

**THE PARVENU FAMILY;
OR, PHOEBE: GIRL AND
WIFE; VOL. II**

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The parvenu family; or, Phoebe: girl and wife; Vol. II by Percy Fitzgerald

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PERCY FITZGERALD

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WIFE; VOL. II**

THE PARVENU FAMILY;

OR,

PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE PARVENU FAMILY;
OR,
PHEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

GETTING INTO SOCIETY.

WE now change the scene to London. Who could now recognise the "ponies" and their mamma—the plodding, painstaking, long-suffering trio—so amiably obsequious to all, and so anxious to get on in a modest way, and without interfering with any one? They were now insolent, eager, unbounded, almost rampant. They had hurried to town, and were set up at a great and fashionable hotel, while a suitable

house was being looked for. Considering what they had come from so recently, their nicety in suiting themselves was amazing : what would have done for persons of high and accepted fashion would hardly do for them. Though the funeral was scarcely over, here they were, richly appointed and equipped, knocking at the door of society and demanding admission. Unfortunately, that door is chiefly opened to those who have passed through before, while the menials invariably say "Not at home" to those who come like our postulants.

A lord's mansion was secured for them in Berkeley Square, and from this coign of 'vantage it was determined to open their "first parallel." Ready money was supplied in abundance; carriages and horses secured from the eminent Mr. Grimbrush; and relations of the most costly kind opened with that gracious but still awful Madame Sylvie, whose windows in Regent Street were impenetrably veiled with festoons of costly lace, and whose favour and even civility was not to be purchased by the most lavish orders. Mrs. Pringle, however, whose energy had begun to develop itself in a

surprising way with her new position, had secured an introduction from a great lady, to whom she herself "had secured an introduction," and thus obtained a certain deference and civility. She herself, therefore, and her "ponies" were fitted out in suitable style, ready to begin that London struggle to which she was looking forward with such delight. Such were the mere material equipments: but this was as nothing. For there were Peris living in a state of genteel starvation, in meagre rooms in streets of stables, off the square in which our ladies were dwelling—persons on almost a bank-clerk's allowance, who were yet allowed to enter within the magic gate, from which they were turned back disconsolate.

But with such difficulties to face, Mrs. Pringle was not without resources. Her original lever was of course Lord Garterley, always glad to say, when a new undertaking of any kind was on foot, "Leave it to me—I'll manage it for you." With all his *bon-homie*, he could take a pretty satirical view of human nature, and knew exactly the description of article to suit the lady.