The Portman Square Conspiracy.

The day's work over, Ernest Prosper Evans would often leave the shop in Duke street and go for a stroll among various squares and highways from which Mr. Jarvis drew his large and fashionable clientele.

The exteriors of the vast mansions inhabited by these favored mortals filled the young hosier with awe and wonder; and sometimes as he passed down Mount Street or through Grosvenor Square, he would catch brief glimpses of the splendours beyond. Often he knew the address, and

had waited on the male occupants. Outside a certain house in Park Lane he would murmur: "The Honourable Bruce Lamb-silk vests, a dozen at a time, and no marking but the plain initials." Outside anto his dressing-gowns!"

ences in underclothing. whom he had served the previous afternoon. Standing against the railings of Portman Square, he looked up at the tall mansion opposite. There were lights on three of the floors, but the blinds were drawn.

He passed on with a sigh, walking in the direction of Seymour street, less potent customer. The door of ital for that business of yours." one of the big houses opened as he crossed over, and a young man em- smaller room, and one more suited erged. A pleasant light escaped to an informal tete-a-tete. from the great hall. Ernest Prosper Evans halted for a moment.

So did the young man.

young hosier dumbly allowed him- help yourself, there's a fortune in self to be conducted into the bril- it. liant hall, where, looking at his companion, he discovered that indeed here was his other self. The spoke of credit the other evening. likeness was remarkable

windows overlooked the over a hundred." whose square.

luminated socks.

Who are you?"

Duke Street," replied our friend.

he said, looking up once more, "at him." funerals and public dinners and in the Lords. And you might call on Aunt Jane. She'd never know the difference. Gad! I could lead a I'll double it if you agree."

The young hosier named a figure slightly in excess of fact.

"Well, I'll pay you double if ever I command."

The proposal Evans hesitated. was very tempting. He longed to play the part; but on four hundred -and funerals, public dinners, and

Aunt Jane! "Thanks, very much," said he; I'm ready." "but it's hardly feasible. I have

look."

peer. "But you'll want capital?"

the end of five if you come here in- in the Row, dined with Aunt Jane, noon," closed the transaction. He stead. And I'll pay your bills as and attended several funerals. The made straight for Baxter's bank, well. You'll have everything the marquis, on the other hand, in- and obtained notes in exchange for same as myself-the same clothes, structed by his accomplice, had serv- the cheque. the same hosiery—so there can be no ed in Jarvis's shop, cleverly avoidmistake-or, rather, nothing but one ing recognition by such of his actime. long mistake." And the marquis quaintances as patronized it: had smiled. "Say a thousand?" he con- made up accounts, measured numercluded judicially.

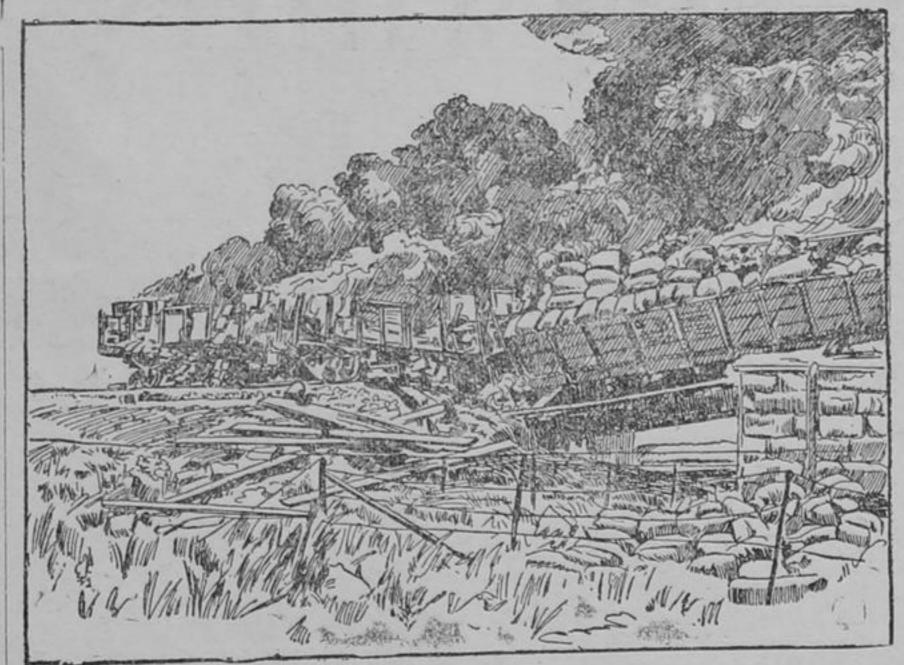
The young hosier hesitated.

"I'll make it two thousand. Come, four hundred a year for five years, and two thousand down at the end?' entreated the marquis.

"Couldn't do it," observed the ten. You see, leaving the firm now close of old I also grown a mustache, ordered look down in the mouth somewill spoil my credit with the manufacturers."

Once more the marquis looked his her half a chance I'm cornered."

companion attentively up and down. "A perfect double," he muttered— the young hosier with a grin. "perfect! I'm hanged if I'm going voice: "You're sure you won't take lordship, making for the hall. three thousand to come here for The next day, at three o'clock pre- behind Mr. Jarvis's counter. me?"



NEAR GREYLINGSTAD.

young Evans had gone North one action. More Boers then appeared horses were killed. evening to call on a certain duke on the scene, bringing the number of

A TRAIN WRECKED BY BOERS | the enemy up to 300. The 4.7 gun at Greylingstad also opened fire on the enemy, who uncoupled the en-Recently a pilot train, consisting gine, and sent it at full speed back was up at Heath street laying the works, is virulently unhealthy, beother house in Belgrave Square it of three trucks, with the engine be- towards the armored train. The foundation-stone of the new soup- cause of the sulphur fumes; but was different. Here he would say: hind, was blown up while crossing a latter, however, promptly backed, kitchens. You will find a full re- when the finished tar is passed on "Lord Gargoyle, and coronets down culvert midway between Vaal and the engine, mounting an in- port of the proceedings in the to dyc-works it brims with health Greylingstad. The trucks were stop- cline, was brought to a standstill 'Hampstead and Highgate Express' and strength, and the weakliest men The young hosier took an infinite ped when half way across the cul- without material injury. Two of that particular date; also my improve when working it. delight in these excursions and the vert, and brought the engine to a trucks, laden with petroleum, izal portrait-a very bad one, but well- | Eighty-six years is a marvellous thoughts they inspired. If he could standstill. A party of Boers, who and flour, however, were totally meaning, I believe and the trowel average, by the way, for the avernot share in the state secrets of a were hidden in some kraals 400 wrecked and burned. No casualties is up in the drawing-room. rising politician, he at least knew yards from the line, opened a heavy occurred on the train. Two Boers the exact size of his collars, his fire on the train, and several shots were seen to fall from the fire of the taste in neckwear, and his prefer- hit the engine. An armored train armored train, and shells from Greywhich was following the pilot train, lingstad burst in their midst, knock-Bent on his favorite relaxation, brought its pom-pom and men into ing a few men over. Two of their

A week later he received a letter. stamped with the Canning coronet and cipher.

"Come round this evening," it where dwelt Mr. Neill, another and read. "I think we can find the cap- ning, and was reverently conducted

This time he was shown into a ter himself.

Then, ed. "You've got to be me after all, some time since I've seen your lord- language." stepping forward, he said, with a for one month, free, gratis, and for laugh: "Why, you're me! Come in- nothing! And then, if you like, you side, and let's have a look at you!" can be yourself again. I'm not go-Completely taken by surprise, the ing to pay you; but if you like to

"Well, you remember when you be?" you gave me a turn. It's a subject would be enough." "I was going out," said the young I'm not particularly fond of. I've man, "but this is really more im- had too much experience of it. Six- figure. The marquis was safe, and portant." And he led his willing ty per cent. compound was the in- the bigger the loan the bigger his marquis concluded. double into a spacious dining-room, terest I paid; but in reality it was 'profits.

"You have been a borrower?" ask-Ernest Prosper Evans was in the ed young Evans, greatly surprised. seventh heaven as he sat at his ease; 'Yes-before I came of age; before and when, in obedience to the young I got the property and the ready. I man's orders, a solemn butler behaved like a young ass! I had a agreed. brought them wine and cigars, he good allowance, but I asked for Thereupon the jubilant Baxter stricken Evans. began to feel as though one day he more. My trustees declined, and so went out of the office and instructed might enter Jarvis's and order il- I went to Baxter. You know Bax- his clerk to prepare the usual docuter, of Jermyn street? He lends ments. "My name," said his companion, anybody with prospects as much as "I wish I had said fifty!" reflected "is Canning-the Marquis Canning. he likes, against a mere signature. young Evans I raised fifty thousand off him in Baxter, papers in hand, was back "Ernest Prosper Evans, an assis- two years, and lost most of it back- before very long tant at Jarvis's, the hosier, in ing horses and buying jewellery. I'm i "You will sign these?" he said, must take risks-they're part of the the weak. Coal-mining is not good; afraid to say how much he got back; hovering over his victim like a bird game. I'll marry money, and go but copper-mining brings the aver-The marquis grew thoughtful. but it was a good deal over the hun- of prey. "You can read it after- and live in the country." "You would come in very useful," dred thousand, and I can't touch wards"-as the young hosier delay-

"How does this affect me?" asked

the hosier. The marguis smiled.

double life!" He sprang up gaily as you'll promise to come here every the signature. he spoke. "What is your salary? evening for a month, and be instructed. I've a plan."

II.

Four weeks later the two young you'll be the Marquis Canning when- men sat together in the same cosy room in Portman Square

the marquis.

prospects that I must not over- days at Ascot and Kempton Park, cheque, drew on his gloves, and lit carried out under the marquis's a cigarette. all carefully tickete he could pass on for you?" "That's rather awkward," said the as the Marquis Canning in any com- "I'd sooner back your lordship," pany.

ous customers for shirts, and invented a new shape in scarves.

"You're all right now!" said the marquis one evening, when they hosier had, with the assistance of his were discussing matters over their cigars. "There's the opera for you to go to tonight; and, mind, I detest Wagner, and don't forget to say pounds in a dozen banks. He had clear of old Lady Malet later on. She's trying hard to land me with that girl of hers, and if you give pletely emancipated himself from

those five years and play at being cisely, Ernest Prosper Evans left the house in Portman Square, hailed a ing year that the money-lender gave forty.

But young Evans only shook his cab, and was shortly afterwards to be seen driving down Jermyn Street, in dangerous proximity to his place of business. Arrived at Mr. Baxter's office, he gaily entered, announced himself as the Marquis Caninto the presence of the great Bax-

Baxter, a plump Scotsman, with You can go, now.' And I handed "Now, look here, Evans," said the sandy hair, small eyes, and a dis- him over to Draper, who declared marquis, as soon as they were seat- cordantiy cheerful manner. "It's afterwards he had never heard such

"I can't say I've missed you," said young Evans.

it comes to a peench," sing-songed to my lawyers. I wrote to you the Scot. 'Now, what can I do for about it. He took some time be-"Explain!" said the young hosier. you this time? How much is it to lieving us-made stupid inquiries at

Mr. Baxter disdained the smaller him, and he's gone raving mad."

with a tempting prolongation of the ter all-"

Young Evans hesitated, smiled. "Well, if you will have it so," he than that! Serve him right."

flourish.

Evans. " And now for the coin-an open cheque or notes will do." "Going racing?" asked Baxter.

"A little."

The money-lender gave a small sigh of relief.

"Well, it's to be tomorrow?" said "Plunging!" he said. "Plunging!" he repeated to himself as he wrote number among my clients." "Yes," said the young hosier, out the cheque. "Well, he'll be here "I've asked Mr. Jarvis for a day off again before very long, and he can -a wedding, my only sister's-and have all he likes up to a hundred

thousand." A month of evening parties, a few The young hosier pocketed the

"Name them," returned the other. guidance, had put the finishing "I got Ananias this morning-"Well, I hope some day to open touches to his education. By a pru-straight from the stable," he said. out a hosiery establishment of my dent avoidance of train subjects. 'It's a dead cert. Shall I put a bit

replied Baxter.

"Certainly," replied young Evans. He had taken part in a debate in Whereupon the young hosier bow-"Well, I'll give you a thousand at the House of Lords, he had ridden ed, and, with a smiling "good-after-

The marquis met him at dinner-

"Excellent!" he said. "We must get these changed for gold, and then we're safe."

By the end of the month the young fellow-conspirator, not only effected the desired exchange, but deposited the whole of the forty-thousand clothes totally unlike anything worn times. by the Marquis Canning, and comthe old Portman Square voice and "I shall stick to Aunt Jane," said manner. At the same time he had find them. reluctantly disappeared from the "I'm off to the Empire, and sup- brilliant circles in which he had been to waste him!" Then, raising his per at Jimmy Harding's," said his wont to disport himself. Despite his riches, he still continued to serve

the marquis the sport he had plan-

The sequel to Evan's exploit was somewhat tragic.

"Baxter's gone raving mad!" said the marquis, one day, when his friend came in to hear the latest

"You remember, I returned his first account, with a note asking him what the deuce he meant by it, and threatening an action for conspiracy," continued the marquis. "That fetched him. He came down here with his papers next morningbefore breakfast too. I was half asleep, but he fairly woke me."

" 'A forgery,' I said, quite kindly, when he showed me your signature. 'I'm sorry, Baxter; but you've been had.'

"'I can sweer it was you! My clerk can sweer it was you!' cried, waving his papers-you know worker in tar is always firstclass. his funny Scotch accent.

"'Swear away,' said I. Then, laying on the silk again: "The date?" I asked.

"He mentioned it and the hour. "Of course I produced my diary.

"'On that afternoon,' I said, 'I

"At this he grew furious. " 'But my money-you've got my beautiful money!' he cried, his hands keeping. Not herding cows in the working desperately. I could al- country, for that is neither more nor most see him wallowing in the sov- less healthy than any other farming ereigns as he spoke. 'You've got work, but my beautiful money!' he shrieked, purple in the face.

"'I'm blest if I have!" And rang for breakfast. "But I'll county-court you! I'l

have the law-I'll--'

"I cut him short. "'All right, Baxter,' I said; 'you've been done, and I'm jolly glad. Case of the biter bit, don't you know. Congratulate the other "Good-afternoon, my lord," said fellow for me when you see him.

The marquis laughed heartily be-

fore proceeding. "I had to go north that day," he "No; people generally don't, teel resumed; "so I handed Baxter over my bank, and wasted more money "Thirty thousand-in fact, twenty over a detective. Now, he's given up. The truth has dawned upon

Evans figeted in his seat as the

"Had I better own up?" he said, "Say forty, if you like," he said, half-way towards repentence.

The marquis interrupted him. "The beast did me out of more "But-" urged the conscience-

"Owning up won't cure him."

And there the matter rested.

reviewing his past activity; and one life-givers to the strong, but fatal to

Evans signed "Canning" with a that the autumn found him involved ening effect on the blood and nerves. "It's a wee bit firmer than it used diture. Included was a large and per is a poison; but the ore in which "I'll answer that question if to be," said Baxter, stooping over somewhat gorgeous trousseau. This it lies is a fine tonic-giving mixture "Age, my dear boy," returned Bond street. "E. P. Evans" was and the all-round work has a very

ments of the assiduous proprietor. "Do you know," said Mr. Baxter one day, "you remind me of a nobleman whom I was once proud to

"What line is yours, may I ask?" politely inquired the proprietor. "Er-banking," said Mr. Baxter. 'And he owes me eighty thousand

pounds," he added with a flourish. "You don't wish to open any more accounts?" lightly asked the hosier, whose identity the reader will easily recognise.

"Not just now-not just now!" said Baxter, purpling. "The next article?" said Ernest

Prosper Evans.-London Answers.

TRADE TRUTHS.

The money-lender's-It's never too late to lend. The lawyer's-A friend with deeds

is the friend we need. The tobacconist's-A puff's as good as a feast. The barber's-Two heads are bet-

ter than one. The cook's -The pan is mightier than the sword. The widow's-Two weds are better

than one. The bachelor's-A little widow is a dangerous thing. The dentist's-It's a good thing to

The auctioneer's-Be content with The burglar's-Take things as you

THE HEALTHIEST TRADES

CALLINGS LIKELY TO MAKE YOU A CENTENARIAN.

"Lor!" exclaimed the young hos- The Tar-Worker's Life Averages Eighty-Six Years-Tending Cowstables Very Healthy.

The best and healthiest trade in the world is dye-making from coal tar. There is no manual work that comes near it, for tar, and the smell of it, is the finest of all tonics and tissue-builders; so much so that the life of a tar-worker comes out at eighty.six years. The mortality is eighty per cent. lower too, than in other factory trades.

Distilling saccharin from the tar is equally good, and the bony framework and circulation of a Malignant diseases are almost unknown in aniline-dye factories, and even in epidemics the workers suffer little. And there is nothing like a tar works for keeping off influenza. Yet the work of actually making the tar, which falls to gas and coke

age of the population if forty-nine. Still better, although not a factory trade like tar-working, is cow-

TENDING COW STABLES.

Here the average length of life is eighty-five, and scores of stalled-cow keepers live over the age of 100. This is because a cow is the only animal whose presence is thoroughly healthy for man-the very breath of a cow is beneficial. Consumption, and kindred ills, are utter strangers in cow stables; and the best thing a man can do to lengthen his life is to look after cows, and, if possible,

sleep in a room above the stable. There is a very strange difference in trades that go on side by side in the way of life-lengthening. The labor of wheeling a wheel-barrow in particular, has such a strengthening effect on the muscles and joints that confirmed barrow-wheelers show the best average in all the building trades—nearly seventy-seven years, and a great many touch the 100. This is largely because, if a man wheels a barrow properly, the wideapart arms open the chest, and help to strengthen the lungs in a wonderful way. Whereas, though wielding a pick-axe seems as if it should be a fine exercise, it really knocks the lifeaverage down to forty-five. The partly stooping position, and the bent inwards position of the arms, contracts the chest dangerously, cramping the lungs till they are easy victims to pneumonia.

IRON-SMELTING.

puts ten years on to the average life Eighteen months later Baxter re- of a man, if he has good lungs to covered, and forthwith retired from start with; but if he is weak-lunged it is liable to cut him off altogether. "I've done pretty well," he said, The hard work and perspiration are age up to eighty years with a run, He was so far successful in these for the composition of the ore, when newer and more laudable ambitions powdered, has an extremely strengthin various forms of romantic expen- This seems odd, because crude cophe purchased at a brand new shop in when breathed in small quantities, inscribed in gold leaf over the win- good effect on the muscles. Few dows, and there was something fa- copper-miners die before they are miliar, yet elusive, about the move- eighty three or four; whereas copper-

smelters are lucky if they see fifty. A first-class trade to put a few extra years on to your life is whiskey distilling, which affords as good a set-up to the system as spirit-drinking pulls it down. The vapors of a distillery are extremely health-giving, and a fatal foe to disease and sickness germs of every kind. Distillery workers, who are not given to intemperance, by the way, show the excellent average of eighty-one years for life, and seldom suffer from illness; while brewery employees, on the other hand, have the decidedly bad average of forty-seven.

Finally, barring accidents, there would be no trade to beat the steeplejack's for keeping life going. The task of working at enormous heights from the ground keeps the nervous system in such perfect order -and that is two-thirds of the battle-that steeplejacks who are not killed by accident show the magnificent average of eighty-nine.

INHABITANTS OF MARS.

"As for me," says M. Flammarion, speaking of the inhabitants of Mars. 'I rather envy them. A world where it is always beautiful, where there are neither tempests nor cyclones, where the years are twice as long as ours, where the kilogran is of 376 grams, and where, therefore, men and women who here weigh seventy kilos there weigh on!v twenty-six, and where, in a word, everything is lighter, more delicate and more refined." And in another place he goes further, pointing out that if the Martians wished to com-Ethel-That detestable Mrs. Brown | municate with us they would doubtsaid that I looked thirty! Maud- less have made the effort many times How perfectly absurd ! Ethel elat- in the past and probably long ago ed-Frankly, now, how old do you abandoned it, deciding it a hopeless It was not till early in the follow- really think I look? Maud-About business to attempt communication with a planet so stupid.