VARIOUS

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'MAKING PRETEND.'

Little girls play at 'Making Pretend,' often assuming some such form as this: 'I'll be a lady, and you shall be my servant.' We all of us unconsciously imitate these little folks in many of the daily proceedings of life, not from a really dishonourable motive or wishing to wrong others. 'The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth' is a proper maxim for a witness in a court of justice, and a wholesome precept to be taught to all; but it is curious to watch among the highest and purest in the land, as among the lowest and most debased, how many are the obstacles to the absolute observance of this precept.

Court-life is full of anomalies in this direction. The 'Queen's Speech,' as we all know, is not the Queen's Speech; it is not written by Her Majesty, and for many years past has seldom been

spoken by her. The prime-minister writes it, after conferring with his colleagues; the Lord Chancellor reads it, as one of three commissioners named for that special purpose. In earlier periods of our history, when the sovereign was his own prime-minister, and his officials were dismissed at his will and pleasure, his speech was really a speech; but now that the ministers are responsible for all the public proceedings of the Crown, the speech is a message, really theirs, although couched in the first person singular, and read from a written paper by other lips. Once now and then the present Queen has had to be furnished with lighted candles to enable her to read her own gracious speech on the afternoon of a foggy day! The Queen is loyally supposed to be present in every court of justice, near the colours of every regiment, and on the quarter-deck of every vessel belonging to the royal navy. To salute the colours during a march-past is to salute a symbol of sovereign power; and even on the darkest night, or when no human being sees him, a naval officer touches his cap when stepping up to the quarter-deck. It is not telling a little fib, but acting one; 'making pretend,' for a purpose sanctioned by all and injurious to none.

The 'honourable member for – ' may not be distinguished for particularly honourable conduct as a member of society; but it is felt that the House of Commons must wink at this, and treat him like the rest. The 'most reverend prelate,' the 'reverend occupants of the spiritual bench,' the 'illustrious duke on the cross benches,' the 'noble marquis,' the 'noble and learned lord,' the

'honourable and gallant member for – ,' 'my right honourable friend' – all these are intended, not as mere flatteries, but to preserve decorum and courtesy in the proceedings of the two Houses. If members mentioned one another by name, or used the second person 'you,' unseemly wrangles would almost inevitably occur; a little 'making pretend,' even if involving a somewhat cumbrous form of circumlocution, is found useful here; many a foreign Chamber of Deputies or House of Representatives suffers sadly from the absence of some such rules.

'Your obedient servant;' this is a small fib; for generally speaking, you are neither his servant nor are you obedient to him. 'Truly yours' and 'Yours faithfully' are equally departures from strict verity; in all probability your correspondent has never done anything deserving of a gush of warm sentiment on your part. 'Yours always sincerely' – well, there may be a little earnestness here; but 'always' is more than you can honestly pledge yourself to. A fair lady is sometimes a little embarrassed in this matter. She may be under the necessity of writing to decline a tender offer made to her by a gentleman. How is she to address him? 'Yours respectfully,' or 'obediently,' or 'truly' – why, this is what he wishes her to be, but what she announces in the letter her refusal to be; and 'your obedient servant' is no better; for as she refuses to be his wife, she most certainly will not be his servant. Turn the matter about how we may, there is no apparent escape from 'making pretend,' unless the subscription to the letter be limited to the mere signature. But the 'making pretend' of respect

or obedience is a small courtesy which lessens the probability of giving offence. And as with the subscription, so with the superscription; the word 'dear' is a fond and affectionate one; but how often do we *really* mean 'Dear sir' when we write those words? While we write the little word we may feel ourselves hypocrites for so doing, for reasons good and sufficient; but we must keep up 'dear' for form's sake. A young spendthrift heir writes to 'My dear father' for more supplies, and may yet be willing to see 'dear father' in the grave for the sake of the inheritance. The old man may suspect this all the way along, but still he addresses 'My dear Tom.'

'Mr So-and-so is not at home.' Certainly not true this, for you happened to catch a glimpse of his features over the parlour window-blind. Apart from any supposition that he owes you money which he is not prepared to pay, he may really have a good and sufficient reason for declining an interview with you. But this degree of 'making pretend' is a little too bad; 'Mr So-and-so declines to see you' would be true, but rather discourteous; and so perhaps a compromise is hit upon, 'Mr So-and-so is engaged at present.'

'Come and take pot-luck with us to-morrow – all in the rough, just as you find us;' not quite true, for preparations are purposely made for the reception of the visitor. 'Pray don't think of going,' you politely say; although as a fact it might be convenient to you and your family that your guest should go at once. 'Always glad to see you' – most assuredly 'making pretend,' for at best you only

mean 'sometimes.' When a young lady at a party declares that she positively 'can't sing,' we take the assertion with several grains of allowance. When healths are drunk and thanks returned, we may do as we like about believing 'the proudest moment of my life;' and when, as sometimes happens at men's parties, 'He's a jolly good fellow' is sung after proposing the toast, it may happen to be that the person thus honoured is neither very jolly nor very good. All the little incidents of social intercourse, if examined critically, display somewhat similar indications of the widely diffused 'making pretend.'

We thank people or praise people in various ways, beyond our real meaning, from a sense of the value of civilities. The Lord Chancellor always assures the Recorder that Her Majesty very highly approves of the selection which her faithful citizens of London have made, when the Lord Mayor elect is presented; and the civic functionary, on that occasion, invites Her Majesty's judges to the Guildhall banquet, although the invitation card has been sent to each long before. 'I bow to your ludship's superior judgment;' although it may be known to both of them, and to the bench and the bar generally, that the counsel really possesses greater knowledge and ability than the judge. 'Gentlemen of the jury' are much flattered by counsel; penetration and sagacity are imputed to them in large measure; the advocate does not mean what he says, but he hopes to wheedle a verdict out of them, in duty to the client who employs and pays him. The judge, unspotted in his impartiality (an inestimable advantage

which we enjoy in this country), has no temptation to indulge in such flatteries, and is free from embarrassment in the matter. As to a counsel positively stating his belief in the innocence of the prisoner he is defending, when he knows that the man is guilty, this is a stretch of audacity on which much has been written and said, and which leaves a painful impression on conscientious minds; a skilful counsel generally manages to avoid it, while using as much whitewash as he can for the accused, and applying plentiful blackwash to the witnesses for the prosecution. The 'enlightened and independent electors' of a borough do not believe that the candidate is altogether sincere in thus addressing them, while he himself has probably the means of knowing that they are neither enlightened nor independent; but the compliment is pleasing to their vanity, and perchance they give him a few extra cheers (or votes) as his reward.

'Making pretend,' in wholesale and retail trade, is now carried to such an extent as to be a serious evil. Where woollen goods are sold as 'all wool,' despite the shoddy and cotton which enter into their composition; where calico is laden with chalk in order to augment its weight; where professed flax and silk goods have a large percentage of cotton, and alpaca goods are made of wool which was never on the back of an alpaca – we are justified in doubting whether the fib comes within the range of allowable 'making pretend;' the articles may possibly be worth the price charged, but nevertheless they are put forth under false names. The law-courts tell us that there are some

millers, 'rogues in grain,' who do not scruple to mix up with their corn a cheap substance known among them by the mysterious name of 'Jonathan.' Butter is sold of which seventy per cent is *not* butter. Tea, coffee, cocoa, and chicory are rendered cheap by adulterants. London beer and London gin (we will leave provincial towns to speak for themselves) are often terribly sophisticated, to give apparent strength by the addition of drugs little less than poisonous. The frauds of trade find their way into a greater and greater number of departments and branches. 'Cream of the valley gin,' the 'dew off Ben Nevis,' 'fine crusted port,' 'pure dinner sherry' – we might excuse a bit of exaggeration in the names, provided the liquids themselves were genuine. 'Solid gold chains,' made of an alloy containing only six ounces of real gold to eighteen of baser metal, are now displayed in glittering array in shop-windows; and many 'real gold' articles have only a thin film of gold to cover a substratum of cheap metal. Soon after the Abyssinian war, when some of King Theodore's golden trinkets were exhibited in England, Birmingham or London or both produced 'Abyssinian gold' chains, watches, and jewellery in which real gold was conspicuous by its absence. Following this precedent, the same or other makers introduced 'Ashanti' gold jewellery after the little war in which Sir Garnet Wolseley was engaged; and the auriferous quality of the one was about equal to that of the other.

But apart from actual roguery, other modes of attracting customers are noticeable for a kind of whimsical audacity.

A hairdresser, who sells bear's grease, buys or rents a small bear, which he placards profusely, and writes up, 'Here, and at Archangel.' A furniture-dealer advertises, for twelve or eighteen months together, that he is enlarging his premises, and will sell off his stock at low prices, to prevent the articles from being injured by dust and dirt – his stock being quietly renewed from time to time, and the prices remaining pretty nearly the same as before. A draper covers half the front of his house with inscriptions relating to an alleged shipwreck or conflagration, to denote how very cheaply he can sell the salvage. 'Dreadful depression in trade,' 'bankrupt stock,' 'ruinous sacrifice,' are well-known manœuvres. We hear of 'Hampshire rabbits' that never saw Hampshire, and 'Newcastle salmon' that were certainly neither caught nor pickled at Newcastle; 'Cheshire cheese' made in other shires; 'Melton-Mowbray pies,' 'Bath buns,' and 'Banbury cakes' made in London – these we can understand as extensions in the production of certain articles at one time localised.

The artistic or fine-art world is much troubled with 'making pretend,' often involving white-lies of considerable magnitude. 'Old Roman coins' produced in an out-of-the-way workshop in London or Birmingham; 'Fine old china' fabricated within a recent period; a 'Genuine Rubens' that originated somewhere near Wardour Street; a 'Landscape after Claude' (very much after) – are sorrowfully known to purchasers endowed with more money than brains. At one of the Great Exhibitions, a French

firm displayed two pearl necklaces, of which one was valued (if we remember rightly) at fifty-fold as much as the other, and yet none but a practised observer could discriminate between them. The exhibitor wished to shew, and did shew, how skilfully he could make mock-pearls imitate real – but what a temptation to 'making pretend!'

THE LAST OF THE HADDONS

CHAPTER XX. – MRS TIPPER AT HOME

The next morning I took care to find employment for Lilian which would require the use of her mind as well as her hands. Indeed we were all as busy as bees, there being a great deal still to be done in the way of putting our little home in order. Fortunately, as it happened for us, the builder had been obliged to make the rooms larger and less formal in shape than are the generality of cottage parlours, in order to carry out the architect's design for the exterior of the building, so we had two good sitting-rooms. Our *drawing-room* gave ample opportunity for the display of taste; and Mrs Tipper had begged me to select the furniture, choose the paper for the walls, and so forth. I did my best, in the way of endeavouring to make an effective background for the by no means few works of art which had arrived from Fairview, and were now to be unpacked and arranged by Lilian and me. Mrs Tipper had been a little disappointed at my selecting sober tints such as French gray for the walls, &c.; confessing that for her part she liked plenty of colour. Indeed the dear little woman too fondly remembered the best parlour in the little cottage at Holloway, where she informed me gay plumaged birds wandered

up and down the walls amidst roses and tulips, to take kindly to more sober tints. And it required some diplomacy gracefully to decline two heavy lumps of china, supposed to represent Windsor Castle, which had been carefully preserved as relics of old times, and which were now brought forth from their beds of wool and presented as Mrs Tipper's contribution in the way of fine art for the drawing-room mantel-piece, with the information that they had been purchased at Greenwich fair and brought home as a surprise by 'John.' But I contrived to make it apparent that we already had as many ornaments as we knew what to do with; and the happy thought occurred to me to suggest that perhaps she would like to have the gifts which had been presented by her husband on the mantel-piece in her own room. At which she was fain to confess that such had been her desire. 'Only I thought you wanted a little more colour in the drawing-room, you know, dears; and I should be sorry to be selfish.'

But as our work progressed she acknowledged that the effect was 'elegant;' though I knew that term did not mean the highest eulogy in her estimation. The dainty collection of Sèvres and Dresden, which had belonged to Lilian's mother, the pictures, few valuable books, and the roses and lilies of the chintz, imparted quite colour enough to the room to satisfy us two. But it gave us enough to do to arrange it all. To the portrait of Lilian's mother, a really valuable painting, the costly work of a celebrated Academician (another extravagance of Mr Farrar's, deplored by Marian), was of course assigned the place of honour.

She must have been a very lovely woman, of the delicate refined type of beauty, which expresses so much to certain minds, and the artist had evidently worked *con amore*. He had seen the soul beneath, and depicted what he had seen. I could well understand the thought which had suggested the simple white flowing dress and loosened hair, with no ornament save a star above the broad white brow, and which had caused him so to pose the figure as to impart the idea that it was floating upwards.

I have heard that Mr Farrar was not a little disappointed in the picture, considering the style too severe, and that he regretted not having stipulated for velvet and diamonds. But the picture had brought fresh fame to the artist; crowds of admirers gathering round the 'Morning Star,' as it was called, when it was on view at the Academy, though it was generally believed to be an ideal rather than a portrait. To Lilian it was a priceless treasure.

Mrs Tipper was in the outset a little afraid lest Lilian should do too much for her strength; but she presently took my hint and objected no more. I kept Lilian at work with me until we were both too fairly tired out to be able to indulge in any sentimental regrets. Two or three days passed thus, hammering and nailing in the mornings, chintz-cover making in the afternoons; in a steady, methodical, business-like fashion, until it was evident that very soon there would be nothing left for us to do, if Mrs Tipper and Becky remained firm in their determination not to allow us to give them any assistance in the everyday work of the house.

When our work was at length completed, we flattered

ourselves that a prettier room than the cottage parlour was not to be found in all the country round. The pictures and china, Lilian's easel and pet books and birds, the pretty chintz furniture, and the rare flowers which found their way to us, did indeed form a very charming whole – a room which looked a great deal more like the home of a gentlewoman than did any of the rooms at Fairview; the latter being too gorgeous in the way of gilding and upholstery to be fitting receptacles for works of art.

I was not a little amused at Miss Farrar's very openly expressed astonishment, when, about a fortnight after our departure from Fairview, she found time for making the promised call upon us.

'Well!' she involuntarily exclaimed; 'you *have* made it look pretty!' presently adding – 'for a cottage, you know. I am sure you need not mind any one coming to see you here. I shouldn't mind living here myself, I really shouldn't! I cannot think how you have contrived to make it look so *comy fo*!'

Then she a little curiously asked to be shewn the rest of the house. And although all our art treasures had been gathered together in this one room, she found that the other part of the house was well and prettily furnished; an air of comfort if not of luxury pervading every nook and corner; nothing being wanting from garret to cellar. In fact there had been no lack of means; Mrs Tipper had money enough and to spare for the furnishing, without drawing upon Lilian's two hundred and fifty pounds received for the piano. It had turned out there were some

hundreds lying in Mrs Tipper's name at the banker's. She had not taken her brother's words so literally as he intended them to be taken; drawing barely sixty or seventy pounds a year of the two hundred which had been settled upon her; and consequently it had been left to accumulate; and as she smilingly explained, Mr Markham informed her there was quite a little fortune awaiting her. 'So I've been saving up a fortune without knowing it, you see, dears: it isn't everybody that does that.' Then, in a softer tone: 'Poor Jacob would be glad to know that his generosity to me will help his child.' Then seeing Lilian's colour rise as she looked up with tear-dimmed eyes at her mother's portrait, and perhaps perceiving something of the thought which occasioned the emotion, the dear little woman went on pleadingly and in a low voice: 'Sometimes I think that *her* love will plead for him. I am sure that his love and kindness to his sister will.'

Marian peeped in everywhere, and even found a gracious word for Becky, though I am sorry to say it was most ungraciously received. I do not wish to lower Becky in the eyes of my readers, and therefore I will only say that for a few moments she returned to the manners of *court-life*, in replying to Miss Farrar's gracious little speech.

'What a deal it must have cost!' again and again ejaculated Marian. 'And how hard you must have worked to get it to look like this!'

'It has amused us,' I smilingly replied.

'And a piano too!'

'Yes; that made its appearance yesterday; a present from an unknown friend;' adding a little mischievously, for in truth I more than guessed that friend to be Robert Wentworth: 'Was it a kind thought of yours, Miss Farrar?'

She was obliged to confess that it was not; though she did not omit to imply that she considered she had already done enough, and more than enough, in the way of 'kind thoughts.' Lilian's quiet self-contained bearing seemed not a little to astonish her. She had, I fancy, expected to find her in a lachrymose state. So at a loss was she to account for it, that she presently asked me in a whisper whether we had had a visit from Mr Trafford. I replied in the negative; and in her satisfaction she was so far off her guard as to say: 'Caroline said he hadn't been.' And she turned to Lilian again more gracious than ever.

She really meant to be kind, and looked disappointed as well as surprised at Lilian's persistent refusal to go to stay at Fairview, though she had had time to feel the difference between her former home and the cottage.

'But you really must not bury yourself in this small place; and it would be so nice for you, you know, having drives and all that. And there's your horse – I won't sell it, if you would like to ride again. I wish I wasn't so frightened of horses. Caroline says I should look splendid in a habit.'

'I should not care to ride now, thank you.'

'But you must come and stay. We are going to have all sorts of gaieties by-and-by; as soon as the new servants are in training.

Caroline knows lots of great people; and we will have dinners, and balls, and fêtes, and all sorts of things. Of course you must come.'

'No; you are very kind – I am sure you mean to be kind – but I could not. I do not care for such things. I prefer the cottage and cottage-life,' gently but decidedly returned Lilian.

But that was quite beyond Marian's comprehension. She was convinced that there was some other cause for the refusal. It was impossible to really prefer living in a small cottage. After a few moments' reflection, she said: 'You are not annoyed about Caroline being with me, are you? You know you all left me alone, and' —

'Annoyed? No, indeed!' very decidedly replied Lilian. 'Why should I be?'

'Well, of course it's rather awkward your having broken it off with Mr – Trafford; Caroline says you have now, quite?' with a keen questioning glance. Lilian made no reply. She had indeed done nothing towards the 'breaking off,' only tacitly submitted to it. After waiting a few moments, and waiting in vain, Marian went on: 'But if you do not care about having him now, I don't see why you should object to meeting him occasionally. Indeed I do not know how I can forbid him to come to Fairview. There can be no objection to his coming to see his sister sometimes.'

'I do not see any,' quietly returned Lilian.

Whereat Marian looked very much relieved; and became so extremely gracious and affectionate towards us, that Mrs Tipper,

who had not been much noticed of late, was taken into favour again.

'And I shall expect to see you too, aunt. I know you do not care for company; but you might come on the quiet days, when we are *quite* alone. I will let you know, the first leisure' —

'You must excuse me,' put in Mrs Tipper with gentle dignity; 'I have given up visiting. I may make an occasional call; but, like Lilian, I very much prefer my present humble home to Fairview – now.'

'It's very good of you to bear it so well, I'm sure; but you can't *really* prefer it, I think. Besides, you are my real aunt now, you know; and if you don't come it will look as if' —

'You must excuse me if I sometimes forget our relationship, Miss Marian' (never could Mrs Tipper be induced to give her the name of Farrar). 'My Lilian is the only niece I have known until very recently, and my love was all given to her long ago.'

But *one* thing had put Marian into a good-humour with herself and us, and she was not to be discountenanced. I think she good-naturedly made allowance for us, as disappointed and soured people, from whom a little ungraciousness might cheerfully be borne, by one so much more fortunate. So she took leave of us in the pleasantest way, and with a pretty wonder at our philosophy under difficulties; which proved that she had already become an apt pupil of Mrs Chichester's.

Aided by a natural self-complacency and obtuseness, and disturbed by no misgiving respecting her own powers, she would

probably very soon become as perfect a specimen of fine-ladyhood as she could desire to be. The difference between a fine lady and a gentlewoman would never be perceived by Miss Farrar.

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