

CHAPTER X

THE CLERGY AND OTHERS

A Norfolk clergyman's dilemma—"Here endeth the Second Lesson"
—A non-smoking compartment—Archdeacon Denison has a surprise—A reverend gentleman's inconsistencies—Servants' views on the 'Igh Church and the Low—Three distinct smells—Great things the work of lunatics—The penalty of genius—Dean Hole's dream—A faithful dog—A dream that came true—A Church dignitary in trouble—A game of hide-and-seek—Was it right or was it wrong?—Study of character—Are we humbugs?

I WILL begin with a Norfolk clergyman who did queer things sometimes. He was tall, not bad looking, and worked according to his lights. What can a man do more? He has lately passed into another world, or I should not dare tell this story. The only relation living thinks it so funny she has no objection, she says, to my writing about it.

One spring day business obliged this clergyman to take a long and dusty ride on his bicycle to a neighbouring town, but a good many miles away. Having transacted his business, feeling tired and exceedingly dusty and dirty, he decided he would return by train and put his cycle in the van.

Entering a first-class carriage, he congratulated himself on its being empty, as he was so dirty and untidy after his long dusty ride.

After the train had moved out of the station, the idea occurred to him to shake his nether garments out of the window. This he proceeded to do, shaking them with energy. The wind carried them out like balloons in front of him, when suddenly an express

train dashed past and carried the garments quite away!

Here was a pretty kettle-~~o~~'-fish. The owner, or, rather, the late owner, of the garments stood transfixed with horror and indignation at the conduct of the express; he then leaned far out of the window, searching for some sign of his lost treasures. The express was just passing out of sight, and no sign of his trousers anywhere. His shirt tails were flapping in the breeze, and he felt cold.

Now what was he going to do? He paced up and down the carriage, utterly dumbfounded, sat down and got up again in a state of considerable agitation. Oh! Oh! The train was slowing down for the next stop, which was two stations from where he wished to alight, being near his home. What on earth was he to do? Most certainly he would be taken for a madman or an indecent drunkard—in fact, there was no end to the possibilities of the situation.

Knowing that the station would be on the far side of the carriage, he stooped down and crept towards the door, keeping only head and shoulders on a level with the window.

The train stopped; he beckoned and made signs to a porter, the only one in sight. This individual, however, would look in another direction. At last the unhappy parson shouted to the man and told him he was a stupid fool. The circumstances, he thought, warranted the expression, for at any moment someone might come and try to get into his compartment—then what a scene there would be!

The porter's attention being at last gained, he came to the window of the carriage, and heard the parson's story; but not liking the look of things, and resenting being called a fool, he ran away, saying something about “Fool yourself!” But he shortly returned,

bringing the station-master with him. The latter wore a stern expression, listened to the half-naked man's story and explanation of the situation, but looked incredulous, and said he was sorry he could not part with what he was wearing, and could not possibly detain the train any longer. He would lock the door, advised the blinds being pulled down, and he would telegraph to the next station and ask a policeman to meet the train with the needed garments.

A shrill whistle, and the train was once more on its way. The poor chilly man was in despair, angry with everybody, and not much nearer the solution of the problem.

Once more the train stopped. His heart sank within him. Peeping through the sides of the blind, he espied a policeman standing at the end of the platform, eyeing every carriage. Shortly the policeman and the station-master stood beside the carriage with blinds drawn down; the door was unlocked, and the former entered the carriage with a parcel under his arm.

Many questions were asked, the answers being written down, also the parson's name and address. The parcel was delivered to him, and the policeman jumped out of the carriage, the station-master locked the door, and away went the train again.

After a tussle with the string on the parcel, the contents were unpacked; but, alas! they were quite inadequate, much too small for a man of his size, and—were of a horsey pattern. How preposterous! However, it was no use sitting looking at the things; he must cram into them somehow, and quickly, as he had to get out at the next station. Thank goodness the station-master there knew him, which made matters a little better.

How he wished he had a button-hook, a shoe-horn,

or something with which to make all ends meet. At last he was inside them, but they would not allow him to sit down, nor could he walk properly; the only mode of progression possible was to shuffle and leap like a kangaroo, and so arrive at the station-master's office somehow. Once there, no powers on earth would make him move again until a pair of his own reached him, and he would send a special messenger for them.

If only he had been wearing stockings he would not have looked so outrageous, for his socks did not reach the trouser legs!

When the train stopped again, and at his own station, it was evident that he was expected, for the station-master quickly unlocked the door, and the parson lopped across the platform into the former's office, where he stayed until his own indispensables reached him.

This same gentleman was rather absent-minded; his parishioners were accustomed to it. One Sunday while taking the usual morning service, when he had finished reading the First Lesson, he said, “Here endeth the Second Lesson,” and then continued the service from that point, leaving out all the between part.

On coming out of church his wife said to him: “Do you know, my dear, that you left out part of the service this morning?” She then explained exactly what had been done. Her husband calmly replied, “Oh, did I? I was thinking about that new brood of chicks just hatched out.”

His reverence very much disliked the smell of tobacco; when travelling he always took care to enter a non-smoking compartment. One day when he had so settled himself there entered two young men; they looked like brothers. The train was an express. As

soon as it started the two young men brought forth pipes and began to smoke them. They were told by the gentleman in the corner of the carriage that he objected to smoke; it was a non-smoking carriage, and would they at once put out their pipes.

No notice was taken of these protestations. The young men sat close together, talking to one another, and evidently having great jokes.

Becoming more and more indignant, the parson said: "If you young men do not stop smoking at once, I shall report you to the guard at the next station we stop at."

Still no notice was taken, and the carriage was blue with smoke.

The moment the train did stop, the agile young men jumped out and called the attention of the guard to the state of the carriage they had been travelling in. Considering it was marked "Non-smoking," and the smell of tobacco smoke made them sick, it was disgraceful, and the old man in the corner should be prosecuted; perhaps the guard would see to it.

They then bolted, leaving the guard and the parson having an animated conversation.

Clergymen receive shocks sometimes as well as authors and publishers. There is always controversy between those who hold High Church views and those who do not. The Rev. J. Bennet, who was at one time noted for his High Church views and practices, was, at the time of which I am writing, Vicar of Christ Church, Frome, having come from St. Barnabas, Pimlico, where there are always High Church services with beautiful music. Lady Bath (the Marchioness) had presented the living to Mr. Bennet, and he had asked Archdeacon Denison to come and preach for him. The invitation was accepted. This gentleman had recently been ducked in a pond by some of his parishioners,

who disapproved of his ritual practices. Presumably they thought this might reduce the temperature of some of his views.

The text chosen by the Archdeacon was from the Book of Revelation, chapter vi, verse 2: "He went forth conquering and to conquer. During his discourse he inquired of the congregation: "Is there one amongst you who, if your worthy vicar were thrown into prison, would not give all you possess to obtain his release?" Someone in the body of the church called out: "I would not give a farthing if they kept him there all his life."

I have a great admiration for the Salvation Army; they do splendid self-sacrificing work, and I have occasionally been present at their services. Once when a big gathering was expected in a hall near my home, I was asked if I would attend *pour encourager les autres*. I went.

After a serious and rather moving address from one of the army captains, a newly made convert asked if he might speak, and was allowed to do so for a few minutes. He began with many theatrical gestures.

"I have been a wicked, wicked sinner."

A voice from the hall: "Yus, yer 'ave, yer 'ave; yer a b——y sinner."

Convert: "But now I am saved."

Voice: "Don't yer believe it."

Convert: "I have found Christ."

Voice: "Poor Christ!"

The convert took no notice of all this, and continued to tell us how it came about that he was saved.

Clergymen do not always believe all they preach, as the following will show.

In 1885 I am told that a large comet was observed in the sky, and placards were posted all over the country, "Will the great comet now descending burn up the

earth or not?" A certain Dr. Cumming of Evangelical views told his congregation that the end of the world was near, and that all the wicked and unrepentant would be burnt alive. After delivering himself of this statement, he paused and looked round on his congregation in silence, as if picking out those for the flames. Some became quite hysterical, and there was a scene in the church, until the village blacksmith stood up and said: "If you believe that, why have you just signed the twenty-one years' lease of a new house?"

Our understudies, in the shape of domestic servants, are often observant and their criticism worth consideration, as the following story shows.

A clergyman in the Isle of Wight had arranged a meeting of clerics, and had invited them to luncheon afterwards. He informed his cook of this fact; she at once inquired of her master whether the coming guests were of the "'Igh Church fancy or the Low," adding: "It makes all the difference in the supplies, for the Low Church 'as appetites and eats tremulous, but the 'Igh Church—drinks."

I am fond of the Isle of Wight, and at one time spent a good deal of time there. I remember a gentleman, whose name, if I remember correctly, was Mr. Hornyold, came and took a furnished house there for the winter. He had a large property in Worcestershire. The servants were sent down in advance to get the house in the Island ready for their master and his family. They at once declared the place made them ill, and they could not stay there; some had sore throats and others had pains in their little Marys.

So when Mr. Hornyold came on the scene he at once sent for the local sanitary inspector, who applied the smoke and peppermint test, and discovered the

Drains were faulty, in consequence of which all had to bundle into an hotel.

Half the rent for the year having been paid in advance, an action to recover the money was taken. What impressed this particular affair on my mind was the cook's description of her sufferings when she was called upon to give evidence. She said there were three distinct smells—one, a nasty one, near the sink; a horrid one near the kitchen stove; and one enough to make her faint in the scullery. She was subjected to a severe cross-examination, but nothing could move her from her "three distinct smells."

A friend of mine that I often used to meet in the Island had at one time a good deal to do with prisons and asylums; he used to entertain me with both amusing and tragic stories in connection with these institutions, leaving little doubt in my mind that there is much in the present lunacy laws requiring further consideration. Indeed, he went so far as to say that if through any mistake a person not mad was sent to the asylum, he very shortly became so, owing to the conditions and treatment.

I will not repeat any of the terrible nightmarish stories—things that I could never have believed possible had they been told to me by anybody else other than the friend in question, yet he said he was powerless to prevent the things he mentioned.

Some of the amusing stories I can recount. There was one gentleman incarcerated in a private asylum for whom £1,200 was paid annually by his relations, so that he might have every comfort. In consequence of this allowance he was given certain privileges. When he desired to go for a walk in the country, he was allowed to do so, accompanied by an attendant, whose duty it was to look after the safety of the gentleman and keep him happy as far as was possible

Whenever his charge came to an open drain in town or country or some big ditch, he stopped and chanted a prayer over it, to which the attendant had solemnly to say "Amen" each time, and if he were not quick enough with this response there were serious ructions.

Whether the unhappy man thought his incantations were over open graves, or that he was speaking down holes to the infernal regions—who can say?

There was a youth in another asylum who sang from morning to night: "They never saw me do it, but I did it all the same." No one knew to what he was referring, and it is an open question whether he knew himself, but it must have been trying to those around him.

The prison stories were not so sad as those about the insane—poor helpless souls in whom the spirit sleeps. How small is the barrier between reason and sanity! Moreau de Tours, a great French alienist, used to say that "all the great things accomplished in the world were the work of lunatics."

Of course, some forms of insanity are happier than others. Those most to be pitied are the people only mad on one subject while perfectly sane on all others. A man I knew, who has only quite lately died in a private asylum, was brilliantly clever and a great wit, but on one point he was hopelessly unrestrained, and had to be put under care. His letters made me miserable, he was so unhappy and hurt that those whom he thought should have loved him were party to his being under care. I am glad his life is over, for his one failing did not prevent him from realising the situation. He occasionally wrote brilliant articles for the papers, and they were published—articles, of course, that did not touch on his peculiar weakness.

He used to tell me of terrible screamings and attempts to escape of some of the occupants of his

asylum, and stories of warders and nurses that made me tremble to think of the lives under their care. So impressed was I at what he told me that I wrote to one doctor where he had been under care and asked him if what I was told was true. He said that there was much that required altering in the law concerning those who were mentally afflicted, and no doubt some of the stories were true.

It is a horrible thought that great minds so often suffer in this way, become unbalanced through the activity of their brains. Was it not Dryden who said: "Great wits are sure to madness near allied." And when we look back upon our friends introduced to us by literature, how many great minds have suffered from mental disturbance! Alexander the Great strained his brain with overstudy when a child, being tutored by the great teacher Aristotle, and died at the early age of thirty-two, suffering from a nervous disorder resembling delirium tremens.

Pope suffered from hallucinations; his health was also ruined by overstudy, but what a genius! At the age of twelve he wrote his "Ode to Solitude," and at fourteen a poem on silence, which brought him to public notice. Lord Byron had a most excitable brain; Lord Dudley always said he was mad. Isaac Newton suffered from such melancholy that it deprived him of all power of thought. Burns pitifully tells us his whole life from the beginning was "blasted with a deep melancholy which poisoned his whole existence." Swift died a violent maniac. Molière was a neuropath, and anybody crossing his wish threw him into convulsions. And many more.

It really seems to be a matter of congratulation if we are fools and our brains do not play us these tricks.

Disordered brains often have such terrible and haunting dreams. My friend who has lately died,

whom I have mentioned, said many of his dreams came true, sadly true.

Some people maintain that dreams are a matter of digestion, or perhaps I should say indigestion. Dean Hole, scholar, divine, and sportsman combined, believed in dreams as Heaven sent. He told a story of a dream which impressed him very much, and which was corroborated later by a neighbour.

Two sisters kept a toll-bar. Both dreamed on the same night that someone was breaking into the house, or going to do so—I forget which. They were so struck at both dreaming the same thing that it got on their nerves, and they confided their fears to a friendly carrier on his way home from market. He was sympathetic, and said he would leave his dog with them for protection, though it always accompanied him and guarded his cart.

The carrier continued his journey, leaving the dog with the toll-bar keepers. The dog objected, soon escaped, and followed his master, who, feeling sorry for the frightened women, asked someone to mind his cart while he took the dog back.

This time, before leaving the dog, the carrier took off his top-coat, placed it inside one of the ground-floor windows, and told the dog to lie upon it and guard it. "Now," said the man, "the dog will not run away any more; he will not leave the coat until I come for it."

In the middle of the night the two women heard a noise downstairs, and hastily ran out of their back door into a lane that would lead them to the nearest neighbour's house, the owner of which was a blacksmith by profession. He was out, they found, but his wife took them in for the night.

When it was light they returned to the toll-bar, and a strange sight met their astonished eyes. The lower

part of a man's body was hanging outside one of the windows on the ground floor; the rest of him looked as though he were stooping into the room. The figure was motionless.

Some labourers passing on their way to work were hailed by the women, and with them they entered the room, and found that the burglar had forced open the window, and that evidently as soon as his head and shoulders were inside, the dog, thinking that his master's coat was in jeopardy, seized the man by the throat and had held him until he was dead. The dog was still on his master's coat, and the trespasser proved to be the blacksmith, who was not at home when the women went to him for protection.

Another story told by the same believer in dreams. Once when he was passing through a time of considerable anxiety he wanted some important information which only one man could give him, and he was dead. One night this man appeared to him in his dreams, and answered several important questions, after which the Dean sought the evidence to prove if what had come to him in his dreams was correct. He related to his solicitor his dream, and to his surprise was informed that he also had received a similar manifestation.

Both had been told where to find a certain paper which was to prove their cause and claim. The instructions received, both by Dean Hole and his solicitor, were to look in the left-hand drawer of a certain desk in the office of a solicitor who had died. They at once went in search of it in the office of the solicitor named, but there was no such desk as answered to the description given.

One of the clerks helping in the search in this solicitor's office suggested that what was wanted might possibly have been put away with a number of things

in the lumber room in the attics—things that had been removed when the lawyer died. There the desk was found and the letter, which made everything straight sailing for the Dean.

Once in the course of conversation Dean Hole said that he had no doubt whatever as to the doctrine of the communion of souls, or to the affinity between this world and the next. I make no comment.

One of the surprises of my life came to me one day when I and my little son were staying in a world-forgotten, out-of-the-way seaside place soon after the tragic death of my husband. I wanted to be alone and try to piece my life together again and I wanted to be "far from the madding crowd" and rest.

This seaside place only boasted a few houses and one general shop, where they sold cheese, lamp-oil, tobacco, and oddments of sorts. As far as I could see, nobody ever went near the shore except ourselves.

I was alone one day, lying on the sandhills with a book beside me, but not reading it, thinking in a dreamy sort of way of things in general, when I was startled by a smart, well set up man standing by me. I had not heard his approach in the loose sand.

He saluted me, and asked if I were the person he was seeking, saying he had been up to the cottage we were renting and had been told I was on the sands. He then proceeded to find a note from some remote recess and handed it to me, saying his orders were that he should deliver it to nobody but myself.

I asked if an answer was required, and was told "No." Another salute, and he was gone.

Now wide awake, no longer dreamy, I proceeded to read the note that had been handed to me by the mysterious stranger. This document has long since been consigned to the flames that tell no tales.

Never until now have I mentioned this curious

meeting or the contents of the letter delivered to me, but as both the people are dead who are concerned, I can, I think, without giving names and without breach of faith, tell the story of my surprise.

As nearly as I can remember, the letter ran :

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

“I am in great trouble; I cannot tell you why, and you would not understand if I did. G—— (his son) must hide for a time until I can get him away somewhere, out of the country. I would that I had died before such disgrace came upon us. I am sending G—— down to you to-night; you may not at first recognise him, but be on the lookout and be prepared.

“Do not let any living soul know that he is with you. In my agony I have turned to you, as I know no other living soul that I would care to trust as I do you.

“I am, I know, asking a great deal of you, but be merciful and help your old friend. I only ask your charity for a few days.”

This letter came from a Church dignitary of high standing and an old and dear friend, who had been an immense comfort to me through some sad times—a man who was the soul of honour and integrity. I wondered. Evidently his son was in trouble of some sort, and must lie perdu for a time. I pictured the old man's anguish. His son had always been wild and a source of anxiety to his father. His mother was dead, but not before her son had broken her heart. Of course, I would do anything I possibly could to help my friend, but felt embarrassed, as I did not quite know how to account to my servants for the man's arrival when it was necessary to keep it a secret.

I waited up that night until very late, thinking my

guest might turn up when all was quiet, but there was no sign of him. The following morning, just before breakfast, he walked in unannounced through the French windows that opened on to the lawn.

How he had come I had no idea, and asked no questions, but it could not have been by train. At first I was a little excited at playing a real game of hide-and-seek; but on reflection came to the conclusion that I might possibly be mixing myself up in a dangerous game—accessory after the fact, or whatever the legal jargon is, and I found it involved a terrible and unpleasant number of white lies to cover the situation. To begin with, G—— had to stay in his bedroom and pretend to be ill, and I dare not let anybody wait on him except my old housekeeper, who had been many years in our service, and who had seen a good deal of the world and loved every hair of our heads.

She behaved splendidly but was very unhappy, saying she did not care what happened to the young man; he probably deserved “to be hung.” And she feared what I was doing might get me into trouble, adding: “Who is there that would do as much for you if your son had done what obliged him to hide?”

I reflected on this, and wondered if this Church dignitary would have done as much for me under the same circumstances. I could not help thinking that probably he would have said his principles and sense of duty would have obliged him to hand my son over to justice. But perhaps I was wrong, and, anyway, I regard a lifelong friendship as sacred, and would go to prison if needs be rather than fail them when in dire distress and after they had put such faith in me.

Five days after the arrival of my old friend's son, during which time I was in a fever of anxiety, fearing his whereabouts might be discovered, a mysterious

yacht came in sight and sent a boat ashore late one evening; it returned with a passenger—and I was alone once more.

It was a near shave, however, for the very next day inquiries were made. I suggested they must be thinking of my son's tutor, who had gone on a holiday to Devonshire, etc.; and after a little innocent fencing I was left in peace, while no doubt inquiries were made elsewhere.

I wonder what my readers would have done under the circumstances? Would they have disappointed and thrown down a lifelong friend, brought his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave, and handed his son over to what is called "justice"? I may have been wrong, but am glad I did not fail the friend who had put his trust in me; and would do the same again if ever such unhappy circumstances were placed before me.

There have been some experiences in my life that have been wonderful, astonishing, concerning other people, but much too sacred to write about. This hide-and-seek affair I have been relating happened many years ago. The young man was caught in the Channel Islands later, but his misdeeds were hushed up as much as possible, for all respected and were sorry for the man's father, who held so high and honoured a position.

It is interesting to study the different characters one meets in a busy life that takes one here and there, as mine has done. A little observation tells one much, far more than words, which may be deceiving. Indeed, it is what people do not say that is often illuminating.

In the reading of character there are certain broad principles and landmarks fairly safely to be relied upon. Men are easier to read than women, but all characters are more or less contradictory.

We may know a man for twenty years, and think

we know and understand him well; then, in the twenty-first year, he may do something that will make the other twenty count as naught. We then say, "Who would have expected it?" as if the poor dear had ever expected it himself. All his theories, all the well-laid plans of his life—where are they gone? And why? How did it happen?

Yet why should we be surprised? Look at the faces round us. Do we ever see one that carries out entirely either all vice or all virtue?

Take, for example, a man with a fine head and forehead, a benevolent nose, small eyes near together, straight thin lips firmly pressed together, and what would you expect? Only the unexpected. But before venturing on my impression of the individual's character I should want to see his hands, and I must see him walk, for both are indicative.

If his hands are short and stiff, with fingers turning in a little towards the thumb, I would expect him to be cruel and relentless. In spite of his fine head and benevolent nose, they would be out-balanced by his deceitful eyes, bad-tempered lips, and cruel hands. This is, of course, presuming that his hands are not the result of rheumatism or ill-health.

The artistic, imaginative people, so often a disappointment to themselves as well as others, usually have long slim fingers, and are by nature emotional and sensitive. Pleasure pitches them too high, suffering plunges them too low—often more earnest in the life they imagine than in the life they lead. These characters are fairly easy to read. They usually have large kindly eyes, looking out on to the world in wonder. Their lips are full, bespeaking capacity of loving—high flights of fancy—for good or ill. They are not very dependable owing to their varying moods.

I suppose it is necessary, if we wish to take a really enlightened view of the springs of human character, that we should start from the point of view of the philosophical physician.

Such a thousand activities go on in the human body of which we are quite unconscious—before an act, or even a motive can exist in our consciousness myriads of unknown, unseen processes have a share in it—so can we really be responsible? Some of nature's laws are open to criticism. There is undoubtedly a close correspondence between mind and matter, though after all only one law governs mankind, just as there is only one logic.

The human brain is one of the world's greatest tragedies. None of us are born all good or all bad. I think the magnetism of the earth must be responsible for the irregular oscillation of our feelings, combined with environment and the temperament given to us by God—a matter in which we have no choice, or why should we vary so in our feelings of love and hate?

We do not, even in these days, run about with quite naked bodies; it would not be wise, and the authorities would interfere. Neither do we run about with naked minds; it would not be wise, and society would interfere. But in dressing both our bodies and our minds I am inclined to think that we often do it so successfully that we ourselves do not know what lies beneath the drapery.

If we do not know ourselves, how can we hope to steer our ship triumphantly into harbour, with benefit to ourselves and help to other people?

One of the most perplexing and strange things that I have noticed in the course of character study is the different sides we show of ourselves to different people. It is not that we are humbugs, untrue to

ourselves or others, for as the sun shines through red and green, the same sun shines and throws quite another light through yellow and blue.

As we cast our shadows on the lives around us, so they cast their shadows on us, the result of which is we show a different side to one person to what we do to another: and do what we may, we cannot do otherwise. We cannot be the same to everybody; especially does this apply to sympathetic people.

As the French say, "This afflicts me," "This many-sidedness makes one feel unreal," but what can we do? In the course of one afternoon we may appear in many different rôles, and yet be in earnest about them all. Apparently it comes from our anxiety to please and be sympathetic, and—because we are really interested in everything and everybody.

Take, for example, a big reception in London, Cairo, where you will. You arrive feeling in touch and at peace with the world and all its puppets. The first person who meets you tells you something amusing about a fat lady you see hurrying to the cloak-room. It will not bear repeating; it is a thing that might happen to any of us if we laced too tight. And we laugh, though we feel it is not nice and kind of us to do so, and it would hurt the lady's feelings if she were to see our mirth. However, be that as it may, we laugh and are a little funny about it ourselves, and then feel ashamed, as if we have done something treacherous.

We move on. The Bishop comes towards us, his apron comfortably swelled, a sweet, affectionate smile on his face, hands palms together, fingers pointed in playful prayer. He says how pleased he is to see us, and offers congratulations on the number of candidates that have come from our villages for Confirmation; and before the last remnant of the smile is

tucked away occasioned by the fat lady's misadventure, we find ourselves discussing in dulcet tones matters of spiritual importance—but meaning every word we say.

Before the spiritual conversation is finished, up comes Mrs. So-and-so, saying: "Oh, we want you so much to come and help in our theatricals. Will you be the curate? Do you mind? You will have to wear a collar that goes all round without a beginning or end." You are amused at the picture drawn, and at the expense of the curates become frivolous yourself.

The next person, smartly dressed, is anxious to tell you a good story she has just heard. You do not like it or think it the least amusing, but the proper thing to do is to smile even if it is a sickly one, and you are bound to find a Roland for her Oliver, though it sounds flat compared with hers.

Now you begin to wish that you had never come, without exactly knowing why, and after spending another hour in much the same fashion you start homewards.

A nice brainless little squire comes and tucks you into your car, talking all the time about the only things that interest him—namely, turnips and grey cobs.

The car moves off, and you sink down into a corner with a sigh, shutting your eyes and saying to yourself: "Which is the real me of all I have been impersonating this afternoon?"

What is so curious is, that in future, no matter where you meet these people, even if in the wilds of Khamschatka, the same side will show itself as when first you met. Is it the shadow cast by them, calling for a response in kind?

Occasionally we find someone who, the moment we meet them, satisfies us; we are ourselves when with

them, ourselves as we like to be, as we feel in our everyday life.

Then, again, there are the people who at once make us feel antagonistic. If they ask us a question to which in all our days we would have answered Yes, we now feel we must say No; we would not show our real feelings for the world. What can the colour be that the sun is shining through?

Perhaps it is a mistake to study too deeply the problems of our existence and the peculiarities of character. It does not alter the course of the river bearing us to the sea, unless perhaps it enables us to be tolerant and sympathetic.