

## NOTES OF VANITY FAIR.

[The following is the first of a series of articles written especially for THE COURIER, and which will appear weekly under the general heading as above. Ed.]

**L**AST week in THE COURIER there were some verses on "Vanity Fair" that are worthy of repetition:

Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair,  
What can we purchase in Vanity Fair?  
Hearts, perhaps broken, but passing for new;  
Vows, false when spoken, but warranted true.  
Colors they're faded, but fit still for wear;  
Nothing is wasted in Vanity Fair.

Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair,  
How goes the trading in Vanity Fair?  
Worn, pale cheeks for red ones, and young hearts for old;  
Fresh roses for dead ones; brass passing for gold.  
Some lose all in the struggle, but none know of care,  
No room for the failures in Vanity Fair.

Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair,  
I pray you come join us in Vanity Fair.  
Bring youth and bring gladness, your high aims, bright desires,  
Purchase old age and sadness, burnt out ashes of fires,  
Naught else will be left you, but why should you care,  
You have danced with the gayest in Vanity Fair.

Your mahogany bedstead isn't the only thing around you that is veneered. Your bedstead has been moved about and mayhap roughly used, and there are chinks in the veneer, but, generally, the surface is smooth and glossy, and you can imagine that the beauty and richness to be observed on the outside extend all the way through. But knock a bit of the veneer off, and you will see a coarse, cheap wood such as no self-respecting person who moves in Vanity Fair would like to exhibit as furniture.

There are few things that are not veneered. We tread on velvet carpet that hides an old wooden floor, with cracks and knot holes, and vermin running to and fro. We wear sealskins that are only plush, and our great coats, that appear so magnificent, from an exterior point of view, are filled with trash for stuffing and the lining is full of holes. Our patent leather shoes cover stockings that may not hide our toes. New gloves may incase a soiled hand; and our spoons are plated and our jewelry "rolled."

The higher up we get in the social scale the more veneer there is. Vanity Fair is itself only a gilded covering for the coarseness and roughness and distress and misery that are elements in all life. Society with a capital S is very much like the society that begins with a small letter and about which the political economists and socialists talk. The same kind of men and women compose it; men and women with the same impulses and aspirations and vices and virtues. Only there is a little more pretence, a veneer of so-called culture that puts a brown stone front on a cheap and rickety tenement. In Society there is the same joy and the same sorrow, the same happiness and pleasure and the same trouble and disappointment, the same heart burnings, and heart yearnings that are to be found among the people who never get nearer than the courtyards and drawbridges in Vanity Fair. But there is a different face on things. The electric light of fashion casts a glow of its own on the people in Vanity Fair. Some have culture; those who have it not feign it. Appearance is the great desideratum. The best side is turned to the public gaze. The

rags and the jagged ends and the broken corners are carefully tucked away and pretence and hypocrisy are the rules of living.

They live for pleasure in this queer world of Vanity Fair. And in seeking pleasure they work and scheme and barter away the best gifts of life for the baubles that become as dead sea fruit in the hand of satiety.

Hearts perhaps broken, but passing for new. Yes, that's one thing they've learned in Society. The gay cavalier, the star of the ball room, who smiles and bows to passing belles, who with spirited step leads the dance, may have misery in his heart, and be sick with poignant memories of the past. But that is all below the surface. There is nothing to indicate that anything but pleasure and the attainment of heart's desire have been his portion.

Vows, false when spoken, but warranted true; colors, they're faded but fit still for wear. Truth somehow gets strangely twisted in this gay realm. Men and women stand ready to deceive each other. The willing ear may hear a thousand meaningless professions. Compliment degenerates into flattery, and flattery passes to flirtation and flirtation to folly. But sincerity and candor and honor are on dress parade, whatever may be stalking covertly in the by ways, and the smiles and the music and the gayety never cease, though plighted troth may be broken and vows be proved false. It is always the same—the veneer undergoes no change. Aye, the colors may fade; but there's a remedy for that, and the faded and jaded are the gayest of the gay.

Purchase old age and sadness, burnt out ashes of fires. Naught else will be left you, but why should you care? You have danced with the gayest in Vanity Fair. Memories of the past are the solace of old age. The sunken cheek of age may glow, and the lack-lustre eye may be rekindled for a fleeting moment, by a chance recollection of the triumphs and gayeties in Vanity Fair. Major Pendennis, when gout had pinned him to the domestic fireside and advancing years made the once sprightly body infirm, still lived in the circle of fashion, and to his dying day he loved to dwell on his services to My Lady This and the Countess That. He never forgot that he had danced with the gayest in Vanity Fair. Beau Brummell in rags was Beau Brummell still. The burnt out ashes of fires left him with nothing but the remembrance of the fact that he had once been the prince of fashion, and that was enough. But the graduates are not all Pendennises and Brummells. The ashes may often leave something more than a recollection. They may leave a regret for the follies—the waste and the vanities of the life that is past.

But people do not often stop to moralize or regret things in Vanity Fair until it's too late—till old age with its sadness has got fairly settled down, and then nobody is particularly interested in them or cares what they think. Old age has no right in Vanity Fair. And Vanity Fair! How old age must see the folly of it! How thin the veneer must seem! There are not many Brummells to say that the game is worth the candle—in Vanity Fair.

EXTON.

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