

the total with astonishment. It was only 3,000*l.* He desired that the assessors should be sent for; and when they came he asked them if they were satisfied that their valuation was really correct. They said, 'We certainly are. If it errs at all it errs by being a little too high.' 'Well,' said the commissioner, 'the matter is of some importance. May I ask if you are prepared to sign a paper to this effect?' The assessors drew themselves up with an air of virtuous *hauteur*. 'Sir,' they replied, 'on serious occasions like the present, when we deliberately say a thing, we are naturally ready to sign it.' 'Then in that case,' said the commissioner quietly, again casting his eye over the list of figures before him, 'I shall, under powers given me by the Government, take over from you, for the purpose of public improvements, a hundred of these houses; and I will do so at your own valuation, which you cannot complain of, as you have just told me that it is high rather than otherwise. Here is the paper, gentlemen. Have the goodness to sign it.' The assessors started. For a moment they were utterly silent. Then came a shuffling of feet, an interlude of hemming and hawing, and then stuttered excuses. 'Well,' said the commissioner blandly, 'if you are not quite sure about the matter take a day to think it over. Come back to-morrow, and then you shall tell me the sum that will really satisfy you.' The assessment by next day had risen from 3,000*l.* to 7,000*l.*

Some readers, perhaps, may think these anecdotes