

Abbey. He resolved to put on all his panoply of Scottish culture. At the memorial chamber he exclaimed aloud: "And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!" He was enchanted with the Whistler portrait. "A true Scot, Mr. Iff!" he said. "He was a man, take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again!"

"True, very true!" replied Iff, a trifle hastily. Before Aubrey Beardsley the Scot grew more melancholy than ever, "For he was likely, had he been put on, to have proved most royally," he cried. They came to the portrait of Keats, a Severn from Sir Charles Dilke's collection. "I weep for Adonais—he is dead," said the banker. "Thank Heaven!" murmured Iff to himself, hoping that all would now be well. But his luck was out: he brought the next blow upon himself. "Some have doubted the autograph of Thomson here," he said. Macpherson was determined to shine. "Never fear!" he said, "that's the man's fist. Do we not know the sweet Roman hand?" And he added: "I am but mad nor nor west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw." Iff groaned in spirit. He was glad when the memorial chamber was done. They came to the gallery of club members. Here the banker unmasked his batteries completely. Before Shelley he said that he, "like the base Indian, cast away a pearl richer than all his tribe," he recognized Pope with eagerness as "a fellow of infinite jest;" he said to Byron, "The sly slow years shall not determinate the dateless limit of thy dear exile;" he apostrophized Swinburne, "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments of princes shall outlive this powerful rime," of Burton he sighed, "A great traveler; mebbe the greatest, save Davie Livingstone, that we ever had; and now he's gone to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns." Before Bishop Berkeley, he said; "That was the fellow who thought he could hold a fire in his hand by thinking on the frosty Caucasus or wallow naked in December snow by thinking on fantastic summer's heat." He dismissed Wellington with an airy gesture. "Seeking the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth," he said; but, feeling the remark rather severe, hedged with the remark that he frowned "as once he did when an angry parle he smote the sledded Polacks on the ice." Simple Simon decided to take his guest to dinner without further delay, to induce him to feed heartily, and to enter himself, upon a quick-firing monologue.

"I am in a light, French, effervescing mood to-night; I will drink champagne," he said, as they took a seat at the table where, as it was darkly whispered, Junius had composed his celebrated letters. "We have a wonderful Pommery." "I'm with you," replied the banker, "though, for my part, I need it to relieve my mind. 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother, nor customary suits of solemn black, nor windy suspiration of forced breath: no, nor the fruitful river in the eye, nor the dejected haviour of the visage together with all forms, moods, shows of grief, that can denote me truly. These indeed seem, for they are actions that a man might play; but I have that within which passeth show; these but the trappings and the suits of woe."

Some of the men at the next table—that at which Clifford, Arundel, Lauderdale, Arlington, and Buckingham had formed their famous Cabal—began to laugh. Simon Iff frowned them down sternly, and pointed to the Arabic Inscription on the wall—it

had been given to Richard I by Saladin—which reads in translation, "He that receiveth a guest, entertaineth God."

"I am sorry you should be troubled on this particular night," he said to the Scotsman; "it is the pride of the members of this club to make their guests happy; and if it be anything within the power of any one of us to amend, be sure that we shall do our best. But perhaps your misfortune is one in which human aid is useless."

"I will not bother you with my troubles, Mr. Iff," returned the banker; "on the surface, it's a purely business matter, though a very serious one. Yet the onus is of a personal nature. How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is, to have a thankless child!"

"Well, if you like to tell me about it after dinner—"

"I think it would interest you, and it will comfort me to confide in you. I do not wear my heart on my sleeve for daws to peck at; but on the other hand, why should I sit like Patience on a monument smiling at grief? But till dinner is done, away with sorrow; we will talk in maiden meditation, fancy-free, and tell black-hearted fear it lies, in spite of thunder."

Then let me tell you something of the history of this club!" cried Simon desperately, and he began to rattle off a combination of legend and fancy, mingled so happily with fact, and touched so elegantly with illustration, that Macpherson quite forgot his culture, and became the plain Scottish man of business, or rather the ambitious boy again as he was thirty years before, when he had first set foot on the ladder that was to lead him to one of the highest positions in the financial world.

When the waiter presented the bill, Iff marked a 19 in front of a printed item at its foot; the waiter filled in £95, and made the addition. Iff scribbled his name. The figure caught the trained eye of the banker. "Excuse me!" he cried; "it's the rudest thing possible, but I would like to see that bit o' paper. I'm just that curious, where there's money." Iff could not refuse; he passed the bill across the table.

"Nineteen Shakespeares!" exclaimed the Scot. "Ninety-five pounds sterling! what 'll that mean, whatever?"

"Well, I didn't mean to tell you, Mr. Macpherson; it's not very charming of me, but you oblige me. There is a fine of five pounds for every Shakespeare quotation made in this club—and of course, as your host, I'm responsible. Besides, it was well worth the money. The men at the next table have not had such a lovely time for years. Simple Simon, as they call me, won't hear the last of it for a while!" But the Scot was stunned. He could only keep on repeating in a dazed way, "Ninety-five pounds! Ninety-five pounds! Ninety-five pounds!"

"Don't think of it, I beg of you!" cried Iff. "I see that it distresses you. I am a rich man, and an old one; I shall never miss it. Besides, the fine goes to a most worthy object; the Society for Destroying Parliamentary Institutions."

"I never heard of it."

"Indeed! it is very powerful, I assure you. It carried through Payment of Members; it has greatly enlarged the Franchise, and is now working to have it extended to women."

"I thought ye said Destroying Parliament."

"Just so. These measures are directed towards reducing the whole thing to a farce. Already the power of Parliament is a thing of the past; authority is concentrated in the cabinet—nay, in a Camarilla