

## Literature, &amp;c.

## OLD CRUSTY.

FRANK FLINT AND HIS RELATIVES;  
Involving the Fate of a Beautiful Young  
Lady.

BY ALFRED CROWQUILL.

"EMILY, my love," said Mrs Foresight, "it is essentially necessary to our interests that you should be very circumspect in the presence of my uncle, the pleasure of whose company to dinner we expect to-day. We have named six o'clock, and, depend upon it, he will be here punctually to a minute; therefore I beg you will be ready to receive him. Put on your plain muslin dress, and wear no ornaments; and dress your hair in ringlets, instead of a *la reine*—for he is so very particular."

"Really, mamma," said Emily, a pretty blonde of nineteen, "I cannot see the necessity of conforming so strictly to the ridiculous whims of this gentleman. I am sure Pa is independent enough in some things; I wonder that he can submit to have the whole house put out of order to gratify this humourist."

"Hush, my dear," said Mrs Foresight; "remember 'walls have ears,'—and be satisfied we have an object in our submission. You have no reason to fear any remarks from any of the party; for I have only invited Mr and Mrs Dumps and their daughters, and our cousin Snooks—a set that we must be bored with now and then, you know; although we cannot ask them to meet our numerous *distingue* acquaintances."

"Very well, mamma, as you please," replied Emily, not at all convinced by the political arguments of her fashionable parent.

The Foresights tenanted a respectable house on the borders of the aristocratic part of the town, and succeeded so well in pushing themselves into good society, that they were really considered "somebody."

"The Court Guide," "the Book of Etiquette," and "Chesterfield's Letters to his son," were the chief "study" of the parents; and although all letters were generally addressed to Frederick Foresight, Esquire, some people were censorious enough to assert that he was only a *principal-clerk* in some Manchester warehouse; that he assumed a standing in society to which he was by no means entitled; and that he sacrificed many real comforts to the rapid folly of "keeping up appearances."

Be this as it may, they were very agreeable people, and managed admirably; and certain it is that Mrs Foresight's uncle was a rich man lately returned from the East Indies, and they were both very zealous to turn him to account, and make "much of him." Unfortunately, they had to struggle with many difficulties; for Frank Flint was a crusty, testy, straightforward, plain speaking old bachelor, who hated all fashionable "fal-lals and nonsense," and spoke so bluntly on every occasion, and had so many peculiar notions and ways of his own, that he was considered by his modish nephew and niece "quite unrepresentable to the cream of their circle."

## A DIALOGUE

"Do you spend much time in thrumming and squalling," said old Flint, laying his hand upon a handsome upright piano, which stood "showing its teeth," and supporting a music book, opened at an Italian scene which was quite the "rage."

"Sir?" said Emily, coloring to the very eyes; and then, recovering her self-possession, she continued, "I play and sing a little."

"Expensive and useless," remarked Flint, "a trap set to catch beaux—get married, and then forgotten. Ask a wife to sing or play, and its always 'Really 'tis so long since I touched the instrument.' Pah!"

Emily smiled. "Can you make a pudding, cook, and carve a fowl,—darn stockings, scrub a floor, or sew a button on your husband's wristband?"

"I dare say I could sir, if I were to try, and there were a necessity for it," replied Emily.

"Learn," shortly added Flint, "useful first, ornamental afterwards. Can you dance?"

"Yes sir."

"Good exercise—promotes health. I could foot it a little, hands across, down the middle, and up again. What do you think of me for a partner in a good old country dance?"

"I should prefer a quadrille, and—"

"A younger partner," said Flint, "no doubt. I don't like quadrilles; they're French—a lifeless dawdling—no vigour—fit only for gouty gentlemen and old dowagers when they stand up to make fools of themselves."

Emily laughed. "There's a good girl," said Flint,—"the first laugh from a young lady since I've been in England; a simper or a smile is all you get from them. It is not fashionable, I believe, to laugh outright; yet cooking and laughter are the two distinguishing characteristics of the animal—man."

The old man paused, and Emily was half afraid to break the silence.

"You don't like me," continued he abruptly. "Accustomed to the smoothness of flattery, truth appears, in comparison, rude and offensive."

"Nay, sir, I do not dislike you; and I do like truth," replied Emily, boldly.

"Then tell me what do you think of old Flint?"

Emily blushed deeply as she summoned up courage to reply: "I think him, sir, a very sincere gentleman, with very odd notions."

"Very good!"

"And I think he is rather unreasonable in requiring other people to conform to his peculiar ideas of what is right."

"Proceed."

"He wears a costume which was fashion-

able fifty years ago, and is singular, because not one in ten thousand of the present day exhibits it."

"Exhibits!" said the old man emphatically. "He wears his hair tied in a *queue*, when every body is cropped; and because young ladies do not dress like their grandmother, calls them ridiculous, and—"

"Hold! I'm quite satisfied," said Flint, smiling; and taking her hand, added, "Emily, you and I shall probably be very good friends after a while. Let us continue to scold each other, and the chances are that the war will end in a mutual good understanding."

## AN INDEPENDENT MAN.

Mrs Foresight was the daughter of Frank Flint's sister. He had also a nephew, (the son of his elder brother) a married man, with six children, who held a situation, and lived comfortably on his limited income, not being ambitious, like his cousin and her husband, of keeping up appearances above his means.

In many respects he resembled the old humourist. When Frank Flint called upon him, he welcomed him heartily; but when, in the course of conversation, the Anglo-Indian expressed his opinion that he "must be put to it" to support so numerous a family, and thought that, before entering into matrimonial engagements, it was prudent for a man to calculate his means of maintaining the "heirs of his loins," Mr Stephen Flint replied shortly:—

"I did calculate, uncle; and, as a proof that I was not out in my reckoning, I have, thank Heaven, been able to support myself and family decently. I have given them all a good plain education, that will enable them to provide for themselves, as their father has done before them. I owe no man a penny, and I ask no patronage from the rich; and, so long as I possess the blessing of health, they will never want. I'm yet in the prime of life, and hope, in the course of nature to see them respectably settled."

"I'll dine with you to-morrow," said Flint.

"Sunday is the only day that I can receive a visitor," replied Stephen; "and it is not everybody that I allow to sit at my table, humble as it is; but, as you are a relation, I shall be glad to receive you. If we agree, well and good; if we don't hitch our horses, the shorter the acquaintance the better. We dine at one o'clock."

"Make it two, and I'm your man," said Flint.

"If you were my master, I would not," replied Stephen; "I would derange the economy of my household. Besides, report says you're a wealthy man, and a compliance with your wishes would appear like flattery, and I never flatter anybody, and I'm no legacy hunter."

Old Flint seemed for once to have met with his match. He hesitated for a moment, muttered a few unintelligible words, and finally, clapping his broad brimmed white hat, turned up with green, upon his head, he said,

"I'll be with you, nephew, punctually," and took his leave without further ceremony.

"Jane," remarked Stephen to his spouse, "I really think the old boy wishes to turn the house out of the windows—but he shan't!—This house is my castle, old girl, and no man, rich or poor, shall rule the roast here. Remember, I'll have no display—beef, pudding, and ale. I'll not stoop to the whims of any man. What! because he happens to be rich, shall I be ridiculous?"

The old boy, however, did come, and made himself so very agreeable, and related so many anecdotes of elephant and tiger hunts, and other Indian sports and pastimes, making the time steal away so rapidly, that it was rather a late hour before he lighted his last cheroot, and took his departure.

"What a nice gentleman he is—how amusing!" observed Jane.

"That's just like you, women," replied Stephen; "it takes time to know a man. The old fox is, after all, perhaps only playing a game. But he shan't govern me or mine—This time two years, if the acquaintance should last so long, I'll tell you more about him. At present there's too much of the nabob peeping out now and then to please me exactly. We'll see."

Stephen Flint, however, did unconsciously like his uncle, and was much gratified by the amusement and information he enjoyed in his society.

## A DOWNFALL.

"My dear," said Mr Foresight to his wife, "I have some very disagreeable tidings to impart. The rich uncle who has put us to so much inconvenience, and whose favor we have cultivated at such a cost of patience, is a ruined man. I passed his house this morning, and there was actually a carpet at the door with a catalogue attached to it! I was so much shocked that I could not enter the place. I, however, to make sure, sent Smithers, (causing him to be very circumspect and quiet in his inquiries) to glean what information he could. And what do you think the foolish, headstrong old man has been doing!—investing all his hard earned money in a bubble mining company, and he is ruined—ruined past redemption. There is no such mine as the West Weggabon Tin and Copper Company, and the Board of Directors are nobodies!"

Mrs Foresight held up her delicate hands and wept: Emily retired to her own room to shed her tears unseen; for, strange to say, there had lately arisen a mutual understanding and esteem between her and old Flint, which had actually ripened into a confidential friendship, and her grief at his downfall was caused by feelings very different from those of her worldly parents. Mr and Mrs Foresight thought the most prudent step they could take, under the affecting circumstances, was to deny themselves, and not to be at home

whenever the old gentleman called; for they sympathized so deeply in his misfortunes, that they could not bear to see him, knowing that they had not the means of offering him any pecuniary aid—at least this was the excuse.

In a few days the old man did call.

"Not at home?" said he, surprised, for he had invariably found them in at that hour; and before the servant could utter a syllable, the unwelcome visitor had hung his hat on the usual peg in "hall," or *passage*, as he always persisted in calling it.

"Not at home!" he replied.

"No, sir."

"Humph!—and pray is Emily at home?" said he.

"Miss Emily, sir?" said the man, who had not been instructed on this point. "Really, sir, I do not know but she may be. Perhaps—"

"Perhaps, as you have some doubts on the subject, you'll make some inquiry, and satisfy yourself, and don't keep me standing here. Open the parlor door and give me a chair."

Confused and half afraid, the man did his bidding, and immediately sent the maid to enquire (of Miss Emily) if Miss Emily were at home.

Emily, who was only half spoiled, and was naturally a good-natured girl, answered the old man's inquiry in her own person.

"Father and mother both out, hey?" asked Flint, taking her hand.

"Did the servant say so?" said she, blushing at her attempt at evading the awkward query.

"Say no more, my dear," said Flint; "I'm not at all disappointed—not at all, I assure you, my little friend. Tell them, will you, that the old uncle is obliged to decline the honor of visiting great people—that is too expensive—and that his relations need not fear his importunities for broken victuals and left off clothes—that he has lived and can live, upon fifty pounds a year, and that he has still a little more than that left to support him. If I should ever want a trifle, I will condescend to ask my friend Emily for it."

"Uncle," said Emily, bursting into tears, "I pity you, and I love you better than ever I did; and, if all my pocket money my Pa allows me will be of service to you, you shall have it;" and, as she spoke, she pressed his hard right hand in hers with so much fervor and sincerity that it seemed to hurt the old man, for the tears started in his eyes.

"Don't play the fool, girl," said he, kissing her forehead, and, lowering his gray and shaggy brows, abruptly quitted the house.

## THE MINISTER.

Among the "set" selected to meet the rich uncle at Mr Foresight's table was Mr Selwyn, the minister who officiated at the church where the family rented a pew. He was a young man about eight and twenty, polished in his manners, and very studious, with a stipend of three hundred pounds a year.

Among his other attainments, he was a first rate chess player; and notwithstanding the boast of the old Indian, he invariably beat him, although he confessed it was a conquest in which the conquered reaped almost as much honour as the victor.

Frank Flint called one evening upon the "parson," as he called him; and he was at home! He was ushered into a small room dignified by the name of a study, where the youth was busily occupied with his books and papers.

"Don't interrupt business, I hope?" said the old man.

"Not at all, sir," replied Mr. Selwyn, rising, and handing him a chair. "I am really pleased to see you."

"Are you? Then you haven't heard the story about those?" (he would have put in a strong adjective here, but in his good sense he gulped it in respect to the "cloth")—those mines?"

"I have, sir; but I would not have been so impertinent as to allude to it, especially on the first visit you have done me the honor to pay me," said Mr Selwyn.

"You wouldn't?"

Mr Selwyn merely bowed, saying, "Shall we resume the last game, sir? If you have time, I shall be happy to give you an opportunity of having your *revanche*."

"I am your man," said Flint, folding up his gloves, and throwing them into his hat.

Mr Selwyn brought forth his chessboard and men, and insisted on his visitor's taking the library chair, he drew the table to the fire and they commenced smoking and playing in silence, the old man alternately placing his feet on the fender, and against the jams of the fire place. After a contest of two hours, and the consumption of about twelve cheroots on the part of Frank Flint, for Mr Selwyn only "wifled" to keep his visitor in countenance, the game was concluded in favor, for the first time of his eccentric guest.

The old man rubbed his hands, delighted.

"Are you a married man?"

"No, sir."

"I'm glad of it," replied Flint.

"Wherefore, sir?"

"I should have entertained a very bad opinion of you."

"Have you an objection to the 'holy' state?" asked Mr Selwyn.

"No, sir," replied Flint; "but I have noticed something in your conduct, which, if you had been a married man, would have been contemptible."

"Indeed, sir; in what respect?"

"You made yourself too agreeable to a young lady of my acquaintance, for whom I entertain the highest esteem."

The blood mantled on Mr. Selwyn's pale

brow as he falteringly demanded the lady's name.

"Nonsense!" said Flint. "You know who I mean, well enough—(give me a light)—Emily—Emily Foresight—"

"I hope sir, you have never observed anything in my conduct that could be misconstrued."

"Not at all, Parson," said Flint, pitching the cheroot into the fire, for it would not "draw," and supplying himself with another. "I'll tell you what; I've seen a little of the world, and know a hawk from a handsaw as well as any man, and I'm as positive you've a sneaking kindness after that girl, as she thinks about you; and that's not a little."

"I hope, sir, you will exonerate me from any attempt to win the affections of the daughter of a gentleman who does me the honor to invite me in confidence to his table."

"Honor?—fiddle-de-dee!—a gentleman!—A gentleman, although he doesn't chance to have a rap in his pocket, is fit company for a lord. If you like the girl why don't you 'pop'?"

"My dear sir, I will not conceal from you that I esteem the young lady you have named."

"You can't; so don't make a merit of it." "But I have too much respect for her, and am not quite so selfish as to sacrifice her prospects to my passion, even had I the hope of accomplishing such an unworthy desire."

"Nonsense!" said Flint, "I'll tell you what it is, Mister Parson. Foresight spends too much money in keeping up appearances to be able to give the girl a portion. Men with money won't jump at bait now-a-days unless it be double gill; if she were my daughter, I would give her to you, and thank you in the bargain!"

"I am much obliged to you, sir, for your favourable opinion; but, whatever my inclination may be, I hope I shall never be induced to forfeit it, even though Miss Foresight should be a tempting bride."

"More nice than wise, Mister Parson. Now if I were a young man, with only one hundred pounds a year clear income, I'd carry her off, ay, and make her happy, too. I tell you what, young man, Emily has plenty of common sense and good feeling too. She's the best of the whole bunch! and—"

"Say no more, sir, I beg, or you'll make me miserable," said Mr Selwyn.

"Well good night!" said Flint; "I shall drop in upon you again soon."

## A DISINTERESTED FRIEND.

"Oh! you are 'at home,' I see," said old Flint, entering the parlour of his nephew Stephen.

"I fear no duns, uncle, and I never deny myself," replied Stephen; "when a visit is unwelcome, I always save the visitor the trouble of a second call by telling him 'at once' I prefer his room to his company. Sit down. So, I hear you've been making a fool of yourself dabbling in what does not concern you, and burnt your fingers."

"Well?" said Flint.

"What do you mean to do now?"

"Live upon my means, to be sure. I don't come to beg. I've enough to live on. What do you think of me for a lodger?"

"On what terms?"

"Sixty pounds a year; feed with the family, stay with the children, and make myself at home."

"I'll give you an answer to-morrow," said Stephen.

The following day Frank Flint became a member of the family, and really made himself so agreeable that not one of the parties concerned regretted the arrangement.

Dinner was served at two o'clock.

"Thought you invariably dined at one?" remarked Flint.

"So we did," replied Stephen; "but as you have come to live with us now, we wish to make everything agreeable to you as far as we can. When you were 'up in the world,' you commanded; now you must know uncle, I can be led to any thing, but never like to be driven. Make yourself comfortable."

The old man made no observation, but he appeared to be lost in a very pleasant reverie.

The day passed over smoothly and happily, and old "crusty" seemed quite content in his reverses, although his old suit, which was not renewed, began to exhibit some symptoms of decay.

Two months, however, had scarcely elapsed when Stephen returned home earlier than usual; he was clothed some time with his wife, and, when he returned, her eyes were red with weeping, and Stephen was evidently depressed in spirits.

"Uncle," said he, "the firm with whom I have been for twenty years has failed; and I have got to seek a new employer—at my time of life, too! We must part; for I cannot afford to keep up the house as I have done."

"What of that?" said old Flint. "Throw my sixty pounds into a lump, and let's jog on together till better times. I like my quarters too well; besides, do you think I'll leave my little playfellows? Why, I should founder at once—no, no! Say no more on that head. Tell me your views; and, perhaps, a tool's advice may be of service to you."

Stephen's large family prevented him from getting the fore-horse by the head; but he was out of debt, and possessed a small sum of ready money to meet the present exigencies.

For the space of a month Stephen spent his whole time in seeking a situation among the extensive connexion of the bankrupt firm, by whom he was well known and esteemed; but there was no vacancy, at least for one of his