Ah me ! the great boughs droop as of old
Over our rustic seat,
Where laburnum bows all his bounteous gold,
The lilac's kiss to meet ;
The roses bloom in crimson and white,
The violets purple the grass,
The wild birds sing, 'mid the blossoms bright,
To the breezes as they pass ;
Naught changed or gone from the dear old times,
Save we two, darling, from under the limes.

S. K. P.

SOCIAL LECTURES.

ON SWELLS.

SLANG is a very bad thing ; it has a thievish twang, and tends to corrupt the English language. Yet if a fact has only one name, and that a slang one, what is a speaker or a writer, who desires to allude to that fact, to do? Now the word "swell" is possibly of most disreputable origin, coined perchance by the Artful Dodger of some Fagin den, and for a long time the sole property of pickpockets and dishonest beggars. But it has pushed a way up in the world, and now occupies the place formerly filled by the equally slang terms, "blood," fop, dandy, with which it is by no means synonymous ; for a swell is—a swell, and there is no other name by which you can designate him. Some men are born swells ; to these the few remarks I am about to offer will perhaps be of little practical value ; but there are others who would achieve swelldom, and it is to them that I more particularly address myself on the present occasion. For as I have observed that there are many young men possessed of regular features, symmetrical figures, and respectable incomes, who gaze with an awful admiration, not unmixed with envy, at the gorgeous beings who flash upon them from the Row and the club steps—who dazzle them at the opera, and abash them in the ball-room—and as many of these eligible youths are fired by a noble ambition to emulate such paragons, but do not rightly know how to set about it, it has occurred to me that a few hints for their instruction and guidance may spare them many false starts and humiliating failures, and so save some from giving up the attempt in despair, and falling back among the ordinary crowd who seem to consider life as a mere arena for contest and for struggle ; who admit responsibilities, acknowledge duties, practise self-denial, and absurdly pursue such chimeras as love, friendship, and ambition. Let the neophyte take courage, for though a swell resembles a poet in this, that he is born, and does not issue, as some ignorant persons have imagined, from a band-box, like Hope, he differs from the paltry scribbler in the more important fact that he can be made. He can be made, and as the persons who have most to do with his manufacture are those artists who devote their talents to adornment of the person, the novice must begin by getting himself as well dressed as his present ignorance and uncultivated taste will permit, taking care to avoid bright colours and elaborate articles of jewellery, until further study under the best masters shall enable him to indulge in such luxuries with safety ; for if he neglects this advice, he will run the risk of splitting on that rock of would-be swells—vulgarity, and his hopes will be wrecked for ever. It is no easy matter for an unknown man to get a really first-class tailor to pay him proper attention ; the only method of procedure is to give a large order in the first instance—say half a dozen coats, eight or nine waistcoats, and as many pairs of trousers—to try each article on at every possible stage of its manufacture, and to give as much trouble as possible. I dare say that you may have observed how badly for the most part statesmen and persons engaged in scientific pursuits are dressed, even though their social positions may be high, their fortunes large, the tradesmen they employ of fashionable reputation. Why is this? It is because they take no pains about the fit of their own clothes, but trust entirely to those tradesmen ; and it is an idiosyncrasy of the hatter, the bootmaker, and especially of the tailor, that he feels no respect for the man who does not worry him to the verge of distraction. Now, without respect for the customer who is to be fitted no true artist can put forth his highest powers. And here I may remark that there is a grand old proverb, the true deep meaning of which lies hidden for the most part from those who utter it. I allude to the aphorism "Nine tailors make a man," which is used by shallow witlings in depreciation of that great art which principally distinguishes the civilised man from the savage ; as if the wisdom of ages, condensed by the wit of a genius, would establish any such flippant nonsense as that the artificer who works up the raw material of nature into a thing of beauty was in any way inferior in the scale of creation ! No, the true sense of the saw is that it requires the united talents of nine tailors to make a man, the ideal man, a swell. Guided by this light the judicious aspirant should, as he gains confidence, extend his patronage. One tailor may have a particular talent for riding-trousers, another for walking-trousers, a third for coats, and so forth.

But when he has once found a bootmaker, he should be constant to him. The wearer of boots, like the cobbler himself, should stick to his last, his *own* last. That is the best of boots, when the foot is once perfectly fitted the model can be fixed for ever in hard enduring wood, future copies may be relied upon as actual reproductions of the original, and the customer is no longer dependent upon the fluctuating skill of the craftsman. For that his powers do vary was

owned by a master in the art, who once exhibited so beautiful a boot in his shop-window, that an amateur wanted to buy it. But it was not for sale, and the proprietor refused to part with it at any price.

"Well," said the amateur, "can you make me another exactly like it?"

"Make another, sir!" exclaimed the artificer, "I did not *make* that boot; I struck it off in a moment of inspiration."

To obtain a shirt that will sit close to the breast in all movements of the body is no light task, and though the necktie is no longer such a stumbling-block in the path of him who would be well dressed as it was in the days of Beau Brummel, its perfect disposal will be found a considerable difficulty, which, however, with practice, fair natural abilities, and a careful study of the best models, is to be overcome.

Having attired himself in suitable clothing, including gloves which really fit him, and a hat that will cling gracefully to his head though the wind blow and his horse plunge, the incipient swell should now exert all his endeavours to form an acquaintance with some acknowledged model, with a title if possible, whom he may study at his leisure. This is often achieved by men starting under great disadvantages, who have devoted all their energies to that one object. It is strange if the noble ambition we treat of should inspire the breast of one who cannot, through family connections, or some old school or college acquaintanceship, get an introduction, if not to the great swell himself, at least to one of the satellites moving in his orbit, through whose means he may insinuate himself into speaking and bowing terms with him; and when he has once reached that point, there are many ways of worming himself into his intimacy. If the great man is in pecuniary difficulties, which is not improbable, he may buy a horse of him, or lose money to him at écarté; if he has a master-vice (and most men have), let him be companionable, and assume it; and as swells, like ordinary mortals, are subject to vanity, he must delicately flatter him.

Prior to or concomitant with this swell-stalking, the aspirant should strain every nerve to get into a *good* club. Many young men who are fitted by position, fortune, and inclination for swells, join second or third-rate clubs in the interim, hoping to gain admission into the more select ones at some future time. What is the consequence? Why, they get into a bad set; they are seen associating with ill-dressed men, who are quite outside the pale of fashion; they are marked as vulgarians; and when their names are put up at the clubs into which they desire admission, their chance is hopeless. The prospects of an utterly unknown candidate are infinitely better, so that the neophyte should get himself proposed for the very best club he can in the first instance. An insignificant candidate, especially if he is proposed and seconded by insignificant members, is far less often black-balled than one whose own or whose friends' merits and popularity have wounded the vanity or stirred the jealousy of the voters. It is the taller heads that are most likely to be lopped off. But should he meet with repulse, let him remain clubless rather than seek refuge in an inferior establishment. His perseverance will be rewarded in time.

It may be, however, that there is some young man amongst my hearers who is endowed with money, beauty, tranquillity, a due regard for his personal appearance, and other qualities essential to success, but who is positively without any acquaintance of the most distant kind who can place him even on the margin of polite society. Let him then enter himself as a fellow-commoner at one of the colleges of either university, or, better still, get a commission in a cavalry regiment. It is true that there is considerable difficulty about this latter operation in these degenerate days; he will have to pass an examination in the first place, and then to undergo the ordeal of drill. The discipline of the riding-school, watering parades, early stables, are very trying indeed to the higher nature which aspires to complete calm; there is also the risk of his regiment being ordered abroad. But he will probably be able to get into the Rag or the Junior, and that will give him the first step which he requires. That accomplished, he can retire from the service as soon as he likes.

But this is a digression; we suppose our neophyte launched, free from distracting cares and occupations, a member of a good club, living in chambers which he need not be ashamed of, and possessed of a sufficiency either of money or of credit, and we resume.

His hair must be dressed daily by a first-rate artist, to whom he should entrust the entire control over his head.

He must not often dance, though he should privately acquire the utmost proficiency in the art; so that when he is positively obliged to practise it in public, he may accomplish the task gracefully, and with as little exertion to himself as possible.

He should take no exercise on foot, but pay the greatest attention to his riding, and never mount a screw. The horse is so noble an animal that it is impossible for a good rider to look insignificant, plebeian, or undignified upon his back; so that the swell may ride at a pace which induces perspiration, if it is necessary for his health; he may even hunt, provided he carefully avoids those meets where cockneys and other vulgarians mostly congregate. All this, of course, is incongruous, abnormal; one conceives the perfect swell as merely lounging on foot, or ambling gently on horseback where people of fashion take the air, but engaging in no pursuit which might rumple or soil him. But there are months when he cannot be seen in London, and the time may hang heavily on his hands unless he engages in country pursuits and pastimes. He may therefore shoot, provided always he can do so without violent exertion. Cover-shooting, for example, may generally be taken very easily, there being plenty of sportsmen who are not swells ready to compete eagerly for the warm corners; and the practice of driving game seems to have been established expressly in his behoof. Shooting pigeons out of a trap is still less objectionable, provided the company be extremely select; but, in truth, the firing of a gun,

accompanied as it is with noise, smoke, recoil, and soiling of the gloves, is unsuited to him, and, like hunting, is only permitted as a concession to human weakness. The same remark applies to most other amusements: billiards is chalky, cards apt to excite, and the swell should never be excited. In short, I know of no pastime exactly fitted for him except croquet.

It may be that the neophyte has certain quondam acquaintances whose dress and style are compromising. If these are difficult to shake off in the ordinary way, the object may always be attained either by lending them money, borrowing it of them, or, best of all, asking them to back bills for him whenever they address him. If he is not short-sighted—in which case it would be impolitic to draw attention to a personal infirmity—he should wear an eyeglass, which will enable him *not to see* undesirable people without obviously cutting them. Rudely to cut any one is bad form, and only practised in these days at the universities. But an eye-glass in the hands of a dexterous swell will be found as useful as a parasol or a fan in those of a lady.

While the ambitious youth is qualifying himself in other respects, he must not neglect the moral and mental training, without which no amount of personal decoration can give him that high-bred air which is the peculiar characteristic of the real swell. He must never be angry or merry, or happy or unhappy, or frightened or amused or astonished; or should he unhappily experience one of those vulgar emotions, let him at any rate guard against the expression of it. He must learn to regard love as romantic folly, and friendship as a poetic myth. He may find more difficulty than at first he apprehends in cooling himself down to the proper degree of apathy and indifference, but dissipation, self-cultivation, and tobacco will aid him greatly. Let him consider to what a degree of perfection those Asiatics have attained, who spend their whole lives—as they trust to spend eternity—sitting or standing in one position, absorbed in listless contemplation of Buddha; and shall a civilised Englishman fail where a heathen barbarian has succeeded? Never! The true swell is his own Buddha.

LEWIS HOUGH.

MRS. MUDDLE'S PARTY, AND HOW IT FAILED.

MR. and Mrs. Muddle were going to give an evening party.

Mr. Muddle was a very moderately successful barrister, whose income from all sources amounted to but little over three hundred pounds a year. His amusement was painting, and in his leisure hours he laid colours on to canvas, and the result was what he and his friends called pictures, and what his enemies called by a less pleasing name.

His wife was a well-meaning little woman, anxious to show off, and inclined to do her best, but with not much idea of how to do it. They had been married some few years, and had entertained but little, though they had themselves been out a great deal. But Mr. Muddle was getting on now, and his wife wanted people to know it, "so the best thing we can do," she said, "is to give an evening party, then we can ask every one at once."

"Will it cost much?" he asked, "and won't it be a great deal of trouble?"

"Not nearly so much as anything else," she answered. "We have only to give them supper; that's all they will need. I should like it to be a really handsome supper," she added. "It is the first party we have ever given, and it must go off well."

"Yes," he said approvingly.

"So," she went on triumphantly, "let's give a really stylish affair."

And Mr. Muddle, who had also secret longings to astonish the weak nerves of his friends, gave his gracious assent.

The next day Mrs. Muddle bought some printed forms, and filled them up, and this was the effect:—

"14, Silvergilt Terrace,
"Bayswater.

"Mrs. Muddle requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Blank's company at an evening party on Wednesday evening, January 21st, 187-, at nine o'clock. "[R.S.V.P."

"This is the 6th," said Mrs. Muddle, "so we have given them good notice. Now we must see about ordering in things for the supper. Of course the eatables will do the day before, but what about the wine?"

"Well, let's see; suppose we have—how many are coming?"

"Oh, I am sure I don't know. I never counted, and they have not all replied. I should say about forty—oh, no, there must be fifty."

"Well, we'll have a dozen of sherry, for we have only four bottles left in the house. I wonder if it should be 'good.'"

"It doesn't matter a bit about that, so long as we have plenty. I think it would be as well to get very cheap wine. No one will find it out. I am sure I don't know the difference as long as it tastes sweet and nice."

"Well, a dozen of sherry, say at twenty-four shillings; and I think we ought to have a little port, just for the old folks—say three bottles."

"We had better have half a dozen."

"Well, then there's the champagne" (Mrs. Muddle