

HOW TO BE POOR.



HAT a queer title, I fancy I hear my readers say. "How to be poor." I should have thought that was easy enough. Do you? Well, then, just try the experiment. Knock off your little luxuries, give up a few of what you think necessities, and let me know the result in a few weeks. No, my friends, it is not so easy to be poor—respectably poor. It is easy enough to be a tramp or a pauper; you have only to let everything go—respectability, self-respect, etc.—and there you are, but that is not being

poor. One of the very hardest lessons a man or woman has to learn is how to be poor after having been rich—to have to economise in the little things which seem to be absolutely necessary. The bigger things, such as carriages, bouquets, men-servants, silk dresses, etc., are obviously unnecessary, and they are the first to go. But there are countless smaller things with which it is not easy to part: the summer holiday, which is supposed to be absolutely necessary for health, a pew at church, which made us appear so eminently respectable and differing from our poorer neighbours, the fresh-cut flowers, that made our tables look so pretty, the dainty lingerie and fresh ribbons and sashes, even the unconsidered postage stamps. All these have to be carefully adjusted to one's new position.

One of the most imperative and the most disagreeable curtailments must be retrenchment in the domestic department. No more ladies' maids, valets, parlour-maids or page-boys. At one fell swoop away they must go, and let me say (*par parenthèse*) that you will be amazed at the result. It is not only the wages, but the cost of board which makes it real economy to pay one good servant rather than three or four indifferent ones. But then, you must do many things yourself that you never did before. You must make your own beds, dust your own china, mend all your household linen as well as your personal apparel, and not mind opening your own hall-door when occasion requires. Moreover you must buy one dress where you bought three or four, one bonnet or hat of serviceable

material, and alter the trimmings instead of buying new ones. Never allow yourself to buy rubbishy material because it is cheap (it is very dear in the end); and you must put out of your head once and for ever the idea that you can be in the latest fashion at any time. You need not necessarily be quite out of the fashion; a little common sense and taste will make it possible to pass muster even at garden and evening parties with old dresses; but then you must adapt and make the best of what you have got.

Cotton dresses must be banished, and blouses and skirts take their place, and every bit of dress and underclothes-making, and of course all millinery, must be done at home if possible.

The economy in men's clothes is not so easy. They must have the stereotyped black coat and tall hat and other clothing, none of which can be made at home; so, as usual, the self-denial presses most upon the women of the family. But the men can do something; they can travel third class instead of first or second class as formerly, they can smoke fewer pipes or cigars, and knock off their club subscriptions and help a little more in the household, and not mind little necessary economies. Much more they cannot do, but they should do that cheerfully.

You will soon find, if taken up in the right spirit, that the riches of a man or woman do not consist in the abundance of their possessions, and that the comfort of knowing that you owe no man anything but to love one another is a state of things worth striving after; that your fires are not less bright because you use cinders where formerly you used recklessly all live coal, that your dinner-tables are not less attractive because arranged with intelligence by yourself instead of your parlour-maid, and that your bonnet pleases your husband's or brother's eye none the less because you are your own milliner.

It is worth while to be "brought low" and made poor to learn this priceless lesson—a lesson that nothing but adversity can teach. And I am tempted to add that no one can really enjoy the good gifts of God who has not had to earn them, and above all, who has not learnt how to sympathise with the friend and neighbour who is poor in this world's goods yet rich above all telling in the good opinion and affection of their family and friends—a state of poverty which kings and princes may envy and millionaires may strive after.

"THE WHITE HOUSE CLASS."

By LINA ORMAN COOPER, Author of "We Wives," etc.

PART III.

MISS BENSON was a wise woman. She did not wish to make the weekly classes at White House too severely scientific. So, on the third morning on which the young Mertons came up her spotless white steps, and into her pretty, comfortable kitchen, they found a variety of tempting ingredients laid out on the table in the window. There were currants and spices, and sultanas and sugar, and flour and baking-powder, and butter and jam. The fire too was alight, and nothing but one of the most interesting of processes to be gone through.

"I am going to have a tea-party to-night. I want a sponge cake, *voilà tout!*" explained the old lady, with a sweep of her hands.

"But how are we to make it, please?" quoth the proud Lucilla humbly. "I haven't the faintest idea!"

"What ingredients do you suppose you will want?" queried Miss Benson.

"Flour, of course," answered all three.

"Butter as well," added Lucilla.

"Eggs," said Eva.

"Milk," supplemented Linda.

"Eggs certainly," assented Miss Benson. "And maybe a very little flour. But no milk and no butter. Sponge cake is one of the easiest of cakes to make. It is also one of the least expensive. On the other hand it takes the most time, and requires a good deal of elbow grease. Now, Lucilla, take two eggs, and their weight in flour. Put the latter in a basin, and, whilst you are breaking up six more eggs, Linda must sift the flour carefully. My last cook broke my sifting-wheel, Linda; but pass the flour carefully through that tiny wire-sieve and it will do as well. Now, Lucilla, break each egg separately. This is always necessary if eggs are bought in a shop. It is unnecessary if they are home-laid. As you see that the white of each is clear, you may add it to the ones already broken. There, that will do. Now, with a spoon, Lucilla, remove those little white specks and threads attached to so many yolks. If you forget to do this, the cake may taste strongly, and will be heavy too. Now whisk with that wire erection. It cost eightpence, and is better than any double fork. Nay,