hope, divine hope, now shot into his soul, and he turned back into the cottage, feeling like Christian when the burthen had tumbled off his back.

He did not touch the cold supper that was on the table, but he felt that, now that he had destroyed the deadly foe, he could at least rest. He was soon in bed, and what with the reaction from the crisis he had passed through, and the exhaustion of the day's political struggle, he slept, and slept soundly—not, to be sure, the sunshiny sleep of little Popsey, but yet a healing, restoring sleep, which gave him some hours of escape from his pained self-consciousness, and enabled him to rise a stronger man.

It was later than usual when he awoke next morning,

and Popsey and his sister were getting restless to be dressed. It was the Widow Dobbs tapping at the window that woke him. Soon he was up, and the good widow, who felt real sympathy for him, not on account of his defeat alone, but for the loss of his £25 deposit money, which she knew must be a serious matter for him, was soon busy dressing the children, while outside he chopped the wood for the fire. She made light of the mishap to him, and said that she would like to know what he would have done with Popsey and Flopsey if he had been elected and had to go away to Miranda, arguefying and bothering about the Parliament House for the best part of every week.

Jacob Shumate was an altered man after that election—more altered than he cared to avow. He did not renounce any of his Socialist views, or give up his convictions about the wrong done to society by the aggregation of large landed estates, and the right of the people to the unearned increment upon them; but he had less hope of being able in his lifetime to remedy these wrongs, and less confidence in the ability of the people to right them, or even in the earnestness of their desire to do so. He never got over the cold welcome that the electors gave to the progressive land tax; and he was the more stung by its failure, as he had to own to himself that he had, to some extent, compromised his own individual conviction about the Reservoir in connection with it. He therefore at times felt inclined to reproach himself with being in the position of the man whose principles were sold but not paid for. He could understand the Lamborns and Hilljohns and Le Fanus going against him. But he could not understand, nor yet forgive, the trappers, who bartered away their principles and his fortunes in the mere abject fear of losing the Reservoir. He was confirmed in this feeling by the friendly way in which those very landowners subscribed to a small fund which Birnie Farrar collected to extricate him from the money difficulty in which the loss of the election had placed him. The Town Clerk of Glooscap had prudential reasons for placating the once popular tribune of Glooscap. Jacob Shumate justified his taking the money upon the ground that his outlay was for an essentially public purpose, and he

truly averred that he would not have taken a penny if he had been elected and had his salary to draw upon.

But after this he held a less prominent part in politics, and gave some attention to his own craft as a shoemaker, while he found a vent for his still smouldering political instincts in writing letters upon public questions, under different signatures, to the Press, and in corresponding with Karl Brumm about the true principles of the Currency. All this kept him more at home than he had ever been before, to the entire satisfaction of Flopsey and Popsey, and also, it must be said, to the satisfaction of the Widow Dobbs. This worthy woman had at first been led to look after the children merely by motherly feeling for them. But, as time went on, there was no doubt that she came to have a considerable respect for Jacob. She saw the best side of him at home, for a fonder father did not exist. And he must have been a harder man than was Jacob Shumate who would not feel touched at and grateful for the widow's kindness to his, as he might truly call them, orphaned children. The widow was approaching middle age; but she was fair enough to see, particularly to one who had learned to associate her every look with that goodness of heart which blushed through the countenance of Martha Dobbs like the rosy-fingered morn. Jacob Shumate, like many other public men, though harsh to the world, was mild and affectionate in the home. The two were drawn towards one another, and the only difficulty that proud Jacob felt to be in the way of their union was that most ancient and constant one, the want of means. He did not like to marry merely upon the strength of their two old age pensions and what he could earn at his work. Before long, however, a happy accident put him in the position to offer his hand with confidence to the widow.

The Inspector of Nuisances at Glooscap was about to resign his office owing to his advanced age, upon a small retiring allowance which the Mayor and Council agreed to grant to him. Birnie Farrar, who still regarded Jacob as a slumbering volcano, and who had lately, he thought, noticed some signs of renewed activity in him, strongly advised Mr. Mayor, for the sake of the peace of the borough, to get him

once for all into harness as a public official by giving him the vacant post. He further maintained that Jacob Shumate would make a searching and efficient officer; and if there was one thing that the Town Clerk prided himself upon, it was his power to see through character. Jacob was appointed, and Birnie Farrar's forecast was amply fulfilled. He did his work in a searching way, as had been predicted. He carefully studied the Municipal Act during the evenings, when Mrs. Shumate, having put the children to bed, took her knitting and quietly sat down at the other side of the fireplace. He was surprised to find the large powers that the law gave to the Inspector; and his constant aim was, not alone to do his duty in a stringent manner, but to enlarge its scope as much as possible. He developed autocratic tendencies. If there was a dirty dwelling anywhere, or an ill-kept yard, he found an authority somewhere in the Statute for dealing with it. If the occupant raised any unexpected objection, Jacob would pore over the Act in the evening till, by putting one clause with another, he found some way to circumvent the malcontent. He did not hesitate to strain his powers wherever he could. In the discharge of his duty he knew nothing of the rights of man. The authority of Rousseau and the '*Contrat Social*' he considered did not apply to municipal affairs. The assertion that an Englishman's house was his castle he regarded as all very well in theory. The privilege of the freeman to do the thing he list he was agreeable to, so long as the freeman listed to do the right thing. In short, however firm his faith may have been in the virtue of the people's rule as a whole, he had little faith in their capability to look after themselves individually. But he made an excellent inspector, for not only was his vigilance great, but his honesty was inflexible. His second marriage was a complete contrast to his first, and so happy were he and the two children with the widow, that his whole manner in private life became more softened and kindly, so that in the end he was one of those men who can truly say that the closing years of their life are the best, not being distracted by the bitterness of the early struggles, and being soothed by that aptitude for rest and quiet that is the befitting accompaniment to the closing scene.

As for Ebenezer Meeks, he considered that his fortune was made for life, when he again took his seat in Parliament as the representative for Brassville. Sir Donald MacLever and Du Tell were glad to see him, sincerely glad. They admired a man who voted at his party's call, and who had it not in him to give trouble about any subject whatsoever, except, of course, the Reservoir; or to any Minister, unless to Slater Scully, the Minister of the Water Bureau. That honourable gentleman certainly was kept busy with interviews, deputations, letters, memorandums, private representations, and public expostulations about the claims of Brassville to have the Reservoir. He was sustained in equilibrium upon the subject by the force of the conflicting 'pulls' from the political masses represented by Leadville and Tinville respectively, and also by the less apparent, yet potently felt, influence that sought to draw the National work right away across the Divide. At first he rather enjoyed listening to those diverse representations, all directed to prove that the particular place advocated was the very spot designed by Nature, public policy, and general convenience for the great work. But as the time for the meeting of Parliament drew near, and the Cabinet had to consider what proposals they would make for spending the Loan, he found himself, as was his wont, perplexed and undecided as to how he would advise his colleagues.

'Lavender, my thoughtful Lavender!' he exclaimed one day, in a sort of gentle despair, to his trusty Secretary, 'what are we to do about this fountain of discord in the North-West? Shall it be Brassville, Leadville, or Tinville? Shall it, in other words, be Meeks, Bunker, or Dubbs? Do you know what, Lavender?' he continued, looking up through the large glasses at the attentive Secretary, who stood beside him—'do you know what?'

'Why, sir, what?'

'Sometimes, Lavender, I feel as if I wished a second Deluge would come along, though contrary to Holy Writ, and give them all enough of water; indeed,' he added musingly, 'more than enough.'

'Well, sir, if I might suggest, you observe——'

'Oh, I know what you are going to propound—the

public interest of the whole Province demands so and so, this, that, and the other. But I don't observe it. I tell you candidly what I have to observe are the insidious Meeks, the impetuous Bunker, and the persistent, not to say the crafty, Dubbs.'

'No, sir, I was only going to observe that the real question to be first decided is, whether this Reservoir should be on the coast side of the Divide at all; or should be at Silveracre, where Mr. Dorland and the mining party want it; or rather at the point higher up in the Ranges, where our engineer Blanksby suggests?'

'Gracious powers, to be sure, Lavender. There are, as you justly remark, all those staggering propositions connected with this noble National work. The more you stir the creature the more it opens out its folds—fangs, I should rather say. To vary the imagery—touch the Reservoir, and the waters become troubled at once. But what am I to say to these three men from the cities along the coast, these guileless children of the sea, if I leave them with no rivulets but those of their own eloquence? What am I to say to Meeks and his two brethren? Two of them will slay me if I give it to a third; all together will stone me if I put it across the Divide.'

'Really, sir, if you would allow me to call your attention to this report of Blanksby's. He gives the levels and distances, and his diagrams show——'

'Oh yes, surely. I know, Lavender, Blanksby's reports are sound. They and his diagrams are soothing. They steal over one like "those evening bells, those evening bells" of my early days and my native land. But they don't show the way out of the practical difficulty—the way to get *round* the lion in the path, without tackling him.'

The Minister paused a while, and then sat up resolutely in his chair, and looked straight before him in a determined manner, as if bent upon then and there tackling the lion. Then he looked round at the Secretary, and exclaimed, with more decision than was usual with him—

'I tell you what, Lavender, we must postpone this Reservoir business a bit. The Chief wants it so, I know. Old Dorland is urgent with him not to precipitate matters.

Until the prize is awarded all the competitors can enjoy the luxury of hope, you observe.'

'Well, to be sure, sir, a little delay would be better than to put such a great work in the wrong place.'

'That's it, Lavender; you speak like a prophet, or at least the son of a prophet. So, to come to the practical application of your words of wisdom, if there should be, unfortunately, you observe—if there should be any inexplicable delay in getting out the returns, quantities, decimal points of calculations, costs, charges, rates, gallons per head and gallons per acre, why, then, to be sure, we must only put up with it as best we can.'

'Oh, very well, sir,' said Lavender, putting together his papers; 'I was only anxious, sir, to remind you that when the question is to be determined, due attention should be given to Blanksby's view of the matter.'

'Certainly, my Lavender; you can give Blanksby my blessing, and assure him that I shall never forget him, nor his diagrams either. I could not if I tried.'

And as a fact the proposal for a Reservoir for the North-West did not make much progress, notwithstanding all the agitation from the coast side of the mountains upon the one hand and from Silveracre on the other. But no human being could say that this was owing to any slackness in the discharge of his duty upon the part of Meeks. He seemed to live for the Reservoir only. And Walter Crane did not at first object to the Member's activity, though it gave him some trouble. He had rather missed the accustomed bustle from Brassville during the time of our politician, and its renewal under Meeks did not displease him. He enjoyed the fresh opportunities afforded for the exercise of his abilities as head porter of the Water Bureau, in leading in deputations, arranging private interviews, sending telegrams, answering the telephone, and making appointments for meetings which he knew that the Minister had no intention of keeping. And here, struggling thus with this National work, we must leave Meeks for the present. What in the end became of the Reservoir, the object of all his honest toil, those readers who have the patience to follow this history to its close will find out.

And now, what were the consequences of this Brassville election to our politician?

When Eilly Lamborn arrived at her aunt's in Miranda, the old lady was already full of the important mission which her brother's letter had confided to her, of trying to prepare her niece for the grave event that was impending. Diplomacy was required for the delicate task which she had in hand, for Eilly was all oblivious of her coming fate, and until her father came nothing definite was to be said. But Mrs. Blaney had full confidence in her own powers, and from time to time threw into the conversation with her niece sundry vague expressions as to how the Brassville election would result, and what would then follow from that result, interspersed with expressions of surprise, more or less pronounced in their character, at many of the recent actions of Frankfort. On the very first day of Eilly's arrival, over their afternoon cup of tea, she played her first card, quite cleverly she thought.

'Well, Eilly, my love, it is so good of you to come all the way from Brassville to take care of your old aunt's rheumatism. And how did you leave The Blocks?'

'Oh, lovely, auntie! The fields look so bright with the shade of green just coming over them, and the trees round the lake just beginning to bud. It is so pretty from the verandah. You must get all right quickly and come home with me; in a week or so it will be quite lovely just to sit and look at. And father says that we will soon have the Reservoir, and then, auntie, why, you know, on a hot day it will make you quite cool just to see the full lake, and the trees so fresh-looking, no matter how hot it is. You'll come back with me, won't you, auntie?'

'Well, my dear,' said Mrs. Blaney, speaking with precision, 'but what is this I hear about your Mr. Frankfort? He says he won't have the Reservoir at Brassville at all, but somewhere away in the mountains, or clouds, or somewhere else.'

'Not have the Reservoir, auntie?'

'Not have the Reservoir, I do assure you, Eilly. It is a positive fact. Your dear father is so anxious about it—indeed, quite upset.'

Eilly felt a shadow coming over her like the gradual advance of the penumbra of a coming eclipse. And there was a shade of distress over her candid countenance as she looked up with surprise at her aunt.

'Why, auntie, how can that be? And father disturbed? Oh, I wish I could have seen Edward before I left. He would have explained it all. But father was in such a hurry for me to be with you, and I am so glad to come. But if I had seen him, he would have told me all about it. He could not really object to the Reservoir.'

Eilly was not familiar with politics. She had not even yet registered as an elector. She brought a clear and strong intelligence of her own to bear upon subjects that she did concern herself with; but as to the Reservoir, she simply accepted the ideas of all about her. She breathed the atmosphere in which she lived, and took it as part of the natural order of things that the Member should get them all that they wanted from the Government, particularly the Reservoir. So she repeated:

'Edward could not really object to the Reservoir.'

'But, my dear child, I tell you that he does object to the Reservoir. Your own father says so in his letter to me. And he is distressed.'

The old lady drew herself up with dignity.

Poor Eilly! the penumbra was deepening. It struck her suddenly that there must be something about it all that she did not understand—that she had not been made acquainted with. There was something wrong. But if there was, it was not with her Edward. She knew his independent, truthful way of looking at things. It formed one of the things she loved him for. She thought for a moment, then she said:

'Perhaps, aunt, he thinks it not right.'

'Now, Eilly dear, be advised by an old woman, and don't give way to those queer ways of looking at things. They grow upon you if you do not check them at first. How can it be not right when everybody wants it? No, no, Eilly, I really do fear that Mr. Frankfort is more eccentric than we thought—that is, at least, I am afraid that he is getting so. Why, my dear,' she continued, putting down

her cup, and resting back in her chair so as to fully enjoy what was one of her greatest pleasures, the narration of episodes relating to her early married life—‘why, my dear, do you know, it reminds me of what my poor husband used to say of some of his patients. Often and often he has told me about them, and the clever advice he would give. When some one would begin, do you see, differing in things from every one else, and doing things that no one else did, and having ever such odd notions, my poor dear husband would say to the wife, “There is a stave loose in the cask, madam. That is what is wrong. Change is wanted, change all round—change of air, of scene, diet, company, everything, in fact, but change of wife, madam.” Your poor uncle was quite a humorous man, as you have often heard me say. “Yes, madam, that is absolutely necessary for your husband—else I can’t answer for the cask. Tighten up one stave, and another goes loose. You want to brace up the whole.” Now, what I do very much fear, my dear girl, is that that is the case with Mr. Frankfort. I do indeed, my dear.’

While her aunt was relating this reminiscence of the late doctor, a dull feeling of uneasiness was perplexing Eilly. But her natural good sense came to the rescue. She would wait till her father came, and then she would know all about it. Till then she would not make herself unhappy for what was probably some mistake her aunt was making; and meanwhile she would not be gloomy, thinking only of herself, when all the while there was the invalid to be looked after and made bright and cheerful.

A week or so later, when her father arrived, she asked him about it, and he told her about Frankfort’s extraordinary action and his defeat at the poll. But she saw, or thought she saw, from his troubled and perplexed air, that he had something on his mind still that he had not disclosed. And in truth he was sorely troubled and perplexed. He wanted to break as gently as he could to her his feeling about the engagement with Frankfort, and to induce her to give it up. But he knew, from his own happy experience, her constant and affectionate nature; and he was not conscious, like his sister, of having naturally diplomatic tact. He was puzzled, not about what ought to be done, but how to do it without

wounding too much the feelings of his child. He had frequent conferences with the aunt, when Eilly would be conveniently got out of the way by shopping errands. The old lady was not troubled with the same hesitation as her brother. These men, she said to herself, have no firmness. To him she said :

‘Why not, Tom, tell the dear girl plainly what you mean—that is, if, as I understand, you do mean it. She is a sensible child ; she is artless, too ; but I presume that even she does not want to marry a failure—a man that is put out by another man at the election. All girls have disappointments to put up with. Why, before I met dear Fred, there at The Blocks, the time when dear——’

‘Yes, yes, that is all right enough, Maggie ; but you don’t know all that is in Eilly as well as I do. She has ideas of her own, has Eilly, that you would never think of in so quiet a girl.’

Mrs. Blaney was about to resume the thread of her discourse about her own early experiences, when the boy in buttons came in with the letters. She kept a perennial boy in buttons, by changing the person each three years as he got too old, in dutiful deference to her late husband’s practice, who always had a boy in buttons to summon the patients from the waiting-room. The conversation was stopped while the letters were opened. In a few moments the old lady raised herself in her chair in some excitement, after she had read one, and exclaimed—

‘There, now, didn’t I tell you ! You men never know anything of what is going on. See what that dear creature Bridget De La Classe has just sent me.’

And she triumphantly handed her brother a cutting from the last Saturday’s *Stingaree*, the fashionable society paper of Miranda. It was taken from the column that was under the heading ‘Political Buds,’ and this is what it was :

‘Brassville—The Election.—The Professor is bucked off by the Brassville Democracy, and that knowing old Whip, Ebenezer Meeks, is in the leather again. Ebenezer vows that it would now be easier to shake a well-glued penny stamp off the pigskin than it would be to buck him a second time. Frankey, a bit ago, lost his chair ; now he loses his

seat ; and if there was anything else he could lose, no doubt he would do so accordingly. The next move is for the country to lose him. He leaves for Native Scotia, we understand, by an early mail. Perhaps he will take on better there. Du Tell has ordered his mourning suit.'

We may leave the two elderly people for a moment while they indulge their mutual astonishment at this surprising piece of news, to explain that the Honourable Mrs. De La Classe was one of the undoubted leaders of society in Miranda. In fact, she moved in the inner circle, right inside it.

The Honourable Mr. De La Classe was a successful flour miller and speculator in grain, who passed his days, from morn to eve, in an atmosphere of flour ; and as there were no children, his wife devoted her life to society duties. One of these obviously was to learn and know accurately what was going on in high life. She always gave a portion of Saturday morning to a careful reading of the *Stingaree*, partly for the sake of the descriptions of the dresses that were worn at the balls, and partly for the sake of the information it gave about individuals and the pungent criticisms that it made upon them. She took two copies of the paper, and she used one for the purpose of cutting out of it striking paragraphs about some of her friends, which she then forwarded to other of her friends, sometimes accompanied by a letter that contained further comments by her upon the point of the extract. Sometimes she sent the clippings by themselves, merely marked with suitable notes of exclamation along the side. These afterwards furnished topics of interesting conversation when she called. This enabled the members of high society to be conscious of one another's infirmities. She had heard of Eilly's engagement to Frankfort, and thought that it was likely that Mr. Lamborn would now break it off. So she enclosed the cutting in a note, in which she condoled very sincerely with her friend upon the prospect of so soon losing her niece. When did they leave for Scotland ? Had the date of the marriage been yet fixed ? She must be there, even if she had to bribe the sexton to let her in.

When Thomas Lamborn read the paragraph, he did not believe it. But he saw at once what a powerful lever it

might be made to induce Eilly to give up Frankfort. Though she was, as we know, a girl of marked intelligence, like many other people who have good intellectual gifts, she was eminently simple-minded; and then she knew nothing at all of the curious ways of some society newspapers. That a thing was stated openly in print was still for her a serious fact. Eilly had tried to put aside the growing uneasiness that she had felt about Frankfort, keeping herself busy with visiting her young friends in Miranda and looking after her aunt. She was quite cast down when she heard the result of the Brassville election, and was getting restless to see Frankfort and hear from himself what it all meant. But in the queer way that things do happen, she had felt happier than usual that morning, as she went from shop to shop making the purchases for her aunt, and admiring all the new fashions in the show-rooms.

When she came home and went into the room where her father and aunt were sitting, there was the flush of high spirits over her face. It quite went to the father's heart as he looked fondly at her to think what a trial now stood facing her. But Mrs. Blaney was firm. She felt that it was for the child's good, and had already begun mentally to review several of those early heartaches which her brother had stopped her from enumerating. Eilly, who read her father's countenance at a glance, saw that something was wrong.

'Why, father dear, what is the matter? Auntie, what is it?'

'Well, Eilly, my love, your father is upset, and so am I too. It seems that Mr. Frankfort that you are engaged to—you know, the Professor that was in the University—your Mr. Frankfort, you would scarcely believe it'—the old lady spoke with a deliberation that was inspired by the sense of the importance of the statement that she was making—'well, my dear, it seems that he is off to Scotland directly. It is openly stated in the newspapers in print.'

Exaggerated display of emotion was foreign to Eilly. But all her bright colour went. She stood silent for a moment, and the hat which she had just taken off and held in her hand dropped to the floor without consciousness upon

her part that she had released her hold of it. Then she spoke :

‘It can’t be true, auntie. Edward would tell me first. Is it, father?’

‘Well, Eilly darling, I hope it is not true. But true or not, I am afraid we can’t go on with this affair. You see, Eilly, he has become so odd like. He goes right against the Reservoir, and then, of course, he is put out for Brassville. He will never be there now, wherever he goes. I thought he would be always near us, and often at The Blocks. I could not have you go quite away from me, Eilly. I could not live at The Blocks alone. I am getting old.’

Was ever child so tried between father and lover?

‘Oh, father—auntie, I am so unhappy. I don’t want to leave father. But how can I——’

Eilly sat down on the sofa and was about to bury her face in the pillow, for she felt that Nature was coming to the relief of the tension of the moment, with some natural tears, when she suddenly raised herself and exclaimed, with a decision and excitement that was unusual with her—

‘Father, I will write to Edward at once. He will tell me all about it.’

‘Well, well, Eilly,’ said the aunt, this time with excessive precision in her accents, ‘if you think it a becoming thing for a young lady to write beseeching letters to a man, who tells in the open fashionable newspapers what he is going to do, and that he is going away to another hemisphere without saying a word to her—if, I say, Eilly, you think that that is a becoming thing for a young lady to do, why, then, all I beg is that you won’t ask me to express my opinion about it. It might be painful for you, and I know it would be painful for me to do so.’

‘You see, Eilly, my dear Eilly, I don’t know about this Scotland, though it seems to get out without our knowing of it. But we know he has gone from Brassville. He won’t be there any more. I wouldn’t like you being quite away from me. It can’t be helped, Eilly. We must look to one another more and more.’

Poor Eilly felt one of those bleak shudders through the heart which mark an epoch in one’s life. The stroke is

given in a moment, but it vibrates, perhaps getting fainter, but it vibrates for ever. She was not without reason for the feeling of despair that came over her. She did not know of the letter that her father had written to Frankfort, after his speech against the Reservoir; nor, of course, of the meaning that he would naturally attach to her sudden departure from Brassville following upon it. So she was unable to think why he had not called upon her in town before this. But she never doubted him for an instant till she was dismayed by this abrupt disclosure in the *Stingaree*. There it was in print. Still, she could not resolve to doubt him even now. Only she did not know what to think. In this crisis she turned to her father. She never had brother or sister, to know them. Her mother was gone. Her father stood to her for mother, brother, sister. Her love for him was absolute. Her trust in him entire. In her every sorrow she felt a gleam of happiness in having him as a refuge. 'Father,' she said, making a strong effort to control her emotion—'father, I don't know what to do or what to say; I am miserable. What should I do?'

'Eilly, dear Eilly, I am only thinking for you. You see how things have gone—all the way we did not want them to. We had better stop the engagement with him—yes, put it off, at least. I can write to explain to him. Of course, Eilly dear, if afterwards we find——'

He was going to add some general words of hope, so as to mitigate the blow, when his sister interposed:

'Now, Thomas, let me entreat you not to go on putting any more ideas or notions into the poor child's head. It is the way with all you men. You don't know your own minds, and you won't let any one else know theirs. Let the engagement be declared off, and there is an end of it.'

The aunt's stern words roused Eilly's pride and stiffened her up to a composure that at first seemed to be fast deserting her.

She went up to her father, rested her head upon his shoulder, as her habit often was, and said with some calmness:

'Father, let it be off as you say. But if I give Edward Frankfort up, I will never think of any one else. I have only you left to love.'

The father and daughter kissed one another, and Eilly sought a while in her own room the refuge of solitude after the trying emotions she had experienced. She also sought the refuge of prayer—to the Great Unseen, but not unfelt. In this she was acting, according to several philosophers, unreasonably. Still, she was acting naturally. And that we do pray is a proof that we ought to pray. Prayer is a great fact. If, which Heaven forbid, the present is to be our only state of consciousness, at least let us pray now.

‘Oh, girls always talk that way,’ said the aunt, as Eilly left the room. ‘She will be all right in a few weeks—a sensible girl like dear Eilly. And such a striking girl, too, with that fine estate behind her, The Blocks, and this Mr. Meeks getting the Reservoir, and she will soon find another——’

‘Oh, do stop, Maggie. If you would only stop talking for a bit. Do let the thing rest. Don’t you see I am upset?’

Lamborn was upset. His irritated nerves found a vent in the explosion against his composed sister, all the more because she was so composed. She felt that it was highly ungrateful of him to turn upon her in this way, after all her assistance and diplomatic handling of the matter. But she said nothing, as she rather feared her brother when he got deeply moved, as he was now.

Soon after the election was over Lamborn and Eilly returned to The Blocks. A few days later Frankfort received the following letter, dated from the old home:—

THE BLOCKS, 10th October 18—

Dear Frankfort—It’s an unpleasant thing I want to write about. It is better for the engagement between you and my daughter to be off; though I am put out to say it straight. I thought that you would be Member here, and that I could have her a lot at The Blocks, and you as well. But all this is upset by your extraordinary way of going on about the Reservoir. Who could have thought it? I can’t make it out yet. But I can’t agree to have her taken quite away from me—perhaps to another end of the world, poor child. I am getting too old for that; and I am alone as well.

But I wish you all the good luck I can, notwithstanding this most unexpected and unfortunate turn that things have taken about the Reservoir.—I remain, yours faithfully,

THOS. LAMBORN.

E. F. Frankfort, Esq.

So the blow had come. Had Eilly been a poor girl, and his career successful, he would have questioned this harsh decision, and claimed at least to have his dismissal from the hands of Eilly herself. But he felt a diffidence in taking such action now, since there was no denying that he had been unfortunate lately, in respect both of the University and the constituency. There was weight, too, in Lamborn's objection that he thought his daughter was marrying a man who would be connected with the district; though what he meant by her being taken to another end of the world Frankfort could not imagine, as he seldom saw the *Stingaree*. He felt that he must also make all allowance for Lamborn's consternation about the Reservoir. Nay, had not Eilly herself suddenly left Brassville after his opening address, and kept away during the whole election? When this last idea struck him he reproached himself for entertaining a disparaging thought of her, and solaced himself with the reflection that all was owing to her noble devotion to her father.

However, he was satisfied that his only proper course was a dignified acquiescence in what Thomas Lamborn proposed. Though not an assuming man, our politician was a proud man. To lose his only love in life was a hard fate; but it seemed to be his fate. He wrote, agreeing that the engagement should be broken off, as he considered it only fair that Miss Lamborn should be able in the circumstances to feel herself entirely free. Without designing it, but in the natural expression of his own feelings, his letter was so worded that it said nothing about the correlative freedom on his side. He had silently made a vow, answering to that which Eilly had declared to her father, that he would never love any one else. His heart was sore when he thought of her, and that upon account of her sorrow as well as his own; for he felt what the separation, however brought about, must have cost her. In his troubled musings there somehow occurred to him the tragic tones of the fortune-teller in the tent at Jortin's At Home, when she warned Eilly Lamborn: 'A Fate awaits you.' But, he said to himself, there are many fates in our lifetime. A troubled fate had now befallen her, all owing to this cursed Reservoir. That a happier and

brighter one might in time be hers was his fervent prayer ; and you, reader, and I join him in it !

As for himself, he had to draw such comfort as he could from those philosophical reflections upon life which, however in truth, are better adapted to enable us to moralise upon the past or speculate upon the future than to endure the present. But as to the political blow he had suffered, he could recall the saying of one great man, that an early death was preferable to the political career ; and as to the domestic disaster which had befallen him, he had to comfort him—if comfort it was—the words of another great man, who declares that the best works of our race have proceeded from unmarried or childless men.

CHAPTER XIII

OUT OF PARLIAMENT

OUR politician was thus out of Parliament. No doubt he felt a natural disappointment. Still, he consoled himself with thinking that the Legislature was no longer the only sphere in which a man could influence public opinion, and be of use to the community in which he lived. The work that Parliament did was doubtless a great work, and a necessary one. The people's government must be carried on—the machine kept going—and credit was due to those who were able, like M'Grorty, to take kindly to the work and adapt themselves to what was wanted. The State must have adaptable men to do its work. It was ever so. Swift mentions that of the three kings in whose reigns he lived, not one ever promoted a man of merit, because the independent temper of such men was found to be a perpetual clog to business. But, mused our politician, is there now no scope for usefulness outside the official circle? In truth there is more scope than ever, for now public opinion has to be made outside politics. The function of the outside politician is different, not inferior to that of the official politician. Great ideas and resolves come now from the people, generated by independent thinkers in the ranks. They are not vouchsafed to the crowd by their rulers. Independent thinkers can proclaim the truth that they feel, and force upon others the ideals that they believe in; and the more Representation becomes Delegation, the more need there is of this work outside the political arena, and the wider scope for the men who are able to do it. Never were the facilities for spreading

thought abroad so great as in the present day. If there is not now the *agora* of the ancient world into which any citizen might step, and seek to enlighten his fellows, there is the Press, the Lecture Hall, the Platform. Aided by printer's ink, you can penetrate into every home in the land, speak to the people there with independence, and maintain the truth as it seems to you, unbiassed by personal interests, political obligations, or popular make-belief. Enthusiasm will be a help, not a hindrance. How much of John Stuart Mill's work in the House of Commons lives in the recollection of men? Little beyond his justification of the crowd in Hyde Park for pushing down the railings.

Our politician, then, as we may still term him—for there are politicians outside Parliament as well as inside—thus consoled himself, and felt that he should by no means consider that he was past usefulness because he no longer figured as one of the actors in the noisy and showy, but least independent, side of public life. He had been in the habit of helping his friend Arthur Hartpole by contributing articles to the *News Letter* upon public questions in which he was interested. Hartpole now desired his regular assistance in the work of the paper, the more readily as they both regarded public questions from at least a common standpoint; and Frankfort was free to accede to his friend's proposal. He had always intended to continue his teaching of Social Science, and soon a course of Lectures by him were announced to be given in the Lecture Theatre of the Free Library, under the auspices of the Committee. Most of his old students from the University attended them, and a large number of the general public as well. In time they came to be regarded as a useful factor in informing the public upon social questions, and people looked forward to them with the expectation of getting independent instruction and light upon those questions. He had thus open to him two powerful means of influencing public opinion.

While he was making his arrangements, he would often talk over his plans with Myles Dillon. Dillon was highly indignant with Brassville for preferring Meeks, and he maintained that the result of the election fully justified his own and Thomas Carlyle's estimate of the wisdom of the crowd.

He was, as we know, generally regarded as privileged to express undemocratic sentiments of the most daring description. With the freedom of the Fool, in the old days, he never hesitated to tell even Royalty itself—the Royalty of his day—what he thought of it. The rejection of Frankfort and the election of Meeks gave fresh zest to his criticisms. When he met M'Grorty at the Club in the evening he would break out before that popular tribune into invectives against a system of Government that could produce such results. M'Grorty enjoyed his outspoken declarations as a change from the usual complacent self-glorification of popular institutions. Personally he regretted the defeat of Frankfort, though Meeks was one of his own followers. He liked a man who knew something of literature, and who could decently make, and also intelligently listen to, a set speech. As to such a one's political views either way he did not, so far as his own private feelings went, care very much. Meeks, to be sure, was an advanced Liberal; but Frankfort was sound enough too—at least for him—though not such a good politician as Meeks.

One evening, not long after the Brassville election, Frankfort was dining with Myles Dillon, and after dinner they were discussing the prospects of his Lectures at the Free Library. Myles, according to his custom, had thrown himself upon the sofa, so that he should be quite at ease, to gratify his turn for argument and disputation upon any subject that might present itself, when a light tap was heard at the door, and M'Grorty's cheerful countenance presented itself, as he bent round the opened door in an inquiring manner, asking in pantomime if he could venture to come in. He looked quite happy, and his intelligent blue eyes beamed sympathetically upon the two friends as they greeted him, and Dillon begged to know whether he came to talk or to get his dinner.

'Dinner? Don't insult me by talking of such a grossly materialistic object as dinner when I have such an intellectual feast before me as even a short conversation with two men of genius.'

'It is all very well talking of men of genius,' answered Myles Dillon in a sulky tone, 'but you get them out of your

politics anyway pretty quick by means of your Reservoirs and dirty water indeed of every description.'

'Reservoirs, my dear Doctor?' inquiringly said M'Grorty, seating himself opposite the sofa and mechanically settling his tie, as he looked down upon the recumbent figure of his host; 'reservoirs—well, I don't know, but——'

'When a man says he don't know, he generally means that he does know; and what I would like to know is what your politics say to the Reservoir at Brassville?'

'Oh, the Reservoir—what is it—Dam and all? Only a trifle; a momentary spoke in the wheel of our friend here. "Out, out, damned spot!" We will get him in for the Blue Street Division. No Reservoirs there, but the majority of electors are women, and they will put in their valiant Knight Templar here flying—as easy as lighting a cigar that draws well.'

And M'Grorty struck a match and gave a practical illustration of his simile. He went on to enlarge upon Frankfort's chances of success—indeed, certainty of success—at Blue Street when the next vacancy should occur. 'And let me tell you,' he continued, nodding gravely to our politician, 'old Carmody Zinck, though he dresses up to look so young, is getting very shaky, and, between me and you and the bar, he is too often at the Empire Palace. Yes, he is.'

Frankfort, however, declared that his ambition for active politics was satisfied for the present at least, and that he now proposed to devote himself to the Press and the Lecture Hall, where he would be free to deal with great questions of principle in just the manner that his own intelligence and conscience directed him. He explained his projects to M'Grorty, who listened with surprise and some amusement to the idea of giving up workaday politics, with the object of being more useful and also of being more intellectually independent. The two continued to discuss the matter for some time, and M'Grorty combated Frankfort's notion as positively incomprehensible to any man who could lay claim to the true political instinct.

'My dear Frankfort, you positively amaze Cornelius M'Grorty. I thought that you were a politician. Do you wish to be a hero in the fight, or only a baggage Johnnie?'

and he turned the blue eyes with elevated eyebrows straight on his companion.

'I want to be one to direct the campaign and leave you to do the marching,' replied Frankfort.

'Let him be,' said Myles Dillon, who had been lying silent a while, but who seemed here to rouse himself. He was in a more perverse humour than usual this evening, and, like some great men we read of, was ready to argue beyond and against his real opinions just to get the better of the other person. So he retorted upon the unruffled M'Grorty—'Let him be. I suppose he wants to die an honest man. And perhaps he is right.'

'Dear friend, why so hard? Cannot we all be honest? Why so hard on the poor politician who struts and frets his hour, etc. etc.?'

M'Grorty, as he spoke, smiled kindly upon Dillon.

'I am not hard upon you. I admire you successful ones who do what you are told, with the superadded art of appearing to believe in the wisdom of your instructions.'

'Brother mine,' said M'Grorty, gently touching Dillon's shoulder, 'you forget that the world must be carried on. The advocate in court has to do even so.'

'Not at all; the advocate says all the while that he is only an advocate. You profess to be yourselves.'

'Dear me, how severe we are this night! Worse than usual—positively ferocious; dangerous complaint *rabies politicalis*. Perhaps you condemn all popular progress?' said M'Grorty, giving an emphatic wave of his cigar at the word 'all.'

'A good deal of it I do,' said Myles Dillon, getting more obstinate as he was pressed by M'Grorty.

'Perhaps, then, the American War of Independence was a mistake?'

'To be sure it was. A blunder on both sides. If they had remained part of the British Empire slavery would have been abolished gradually, and they would never have had their Civil War—nor yet the fear of another civil war one of these fine days—about the blacks, or the President, or something else.'

'Really? And the French Revolution now?' said

M'Grorty, standing up and looking down in an interested manner at Myles Dillon.

'And what was your French Revolution? Destruction only. They tore up the tree by the roots and planted nothing that will grow in its place. They burnt down the house to get the roast pig of reform, and it is not built up again, and after a hundred years does not look like as if it would be just yet.'

'Perhaps, dear Doctor,' said M'Grorty, with a light wave of his hand, as if to clear the way for his next questions — 'perhaps, then, you also condemn the noble struggle in America by which the North freed the slaves for ever.'

'Well,' replied Myles Dillon doggedly, 'you needn't throw that democratic brick at me either. It was a good thing done in a bad way. Emancipation was delayed by their wire-pullers till they could not help it, and then done by rushing the bull instead of leading him.'

'You don't say so?'

'I do; and I say further, that if they had had a few statesmen about, and *minded* them, you observe, they would have undertaken Abolition a century before, and then done it slowly. Russia did the same work with her serfs, only she did it better.'

'Interesting, is it not, at this time of day, to find a full-grown man like our prostrate friend there on the sofa openly denouncing Liberalism?' said M'Grorty, looking round to Frankfort as if for sympathy.

'What is your Liberalism now, I would like to know?' asked Myles Dillon.

'Well, let us hear the diagnosis of the Sage of the Scalpel.'

'My diagnosis is that the twentieth-century Liberalism is that nobody is to do what he hasn't a mind to, and that every one is to have the best of everything and somebody else is to pay for it.'

'What, the old country in the wrong box as well— England, Ireland, Gladstone, ballot-box— dawn of new era?'

'Why, in England they are making a fair division

enough. Aristocrats reign and have the patronage, while democrats govern and have the populism. Socialism mixed with blue blood becomes respectable.'

'What? Collectivist earls, marquises murmuring Karl Marx, and dukes devoted to dividing up!' exclaimed M'Grorty, gently lifting his hands in show of consternation. He added, 'And what about poor Ireland, your own, your native land?'

'Liberalism has got you into a cleft stick there. Ireland is more hostile to your rule than she was a century ago. She elects gentlemen to make laws for the nation who are fresh from fighting under the flag of your enemies to destroy you, and men who cheer in Parliament at the announcement of disasters that have befallen you.'

'It would seem, may I respectfully remark, to plain Cornelius M'Grorty that this is not exactly the fault of Liberalism.'

'But that is just what it is,' answered Myles Dillon doggedly. 'Your Liberalism teaches Ireland to be disloyal. The only party you have cowed there is the Loyalist party. You proclaim that the true government is of the people, by the people. Eight-tenths of her people demand self-government, and you refuse it to the Celt, because the Saxon does not like it. If your principles are right, Ireland is entitled to her Parliament.'

'Sad, is it not,' exclaimed M'Grorty, as if speaking to himself, 'to see one's near friend a mere chronological mishap—a man of the seventeenth century by some blunder reappearing in the enlightened twentieth century—a being obstinately standing in the east while the world moves to the west—nay, a mere antediluvian organisation, though of the intellectual type, still antediluvian, prehistoric, indeed preglacial, truly fossil, ante-mundane.'

'I will tell you what will be more sad, Mr. M'Grorty, if you find after a while that your political Liberalism ends by landing you in industrial slavery.'

'You don't mean it? And may I repeat this new view of the situation at the Woman's Rights National League meeting, Temperance Hall, where I am to look in as I go

home this evening, and say a few appropriate words upon Marriage Reform ?'

As M'Grorty spoke, he looked round in the mirror over the mantelpiece to get one more glance at himself before he took his departure to the meeting.

'Yes, you may tell them that, and you may also tell them that, when modern society has worked out the experiment of government, by sheep following sheep, jumping after one another through the first hole in the hedge, it ought then to look back and erect monuments to the few honest men who, like Myles Dillon, M.D., told them the truth.'

'A monument?' said M'Grorty, facing round from the mirror. 'No, no; but whenever you do go, we will enshrine you in the Blue Street Museum in one vast glass vase of transparent pickle, and show you as the last remaining specimen of the Political Dodo. Admission—adult electors, one shilling; children electors, sixpence. Bye-bye—farewell meanwhile. I will tell the ladies all about it.'

And M'Grorty tripped off lightly to the meeting in the Temperance Hall. He had quite enjoyed Myles Dillon's odd ideas. He was accessible to new views of things, but he was also able to enjoy old ones. It was rather a relief to him to hear Myles Dillon, just as some of the best of the clergy outside their work enjoy the reaction of mingling in the excitement of the world.

In due time Frankfort completed his arrangements for giving his first series of Lectures on Sociology in the Lecture Theatre of the Free Library. Lectures, and especially lectures on Social subjects, were an institution in Excelsior. They even competed with the attractions of the stage. It was one good result of the wide diffusion of political power among all, and of the general idea that all were equally concerned in looking after the State, that numbers felt it no more than their duty to avail themselves of such means of acquiring knowledge as might offer. It was the recreation of many to listen to and to criticise schemes of every description for remedying the ills of life. Ladies used to go in parties to hear addresses upon topics such as these at the Free Library. They occupied stage boxes or parts of the galleries, which

were specially reserved for them, and often brought some knitting or crochet-work with them, so that, whatever the intellectual entertainment might prove, the hours would not be passed in a wholly unprofitable manner.

It so happened that Frankfort's first lecture was announced to be given during the week when the great yearly Cattle and Sheep Show of the Province was held in Miranda. Numbers of the country people journeyed to the city at that time, and among them upon this occasion were several of our old friends from Brassville and the surrounding district. Mr. and Mrs. Shumate came, at the persuasion of Martha Shumate, owing to her concern for Jacob. She said that he needed change. Jacob Shumate was such a searching Inspector of Nuisances that he came into frequent conflict with the householders of Glooscap, and this at times caused him so much irritation that his health suffered, to the great concern of his wife, the devoted Martha. It so happened that just at this time he was especially perturbed by a dispute that had been going on for some time with the proprietor of the Red Parrot Hotel about a covered brick drain in the yard of the house, a portion of which he had required to be taken up and replaced by an open drain. The man, who was a bush lawyer, refused to do this, as he maintained that his drain complied with the law as it stood. Jacob strenuously disputed the fact, and relied upon the section of the Act which said that all drains should be adequate and sanitary. He admitted that this drain was adequate, but maintained that, owing to its being closed, it became unsanitary after a certain length of its course, and should be made an open drain from that point. He summoned the proprietor to the Glooscap Police Court. The case had been set down for the Monday in the Show week, but as the day drew near Jacob discovered that Hilljohn, the landowner of Charlotte Mount, would be away at the Show, while Barney Clegg, who had at length been made a Justice, owing to the persistency of Meeks, was coming over to take his place on the bench at Glooscap. Mr. Clegg explained to his friends that he was going to the small outlying Courts merely to gain experience before he faced the 'Temple of Janus in Brassville,' as he termed the Court

there. Jacob Shumate, however, was fully satisfied in his own mind that he was coming to Glooscap for the purpose of perverting justice in the interest of his brother publican, and openly said that he would not trust him to adjudicate upon the life of one of the rabbits or red parrots in the forest. But he admitted that Hilljohn was judicially a reliable man, though in politics he would not look at him. Thaddeus Knack, his lawyer, had with difficulty managed to get the case postponed, and Jacob came home to his wife quite upset at the narrow escape he had of having his action, and indeed his reputation as Sanitary Inspector, at the mercy of Justice Barney Clegg! What with the prolonged irritation of the contest with the Red Parrot and the fear of this final catastrophe, he was so much, his wife considered, in need of a change that she insisted upon his carrying out a promise of long standing to give her a trip to the Metropolis; and so, together with the two children, Popsey and Flopsey, whom she would not hear of being left behind in the care of a neighbour, Mr. and Mrs. Shumate came to Miranda for the Show week. Barney Clegg, finding that the case was not to be heard, came too, discarding all other judicial cares. Mrs. Garvin, the Post-mistress at Glooscap, gave her nephew, Terence M'Glumpy, the letter-carrier, three days' leave to visit the city. The young man had wonderfully improved, and now could frequently make out the directions on the letters. Many other townsfolk from Glooscap and Brassville also went, and Mr. Lamborn had arranged to go with his daughter, but he was suddenly called off to his cattle station beyond the Divide. However, he induced Eilly Lamborn to go with Mrs. Fairlie, the wife of the Banker, who readily agreed to take charge of so pleasant a companion. The fond father thought that he had noticed beneath Eilly's habitual quiet cheerfulness some shade of depression lately, and he was anxious that she should not miss the change that the gay week in Miranda would afford. So Mrs. Fairlie and her children, Minnie and Teddy, journeyed to town with Eilly.

The morning after they arrived at their lodgings, as they sat at breakfast, rather later than usual, young Teddy vigorously struggling with the holiday luxury of

cake *and* jam together, while his mother was looking over the *Rising Sun*, and Eilly was making tea, Mrs. Fairlie exclaimed—

‘Why, really—to be sure! We must go, Eilly.’

‘Go where, Mrs. Fairlie?’

‘Why, to this Lecture here—do you see—Free Library. The paper says that every one is going; so, of course, they are. It is all about Public Opinion and Social questions, and things of that sort.’

‘Yes, that would be interesting, Mrs. Fairlie. I would quite like to go,’ said unsuspecting Eilly, it never occurring to her to ask who the lecturer would be. This aspect of the question had not presented itself to simple-minded Mrs. Fairlie either, so she quietly continued:

‘Yes, and you know my nephew Frankfort is really a clever man; though I must say that he is a little odd in his ways, and he has not been very fortunate either lately, for the matter of that.’

As she glanced up casually at Eilly, she saw that the habitual cheerfulness of her open countenance was suddenly clouded over by a shade of trouble. In the simple but expressive language of Scripture, her countenance fell. The good lady then called to mind the relations that had existed between Frankfort and Eilly, and exclaimed, quite naturally—

‘Oh, Eilly dear, why, now, I had really forgotten. But that does not matter, does it? There will be such a number of people there, the paper says, and it will be interesting to see the meeting all the same. You don’t mind his having been unfortunate, do you?’

And Mrs. Fairlie continued her study of the *Rising Sun*, while Eilly turned as if to talk to Teddy, but really feeling perplexed what to do—whether she should go or not. She did not like to explain even to her friend the objection she had to going, yet, if she went, she might be seen by him—nay, might meet him. She wished that her father was near her, that she might talk to him about it. Mrs. Fairlie was so kind, but so casual, in her way of looking at things. Her first impulse was to refuse to go, but she was stung by the question that Mrs. Fairlie had put,

without the least design and in the most natural way, whether she minded his having been unfortunate. In her perturbation, Teddy came to the relief of her perplexity by giving her time to think, as unconsciously as his mother had caused it. He was an ardent admirer of Eilly. Only a few days before, when she was lunching at the Bank, he had surprised her and his mother by remarking incidentally in the conversation, with that imprescriptible right which children have to say straight out what they really think—

‘Ah, but, mother, Eilly is such a beautiful girl.’

He pronounced it ‘gurl.’ Many older members of the male sex thought the very same thing; but then they could not express their thoughts in this open manner. Eilly, too, liked Teddy, so it was never a difficult matter to start a conversation between them.

‘Where are we to go to, Eilly? Is it to the circus?’

‘*We*?—indeed, *we* are not going anywhere. Your mother was speaking of my going with her somewhere.’

‘Where is that, Eilly?’

‘Going to hear a clever man speaking.’

‘What is he going to speak about?’

‘About making people better, and everything better.’

‘Ah, I know what would be better.’

‘Why, better for what, Teddy?’

Eilly spoke scarce heeding what she was saying, pondering over her difficulty, while Teddy, upon whose mind the week’s holiday had made a deep impression, went on to expound a theory of his own.

‘Look here, Eilly, listen. I’ll tell you. How many days a week do I work at lessons and school?’

‘How many? Why, count.’

‘Well, there is Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday; and then I play on Saturday and Sunday. Do you hear, Eilly? Listen.’

‘Yes, I am listening. What then, Teddy?’

‘Why, if you want boys to be happy, it would be better to work on the Saturday and Sunday, and to play the other days.’

‘Oh, Teddy, what an idle boy you would be. You had

better not let your master, Mr. Nickerson, hear you talk that way.'

Teddy was rather awed by the mere idea of making such a proposition to Neal Nickerson, so he hastily added :

'No, but you see, Eilly, I would do it this way. I would work ever so hard, hard on Saturday and Sunday and do all the lessons that way.'

Eilly and Mrs. Fairlie laughed at this novel solution of the Labour question ; and the child's prattle having given Eilly an opportunity of thinking, she was about to explain to her friend the difficulty she felt in going to the Lecture without knowing what her father thought about it, when the door opened, and Mrs. Dorland was announced. She excused herself for making such an early call ; but she was inviting a small party of friends to a quiet dinner, and afterwards to go to the Lecture at the Free Library, and she hoped that Mrs. Fairlie and Miss Lamborn would join them.

'Why, Mrs. Dorland, we were just talking about it. We will be glad to go, indeed ; won't we, Eilly ? But,' added Mrs. Fairlie, direct and plain-spoken as usual, 'I thought that it was Mr. Dorland that had the dispute with my nephew—about the University, had he not ?'

'To be sure he had, Mrs. Fairlie ; but William is too just a man to bear enmity. And then Mr. Frankfort behaved so nobly about the Reservoir. William quite admires him for it.'

'The Reservoir ?'

'Yes, you know, at that last election, losing it rather than pitch the public money about right and left to buy his own seat in Parliament, and tell a lot of stories about the Reservoir, as William says. Why, he said to me the very first morning the lecture was announced in the *Rising Sun*, says he, "Lizzie, we will go and hear Mr. Frankfort. After all, he is an honest man." And you know, my dear Mrs. Fairlie, how much William thinks of that.'

'But,' exclaimed the Banker's wife, 'Mr. Fairlie says that we ought to have the Reservoir at Brassville !'

'At Brassville—with the mountains between it and the mines, where they want the water ? William says that

Parliament can never throw away money like that. How could they, my dear Mrs. Fairlie? They might as well put it in the sea near Leadville at once, he says. It is only that poor fellow Meeks, you know, who would ask for such a thing.'

'You do surprise me, Mrs. Dorland, you do, really. Why, that was why we all voted for Meeks, because he is to get the Reservoir. It was for nothing else. And now you say it is all wrong. You quite amaze me.'

'At any rate, my dear Mrs. Fairlie, Mr. Frankfort is not going to lecture about the Reservoir; so we can all agree to go and hear him on his Social subjects.'

Eilly had rapidly satisfied herself, while the two ladies were speaking, that it would be better for her not to refuse to go. She was struck by the way that Mrs. Dorland had put the Reservoir question. Frankfort seemed to have been a good deal misrepresented about it. The story of his leaving for Scotland was clearly a false invention. On the whole, it was better for her not to refuse to go. How far she was influenced—unacknowledged even to herself—by the feeling that she would rather like to see him again, even at a distance, we must leave the reader to determine for himself.

So the party was made up, and, led by Mr. Dorland, they occupied a prominent part of the gallery circle on the evening of the Lecture. Mrs. Dorland got her knitting out early, and emphasised her feelings, as the address went on, by that vigorous action of the needles which was, as we know, her custom. The Lecture Theatre was filled. A large proportion of Frankfort's old students had joined the class which he had formed, and the political world and the Press were well represented. Mons. Froessolecque sat at the reporters' table, making mental notes for a scathing leading article; but Secker, who had come with him, took a seat quite at the back, so as to escape general observation. Barney Clegg, on the contrary, went as far forward as he could, and looked round every now and then upon the audience with some sense of importance, as being now one of the judges of the people. Jacob Shumate came by himself, as Mrs. Shumate had waited at home to put the children

to bed ; and while the glance of his dark eye seemed to be as searching as of old, his countenance was certainly less careworn than before marriage, and this notwithstanding his recent troubles with the Red Parrot. The Honourable Cornelius M'Grorty arrived arm-in-arm with David Stoker, and listened with marked attention to all that Frankfort said ; but Stoker could not suppress every now and then some 'asides' which were expressive of his mental criticisms upon certain of the views which the lecturer expressed. Mr. and Mrs. Meeks took a prominent seat in the gallery. Meeks, as we know, was not devoid of kindly feeling, and he wished to show that he bore no enmity to the man whom he had defeated. Also, he desired to take note of how the lecturer would succeed, and whether he could manage to give a popular turn to his remarks. Terence M'Glumpy, notwithstanding the damper that his enthusiasm had met with at the election meeting, when he heard that his patron was to appear, put aside a proposed visit to the play and came down with some young friends, whom he instructed to observe when he applauded, and then all to clap together. But Terry himself did not understand enough of the subject to know the right moment at which to clap, so his exuberant applause often proved embarrassing to the speaker, coming either prematurely or else after the point of the argument had been made.

Frankfort took as his subject 'Public Opinion : What is it?' As all reasonable contributions towards solving this complex problem should be acceptable, we give here the substance of what he said.

PUBLIC OPINION : WHAT IS IT ?

It was a question worth considering and trying to answer, since public opinion was now our king, and a king to whom not only was open resistance vain, but whose subtle influence sought to control our very thoughts. It used to be a commonplace reflection that even in slaves the mind was free. But this could not be asserted without qualification of the subjects of public opinion. Yet, imperious and formidable as it was, its outline and proportions were not easy to define.

That shape,
 If shape it might be call'd that shape had none,
 Or substance might be call'd that shadow seem'd.
 What seem'd his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.

And who can trace to their source the elements that go to form it? How shall we seize and fix the floating and varying fancies, impulses, ideas, convictions, hereditary beliefs of millions of men, and mark in clear outline when and how they resolve themselves into the public opinion of to-day—the vapours of public thought, to be condensed, shall we say, into the formed clouds, thereafter to cause the fertilising rain?

What was this public opinion? It faced us with more aspects than one, and, when analysed, was found to be made up of several elements. Though at times these seemed to mingle together, and together to produce political results, yet they are by no means identical.

First, there is the matured public thought, or opinion, that is the result of the accumulated human experience of centuries, perhaps of ages, by which truths are engrained into men's beliefs—almost into their natures—by hard and often cruel experience, and become accepted by all as conclusions that are self-evident. These establish beliefs and habits of thought the direct opposite of the mistaken ones from which the ancient abuses sprang, and which (as all progress is apt to oscillate between extremes) may even in some instances mark a rebound too far from the original error.

An example of public opinion of this description is to be found in the belief, now universal in Western civilisation, in the blessing of freedom of conscience, and the wisdom of the separation of the State from Church control. It is the product of the lessons taught by ages of the stern experience of religious persecution and intolerance, so that we know now by heart, and instinctively, the folly and the wrong of the State interfering with any man's religious belief, or giving the Churches authority in secular government. The flames of the stake shed their light upon us through centuries. And now, when far away on the prairies, in some

mushroom village of the plains, the local lecturer harangues in the weatherboard hall of the free library (in which not a religious book will be found) in favour of State and secular education, indignantly asks what right the Churches have to interfere, and loudly proclaims that religion is a matter as to which each one is to judge for himself, he is merely giving voice to a conclusion that experience had stored up ready for use, centuries before he was born. Like a piece of coal, he gives out light from material that has long ago been stratified and placed away for human service. Loudly does he strike the table, and the room resounds with his eloquence, while men and women electors sit around and cheer the enlightened public opinion which they have inherited. But had they lived in the old days, they would doubtless, with the rest of the then crowd, have scowled and shuddered at the martyrs as they passed along to the stake. It may be added, that in the attempts that have been made at times (as, for example, in France) to proscribe from the public education of the young all traces of religious truth or feeling, we find an instance of where the rebound from one blunder reaches so far that it leads to a blunder on the other side. We come upon a fanaticism of secularism that the changes of time have evoked from out of the fanaticism of religion.

Other examples of public opinion, the result of stored-up experience of more recent origin, readily suggest themselves. The sufferings and the desolate condition of the poor, the harshness of the old penal code, the wrongs of women centuries ago, the severity of the indiscriminate application of the law of supply and demand—the operation of evils such as these in the past have created a public sentiment upon those subjects that we of this generation intuitively adopt as a part of our commonly accepted public opinion. We can also see this phase of public opinion in our own time, not yet matured, but in process of making for future use. No one can dispassionately observe the working now of some of our institutions and social methods, such as legislatures, machine politics, the press, industrial monopolies, the rule of political majorities, without feeling that what passes with little notice each day is yet silently storing up

materials for the formation of a public opinion concerning them in the future which will be widely different from that which prevails at present, but which will be accepted by our descendants as a part of the common stock of public intelligence. Just as the abuses of the old monarchies and aristocracies gradually forced upon men convictions discrediting them, which to-day we inherit as the commonplaces of public thought, so there is now being formed—growing up all the time—a public opinion about certain phases of Democracy which a century hence will make them to be, as a matter of commonly accepted opinion, equally discredited. These social axioms, then, taught by the stored-up experiences of bygone times, we take to be the first or foundation element of the public opinion of a people. It is common to all, high and low, wise and simple.

The next phase of public opinion includes the last, and is made up of the general intelligence and the prevailing tones of thought in any community, as they appear in all its varying forms of popular expression and discussion, from the cottage to the mansion, from the lecture halls of the University to the tap-room of the inn, from the flimsiest news-sheet up to the cultured review.

It is mainly voiced in the current publications of the time, the daily newspaper being a chief factor in expressing it, and bringing it to a head upon subjects as they become mature for settlement. While it is moulded on the ideas of all classes, as they are found at any time to be prevailing, it is also influenced, though not determined, by the higher standard of thought in the community, and by the conclusions of thinking men.

This public opinion is not the same thing as the political public opinion that governs democratic communities. With a middle-class suffrage, such as prevailed in England from 1832 to 1867, it is. There, this general public opinion is substantially the same as that expressed at the polling booths, and represented in the Legislature. The same tones of thought, similar feelings about public matters, and the like kind of social aspirations find voice, under a middle-class suffrage, in both general public opinion and in political public opinion. As Disraeli said in the House of Commons in the

notable debate of the session of 1852, 'public opinion governs this country, whose mild and irresistible influence can control even the decrees of Parliament.'

But when the suffrage becomes universal, a divergence is made manifest between this general public opinion of the country and its political voice, as it is sounded from the ballot-box—between the mandate of the latter and the wider conclusions of the former. For the majority of the people who vote speak with one voice at the ballot-box (substantially excluding the minority), and while they must be taken to represent the most important interests and the most prevailing sentiments of the public, they do not represent all, as is done by the outside general public opinion. The ideal of the advanced party in our time is not the representation of everybody, but the representation and the rule of the majority, with which they are themselves identified. Hence it is that we at times find political opinion approving what the general public opinion censures, and men, measures, and methods continuously supported by the one and condemned by the other. The general public opinion of the United States has never approved of the Spoils system, by which the offices in the public service are distributed, as so much plunder, to the victors at the polls. But it was for several generations supported in an unwavering manner by the political public opinion of that country. No more does the general public opinion there sanction the Machine system of government, and the rule of the Boss, by which a band of wire-pullers can dispose of the fortunes of great cities, and lay them at the feet of some vulgar potentate, who comes back, perhaps, from foreign lands, like Napoleon from Elba, to assume the dirty purple that the army of ward-politicians and rogue-demagogues lay at his feet. It is surprising how widely apart the social and the political condition of a people may be. In a past generation New York was for some years governed by a gang of criminals. But all the while social life went on as usual, education advanced, charities flourished, churches were filled, literature was free. The social stream and the political flowed on in the same State, but in distinct currents, never mingling. No doubt such a government would in time poison the sources of national life ; but for a while

you may have fair conditions of social life, together with, in the political world, a government of the gutter.

This divergence between general public opinion and political public opinion is also evidenced by the fact that, even in communities that are not ill-governed as New York was, the men who are chosen representative men in politics are perhaps unknown to the general public, or thought little of, if known. They have all the honour, position, power, titles (such as are allowed in democracies) that politics can give them. They are to the fore as the representative men of the people, and they are their political spokesmen. But all the time the general public may know little of them, or may even despise them if they do know them. General public opinion would name some of the eminent men of their country, for its choice—men whose fame had gone forth, perhaps, throughout the world, whose names would be remembered when they had passed away. But political public opinion selects the safe, unknown man who has not been prominent enough to make enemies, who excites no envy, who is ready to profess any creed that is wanted, and who will conciliate votes by having no past record to trammel or prejudice him. The count-up of the votes is the point it fixes on, the determining consideration in its calculations. Here it reaches the top of its speculation. 'Who is James K. Polk?' asked the simple-minded citizen, not in a satirical fashion, but merely for information, when that gentleman was proclaimed before the Capitol as President of the United States. He knew not, nor did many of his fellow-citizens; nevertheless, Mr. Polk was the President, and ruled the nation for years, unknown to men then, and unknown to fame since. This divergence between general public opinion and political public opinion is also often made apparent by the Press, speaking as it does with many voices, and expressing varied phases of public thought and interests. In the United States it is nothing unusual to see the Press vehemently condemning some line of conduct, and denouncing those who are concerned in it in unsparing terms, while the political world goes on unheeding, giving its full support to the men and methods that are thus commonly discredited outside.

But while in working-day politics this chasm often yawns wide between general public opinion and the political opinion of the caucus, the ward meeting, and the ballot-box, we must not regard this as the permanent condition of our common social and political life. The hope of progress lies in the gradual assimilation of the two, by raising the tone of daily politics, till it shall be in complete unison with the general intelligence and conscience of the community. There is a tendency to this happy issue in progressive self-governing countries, which, if not as rapid and complete in its operation as we could desire, is yet onward in its direction. It is active in proportion to the general intelligence and the political aptitude of the people. In the United States it can be observed even in relation to the degrading Spoils system.

Certainly there is a possible danger, another alternative which, if it is ever wise to hearken to pessimistic forebodings, we must note, namely, that in a community of low intelligence, the continued influence of Machine politics may in time drag down the general public opinion to its own level, and make political public opinion and general public opinion united in a common decadence. Just as a low growth of vegetation will often choke a higher form, or a base currency drive out good coin. Thus a stable equilibrium would be obtained by both resting at the foot of the hill. But to anticipate this would be to despair of progress.

The purpose of democratic political public opinion is a grand one—to elevate the whole. As a first step toward this, it pulls down all privilege, and firmly holds to the idea of a State in which none are afore or after another. This is easy work. But then begins the task of constituting upon new lines the State, social and political, and to do this successfully it must work in unison with enlightened general public opinion—if we would avoid seeing the new dispensation slowly fall under the influence of a stolid, Chinese stagnation of uniform mediocrity.

We must add one important fact to the consideration of the relation between general public opinion and political public opinion, which is, that even now in communities where

the political public opinion is not high, if upon any question general public opinion should become roused at a great crisis, then the political public opinion is for the time overshadowed, and the arts and watchwords of the Boss and the Machine pale, and become ineffectual like candles in sunshine. Witness the change wrought in the United States by that first fatal shot fired by the South (at Fort Sumter) upon those political parties that had been for years working for the Slave interest, as the most useful line to follow in daily politics.

Political public opinion remains ; the force that carries on daily government, taxes us, directs the conditions of our industry, controls our education, seeks to regulate our social habits, and further, by the mere operation of authority and the examples of public success, moulds the very thoughts, the private opinions of many. As for the politician, he who would succeed must implicitly accept its mandates, try to believe in them, and be prepared to find reasons to justify them. Thus directing our Government, controlling our thoughts, distributing its bounties, men naturally incline to do reverence to so great an authority. Praise follows power. What then is this sovereign lord ?

Political public opinion is the voice of the majority of the electors, expressed at the ballot-box, as it is directed and interpreted by its political leaders. Those leaders are the men who understand what one man—or one adult—one vote means, and who work up to the social revolution this principle has brought about. And we must not deny great practical value to this formal and conclusive declaration of the popular will in public affairs. It enables Government to be carried on somehow. It cuts the knot, by the stroke of an authority that men generally are content to accept, of tangled and conflicting interests and passions. It gives, even under low political conditions, much personal liberty, social safety, and (up to the present, at least) industrial progress. It is generally good-natured and easy-going, and it confers on the masses the soothing feeling that they are their own masters. In this way it makes possible the government of the poor, by the only means that seem to be workable in our Western civilisation, namely, by themselves—or ostensibly

by themselves. They cannot be controlled by force ; but they submit to government by themselves, or what is so called, and under which, at any rate, all pretensions that one man is more entitled to rule than another are ostentatiously denounced. When we reflect what a problem the government of men has always been, and how imperfectly that problem has been solved, in the interests of the people at least, by kings and aristocracies, we must not let the defects in the rule of political public opinion prevent us from recognising its substantial merits. Government has in every age been a tangled affair at best.

But evils there are in this political public opinion, and defects that were unexpected threaten it. The best hope of amending the one and avoiding the other is to endeavour to make clear what they are.

In the first place, we must bear in mind that political public opinion is, under our present electoral systems, the voice of the majority, for the time being, of the people, not of all the people. Philosophers who championed the advent of Democracy in our age, and proclaimed its superiority to any form of class Government, have insisted that all ought to be represented, and have proposed to do this by means of some system of proportional voting. This was necessary, they truly said, to complete the just system of Democracy. But Democracy seems to be getting completed without it. Men took what pleased them in the philosophers' proposals, and left the rest. This reform seems to be as distant as ever, not owing to the difficulties in its practical working which we often hear stated, but because the dominant power of our day has no fancy to see its authority in any way restrained. The despotic spirit is natural to man, and when overthrown in one form of Government, in one age, appears in another in the next. Under existing political conditions, then, only the majority are represented in political public opinion, and this leads to an important result.

The majority must undoubtedly govern ; but under certain political conditions this majority is a shifting one. With a restricted suffrage, supporting two balanced and contending parties in the State, majority rule meant a turn-about arrangement. The majority of one election became

the minority of another. But in a thorough Democracy there is no such division among the mass of the people upon the questions that go deepest into the Social State. There is no centre of resistance to the general voice, as it is spoken at the ballot-box. There may be outside, but it does not operate at the polling-booth. And, as all communities have from the beginning been divided into the worse-off and the better-off, the worse-off being always in a permanent majority, it follows that the public opinion of the ballot-box is the public opinion of the poor, and the Government carried on under its direction is, in so far as it is honest, the Government of the poor man. The well-off, who are ever in a permanent minority, are little heard in this form of the expression of public opinion. Not that they are extinguished wholly. Their views are made known as one element in the general public opinion of the country. They may influence politics indirectly—at times, even in an unwholesome manner. But the public opinion of the ballot-box, if it is genuine, is the voice of the poor; and it is not merely an expression of opinion, as in restricted suffrages. It is a manifestation of force. This, then, we state as one defect in the political public opinion of direct Democracies. The majority ought to rule, but all ought to be heard in the political arena. It is an unsound state of things when any section of the people are out of it, and become permanently a quantity that need not be counted. They are apt to become alien and malcontent, and to operate outside the legitimate lines. Some people congratulate themselves upon this result. But they do not realise the problem which is before our civilisation.

But there is another difficulty which the working of democratic institutions is developing, and which threatens to profoundly modify the whole character of the public opinion that is expressed at the ballot-box. In small communities, with only a few hundred thousand electors, you can ask them what they want, and they can answer by their votes, much as they used to do in the republican cities of old. Their public opinion is capable of distinct utterance by themselves. But when you come to deal with millions, and to operate over vast territories, the ballot-box process of getting this

public opinion becomes unreal. The theory is that each voter gives a vote which expresses his judgment upon the issues submitted to the nation. The judgment of the majority thus obtained is the political public opinion that is to govern the nation. Now, if we take the great democracy of the world, the United States, we find that there are some thirteen million voters, the expression of whose will is called for (indirectly) in the election of the President. If they had female suffrage, there would be twenty-six millions of voters. These vast multitudes of people are, like the primeval elements, without form and void, till moved by superior intelligence and concentrated power. A special class, whose business it is to manage the voting, is called into existence, and it makes a living out of this business. It is not a very high class, but it has a knowledge that is essential for the work, and a peculiar astuteness that is born of the environment in which its members live. These qualities are as much wanted for managing an election as is the skill of a pilot on the Ganges required to direct the course of a ship safely through the treacherous shoals and mud-banks of that river. It requires great skill to become a good Ganges pilot, but a skill quite different from the intelligence of the navigator who directs his ship, on a destined course, over the ocean. With these large multitudes to direct, organisation, complex machinery, strict discipline, implicit obedience to the word of command become essential to secure united action, and prevent a scattering that would be fatal to success. Political judgment passes from the individual to the managers. It is government of the people, through the people, and for the wire-pullers. The manager called in to guide the steed, when he mounts him, is apt to ride him where he will, and as he wishes ; unless when something exceptional rouses the spirit of the animal, and he breaks away from the bit. Thus we have, when this phase of democracy is developed, in place of a free and true expression of opinion at the ballot-box, a despotism of Bosses, tempered by bolts.

There is another weakness that is being developed in this government by the majority of votes—this public opinion of the ballot-box. When the people in a city, or a small rural State, agree to govern themselves by the majority,

it is well, and can be easily managed. They cast their votes together, and can clearly and readily count up which side has the most. When they ascertain this, the losing side may submit quietly. The local questions between them are within the ken of all, and affect all alike in one way or another. It is only a family difference between them. They are all in the same boat; their interests are identical; a danger to some would be a danger to all. If, therefore, in such a case three hundred thousand voters are one way, and two hundred thousand another way, the two hundred thousand can put up with defeat and with the three hundred thousand having the government. But when we apply this system to thirteen millions of electors spread over a continent—the United States, for example—and when, as the result of the ballot-box battle between millions—this Titanic struggle of paper tickets—there is only a majority of a few hundred thousand either way, the problem of government becomes more difficult. Not only are widely apart and wholly distinct interests to be dealt with, but the authority of the winning side becomes, in truth, an artificial thing. The side that secures out of the thirteen million voters a majority that is only nominal gets everything, and has for years the power, honour, glory, and patronage of the whole Empire, to the total exclusion of the others. It will be truly a great thing, and a noble thing, if millions of men will continue to adjust their differences by the simple and innocent process of dropping cards into a box and then counting them, he who has the bigger heap, though ever so little bigger, taking all. Every well-wisher of his race will pray that this peaceful method may endure for the ages. But when we see the population of a great nation nearly equally divided about the choice of its King, can we wonder that a strain is felt, and that the ancient process of government by the majority seems to be entering upon a new phase? The public opinion of the ballot-box threatens to get swamped in the complexity of the machinery, the vast scope of its operations, and the balanced nature of the results.

Take, for example, the elections for President of the United States from 1884 to 1896. The returns stand thus :—

1884.

Total votes cast	.	.	.	10,044,985
For Cleveland	.	.	.	4,911,017
For Blaine	.	.	.	4,848,334
Majority for Cleveland	.	.	.	62,683

1888.

Total votes cast	.	.	.	11,380,860
For Cleveland	.	.	.	5,538,233
For Harrison	.	.	.	5,440,216

(Thus Cleveland had 98,017 more votes at the polls ; but Harrison had a majority in the College and was declared elected President.)

1892.

Total votes cast	.	.	.	12,059,351
For Cleveland	.	.	.	5,556,918
For Harrison	.	.	.	5,176,108
Majority for Cleveland	.	.	.	380,810

1896.

Total votes cast	.	.	.	13,923,102
For McKinley	.	.	.	6,923,102
For Bryan	.	.	.	6,502,925
Majority for McKinley	.	.	.	420,177

A table of figures that gives food for thought surely !

At a general election in France some years ago, out of some ten and a half million voters, the successful candidates were returned by about four and a half millions, leaving six million citizens who did not vote or who voted for the defeated candidates.

The principle of government by the majority may be good. But what if you have millions of voters in the majority and millions in the minority, like twin brothers, nearly of a size? The system would not work if you had only the public opinion of the ballot-box. It is saved by the healthy outside public opinion of patriotic men, which is ready to steady and control the political conflict.

There is still another and a more subtle danger which threatens to impair the ballot-box as a true exponent of a

people's national voice. It is experienced in countries where popular government is developing into paternalism. Under it what counts for the national voice is apt to be made up of the selfish cries of sections of the people, all clamouring for Government attention to themselves, regardless of what would be demanded by a comprehensive concern for the whole, and for the future interests of the nation. The growing proportions of this threatening danger to political public opinion will justify us in giving to it some consideration. This natural selfishness was not so serious when the electors were only a subordinate part of the Government, and when the national administration was in the hands of an aristocracy or a monarch, who, if they took care of themselves, were also strong enough to defy sectional interests and consider for the country as a whole.

Unquestionably the great practical purpose of popular government is to improve and elevate the condition of the masses of men, and to raise them as far as may be above the miseries that have marked their lot in the past. And it would be vain, under any system, to fix too high a standard or to expect men not to think of their personal interests and wants. But side by side with this material object, and essential for its real success, there is this further purpose in free institutions, that while improving the lot of the man, they, at the same time, improve the man as an individual, take him somewhat out of himself, enlarge his ideas, expand his sympathies, correct his selfishness, and by making him to feel concern for the great interests of the country, prepare him where necessary to make sacrifices for that country. In truth, this latter purpose used to be insisted upon by advanced thinkers half a century ago as the most valuable one that self-government would promote. And this personal disinterestedness did, in fact, often mark the poor, even before they had the political franchise at all.

Burns sketches the public spirit of the poverty-stricken peasants of Scotland in these words :

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak' the bodies unco happy ;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs :

They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
 Wi' kindling fury in their breasts ;
 Or tell what new taxation's comin',
 An' ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

Dr. Arnold says, writing in the year 1837, of an English election : ' In this last week I have been at an election : one of those great occasions of good or evil which are so largely ministered to Englishmen ; an opportunity for so much energy, for so much rising beyond the mere selfishness of domestic interests, and the narrowness of mere individual or local pursuits.'

Sir James Mackintosh thus describes—and no one was able to do it in a more luminous manner—how the vote was regarded in the early days of the fight for political freedom (some words that do not affect the meaning are omitted) :—
 "The franchise is a political right conferred on individuals for the public advantage. It is also a privilege and advantage for the holder. It holds a middle station between office and property. Like the former, it is a trust. On the other hand, as the advantage of the holder is only one of its secondary objects, it has not the sacredness of property.'

The popular literature of the last century, and the first half of this, tells all the same tale of the patriotic spirit of the humbler ranks of the people, and their interest in public affairs. True, some sold their votes, but, as a whole, the people thought of public objects. Till of late, for some generations past, they had not looked to the Government to deal with their private concerns, so the political spirit expended itself on public affairs. The Government concerned itself with the broad common needs of the country, and the aspirations of those who had votes, and even of those who had not, naturally fell into the same direction. As the objects of the State were broad and national, so were, speaking generally, the ideas of those who concerned themselves in the affairs of State. The citizen, when he gave his vote upon national questions, for the time forgot, as Burns says, his private cares, and learned to make the general wants of the country his concern. The greatness of the issues that he is dealing with lifts the poorest man out of the mean surroundings of his daily life. This is the ideal

promised to us in the past by able men as the natural result of the use of political power.

But their speculations assume as their standpoint the representation of men for public objects. In the reaction from the past neglect of the poor, a danger lurks in the very solicitude of their Governments now to take care of them. For the more the people are called upon to govern the State, the less they are held to be able to look after themselves. The more powerful they grow as voters, the less reliant they become as citizens. So the Government is required to protect and order their industry, fix their wages, find work for the unemployed, distribute largesses to districts out of the public funds, carry out local works, manage public mercantile concerns, and are so occupied with looking after business details that they have little energy or time left for a commanding view of the interests of the country as a whole. Those particular interests, also, are often inimical to the true interests of the whole. Government upon these lines becomes in the cities socialism, in the country districts, localism; nowhere national. That some of these objects are useful does not alter the effect upon public spirit, of which we are speaking. The electors are themselves the Government, whose main function it is to supply their own wants. Recent developments of popular government in America, Europe, and England and her dependencies show that the danger is a real one.

The sinister operation of such a system is to substitute for public spirit a concern for self, and a disposition to regard politics as the legitimate channel for exercising that concern. All having a vote given to them as a matter of course, and it no longer conferring any distinctive importance politically, nor appearing to the individual atom, termed an elector, to carry with it any special trust for others, it is apt to be more valued for its practical use than for its political object. We travel round in another way to the old evil of bribery, but in a more serious aspect. It is not now the purchase of a few venal voters, who had no direct power in the State. It is the danger of making the sovereign people itself mercenary. The vote becomes, not a right, or a trust, but rather a perquisite. If this tendency were to go on unchecked, the nature of self-

government would be affected. There would soon be little politics in politics. They would become merely an expression of sectional wants, and social restlessness. In truth, if society is to become socialistic, Governments ought to become despotic. It requires a benevolent despotism to deal comprehensively and independently with all the contending industrial interests of a country. As the Governments grow more paternal, people will grow less political.

Such are some of the dangers that threaten to impair the public opinion of the ballot-box. Though progress moves upon lines of its own, and mankind have often had to confess that they were led by a way that they knew not, yet we must not the less strenuously cope with these difficulties of freedom, armed with the weapons that freedom supplies, and especially by proclaiming and enforcing upon peoples the lessons of experience. We also confidently call to our aid the growing intelligence of the masses, the common-sense of the people, often better than the institutions they work under; the inherent strength that there is in truth; the outside general public opinion of the country, the power of the enlightened Press, the disinterested efforts of public men. Popular government would fail if it proved unable to develop saving powers in the community, to grapple with the evils that from time to time threaten it, as they have done all conditions of human society and political Government.

These are the different forms of public opinion that we find to be active in self-governing communities to-day. The first, inherited from the experience of the past, is the most generally accepted. It permeates our ideas and social life. The second, the general public opinion of the community, is the most comprehensive and thoughtful. The third, the public opinion of the ballot-box, is the most powerful in everyday politics. We must obey it, and we wish to admire it. The danger of modern democratic States lies in the discord between the two last; safety and progress in their union. There is a divergence now. How will it work out? It may be by general public opinion (representing all the elements of social strength) proving too strong for the ballot-box. Or it may be by the voice of the ballot-box, subduing

and assimilating to itself general public opinion. Or it may be that the growing improvement of society as a whole may blend the two.

If this latter happy consummation is not reached, but the divergence continues between them, then, should the social conditions prove stronger than the political, in due time some alteration in the present methods of popular government will follow, under one device or make-believe or another, and political conditions will be assimilated more to the reality of social conditions, in which, except under despotic Socialism, there never can be equality among men. We can now see tendencies in this direction, and in an unhealthy and dangerous form, in the United States. Development in an opposite direction is to be observed in some young communities which have no national concerns nor large vested interests to trouble them, or to steady them, and where the direct mandate of the ballot-box easily overmasters such social strength as the all-pervading control of industry and capital by the Government has left in the individualism and private enterprise of the people.

If the political opinion of the ballot-box thus overmasters and assimilates to itself the general conditions of social life, then we shall have arrived at the true Socialists' ideal, when the theoretical equality of the political sphere would be reproduced in the enforced equality of all in the social life of the people. This would entail the loss of personal freedom, and of the leadership of intellect among men. It would mean the stagnation of nations. The public opinion of the ballot-box would then have swallowed up all other public opinion. But its power would be destructive, not constructive—shown in pulling down the Social State, not in building it up.

There is a third way open to Western civilisation towards which all the friends of freedom hopefully look. By it neither the social power nor the political will suppress the other; but each will be modified by interaction between them; both will be improved by growing experience and intelligence, the social becoming broader and the political less subversive; while their combined action will work in co-operation for the amelioration of all conditions of men,

and especially of the weaker members of the community ; yet by means that will be consistent with individual freedom and energy, and thus with the progress of national life. The hope of this outcome of the problem obviously depends much upon whether a fair standard of wellbeing can be diffused among all ranks of the people. With wealthy classes and pauper masses *and* the ballot-box, you have all the conditions provided for a Social State with an unstable equilibrium. But much also depends upon whether the political public opinion of the future is to be founded upon intelligence, and guided towards national interests by the teaching of enlightened experience and common-sense. Failure is before us if the public opinion of the ballot-box is to represent the promptings of a multiplied self-interest and reflect only the tone of a general mediocrity. There are great problems which, in our transition to direct Democracy, we are called upon to solve. Let us never doubt that the general public opinion of our country and the political voice of the ballot-box will join as one, to together face them and to solve them.

When Frankfort had finished his lecture, various opinions regarding it were expressed by the people as they separated. The impression which he made was favourable. His audience represented the general public opinion of which he had spoken, not merely the voice of the ballot-box. Several of his acquaintances came up to him to inform him and to relieve themselves by their criticisms. Cornelius M'Grorty, as he passed near going out with David Stoker, pressed his hand cheerfully, nodded to him, and only said, ' Illuminating ' ; while Stoker, who had not fully grasped all he heard, exclaimed, keeping to a safe general proposition, ' Right you are, sir, so long as you hold on to the people's voice. ' Meeks, as he passed by him, going out with Mrs. Meeks at his side, courteously waved him recognition and went on without saying anything. Jacob Shumate, all the time he was listening to the address, could not get out of his head the conflict about the drain at the Red Parrot. He greeted our politician in as affable a manner as he was capable of, and in answer to the question how he liked the

lecture, remarked that the most important phase of practical public opinion had been omitted. Which was that? The public opinion of vested interests. He was about to illustrate his point by enlarging on the obstinacy with which house and property owners joined together to resist sanitary reforms, when Barney Clegg, pushing himself ostentatiously to the front, interposed to shake hands warmly with the lecturer and congratulate him in his own way. He had only a hazy idea of what Frankfort had been saying, but he felt bound as a Justice of the Peace to show intellectual discernment, and personally he had no dislike to our politician. Even if it were true that he had gone against the Reservoir in order to regain the favour of William Dorland, who wanted it for the silver mines across the Divide, that did not materially damage him in Mr. Clegg's estimation. He wished to say something complimentary and at the same time something non-committal in its character. So he remarked, as he retained Frankfort's hand in his own for a few moments after the first grasp, using a phrase which was a favourite with him, 'that he had that evening "excilled" himself.'

As our politician was passing out he found Karl Brumm waiting at the door for him, evidently anxious to propound some criticism of his own upon what he had heard. His ideas, as the reader may remember, were generally original, and often peculiar. He accosted Frankfort with his old air of benevolent superiority, and mentioned that he and his wife had come up to see the Show, but that they quite enjoyed spending an intellectual evening, 'whether we are in accord with what we hear, Mr. Frankfort, or whether we are not.'

'Thank you very much, Mr. Brumm, and you too, Mrs. Brumm. But I hope that there is not much in what I have said that you disagree with?'

'Helsa, my love,' said the old man, 'just wait here a few minutes while I go on with the Professor; I will be back directly.'

Frankfort wondered what the old German could have to say that led him to pass on out of his wife's presence. Nor had he indeed much cause for doing so. But Karl Brumm was a man of highly refined feelings, and he had an

idea of his own which he preferred to state in his wife's absence.

'I do not differ,' he continued, 'from your enumeration of many sorts of public opinion. But you have omitted the most vital phase of public opinion, without which you will soon have no need for any public opinion in our modern civilisation.'

'Why, dear me, what is that?'

'Marital public opinion, Mr. Professor.'

'Marital public opinion?'

'Just so, my dear sir,' Karl Brumm went on, looking in his calm way at Frankfort. 'Just so. It is strange, is it not, how men will miss what is on the plate before them, while they go down upon their knees to seek what is under the table? You busy yourself with speculating about the public opinion of the coming advanced race; but if you don't reform your marital public opinion there will be soon no race coming, whether advanced or otherwise, for you to speculate about.'

'Why, how is that, Mr. Brumm?'

'Don't you know? As a sociologist you surely study the population statistics, and I presume that you are not quite ignorant of the claims that advanced women make, when they have become sufficiently advanced?'

'Oh yes, to be sure. I see you allude to the small birth-rate among the cultivated people.'

'Even so, my friend. The progressive people that embody this enlightenment we prize so much are becoming sterile. They marry rather late—if at all—and when they do marry generally have only one child. Now I presume that you will admit,' and the old man looked round with a faint smile as he spoke—'I presume that you will admit that every one must have had two parents.'

'Certainly, that is clear beyond question.'

'And when two advanced people marry, we can also say that it required four parents to produce them.'

'Surely so.'

'Well, then, if some of these advanced pairs have only one child, and others none, it seems that the business cannot go on. The concern will wind itself up; voluntary winding

up of the race of advanced people in favour of the stupid and unprogressive sort of creatures, who will then continuously come on into possession.'

'That certainly is a serious question, Mr. Brumm; but I don't know that I quite catch how you connect this with my address this evening.'

'No? Why, surely, when I call your attention to it, you must see that you have omitted to enforce the need of, or even to refer to, the most important of all public opinions, a sound marital public opinion. Without this all that you have been saying is—if you will excuse my plainness of speech—only beating the air. For example, I have made a calculation with some care, and I find that, at our present birth-rate in Excelsior, the white race would be extinct in 153 years.'

'Really?'

'Really and truly. What need, then, for anxiety about the public opinion of the future? Unless you reform that public opinion, progress only produces the refinement that is to destroy it. Its own showy plumes feather the dart that pierces it to the heart, as the poets say.'

And Karl Brumm looked up with a look of quiet triumph.

'Still, Mr. Brumm, I do not quite see how you connect this evil with public opinion.'

'I connect it with the want of it. With all our advancement, cannot we raise a public opinion that will teach our enlightened men and women that marriage has its duties as well as its privileges, and that it is not progress to be more animal than the animals. Well, well, I must say that our wise men—why, what could be more simple than—Ah, Helsa, my love, tired of waiting?' he continued as Mrs. Brumm came up. 'I ought not to leave you standing there so long. Well, good evening, Professor—good evening. Some time when we meet I will expound to you at leisure this primal phase of public opinion.'

And Karl formed his wife and himself into a small procession, and stalked composedly away, having once more illustrated how much easier is it to state a problem than to solve it.

Secker slipped quietly away by himself, but later on

joined Mons. Froessolecque at the office of the *Sweet-Brier*. The old Frenchman declared with warmth that the whole discourse was nothing better than the rank old Toryism of Britain, and proposed to deal with it in a slashing style in the next morning's leading article. But Secker said that this would be quite a mistake. The true way was to belittle the whole thing. Accordingly the leader in the *Sweet-Brier* the following day began: 'Professor, or ex-Professor, Frankfurt is a whale at theories. He does not think much of public opinion. Possibly the feeling between him and it is reciprocal,' and so went on in a disparaging, trifling manner. But the *Rising Sun* spoke well of the lecture, and said that it gave 'food for intellectual rumination'; while the *News Letter* handled it with intelligent and sympathetic criticism. One of the sharpest rebukes the lecturer got was from Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride, who wrote to him from Brassville, pointing out that he had quite overlooked the change that woman's vote would make in the public opinions of nations. As there would be at least as many female voters as male, the political opinion of people must obviously be a different thing in the future from what it had been in the past, when it was that merely of the men. Yet he, the lecturer, had gone over the whole subject without one reference to this vital change, and treated it as if men still would give the tone to the life of nations. This was the more surprising and inexcusable as he himself was acquainted with the strength and importance of the voice of woman. It had nearly returned him at the last Brassville election, notwithstanding even the Reservoir.

Louis Quiggle, his election agent, who felt regard for him personally, and also as a possible candidate for Brassville, when the Reservoir question was settled one way or the other, sent him by an early post a friendly warning against indulging in the declaration of general principles. 'Mum is the word,' he wrote, 'upon public questions till right on the course and coming up the straight.'

Neal Nickerson wrote to congratulate our politician. In particular, he approved of the explanation of stored-up public opinion; but 'why, oh why,' as he expressed himself, did the lecturer omit to state that the great storehouse of

intelligent opinion was in the classical authors? In what respect, he asked, had men advanced in poetry beyond Homer, in metaphysics and philosophy beyond Plato and Aristotle, in oratory beyond Demosthenes, in social polity beyond the Romans, in the spirit of patriotism beyond the Greeks? The only 'extra,' he said, was respect to parents, and in this matter the example of China for some thousand years was the great fact.

Myles Dillon's commentary upon the Lecture was short. He remarked, as they were chatting together a few evenings afterwards, that he had told more truth in that hour's discourse than in the three years' talking in Parliament.

'But do you agree with my explanation of what public opinion is?'

'No, I don't.'

'Why not, Myles?'

'Because you were like the man who was searching for the philosopher's stone. No wonder you found it hard to define public opinion. There is no such thing now.'

'No such thing?'

'No. It's public feeling that governs us. It is what we fancy, not what we think. In our enlightened age we do what we like to do.'

'Ah, Myles, bad as ever, I see—bad as ever. But I hope I worked out my view pretty clearly.'

'Right enough, Edward Fairlie, in what you put in. But you left out the main thing, if you are to have this public opinion.'

'Why, what's that?'

'The first thing is to have a strong and healthy people, and particularly a people with healthy heads. Without a robust stamina in your people, their opinions are of no consequence. They are a crowd, not a nation. They can neither think nor fight.'

But, all the same, Myles stoutly maintained in public that the Lecture was the first political discourse for some years that was worth while for a sensible man to listen to; and that it showed how much the public would gain if their public men could say what they thought.

These various interviews and criticisms were all inter-

esting to our politician, and not without instruction. But the interview that impressed him most that evening was brought about by Mrs. Fairlie, in her own frank, simple manner. The Dorlands left without seeing Frankfort, as the President thought it better to leave it to the papers to announce that he was among the audience. But Mrs. Fairlie hurried up to congratulate her nephew, never thinking of Eilly by her side. She assured him that she was quite pleased with his speech, and that, if he had only spoken that way for the Reservoir, he would have beaten Meeks easily. It was the first time that Frankfort and Eilly had met since the election and all its unhappy results. She gave him her hand frankly, but felt a natural reserve about showing too much of that kindly feeling which she could not conceal from herself that she felt for him. He, on his part, in addition to that admiration for her which had never abated, experienced afresh, as he saw her before him, heard her speak to him, name him, look at him with those glorious eyes—he experienced afresh, we say, that irresistible mesmerism which draws one man to one woman, and at times does so at the cost of fortune, success in life, peace of mind, nay, even at the cost of honour and self-respect itself.

No such apprehension now, truly, separated these two. We know what Eilly was, and Frankfort, be his defects all noted down, was still not unworthy of her. Their appreciation of one another was mutual; their years were suited; their stations in life not dissimilar; they were well adapted each to find mutual companionship in the other. She was cultured, as he was intellectual; both were gifted with human sympathy. What then kept these two apart? What was the shape that envious Fate this time assumed to bar the union of two loving hearts? What was the lion in the path? Was it difference in religion, or any racial disparity? Was it some personal feud between the two families? Did it originate in the antagonisms implanted among people by wars and bloodshed, such as the Civil War in America, the struggles between Frenchmen and Germans, the persecutions of religions, the wars of the Roses? No, it was none of these. Things were on a lower level. It was the Reservoir.

CHAPTER XIV

THE LAST

POSSIBLY the readers of these pages may feel some interest to know how political progress continued in Excelsior, and also to follow further the personal fortunes of our politician, Edward Fairlie Frankfort, and our dear Eilly Lamborn, whose destiny, as we may reasonably expect, will not be finally parted from his. It will suffice to give a brief sketch of what remains of both the political and the social story.

The people of Excelsior became, with their growing experience, more and more sensible of the evils that beset the working of their political institutions and, to some extent, marred their usefulness. It was obviously not for the good of the people as a whole that local influences, skilfully and persistently urged, should prevail over the general interests of the community. The growing power of the numerous ranks of the State workers was a danger that threatened the stability, or at least the independence, of the Government, and its power to secure the best terms of service for the public. The Legislature could do no more than reflect the social and political conditions of the people it represented. There were two competing powers manifesting themselves in the political arena, and dividing it between them—the power of numbers and the power of money, the power of David Stoker and the power of William Dorland. Each of these had its own sphere; but at times the two together—each for its own purpose—co-operating for a common end, proved too strong for the general public and the interests of the whole community.

Experience was showing the difficulty of a popular Government managing industrial undertakings, whether regard was had to commercial success or to political independence.

The danger of having Universities in private hands and without public supervision had been made clear. Money was coming to assert its sovereignty over intellect and the truth that intellect ought to proclaim.

The people of Excelsior then, we say, taught by experience, began to feel all this. Abuses and mistakes, though for a time they may be even enjoyed, will in the end produce their natural consequence of evil things. As the people felt, their Parliament felt with them. Both joined together to carry out reforms that thinking men had long agreed were essential if popular government was to be the success and blessing that it ought to be. To remedy the evils of localism throughout the Province, they abolished the system of representing localities altogether. They divided Excelsior into large districts, each returning their proportion of Members to the Legislature, and provided by an adaptation of the proportional system of voting for fair representation for all. They formed no exaggerated idea of the value of this system of voting; but they adopted it as the only means, under the one adult one vote principle, for preventing the permanent ostracism from the political sphere of one class of the people. They wanted no lower orders in their Province—not even wealthy lower orders. But they also guarded against the illegitimate exercise of the power of money. Stringent measures were provided to limit the expenditure of candidates, so as to prevent the humiliating spectacle of public approval being meted out not to ability or high character, or even common aptitude for the work of a legislator, but merely to the ample clinking of coin. Any candidate who spent, directly or indirectly, more than £100 upon his canvass was disqualified.

Every elector was bound by law to vote; and soon the vote of the elector came to be regarded as a duty to the country, not a courtesy to the candidate.

The problem of combining State industries with political independence it was not given to the present generation of

Excelsior to solve. They tried experiments. The more the Government drifted under the Socialist impulse into industrial undertakings, the more helpless it got politically, and the more true political life withered. How it will ultimately work out, experience not speculation must reveal. But we may venture to say that it will be in one of two ways. Either it will result in the full Socialist ideal, with the loss of political independence, or the individuality of the people will assert itself, and private enterprise and self-reliance will live again. The people of Excelsior, when left to themselves, were both energetic and enterprising, so we must expect that they will make a wise choice between these alternatives.

The borrowing powers of the Legislature were limited, as is done in several of the American States, and a proposal was made to further copy the example of some of those States by preventing its meeting oftener than once in two years. But this was not persisted in, as it was considered it would impair the principle of direct government by the people. Rigid economy, combined with the useful expenditure of public money, for which full value was insisted upon, became a feature in the financial methods of Excelsior.

A stringent law was adopted for exercising supervision over Universities by means of an independent Commission, whose especial duty it was to secure full freedom in their teaching to all Professors and Lecturers.

Many subordinate and administrative reforms were also adopted, and the whole was moulded into the New Constitution of Excelsior, which formed the instrument of Government under which that fair Province has since lived and prospered.

Reader, do you ask, is all this really so? Did the people of Excelsior in truth and in fact thus grapple with the evils that threatened their institutions? Do Democracies thus reform themselves? Reader, you may ponder and pause, pause and ponder; but for answer call to mind that this history deals with some things that have happened in our Democracies, with others that might naturally have happened, and with others again that ought to happen, and doubtless will happen, as true political progress is developed among

the people. The reforms we have spoken of belong to this last class.

Nothing remains but to tell the fortune that awaited Edward Fairlie Frankfort and Eilly Lamborn, for, as we have said, how can they be separated? Both were unhappy when they were parted asunder by the Reservoir. Eilly pined in silence, while she sought and found some relief in her devotion to her father, who had become a much altered man and a much shaken man after the death of his wife. He could not but notice the depression that was over her, bravely as she fought it; nor was it difficult for him to define the cause. But now the obstacle to her union with Frankfort was out of the way. After many dire struggles, in which Meeks was brought to the verge of the grave, the Reservoir had been ultimately constructed on the inland side of the Divide, not exactly where the Honourable W. Dorland wanted it, but still at a spot where it was certainly most useful to his mines, and added much to their value. At any rate, it was clean gone from Brassville. Meeks was, of course, rejected at the next Brassville election. But he got a small place under Government, and, and as fate would have it, near the site where the Reservoir was finally made. Even there, however, he used to argue with his neighbours that the true place was Brassville. He had been so long in the habit of maintaining this proposition, that at last it became embedded in his mental constitution as an actual fact. In his advancing years he was always ready to vindicate the claims of Brassville, and to give a series of figures showing the returns per thousand gallons of the water, and by the rating per acre of the land that was capable of irrigation, which figures clearly proved that this National work would return at the very least six and three-quarters per cent upon the quarter of a million. Meeks was thus like some who begin their religious career as a business and end with it as a faith. After repeating their creeds for a lifetime, they come at last really to believe them.

Lamborn's love for his daughter was greater even than his grief for the Reservoir. If he could not have the one, at least he could gratify more deeply than ever his devotion to the other. So he arranged, with the aid of his sister in

Miranda, the discreet Mrs. Blaney, that Frankfort and Eilly should meet, quite in a casual way at first, at small social dinners at her house. Each found that the sympathy between them had not been weakened by absence; indeed, it had been deepened. Eilly, with her independent way of looking at things, had nothing but admiration for what she considered the simple and disinterested integrity of Frankfort's character; while he added to his devotion for her as a lover an especial gratitude for her sympathetic appreciation of him, and a deep regard for her noble nature.

That followed which ought to follow, and which would have happened long before, only for the Reservoir. The two, so deeply and fondly drawn together by Nature's mysterious link, became one. Never were two human beings more fitted each to be the supplement of the other's life. Old Thomas Lamborn, when he gave away his darling Eilly, before Dr. Keech and one of the largest and most sympathetic wedding congregations that ever assembled at Saint Chad's, did not feel that sadness which sometimes is a father's lot at weddings; for it was arranged that Mr. and Mrs. Frankfort were to live with him, taking a town house at times of business pressure, but chiefly residing at The Blocks, the old home that was so dear to him and to her. People of all classes and parties came to the church. Barney Clegg arrived early and put himself into a front side pew, and looked about with a patronising air, as if to say, 'I am right anyway. I always voted straight.' Jacob Shumate came too, though not without some inward struggles with his own sense of political rectitude. He pacified himself with the reflection that he only came to do honour to Eilly, and even he admitted that this was but her due. Still he was far back in a seat near the door.

Mr. and Mrs. Pride were there, and Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride admitted that Frankfort deserved such a prize as his wife in consideration of the noble work he had done to secure the emancipation of women. Mr. and Mrs. Quiggle came, the little agent beaming with satisfaction, because he liked Frankfort and adored Eilly, and also because he thought that the marriage would be decidedly useful from an electioneering point of view. Who would vote against the

husband of Eilly Lamborn? Terry M'Glumpy insisted upon having a day off to attend the marriage of his patron, and his aunt, Mrs. Garvin, in order to avoid any questions by the travelling inspector, who was then going over her accounts, gave the boy a bundle of letters, mostly conveying congratulations from Glooscap, to deliver to Mr. and Mrs. Frankfort. And deliver them he did, each packet, the one for him and the one for her, according to the true and proper superscription on it—though whether this was owing to the fact that he actually read the address upon each, or to some hints from his aunt as to the outward differences between the two parcels of letters, no one could truly say except the letter-carrier himself.

At the wedding breakfast they were a gay party, with perhaps one exception—Myles Dillon. Plain-spoken Mrs. Fairlie caused some amusement by reviving her old joke, and warning the bridegroom to be a good husband, else Eilly might take revenge by standing against him for Brassville, and then he would have no chance. They all laughed—what a small thing causes laughter amid the tension of the feelings that permeates the marriage feast! Only Mrs. Hannah Gazelle Pride could not help whispering somewhat loudly across the table to her husband that she was unable to see where the joke was. It was a mere fact, and no joke.

Neal Nickerson, the schoolmaster, had with much effort prepared what he felt would be an effective speech, when it came to his turn to propose the health of the Rev. Dr. Keech. He intended to draw a comparison and a contrast between the Reservoir and Mrs. Frankfort. Frankfort would naturally address to the faithless jade, the Reservoir, the ancient classical reproach, 'I could not manage to live either with thee or without thee'; while for the true queen of hearts, the bride, if he was to live at all, he could only live in her. He thought this good, but unfortunately, when he came to it in his speech, he could not resist the temptation to quote the line in the original Latin tongue, upon which such an outcry was raised, led by Hedger, the lawyer, against spoiling their digestion by Latin, that he had to sit down prematurely, without making it clear to any one what it was that he did want to say. He revenged himself

for some days after by setting hard exercises to the boys from the ancient author in whose writings the sentiment occurs, and explaining to them in a persistent manner the force and various applications of the line, and declaiming it to them accordingly to his own complete satisfaction.

Myles Dillon was best man, and it was the general expectation that he would make a droll speech in proposing the Bridesmaids. But he was serious in his tone—almost grave, and spoke with some feeling. When rallied about it by Dr. Delane, while they were all standing about in the usual state of uneasy expectancy waiting for the newly-married couple to go away, he justified himself by asserting that of the three religious services that were pronounced over most decent men—the baptismal, the marriage, and the burial—that of marriage was the most serious. When Dr. Keech challenged this statement with some vehemence, Myles obstinately defended his opinion. It was, he said, a disputed point what the effect of the baptismal service was, and the burial service only affected others; but there was no mistake whatever that the marriage service fixed your fate for this life anyway. Myles Dillon was the more inclined to be serious, as against his better feelings, with the selfishness natural to a mere bachelor, he was conscious of some regret at losing his old friend. And he certainly regarded him as lost as far as he was concerned. For he said to himself that he could not hope that Mrs. Frankfort would make an exception in his case to the usual rule, under which the young wife *taboos* (to take a word derived from the Islands of the Southern Seas) her husband's bachelor friends.

When Frankfort and Eilly settled down to married life, they spent much of their time at The Blocks, and when they went to town her father came with them; for he never could reconcile himself to any long separation from his daughter.

As time, with its changes, passed on, Thomas Lamborn went to join his life's partner in the eternal rest; and Frankfort and Eilly found themselves masters of the estate. He had left it absolutely to them, merely expressing in his will a wish that they should not part with it, but should leave it to their children. From what we know of the

daughter and the son-in-law, we may be sure that this wish was respected. It fell in, too, with their own fondest desires; for was there not their bright boy Thomas Edward, named after grandfather and father, to carry on the property, while his sister little Eilly and two smaller brothers had their shares by charges on the income. When population thickened round The Blocks, and the poor increased, as they have a way of doing under all forms of human government—even the most democratic—Frankfort and Eilly showed that they felt the responsibility of having property. They extended to their humbler neighbours all the sympathy and practical aid that the worthy members of aristocracies in older lands give to their poor. But they did so with careful regard to the sentiment of equality which permeates the poorest in democracies—the more fervently because they are poor. It is a relief from practical depression to cherish an ideal elevation.

Myles Dillon need not have feared that he would lose his old friend by the marriage. Eilly, under the combined influence of her sweet disposition and strong common-sense, welcomed him so cordially to The Blocks that he spent most of his holidays there. He never married, so Frankfort's home, with such a mistress, became the green spot in his dreary bachelor life. As is frequently the case with these single men, he loved children desperately, and he often declared truly that it beat a morning in the dissecting-room to play with little Tommy, and to listen to his absurd remarks. Eilly laughed at the two of them with all a mother's pleasure, and only begged of Mr. Dillon to take care that the child did not catch that dreadful Irish brogue of his. When he got tired of his juvenile sports, Dillon further enjoyed himself by admiring Eilly, or getting into arguments about Democracy with Frankfort.

Jacob Shumate, as he grew older, and also milder under the softening influence of time and of the Widow Dobbs, now Mrs. Shumate, as the reader knows, extended some toleration even to Frankfort. He did not support him when he stood for the House of Representatives for Brassville, but he refrained from opposing him, and declined to go upon the Committee of Klinker, the leading rabbit trapper, who was

in the field against him. He told them that the district was too backward to give a true people's man a fair chance, and that he did not want any professional Populists. He and Klinker had never been friends. Eilly Frankfort, who took a kindly interest in the Shumate family, as she did in all the cottagers in her neighbourhood, after a while got her husband to appoint Popsey, Jacob's son, now a grown-up youth, boundary rider to The Blocks. So clever and trustworthy did Popsey prove, that in time he was promoted to be manager; and in the discharge of his duties he showed all his father's disposition to spy out what needed amendment, but with a distinctly practical blend, which was probably due to the sensible training of his stepmother. When Popsey attained this position at The Blocks, and had experience of Frankfort's generous disposition and of Eilly's constant kindness, he became absolutely devoted to them; and his father, now an old man, being frequently at The Blocks to see him, often met Frankfort, and came, though in his sour way, to have what might be called a feeling even of regard for him. At any rate, he went so far as actually to vote for him once when, as sitting Member for Brassville, he was threatened with a close contest. Jacob could never clear up in his own mind, nor quite satisfy himself, whether it was wholly public considerations that influenced his vote upon that occasion; though to others he maintained that it was Frankfort who had come to his principles, not he to Frankfort's. But politics were to the last the ruling passion of Jacob Shumate. They filled his nature. As for our politician, he did useful work in the House of Representatives, and did not lose his interest in politics. But as he grew older, he realised how small was their share in directing the course of the stream of human progress, upon whose surface they disported themselves, or in influencing those natural causes that promoted the movement from one into the next of the allotted stages of our civilisation. Also it came home to him that politics constitute only a small part of life, while the love of a true-hearted woman fills the whole. Such as his feelings were to Eilly, such were Eilly's to him. At times the warning of the fortune-teller at Jortin's party would recur to her—'Maiden, a Fate awaits you.' So

it had ; and at first such a sad one, both when her mother was so suddenly stricken down, and afterwards when she was separated from Frankfort, as she thought for ever. But now what a happy one ! For what can be a happier fate for man or for woman than for two to grow together in a life of united usefulness and reciprocal love ?

THE END





