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THE BASHFUL MAN.

I experience a kind of tribulation which, I fear, will at length oblige me to renounce society in which I am very desirous of appearing; but I will give a short sketch of my past history and my present situation, that the reader may be enabled better to appreciate my perplexity.

My father was a farmer of small property, and without other instruction than he had acquired at a charity school; but, on the death of my mother, and having no other children than himself, he resolved to procure for me an advantage which, in his opinion, would have rendered him happy—a liberal education. He first sent me to a country college, and from thence to the university, intending that I should take orders Here, receiving only a moderate allowance from my father, and finding my self inclined to timidity and bashfulness, I had no opportunity of throwing off that natural *gauchee* which is the fatal cause of all my troubles, and from which, I begin to fear, I shall never be able to free myself.

I must premise that I am tall and slender, that I have a fair complexion and light hair, but such a tendency to blush that, when at all confused, all my blood rushes to my face, and I resemble a rose in full bloom The consciousness of this unfortunate weakness caused me to shun company, and I became fond of college life, especially when I reflected that the unpolished manners of my father's family were little adapted to instruct me in the usage of the world I had therefore determined to remain at the university and take pupils, when two unforseen events wrought a great change in the posture of my affairs, I mean the death of my father, and the return of an uncle from India. I had seldom heard my father speak of this uncle, and it was generally believed that he was long since dead, when he unexpectedly arrived in England, only a week too late to close his brother's eyes.

I was inconsolable at the loss of my father, but my uncle seemed little affected, for he had been separated from his brother more than thirty years, and in that time had acquired, as was his wont to boast, a fortune sufficient to render a nabob happy. In a word, he brought home with him the large sum of thirty thousand pounds sterling, and on this he founded hopes of unlimited happiness. While he was forming plans of grandeur and enjoyment, whether the change of climate proved injurious to him, or some other cause of which I am ignorant, he was carried off, amid all his dreams of happiness, by a short illness of which he died leaving me sole heir of all his property.

Behold me now, at the age of twenty-five, well versed in Latin, Greek and mathematics, possessed of an ample fortune, but so awkward and ignorant of all the usages of good society, that those who knew me never designated me by any other title than that of *the rich and learned clown.*

I purchased a short time since an estate in the country, where I am surrounded by what they call persons of the *beau monde*; and if you consider my parentage and awkwardness, you cannot easily conceive how much my company is sought in the neighboring families, especially in those containing daughters of a marriageable age I have received from the neighboring gentlemen familiar visits and the most pressing invitations But, though I desire to accept their friendly offers, I constantly excuse myself under the pretext that my affairs are not yet settled. For the truth is, that, when I mount on horseback, or go out to walk with the formal intention of returning their frequent visits, my heart fails me when I approach the door, and that, more than once, I have returned to my own house, fully determined to make a new attempt the next day

However, I resolved at length to subdue my bashfulness, and accepted, three days since, an invitation to dine with a man whose frank and simple manners left me no doubt of a cordial reception Sir Thomas Bienvenu, who lives at the distance of about two miles, is a baronet, proprietor of an estate with a yearly income of two thousand pounds, near the one which I have purchased He has two sons and five daughters, all of a pleasing exterior, who live with their mother and an old aunt, the sister of Sir Thomas, at the estate of Bienvenu.

Consciousness of my awkwardness, I had taken for some time past lessons in dancing, from a professor of this science, and although I at first met with numerous difficulties in the art which he taught me, my knowledge of mathematics, aided me wonderfully by teaching me how to preserve my equilibrium, and to adjust my centre of gravity with the five positions.

Having then acquired the art of walking without making false steps, and learned to bow, I accepted with confidence the baronet's invitation to a family dinner, doubting not that my new acquirements would suffer me to present myself before ladies with tolerable intrepidity. But, alas! how vain are all hopes founded on theory, when they are not sustained by habitual practice! As I approached the house, the sound of the clock alarmed me and I feared I had made dinner wait from want of punctuality; disturbed by this thought I turned red as scarlet, while my name was repeatedly announced by servants in livery, who introduced me into the library, scarcely knowing where I was and whom I saw.

At my entrance, I summoned all my courage, and made my newly acquired salutation to Lady Bienvenu, but unfortunately, in bringing back my left foot to the third position, I stepped on the gouty toe of poor Sir Thomas, who followed close behind to introduce to me each member of his family by name. It is not easy to imagine the embarrassment I experienced on this occasion, since bashful persons only can judge of my misfortune, and their number is, I think, very small. The baronet's politeness gradually dissipated my confusion, and I was surprised to find how well good breeding enabled him to dissemble his pain, and appear perfectly at his ease after so painful an accident.

The cheerfulness of Lady Bienvenu, and the familiar chat of the young ladies, insensibly encouraged me to throw off my reserve and sheepishness; I ventured even to mingle in the conversation and start new subjects. The library was richly furnished with books of an elegant binding. I supposed that Sir Thomas was a man of letters, and ventured to give my opinion respecting several editions of the Greek classics, in which the baronet's opinion entirely coincided with my own I was led to this subject by observing an edition of Zenophon in sixteen volumes, which, as I had never before heard any mention made of them, excited in me a strong curiosity I rose to examine them; Sir Thomas perceived my design, and wishing, I suppose, to spare me the trouble, rose also to get the book, which redoubled my eagerness to prevent him, so that I seized the first volume hastily, and drew it out; but, good heavens! instead of the book, a board, covered with leather and gilding, which made it resemble the sixteen volumes fell precipitately, and unfortunately overturned an inkstand on the table placed under the library In vain Sir Thomas assured me that I had done no harm; I saw the ink flowing in large streams from an inlaid table upon the Persian carpet, and, scarcely knowing what I did, I endeavored to arrest its progress with my cambric handkerchief.

In the height of this confusion, we were informed that dinner was served, and I gladly perceived that the striking of the clock which had at first caused me so much alarm was only the stroke of the half hour before dinner In crossing the drawing-room to repair to the hall to dine, I had time to recover in some degree from my embarrassment, and I was invited to seat myself at the table between Lady Bienvenu and her eldest daughter:

Since the fall of the wooden Zenophon, my face had resembled a burning coal. I had just began to recover my spirits, and feel composed, when an unlooked for accident again suffused my cheek with blushes. Having placed my plate of soup too near the edge of the table, in addressing Miss Dinah, who politely complimented me on the form of my waistcoat, I let fall the boiling soup upon my knees. Notwithstanding a number of napkins which were at once offered to wipe my clothes, I believed, for some moments, that I was being boiled in a caldron. But, remembering that Sir Thomas had dissembled his pain when I trod on his toe, I bore my misfortune courageously and in silence, and seated myself amid the stifled laughter of the ladies and domestics. I will not relate the numerous blunders which I committed during the first service, nor the embarrassment which I suffered when called upon to carve a fowl, or serve the company from some dishes which chanced to be near me, upsetting a tureen full of sauce, and overturning a salt-cellar; I hasten to the second course where new disasters awaited me.

I had on my fork a piece of pudding, when Miss Louis Bienvenu asked me to have the goodness to pass her a pigeon near me In my haste, scarcely knowing what I did, I carried to my mouth the pudding, as hot as a burning coal; it was impossible for me to conceal my suffering; my eyes were starting from their sockets. At length, notwithstanding my shame and resolution I was obliged to let fall on my plate the cause of my suffering Sir Thomas and the ladies pitied my misfortune; each advised a different remedy; one recommended oil, another water, but all agreed that wine was best to soothe the inflamation, and a glass of Maderia was brought from the sideboard

But, alas! how can I relate the sequel? whether the butler was taken by surprise, or whether malice instigated him, he gave me a glass of the strongest brandy with which I filled my mouth, already wounded and cicatrized Entirely a stranger to the use of all spiritous liquors, with my tongue, my throat and my palate severely scorched, what could I do? It was impossible for me to swallow the liquid; clapping my hands to my mouth, the liquor escaped through my fingers, I was assailed with shouts of laughter from every corner of the room In vain Sir Thomas reprimanded the valets—in vain did Lady Bienvenu chide her daughters; the measure of my shame and their amusement was not yet complete.

To free myself from the intolerable state of perspiration into which this accident had thrown me, I wiped my face with that ill-fated handkerchief, which was yet quite wet, thanks to the fall of Zenophon, and I besmeared my face with streaks of ink in every direction. The baronet himself could

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