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COUSIN FRANK.
By Miss Sedgwick.

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Gray, in the most familiar of his exquisite Stanzas in a Country Church-yard, ("Full many a gem" &c.) has expressed most poetically the waste of a false position in life. The fond partiality of every village generation finds in its own burying-ground some "village Hampden," some "mute, inglorious Milton," or

"Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood."

It is a signal good fortune, when an individual has a right position in life. The office of President of the United States is one of the highest among men, and he who worthily fills it is the peer of kings and autocrats. Washington, the elected head of the American people, was truly king of kings. But if the nation put in that high place a man only fitted to be a clever ward politician, or a skillful overseer of a plantation, he is a mark in the pillory, not the light set on a hill.

We see every day men in a false position; in places as ill-fitting as a garment a world too wide, or perchance too narrow. Men are raised to offices of trust and honor, that are worthy neither of the one nor the other; and stout frames, which nature has built of muscle and sinew able to subdue the wildest of our wild land, are in places behind counters, that women of right and grace should fill. Do we not all know ladies in drawing-rooms, cumberers of that ground, who would have figured as first-rate milliners? And mistresses of our city palaces, who would have been inestimable market-women? And yellow, languid, fine ladies, who in the right vocation of chamber-maids, would have been brisk and blooming? And do we not know those in obscure and humble places, who, shuffled to their right position, would bring with them the graces so much wanted to give a zest to high life? There are men born to the inheritance and ministration of a princely fortune, who are only fit to keep a livery stable, or drive four in hand; and there are spiritual teachers, whose whole lives should be passed in the humblest class of learners. Bachelors there are, who would have been pattern husbands and idolized fathers; and husbands and fathers, who should have gone roaming and growling alone through life. It is this prevailing disorder and unfitness, that makes it so peculiarly delightful to see a friend in the right position—that gives to fitness the effect of harmony.

This felicity of the right position is most strikingly illustrated by a charming friend of mine, who, having an innumerable host of young cousins, is best known by his most common appellative, "Cousin Frank." A discerning girl has tried to fix upon him the sobriquet of Pickwick, but there was a general outcry against this; we were too jealous of the originality of our friend, to blend him in any way with another. Perhaps, we did not all of us fully appreciate the gentle qualities—the romantic benevolence—the exquisite gentlemanliness of the Don Quixote of Mr. Dickens's creation; and besides, the very sound of "*Cousin Frank!*" is a key-note

to our affections. "Cousin Frank" is not too young—and I cannot remember that he ever was—for any kind of office; and he never will be "too old" for any service of humanity. He is not rich, thank Heaven, for if he were, he would have cares of his own; nor is he poor, and thank Heaven for that, too, for then he would have sordid anxieties. If he were too tall, he might on some occasion (there is a universality in Cousin Frank's occasions) be inconveniently conspicuous; and if he were too short, he might not always command the respect of those who measure dignity by feet and inches; so he is just right—just as high as all our hearts.

Again, "Cousin Frank" is not in the dilemma of one of Mr. Bulwer's heroes, "too handsome for anything," but were you to question his beauty in

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a certain circle, any one of a dozen fair young creatures would exclaim, "Cousin Frank not handsome!—I wonder then who is!" He certainly has what our English friends call "a nice countenance;" just that amount of good looks that makes a young lady who has his arm in a company of strangers, feel very complacent.

We have said there is a universality in "Cousin Frank's occasions of benevolent usefulness"—we cannot enumerate them. He is the dear and privileged friend of a half-a-dozen families, and the mainspring of three. If there be a pleasant party on foot, "Cousin Frank" must come to make it pleasanter; if a dull one, he must come to make it endurable. If an agreeable dinner is planned, "Cousin Frank" is the guest to make sure all its pleasant little hilarities; if a heavy one is apprehended, he must do its dull honors. A perilous winter's journey can only be encountered with "Cousin Frank: " an enticing pic-nic would still be nothing without him. If there be an awkward secret that must be confided to some one. "Cousin Frank" is the chosen recipient; he never tells, and if help be possible, help will come from him.

"Cousin Frank" is no amateur of music, real or pretended. I doubt if he could distinguish an air of Bellini from a sonata of Beethoven. Yet he goes to more concerts than any man in town; for Grisi or Lablache would sing in vain to any of our score of girls, if "Cousin Frank" were not there. The lectures—we must confess it—sparing neither sex nor age, they have well nigh exhausted even "Cousin Frank's" patience, and he was once seen looking grave and doubtful when one of his prettiest cousins asked him to attend her to the "Tabernacle."

For himself, "Cousin Frank" eschews parties; but if there be a timid womankind among us, who fears to go alone in a carriage, he is called upon to attend her; or if there be a frugal one who would fain save coach-hire, he is again called upon, and "Cousin Frank" is that good, that "dainty spirit," that "does always come when you do call him." But he is not merely the *preux chevalier* of young and pretty girls—most bachelors are willing servants of these; he is the visiter of the neglected, the prop of the old, the cheerer of all. He has that true chivalry which Charles Lamb said he would believe in when he saw the best seat in a coach given to a forlorn old woman.

As to country commissions, scarce a mail arrives without bringing a flood of them for "Cousin Frank." The tide never ebbs. For example by the last: "Poor B. is getting deafer and

deafener every day. It is a sad sight to see the tears in his eyes when he perceives his little boy's lips moving without hearing the accents that come from them. Ask your Cousin Frank to look in at the new-fangled instruments for the deaf, and send us a report of them." "G_____ 's eyes are getting worse again;" then comes a statement of the case, and the unfailing conclusion, "*Ask your Cousin Frank* to step into Elliott's and consult him about her going to town." Again: "We are impatient to see Stephens's new work; ask your Cousin Frank to forward it by the first opportunity." And once more: "Ask your Cousin Frank to send me a couple of dozen of good Port and a half-box of the best cigars; he knows how to choose both."

But we forbear, lest through our dull medium our readers may be—as no one ever yet was—tired of "Cousin Frank." This is not the place to speak of his blessed part in the domestic tragedies of his friends; that memory is *cut in* to their hearts, and its memorial is written down in the book of which the angel of life keeps the record. Such a character as "Cousin Frank" is a rare social blessing, and its felicity is to have fallen into the right position—upon a family where there is an alarming and most inconvenient preponderance of womankind.

Every now and then we have a rumor that "Cousin Frank" is about "to give to a party what was meant for mankind;" and his cousins look jealously on certain of their charming friends on whom he seems to them to smile to benignly. The cloud passes off. The statue has found its true niche—the picture its best light. "Cousin Frank" must not be married. This would be like giving to an individual an exclusive right to the sunshine—allowing to one family the monopoly of the Croton water. No: all crowns but the crown matrimonial to our dear "Cousin Frank!"